

# IMPORTANT NOTICE

## ABOUT RECENT CARJACKING INCIDENTS IN CHICAGO AREA

From Mayor Andre Harvey and the Bellwood Police Department

Bellwood Residents,

As you know, recently there has been a rash of carjacking incidents across the Chicagoland area, *including the suburbs*. It is highly important for your personal safety that you stay alert and always take precautions to protect yourself whether you are at home, work, shopping or enjoying leisure time. Carjackings and car burglaries can – and are – happening *everywhere*.

**Never** leave your car running with the keys in the ignition. If someone demands your car keys, don't resist. *Nothing is more valuable than your life.*

Do NOT leave your keys in your car while it is warming up in the driveway, in front of your home or anywhere else. Do NOT leave your keys inside while at the gas station pumping fuel. Do NOT make it easier to become a victim of a crime that could also cause injury to you or your family.

Here are a number of other **important tips** that you should remember and practice all the time no matter where you are or what you are doing:

### **Theft Prevention**

- Vehicles parked along city streets can be targeted for "smash and grab" thefts.
- Valuables left in plain view also may motivate criminals to quickly break a window and grab them.
- Store items under seats or in the trunk. Otherwise, take valuables with you.

### **Be Aware of Your Surroundings**

- Have your keys ready when approaching your vehicle. Do a quick scan of your rear seat before getting in.
- Be alert to any activity near your vehicle. Be aware of people who may be following you to your vehicle.
- Lock your doors when inside the car.

### **Be Alert To Potential Dangers**

- Exercise caution when people approach your vehicle requesting directions, change or passing out flyers.
- When stopping in traffic, leave enough distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you so you can pull away quickly if needed.
- Be alert when approaching drive-up automated teller machines.

### **Actions**

- Try to keep a cell phone accessible when driving.
- Keep a pen and notebook accessible in your car to write down important information about suspicious circumstances.
- In case of a vehicle breakdown, call the police for help and use great caution when approached by unknown individuals.

### **Avoidance**

- Don't get out of your vehicle if you witness suspicious circumstances. Drive away and call the police if necessary.
- Avoid using an ATM at night, especially if you see people loitering nearby.
- Never leave small children unattended in your vehicle.
- Avoid parking in secluded, poorly lit areas. Keep all valuables out of sight when parking.
- When having your vehicle serviced or cleaned, remove your house keys from the key ring.

