



G.A.I.N.

GANG ACTIVITY INFORMATION NETWORK



Volume 5, Issue 2

February 2009

United States
Department
of Justice



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POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

FBI: Burgeoning gangs behind up to 80% of U.S. crime

Published by USA Today on January 30, 2009

Criminal gangs in the USA have swelled to an estimated 1 million members responsible for up to 80% of crimes in communities across the nation, according to a gang threat assessment compiled by federal officials.

The major findings in a report by the Justice Department's National Gang Intelligence Center, which has not been publicly released, conclude gangs are the "primary retail-level distributors of most illicit drugs" and several are "capable" of competing with major U.S.-based Mexican drug-trafficking organizations.

"A rising number of U.S.-based gangs are seemingly intent on developing working relationships" with U.S. and foreign drug-trafficking organizations and other criminal groups to "gain direct access to foreign sources of illicit drugs," the report concludes.

The gang population estimate is up 200,000 since 2005.

Bruce Ferrell, chairman of the Midwest Gang Investigators Association, whose group monitors gang activity in 10 states, says the number of gang members may be even higher than the report's estimate.

"We've seen an expansion for the last 10 years," says Ferrell, who has reviewed the report. "Each year, the numbers are moving forward."



Los Angeles Police Department officers question MS-13 members in 2007. The ubiquitous gang, which originated among Salvadoran refugees settling in L.A. in the 1980s, has spread to 42 states, with cells in suburban and rural areas.

Continued...

'Growing threat' on the move

The report says about 900,000 gang members live "within local communities across the country," and about 147,000 are in U.S. prisons or jails.

"Most regions in the United States will experience increased gang membership ... and increased gang-related criminal activity," the report concludes, citing a recent rise in gangs on the campuses of suburban and rural schools.

Among the report's other findings:

- Last year, 58% of state and local law enforcement agencies reported that criminal gangs were active in their jurisdictions, up from 45% in 2004.
- More gangs use the Internet, including encrypted e-mail, to recruit and to communicate with associates throughout the U.S. and other countries.
- Gangs, including outlaw motorcycle groups, "pose a growing threat" to law enforcement authorities along the U.S.-Canadian border. The U.S. groups are cooperating with Canadian gangs in various criminal enterprises, including drug smuggling.

Assistant FBI Director Kenneth Kaiser, the bureau's criminal division chief, says gangs have largely followed the migration paths of immigrant laborers. He says the groups are moving to avoid the scrutiny of larger metropolitan police agencies in places such as Los Angeles. "These groups were hit hard in L.A." by law enforcement crackdowns, "but they are learning from it," Kaiser says.

MS-13 far-flung from L.A. incubator

One group that continues to spread despite law enforcement efforts is the violent Salvadoran gang known as MS-13. Michael Sullivan, the departing director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, says the gang's dependence on shocking violence to advance extortion, prostitution and other criminal enterprises has frustrated attempts to infiltrate and disrupt the insular group's activities.

"MS-13's foothold in the U.S. is expanding," Sullivan says.

Kaiser says the street gang is in 42 states, up from 33 in 2005.

"Enforcement efforts have been effective to a certain extent, but they (gang members) keep moving," he says.

MS-13 is the abbreviation for the gang also known as Mara Salvatrucha. The group gained national prominence in the 1980s in Los Angeles, where members were linked to incidents involving unusual brutality. Since then, it has formed cells or "cliques" across the U.S., says Aaron Escorza, chief of the FBI's MS-13 National Gang Task Force. The task force was launched in 2004 amid concerns about

MS-13 SPREADING

The violent Salvadoran gang MS-13 has cells, or "cliques," in 42 states. States reporting no MS-13 presence:

- Alaska
- Delaware
- Maine
- Minnesota
- North Dakota
- New Hampshire
- New Mexico
- Vermont

Source: FBI



the gang's rapid spread. Gang members were targeted in broad investigations similar to those used to bust organized crime groups from Russia and Italy.

Among law enforcement efforts:

•**Omaha:** The last of 24 MS-13 members swept up on federal firearms charges and conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine were sentenced last year in the largest bust since the group emerged there in 2004. The gang's strength dimmed as a result, but the nine-month probe did not eradicate the group, says Ferrell, who assisted in the investigation.

•**Nashville:** During the last two years, 14 MS-13 members pleaded guilty on charges ranging from murder to obstruction of justice. Davidson County, Tenn., Sheriff Daron Hall, whose jurisdiction includes Nashville, says MS-13 started growing there about five years ago, corresponding with an influx of immigrant labor. Last April, county officials began checking the immigration status of all arrestees.

