



Ventura County **SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Jim Fryhoff - Sheriff | John Reilly - Undersheriff | Steve Jenkins - Chief of Police



MEDIA RELEASE

Nature of Incident: Public Safety Notice: Mail theft in the Ojai Valley

Report Number: 25-28504, 25-60120, 25-61366

Location: The City of Ojai and Oakview, CA

Date & Time: March 2025 to present

Unit(s) Responsible: Ojai Investigations Bureau

Narrative:

Over the past several months, the Ojai Investigations Bureau has noted a significant increase in mail theft targeting the blue United States Postal Service (USPS) mailboxes located throughout the city and county areas of the Ojai Valley.

Suspects have been unlawfully removing mail with the intent to steal and forge checks, leading to a series of active investigations. Currently, station detectives have 25 to 30 active forgery cases with over \$300,000 in losses combined.

In response to these incidents, and with the assistance of U.S. Congressional District Representative Robert O'Riley from the Office of U.S. Congressman Salud Carbajal, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and Ojai Police Chief Captain Steve Jenkins, several of the older USPS mailboxes have been replaced with newer, more secure models. These replacements aim to deter theft and better protect community members' mail. Residents are encouraged to remain vigilant, avoid leaving outgoing mail overnight, and report any suspicious activity around mailboxes to the Ojai Police Department.

The upgraded mailboxes have been installed at the following locations:

- 211 East Matilija Street, City of Ojai, CA
- 1215 Maricopa Hwy, City of Ojai, CA
- 360 North Ventura Ave, Oakview, CA

There are plans to replace additional mailboxes in the future. The following tips are recommended for citizens when mailing checks through the United States Postal Service.

- Never mail cash or personal checks – only send money orders by mail
- Don't leave sensitive mail documents in mailboxes – take it in person to your local post office
- Try and deposit your mail as close to the mailbox pickup times as possible
- Use online bill payment options – they can be much quicker and much safer
- When mailing large check amounts, certified mail with return receipts is recommended by postal services and financial institutions

Prepared by: Detective Joseph Sharif #4540

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Approved by: Captain Steve Jenkins

Ventura County Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$1,000 reward for information, which leads to the arrest and criminal complaint against the person(s) responsible for this crime. The caller may remain anonymous. The call is not recorded. Call Crime Stoppers at 800-222-TIPS (8477).

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