

## Certified Retirement Community Community Assessment

### Tab 2- D Personal Safety, Security and Crime Statistics

The **West Columbia Police Department** is a full service police department. The officers and staff of the department are proud to serve the citizens of historic West Columbia. We are a department consisting of a Chief, one (1) Lieutenant, one (1) Patrol Sergeant, one (1) Detective, one (1) Patrol Corporal, six (6) full-time patrolmen, and three (3) part-time patrolmen. Using our four (4) full-time dispatchers and a dispatch supervisor, we are able to provide 24 hour dispatch service for our officers. We also provide 24 hour dispatch service for multiple fire agencies and our local EMS. The West Columbia Police Department works in full cooperation with many law enforcement agencies.

The **Brazoria County Sheriffs Department** has thirty (30) patrolmen on duty with fifteen (15) officers on each 12 hour shift ~ three (3) of which are assigned to patrol West of the Brazos which includes West Columbia. The **Texas Department of Public Safety** has thirty-five (35) troopers assigned to patrol the highways in Brazoria County, four (4) of which are assigned to the West Columbia sub-office. Together, we strive to keep West Columbia a safe community in which to live!

**The crime index for West Columbia is only 218, well below 80% of the state average of 608.**

#### 2007 Uniform Crime Statistics for West Columbia (Source: melissadate.com)

<b>Crime Index</b>	<b>218</b>
<b>Population</b>	<b>4,216</b>
<b>Murders</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Rapes</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Robberies</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Assaults</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Burglaries</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Thefts</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Motor Vehicle Thefts</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Arsons</b>	<b>1</b>

The West Columbia Police Department is currently developing a program called "In Touch" for our senior citizens and disabled/homebound citizens. We know West Columbia has many senior citizens and we care about them. Simply put, once registered, we will call and check on seniors once a day. If we are unable to contact the individual, we will send an officer to the house. This program will be a free service offered by the department.

We also offer a house check or "close patrol" for homes and businesses within the city limits. If residents or business owners are leaving for the night or on vacation, they simply call the department and request that officers maintain a watch on their property while they are away. Residents can also request this service at anytime they feel uncomfortable inside their homes. A House Check Form is available on our website and can be filled out and emailed or dropped off at the department.

The West Columbia Police Department is a very community oriented department. We like to meet our citizens and get to know them. Every year, the department participates in National Night Out. It is a great opportunity for our officers to get about and speak to our citizens face-to-face, listen to any of their concerns, and let them know we are here to help. It also assures the citizens that the officers are just regular people too!

Coastal hurricanes are always a concern for Gulf Coast residents. West Columbia is constantly looking for ways to improve its ability to get its citizens to safety in the quickest way possible. Texas offers "The 211 Registry" which allows seniors and other citizens who are unable to evacuate on their own, to register to be evacuated in the event of a disaster. Once registered, those who are unable to evacuate on their own will be picked up by a shuttle bus and escorted to an evacuation hub. West Columbia is one of three designated evacuation hubs for Brazoria County. In the event of a major hurricane, we will open our hub, which is located at our civic center. Medical attention will also be available at the hub, if needed. From there, citizens who are unable to evacuate on their own, will be evacuated to Bell County where they will be housed until it is safe to return



**2009 West Columbia Police Department**

The **West Columbia Volunteer Fire Department** was formed in 1940 with a chief, forty eager volunteers and one donated fire truck. The department has been strongly supported by the community and has continued to grow. In 1972, the citizens of West Columbia approved a bond issue for a newer, more modern fire station to be built. The fleet has now increased to nine (9) Fire & Rescue trucks and maintains approximately 30-40 firefighters on staff. The Ladies Auxiliary is currently working to raise funds for a Relief truck which will provide supplies on-the-scene to firefighters such as drinking water, dry clothes, blankets, etc. Last year, the department purchased Thermal Imaging Cameras which can detect a fire inside a closed building or find a person in a field who may have been ejected from a vehicle at a car wreck. This equipment will enable firemen to respond more quickly and efficiently. Fire Fighters respond 24/7 to calls.

Volunteers are trained at fire school annually to learn the latest in search & rescue including Swift Water Rescues, Structural Fire Fighting Techniques and the use of the Jaws of Life. This type training helps with the City's Insurance Key Rate for the citizens, to ensure the lowest insurance rate on their homes.

To prevent equipment failure, quarterly checks are performed on all city fire hydrants, all fire hoses are pressure tested and (per State mandate) all "Class A" Pumper trucks are pressure tested.

Local hotels, businesses, restaurants and stores are assisted with pre-planning escape routes and proper location of smoke alarms, fire extinguishers and sprinkler systems. Day Care Center inspections are performed to ensure children's safety.

During October – Fire Prevention Week, the West Columbia Volunteer Fire Dept. provides and installs smoke alarms and fire extinguishers (while supplies last) for seniors and those who may not be able to afford them. If a citizen provides their own, the fire department will be happy to install them free of charge anytime through the year.

Members of the West Columbia Volunteer Fire Dept. also donate time to the community. During Fire Prevention Week, members visit all schools and day care centers (approx. 1,500+ children) and give safety talks with handouts and coloring books. At the high school economics classes, they provide hands-on training in fire extinguishers and placement of smoke alarms. They also give safety classes and demonstrations to Boy & Girl Scout Troops, Senior Citizens, and other organizations, upon request. In addition, members donate time to assist with Project Graduation, National Night Out, Jerry Lewis MDA Fill-the-Boot and the Annual Fireworks Display at the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration.



**2008 West Columbia Volunteer Fire Department**