



CHATHAM COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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MEDIA ADVISORY

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Chatham County Police Department Maintaining Community Policing Mission During COVID-19 Social Distancing Efforts

Chatham County, GA (March 20, 2020) – The Chatham County Police Department is coming up with new ways to maintain its mission of Community Policing while respecting social distancing efforts necessary in the fight against the COVID-19 (corona virus) pandemic.

“Community policing is the foundation our department is built on and is a major part of our law enforcement mission,” said Chatham County Police Chief Jeffrey Hadley. “Our officers typically make contact with more than 600 Chatham County residents every month during their community policing efforts, and that does not include 9-1-1 calls or other calls for service. We want to maintain that community contact while respecting the need for social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

While citizens are still welcome to approach any Chatham County Police Officer, the department understands that presentations to schools and community groups will not take place and many residents will not be frequenting some of the public spaces where they typically interact with officers. The department is implementing several new services designed to bridge the gap during this time.

To keep residents informed of crime activity and trends in their area, the department is now posting a weekly crime report to its web site. The report is available on the department’s website at <https://police.chathamcountyga.gov/> . The report will be posted each Thursday and will give residents a snapshot of the crimes reported that week, where they occurred, and how the number of crimes compare to the previous week, the previous 28 days, and will provide year-to-date totals.

The department has also set up two Community Policing Hotlines that will give residents a chance to call and speak with an officer at length about concerns or issues in their

neighborhood. “These are the kinds of conversations that we have every day with residents as we see them in the grocery store, at the gas station, or in a local restaurant or business,” said Hadley. “We will still have those conversations. But, if someone is staying home in an effort to socially distance, we don’t want them cut off from the officers they are used to seeing in their neighborhoods. They can call our hotline numbers and have that conversation from their own home.”

The Community Policing Hotlines are now active. Residents in West Chatham County can call 912-652-6969, and residents in East Chatham County can call 912-651-4799 to speak with an officer. These numbers are not for COVID-19 information or questions, but for community policing questions and concerns.

To take the place of presentations and discussions at neighborhood association and neighborhood watch meetings that may be cancelled, officers will send an e-mail report to the presidents of these organizations about activity or concerns in their area that can then be shared with the neighborhood at large.

“Even in this time of social distancing and isolation, we want people to feel connected to what is going on in their neighborhood and the work the Chatham County Police Department is doing every day,” said Hadley. “We want them to know that we’re here, we’re working, and available to them whenever they need us.”

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