

An Introduction to *the CrimeBuster Program* by

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We may have misnamed our program since there are all kinds of "crime". We actually have a sister program known as *HelpAlert* which deals with assault and robbery where individuals are involved. We just thought *CrimeBuster* was a good name to describe our copper anti-theft program and it grew from there. However, if you do have an interest in reducing assault and robbery in your community, please visit our *HelpAlert* web site at www.info4u.us/HelpAlert.pdf. For now, our topic is burglary and theft at unoccupied structures, and in particular - churches!

Broadcasters, Churches, Farmers, Municipalities, Property Owners, and Electrical Utilities all have one thing in common - Copper theft! We are all paying for senseless criminal acts involving Arson, Burglary, and Copper theft - the ABC's of one of America's major crime problems. The solution is the *RobberStopper* Program, a joint venture between participating churches and property owners along with local law enforcement agencies and Falcon Direct; working together as a coordinated team to drive these crimes out of communities that are fed up with being victimized!

There are several contributing factors to the increasing incidents of copper theft - Need, Greed, Heed and Speed. The thieves are generally not the brightest stars in the sky. Most often, the crime is committed as a result of NEED for mind altering substances. They are able to conduct their activities due to the GREED of unscrupulous salvage dealers who jump on the chance to buy copper at bargain prices and victims not HEEDING common sense precautions to protect their assets. The success of the thieves is dependent upon the SPEED at which they can perform their task and be long gone before the incident is reported.

As long as these conditions exist, copper theft will be an increasing problem for property owners, utilities, unoccupied buildings, and in particular small rural churches.

Because of limited funds, many churches do not have insurance and rarely do smaller churches have an alarm system. Even the ones that do have alarm systems find them to be generally ineffective due to delays associated with call transfers from the monitoring center and response time. (in particular with calls requiring law enforcement response in rural areas).

We noted with interest the newspaper report of an incident which mentioned that the robbery was conducted by individuals who had done work for the church. As it turns out, the two brothers accused of the crime had knowledge of where an emergency key could be found to gain entrance to the church offices. Part of the problem here is the act of the criminals, but to some degree, some simple precautions and safeguards could have been implemented to make this target a little less vulnerable.

The process of being very selective about come does work for you or comes in to your home or place of work goes a long way in reducing theft and vandalism. Twice I have let people into my home that I didn't check out, and twice I was burglarized.

If it can happen to me, it can happen to you. Check people out. Don't employ "casual" workers without demanding verifiable identification.

If you have vacant property, remove the air conditioner, secure the doors, and put in some type of alarm system even if you have to use a cellular dialer and/or a RobberStopper (more about this shortly). If you don't I can almost guarantee you thousands of dollars in damage as copper thieves attempt to rip copper wiring out of your walls. You can spend a little bit now, or a whole lot later. The choice is yours!



The number one thing you can do to reduce or eliminate air conditioner copper theft is to make it hard for the bad guys to get to the copper. One of the better solutions is to enclose your AC unit in a cage. If you are handy with tools, you can build one yourself for under a hundred dollars. Click [here](#)* for details. Obviously, a cage alone won't solve the problem, but a cage coupled to a detection and notification device CAN quickly shift the odds in favor of the property owner. We'll be telling you more about how this is done shortly.

If you prefer, you can purchase a commercial cage and either install it yourself or have it done by a local contractor. The cost of the cage will vary depending on size, with prices starting at under \$300. That is a WHOLE lot less than a thousand dollar deductible if you have insurance, or the replacement cost of the AC unit which typically ranges from a low of five thousand dollars to well over twenty thousand dollars! For additional information on commercial cage units, click [here](#)*.

Now that we know the cause of copper theft and related burglary (NEED), and some of the simple things we can do to protect ourselves (HEED), that leaves us with the unfinished business of GREED and SPEED.

Dealing with GREED can be a tough issue. It requires effort and perseverance by working with your local governmental agencies to write and enforce strict regulations on the purchase and sale of scrap metal, similar to the standards applicable to pawn shops.

