



CALIFORNIANS AGAINST RETAIL & RESIDENTIAL THEFT

Californians Against Retail And Residential Theft Issues Its Inaugural Award To The City Of Lakewood for Its Anti-Crime Efforts

PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday, December 14, 2022

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SACRAMENTO, CA – Californians Against Retail and Residential Theft (CARRT) issued its inaugural anti-crime award to the City of Lakewood on Tuesday, Dec. 13 at a community reception in Lakewood. The award recognizes Lakewood's hard work and commitment to reducing crime.

"It is only fitting that the City of Lakewood receives the first anti-crime award issued by Californians Against Retail and Residential Theft," said Matt Ross, spokesman for CARRT. "Lakewood clearly identified the problem and took creative steps to reduce theft within their community."

Like communities across California, Lakewood has experienced a rise in property theft recently, both at the retail and residential level, including an increase in the theft of catalytic converters from vehicles. In March 2022, the Lakewood City Council took strong action with a creative approach. As a first step, the city paid for an increase in the number of patrols from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the city's contract law enforcement agency. That included a two-deputy crime suppression patrol that focused on areas of the city experiencing upticks in crime. However, deputy sheriff staffing shortages limited the number of additional patrols, so Lakewood hired a private security company to serve as an additional layer to public safety to supplement local law enforcement. Overnight security car patrols served as an extra set of eyes to report any criminal activity and nearly doubled the number of patrol cars on Lakewood streets every night.

A statistical analysis of catalytic converter thefts in Lakewood and neighboring cities showed that those thefts increased by 75% to 111% in nearby cities over the next four months. However, catalytic converter thefts only increased by 1.5% in Lakewood during that time period, showing that Lakewood was overcoming regional trends with that crime. The presence of the highly-visible security guard patrols also reduced late night loitering at parks and commercial areas, gave initial assistance to persons in need on multiple occasions, and provided residents with an overall added sense of safety and security. The program was judged to be so successful that the city extended the effort beyond its initial pilot phase and is now focusing the security patrols on specific commercial and residential areas that have seen spikes in criminal activity.

Aside from personnel, the City of Lakewood also offered incentives such as rebates for home security camera installations, expanded the number of automatic license plate reading cameras, offered catalytic converter engraving, and assistance with the installation of anti-theft devices.

"The City of Lakewood is honored to receive this award," said Mayor Steve Croft. "Lakewood has always prioritized public safety, and the recent increases throughout California in property crime at the residential and retail level required that we do everything we could at the local level to respond with enhanced and creative approaches. We are proud of our efforts and will continue to work hard to keep Lakewood a safe community to live, work and shop."

Lakewood was incorporated in 1954 as America's largest planned community at the time and also home to the nation's then-largest suburban shopping mall, Lakewood Center, which is still the second-largest shopping center complex in Los Angeles County. Lakewood is home to 80,611 people and is considered one of Southern California's most broadly diversified communities, with a population that mirrors the diversity of Los Angeles County as a whole. With an economic base of nearly 3,000 businesses, Lakewood is predominantly a single-family community with 85 percent of its housing units being single-family detached structures.

CARRT is a broad-based coalition of business associations, local groups, and victim organizations advocating for California officials to act now and give law enforcement the tools needed to reduce theft. The coalition includes local Chambers of Commerce, California Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce, California Business Roundtable, California Black Chamber of Commerce, California Grocers Association, Crime Victims United, Klass Kids Foundation, and National Federation of Independent Business.

CARRT has been meeting with local officials, law enforcement, and legislators to ensure that elected officials understand the true impact of retail and residential crime. CARRT aims to provide public safety officials with more tools to address this problem.

For more information about CARRT, please go to the website at www.carrt.org. For more information regarding the City of Lakewood and its public safety efforts, please go to <https://www.lakewoodcity.org/PublicSafety>.

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