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NEWS

FROM
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Citizens Now Can Report Certain Minor Crimes Online

Towson, Md. (February 27, 2012) -- Baltimore County has given citizens the ability to report certain minor crimes online. This system will allow people to get crime reports much more quickly – and will free officers to handle more serious incidents.

This morning, County Executive Kevin Kamenetz and Police Chief James Johnson held a press briefing at the North Point Police Precinct to demonstrate the new online crime reporting tool.

“Our officers are a precious resource, and it doesn’t make sense to send them on routine, low-priority calls for service when technology and modern communications give us a better alternative,” said Chief Johnson. “Every officer who doesn’t need to respond to a routine call because of this new system is available to investigate cases, respond to emergencies and patrol their neighborhoods.”

Improved Customer Service

The Office of Information Technology and the Police Department’s Technical Services Division about a year ago began developing an online crime reporting system that allows citizens to self-report certain types of crimes.

“In every agency, we want to use technology and modern communication tools to improve customer service and make more efficient use of resources,” County Executive Kamenetz said.

This Internet-based crime reporting tool is available at www.baltimorecountymd.gov/policereportonline to victims of the following crimes:

- Lost property
- Abandoned motor vehicles
- Hit-and-run accidents (not involving injury)
- Destruction of vehicular property
- Destruction of other property
- Theft from a motor vehicle
- Other theft

- more -

In the months ahead, the Department will evaluate whether other categories of crime might be appropriate for online reporting.

The tool takes customers through a series of simple questions to determine if the circumstances allow them to file an online report, or if they need to follow the traditional reporting process. Crimes involving suspects, injury or significant amounts of money or damage are not eligible for online reporting.

Once a citizen files the report, the Police Department's Records division reviews it. If the report contains errors, Records personnel send it back to the user for correction. If there are no corrections, the citizen immediately receives an email containing a case number, and he/she can print out a copy of the report for insurance purposes, etc.

This is a major improvement in customer service. Until now, customers often have had to wait for reports on lesser crimes because police officers make serious issues a higher priority. Now, people don't have to wait.

Since November, about 330 people have used the online reporting system.

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