INDEPENDENCE DAY - SOFT TARGETS

In just a few short weeks we will be celebrating our nation's Independence Day, July 4th. As customary people all across our country will be celebrating the day with parades, cook-outs, camping, and of course the signature event of fireworks. As you might recall, the Boston Bombers were intending to commit their crime on July 4th, and the only reported reason that they did not do so was because they finished making their bombs early. So, as we approach another “Soft target” event what should we do? Do we need to figure that nothing will happen like so many years in the past? Do we need to hunker down at home? Should we avoid all the celebrations? The fact of the matter is our country is changing, and large public events may become “soft targets” more often, but we cannot be driven to hide in our homes. There are many precautions and steps that the average person can take to be prepared. First, like the DHS says, if you see something, say something. If someone looks out of place, like they do not belong or are not doing what everyone else in the crowd is doing, trust your instincts and contact the police if you deem it necessary. Soft Targets, those with an open venue & with a large number of people, are very hard to secure, so everyone can help by being vigilant.

U.S. GUN VIOLENCE HIGHER OR LOWER SINCE 1993?

Has gun violence gone up in the last twenty years, or has it gone down? Depending on who you talk with you may receive different views. However to sum it up, according to a Pew Research Center study released last month 56% of Americans believe that gun crime is worse today than it was 20 years ago. 84% of Americans believe that gun violence in our country has gone up or stayed the same. Now for the reality, gun violence has actually dropped significantly since 1993! Yes, we said dropped. According to the study, victimization from non-fatal gun violence crimes is actually down 75% since 1993. In fact, there was close to 50% less firearm related homicides in 2010 than in 1993. So what causes people to believe otherwise?

With 24 hours news in our world now, more so than in 1993, the same notorious acts of gun violence get plenty of news coverage, and some would say to the point where the reporters are adding to the fear of an increase, yet there are no facts to support it.

Another way to explain this perception verses reality disparity is the fact that some of the largest news stories on this subject in recent years has been mass murders at the hands of a gunman. Suffice it to say, that although the statistics prove otherwise gun violence is still a serious threat to the average American. Like many things in life, perception can be very powerful and should not be discounted. If people feel unsafe no positive statistics will change that.
RETAILERS USE DATABASES TO TRACK EMPLOYEE THEFTS

It is doubtful that employee theft will decrease anytime soon for any number of reasons. As we reported in previous editions of this newsletter, businesses lose far more inventory to internal thefts by employees, than to shoplifters. So how are business owners changing their loss prevention measures? They are doing so by amassing a very large database that tracks information about former employees that steal, and they are using that database to keep those former workers out of the retail business.

According to the New York Times (April 2, 2013), tens of thousands the major retailers are contributing to this database. One such database is the First Advantage Corporation’s “Esteem” database. According to the article several of the major retailers (i.e. Target, CVS, Dollar General) are using databases such as this one to both input information and to review prior to hiring potential employees. But like with many other sources of information available today, there is controversy to this type of data collection points.

One of the concerns is that the information going in might not be accurate. Other concerns include the issue similar to credit reports, and that is if you find some information on there that is not accurate, it can be very difficult to get it erased or corrected.

Stay tuned.