



Criminals beware; new citizens on patrol are on the prowl. The Collin County Citizens on Patrol program began Wednesday, Jan. 21, as part of an effort to reduce crime in a cost effective way. The citizens will be asked to patrol roadways focused mainly in rural parts of the county.

"We think it will be a real benefit to the agency and allow folks to participate in the county government," Deputy Dickie Thomas said.

Sheriff Terry G. Box and the Collin County Sheriff's Office selected members out of a group of alumni from the Citizens Academy program. On top of fourteen weeks of academy training, each member received 12 hours of training in prevention methods and safety techniques.

The training covered observation and patrol skills as well as accident scene control. The new C.O.P.s also learned methods to assist Patrol Deputies which will allow deputies to focus on calls requiring certified law enforcement personnel.

Thomas said C.O.P. members will help with calls such as loose livestock on the roadway, act as standbys for wreckers and help with assistance on accident scenes directing traffic and adding supplemental manpower.

"Their main focus will be looking for criminal activity and acting as eyes and ears," Thomas said. "They will notify on duty patrol officers to take any kind of enforcement action necessary."

At present, the county Sheriff's Office has one vehicle marked and stocked for the volunteers and hopes to add another in April. They have 19 C.O.P. members fully trained and will soon add 11 more. In a matter of weeks the program aims to have over 50 members working to patrol the roads.