"We know we have removed about 100 gang members, including MS-13," to U.S. authorities for deportation, Hall says.

•**Maryland:** Earlier this month, federal authorities said they had convicted 42 MS-13 members since 2005. More than half were charged in a "racketeering conspiracy" in which members participated in robberies and beatings and arranged the murders of other gang members, according to Justice Department documents. In one case, Maryland gang members allegedly discussed killing rivals with an MS-13 leader calling on a cellphone from a Salvadoran jail, the documents say.

Escorza says a "revolving door" on the border has kept the gang's numbers steady — about 10,000 in the U.S. — even as many illegal immigrant members are deported. The FBI, which has two agents in El Salvador to help identify and track members in Central America and the United States, plans to dispatch four more agents to Guatemala and Honduras, Escorza says.

"They evolve and adapt," he says. "They know what law enforcement is doing. Word of mouth spreads quickly."



Answers scarce in '08 homicides

Lack of progress in 1 slaying upsets victim's father

Published by the Journal-Gazette on January 2, 2009

FORT WAYNE, IN | Like the families of more than two-dozen other homicide victims in 2008, Paul Craighead awakes each day with the same pain. He asks the same questions and seeks closure. He has yet to find it.

"I feel like somebody ripped my heart out of me," he said. "I wake up every day like that. I still don't believe it happened to me."

For Craighead, 47, raising two daughters has been his greatest accomplishment. He never imagined he would have to bury one.

His eldest daughter, Shantell Maria Craighead, 27, was shot to death March 31 inside her Blum Drive home on the city's northeast side. Another woman living at the home, Rachel Roos, 23, and Roos' unborn baby were also killed. Police have made no arrests in this case. In fact, arrests have been made in only three of Allen County's 26 homicides in 2008. That 11.5 percent clearance rate is down dramatically from 2007, when about 48 percent of the homicides were cleared through an arrest. The year before, about 36.8 percent of the homicides were solved. Last year's clearance rate leaves a lot of room for questions, Craighead said. Many of his lingering questions deal with how police handled the case.

"If we could solve some of these, we would fill the jail with the right people," Craighead said. "I just want to know, 'What are they doing?'"

Domestic violence

Police and prosecutors contend they are doing the best they can, but the answer isn't simple. Allen County Prosecutor Karen Richards said she has seen strides in domestic violence investigations. Unlike in years past, when there were more domestic-related killings, only one Fort Wayne homicide was classified as such in 2008 - the death of 3-year-old Javon LaWayne Southall. The toddler was beaten to death in September. His caretaker, Abdallah Goroumi, 29, awaits a trial in February.

"We are trying really hard to prosecute domestic violence cases," Richards said. "Any year that you don't have a domestic violence homicide, it is a plus."

Domestic violence homicides are usually the easiest cases to solve, said Charles Wellford, a professor at the University of Maryland Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice.

"The ones where it appears to be drug- or gang-related have lower clearance rates generally," he said. "But even cities with high clearance rates solve them better."

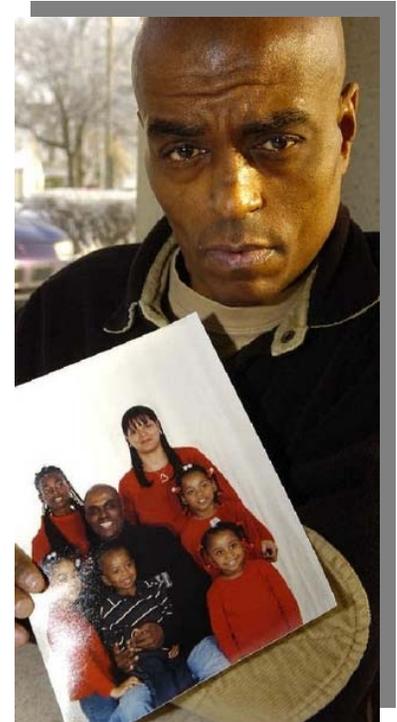
Drugs and gangs

According to the FBI, 61.2 percent of all murder and non-negligent manslaughter cases nationwide resulted in an arrest in 2007. To some extent, how police investigate homicides correlates with clearance rates, Wellford said. He conducted a study on homicide clearance rates for the National Institute of Justice in the mid-1990s.

In Allen County, at least five of the killings in 2008 are believed to be gang-related. Six others were a result of suspected drug-dealing, police said. Those are also unsolved.

"In the nature of drugs or gangs, people tend not to talk," Richards said. "Those types of cases are extremely difficult. You have to be confident that you can prove your case beyond a reasonable doubt before you can file it."

