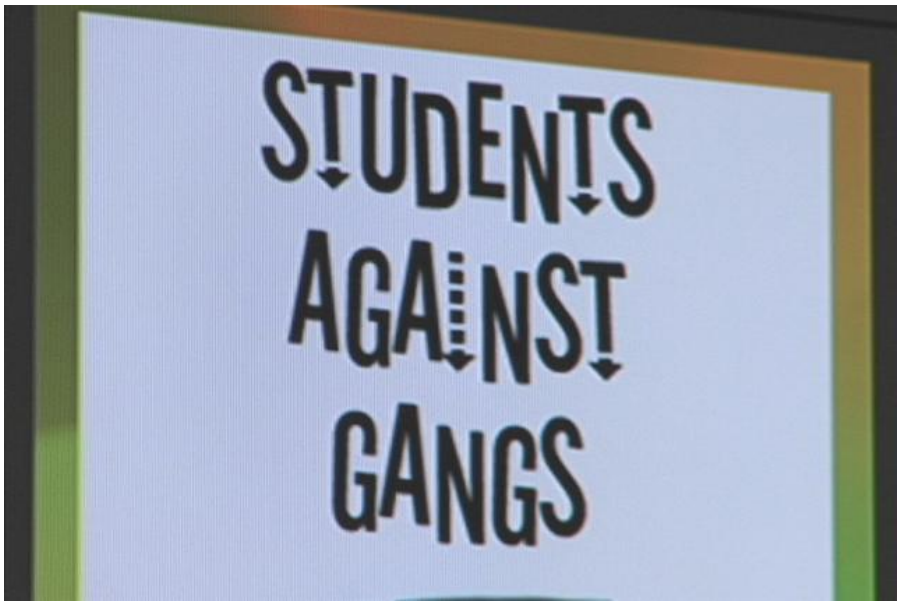
Project Safe Neighborhoods in the News

June 30, 2009: WLFI TV

New anti-gang website for students
Forum to learn about and discuss gangs



Updated: Tuesday, 30 Jun 2009, 9:33 PM EDT
Published : Tuesday, 30 Jun 2009, 5:09 PM EDT

- Niccole Caan

LAFAYETTE, Ind. (WLFI) - Children can now help fight gangs with a new online tool. The Tippecanoe Prosecutor's Office helped launch Students Against Gangs. It's an online safe space for students to talk about a problem plaguing schools. Students Against Gangs offers online resources for children to learn how to identify gangs and talk about problems they have with them.

"I found it of particular interest because we have no anti-gang programs for the youth in Tippecanoe County and this is one way they can reach out of experts across the country to gain advice," said Project Safe Neighborhood Anti-Gang Coordinator

Redd helped create the website. She developed it after another sight she help set up, Teachers Against Gangs, gave educators and community members the resources to challenge gangs.

"To use it as a vehicle for students to be able to have the opportunity to speak openly about the problems we're having in school with gangs or if they are trying to get out of a gang," she explained.

Students who sign up can remain anonymous. The site is recommended for students in seventh grade and above.

Purdue Senior Sarah Andrews joined the site with hopes it will be a good resource if she encounters gang activity.

"If I would ever see anything I could get on there and know how to deal with it," said Andrews.

Andrews studies elementary education and believes the site will be a good place to send future students struggling with gang recruiters.

"There is gang violence even in elementary kids I would end up teaching, so I think it's important to know where to

go to get information like this," she said.

It's information she hopes will empower students to stand up to gangs.

June 30, 2009: WLFI TV

Neighborhood Watch group to deter crime
Urges members to call We Tip

Updated: Tuesday, 30 Jun 2009, 6:11 PM EDT
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- Renetta DuBose

LAFAYETTE, Ind. (WLFI) - One Lafayette neighborhood hopes to prevent crime by forming a watch group.

The Valley Center Neighborhood Association feels drug activity is on the rise.

Vice President Jodie Ellis said it's so bad, she can't even enjoy the comfort of her home.

"I actually got in the car and drove to another neighborhood to walk my dogs because I just don't want to put up with it anymore. I'm sick of it," said Ellis, who lives on Center Street.

Ellis and John Lewandowski said they've had enough. Lewandowski serves as president of the Valley Center Neighborhood Association. He said a few months ago the once diverse and seemingly safe neighborhood went downhill.

"I've seen people kind of walking in the middle of the street, kind of stumbling around. It could be at all hours. It could be in the morning. It could be in the middle of the afternoon. It could be at nighttime. For kids and older people that live in this neighborhood, that's a little scary for them," said Lewandowski.

"I was just walking my dogs and apparently these people didn't like me going by there and they were going (waves with hand) and I was like wait a minute, who are you to tell me what to do?" said Ellis.

Ellis and Lewandowski believe the suspicious activity us drug related. So, the two homeowners want to add a new component to their association...a neighborhood watch group. Ellis feels it will empower the community to be more vigilant.

"We want to stop this now before this gets worse. From what I've learned from the prosecutor's office, drugs really are key. When you start having a lot of drug activity in your neighborhood, all these other crimes follow very closely. By addressing the drug problem here we hope to stall or put off the other crimes as well," Ellis said.

Lewandowski said there are about 400 homes in the neighborhood and 80 people active with the association. He hopes one day neighbors will feel confident reporting small problems and improve the beauty of the neighborhood.

"The meeting tonight is also to encourage people not only that we're going to start organizing a neighborhood watch program, but we also want to encourage our neighbors to use the We Tip line. It is totally anonymous," said Lewandowski.

