



POLICE DEPARTMENT

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TO: Our Community
FROM: Stan Standridge, Chief of Police
DATE: September 16, 2011
SUBJECT: Safety in our community

In recent days you have learned that two sexual assaults were reported within days of each other. Both assaults occurred on the west side of the Mall of Abilene. Since the police department alerted the community to these two assaults, some citizens have expressed concern for their own safety. Please know that your concerns are valid. I hear your message, and I am very sensitive to your concerns about this matter. Your police department is equally concerned about the safety of our citizens, and we have taken many actions to not only protect our community but also to apprehend this person or persons. It is untrue that we did nothing while not telling our community about these assaults. Instead, we responded with a specific action plan that involved several divisions. We spent many investigative hours working from planning to covert surveillance. We worked together to ensure the public's safety while also trying to apprehend the person or persons responsible. Accomplishing both objectives sometimes requires very different approaches, and we have found ourselves in the middle of that tension. I want to reassure our citizens that we did not leave them unprotected.

In the days ahead, uniformed officers will be present in the Mall parking lot during nighttime hours. Please know these safeguards cannot ensure assaults do not occur elsewhere in the City, so our citizens are encouraged to practice awareness. Awareness includes parking close to an entrance, especially at night; parking as close to available light as possible; traveling in pairs; having your keys in your hand before getting to your vehicle; and lastly, being very aware of your surroundings while listening to your instinct. The greatest danger is what runners call zoning out, where persons simply ignore their environment. Everyone is encouraged to always be aware of your immediate surroundings.

The great news for 2011 is that we have seen a 46% reduction in sexual assaults through July. Twenty three reports were received from January 1st to July 31st versus forty three during the same time frame in 2010.

The men and women of the Abilene Police Department are all members of this community. We are fully committed to everyone's safety. We must stand together to stop this violence. Now is the time for unity. Thank you.

We Serve Those We Protect