Prosecutors might review a case for several months before making a decision on whether to file charges. If confidence in the case is not there - eyewitness testimony and forensics being the best evidence - it is sent back to police for further investigation, Richards said. Sometimes it takes as long as six months for crucial evidence to be returned from out-of-town testing labs, said Sgt. Carl Moore, who heads the Fort Wayne police homicide and robbery unit.



An average year

With nine slayings in one week in late March and early April, 2008 looked as though it would be especially violent. But with 26 homicides - all in Fort Wayne - in one year, 2008 ended with an average number of killings. Most years there are 20 to 25 homicides in the city, Moore said.

"Homicide is not one of those things we can predict," he said. "A lot of times, homicide is a heat-of-the-moment type of thing. We don't have any way to prevent it."

Clearance rates are not affected by a city's size or the number of officers on a department, Wellford said. Some areas of police work can be controlled, but in any homicide, there are uncontrollable factors, he added.

"They can't control the number of homicides in their community they can't control the offenders," he said.

Holding out hope

For Craighead, it's mostly the wondering and not knowing that keeps him awake at night. Each weekend, police make a number of arrests, but not the "big arrests," he said. Meanwhile, it's his mission to make sure his daughter's name remains clean.

"I know my daughter was innocent in this whole matter," he said. "The kids were her whole life."

A certified nursing assistant for seven years, Shantell was a single mother of four. She is survived by her children Shanteara, 11; Shania, 9; Shazmin, 7; and Xavier, 5.

Fort Wayne police said they hope to close a number of these homicides within the next year. Moore said there are solid suspects in more than half of the homicides, and Richards said five cases are under review by prosecutors for possible charges.

"We'll have several more people locked up," Moore said. One arrest in a 2007 homicide was made last year.

"I know the police are continuing to investigate these cases," Richards said. "That's where the community becomes important. We need people to come forward and talk to police about what they know. That's the only way some of these will ever be solved."

Craighead, meanwhile, said he still holds out hope that his daughter's killing will be solved, but these answers bring little closure to the families and do nothing to take away their pain. Even if his daughter's killer is found, Craighead said it will never bring back the beautiful woman he raised. So he continues with one plea:

"Don't let these killers walk the street."

ALLEN COUNTY HOMICIDES

2008	26
2007	27
2006	19
2005	31
2004	25
2003	21
2002	30
2001	26
2000	20
1999	24
1998	25
1997	42
1996	18
1995	30
1994	41
1993	37
1992	25
1991	29
1990	20
1989	27
1988	24
1987	10
1986	19
1985	28
1984	4
1983	19
1982	24
1981	25
1980	21

Sources: Allen
County Coroner's
Office, Journal
Gazette archives



Agencies teaming up to fight for safe streets

Published by the Journal-Gazette on January 8, 2009

FORT WAYNE, IN | Less than two years after Fort Wayne police launched an anti-gang task force, a group of law enforcement agencies is discussing a second, similar team that would focus on violent crime, not just gangs.

The FBI has created similar task forces under the Safe Streets program in Evansville, Indianapolis, Gary and Lafayette. The program focuses on violent crime, including dangerous fugitives and bank robbers. The groups are not limited to gang activity, said Special Agent Wendy Osborne, spokeswoman for the FBI office in Indianapolis.



Allen County Sheriff Ken Fries said the team could include officers from his department, Indiana State Police and the Fort Wayne Police Department as well as local FBI agents. The task force hasn't been finalized, but Fries will discuss the idea with the sheriff's merit board today.



The merit board handles hiring, promotions and discipline for the county's sworn officers. Fries needs the board's permission to pick the three officers who would be assigned to the team outside the normal seniority-based bidding system. The board won't likely vote on the issue until February, Fries said. Fort Wayne Police Chief Rusty York plans to assign one city officer to the proposed task force initially.

"As time goes on, if we can provide more assistance, we will," York said. In addition to the proposed task force, the city's partnership with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to target gang and street-level crime will continue, York said. The two programs have a slightly different focus and won't be competing, he said.

Five city officers are currently assigned to the anti-gang unit. They collect intelligence information; work with parents, young people and school resources officers; and take guns off the streets. The officers are paid by the city.



In comparison, the proposed task force would involve more long-term investigations, York said.



All officers involved in the Safe Streets program would be deputized, work out of federal-paid offices, use federal vehicles and have any overtime paid by the FBI, Osborne said.

York is satisfied with what he called the good work city officers and ATF agents have done since the anti-gang task force was created in the summer of 2007, he said. The anti-gang team was announced after a rash of gang-related homicides earlier that year. But it also came on the heels of a plan Fries had proposed to create a similar squad - an idea York shot down.

