

# Keep home safe from burglars while you're away on vacation

Take steps to keep your most valuable asset – your home – safe while you are on vacation.

Sadly, burglaries are common while folks are on vacation. Thankfully, there are some simple steps to make sure your home is safe while you and your family are on that hard-earned vacation.

Be cautious of whom you tell about your vacation. It's OK to let a trusted neighbor know when and where you are going but be careful telling others.

One innocent comment or post on a social networking site could lead to problems. Don't risk it. Many folks hire "house sitters" these days. This is a great way to make sure your house continues to look lived-in while you're gone.

Even if you don't hire a house sitter, there are some simple ways to lead potential burglars into thinking you're still at home.

Invest in some quality light timers. Hook a timer up to lights, televisions and radios. This will mask the fact that there isn't anyone home. Adjust the timers' settings to your normal routine. Be sure to ask someone to water your



**Derek Schmidt**

• **Attorney General**

plants and keep the yard mowed. Remember: you want your home to look as if you are still there.

Make sure everything is locked and secure before heading out on your excursion. If you do not have deadbolt locks, have them installed by a professional. Make sure your home security system is working properly. Double check sheds, windows, garage doors, basement windows and any places a thief may target to break into your home.

It is also a good idea to have the post office hold your mail while you are away. Or ask a trusted neighbor to collect your mail and newspapers.

A few newspapers lying in your driveway may be an invitation to steal. If someone is collecting them for you, ask them to hold them in

their house until you return instead of piling the papers on the front porch.

Keep valuables such as jewelry and important documents in a safe deposit box. Consider using a video camera or your smart phone to keep a video diary of all of your belongings.

Keep a record of serial numbers for electronics and other valuables; this may prove useful in getting your belongings back if something were to happen to them.

An unanswered phone also might tip off a prowler that no one is home. Turn the ringer to the phone off while you're away and don't refer to your trip in your outgoing message. If you can check your messages remotely, learn how to use this feature. You may also be able to forward your phone to your cell phone.

Remember that trusted neighbor that you are going to have collect your mail? Why not get him or her to park in your driveway while

you are away?

Do you have outdoor motion sensor lights? If not, have those installed as well. If the light were to come on while prowling around your house a robber could assume someone is home and will not stop at your place.

Consider shutting off your gas and water to avoid potential flooding, gas leakage or fire. It sounds a bit rash but it is always better to be safe than sorry.

It might be a good idea to call your home security company and let them know you will be away. Confirm that they have your cell phone number. This way the company will know where you are and how to reach you if something does occur. In some areas, you can even notify local law enforcement so they can keep an extra eye on your home.

You work hard all year and deserve a good vacation with your family. Don't let your vacation be cut short with a tragedy or burglary. With these tips you can relax on your vacation with the peace of mind that your home and belongings are safe.

Have a good trip!

## On the Beat

### COLBY POLICE Monday

12:07 a.m. – Caller reported a subject standing by the mail boxes at Friendly Acres, then walking off and coming back. Unable to locate.

10:35 a.m. – Driving while suspended report filed on incident at 2:26 a.m. Friday.

1:04 p.m. – Employee called about finding coat at Community Building. Report filed.

4:58 p.m. – Caller requested officer in reference to subject harassing him. No report.

8:48 p.m. – Caller reported subject yelling at him while walking by. Spoke with both parties.

8:50 p.m. – Subject came to station about caught dog. Met subject at Colby Animal Clinic.

9:28 p.m. – Checked smoke from residence.

11:26 p.m. – Caller reported a young subject staying at the playground area at Friendly Acres.

### Tuesday

3:40 a.m. – Alcohol violation: subject reported subject coming home intoxicated. Report filed.

7:30 a.m. – Welfare check. Employee set alarm off by mistake.

11:55 a.m. – Subject reported dog bite. Report filed.

12:09 p.m. – Caller reported juvenile hanging around who was told to leave and then came back. Criminal trespass report filed.

3 p.m. – Caller reported erratic driver southbound on Range. Located vehicle, driver OK.

3:19 p.m. – Caller reported subject with head down in vehicle in parking lot. Everything OK.

3:28 p.m. – Caller reported theft of jar of money.

4:01 p.m. – Caller reported subject left in the ditch in front of business. Not found there; believed to be subjects from earlier.

4:16 p.m. – Caller reported vehicle broken down in parking lot with subjects arguing. Subjects from earlier.

7:17 p.m. – National Crime Information Center hit on stolen vehicle out of Sherman County.

### THOMAS COUNTY SHERIFF Monday

11:39 a.m. – Helped Highway Patrol at I-70 mile 55 eastbound.

1:41 p.m. – Released Judith Leah Tippets.

### Tuesday

7:50 a.m. – Released Taylor Linn Brown.

7:55 a.m. – Caller reported break in at Brewster.

10:44 a.m. – Made contact with suspicious person at County Rd. 11 and S.

