

<b>WINNEBAGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE NEWS MEDIA RELEASE</b>		<b>NEWS RELEASE NUMBER 2013-023</b>
<b>INFORMATION: WINNEBAGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE launches TEXT 2 TIP PROGRAM and Android and iPhone app</b>		
<b>DATE: 07/10/13</b>	<b>TIME: 2:30 PM</b>	<b>PAGE 1 OF 2</b>

Do you want to help the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office fight crime? Now, there's an "app" for that!

Today, the **WINNEBAGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE** is launching a **TEXT 2 TIP** program with an app for Android and iPhone devices that enable the public to send anonymous tips to the police and lets the police respond back, creating a two way anonymous "chat." The free app allows citizens to send crime tips anonymously to the Sheriff's Office.

According to **Sheriff Richard A. Meyers**, this capability is a new paradigm for creating safer communities – especially in reaching out to a younger age demographic.

"We're proud to make this technology available to our citizens free of charge. This tool, along with the Text-2-Tip program, will help our citizens play an active role in keeping neighborhoods safer, it will engage people of all ages in the process and it will save our agency time and resources. When someone feels afraid to come forward, or simply feels like they don't want to get involved – this can be a great way to pass information on without fear of retribution. Now the new phone apps make reporting tips even more convenient."

Community members with iPhones are encouraged to install the app by visiting the Apple App Store and searching for "TipWCSO." For android phones, go to Google Play and search TipWCSO.

(\*Please note that for both apps, the search term is TipWCSO – which is one word without a space. The apps are also found by searching for the name, Winnebago County Sheriff's Office.)

Citizens can also send an anonymous tip to the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office without the app on any text capable cell phone. To send an anonymous tip via text message to the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office, simply text the keyword **TIPWCSO** and your message to **847411 (TIP411)**. Standard text rates apply.

Anonymous web tips can be submitted from the Sheriff's Office website at [www.winnebagosherif.com](http://www.winnebagosherif.com) by clicking on the "**TXT2TIP**" **phone icon** on our homepage. This will take you to our Text 2 Tip page where one would select the "**FIGHT CRIME. Submit a Tip.**" (There are also options to download the iPhone or Android App by clicking the appropriate icon.)

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All three methods – the phone apps, texting, and the online form – are anonymous and the tips are sent directly to the Sheriff’s Office. This allows Sheriff’s Office detectives to ask follow-up questions to tipsters, who remain anonymous.

It’s important to remember that this is not a replacement for 9-1-1. If you need help, witness a crime, or you are in danger or in an emergency situation, please call 9-1-1 immediately.

Helpful tips include information about people wanted on warrants, drug activity, suspicious activity, cold cases, or any type of crime or criminal activity. The Sheriff’s Office has a long history of receiving tips from residents and through our local CrimeStoppers program.

**About CitizenObserver**

CitizenObserver, a St. Paul, MN company founded in 2000, provides web based alerting tools to law enforcement, education, and public safety agencies in over 40 states.

It’s 100% anonymous. CitizenObserver’s technology removes all identifying information before the Sheriff’s Office sees it so there is no way to identify the sender.

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