

Report crime by text messaging

Crime Stoppers is making it easier - and more tech - to secretly report crime in Hood County.

"We now have text messaging ability, in which people can use their cell phone to text in a crime, suspect or suspicious activity to our secure server," Crime Stoppers coordinator, lieutenant Billy Henderson, said.

Texting is becoming an increasingly popular, efficient and private way to communicate, and investigators needing tips from the public are excited about the possibilities.

"It's a pretty cool deal," he said.

Young people are the biggest users of text messaging, and this fact has not been overlooked by Crime Stoppers officials, who encourage input from students.

Four schools have campus Crime Stoppers programs. Granbury High School, Granbury Middle School, Acton Middle School and the Crossland Ninth Grade Center have student resource officers (SROs) who keep track of crime tips that are submitted from students.

Hood County is among the first in Texas to offer this technology, just released in March, Henderson said.

Crime Stoppers provides several identity-safe methods for Hood County residents to make reports:

■ Call 817-573-TIPS

Phone in to a live 24-hour hot line and talk to a person. The caller's name is never used, but they are issued a unique ID number so that if their tip leads to an arrest, they can be contacted with reward money. The system allows money to be deposited in such a way that law enforcement - and suspects who were reported - never learn the identity of the caller.

■ Log onto www.hoodcountycrimestoppers.com

Last year an Internet Web site was designed allowing people to make reports on-line. These likewise guarantee anonymity, and have the added benefit of allowing law enforcement to ask further questions and stay in contact with the person making the report. The person has the option to return to the Web site through a tip ID number and password, checking back periodically for police communications - or to see if the crime was solved - and reward money could be theirs.

■ Send a text message as "Tip 129 plus your message" to CRIMES (274637)

There is no caller ID to identify the texter. The texting system works similarly to the on-line system, with a tip ID number issued and a password created for further communication.