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The Burleson Police Department is adding a new tool to the toolbox. It's called Nextdoor.

Police are partnering with the private social network for neighborhoods. The partnership allows Burleson's Community Resource Officer David Wardlaw to communicate online with residents in Burleson neighborhoods so they can work together to improve safety and strengthen neighborhood watch efforts.

There are currently 25 active and six inactive Nextdoor neighborhoods in the city limits of Burleson. Every neighbor has to verify his/her address and sign in with their real name. Neighbors can share information about community events and activities, local services, babysitters, and even lost or found pets.

The officer will work with homeowner association presidents as well as neighborhood leaders to share information on crime prevention and safety, public events and emergency notifications.

"If your neighbor reported a vehicle burglary between 2 a.m. and 5 a.m., then I'm going to post in your Nextdoor neighborhood group and ask if anyone has video of suspicious activity during that timeframe," the officer said.

Nextdoor is free to residents. Each neighborhood has its own private Nextdoor neighborhood website accessible only to residents who verify that they live in the neighborhood. Captains or leaders establish and manage their neighborhood's Nextdoor website. Registered sex offenders and anyone in that offender's residence are not allowed to participate in Nextdoor.

The police department can not access residents' websites, contact information or content. Nextdoor says that officers can't view the content that neighbors post on Nextdoor, except for direct replies to posts made by the officer.

"If you have suspect information, we ask that you send an email to me instead of posting it on the Nextdoor website," Officer Wardlaw said. "That person may actually be innocent and naming him or her could lead to a civil suit. And, publishing specifics of a crime could hamper an investigation. Please, feel free to let your neighbors know that a crime has taken place, such as 'My car was

broken into last night,' or 'My mailbox was damaged,' but no specifics. If you have information about a suspect, or if you have video, please contact me."

The community resource officer can be reached at dwardlaw@burlesontx.com. To get involved in your neighborhood's online network, go to www.nextdoor.com and enter your email address, street address, zip code, and then click "Get Started." If there isn't already an online network set up for your neighborhood, you have the option of creating one. Nextdoor is free and is also available as an app on iPhones and Androids.

To start your own Neighborhood Watch, go to www.burlesontx.com/neighborhoodwatch.