In April 2007, York declined to sign an agreement with the county and the ATF to use federal grant money to target gang activity and gun crimes. York said at the time that the sheriff's application for the grant didn't meet requirements. Fries' proposal also drew criticism from residents in southeast Fort Wayne who were concerned the squad would target and harass young black men. The proposal was similar to the sheriff's department's Metro Squad - an aggressive unit that operated in the early 1990s mainly in southeast Fort Wayne.

Fries called the Safe Streets program more comprehensive than the city's anti-gang task force. But it will concentrate on many of the same goals of his proposed ATF project from 2007, he said Wednesday. Fries said officials had discussed May as a possible start date for the new FBI-led task force. Officers must obtain federal clearance first.

Formal agreements among the participating agencies have not been signed yet, Osborne said.



[Cincinnati] Police Arrest Gang Members As Young As 11

Published by ABC9 News, WCPO.com on January 3, 2009

CINCINNATI, OH | 2008 was a bad year for gangs in Cincinnati.

A ring known as "The Northside Taliband" was targeted by Cincinnati police in November. Investigators confiscated a cache of alleged gang weapons including revolvers, semi-auto pistols, assault rifles – and even bullet-proof vests.



Now police say they have nipped a growing gang – called the Coleridge Boys – in the bud. The youngest member of the budding gang was just 11-years-old. He was arrested along with seven others. According to District Two officers, the gang targeted homes and businesses in the Pleasant Ridge and Kennedy Heights neighborhoods of Cincinnati.

Sergeant Danita Kilgore says, "The eight that have been arrested and charged are what we believe to be the core element of this gang, however we're estimating between maybe 15 to 20 individuals."

Whether or not Cincinnati has a major gang problem, officers have definitely made a large number of gang related arrests. They've done so without the assistance of a centralized anti-gang task force. The city disbanded the gang unit more than six years ago.

"I don't think that there has necessarily been an increase in gang activity," says Sgt. Kilgore. "I think that we're aggressively pursuing it even more so than in the past with initiatives such as CIRV." CIRV, or Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence, allows investigators to target the entire gang even if only one member is charged with a crime.

More than a decade ago, officers aggressively pursued gangs throughout the city and sent the remaining gang members underground. Now Cincinnati police are once again cracking down on gangs, but this time with specialized units at the district level.

Sgt. Kilgore says, "One message that we'd like to send out to the Coleridge Boys and other such groups is that we will aggressively pursue you."



Fugitive Latin Kings leader captured in Mexico

Published by South Town Star on January 5, 2009

CHICAGO, IL | A leader of Chicago's Latin Kings street gang, the subject of an international manhunt after fleeing the area following a massive investigation into the gang's leadership in September, has been arrested in Mexico.

Vicente Garcia, 30, was charged in a criminal complaint on Sept. 24, 2008, with violating federal drug and firearm laws, according to an FBI release. The charge was part of "Operation Padilla," an investigation that sought to dismantle the Latin Kings' leadership and led to 40 people being charged and a multimillion-dollar drug operation being disrupted.



Of the 40, only five became fugitives. After Garcia's arrest, the four others remain at large. More than half of those charged were reputed "Incas," or leaders of the Latin Kings, operating in the Little Village neighborhood along 26th Street.

Chicago FBI chief Robert Grant said the gang was targeted after it "caused a tremendous amount of violence because of the drug trade." The feds learned of planned murders that were "disrupted" during the investigation, he said.

An informant helped build the case, securing video and audio surveillance. At one meeting in 2007, Garcia, with a last known address in Bolingbrook, told the Incas they had to sell cocaine to help pay for "guns, attorneys and funerals," U.S. Atty. Patrick Fitzgerald said.

Garcia fled to Mexico and was arrested in the City of Tamazula, State of Jalisco in December, the release said. Mexican authorities turned him over to federal authorities in Houston, Texas, on Dec. 20, the release said. He was awaiting extradition to Chicago on Monday.

Garcia is accused of overseeing the distribution of cocaine and firearms throughout Chicago and surrounding suburbs.

For related news on Vicente Garcia and the Latin Kings see: <http://www.chicagobreakingnews.com/2009/01/reward-offered-for-alleged-latin-king-fugitive.html>



Broadway Kings street gang in Cleveland brought down by traffic stop

Published by the Plain Dealer on January 9, 2009

CLEVELAND, OH | A traffic stop more than a year ago led to the dismantling of the Broadway Kings street gang on Cleveland's southeast side, police said Thursday.

Federal agents and Cleveland police fanned out across the region to arrest 17 suspected gang members early Thursday morning. Three remained at large Thursday night, and five other suspects were already in jail. Authorities spent a year investigating the gang, which dealt drugs around the Slavic Village neighborhood, after a traffic stop in November 2007.