This leaves us with one remaining consideration, the SPEED of reporting an event and the SPEED of responding. Without getting into the specifics of response times in rural areas, let us just say that in most cases, there is more than adequate time for a thief to perform their function even when an alarm system is used. The reason is too much geography and too little manpower. Clearly, something needs to be done to speed up reporting time and response time.

To address this problem, Falcon Direct developed the *CrimeBuster Program*, a partnership between churches and property owners, local area citizens, and Falcon Direct. When possible, agreements are also developed with local law enforcement and fire departments. The *CrimeBuster Program* has been developed utilizing the basic technology employed is a companion program known as the *SafeChurch Program* (Additional information is available at www.info4u.us/SafeChurch.pdf). The heart of this system is a gadget known as the *QuikTalk Reporter*.

The basic *QuikTalk Reporter* is a battery powered desk calculator sized alarm detection and VHF or UHF notification system which can be connected to a variety of sensors including the air conditioner cage.



There is no monthly monitoring fee or delays associated with alarm monitoring centers and local area dispatch operations. The response can be VERY fast, which brings us to the real value of the *QuikTalk Reporter*. This incredible device sells for only \$695 including the AC cage sensor, a small price to pay for rapid fire response, but this is only part of the story!

As mentioned previously, many small churches do not have insurance which can easily cost several thousand dollars per year. That's a pretty good chunk of change for a 25 member congregation! Even with insurance, there is generally a thousand dollar deductible (or more). Even a fifty dollar per month security system might be out of reach since such systems require a phone line and many small churches don't have a phone!

Now, let's take a look at the *QuikTalk Reporter* alternative. As we said, the cost is only \$695 with no installation cost, no monthly monitoring fees, and no delays. That's a pretty good solution. Better yet, we can make it even better by adding one or more additional sensors to detect unauthorized entry, power failure, or smoke detection.

How it works

The basic *QuikTalk Reporter* is a desk calculator sized battery powered, switch activated, voice annunciating VHF or UHF transmitter with the capability of connecting a maximum of two inputs. Or, putting it another way, it is an affordable and efficient way for churches to speed up the notification process in the event of tampering with the air conditioner. It does this by transmitting a voice message directly to the radios of participating local area fire departments. Here's how this works:

No installation is required. The user simply places the battery powered *QuikTalk Reporter* and supplied AC cage sensor in a suitable location. There are no electrical connections or wiring required. The only maintenance required is an annual replacement of the batteries (6 - AA alkalines). If battery replacement is required before the annual exchange, a low battery alarm will be transmitted to associated radios.

Law Enforcement Agency Participation

As noted previously, the *QuikTalk Reporter* is capable of transmitting a notification message on any VHF or UHF analog radio frequency, either wide or narrow band. If the participating agency is agreeable, the calls can be transmitted directly on the law enforcement frequencies. We also do not recommend sending *QuikFire Reporter* calls to 911 or other central dispatch centers since they are generally prohibited from receiving calls from automated devices (a topic for another discussion).

Law enforcement agencies that elect to participate in the *CrimeBuster Program* are offered a special incentive in the form of a one hundred dollar for every *QuikTalk Reporter* installed in your jurisdiction. When the participating agencies provides us with a listing of all churches the applicable area, we will prepare and mail information on the *CrimeBuser Program* at no cost to the agency. Working together, we can significantly reduce senseless crime against those who can use some help. If you don't have a frequency that can be used for reception of fire alert calls, we will work with you on alternatives, several of which will be discussed on the following page.

In some instances, for a variety of reasons, a local law enforcement agency may not be able to provide direct response service. In such situations, we have an alternative solution. It's called *Community Alert*. It works like this.....

One or more community citizens acquire, or are provided with a low cost 2-way radio to monitor the applicable *QuikTalk Reporter*. When they receive a message, they can immediately call 911. It's not as fast as direct connect with the responding agency but it is a whole lot better than other alternatives!

In some cases, it may be necessary to use a high powered version of the *QuikTalk Reporter* which adds \$300 to the cost (i.e. \$995 instead of \$695). Either VHF or UHF capability is required.



The radio we normally use for community citizen monitoring of *QuikTalk Reporter* alerts is only \$349. The *DeskTop Reporter* shown at the left is ideal for monitoring calls for all *QuikTalk Reporter* models.

