

Wal-Mart's Crime and Safety Report Can be found at

http://walmartwatch.com/battlemart/go/cat/crime_safety

You can find just about anything you want at Wal-Mart---and that includes crime as well. Whatever kind of heinous act you prefer, you can get it at Wal-Mart. The company likes to say it is a "retail magnet." Unfortunately, it seems to be a magnet for criminal activity too. Here are eight examples from last week's news. Murder, rape, sexual assault, assault and battery, bombs--you can find it any week at a Wal-Mart supercenter near you. It's the family place to shop:

Salt Lake City, UT: A judge sentenced a man accused of sexually abusing an 11-year-old girl inside a Salt Lake City Wal-Mart. Police arrested the defendant in December 2004 after a shopper caught him inappropriately touching a girl in the store.

Minnehaha County, SD: A jury deliberated for about an hour Wednesday before finding a Sioux Falls man guilty of assaulting a co-worker with his car in a store parking lot. The defendant was convicted of first-degree attempted murder, two counts of aggravated assault and violation of a protection order. The man struck and dragged his victim in the Wal-Mart lot. "This was a very violent vehicular assault," Nelson said. "It was clear from the evidence that the defendant targeted the victim."

Ithaca, NY: Federal officials say the package found last month behind the Wal-Mart in Ithaca was an improvised explosive device. It had a battery on the bottom and a kitchen timer on top. The Wal-Mart and surrounding businesses were evacuated and a bomb dog called in. Authorities destroyed the package by shooting it with a shotgun. It broke apart, but did not explode. Nine officers came in contact with a liquid from the package that forced them to be quarantine for a short time.

Ventura County, CA: A man went on a two-day crime spree that left three people dead and five hospitalized before he killed himself inside a Wal-Mart in California's Simi Valley. The suspect was chased by police to the Wal-Mart store. About 100 employees and customers were evacuated from the sprawling store as 40 to 50 officers surrounded it. Officers who entered found the suspect dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Myrtle Beach, FL: A 27-year-old man has been charged with murder in the stabbing death of a woman at a Myrtle Beach Wal-Mart parking lot. A fight broke out in the Wal-Mart parking lot, where the woman was stabbed to death.

Harris County, TX: A 33-year-old shopper was fatally shot during an armed robbery in west Harris County on Friday night. The victim was approaching his car in the parking lot of a Wal-Mart about midnight when a man jumped out of a beige or champagne-colored van and shot him once in the chest, officials said. The shooter got back in the van, driven by another man, and fled.

Marietta, GA: A 72-year-old Wal-Mart greeter was seriously injured when he was run over while trying to stop a suspected shoplifter. The incident began Saturday afternoon when a security officer at the store saw a man stealing DVDs. When the security officer and the greeter confronted the man at his car, the man's door hit the greeter, and knocked him down. The man then drove over the greeter's leg, chest and head. The greeter

suffered a punctured lung, broken ribs and facial injuries. "He is expected to live. But he was hurt pretty bad," a policeman said. "He was just trying to do his job and protect the store against shoplifters."

Tyler, TX: Prosecutors have decided to seek the death penalty against a former Marine accused of kidnapping and killing a Wal-Mart store clerk. The defendant is charged with capital murder in the death of the 19-year-old Wal-Mart worker. The clerk was abducted after her nightshift ended on Jan. 19 at a Tyler Wal-Mart. The defendant followed the clerk to her pickup, then rushed behind her and pushed her inside. He then sexually assaulted, strangled and shot the woman to death before dumping her body in a West Texas ditch.

Examples of "the crime issue" are good to bring before your City Council. Check with local and surrounding area police departments to request "incident reports" from the nearest Wal-Mart street address. High levels of crime have a negative impact on the quality of residential life in the community, and the value of property surrounding the Wal-Mart. It also has forced many towns to hike the cost of public safety by adding more police personnel, increased patrols, and even police substations right in the Wal-Mart parking lots.

Before your local officials decide to support bringing in a Wal-Mart, or expanding the existing store, let them know about the dangers it poses to public safety. All this crime costs the public money to apprehend, detain, prosecute, and incarcerate the criminals. It's just another piece of the unquantified cost of Wal-Mart to us all.