Lewandowski said neighbors should call the We Tip line to report increased traffic at one home or impaired people on the block.

Valley Center Neighborhood Association will meet Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at the Rush Pavilion in Columbian Park.

The association covers blocks between 15th and Alabama Street and 15th and South Street in Lafayette.

June 30, 2009: WLFI TV

New anti-gang website for students
Forum to learn about and discuss gangs

Updated: Tuesday, 30 Jun 2009, 5:16 PM EDT
Published : Tuesday, 30 Jun 2009, 5:09 PM EDT

· Niccole Caan

LAFAYETTE, Ind. (WLFI) - Students have a new place to learn about gangs. Project Safe Neighborhoods Gang Investigator Kathryn Redd helped launch a new anti-gang website. Students Against Gangs is a forum for students in seventh grade and above. The website gives them information on gangs and how to get out of a gang. Purdue Senior Sarah Andrews joined. She hopes the site will be a good resource if she encounters gang activity.

"If I would ever see anything I could get on there and know how to deal with it," she said.

"I found it of particular interest because we have no anti-gang programs for the youth in Tippecanoe County and this is one way they can reach out to experts across the country to gain advice," said Redd.

Those who join can remain anonymous. **News Channel 18 will show more on the site helps children tonight at 11.**

June 27, 2009: Lafayette Journal and Courier ~ Editorial

Gangs will only move on if confronted

Gangs, in their basic form, are nothing more than an organized group of criminals, and criminals generally prey upon opportunities and weaknesses.

To combat crime, a community generally must reduce the opportunities for criminals to be successful and present a united front against them.

Project Safe Neighborhood, a county-wide effort to confront crime, means that Tippecanoe County is ahead of many Indiana communities.

Thursday's presentation on gangs in Tippecanoe County by sheriff detective Rob Rush should be a reminder that the community needs to remain vigilant, but it should not be a call to panic.

Gangs take advantage of divided communities and infect apathetic neighborhoods -- and fearful neighbors -- like a virus that spreads to other areas. If neighbors stand up against crime, the criminals grow weaker.

Neighborhood associations and neighborhood crime watches are powerful defenses. Project Safe Neighborhood helps coordinate these groups and serves as a bridge between residents and officials.

Project Safe Neighborhood is designed to empower neighbors, remove indifference and teach landlords how to prevent would-be criminals from taking root in rental properties.

In essence, the project amounts to turning on the proverbial lights and watching the cockroaches scurry for cover.

If criminals or gangs are to be successful, a community must leave them alone.

If Greater Lafayette confronts them, criminals and gangs will move to another neighborhood that is more to their liking. Confront them often enough and in places throughout the community, and the criminals will abandon the

area all together.

June 19, 2009: OUR TOWN

Prosecutor fights rising drug, gang problem

POSTED: Friday, June 19, 2009
By KEVIN HOWELL, OURTOWN.COM

LAFAYETTE -- Gangs and drugs, two interrelated issues in Tippecanoe County, are on the list of problem priorities for Prosecutor Pat Harrington to resolve.

The 51- year old, first term prosecutor has enlisted the help of law enforcement, community organizations, area schools, and residents to combat those as well as other problems.

“When I ran (for office) I thought the prosecutor needs to be interactive with people and the community,” said Harrington in his fourth floor courthouse office.

To that end the Lafayette native, former defense attorney and former deputy prosecutor in Lake County, helped initiate programs involving the community.

WeTip, Project Safe Neighborhoods make impact

Starting with a Project Safe Neighborhood grant and hiring grant coordinator Kathy ‘Kat’ Redd, Harrington worked with landlords to help identify good tenants, to make their property safer, and to handle bad-tenant situations especially where criminal activity is involved.

Through those efforts, and with the ambition and drive of Redd, Harrington said, the WeTip Hotline was introduced.

“When Kat started working with landlords, she did focus groups with landlords, community leaders, people in the community and Neighborhood Watch programs. She discovered there was an opening in the system - people wanted to connect but didn’t want to call police because they might be identified,” Harrington explained. “They want to be involved but not to the extent there may be retaliation or to get involved in a legal matter.”

In May 2008 WeTip, an anonymous venue for reporting suspicious activity, went online and in the six-month period from September 2008-April 2009, 508 reports of criminal activity were called in - a 112 percent increase over the first eight month period.

Drugs, Gangs on the rise

There were 122 reports of drugs sales and trafficking, 122 reports of child endangerment, 63 drug abuse, 32 weapons, and 26 fugitive tips.

With reported drug activity, gang activity had also risen.

"We have more drug crimes now. If you look at statistics most crime is drug – driven either because of drug addicts or drug dealers," said Harrington.

He cites a 48 percent increase in crack cocaine the last five years with 152 cases in 2008 compared to 38 four years ago.

"In my opinion, the reason we've had an influx of crack cocaine is it's the popular street drug, and we've become a good market for Chicago – for lack of a better expression, Lafayette has been discovered by drug dealers," Harrington said.

That's also where gang activity seems to originate.

"Gangs are on the increase. Ten years ago this community didn't have gangs, but with the change in demographics we've been discovered," He said.

Currently 28 gangs are reported in Tippecanoe County, with about 1,000 to 1,500 members.

"We don't have any home – grown gangs," Harrington said. "They are coming in and recruiting."

Harrington hasn't stopped with Project Safe Neighborhood and WeTip.

He has gone into schools passing out 55,000 flyers to K-12 children last year on gangs, drugs and other crimes.

Cops Online is another program where police network with officers across the country online and to learn about gang and drug activity.

