



In an effort to create, a safe space for residents selling goods online, the Prairie View Police Department will be introducing a Safe Exchange Zone January 12 in the city hall parking lot at 44500 U.S. Business 290.

The zone is made up of two parking spaces outlined in purple and gold that will be under 24-hour video surveillance. This zone is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

“It can be used for child custody issues, for e-commerce, for whatever,” Prairie View Police Chief Anthony Solomon said.

Residents who participate in local “Beg, Barter, Buy” pages on Facebook or Craigslist are encouraged to use the zone as a meeting place to avoid going to a stranger’s home. However, officials said Prairie View Police officers will not personally witness, facilitate or participate in exchanges.

“We’ve gotten a very good response from residents],” Solomon said. “We’ve also got a good response from people tagging other police departments in [the Facebook post], wanting them to initiate it in their area in their community.

For now, Prairie View is the only city in a 15-mile radius with a Safe Exchange Zone, so city officials are encouraging Waller, Harris County and surrounding residents to use the zone in Prairie View.

“This isn’t necessarily a new program, but it’s something that is nowhere in our area, so it’s something we wanted to bring to our area especially because Facebook groups are so popular with students and they meet all the time, locally, to try to exchange stuff,” Solomon said. “We wanted to give people somewhere that they feel comfortable meeting at.”

Additionally, department officials encouraged individuals participating in online exchanges to take precautions when posting on social media by disabling location services and withholding personal information, such as home addresses and credit card numbers.