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NEWS BRIEFS

Police, educators work to counter gang violence

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Oklahoma gangs on the move

An intelligence report by the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics has stated that black youth gangs are growing at an alarming rate in Oklahoma cities and also are spreading into rural areas of the state. The report was prepared during the last 10 months and is a preliminary analysis of street gang activity by Crips and Bloods, two California-based gangs whose membership has migrated to Oklahoma and many other areas nationwide.

The report links the movement of gangs within Oklahoma to the influx of Los Angeles-based gang members into the state's metropolitan areas. Their influence, lifestyles, use of violence, and knowledge about marketing crack cocaine has spread quickly to midsized Oklahoma towns with black communities. Gang-related shootings have been reported in Elk City, Frederick, Hugo and Lawton. Ardmore police also report an increase in gang activity.

Gang membership estimates for Oklahoma City range from a high of 9,000 members to the report's conservative estimate of 3,500. An alarming 250 drive-by shootings have been reported in Oklahoma City in the last 22 months, resulting in 14 fatalities. The figures for Tulsa are similar.

The report focused on black gangs since they do "the lion's share of drug trafficking," said agency spokesman Scott Rowland. But the report indicates the existence of white, Hispanic and Asian gangs within the state as well.

Security tightens at athletic events

Pinellas County, Florida, school officials recently moved football games up 90 minutes to counter violence and vandalism at athletic events. The action was taken after a 12-year-old girl was hit by a .38-caliber bullet following a game. The shot was fired by a youth on a bicycle who told police he thought a gang was coming after him.

Los Angeles school officials also are re-evaluating security at athletic events after gunfire halted a football match.

Two students were hit by ricocheting bullets during the final minute of a game between Dorsey and Crenshaw high schools. Witnesses said that 10 to 15 people fired at each other across the field, although authorities later concluded that the shots were fired from the street next to the stadium. About 100 players and coaches dropped to the ground and the crowd of 1,000 fled before the game was called off.

The shooting resulted even though school officials had taken several security measures to help prevent such an incident. The game was played at 3 p.m. instead of the traditional 8 p.m. because of a history of problems between the two schools. Fans also waited in long lines to get into the game as police officers frisked everyone for weapons.

Sid Thompson, deputy superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District, said that they will try to beef up security on a major thoroughfare at the entrance to the stadium. The open design of the facility makes it impossible to keep gang members away during games.

Gang intervention program developed

The National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention Program, a cooperative research and development project between the U. S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration, has been developing gang intervention models and technical assistance materials, including a manual for the implementation of key model ideas.

Models and accompanying manuals include approaches and guidelines for local community planning and the mobilization of agency and citizen efforts, with specific models for police, prosecution, judges, probation, corrections, parole, schools, employment, community-based youth agencies and grassroots organizations. For more information, contact Dr. Irving A. Spergel, School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago, 969 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637, 312/702-5879.

Curfews aimed at curbing crime

In an attempt to curb increasing juvenile crime, the city of El Paso, Texas, has adopted a curfew. Beginning November 8, youths 18 and younger and their parents can be charged up to \$500 for violations of the curfew that will be in effect from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m.

The El Paso curfew, as well as curfews in other cities, has drawn criticism from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). A similar curfew in Dallas, Texas, currently is being challenged in court by the ACLU, several teens and their families.