Getting message to community important

A similar program – Teachers Against Gangs – is being promoted where teachers go online for information from other teachers – "like a FaceBook for teachers."

Project Safe Neighborhood includes monthly meetings with school corporation representatives, gang investigators, school resource officers, and juvenile probation to talk about trends in schools, recruitment by gangs, and graffiti.

"It's informal to get the message to the people," Harrington explained.

Getting the message out to the community is also why Harrington became a member of the local NAACP.

"I knew Sadie Harper-Scott, the director, when she was at the Hanna Center. When she wanted to reestablish the NAACP she said 'Pat it would be really nice to have you join,'" Harrington said.

"It's for people of all color, and if you go through their training you get a wonderful experience about how people of all colors have advanced the civil rights of everyone.

"It's good because I can be present, go to meetings and hear issues and give my opinion on the issues – it's a valuable addition to the community, and a way to reach people with a need in the community."

The community is key, Harrington, also a high school basketball referee, said.

"When I ran, I thought the prosecutor had to be a spokesman for the community, be proactive in community

policing and getting the community involved with the issues of safety – it's not a police community, it's our community," he said.

"We'll be successful because the community has gotten behind us."

June 19, 2009: Lafayette Online

2 year old girl abducted from Gary, Indiana

By Staff Reports, Lafayette Online News
Posted June 19, 2009

LAFAYETTE and INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — On behalf of the FBI and the Gary PD, Tippecanoe County Project Safe Neighborhoods is asking the community for information to help locate Jada Justice, a 2 year old girl who was abducted from Gary late on June 16.

Jada Justice was abducted from a parked vehicle in Gary, IN on June 16th. Anyone with information regarding her whereabouts is urged to call either the FBI or **1-800-78-CRIME**

According to police and FBI reports, Justice was taken from a parked vehicle at the Glen Park Gas Station, 1401 East Ridge Road in Gary, Indiana at approximately 9:40p. She had been in the care of a relative at the time of her disappearance. The Gary Police Department immediately responded to the scene and conducted an extensive search of the area, but found no sign of the child nor clues as to where she might have been taken.

Jada Justice is described as a black female who will be 3 years old this August (approximately 34 months old), 2'2" tall, 35 pounds, black hair, brown eyes, and light brown complexion. At the time of her disappearance, she was wearing an orange skirt, a white tank top with orange and green stripes, white sandals and purple underwear.

Anyone with information concerning her current whereabouts is requested to contact the FBI Indianapolis Office at 317/639-3301. Anonymous and confidential tips can be phoned in to WeTip at 1-800-78-CRIME.

June 18, 2009: Lafayette Journal and Courier

Tippecanoe helping in missing toddler's case

STAFF REPORTS

Anyone with information on a 2-year-old Portage girl missing since Tuesday from northwest Indiana can now report it anonymously.

Jada Justice was reportedly taken from a parked vehicle outside a gas station and convenience store in Gary. She

was in the care of a relative at the time.

The Tippecanoe County prosecutor's office today assisted the FBI and Gary Police Department by providing use of its anonymous WeTip hot line, according to Kathryn Redd, the county's Project Safe Neighborhoods coordinator.

WeTip is a nonprofit based in California with affiliates nationwide. In Tippecanoe County, it was launched a year ago as part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods anti-crime initiative.

Jada is described as a black female, about 2-foot-2 and 35 pounds. She has black hair, brown eyes and a light brown complexion.

She was wearing a white tank top with orange and green stripes, an orange skirt, purple underwear and white sandals the day she disappeared.

Anyone with information can call WeTip at (800) 78-CRIME or (800) 782-7463. Monetary rewards are available for information that leads to a suspect's arrest and conviction.

- Sophia Voravong/svoravong@jconline.com

May 26, 2009: Lafayette Journal and Courier

Homicide case stalled 5 months later
Still no arrest in schoolteacher's death at Lake Shafer

By SOPHIA VORAVONG; svoravong@jconline.com

MONTICELLO - It has been nearly five months since retired schoolteacher Judith Claypool was found dead in her Lake Shafer residence, killed during an apparent home invasion.

No arrests have been made, and no suspects have been openly identified.

Investigators are still looking into whether Claypool, 67, was a target or whether she did not know the suspect, said Sgt. Kim Riley, public information officer for the Lafayette district of the Indiana State Police.
"It's all still open for discussion," he said. "We have not ruled anyone out, but we have not pinned anyone down, either."

Riley said authorities are hopeful that new information will come when the Indiana State Police completes testing evidence that was taken from Claypool's North Sullivan Court home.

He declined to comment on what was sent to the lab. But results could be available soon.

"It's an unknown timetable because the lab gets samples and evidence from all over the state," Riley said. "But we are hoping that it will be soon. ... We have no new leads at this time."

State police detectives are assisting the White County Sheriff's Department in the homicide investigation.

Claypool was killed on Dec. 29.

Since, authorities in White County have partnered with the Tippecanoe County prosecutor's office and its WeTip anonymous hot line to try and generate leads.

And a reward of $10,000 is available for information that would lead to an arrest and conviction. Half of the reward came from Monticello businessman Don Rollheiser.

Rollheiser, a property manager in White County, did not know Claypool.

"I'm from Chicago and had a business in a bad neighborhood. I saw a lot of things go down there," he said. "I didn't want to see this town go like that. I wanted to help out."

Rollheiser said his hope is that media outlets continue stories about Claypool's murder and that others are encouraged to add to reward money until an arrest is made.

"It bothers me, but there's not much we can do about it," Rollheiser said of the seemingly stalled investigation. "But I think if the community puts out enough reward money, maybe someone in a tavern who overheard something will come forward.

