

# Water used to catch criminal

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Staff writer

In Boynton Beach, a special type of water could help put criminals behind bars.

Yes, water.

SmartWater CSI — a mineral-encoded water, which is safe to drink but better to sprinkle on valuable items, allows police departments around the world to track stolen items.

It's one of the newest tactics being used by the Boynton Beach Police Department to keep property crime down in the city.

The department will launch the program at 5 p.m. Tuesday at the Boynton Lake North neighborhood, where officers will give out hundreds of free vials of the water to help residents protect

Boynton  
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their property against burglars and thieves.

Each vial has a special code that rubs off on criminals when they steal the marked property. Then police use a special blacklight to determine who stole the item.

"It's fresh, innovative, easy-to-use, and it's proven effective in reducing property crime in its native England," said Boynton Beach Police Chief Jeffrey Katz.

SmartWater CSI was introduced in the United Kingdom 17 years ago and has been a helpful tool in keeping property crime down, said Logan Pierson, president of SmartWater CSI's American operations.

"It isn't a product as much as a strategy," he said.

"With the help of law enforcement, we get into communities and knock down crime through publicized arrests or convictions, making the criminals aware and making the community safer."

Since Katz was hired earlier this year, he began looking into ways to make a troubled department more effective. He believes SmartWater CSI will be another way to do just that.

"SmartWater CSI represents an opportunity to turn the tables on thieves," Katz said. "Every piece of stolen property represents another risk of being caught."

Police Chief Frank Adderley of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department unveiled SmartWater CSI in January.

With the help of the water, the department caught a car burglar on Fort Lauder-

dale beach. The department set up a bait car. When the burglar went into the car, he was sprayed with the special water, which tied him to the crime.

Adderley said that he hopes more arrests come from the new technology.

"It's about getting the public educated on the project and educating offenders," he said. "If they know that if they break into this house they'll get sprayed with SmartWater or if they get items that are already marked it's going to be hard to sell them at a pawn shop," they may be deterred.

In addition to the Fort Lauderdale Police Department, the Riviera Beach Police Department and the Palm Beach County Sheriff's department have SmartWater in place as a crime deterrent.