



## *How Start a Block Watch*

### **Getting Started**

- Form a planning committee of neighbors to discuss needs, the level of interest, possible challenges and the Watch concept.
- Contact the Floyd County Police Department to discuss the Neighborhood Watch and local crime problems. Invite the local law enforcement Block Watch Coordinator to your meeting.
- Publicize your meeting at least one week in advance with door-to-door fliers, e-mail or phone chain and follow-up the communications the day before the meeting.
- Select a meeting place that is accessible to people with disabilities.
- Hold an initial meeting to gauge neighbors' interest; establish purpose of the program, and begin to identify issues that need to be addressed. Stress that Watch group association of neighbors who look out for each other's families and property, alert the police to any suspicious activities or crime in progress, and work together to make the community a safer place to live.

### **Adopt the Watch Idea**

- Elect a chairperson or leader.
- Ask for block captain volunteers who are responsible for relaying information to members on their street, block and keeping up-to-date information on residents, and making special effort to involve the elderly, working parents, and youth.
- Establish a regular means of communicating with Watch members – e.g. newsletter, telephone, fax, e-mail, etc.
- Prepare neighborhood map showing names, addresses, e-mail addresses and phone numbers of participating households and distribute to members. Block captains keep this map up-to-date, contacting newcomers to the neighborhood and rechecking occasionally with ongoing participants. With guidance from the Floyd County Police Department, the Watch trains its members in home security techniques, observation skills, and crime reporting. Residents also learn the types of crime that affect the area.

### **Tips for Success**

- Hold regular meetings to help residents get to know each other and to collectively decide upon program strategies and activities.
- Involve everyone – young, old, single and married, owner and renter.
- Get the information out quickly. Share all kinds of news – don't allow rumors.
- Celebrate successes and contributions of your volunteers through events such as awards, annual dinners and parties. Remember, this will take a lot of work initially to get started but this program will make a big difference. The Floyd County Police Department will be present to answer questions and to make this program successful for your neighborhood area.