"That's what I'm looking for."

Additional Facts

What you can do

Tips in the case of Judith Claypool's death can be left anonymously by calling WeTip at (800) 782-7463.

May 24, 2009: Lafayette Journal and Courier

Landlords offered anti-crime tips

The Tippecanoe County prosecutor's office is holding its next Project Safe Neighborhoods course for rental property owners and managers June 16 to 17.

The free course will be from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Tippecanoe County Office Building in downtown Lafayette. The course provides instruction on preparing the property, code requirements, applicant screening, ongoing management, warning signs of drug activity and more.

To register, send an e-mail with contact information to Kathryn Redd at kredd@tippecanoe.in.gov.

May 3, 2009: Lafayette Journal and Courier

Arrest made in Shadeland liquor store robbery

A Linden man was arrested Friday in connection with an armed robbery at the Shadeland liquor store eight days ago, police reported.

Richard Stair, 46, of Linden **was arrested on suspicion of armed robbery after police received a tip from the WeTip anonymous hotline**, according to Detective Thomas Lehman with the Tippecanoe County Sheriff's Department.

Stair is accused of robbing Bedrock Liquors, 2525 Indiana 25, Shadeland, at 10:55 p.m. Saturday, April 25. According to police, Stair entered the store and displayed what appeared to be the handle of a knife. He fled the store with cash, cigarettes, and alcohol.

He remained Saturday in the Tippecanoe County Jail on a bond of $25,500. He also was held on an unrelated warrant for failure to appear in court to face a charge of operating while intoxicated stemming from a January arrest.

Lehman credited the WeTip program for pointing the investigation in the right direction.

Citizens can report criminal activity anonymously by calling WeTip at (800) 78-CRIME. In addition, tips can be submitted online at the WeTip website at www.wetip.com

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May 1, 2009: WLFI TV

Community can help stop gangs
WeTip Hotline is invaluable resource

Updated: Friday, 01 May 2009, 8:55 PM EDT
Published : Friday, 01 May 2009, 4:56 PM EDT

- Laura Kirtley

LAFAYETTE, Ind. (WLFI) - Police and school administrators say step one for any community is to stop gang influence among kids. Parents are part of the solution. It is a matter of educating them about gangs so they know what to look out for. Some students said most parents are not aware of just how influential gangs are in the schools.

"Some parents don't even know what's going on. Most kids don't even talk about it because they are too afraid to talk about it at home, because they don't want anything to happen to them," Lafayette Jeff High School student Austin Jackson said.

Lafayette Police Officer Mike McIver works in the Lafayette school system. He said he has seen a child as young as six-years-old sporting gang paraphernalia.

"There has also not been a whole of education in the home about gangs. What they create and what can happen when you get involved in the gang. So when they get into it, they don't really know what they are getting in to until it's too late," McIver said.

Some students who have found themselves caught up in gang activity have a warning for parents and students.

"I joined it because I had problems. Now I know it's not good. It's not fun. It gets you into a lot of trouble. From my experience I'd tell them no--don't join gangs it's not good," a Lafayette Jeff High School student said.

Outside of the schools and in our neighborhoods, police say graffiti is a sign residents should not ignore While gang graffiti is creeping up around the community, people are just as quickly working to clean it up. Something Tippecanoe County Prosecutor Pat Harrington said is important to show gangs they are not wanted in the community.

"When they know that local citizens are going to be protective of their neighborhoods they'll move on to another city or location where they can blend in and do their illegal activity," Harrington said.

Lafayette residents who have seen their neighborhoods spoiled by gang activity and drug deals, urge others to be aware and work with law enforcement to save their neighborhoods.

"It's everybody's problem. Everyone in the city of Lafayette it can happen in your neighborhood too," Lafayette resident, Tracey Smith said.

Parents, teachers, and community members can do more to help. A website set up by the Tippecanoe County Prosecutors office shows which gangs are working in our area. It can be a good resource for parents. They can find out what to look out for--gang identifiers like signs and colors. For more information Click here

Additionally, the Prosecutor said the anonymous WeTip Hotline is an invaluable resource. The number is 1-800-78-CRIME. Harrington said since WeTip started in May 2008, they have received 700 tips.

April 25, 2009: Lafayette Journal and Courier

VP robber gets 16-year term

STAFF REPORTS

A Lafayette man was sentenced Friday to 16 years in prison for holding up a convenience store last summer and for being a habitual offender.

Lucio Hernandez Hinojosa, 27, was accused of pointing a handgun at two Village Pantry employees during an Aug. 6 robbery at the store on South Fourth Street.

No one was injured. The former Gary resident fled with $138 and a carton of cigarettes.

Hinojosa was found guilty of robbery, a Class B felony; theft, a Class D felony; and criminal confinement, a Class C felony, after a bench trial in February before Judge Randy Williams of Tippecanoe Superior Court 1.
Williams later that month deemed Hinojosa a habitual offender.

Chief Deputy Prosecutor Kristen McVey said Hinojosa used the stolen money to buy drinks after the robbery at a West Lafayette bar.

Hinojosa pleaded guilty in Tippecanoe Superior Court 5 last November to charges of receiving stolen property, a Class D felony; and false informing, a Class B misdemeanor.

He also was convicted of residential entry in Tip-pe-canoe County in 2001.

Hinojosa was identified as a suspect in the August robbery after a call was made to WeTip, an anonymous reporting hot line.

