

Certified, Smart, & Thinking Ahead



Michael Betten, CPP

Crime Prevention Officer
Overland Park (Kansas) Police
Department

Michael Betten, CPP, is making a difference in his community. As an officer with the Overland Park Police Department, Betten has focused on burglar alarm reduction and community protection. “We’re trying not to look at things like you would normally,” says Betten. He’s been conferring with homebuilders as well as physical security and alarm companies to help officers be more proactive in incident response. Too often, he says, by the time officers respond to an alarm or video image, the damage is done. He would like to see an alarm activated by a strobe light and sound, for example, while the perpetrator is still outside the premises. “If such a system were in place,” he says, “neighbors would likely hear and see the commotion and call the police. Or, better yet, the criminal would get nervous and leave before doing any damage.”

Betten’s approach is unique because he makes a point to network with homebuilders and criminologists before the home’s foundation is even laid. For example, many times doors are breached because the hardware isn’t solid, and the frames are only an inch and three-quarters in width. Working with homebuilders insures a better quality door, and an alarm system can be integrated right into it. Somebody hits the door, the alarm gets activated, and the criminal is still outside.

Betten was an education major, but his real love was always police work. After transferring to the University of Nebraska, he graduated in 1986 with a degree in criminal justice. Soon afterwards, he was hired as a patrolman for the Overland Park (Kansas) Police Department.

About ten years later, a confluence of events changed his life. First, four home invasions in Overland Park resulted in the assault of four women, and Betten became actively interested in crime prevention. He then attended a course at the University of Louisville’s National Crime Prevention Institute, which was taught by ASIS member Henri Bérubé, CPP. Bérubé is a crime prevention specialist with the Peel Regional Police Service based in Brampton, Ontario, Canada.

Betten and Bérubé soon found common ground, and Betten found a mentor. He received his Certified Protection Professional (CPP) certification in 1998, realizing that the CPP designation is the security industry’s highest recognition of its practitioners. He is now pursuing a master’s in occupational safety and security management at Central Missouri State University. “Having the CPP gives you credibility,” says Betten. “It adds a credential to your resume, and it has given me more confidence.”