The police were investigating a man for a string of violent crimes when they pulled him over and found a stash of guns and drugs.

The Broadway Kings did not have an affiliation with any national gang, and none of the suspects are older than 30, Deputy Police Chief Ed Tomba said. The group was not a large, organized gang but rather one involved in street-level drug dealing, he said. Tomba said the gang spawned violence throughout the neighborhood, including robberies, shootings and drug dealings.

"They dabbled in violence and narcotics," he said.

Tomba added that police found a suspected gang member sleeping with a shotgun across his chest when officers arrested him Thursday. The members face various charges for illegal weapons, drug trafficking and drug possession. Officers seized a kilogram of cocaine, a pound of marijuana, 12 firearms and a military-style bulletproof vest.

In the past two years, Cleveland police have worked with federal and county prosecutors to obtain nearly 200 convictions of street gang members. People found guilty of drug and gang crimes typically receive longer prison sentences in the federal system than in the state court system.

Mayor Frank Jackson said other gangs will be brought down because of the city's partnerships with state, county and federal agencies. He credited the partnerships with helping lower the city's homicide and crime rates last year.

"This is the first one this year," Jackson said. "Expect more of the same."



Lancaster may target pit bulls and Rottweilers as anti-gang measure

Mayor R. Rex Parris, hoping to 'deliberately harass' gang members who favor the dogs, backs an ordinance that would stiffly penalize owners of 'potentially dangerous' and 'vicious' animals.

Published by the Los Angeles Times on January 26, 2009

LANCASTER, CA | The city of Lancaster is considering adopting stiff penalties for owners of "potentially dangerous" and "vicious" dogs, particularly those that law enforcement officials say are favored by gang members and used for intimidation.

The proposed ordinance would also require spaying and neutering of all varieties of pit bulls and Rottweilers, including mutts that have "predominant physical characteristics" of those breeds.

"I want gangs out of Lancaster," Mayor R. Rex Parris said in a recent interview. "I want to make it uncomfortable for them to be here. Anything they like, I want to take it away from them. I want to deliberately harass them."

If the ordinance is approved Tuesday, Lancaster will join a growing list of Los Angeles County municipalities that have adopted laws aimed at curbing canine populations. But it would go a step further by specifically trying to identify dogs that are "potentially dangerous" or "vicious."



California law allows local authorities to target specific breeds for spaying and neutering, but specific breeds cannot officially be branded vicious. Under the Lancaster ordinance, however, a hearing officer could deem an individual dog to be potentially dangerous or vicious. For example, dogs that are unprovoked and engage in aggressive behavior, requiring a person to take defensive action, may be found to be potentially dangerous. And

dogs that are trained to be aggressive for fighting, inflict severe injury or death or are already listed as potentially dangerous may be determined to be vicious.



Gang tattoo featuring a pitbull
Source: photobucket.com

The ordinance would allow dogs in either category to be impounded and vicious dogs to be destroyed if deemed to be a significant threat to the public safety, officials said. If an impounded dog was cleared for release, its owner would have to pay for the animal to be properly licensed, fitted with a microchip and vaccinated, in addition to other measures. A fine of up to \$500 would be leveled for each offense committed by a potentially dangerous dog and up to \$1,000 per offense for a vicious dog. And the owner of a vicious dog could be prohibited from possessing any dog for up to three years.

"It's really like [gangs] having a weapon that they are allowed to display and intimidate people," Parris said. "If they have a pit bull, they may as well put a sign on their head saying, 'Come get me.' "

Not everyone is happy about the proposed ordinance. At a recent council meeting, dog trainers and owners -- some with their canines in tow -- showed up en masse to voice their opposition. They challenged the fairness of the proposed ordinance.

"There is no scientific proof that genetics cause a breed of dog to be aggressive, vicious or dangerous," dog trainer Carole Kelly told council members. "Irresponsible owners are to blame for the behavior of dogs. Breed-specific legislation is an injustice." She also said that the health, development and temperament of a dog could be threatened by sterilization procedures.

Dogs less than 4 months old or considered at high medical risk are among those excluded from mandatory spaying or neutering under the proposed law. But this doesn't satisfy dog owners such as resident A.J. Listman, a trainer and dog-show competitor who said she has helped rehabilitate aggressive canines.

"What happens when these gang members that you're trying to target move on to Dobermans or German shepherds? You going to restrict them too?" Listman asked the council.

"If they move on to cats," Parris responded, "I'm going to take their cats."

