

NEWS RELEASE

April 19, 2013
For Immediate Release

Media Relations Office
573 335.6621 / F: 573 339.6362

Lt. Rick Price (x1093)

The Cape Girardeau Police Department continues to look for ways to increase effectiveness to provide better service to the community. Throughout this process we have identified situations when the police expend significant resources with minimal benefit to the community. "By eliminating or reducing situations like these," Interim Chief Roger Fields said, "We can free up police resources to focus on areas that are most beneficial to the community as a whole." One of those situations is what are commonly referred to as "gas drive offs".

The Cape Girardeau Police Department has investigated 306 gas drive offs in the last 7 months. One officer currently spends 80-85% of his time investigating these incidents and in his experience has made the following observations:

- Many gas drive-off reports contain limited information which hampers the officer's ability to locate a suspect.
- Many incidents are unintentional resulting in no criminal charges and the matter simply settled by the subject paying the bill.
- The police expend significant time and resources investigating cases that rarely results in criminal charges.

The Police Department recently arranged a meeting with local fuel merchants to gauge the severity of the problem and look for an alternate solution. The merchants in attendance agreed that a prepay policy was the only sure way to prevent these losses.

The Police Department agrees that losses due to drive-offs are a serious problem for the merchant, the consumer and law enforcement and that a prepay policy is the single most effective way to prevent the loss. Merchants have agreed to voluntarily implement a prepay policy which will go into effect on May 1, 2013. The Police Department will assist merchants in designing a municipal ordinance that the merchants may at some point present to the City Council.

