

From the Office of the Sheriff:

As gas prices continue their upward trend so does several criminal statistics. The most popular of which is gas drive-offs. The Dodge County Sheriff's Dept. works very closely with all out county merchants to ensure that those whom intentionally fail to pay are sought, located and charged with theft. Not all reported gas drive-offs are exactly that. Modern technology allows for pay at the pump, debit or credit. Often times we respond to a case in which the customer received fuel and the card was later rejected or invalid.

To aid both merchants and law enforcement, I would recommend you remain at the pump until you receive your receipt for your purchase. That receipt is the only proof you have that your debit or credit transaction occurred and you paid. The receipt will come in very handy when the deputy sheriff knocks at your door seeking payment from the merchant.

Some people just forget to pay while shopping inside or drive-off daydreaming. These forgetful drivers are usually returning to the merchant at the same time we are attempting to locate them. Should you figure it out after you have left, please place a courtesy call to the merchant and tell them you are on your way back to pay or give them a credit card number so they can be paid for the product you obtained.

Another area of theft on the rise is the theft of wire, aluminum, steel or any other material that brings good money at the local recycling centers. We are very fortunate to have centers that report suspicious activity but there are always a few that receive materials with no questions asked. The thefts of wire is very popular as copper prices are through the roof. Perpetrators have rented truck and traveled the countryside stealing all they can locate. Theft of steel, aluminum, and stainless steel are popular as well.

For those in the business or those that may have this material laying around, take some additional measures to ensure they don't "walk" away in the middle of the night. For those that purchase these materials at local recycling centers, ask a few questions or at least ask for identification of the seller in case a rash of thefts is reported later. This is for your protection. If we can determine that the materials were stolen, we will confiscate it and you will not be reimbursed for your costs. It is also a serious crime to receive or be in possession of stolen property. If the sellers are nervous and things just don't look right or add up, they don't.

Other victims this summer have been the buildings trades as thieves focus on building material and tools left at residential construction sites. Dodge County has many beautiful rural locations to build homes. These private, discreet, and wooded properties are just exactly what you the homeowner are looking for. It is also the same thing the thief is looking for. I recommend you do not maintain a large amount of building materials that will not be used immediately. It is nice to have that load of lumber delivered in one shot but it does make for a lucrative target for the bad guys. Keep your site secure and lighted if possible, a chain across the drive will also prevent unauthorized access.

The Dodge County Fair is right around the corner and I hope to see many of you there. Feel free to visit the Sheriff's Dept. displays. Bring your questions and concerns to any of the Dodge County Sheriff's Deputies that work the fair. [tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us](mailto:tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us)

