

# Sheriff Robert Lane Presentation to City Council

Riverdale City Hall, 110 Manor Drive  
Council Chambers Room

Presentation Notes prepared by Councilman Paul DCamp

***On Tuesday, August 28th, Sheriff Tim Lane provided a report to the Mayor and City Council of Riverdale regarding on-going occurrences of auto theft that are taking place across Scott County, Iowa and Rock Island County, Illinois.***

1. Here are a few facts regarding the wave of car thefts in the QC area:
  - Perpetrators are youth, 10 to young adults—around 100 or so.
  - It's not any particular area, it's widespread in the region.
  - It's "Homegrown" problem
  - It's been increasing in numbers of reports:
    - Reports of car thefts in the 500s in 2016
    - Reports exceeded 1000 in 2017
    - currently 600 for 2018, on track to exceed 2017
  - Juvenile Detention space is limited—currently Scott County has bed space for 16. There are currently 40 in custody. Per legal requirements, if there isn't enough space, non-violent juvenile defenders are released back home.
  - Violent offenders are not released. They can be held in adult lockup.
  
2. How they do the thefts:
  - They load up in a vehicle, travel to a target area and check for unlocked cars and houses. They look for keys/fobs, money, weapons, garage door openers.
  - Reports have been that thefts can take place any time, any day of the week.
  - They are violent and often are armed. If you encounter them, do not try to confront.
  - They are quite brazen. They'll enter houses they know are occupied, and Sheriff Lane described one incident in which a car was stolen in the presence of an officer.
  - When an officer sees a reported stolen vehicle, the driver frequently flees at a high rate of speed. The officers are instructed not to pursue at a high rate of speed. Perpetrators can be apprehended if the officer can catch on foot, or if the driver wrecks the car.
  - They take the cars for "fun"—just doing joy rides.
  - Cars, if recovered, are usually wrecked by the youths.

3. Sheriff and Police resources
  - Sheriff and local police staffs are limited. Currently at the same levels as in the 1970s. There is high turn over, and do not have the staffing and resources necessary to fully control this situation.
  - Need some Legislative changes to remove restrictions on juvenile detention. Not a priority in Des Moines, because this problem is not a statewide issue. Almost exclusively a QC problem.
  - Attempts to address by working with parent(s) has been ineffective.
  
6. What should we as citizens do?
  - Make sure you keep your house and car doors locked.
  - Don't leave keys in the car.
  - Consider a home security system. (Cameras or alarms, can alert of intruders.)
  - Don't confront perpetrators.
  - Consider Neighborhood Watch program.
  - Be vigilant. If you spot them, they definitely will stand out as a group of youths traveling in a group in a car. If you see something suspicious, call 911.
  
7. Questions
  - Legality of "Conceal and Carry" — using potentially deadly force. Sheriff Lane responded that Iowa law allows a person to use deadly force when their life is threatened. Fairly long conversation about many potential issues.
  - Get a dog? Sheriff Lane was supportive of owning a dog, as a way to deter thieves. (Not a mean dog...a nice family dog is still quite effective.)