For video coverage of this story and the article in its entirety see: <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-dogordinance26-2009jan26,0,1022231.story?page=1>



UPDATE from January (Volume 5 Issue 1) G.A.I.N. Newsletter article: *LA official sues gang leaders*

L.A. to seek to recover \$5 million from street gang

A judge approves a civil judgment against the leaders of the 5th and Hill gang, which has long held a monopoly on the downtown heroin trade. Some doubt the judgment will hurt gang activity.

Published by the Los Angeles Times on January 14, 2009

LOS ANGELES, CA | A Superior Court judge has ruled that Los Angeles city officials can seek to recover \$5 million from a street gang that has long held a monopoly on the downtown heroin trade, officials announced Tuesday.

The civil judgment was sought by City Atty. Rocky Delgadillo, who called it a new front in the fight against gangs. It was the first such judgment since a 2007 state law was passed allowing county and city prosecutors to go

after a gang's ill-gotten assets. That law was further amended last year, enabling prosecutors to go after gang leaders' personal assets, regardless of whether they were tied to illegal activity.

How much of the money Delgadillo's office will be able to collect remains to be seen. The city attorney said his office would go after cash, homes, cars and businesses -- such as tattoo parlors -- owned by leaders of the 5th and Hill gang.

Last week's judgment in Los Angeles County Superior Court names 11 of the gang's members, who will be held liable for the damages. The city won the case against the gang members after they failed to respond to the city's lawsuit. Of the 13 named in the original lawsuit, one was deported and another is still fighting the case in court, officials said.

Once the penalties are collected, a fund will be set up for the downtown community affected by the gang and will be used to undo the damage from its operations, the city attorney said.

"This is a whole new front that we're waging against these gang members," Delgadillo said, adding that his office may seek civil penalties for the cost of homicides in future cases. "It's new to them, it's new to us, but it feels like we're winning."

Experts, however, were less optimistic about how much the civil judgment would hurt gang activity. Lawrence Rosenthal, a former federal prosecutor who worked on anti-gang efforts in Chicago, said he was skeptical that the city would be able to collect on the judgment. Gang members and drug dealers, in particular, take many precautions to keep few assets in their name, he said.

"Usually you spend more time and money getting the judgment than it is actually worth," said Rosenthal, a professor of law at Chapman University in Orange. "They're such a political currency, fighting gangs, that public officials are always wanting to get a part of the action."

But the lower standard of proof in civil court may make the legal maneuver a useful tool against gangs, said Wes McBride, executive director of the California Gang Investigator's Assn. and a former gang investigator with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

"Anything you can do to mess with them, to make their criminal life uncomfortable, is a smart idea," he said.

See the full story at: <http://www.latimes.com/news/print/edition/california/la-me-gang14-2009jan14,0,1793752.story>



Cops stage pre-dawn raid on Crips gangs

Published by Bakersfield.com on January 8, 2009

BAKERSFIELD, CA | The toughest gangs in Bakersfield were probably hunkered down Thursday, their criminal plans on hold, thanks to a pre-dawn raid by dozens of officers. The heavily armed officers, wearing flak jackets, swooped down on homes associated with gang members with orders to arrest those they found — and send a message.

Earlier that morning District Attorney Ed Jagels had issued the marching orders, standing in front of some 60 police, sheriff, parole, probation and district attorney officers.



A gang member is taken into custody during an early Thursday morning gang sweep in Bakersfield.

“We want them thinking about what you’re going to do next, rather than what they want to do next.”

The main targets were 19 “shot callers,” top level gang members that are part of a larger list created by Jagels last year. The list includes 105 of “the most dangerous guys” in local gangs, prosecutors say.

The county’s top prosecutor told the officers to spread the word about the list. “We want to get the message across that if you make the target list, you are going to go to jail or prison,” Jagels said.

By the end of the raids, however, only three of the 19 shot callers targeted were in handcuffs. Officers said the raids will still help squash gang activity, officers said.



California State parole agent Eric Martinez, left, briefs Kern County D.A. Ed Jagels, center, and D.A. Investigator Julie Gaines before a team of officers look for a gang member early Thursday morning during a sweep of gang members in Bakersfield.

“They will shut down illegal operations until they think it’s safe,” Bakersfield homicide Sgt. Joe Aldana said. “Especially violent crime.”

“Keeping pressure on them has tremendous value,” Jagels said.

The gangs singled out for enforcement Thursday were the Eastside Crips — “by far the biggest gang in the city” Aldana said — and it’s rivals, the Country Boy and Westside Crips, and the Bloods.

