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POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

Vandalism prompts partial closing of Whihala Beach

Published by the NWI Times on July 15, 2009.

HAMMOND, IN| Increased gang activity has forced the county to close the Hammond side of Whihala Beach until further notice, a Lake County parks official said Tuesday.

Beachgoers accustomed to entering the park at the Hammond entrance -- just beyond Horseshoe Casino -- lately have been ousted from that portion of the beach and its parking lot and urged to re-enter at the Whiting entrance off 117th Street.

The gangsters, when they show up, generally drive in," Gordon Phillips, superintendent of park operations, said. "We thought at least for a time we'd lock (the gates). It does seem to have helped a little bit."

Asked to leave the west end of the beach on Tuesday, Pedro Nunez of Chicago's Hegewisch neighborhood, and his niece, Dalila Lira, also of Chicago, were nonplussed, saying they frequent that small, quiet portion of the county park. Nunez said, despite the closure, at least 10 cars were parked at the site during his last visit two weeks ago.

The restriction involves only a short span at the west end of the mile-long stretch of lakeshore, ending just beyond the west parking lot. It does not affect bikers and walkers who continue to have full use of area trails.

The temporary closing was prompted by an act of vandalism: Doors to the restroom facility were ripped from their hinges.



Continued...

"We're in the process of reordering the doors to be able to open it back up," Phillips said. "We want to accommodate the law-abiding citizens. We will try to reopen as soon as possible. Hopefully (the gangs) will have moved on."

He said the park manager reported neighbors welcoming the temporary closure to curb gang activity, which has been detected more at the west end of the beach than the east side.

Phillips also said budget cuts have forced the county to hire fewer lifeguards -- nine instead of the typical 15 to 17. And lifeguard stands have been reduced to three, from six or seven previously.



Chicago teen pleads guilty in E.C. gang murder

Pirant faces up to 45-year sentence

Published by the NWI Times on August 11, 2009.

EAST CHICAGO, IN| A Chicago teen faces up to 45 years in prison for his role in the 2007 mob-style killing of Dominique Keesee in East Chicago and the separate shooting of another man.

Jamil Pirant, 17, is scheduled to be sentenced Sept. 30. Pirant pleaded guilty to murder in the perpetration of a robbery and attempted murder, according to a spokeswoman for Lake County Prosecutor Bernard Carter.



Prosecutors said Pirant and three co-defendants broke into Keesee's home, searched for drugs and money and then forced Keesee to open a safe containing marijuana.

Pirant was 15 when Keesee, 19, was gunned down Nov. 16, 2007, in his home in the 4700 block of Euclid Avenue. Keesee died of multiple gunshot wounds to the head and chest.

Co-defendant Khalid Jackson-Bey, 21, was sentenced July 2 to 65 years in prison for his role in Keesee's slaying. A jury found Jackson-Bey guilty of helping the East Chicago-based Players Circle Family street gang carry out the murder, for which participants were promised \$7,000 apiece and a share of any illicit drugs they found in Keesee's home.

Two other defendants stand charged with murder and robbery in connection with Keesee's killing.

A hearing is set for today for Mrtyrone Metcalf, 18, of Hammond. Anthony Rias II, 19, of Gary, has a pretrial hearing set for Monday and a jury trial set for Sept. 14.

Co-defendant Jamal Hillsman, 19, of East Chicago, pleaded guilty to assisting a criminal for his role in Keesee's killing. Hillsman is scheduled to be sentenced Oct. 13.

Pirant turned 17 in April and had been set to stand trial as an adult after being waived from juvenile court.

The attempted murder charge against Pirant stemmed from the shooting of an East Chicago man near 150th Street and Northcote Avenue in East Chicago two weeks after Keesee's death.

Gangs prompt a proactive response

Published by the Journal Courier on August 13, 2009.

LAFAYETTE, IN It has been 11 years since Tashiana Armstrong moved from Gary to Lafayette. But scars where bullets struck her left arm and kneecap are daily reminders of her life in northwest Indiana.



