

## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **RUTGERS STUDY FINDS ALARM SYSTEMS ARE VALUABLE CRIME FIGHTING TOOL**

#### *Study Links Burglary Reduction to Increase in Alarms Systems*

(Newark, NJ, February 5, 2009) – A comprehensive study of five years of statistics by researchers at the Rutgers University School of Criminal Justice (SCJ) in Newark found that residential burglar alarm systems decrease crime. While other studies have concluded that most burglars avoid alarm systems, this is the first study to focus on alarm systems while scientifically ruling out other factors that could have impacted the crime rate.

Researchers concentrated on analyzing crime data provided by the Newark Police Department. “Data showed that a steady decrease in burglaries in Newark between 2001 and 2005 coincided with an increase in the number of registered home burglar alarms,” said study author Dr. Seungmug (a.k.a. Zech) Lee, who received his doctoral degree from SCJ in 2008 and presently teaches at Ohio Northern University in Ada, Ohio. “The study credits the alarms with the decrease in burglaries and the city’s overall crime rate.”

In short, the study found that an installed burglar alarm makes a dwelling less attractive to the would-be and active intruders and protects the home without displacing burglaries to nearby homes.

The study also concluded that the deterrent effect of alarms is felt in the community at large. “Neighborhoods in which burglar alarms were densely installed have fewer incidents of residential burglaries than the neighborhoods with fewer burglar alarms,” the study noted.

The study was conducted with the cooperation of the Newark Police Department and reviewed five years of police data. The more than 300-page study was conducted over a two-year period and funded by the non-profit Alarm Industry Research and Educational Foundation (AIREF). SCJ Professors George L. Kelling, Marcus Felson and

Ronald V. Clarke and Professor Robert D. McCrie of John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York were members of the study's Faculty Advisory Committee. Dr. Clarke served as committee chair.

"This type of study assists police departments to effectively deploy their limited resources," said Newark Police Director Garry McCarthy. "The School of Criminal Justice provides valuable insight into the positive impact alarm systems can have in preventing residential burglaries."

"This is the most comprehensive study of its kind that has ever been conducted," said Dr. Lee. "By using sophisticated in-depth research techniques, we were able to eliminate the variables that impact crime rates and focus directly on the impact alarm systems have on residential burglaries."

The study noted that "technology innovations" have increased the availability of home security systems to middle-class homeowners and that technology has made the systems more dependable. "Computers, printed circuits, digital communicators, and microprocessors have refined monitoring and signaling technology, and modern electronic sensors now include ultrasonic, infrared and microwave devices which were formerly available only in more sophisticated commercial and industrial applications," said Dr. Lee.

Researchers also pointed to an earlier study based on interviews with burglars ("Burglars on the Job 1994," Northeastern University Press) to support their conclusions. That study concluded, "Most offenders, though, wanted to avoid alarms altogether and, upon encountering such devices, abandoned all thought of attacking the dwelling."

For more information about "The Impact of Home Burglar Alarm Systems on Residential Burglaries" study, please contact Dr. Lee at 419-772-2597, [s-lee.8@onu.edu](mailto:s-lee.8@onu.edu) or [ezech0725@gmail.com](mailto:ezech0725@gmail.com).

## **MORE ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

*Rutgers School of Criminal Justice (SCJ) is a major national and international center for scholarly research on all aspects of policing, delinquency, crime, and criminal justice administration. This provides a basis for its educational programs that also fulfill public service obligations by helping to address the needs of criminal justice agencies within the city, state, nation, and world.*

*Based at Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey, SCJ's faculty includes some of the top scholars in the field, and the Ph.D. program in criminology has been ranked fourth in the nation by U.S. News & World Report. The doctoral program continues to set the standard for doctoral training, and SCJ's graduating students are highly sought after by universities recruiting new*

*faculty. All of the degree programs offered by SCJ provide classroom as well as research opportunities that prepare students for positions in research, teaching, and criminal justice system management and policymaking. For more information on the school, please visit [www.rutgers-newark.rutgers.edu/rscj](http://www.rutgers-newark.rutgers.edu/rscj).*

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