11:30 p.m. – Caller reported a semi all over the road at mile 68 westbound I-70. Unable to locate.

## Public Notice

**NOTICE OF HEARING ON ADOPTION OF NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PLAN FOR UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #274, OAKLEY**

You are hereby advised pursuant to the provisions of KSA 12-17, 117, a public hearing will be held at 621 Center Avenue, Suite 103, Oakley, Thomas County, Kansas, on the 11th day of June, 2012 at 6:00 o'clock p.m. to consider whether Unified School District #274 (Oakley), Thomas County, Kansas, should adopt a "Neighborhood Revitalization Plan" for all of the area and territory lying within the corporate limits of such school district in Thomas County, Kansas.

The proposed Revitalization Plan is available for public review and consideration at the office of Thomas County Economic Development Alliance, 350 S. Range, Ste. 12, Colby, Kansas during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #274 (OAKLEY), THOMAS COUNTY, KANSAS  
BY: THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
BY: President – Scott Maurath

ATTEST:  
Clerk of the Board of Education

(Published in the Colby Free Press on Wednesday, May 30, June 6, 2012)

## Public Notice

**NOTICE OF HEARING ON ADOPTION OF NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PLAN FOR NORTH RANDALL TOWNSHIP**

You are hereby advised pursuant to the provisions of KSA 12-17, 117, a public hearing will be held at 2816 County Road M, Colby, Thomas County, Kansas, on the 19th day of July, 2012 at 8:00 o'clock p.m. to consider whether NORTH RANDALL TOWNSHIP Thomas County, Kansas, should adopt a "Neighborhood Revitalization Plan" for all of the area and territory lying within the corporate limits of such school district in Thomas County, Kansas.

The proposed Revitalization Plan is available for public review and consideration at the office of Thomas County Economic Development Alliance, 350 S. Range, Ste. 12, Colby Kansas during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

NORTH RANDALL TOWNSHIP  
THOMAS COUNTY, KANSAS  
BY: Trustee – Lonnie Wilson

ATTEST:  
Clerk of NORTH RANDALL TOWNSHIP

(Published in the Colby Free Press on Thursday, July 5, 12, 2012)

## Public Notice

**NOTICE OF HEARING ON ADOPTION OF NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PLAN FOR UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #274, OAKLEY**

You are hereby advised pursuant to the provisions of KSA 12-17, 117, a public hearing will be held at District office, 621 Center Avenue, Suite 103, Oakley, Logan County, Kansas, on the 20th day of July, 2012 at 7:30 o'clock a.m. to consider whether Unified School District #274 (Oakley) Logan County, Kansas, should adopt a "Neighborhood Revitalization Plan" for all of the area and territory lying within the corporate limits of such school district in Thomas County, Kansas.

The proposed Revitalization Plan is available for public review and consideration at the office of Thomas County Economic Development Alliance, 350 S. Range, Ste. 12, Colby, Kansas during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #274 (OAKLEY), LOGAN COUNTY, KANSAS  
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
BY: President, Scott Maurath

ATTEST:  
Board Clerk, Stacy Tholen

(Published in the Colby Free Press on Thursday, July 13, 20, 2012)

# Tree stand 'mansions' challenged

DULUTH, Minn. (AP) – Some Minnesota hunters are upgrading their deer stands, trading the traditional nailed-together hunks of wood for what one official calls "mansions" in trees on public property.

St. Louis County officials are seeing deer stands – platforms perched in trees to help hunters more easily spot deer – with stairways, decks, shingled roofs, commercial windows, insulation, propane heaters, carpeting, lounge chairs, tables and even the occasional generator, the *Duluth News Tribune* reported Sunday (bit.ly/Lzie7J).

Some hunters have even planted crops near their stands in hopes of attracting deer, said St. Louis

County Land Commissioner Bob Krepps. He said hunters have also cut down trees near their stand to improve sight lines.

"We're getting overbuilt," Krepps said. "We're seeing mansions out there – basically hunting shacks on stilts."

Private landowners can do what they want, Krepps said, but tax-forfeited land makes up nearly 1 million acres of county forest, and is supposedly open to all hunters. Hunters who customize stands in these areas are inappropriately claiming public land as their own, he said.

"A lot of these cross the line of what's appropriate," Krepps said. "If I'm out walking and come across one of these buildings on

posts, am I going to feel welcome to hunt there? Probably not. And if I do, there's likely to be a fight. That shouldn't happen on land that belongs to everyone."

One deer stand was 18 feet wide and 20 feet long; county officials said it was more like a cabin. And officials have even found some stands on public property with locks on the doors.

Traditional wooden stands are often abandoned to rot in the woods. That gets more complicated with new, sometimes elaborately manufactured stands that include plastic, metal and shingles, which aren't biodegradable "and really leave a mess in the woods," said Jason Meyer, a forest manager for the county.

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