Presenters and attendees at the Faith Community Center.
Source: WFLI.com

Armstrong just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time -- twice a victim of gang-related gunfire.

"I had my 3-month-old daughter with me in the car. The bullet went in right here and went right out," Armstrong said, pointing to a raised wound on her knee. "I was raised all around gangs. I didn't want that for my kids."

She was among an estimated 150 people who attended a presentation Wednesday, hosted by Project Safe Neighborhoods through the prosecutor's office, on gang-related activity in Tippecanoe County. The presentation was sponsored by and held at Faith Community Center.

"We realize that it is an ongoing issue in Lafayette and West Lafayette," said Andy Woodall, pastor of student ministries at Faith Baptist Church. "We want to be out in front of the problem instead of just reactive."

Prosecutor Pat Harrington and Kathryn Redd, coordinator of Tippecanoe County's Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative, shared information about gangs compiled from local law enforcement and testimony presented during criminal sentencing hearings.

Among the statistics presented Wednesday night by Harrington and Redd:

- Tippecanoe County currently has 28 known gangs, up 42 percent from 18 known gangs in 2008. The information is gathered largely from inmates at the Tippecanoe County Jail.
- In the past seven months, 15 people convicted and sentenced in Tippecanoe County courts have been confirmed as gang members, based on criteria through the FBI.

"I had someone tell me the other day, 'Pat, with the way you've been running around talking, I thought we had 10,000 gang members,'" Harrington said. "But when do gangs become an issue? When should we begin to care? ... That's right, with one. One is too many."

Detective Rob Rush, gang liaison for the sheriff's office, brought notebooks, belts and drawings confiscated from area children -- identified gang members -- so that people could have an up-close look afterward.

"Get involved in your kids' MySpace pages. Check what Web sites they are visiting," Rush said. "Search their rooms, check their cell phones and their notebooks. "If you think it's gang graffiti, call your local law enforcement or call me. We will help you."

Derek Corneilisen, a 15-year-old Jefferson High School student, agrees with Rush's sentiment on parental involvement. He attended Wednesday's presentation as part of court-ordered community service.

"You'll be walking down the hall and a fight breaks out," Corneilisen said. "You'll see people throwing gang signs. ... Parents just need to watch what their kids are doing."

For related news and video coverage of this event visit:

http://www.wlfi.com/dpp/news/local/local_wlfi_lafayette_Public_gets_an_inside_look_at_gangs_200908122348



Hammond man charged with planning to kill FBI informant

Agent: Suspect didn't know he was talking to another informant about plot

Published by the NWI Times on August 13, 2009.

HAMMOND, IN| A 26-year-old Hammond man offered to kill the FBI informant who helped agents with a recent drug case against alleged members of East Chicago's chapter of the Spanish Vice Lords, according to criminal charges unsealed Tuesday in Hammond federal court.

Felipe Deleon didn't realize July 22 he was explaining his murder plot to yet another secret informant outfitted with an audio recorder, an FBI agent wrote in his report. Deleon said that if he couldn't find his target, he would kill the informant's mother so the informant could "burn in hell for the rest of his life with guilt," the agent wrote.

Deleon was arrested Aug. 3, and Magistrate Judge Andrew Rodovich on Tuesday denied bond, so Deleon will remain jailed pending his prosecution on charges of planning a murder-for-hire. Deleon's court-appointed lawyer, Arlington J. Foley, declined to comment Wednesday.

The Spanish Vice Lords have figured into several recent federal and state cases. One federal case involves the gang's reputed leader, Michael Silvas Jr., a one-time East Chicago City Council candidate who faces charges he led a cocaine-dealing conspiracy with other Spanish Vice Lords. Silvas' family denies he led the gang or sold drugs.



Spanish Vice Lord drawings
Source: ChicagoGangs.org

Deleon himself is facing a felony drug charge in Lake County. That state charge may have dovetailed with the murder plot, according to the federal charges. The FBI agent claims Deleon said in a recorded conversation that even if he weren't to murder the informant, Deleon would flee the country, because the state charge has jeopardized his immigration status.

