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DATE: **MAY 30, 2014**

SUBJECT: **BURGLARY AWARENESS**

As we enter into the warm weather months, Dakota County Chief Deputy Tim Leslie cautions residents to "be on the lookout," as burglaries and related criminal activity tend to increase during this time. Although burglaries in the southern part of our county have been generally trending downward since 2011, nearly 40 percent of all the burglaries between 2011 and 2014 have been reported in the afternoon hours (2:00 to 6:00 p.m.) Chief Deputy Leslie offers a few tips for citizens to reduce the chances they will be victims of these types of crimes:

- ✓ Lock all doors and windows before leaving your home and prior to going to bed. Even when leaving for a short time, it is important to secure your home.
- ✓ Leave lights on when you are gone or have them on automatic timers for the evening, both on the interior and exterior of the home.
- ✓ Always make sure your garage door is closed when leaving the house.
- ✓ Install deadbolt locks on all exterior doors of your home. Sliding glass doors are more vulnerable, but buying special locks and using door stops provide good security.
- ✓ If you leave your car out at night, make sure all the doors are locked and remove any visible money or other items that would entice a thief. Remove any personal information from your car.

When leaving for an extended period of time, in addition to taking the steps listed above, there are other precautions you should take:

- ✓ Let your neighbors know you will be gone and let them know if you have people checking on the home while your away. Ask them to report any suspicious activity immediately to law enforcement. Neighbors provide some of the best protection when they look out for each other.
- ✓ Make preparations to ensure your mail and newspaper will not be delivered while you're away or have someone pick it up every day.
- ✓ Make arrangements for your lawn to be cut on regular intervals.

If you have been the victim of a burglary or other related criminal activity, please:

- ✓ Call 911 and wait outside the residence until law enforcement arrives.
- ✓ Do not touch or pick up anything because you could contaminate potential evidence.