

HOOVER POLICE



Gazette file photo
From left to right, Hoover police officers Brian Foreman and Tani Standeffer join Bluff Park residents Robin Shultz, Ben Shelton (with son) and Ken Harden at the new Bluff Park police substation.

Bluff Park residents get needed police substation

By HUNTER FORD
Gazette Staff Writer

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Bluff Park residents are up in arms about what they perceive as a lack of police presence in their community, and they want to put an end to the rash of burglaries and robberies that have plagued the area.

More than 150 people packed the auditorium at Bluff Park Community School last week, to voice their complaints and concerns about crime and police patrols in the neighborhood.

Police Chief Nick Derzis took questions from the audience. Mayor Tony Petelos and the entire city council were also on hand, along with State Representative Paul DeMarco and Judge Robert Cahill, who lives in Bluff Park.

"This is the type of community meeting we like to have," Derzis said. "I think

"You don't usually find guys foolish enough to do something like that," Derzis said.

Derzis said the police department had investigators working 19 to 20 hours straight just after the Piggly Wiggly robbery. Hoover police were unable to catch the suspects, but Derzis said subsequent investigations have led him to believe the people responsible for the crime were arrested in another jurisdiction and are now in jail.

Derzis also told the audience that the crimes in the area "personally tick me off," and promised to take action to make the situation better.

Ben Shelton, a Bluff Park resident who helped organize the meeting, was in the store with his four-year-old son when the robbery occurred. Shelton said the community should have a police substation.

Anytime a police substation or an increase in police presence was mentioned at the meeting, an eruption of

ence, while their neighborhood has virtually none.

According to Derzis, the police department operates ten "beats" in the city. Of those ten, Bluff Park is ranked fifth in the number of calls for service.

"That puts you right in the middle," he said. "That is not bad. You don't want to be in the top half."

Derzis said that Lorna Road has the highest rate of calls for police service, with the Galleria Mall area being second.

Other residents voiced concern that new subdivisions, like Ross Bridge, have stretched the police force too thin.

Mayor Petelos said there have been 17 new police officers added to the force in the past two years and 14 new police vehicles were recently purchased.

One woman drew some laughter when she offered a way to deter criminals.

"Why don't you take an old police car that doesn't even