Deleon drew the notice of federal agents July 22 when he called someone to set up a meeting to explain his plan, and the call's recipient notified the FBI, the agent wrote. Agents wired the person for a meeting in a car behind Deleon's house on Hohman Avenue, the agent wrote.

The agent stated Deleon said he knew the identity of the informant who worked with agents against the Spanish Vice Lords. Deleon said the informant would tell police about gun and drug sales, eventually laying a base for charges under the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, also known as the RICO law, according to the agent's report. Deleon said prosecutors need the informant as the "main witness" in the cases, the agent wrote.

Deleon said in a profane diatribe that he wouldn't need \$10,000 or \$20,000, just minor support to "smoke" the informant "ASAP," according to the agent's report. The agent claims Deleon said he had an AK-47 to use on the informant or the informant's "momma" if needed, and Deleon said he would commit suicide by provoking a police shooting if he were cornered.

In a second meeting July 23 at a Hammond gas station, Deleon accepted \$500 from the person he told of the plan, the agent wrote. The person promised Deleon another \$1,000 after the informant was killed, according to the agent's report.



Dyer man accused of drug sales, gang activity denied bond

Silvas Jr. among several indicted in cocaine case

Published by the NWI Times on August 12, 2009.

HAMMOND, IN| Reputed East Chicago gang chief and cocaine-dealing suspect Michael Silvas Jr. remains in jail after a judge Wednesday morning shot down his request for bond.

Hammond federal Judge Philip Simon rejected Silvas' second request for bond, saying the drug conspiracy case against the 26-year-old, allegedly the East Chicago chief of the Spanish Vice Lords, appears "rather strong."

Outside court, Michael Silvas Sr. said his son is not a bad guy. Silvas Sr. said the charges are based on misleading evidence from a paid informant who lied to FBI agents about drug deals and gang activity. The elder Silvas said police have accused a lot of people of leading the alleged gang. He said his son doesn't know several of the people caught up in the drug case.

FBI Special Agent Adam Pohl recounted the case against Silvas Jr., who now lives in Dyer, on the stand Wednesday. Pohl said Silvas Jr. was the gang chief and the leader of a conspiracy that orchestrated cocaine sales between May 2008 and February 2009, several monitored by the FBI through a secret informant. On cross-examination, Pohl acknowledged agents hadn't recorded every conversation allegedly involving drug deals set up by Silvas Jr.

Silvas Jr.'s mother, Patricia Silvas, testified her son helps care for sick elderly relatives and has a job. She noted that he ran for East Chicago City Council in 2007. The day before the election, a gunfight killed Silvas Jr.'s 7-year-old son. No one has been prosecuted in that killing.

Three other men -- Jose Almodovar, 25, of East Chicago; Nicholas Ortega, 22, of Chicago; and Richard Vasquez, 26, of Chicago -- have pleaded not guilty to the charges in the indictment that also includes Silvas Jr. Many others also have been indicted on related charges in state and federal court, Pohl said. Silvas Jr., Almodovar and Vasquez are charged with conspiracy and drug distribution. Ortega is charged only with drug conspiracy.

After his arrest, Vasquez admitted he has sold cocaine, Pohl said.

Muncie, Anderson police try to untangle teen' girl's slaying

Published by the StarPress.com on August 4, 2009.

MUNCIE, IN | Muncie and Anderson police were talking to people of interest Monday, trying to determine who fatally shot a young Muncie woman in the parking lot of an under-21 club early Sunday.



Tanisha L. Young (middle)

"We don't know if (19-year-old Tanisha L. Young) was shot accidentally or shot by someone intentionally," said Muncie police Capt. Mark Vollmar, who heads the investigation.

There might be as many as four people who began shooting, Vollmar said, after fights and arguments erupted between Muncie and Anderson youths at the Twin Cities Club, 3000 N. Granville Ave.

Anderson police Sgt. William Casey said several people of interest had been identified and were being interviewed Monday following Sunday's arrest of Terry Lee Johnson, 18, of Anderson, who was initially charged with criminal recklessness with a handgun.

