

Security increased during holidays at Gwinnett Place

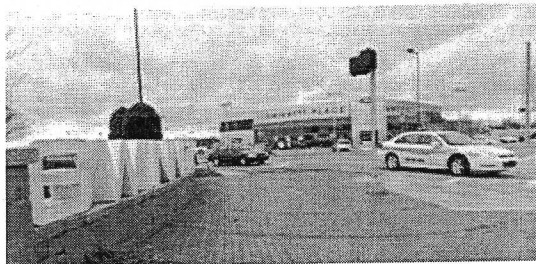
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By **Camie Young**

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Patrolling through the parking lots of Gwinnett's central business district, Paradigm Security Services' Sgt. Chris Rawley never knows what will happen when a person waves him over.

Recently, instead of helping jump an engine or checking out a suspicious person, one mother simply wanted to fulfill her daughter's wish of a photo with a security office.

"You would have thought I was Santa Claus," Rawley said with a laugh.

Rawley and his crew have been out every day, increasing not only the security but the spirit in the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District.

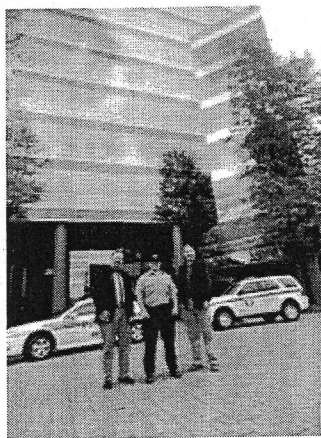
The CID's Director Joe Allen showcased the increased patrols, which began on Thanksgiving in conjunction with the holiday shopping season, as another positive in the hopes to rejuvenate the area.

"They are really here as the ambassadors for the area," Allen said, adding that CID staffer Glenn Wisdom regularly patrolled the corridor during the rest of the year, with Paradigm adding protection over weekends. "It's about building good will."

While the area around Gwinnett's oldest mall is considered to be a higher crime area, Allen said most of the problem is the perception. Between 2007 and 2012, robbery and theft were cut in half in the community, and motor vehicle theft was down 65 percent.

The Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District has increased security patrols for the holiday shopping season. Security guards from Paradigm Security Services are on patrol from 8 a.m. until midnight daily. (Staff Photo: Camie Young)

But even though the statistics may not match the perception, Allen said leaders want people to feel safe as they shop, especially as the crowds come out for holiday deals.



Gwinnett County's police force has increased its patrols with a holiday task force, and the opening of a state patrol post in the CID has also enhanced visibility. Gwinnett Place Mall has its own security patrol, as do some of the other shopping centers like Santa Fe Mall, allowing Rawley and his crew to spend time helping anyone in distress, with every thing from directions to restaurant recommendations, he said with a laugh.

"The opportunity is there," he said of the possibility of more thefts during the holiday shopping season, "But with the increased patrols for us and Gwinnett County police ... it's a major visual deterrent. They see us; they think differently."

The Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District has increased security patrols for the holiday shopping season. Glenn Wisdom, (left) of the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District, has been joined in patrols of the area by Paradigm Security Services, including Sgt. Chris Rawley (center), said CID Director Joe Allen (right). (Staff Photo: Camie Young)



Sgt. Chris Rawley of Paradigm Security Services patrols the businesses in the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District. The CID has increased patrols in the shopping district during the holiday season. (Staff Photo: Camie Young)