

Turlich Gives Presentation on Car Burglaries, General Crime at PABI Luncheon



By Justin Walton

reporter@plaqueminesgazette.com

At the February 16 Plaquemines Association of Business & Industry monthly luncheon, Plaquemines sheriff Jerry Turlich gave a presentation to a crowd of local business owners and a few parish government officials. The presentation given by Turlich was similar—nearly identical, in fact—to the one he gave at a February 1 “Public Forum” held in the Belle Chasse High School Auditorium. As noted in the article covering that “Public Forum,” Turlich’s presentation was an attempt to inform residents about a string of car burglaries that occurred late in December 2021 and January 2022. During the PABI Luncheon, Turlich noted—as he did at the Public Forum—that the recent wave of car burglaries (which has affected Orleans and Jefferson Parishes as well) led to Plaquemines having five car burglaries in quick succession. While these incidents have many residents on edge, especially those in Belle Chasse where the burglaries occurred, Turlich emphasized that this sudden uptick in crime is an anomaly for Plaquemines. He also noted these burglaries were “made easy” for the offenders as many of the cars burglarized were left unlocked and with a set of keys still in the car. “We had



a string of several burglaries that happened within a quick time frame. Obviously, that's worrying, but the past few years have actually been very good for us in terms of crime," Turlich stated, explaining that the number of car burglaries in Plaquemines for all of 2021 are incredibly low when compared to Orleans and Jefferson numbers. In 2021, Plaquemines had only 33 vehicular burglaries and 21 auto thefts. Additionally, Turlich explained that the Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's Office has been able to make multiple arrests and recover most of the vehicles related to the burglaries. "We send out all the dogs to retrieve our residents' property. And I'm proud of what we've been able to do, but there's still some work to be done," Turlich stated. "This kind of stuff doesn't happen a lot in our parish. The number of burglaries we have in a year, Jefferson or Orleans may have that in a single week." "We want to make sure this parish is protected from crime and doesn't suffer from some of the same problems our neighboring parishes do," he added. Again, this presentation, while focused on the car burglaries, stretched its focus to areas beyond the car burglaries. Turlich briefly touched on, at different points during his presentation, issues like justice system reform, political platforms of "big city" District Attorney's, and potential legislative solutions. "In a certain sense, justice reform was needed. We don't want poor people just sitting in jail because they're poor; that's not what I want. But I think it's gone too far the other way," Turlich stated, explaining that some DAs run on political platforms of "not prosecuting" people for property damage crimes. "That's just ridiculous because it puts people in danger. We need legislation that is meant to protect our citizens, not criminals." Turlich stated that he and the Louisiana's Sheriff Association will be pursuing legislation that requires "mandatory minimums" for property crimes. Though Turlich emphasized the need for stricter charges for those who repeatedly commit these kinds of property crimes, he constantly reminded those at the PABI Luncheon that Plaquemines still has a relatively low crime rate. "When these kinds of things happen in Plaquemines, I take it personally. Everyone in the sheriff's office does. But, thankfully, we don't have a lot of crime in our parish," Turlich stated. "We have a good justice system here [in Plaquemines], and we want to make sure it stays that way."

