

# Teen Court topic of Kittrell Community Watch

A total of 53 local residents attended the Kittrell Community Watch meeting on Feb. 24 to hear Linwood Martin

explain the Teen Court program. Teen Court is a state-wide program where first-time misdemeanor offenders, ages 10 through 17, can admit guilt, accept responsibility, and be sentenced by a jury of their peers.

Unlike Juvenile Court, Teen Court does not result in a criminal record if there are no subsequent



Martin

crimes. Except for the judge and two deputies, teenagers fill all Teen Court positions: jurors, bailiff, clerk, and attorneys.

Martin said the teenage juries tend toward giving maximum sentences. Each case must be referred to Teen Court by the police, schools, or Juvenile Court. The goal is to stop criminal behavior early and produce long-term behavior changes. The Teen Court program in Vance County started in July 2010.

In addition to learning about the Teen Court program, those attending heard from Sheriff Peter White, Det. Lilley and

deputies Thorpe and Alston about recent criminal activity and recommended counter measures. They also answered questions from residents.

Kittrell Community Watch is an informal association of Kittrell-area residents with the aim of combating crime and improving safety by sharing information and improving cooperation with law enforcement.

Based on inputs from attendees, Edward Woodlief, president, set future meetings for 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month at the Kittrell Fire Station. He encouraged all Kittrell-area residents to attend.