April 23, 2009: Lafayette Journal and Courier

WeTip gives tip of the hat to county

By SOPHIA VORAVONG; svoravong@jconline.com

When Tippecanoe County first implemented the WeTip hot line a year ago, Prosecutor Pat Harrington hoped residents would embrace being able to report crimes anonymously.

But even he was surprised by the program's success. In the first month, 78 tips came in -- setting a record high for WeTip's 36-year history, according to Sue Mandell, WeTip's director of program development.
"We've never had anything like that," she said. "Tippecanoe County has truly made WeTip a priority."

Those efforts will be rewarded today during WeTip's 36th annual National Crime-Fighting Conference in Riverside, Calif. Harrington was selected as prosecutor of the year by the nonprofit organization's board.
Kathryn Redd, coordinator of the county's Project Safe Neighborhoods -- the initiative through which WeTip was launched here in May 2008 -- will be honored as woman of the year.

"This is a community award," Harrington said. "WeTip has been successful here because the public accepted it -- community leaders, school corporations, neighborhood associations, civic leaders, churches."

How it works
When a call is made to WeTip's 800-number, operators take down the information and forward it to the appropriate law enforcement agency, Mandell said.

Depending on the urgency of the tip, the information can be relayed immediately via telephone or sent in an e-mail or a fax.

WeTip most recently helped the Lafayette Police Department locate a 31-year-man wanted for failing to show up for a court hearing. Chad Balser had been sentenced to community corrections and probation after pleading guilty to possession of a firearm.

"Here at the police department, WeTip has been a very successful tool," said Detective Matt Devine, who runs Lafayette's Fugitive Search. "If we get information that the suspect is at a business right this second, we can have a patrol officer check right away.

"If it's information that a suspect is staying at a house on Wabash Avenue, detectives can follow up on that and do surveillance in the area."

Redd said that so far, between 700 and 800 tips have been reported since last May. About 59 percent were related to drug activity, with about 70 percent of those having a secondary crime of child endangerment, Harrington said.

Another 26 percent of tips reported dealt with child neglect or endangerment.

Redd has since been asked by police departments, prosecutors and city councils throughout Indiana to speak to them about Tippecanoe County's success.

"It's everything I imagined," she said. "WeTip is something that crosses all boundaries of age, gender, sex, economic class. That's why it has been successful."

Mandell said another community -- with a population of 470,000 -- that launched WeTip a month prior to Tippecanoe County received 41 tips in its first month. Tippecanoe's population is about 160,000.
Tips can be made anonymously to the WeTip hot line by calling (800) 782-7463 .

April 23, 2009: Lafayette Journal and Courier

Police turn to hotline for help
White Co. police to use WeTip for unsolved murder

Updated: Thursday, 23 Apr 2009, 7:29 PM EDT
Published : Thursday, 23 Apr 2009, 4:32 PM EDT

- Laura Kirtley

MONTICELLO, Ind. (WLFI) - It has been nearly four months since Judith Claypool was found murdered in her Monticello home. Now, White County investigators are teaming up with the WeTip Hotline to solve the case.

For Lynn Bonfils, the murder of her neighbor, 67-year-old Judith Claypool, is still overwhelming. On December 29th police discovered Claypool's body in her home at 2352 Sullivan Court. Her car was found abandoned in a neighbor's front yard. Police believe her death was the result of a home invasion.

"It just hurts inside to think about what happened to Judy. She was a special lady. Just looking at our little avenue here, it's really scary because why did they pick on Judy's house," Bonfils said.

The Tippecanoe County Prosecutor is offering the use of the WeTip Hotline to White County for this case. Prosecutor Bob Guy says anyone with information about the murder of 67-year-old Judith Claypool can call the anonymous WeTip Hotline. Guy is hopeful a new billboard on Sixth Street in Monticello will encourage those with information to come forward.

"You never know until that information is provided whether that is going to be the link to establish the information that is going to lead to an arrest. So we encourage people to continue to provide information," Guy said.

Guy said investigators are looking into leads and waiting on lab results from forensic evidence.
"There is information that we're trying to keep outside of the community and realm of the media--not to withhold information, but we believe that information could potentially jeopardize the investigation," Guy said.

For now, friends and family continue to wait for answers--questioning how this could happen.
"The idea that evil can't happen in our town is unrealistic anymore. It does happen," Bonfils said.

Anyone with information on this case is urged to contact WeTip at 1-800-78-CRIME. WeTip is offering a $1,000 reward for the successful arrest and conviction of the person or persons involved in the crime. Since January, Monticello community members have offered a $10,000 reward.

April 9, 2009: Lafayette Journal and Courier

WeTip info leads to fugitive's arrest
Chad Balser arrested in Lafayette

Updated: Thursday, 09 Apr 2009, 10:42 AM EDT
Published : Thursday, 09 Apr 2009, 10:42 AM EDT

- Sue Scott

LAFAYETTE, Ind - Lafayette Police have apprehended a man featured on Fugitive Search nearly two years ago. Chad Jeremy Balser, 31, was arrested Wednesday evening by Lafayette Police. Detective Matt Devine said Balser was found in a residence in the one thousand block of Wabash Avenue. **"Balser was located as a result of information provided through the WeTip hotline," said Devine.**

Detective Devine said this case stems from a traffic stop in August 2005 on the city's north side. "Officers identified Chad Jeremy Balser as a passenger in a vehicle," said Devine. "Illegal drugs and a sawed-off shotgun were in the vehicle. The sawed-off shotgun had its serial number altered."

Balser pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm with an altered serial number in February 2006. He was sentenced to a combination of community corrections and probation. Detective Devine said a warrant was issued for Balser's arrest when Balser failed to show up for a court hearing in July 2007.