Muncie police spent much of Sunday and Monday interviewing witnesses and trying to establish a motive and suspects for the shooting.

The fight inside the club apparently started between rival youth groups known as the J-5's from Muncie and ABM ("All 'bout Money") from Anderson, investigators said.

"There were girls and boys flashing gang signs," said Vollmar, with party-goers as young as age 12 at the party.

And when the youths grew were tired of fighting and arguing, some teenagers then pulled out guns and began shooting, Vollmar added. Vollmar said he had been unaware the teen club existed, and that police had found some witnesses and their parents to be decidedly uncooperative.

The rivalry between Muncie and Anderson youngsters is known to police and others who work with youth.

"That has been going on for years," said Casey, a 28-year veteran of the Anderson Police Department. "It started with sports," Casey said, and more recently turned violent with kids using guns to settle their differences.

Casey said teenage dance clubs sprang up in Anderson a few years ago with out-of-town promoters offering entertainment that police later found involved sex and drugs.

Anderson police are also familiar with the ABM gang, which is allegedly involved in drug trafficking. Anderson officials began regulating the clubs in an effort to that put them out of business.

Vollmar anticipated more arrests as both police departments work the case. Shooting victim Tanisha Young was the niece of Stan Young, Anderson's deputy police chief.

Delaware County Prosecutor Mark McKinney's office, along with Child Protection Services, also are investigating what teenagers were doing at a club well after curfew, along with what liability, if any, club operators and parents could have. McKinney said witnesses needed to come forward and cooperate with authorities.

"This is another example of a situation where members of our community need to step up and speak out," he said.



Gang leader charged in scheme to control punk rock

Published by Reuters on July 14, 2009.

CHICAGO, IL | The founder of a street gang that administered beatings and made threats in its drive to control the punk rock music scene has been charged with extorting a Chicago performer, authorities said on Tuesday.

Elgin Nathan James, a self-proclaimed founding member of Boston-based FSU -- which stands for "Friends Stand United" -- was arrested on Monday by FBI agents at his Los Angeles home. The attempted extortion charge was then unsealed by the prosecutor's office in Chicago.

FSU boasted in videos dating to 2004 about beatings it administered to punk music fans and performers. The aim was to establish control at clubs and concert venues and drive "Nazi skinheads" out, according to prosecutors.

The victim in this case was a "popular recording artist from the Chicago area" who was not named. The victim and his friends were beaten and repeatedly threatened by FSU members while on tour in late 2005 and early 2006, prosecutors said.



FSU founder Elgin James
Source: TechBanyan.com

Cooperating with the FBI, the victim tape-recorded James seeking to extort money from him in a telephone call and agents observed James accepting a \$5,000 payoff at a club to stop the harassment. If convicted, James could face 20 years in prison.

10 arrested in ICE-led operation targeting gang members for deportation

Published by Media-Newsire.com on July 21, 2009.

INDIANAPOLIS, IN | U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents and local law enforcement officers made 10 arrests during a two-day operation targeting illegal aliens with ties to violent street gangs in Indianapolis. This is the latest local effort in an ongoing national ICE initiative to target foreign-born gang members.

These arrests were made as part of Operation Community Shield, under ICE's National Gang Unit. As part of this national initiative, ICE partners with other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to target the significant public safety threat posed by transnational street gangs. Partnerships with local law enforcement agencies are essential to the success of Operation Community Shield.



Source: CPIU.com

Both are in the custody of the Marion County Sheriff and will be turned over to ICE for deportation once the local charges are resolved.

The majority of the gang members in ICE custody have prior criminal histories. Some of their convictions and arrests include: battery, drunken driving, criminal trespass, residential entry, domestic battery, criminal recklessness and theft.

"Street gangs pose a growing public safety threat to communities in the Indianapolis area," said Daniel Dill, resident agent in charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Indianapolis. "We will use all our law enforcement tools to thwart the criminal efforts of street gangs. Operation Community Shield shows how ICE works with our law enforcement partners to dismantle these criminal organizations and help protect our communities."