Though they operate primarily in southeast Bakersfield, officers went to homes in southwest Bakersfield where they were believed to have been living with their mothers or girlfriends. Police estimate there are 6,850 gang members or associates in the Bakersfield area. Police won’t say exactly how many members each group has, but black gangs (Crips and Bloods) make up 30 to 35 percent of the gang population. Hispanic gangs make up 40 to

50 percent and white gangs are about 10 to 12 percent. The remaining 3 percent are Asian gangs or others, police reported. Out of them all, the Crips are the busiest of the lot when it comes to drugs and violent crime, officers said.

One target who got some special attention Thursday was a no bail Fish and Game warrant for Tommy Pernell Davidson, a 42-year-old Eastside Crips member. He was caught Thursday for fishing without a license. The no bail warrant stemmed from his failure to go to his arraignment and a history of assault convictions, records show.

One of the officers said, “Let it be known that if your a gang member and you violate Fish and Game laws, we’re going to get you.”



4 Teenagers Are Charged In Shooting at Wheaton Mall

Published by the Washington Post on January 8, 2009

WHEATON, MD The teenagers weren't thinking about last-minute holiday purchases when they pulled into the Montgomery County shopping mall two days before Christmas. Instead, one of the teens later told police, the group went to the crowded mall to randomly shoot someone.

All four, including a 14-year-old girl, are members of the Bloods street gang in Prince George's County, authorities said. Two of them opened fire in the parking lot of Westfield Wheaton Shopping Centre when they spotted members of a rival gang, police said.

In announcing the arrests yesterday, county police said the four were being held on charges of attempted first-degree murder. Police identified the suspects as Antwaun T. Lee, 18, of Greenbelt, Andrew Davies, 19, of Hyattsville, Anthony D. Taylor, 19, of the District and Aliah Kinard, 14, of Alexandria. Kinard is charged as an adult. Samantha L. Quick, 20, of Greenbelt is charged as an accessory after the fact.

Charging documents allege that the shooting started with two words from Taylor, whom police identified as the leader of the Lanham gang.

"Bust them!" Taylor, known as "Kchaos," is alleged to have said upon seeing the rivals, members of the MS-13 gang.

On his command, police said, Lee and Davies opened fire. Police said the bullets struck one of the MS-13 members, a 20-year-old Silver Spring man, in the shoulder and shattered the windows of a car occupied by two bystanders.

The suspects led police officers on a chase through a Macy's department store before escaping through an emergency exit in a dressing room area. Davies fired one round -- an apparent accidental discharge -- in the process, according to the charging documents. Officers found two guns in the dressing area, one of which had been stolen.

According to police, Quick, who is known as "Cherry," picked the four up and drove them to the Delaware portion of the Eastern Shore.

In the parking lot, police found a 1996 Honda Accord that had been stolen from the New Carrollton Metro station the day before. In the car, investigators found stolen property from burglaries in Howard and Prince George's counties. On the rearview mirror, they found a fingerprint linked to a man who gave police the name Walter J. Graves when he was arrested in October.

Detectives pulled his arrest photo from that incident and matched it to one of the men caught on surveillance footage from the mall.

Meanwhile, on the Eastern Shore, Lee, Kinard and Quick emerged as suspects in a series of burglaries, according to charging documents. On Jan. 2, they were arrested after a high-speed pursuit with Maryland and Delaware state police. Lee was fingerprinted, and police in Montgomery soon learned that the man they knew as Graves was Lee, police said.

Montgomery detectives headed to Delaware. Kinard and Quick confessed to the incident at the mall and a series of burglaries in Howard and Prince George's and on the Eastern Shore, according to the documents. They and Lee, Kinard's boyfriend, were being held yesterday in Delaware.

Police arrested Davies, whose fingerprints were also in the stolen Accord, and Taylor on Tuesday in Prince George's, police said. Efforts to reach attorneys for or family members of the five suspects were unsuccessful.



Andrew Davies, 19, left, and Anthony D. Taylor, 19.
Source: Montgomery County Police

Do jobless join gangs?