March 26, 2009: Lafayette Journal and Courier

Growing presence, impact of gangs cited in Greater Lafayette

By Meranda Watling • mwatling@journalandcourier.com

Dru Anthrop said as a Central Catholic Jr.-Sr. High School student, he feels somewhat sheltered from gang activity and its influence in this community.

He said his awareness was raised after hearing Tippecanoe County Prosecutor Pat Harrington discuss the trends

and related growing drug problems in Greater Lafayette. Harrington spoke to Central Catholic students and community members on Wednesday.

"I was kind of completely ignorant of gang activity because here, we're protected," Anthrop said. "I don't know anyone involved in gangs. This made me aware."

Harrington said teens like the Central Catholic senior and his schoolmates need to be educated about the signs of gang activity and how to react. That age group is more in tune with popular music videos and emerging technologies that gangs sometimes use.

"We are addressing the situation," Harrington said. "But you have to be aware. Because if you aren't aware and come across a gang and disrespect them, you could be in trouble."

Among the troubling local trends Harrington cited in his presentation was the known presence of at least 23 gangs in this county. Mostly, they have trickled down from the Chicago area.

He said while gang violence hasn't been a significant problem here, the drug trade is flourishing. More than 40 Class A felony drug arrests have been made this year, Harrington said. And more than half of those are believed to be gang-related.

Also, more heroin arrests were made in the first three months of 2009 than any year prior in Tippecanoe County.

Harrington said a drive-by shooting on Club Lane in December is believed to be gang-related, and he cited the ongoing presence of graffiti around the county -- including a gang "tag" in a courthouse restroom.

He showed the students some of the symbols or tattoos different gangs use, such as specific numbers or colors identified with particular groups. **And he encouraged them to notify police via the WeTip hot line at (800) 78-CRIME or (800) 782-7463.**

Central Catholic senior Heather Christopher said after the presentation that "some of the statistics, especially the local ones, were shocking."

She also was glad to be aware of the problem and also what to look for or avoid.

"It's important to know where you are and who's around you at all times," she said. "And be able to recognize the signs and to do something."

March 25, 2008: WLFI TV

Prosecutor educates parents on gangs
Parents learn gang symbols

Updated: Wednesday, 25 Mar 2009, 11:45 PM EDT
Published : Wednesday, 25 Mar 2009, 11:45 PM EDT

LAFAYETTE, Ind. (WLFI) - Parents gathered in the cafeteria at Central Catholic High School see what they might miss when out in public.

"I was interested to hear about gang activity in Lafayette," said parent Lou Fenoglio.

Tippecanoe County Prosecutor Pat Harrington broke down the different gang symbols and tattoos.

"I didn't realize there were so many different gangs associated with the Lafayette area," said Fenoglio.
Fenoglio will take what he's learned about the 23 gangs in Tippecanoe County home so he can educate his three children about what to watch out for.

"Just to be aware, not to be scared, not to be afraid, but to be aware and openly talk about it," Fenoglio said.
Prosecutor Harrington said he's leaving the courtroom to take on the role of teacher so parents can be part of the solution to the gang problem.

"So we can be safe and be smart and so they know what law enforcement is doing about the issue," explained Harrington.

Harrington hopes the presentation will also encourage parents to get involved to get gangs out of the area. Parents should know they are liable up to 5,000 dollars if their child does any damage in association with a gang. Also, most gang crimes are prosecuted in adult, not juvenile court meaning convictions will show up on a permanent criminal record.

February 26, 2009: Lafayette Journal and Courier

Monticello homicide case gets helping hand

-- Sophia Voravong/svoravong@jconline.com

Authorities are hopeful that an anonymous hot line will help generate new information in the homicide of retired Monticello teacher Judith Claypool.

Claypool, 67, was killed during a home invasion Dec. 29 at her White County residence. No suspects have been publicly named, and no motive has been released.

But investigators there recently teamed with the Tippecanoe County prosecutor's office and use of its anonymous reporting hot line, WeTip. WeTip is part of Tippecanoe County's Project Safe Neighborhoods anti-crime initiative. "We have formed a partnership with them to assist them in any way possible," said Kathryn Redd, Project Safe Neighborhoods' local coordinator. "WeTip has been going very well for us. Most recently, it assisted police in making an arrest in several Village Pantry robberies."

White County Sheriff's Department and the Indiana State Police are investigating Claypool's death. Sgt. Kim Riley, public information officer of ISP's Lafayette post, said no arrests have been made as of Wednesday.

WeTip, a nonprofit with affiliates nationwide, was launched in Tippecanoe County last year. Anonymous tips are forwarded to the investigating agency after they're received.

Redd said Tippecanoe County also partnered earlier this year with state police to help generate new information in a gang-related, double homicide in Lake County.

Anyone with information on Claypool's death can call the White County Sheriff's Department at (574) 583-2251 or WeTip at (800) 782-7463.

February 25, 2009: Monticello Herald Journal

Claypool murder case gets boost of support
Anonymous tip line, bigger reward added to investigation efforts by state.

By KATIE DUFFEY, kduffey@thehj.com
Published: Wednesday, February 25, 2009 10:41 AM CST

Using the lure of an increased reward and the veil of anonymity, local law enforcement officers and the family of slain Twin Lakes teacher Judith Claypool are hopeful new details will surface in the Dec. 28 murder case.

“We appreciate the support of the community. At this time we have placed our trust in local law enforcement officers, and have faith that it will be resolved,” stated Claypool’s brother Ken Houston, speaking on behalf of the family for the first time since the killing.