ICE was assisted in the operation by the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Since ICE began Operation Community Shield in February 2005, more than 13,800 gang members belonging to more than 900 different gangs have been arrested nationwide.

The multi-agency operation, which ended July 16, targeted foreign-born gang members and associates. Eight of the ten males arrested are documented members of the following gangs: Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), Vatos Locos, La Venganza Comienza (The Vengeance Begins) and Sureños-13. All eight are in the United States illegally from the following countries: Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala. The men are currently in ICE custody on administrative immigration violations pending removal from the United States.

Two of those arrested have no gang affiliation but were arrested on state charges during the course of the enforcement operation. One is a previously deported El Salvadoran national who was taken into custody for resisting arrest. The other, an illegal alien from Mexico, has an outstanding warrant for driving without a license.

Recruiting by gangs now a felony

Measure targets adults who use minors to shield themselves

Published by the Chicago Sun-Times on June 3, 2009.

SPRINGFIELD, IL | Under a new Illinois law, recruitment of minors by criminal gangs will become a felony punishable by a possible four to 15 years in prison.

Senate Bill 141 was signed Monday by Gov. Pat Quinn and takes effect Jan. 1, but it likely will take much longer to determine its effectiveness in curbing drug activity and violence.

State Rep. Jehan Gordon, D-Peoria, was one of the bill's co-sponsors in the Illinois House. She said changes in the law are needed because of the way older gang members use minors to shield themselves from possible jail time. The practice, she said, helps perpetuate a pattern of males in cities dying violent deaths at younger ages.

"Typically, gang activity is surrounded by drugs," Gordon said. "What they oftentimes will do, particularly someone who has a record and has been to jail a couple of times, they'll prey on little kids. They have 10- or 11-year-old kids dealing drugs for them.

"If (the youngsters) get caught, they're just in and out of JDC (Juvenile Detention Center). A lot of gangs use that loophole - which is supposed to protect young people from being haunted by mistakes they make when they're young - to their advantage."

The new law makes it a felony to recruit people under the age of 18 for illegal activities. The law covers recruitment by threats, coercion or physical force and recruitment on or adjacent to school grounds. The law also covers the use of computers, phones and other telecommunications devices to recruit or retain minors.

Peoria County State's Attorney Kevin Lyons said the law was passed with good intentions but said "enforcement will have to be a wait-and-see approach." Although it is unclear how effectively the law can be prosecuted in courtrooms, Lyons said the reason for it is clear.

"The need for this bill results from adult criminals who well know that a different set of criminal laws and procedures apply to minors and juveniles," Lyons said. "Therefore, the adult criminal seeks to recruit juveniles who will generally face less consequences, including no adult jail time or prison, than an adult because one of the main objectives of juvenile court is to reform and rebuild the minor before giving them serious criminal consequences."

Police agencies also will need time to determine how the law can be enforced.

"The spirit of the law is very good," said Peoria County Sheriff Mike McCoy. "Enforcing it and prosecuting it is going to be a little tougher."

McCoy envisioned the new law possibly being used in cases where minors are lured into delivering or holding drugs and weapons in order to pay off a drug debt or simply to avoid harm.

"Hopefully, any parent who gets information that their child is being coerced into a gang would notify law enforcement so we can investigate it," McCoy said. "Not everyone who joins a gang does it out of free will. Some are coerced."

He said the average age of gang members has been lowered dramatically in recent years but not always because of threats. Many times, it is the simple lure of an easy dollar.

"Do you want to work at McDonald's for \$8 an hour or carry a package a few blocks down the street for \$500?" McCoy said. "For all the drug education we do, it doesn't always hold too much water when someone is offered more money than they've ever seen in their life."



