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FEATURED

Gwinnett Place CID beefing up security for holiday shoppers

By Joshua Sharpe

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Ken Matthew, Gwinnett Place security officer, out on a patrol Tuesday afternoon. (Staff Photo: Joshua Sharpe)

DULUTH — Officials with the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District say crime is down in the area 34 percent compared to 2007. Within the overall decrease, the CID reports there are also drastic reductions in robberies, car thefts, commercial burglaries and general thefts.

Still, the area off Interstate 85 and Pleasant Hill Road has a reputation.

“There are certain perceptions,” said Joe Allen, CID executive director.

With that in mind, the district is upping security for the holiday season, starting at 10 p.m. on Thanksgiving. The district hires two extra officers to work the detail, which started in 2007.

Security officer Ken Matthew, who works the district through Paradigm Security Services, said the job is largely about being available for the shoppers who descend on the area and its some 800 establishments during the holiday season.

Sometimes he'll have to give people directions, or give cars a jump start.

When it comes to crime, the security officers keep an eye out for illegal activity and report it to county police if they find it.

Allen likes to tell the story of the time security officer Glenn Wisdom came upon a family whose child had lost a toy car down a storm drain. Wisdom had a large tongs-like tool and helped fish the car out.

The officers are there to “serve as ambassadors to help and assist,” Allen said.

Allen also likes to talk about the improvements to the Gwinnett Place area. The economy has rebounded enough that only three developments in the area, which spans about 1,000 acres, are having trouble filling up. And, of course, the crime is down, he points out.

He gives the credit to the Gwinnett County Police Department and security officers including Matthew and Wisdom.

“Crime continues to go down,” he said Tuesday.



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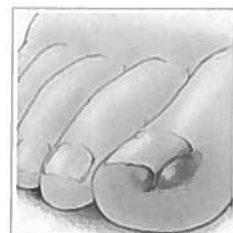
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