“We would hope that anyone with information would come forward.”

A partnership formed with the Tippecanoe County Prosecutor’s Office, investigators hope, will allow for information to be more forthcoming regarding the 67-year-old’s murder — the result of an apparent invasion of her lakeside home.

“Everyone is concerned that it hasn’t been resolved, myself included. One’s expectation often is that these cases are solved soon after they are committed, and that is far-fetched. I do echo their concern however,” said White County Prosecutor Robert Guy. “It is not from a lack of effort, but a lack of information.”

According to Guy, Cpl. Scott Brown with the Indiana State Police informed him of a service used by the Tippecanoe County Prosecutor’s Office that allows individuals with information regarding a specific crime to make reports with explicit anonymity.

“He (Brown) indicated to me that we may be able to utilize this resource in our investigation on a one-time basis to piggyback with Tippecanoe County,” said Guy.

“The unique thing about WeTip is that it has an anonymous hotline that they believe has a greater capacity of generating information because it does allow a person to remain anonymous.”

Launched in May of last year as part of Tippecanoe County’s Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative, WeTip is a results-driven non-profit agency that officials say above all places the importance on assisting law enforcement solve cases.

“After meeting with citizens, civic groups, businesses and neighborhood associations it became clear that there was a hesitancy to report illegal activity to police,” said Kathryn Redd, Project Safe Neighborhoods/Anti-Gang Initiative Coordinator for Tippecanoe County, who attested to WeTip’s immediate success stories.

“We have received in excess of 500 criminal activity reports, from 36 different counties in Indiana, since the program began.”

According to the WeTip Web site, all calls are anonymous — not just confidential. Where confidential calls can be subpoenaed for legal purposes, anonymous phone calls cannot be traced or taped.

When calling the hotline, 800-78-CRIME, an informant is instantly informed that “This is the WeTip Crime Hotline, do not give your name or identify yourself in anyway.” If at any time the caller starts to identify themselves, the operator will disconnect the call.

Once anonymity has been established, the operator takes the caller through a series of about 65 questions — a lengthy list aimed at eliciting as much information from the informant as possible. Finally, the caller is asked if “there is an arrest and conviction, are you interested in a reward?” If the answer is yes, the caller receives a three-part fictitious code name in addition to their tip number.

Once contacted regarding the Claypool case, Redd said her office immediately jumped at the opportunity to help White County investigators with the use of WeTip.

“When I was approached by the ISP on behalf of the White County Prosecutor for WeTip assistance, there was never a doubt that the executives at WeTip would provide the service,” said Redd. “Given the severity of the crime, this is a case where there are no jurisdictional boundaries.”

Since signing on with WeTip, Redd said Tippecanoe County has broken all records in the service’s 36-year history. Attesting to its usefulness locally, Redd also indicated that other Hoosier counties’ utilization of WeTip have paid major dividends in tracking down criminals.

“In early January, the Indiana State Police (in Lake County) asked for assistance from WeTip to assist in solving two cold-case gang murder cases,” said Redd. “WeTip was happy to accommodate them in trying to bring the perpetrators to justice.”

As White County's case is added to the WeTip database, flyers advertising the hotline, along with an increase in reward money, are being circulated throughout the community — with plans also on the way for a billboard to be placed in Monticello alerting residents to WeTip.

Last month, Monticello businessman Don Rollheiser offered $5,000 to the prosecutor's office as a reward for any information leading to the capture and conviction of Claypool's murderer. Spurred by this action, two local groups have recently come forward with additional pledges of money to help in the investigation.

According to Guy, the Class of '59 and Friends, as well as Twin Lakes School Corporation members, have helped the reward available swell to $10,000 — a total inflated further still with the promise of up to $1,000 from WeTip.

"There is someone who knows what happened, the key is making sure that person understands the program and knows there is a 100 percent anonymous method to report what they know," asserted Redd. "It takes the determination of the community to get the word out."

Anyone with information regarding Claypool's murder is encouraged to contact either Detective Patrick Shafer with the White County Sheriff's Office at 574-583-5121, or make their report anonymously with WeTip by dialing 1-800-78-CRIME.

Visit www.wetip.com for more information.

February 17, 2009: WLFI TV

New anti-gang website online
Comprehensive site for parents and teachers

Updated: Tuesday, 17 Feb 2009, 5:52 PM EST
Published : Tuesday, 17 Feb 2009, 5:36 PM EST

Niccole Caan

LAFAYETTE, Ind. (WLFI) - A new anti-gang website for parents and educators is now online. The Teachers Against Gangs site began this week. Website members can ask questions in forums, look at gang symbols and post gang related photos and video.

Kathryn Redd, the Anti-Gang Initiative Coordinator for the Tippecanoe County Prosecutor's Office, describes the site as a comprehensive place to find out about gangs. "It's just pulling that information together so that the community has one place they can go and gather these things. We'll also have news reports, any current studies that are out," said explained. Redd will be an administrator for the site.

Also, developed recently was a companion anti-gang website for law enforcement: Gang Cops Online. It's a place for officers to share information confidentially.

January 23, 2009: WLFI TV

WeTip Hotline honored
Hotlines less than a year old

Updated: Friday, 23 Jan 2009, 10:17 AM EST
Published : Thursday, 22 Jan 2009, 11:49 PM EST

- Niccole Caan

TIPPECANOE COUNTY, Ind. (WLFI) - Tippecanoe County's WeTip Hotline will receive a national award after being in operation less than a year.