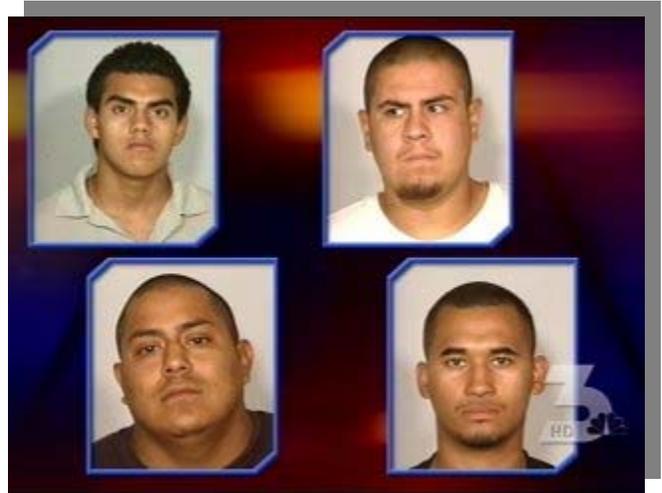
Gang members arrested for pimping young girl

Published by KVBC.com (NBC 3 News, Las Vegas) on August 11, 2009.

LAS VEGAS, NV | Police have arrested four men who claim to be members of a local gang. They're charged with some very serious crimes, including kidnapping and forcing a child to work as a prostitute.

We've heard a lot about gangs making money through drugs and stolen property. But now, police have booked four men into the Clark County Detention Center for making money by pimping a 15-year-old girl.

"Periodically we see cases like this where young girls are made to commit acts of prostitution against their will," confirms Clark County District Attorney David Roger.



The four suspects arrested by Las Vegas Police.

The suspects are between the ages of 17 and 22, all self-professed members or associates of a notorious Los Angeles-based gang known as "Blythe Street."

Over the past several weeks, they've been picked up by Las Vegas police for crimes that reportedly took place at an Extended Stay Motel. The men are accused of befriending and then kidnapping a 15-year-old Las Vegas girl and keeping her locked in a room.

According to court documents and arrest reports, the men "forced her to have sex" with several Johns. And if she refused or tried to leave, they would beat her by "striking her in the face with handguns."

The young girl even told officers that the men would hold a revolver to her head and play "Russian Roulette."

According to online blogs and YouTube videos, Blythe Street gang members are known for their violence and for trafficking cocaine. Experts say most gangs are about getting money every way they can. And for the four suspects, police say this included forcing a young girl to do the unthinkable, knowing that if she didn't cooperate, she would suffer the consequences.

There's no clear indication of how long the girl was forced to live this way, but it appears as if the ordeal lasted for weeks. She was ultimately rescued when one of the suspects tried to solicit her to a resident at the motel, who later called the police.

The four suspects are scheduled for a court appearance in the next couple of weeks; their charges include living off the earnings of a prostitute and first degree kidnapping, which can carry a life sentence.

For video coverage of this story visit: <http://www.kvbc.com/Global/story.asp?S=10890210>

For related news involving Seattle, WA based gangs visit: http://www.seattlepi.com/local/408340_bellinger21.html

All-girl gang gaining ground in Daytona, authorities warn

Published by the SunSentinel.com on August 14, 2009.

DAYTONA BEACH, FL| Daytona Beach police think that for the first time, an all-girl gang is trying to get a foothold in their city.

Male-dominated gangs often have female members, Daytona Beach police Chief Mike Chitwood said. But this group, which calls itself a "squad," is the first he has seen that allows only girls. Chitwood said his agency learned about the group when officers responded to a June disturbance at a bar.

"It took us by surprise," he said.

During the disturbance at Circus Bar on Mason Avenue, officers arrested Brittani Elaine Pinckney, 18, along with two members of the Outlaws motorcycle gang. That's when she started screaming threats of retaliation from her "squad," Chitwood said.

Pinckney, who had to be subdued with a Taser, was jailed on charges of aggravated battery and resisting arrest with violence.

Officers began connecting Pinckney's comments with incidents during the past few months, several of them reported by parents whose children were victimized, Chitwood said. So far, the only thing the girl gang members are suspected of doing is beating up other girls.

"They are jumping out of cars and beating up other females," Chitwood said.

Those activities started about the time school let out, he said. "We're concerned about it carrying over into the school year." Police are working with Daytona schools to make them aware of the gang and to solicit help in gathering information about the group.