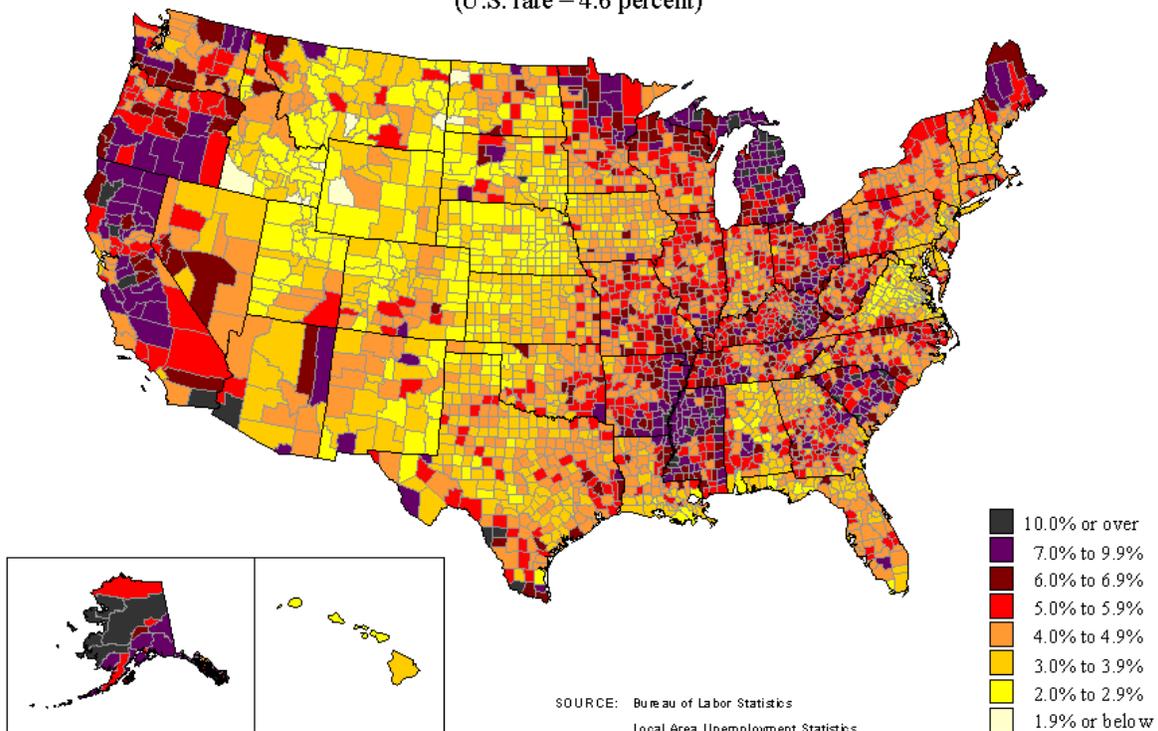
Groups try to find ways to keep ex-cons from returning to crime

Published by the Denver Daily News on January 20, 2009

A multi-faceted strategy to curb street gangs in Denver is crucial because a rising unemployment rate — which Denver has seen — has historically led to more gang violence, said a former Denver gang member turned community activist.

The U.S. Labor Department announced this month that 5.9 percent of Denverites are now unemployed, a 1.9 percent increase from the same time last year. Terrance Roberts — a former Blood member who through his Prodigal Son Initiative now helps former inmates find employment — said he has received an increase in phone calls from former inmates looking for work. The community activist worries that the ex-felons will be passed over for job seekers with “cleaner” resumes and could revert to crime as a result.

Unemployment rates by county,
2007 annual averages
(U.S. rate = 4.6 percent)



“When the unemployment rises, the crime rate rises because people do desperate things because they have to eat,” he said. “I don’t want to see that happen in Denver.”

Community activists are hoping the Comprehensive Gang Model that is starting to be implemented in Denver will keep street gangs and related violence from rising during the recession. The model being promoted by the Federal

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention calls for cooperation and communication among the different gang prevention services in an effort to lower gang-related numbers.

“We’ve got great programs doing (gang) intervention, prevention, suppression and reentry services, but not in a coordinated fashion and targeted fashion,” said Regina Huerter, executive director of Denver’s Crime Prevention and Control Commission. “That’s what we’re working on, how we can go deeper with targeted services.”

Roberts said he likes the idea of gang-prevention agencies collaborating together because it results in a better use of resources. However, he added that each agency should have their own individual programs and their own sense of individuality so they can “better help the people in their own community as well.”

Collaboration

The Comprehensive Gang Model utilizes five strategies — ranging from getting local citizens involved and coordinating programs to increasing educational and employment programs for gang-involved youth — as a framework in which to do gang specific work. The model has been utilized by cities like Chicago and Houston and has produced positive results, according to Huerter.

The Crime Prevention and Control Commission is currently doing outreach with schools and other coordination efforts. The organization is also looking into how they can move forward by working with communities and implementing the strategy for a long-term sustained effort.

“We clearly have a gang presence, we’ve had one for years, but we are not an L.A. or Chicago and we don’t want to be,” Huerter said. “The great thing is that we have the opportunity to help change this course rather than just react to the course. This is really a social community issue as much as a law enforcement issue, and we have to treat it that way.”

From the Editors 



Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. We are always trying to improve the quality and effectiveness of our newsletters and information.

If you have any comments, suggestions or articles that can be used in the “G.A.I.N.” Newsletter, please send them to:

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