

Don't Be a Vacation Victim

School is almost out for the summer and that means vacations for lots of families. But take precautions before leaving home. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, residential burglaries increase 10 – 18 percent during the summer when many families are away.

Give your house a lived-in look

- Put automatic timers on several lights on each level of your home, on a radio and on the television. Set the timers so the lights and appliances will turn on and off randomly.
- Leave shades and blinds in the same positions they are in when you are home.
- Arrange to have your lawn mowed while you're away.
- Install dusk-to-dawn or motion sensor lights on all outdoor lights.
- Cancel the newspaper.
- Have a neighbor get your mail and any deliveries, or have the post office hold them until you return.
- Ask a neighbor to park in your driveway while you are gone.
- Have someone place your garbage cans at the curb for normal pickup and then return them to your garage.

Inform as few people as possible of your vacation plans

- Tell the Sheriff's Office or your local police department you are away on vacation, and who has a spare key to your house.
- Don't post your plans on social media sites.
- Leave your contact and itinerary information with a trusted neighbor and ask that neighbor to keep an eye on your property.
- Leave your normal message on your answering machine.
- Don't turn on email auto-reply to indicate you are not at home.

Make sure your home is secure when you leave

- Lock all outside doors with deadbolt locks.
- Lock your windows and the garage door.
- Make sure your smoke and burglar alarms are functioning properly.
- Place metal rods in the tracks of sliding windows and doors for extra security.
- Securely fasten pet entrances onto your patio.
- Make a home inventory list complete with photos and video.

This crime prevention tip is provided by the Hillsborough County Criminal Justice Department. For more information or more safety tips, residents should call 813-276-2033 or visit <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/liaisons/criminaljustice/>.

Hillsborough County and State Division of Forestry Working Together To Offer Free Community Workshops On Wildfire Protection

Hillsborough County is one of 10 counties chosen by the Florida Division of Forestry (FDOF) to participate in developing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The County was chosen to participate based on its high wildfire risk ranking in the state.

As part of the State's effort to increase communities' awareness and protection from wildfires, a free workshop, *Living on the Edge, How to Have a Firewise Community*, is available to interested organizations and neighborhoods in Hillsborough County. This interactive workshop will engage participants in activities and discussions to increase their understanding of local wildfire issues and identify ways to make their communities more wildfire safe. Neighborhoods that participate will have an opportunity to start the process of becoming an official "Firewise Community." More information on Firewise Communities is available at: www.fl-dof.com/wildfire/firewise_index.html.

The Firewise workshops are available for free to local interested groups and communities. Interested groups should contact Bill Delph, Florida Division of Forestry, Fire Prevention Specialist at, 863-648-3152, or Bill.Delph@freshfromflorida.com.

In conjunction with these Firewise workshops, the County has been meeting with local agencies, organizations and municipalities to develop the County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The CWPP will address the County's wildfire hazard and create a strategy to reduce current and future wildfire risk. Plan participants attended an initial Firewise workshop and met two additional times to discuss local wildfire risks. The goal of the Plan is to draft proposed future actions such as fuel management projects, wildfire suppression needs, education and information initiatives, and policy recommendations.

The draft CWPP will be available for the public to review and comment in early summer, prior to taking the Plan before the Board of County Commissioners for approval and incorporating it into the countywide Local Mitigation Strategy.

The Florida Division of Forestry received funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for fire high risk counties to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Hillsborough Extension Hosts Family-Friendly Open House

Hillsborough County Extension, a cooperative service between the County and the University of Florida, is hosting an open house on Saturday, June 11, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at their main office, 5339 County Road 579 in Seffner. This open house features free family-friendly hands-on activities and exhibits, make-and-take home projects, presentations and garden tours.

"The Open House is a great way for the residents of Hillsborough County to have fun while learning about the services we offer," said Debra Jo Kinsella, Hillsborough County Extension Director. "Most people know extension as traditional agriculture or 4-H programming, but there's so much more in the way of education, outreach and solutions to everyday problems – including money management, balancing work and family, nutrition and food safety, and landscape pest control. In addition to faculty and staff giving demonstrations and presentations, we want to showcase our tremendous volunteer base and non-profit partners."

Tours of the Bette S. Walker Discovery Garden, led by Master Gardener volunteers will present garden designs that convey landscape and maintenance ideas, showcase plants that are outstanding performers in central Florida, and provide a beautiful serene setting for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of visitors.

Attendees can also view demonstrations and displays and hear presentations on a variety of topics like home canning, cisterns for rainwater harvesting, the health of urban trees, micro-irrigation and turf alternatives. Extension's faculty and staff are subject matter experts in the fields of agriculture and natural resources, horticulture and Florida-Friendly Landscaping™, 4-H youth development, and family and consumer sciences. They will all be on hand to answer questions.

All ages are welcome; however the open house is most appropriate for children in grade 3 and up and adults. Registration is not required.

For additional information contact Hillsborough County Extension at (813) 744-5519, or visit <http://hillsborough.extension.ufl.edu>.