Crime precautions needed

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Though Redding’s crime rate is well below 1990s’ levels, experts say residents still need to take precautions.

“This sense we’re really not a big, big city so you don’t have to worry and lock your doors and your car all the time, that’s a false security,” said Bob Blankenship, who became Redding’s police chief in 1988 and served in the 1990s.

“You do have to lock, do have to have an alarm on your home, on your car, and be proactive. There are people who make a living on those who don’t lock their doors, their cars. That’s how they make a living — stealing,” he said.

Property crimes ticked up about 3 percent year-over-year in 2014, said Rob Paoletti, current chief of the Redding Police Department.

Thefts represented the bulk of the property crimes, though burglaries also rose, he said.

Crime prevention also includes meeting neighbors, said Ann Corrin, pastor of Pilgrim Congregational Church. When she became worried about vandalism near her church, she and her husband began walking their dog in the evening near it.

People also need to overcome their fear — meet their neighbors, walk in their neighborhoods and parks, she said.

Leaving doors unlocked or items in the car must be avoided, said Frank Scafidi, spokesman for the National Crime Insurance Bureau.

“Even if it’s a bag filled with dirty underwear, somebody might think there’s a laptop in it. They’re going to break the window and take it out and find out,” Scafidi said. “People can have a late and great BMW ... they stop, jump out for coffee and leave the thing running, and come back and it’s gone. That’s a classic crime of opportunity.”

Approximately 32 percent of all burglaries in Redding involved no forced entry in 2014, Paoletti has said.

Blankenship said the Redding Police Department lacks enough officers — in the 1990s, Redding had more cops per civilian than today.

Ed Rullman, who started the Redding Merchants Crimewatch and owns C.R. Gibbs American Grille, echoed the call for more officers, though he added more jail space is necessary, too.

PRECAUTIONS from 1A

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