



Metro Nashville Police Department » Media Releases

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 4, 2006

Chief Ronal Serpas today announced the creation of Operation Safer Streets, a three-pronged plan that will greatly enhance police department gang investigations, precinct-based criminal investigations and add increased uniformed officer visibility downtown on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

Beginning May 19, 28 Specialized Investigations Division narcotics detectives will each be dedicated to undercover gang enforcement duties once a month (this is in lieu of their traditional monthly "Mission One" assignment). These detectives, alone, will add seven additional officers each week to gang sweeps, enforcement and intelligence gathering activities. They will be joined by two officers from each of the six precincts, an ATF agent, a gang expert from the Davidson County Sheriff's office and the police department's six-member gang unit.

"I am very excited that a team of 25 Metro officers will be taking part in gang investigations at least once a week," Chief Ronal Serpas said. "Precinct commanders will play a major role in deciding which hot spots will be targeted. The commitment of resources from the ATF and Sheriff's Office are welcomed, and I thank ATF Special Agent in Charge Jim Cavanaugh and Sheriff Daron Hall."

The beefed up gang investigations will take place throughout Nashville and may involve gang-related drug enforcement, the saturation of areas frequented by gang members and undercover surveillance.

"There's no doubt in my mind that gang members will feel our presence and that this effort will bring relief to neighborhoods," Serpas said.

Chief Serpas also announced that for the first time since detective decentralization to the precincts, new investigator positions will be

added June 1 to assist in handling homicide, robbery, assault and property crime cases. Of the 14 new detective positions, the North Precinct will receive five, the East Precinct four, the South Precinct three, the West Precinct one and the Hermitage Precinct one.

"As we gradually increase staffing through our aggressive hiring program, we are able to dedicate officers to important investigative positions," Serpas said. "Precinct detectives and those in centralized components have done an incredible job while we held the line on patrol staffing, but they need help and it is on the way. It is my expectation that more investigative resources will result in more cases being cleared and more dangerous criminals going to jail."

The Investigative Services Bureau will receive four new detectives in June.

The third component of Operation Safer Streets will put four uniformed officers on walking beats downtown on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights beginning this weekend. The four officers, who will be on overtime, will be on duty from 11 p.m. to 4 a.m. each night and cover the area from 1st to 4th Avenues between Demonbreun and Church Streets.

"The primary mission of these officers is to deter disorder in the hours after midnight when the downtown bars close," Chief Serpas said. "These officers will be highly visible and will conduct bar checks in the early morning hours in an effort to identify potential problem situations before they can spill onto the streets."

Central Precinct Commander Andy Garrett instituted a similar program last year with positive results.

The three components of Operation Safer Streets will be in effect until further notice and have been designed to have an impact on deterring crime during the upcoming summer and fall months. The program is designed to have an impact on pushing overall major crime, which is down nearly 11% this year, even lower; and build on last year's successes that reduced overall major crime to its lowest level since 1991.



Chief Ronal Serpas announces Operation Safer Streets from Riverfront Park in downtown Nashville.



Special Investigations Division Captain Todd Henry details the enhanced gang enforcement initiative. To the right of Henry are ATF Assistant Special Agent in Charge Ron Turk and Davidson County Sheriff Daron Hall.



Central Precinct Commander Andy Garrett details the duties of the four additional officers who will be on walking patrol downtown on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Behind Garrett are (l-r) Deputy Police Chief Joseph Bishop, South Precinct Commander Rick Lankford, West Precinct Commander Mickey Miller and Deputy Police Chief Steve Anderson.

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