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Posted: 4:24 p.m. Monday, Nov. 21, 2011

Holiday security beefed up at Gwinnett Place

By Kerry Kavanaugh

GWINNETT COUNTY, Ga. — Starting Monday, extra security patrols will be out in force across the Gwinnett Place community improvement district.

Channel 2's Kerry Kavanaugh found out how reducing crime is bringing the area back to life.

From cracking down on loitering to checking out street lights, the Gwinnett Place community improvement district said their security will do it all.

They said they have to keep this area competitive, especially during the all-important holiday shopping season.

"We're just an extra set of eyes and ears out there," security officer Nick Sabino said.

Sabino said they make a difference.

Kavanaugh rode with Sabino Monday as he patrolled the Gwinnett Place CID, which is a 10-mile stretch between Club Drive and along Pleasant Hill Road up to Old Norcross Road.

"Mostly looking for vehicle break-ins, people hanging around vehicles, anything suspicious," Sabino said.

Sabinno is part of the increased security patrol in place to make Gwinnett Place safer during the holidays.

"More people say we see your patrol cars out there, we feel safer. We don't see the graffiti, we don't see the trash on the roadways," Joe Allen with the Gwinnett Place CID said.

Allen runs the Gwinnett Place CID. He said the area is still overcoming a negative stigma.

"An area that looks safe, clean, secure, that's going to encourage people to come back out," Allen said.

He said increased patrols have cut down on crime by 33 percent over the past three years. But they aren't just fighting crime.

Patrolmen will clear up illegal signs and trash, help jump start customers cars, escort customers to their cars.

Store managers said customers and employees have come to depend on them.

"In the parking lots, (if there's) something wrong, we just call right away," store manager Biany Mateo said.

The increased patrol costs the commercial property owners roughly \$15,000. Organizers said it is worth it to keep Gwinnett Place on the map.

The Gwinnett Place CID said security patrols have clocked over 4,000 hours this year. They said they will be out on Black Friday beginning at 5 a.m.