Chitwood also is concerned that the girls will branch out into other criminal activities.

"It's something that is in its beginning stages," he said.

It's not uncommon for gangs to be involved in drugs and to force victims into sex acts, Chitwood said. He said he wants to stop this group before it reaches that point.

Technically, the group does not meet the state's criteria to be classified as a gang, Chitwood acknowledged. That includes having identifying signs, colors or symbols and documentation of gang activities.

All-female gangs are more prevalent in places like California, said Inspector Karen Weaver of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. "It's a relatively new thing for us here in Florida."



Mother to Sue Schools After Son Dies in Gang Violence

Published by WJLA.com (ABC 7 News, Annapolis) on July 3, 2009.

ANNAPOLIS, MD| The mother of a 14-year-old Crofton boy who died in an apparent outbreak of gang violence plans to sue the Anne Arundel County school system.

Jenny Adkins believes the school system failed to protect her son, Christopher Jones, from gangs at school.

Jones was attacked May 30 by a group of teens while riding his bike as part of what police called a gang dispute.

Adkins has said her son was being bullied and that school officials had promised to protect Christopher. He was transferred to a new high school in April.

Adkins' lawyer, Richard Jaklitsch, says she's almost as upset with the school system as she is with the teens involved in her son's death. Jaklitsch has notified the school system of his client's intention to sue.



Feds See 'Proliferation' of Indian Gang Activities

Published by the Flathead Beacon on July 13, 2009.

SIOUX FALLS, SD American Indian gang activity has recently started moving from mainly graffiti and vandalism to violent crimes such as beatings, gang rapes, elder abuse, home invasions and drive-by shootings, according to a recent U.S. Department of Justice report.

Congress asked for the document as part of the appropriations process for the 2009 fiscal year. It outlines the various agencies in charge of law enforcement and prosecution in Indian Country, where the crime rate is the highest per capita of any racial group.



For Indian women, the violent crime rate is nearly 50 percent higher than for blacks, and nearly one-third of all Indian victims of violence are 18 to 24 years old, the report said.

The report breaks little new ground but summarizes the status of Indian crime as Congress and the new administration debate how to bolster police work and prosecutions on reservations. It also notes that the FBI and federal prosecutors have started seeing "a proliferation of gang activities in Indian Country."

Among the reasons cited: media influences, the strained social environment on reservations and tribal members returning from prisons where they were involved in Native American prison gangs.

"Some tribes are ill-equipped to address this burgeoning crime problem," the reports said.

The FBI is working with an expert on Native American gangs who has so far done 16 assessments on reservations, the findings of which are given to law enforcement officers and members of the community.

"It points out that the system is failing," said U.S. Sen. John Thune, a South Dakota Republican. "Crime remains endemic on the reservations and I hope this report can be used in some congressional debates we're having to address these crime problems we're having on the reservations."

He and U.S. Sen. Byron Dorgan of North Dakota said one reservation that needs added law enforcement is the Standing Rock, which straddles the Dakotas.

A surge of Bureau of Indian Affairs law enforcement officers last summer bumped staffing levels from 13 to 37 on the reservation that's roughly the size of Connecticut. But the extra help is gone and the crime rate, at one point more than eight times the national average, is on the rise after dropping during the surge.

Dorgan, a Democrat, is chairman of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, and said he asked for the DOJ report to make the case for funding for added law enforcement officers — for all reservations.

"It's fine to analyze the problem and, in fact, that's important so we get the right solution. But this is a problem that has been analyzed and analyzed and analyzed, and the people on the Standing Rock reservation just want law enforcement out there," he said.

President Barack Obama's budget didn't include additional funding for law enforcement on reservations.

But last month, Associate Attorney General Thomas Perrelli announced a DOJ plan to hold a series of regional meetings leading up to a national gathering with tribal leaders to seek input on what should be done.

Perrelli later told Dorgan's committee that the agency is committed to making reservations safer.

"I want to express the department's unequivocal commitment to the mission of fostering public safety in Indian Country," he said June 25.

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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