

In a way Canyon Lake residents are very fortunate. Most of the crime that occurs in the gated community is theft related. Because violent crimes are virtually non-existent, deputies who provide police protection services in Canyon Lake often can spend more time investigating thefts and burglaries than they would in other communities.

The value-added service is not lost on Kathy Mulcahy. Last November the family's \$20,000 custom golf cart was stolen "by two scary looking people" while her daughter was at the Canyon Lake Equestrian Center.

Not only was the family out a convenient way to get around the community but insurance didn't cover the entire loss.

Thanks to some quick work by the investigating deputy a description of the thieves and key information was collected.

"Deputy Ron Brown was so helpful," said Mulcahy. "I was able to flag him down right after the cart was taken and he followed up on all the leads I gave him."

Ultimately the cart was traced to a man from Winchester who purchased the vehicle from a relative. The cart was recovered and returned to the Mulcahy family and a Menifee man was arrested and charged with the theft. Along with some jail time and community service, the thief also agreed to pay Mulcahy \$350 for damages done to the cart.

On June 7, 2011 the voters of Canyon Lake will be asked to approve Measure E, a public safety tax that will maintain high levels of police, emergency medical, and fire protection services over the next five years and help eliminate a temporary budget shortfall.

If Measure E does not pass, there is a possibility that one of the three fire stations serving Canyon Lake would be closed and police services would be cut back.

If that happens theft cases like the Mulcahy's golf cart would be handled by a centralized detective bureau whose priority would be solving violent crimes.

"It would be assigned to other investigators," said Lt. Daniel Hedge with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, which provides police services to the City of Canyon Lake. "And response time to certain crimes would not be as fast."

He said one of the hidden benefits of minimal crime in Canyon Lake is deputies assigned to the city can do crime investigations immediately.

"Our staffing in Canyon Lake allows the deputies to handle their own investigations from beginning to end," Hedge explained.

If law enforcement resources in the city were cut back because of budget issues, investigations would take much longer, he said.

“It would not be the same,” Hedge said.