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# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Shopping season can mean increased criminal activity

MURPHY (November 16, 2015) The days of seemingly endless shopping are just ahead for many residents, and unfortunately, these days can also mean a rise in criminal activity, says Murphy Police Chief Arthur “Trey” Cotten.

“Shoppers should pay special attention to their surroundings,” he said. “Very often, we get caught up in the hustle and bustle of shopping that we lose sight of some important common sense personal safety principles.”

For example, the following tips and suggestions can help shoppers feel safer and can lessen the chance that they will become victims of crime:

- When shopping, park your vehicle in consideration of the time you will be returning to your vehicle, not what the lighting conditions were when you parked. Park in a place close to an entrance and one that will be well lit when you return to your car.
- When exiting the store, have your keys in your hand and be ready to open your car or hit the duress button.
- Check the interior of the vehicle before you reenter your vehicle for hidden persons or evidence of burglary.
- If you put packages in your vehicle while shopping, place the package in the trunk or out of view if you do not have a trunk. Do not leave the vehicle unlocked and take your purse and keys with you. A black (or dark) blanket laid over packages in the back of an SUV with darkened windows makes outside detection of packages almost impossible.
- Shop with at least one other person. Or, if you must shop alone, make sure that at least one other person knows what your shopping itinerary is; check in, periodically, with this person. Have a pre-established meeting time to reconnect with kids and other in your shopping group.
- Do not flash large amounts of money. Use credit/debit cards, if possible or be very aware of where you are when you take cash out of your billfold or purse. Only display the cash you will need to pay for the items. Put change immediately into your billfold or purse -- do not just shove it in a pocket or carry cash openly.
- If something just does not feel right when you return to your vehicle, call the police immediately.

“Rely on your intuition,” said the Chief. “No matter where you are, the police do not want you to be a victim and we have no problem assisting you. Many shopping malls and centers have security or courtesy officers who can assist shoppers as well.”

The non-emergency number for the Murphy Police Department is (972) 468-4200 and can be called to report suspicious activity. Residents should add the number to their mobile phone memories. All emergencies are reported to the dispatch operators at 9-1-1.

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**ABOUT MURPHY** -- Murphy is a fast-growing community located in Collin County. The population is approximately 18,020, generally characterized as highly educated with a median household income above the state average. With more than 70 percent of the land developed, the community is dominated by single-family residences. City planners strive to preserve a country feel while exhibiting an aggressive economic development stance. The centrally-located municipal complex includes four buildings that house Fire, Police, City Administration and Public Works. Money Magazine has dubbed Murphy as the 27<sup>th</sup> Best Place to Live in America for small cities, and D Magazine placed Murphy as the fifth best suburb in the 2014 list, where it has consistently ranked in the top 10.