In some instances, it may be possible to get a grant or endowment funding for a neighborhood communications network. This could pay for *QuikTalk Reporters* AND *DeskTop Reporters* for use in the home as a part of the Neighborhood Watch program.

As you can see, there are many alternatives - none of them expensive in comparison to the cost associated with insurance deductions, uninsured equipment replacement, or monthly monitoring services.

Community Alert Option

Actually, there can be a benefit in sending alarm calls to one or more homes in an area since the capability of the system can be expanded to perform other functions besides inhibiting copper thieves. As noted above, the *Community Alert* option is available in areas where direct notification to a local area law enforcement agency is not feasible.

The use of the *DeskTop Reporter* by community members for alarm reception adds minimal cost, and isn't quite as fast as direct contact to law enforcement radios, but there are some significant advantages in selecting this option.

Even churches that have alarm systems find them to be generally ineffective due to delays associated with call transfers from the monitoring center and response time (in particular with calls requiring law enforcement response in rural areas). A similar problem extends to farms (copper irrigation pipe), municipal buildings, utility power stations, and even fire departments! There are ways to respond to the problem, but most are generally ineffective (See South Carolina [story*](#)).

In reality, a volunteer fire department can respond much quicker than law enforcement agencies in rural areas. If the local volunteer fire department is willing to answer non-fire calls, it could be a significant crime deterrent in your community. It's OK for a fire department to respond to a theft or vandalism call as long as it is acknowledged that law enforcement is not their business. The sound of a siren (whether EMS, Fire, or Police) will send bad guys scampering. Fire department members can develop a road block plan, get tag numbers, or develop an action plan that will show the bad guys that you mean business.

With the aforementioned thoughts in mind, you can expand the potential of the *QuikTalk Reporter* to perform a variety of supplemental functions such as adding one or more of the following options.

AC Power Reporter Option - Adds \$195. Sends a radio alarm message if thieves cut off power (to keep from getting shocked when they are stealing your air conditioner).

Premise Reporter Option - Adds \$195. Motion sensor with keypad on/off controller. Detects motion inside building when "they" come to take church PC's, amplifiers, video projectors, musical instruments and other electronics.

Smoke Detector Option - With fire marshal approval and fire department participation, we offer a smoke detector option for rapid fire reporting.



Note: All prices quoted above include necessary wiring and sensors with simple instructions for connecting additional sensors. The *QuikTalk Reporter* unit shown on the previous page can serve a maximum of two devices. The new *QuikTalk Reporter II* is the same price excluding any sensor. The difference between the two units, other than appearance is that the *QuikTalk Reporter II* can accommodate up to four external sensors with a different voice message associated with each sensor. The *QuikTalk Reporter III*, priced at \$995 also includes a wireless receiver for use with wireless sensors for easier installation. This model also includes a more powerful transmitter than the standard *QuikTalk Reporter*.

In summary, you don't have to be a victim! Working together, we can make your community a better place to live by getting a handle on copper theft, and making it tougher for those who would break into your premises. We haven't mentioned financing, but we recognize that spreading the cost out is better than not having the service.

If you wish, we can provide a complete package, customized to your individual requirements with air conditioner cage and installation included, then work with you to spread the payments over a reasonable amount of time. The *RobberStopper* may qualify for grant and/or endowment funding. Call us for additional information. We're ready to help you put a stop to your community being victimized. Are you?

The Falcon Team
At your service!

CrimeBuster.doc

(*) If you are reading this material off line and wish to view the linked articles, please refer to the following sites to download the referenced articles at your convenience.

1) Copper theft story - Air conditioner photo courtesy of WSFA - Montgomery, AL
<http://bullockcounty.wsfa.com/content/copper-thieves-target-church-air-conditioners>

2) Arson story - Church photo courtesy of MSNBC
<http://www.squidoo.com/churchburning#module37449702>

3) South Carolina story - Article courtesy of The State Newspaper - Columbia, SC
<http://www.thestate.com/2011/02/23/1707853/copper-thieves-hit-midlands-churches.html>

4) Build you own AC Cage - http://reinews.net/1181573514/index_html

5) Commercial grade Air Conditioning Cages - <http://www.ac-guard.com/index.htm>

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