The hotline will be honored at the national WeTip Conference for having the most calls per capita. Tippecanoe County Prosecutor Pat Harrington says the community is what makes the program so successful in our area.

"The reward is for everyone in the community. I think it's tremendous everyone has excepted this and they will call the anonymous tip line and report crimes when they see them or they have any information about a crime that has occurred. It's very rewarding," said Harrington.

Tippecanoe's WeTip is eight months old and already 475 tips have been taken. Harrington attributes part of the program's success to News Channel 18 distributing the number during newscasts.

"We noted that after Channel 18 uses the number we will see large tips the following 2-3 days," he explained.

Harrington will teach other counties in the nation how to make their hotlines successful at the WeTip national conference in California in April.

He believes the key is marketing the program to many different groups including schools, churches, neighborhood associations and businesses

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January 21, 2009: WLFI TV

Project Safe Neighborhoods aids rentals
Rental property owners offered free course

Edited: Wednesday, 21 Jan 2009, 7:56 PM EST
Created On: Wednesday, 21 Jan 2009, 5:33 PM EST

LAFAYETTE, Ind. - The Feb. 2009 session of the Tippecanoe County Rental Property Owner and Manager Training Course, Keeping Illegal Activity Out of Rental Properties, will be held on Tuesday, Feb.10 and Wednesday, Feb.11 from 6:00 to 9:00pm in the Grand Prairie Conference Room at the Tippecanoe County Building and is now open for registration.

The course is offered free of charge and advanced reservations are required. Participants who complete the 2-day course will receive a copy of the 200-page manual and a certificate of course completion from PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS; Pat Harrington, Tippecanoe County Prosecutor; US District Attorney, Northern District of Indiana, and the US Department of Justice.

FEBRUARY DATES
Session 6:

- Tuesday, February 10, 2009 and Wednesday, Febuaray,11, 2009
- 6:00-9:00pm
- Tippecanoe County Building - Grand Prairie Conference Room

To register by email:
Send request to Kathryn Redd at kredd@tippecanoe.in.gov; include your name, personal address, name of the rental property or properties you represent, number of rental units you own/manage, your office and mobile phone numbers and email address.

To register by phone:
Call the PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS INFORMATION LINE at 765-413-7238, leave a message including your name, personal address, name of the rental property or properties you represent, number of rental units you

own/manager, your office and mobile phone numbers and email address.

January 21, 2009: Our Town – Lafayette/West Lafayette Online

Rental property owner and managers course open for registration

1/21/2009 6:32:48 PM

POSTED: Wednesday, January 21, 2009

LAFAYETTE -- The February session of the Tippecanoe County Rental Property Owner and Manager Training Course, "Keeping Illegal Activity Out of Rental Properties" will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 10 and Wednesday, Feb. 11 from 6-9 p.m. in the Grand Prairie Conference Room at the Tippecanoe County Building.

The course is offered free of charge and advanced reservations are required. Participants who complete the two-day course will receive a copy of the 200-page manual and a certificate of course completion from PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS; Pat Harrington, Tippecanoe County Prosecutor; US District Attorney, Northern District of Indiana, and the US Department of Justice.

Those interested can register via email by sending a request to Kathryn Redd, the coordinator, at kredd@tippecanoe.in.gov. Include your name, personal address, name of the rental property or properties you represent, number of rental units you own/manage, your office and mobile phone numbers and email address.

Participants can register via phone by calling the PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS INFORMATION LINE at 765-413-7238. Leave a message including your name, personal address, name of the rental property or properties you represent, number of rental units you own/manager, your office and mobile phone numbers and email address.

December 8, 2008: WLFI TV

Gang crimes on the rise
Tippecanoe County housing targeted

Last Edited: Monday, 08 Dec 2008, 6:19 PM EST
Created On: Monday, 08 Dec 2008, 6:19 PM EST

Renetta DuBose

Lafayette - Kathryn Redd, who works with the Tippecanoe County prosecutor, said the best way to decrease gang activity is for the community to step up.

It's gang fights, like one recently posted on YouTube with students behind the Big Lots store in Lafayette, that has authorities beefing up enforcement. Redd said crimes like graffiti and drug trafficking are being done by some former Chicago Housing Authority residents now calling Lafayette home.

"Criminal CHA clients are exploiting the system by setting up drug sales and distribution operations in complexes throughout our county," said Redd.

"Anytime you have housing projects sometimes that opportunity presents itself. But we just all have to work diligently to combat that, to be warm and welcoming to the people that are coming for the right reasons," said Lafayette Mayor Tony Roswarski.

Lafayette resident and Hammond native Blanca Acevez said not everyone moving from areas to the north participates in illegal activities. She said targeting young people with a positive message is key.

"There's no reason to carry a gun. You have every resource available to you to be successful. There's no reason for it. I think that needs to be advocated through the schools," said Acevez.

The prosecutor's office trained landlords in Tippecanoe County and local schools on how to operate with the We Tip crime reporting service. Redd said between May and September this year Tippecanoe County's "We Tip Hotline" has taken 137 tips and 411 "Reports of Criminal Activities." She hopes the results encourage people to speak up.
"By conveying our priorities and our message and the results of this enhanced enforcement, we have the opportunity to demonstrate to the community, that they have the power to do something, that they have the power to act," said Redd.

Redd said graffiti is down but there is a turf war between the Latin Kings and the Latin Dragons at McCutcheon High School. She said Lafayette Jefferson High School is the number one school for gang recruitment.

December 2, 2008: Lafayette Journal and Courier

Safe Neighborhoods receives 2nd grant

The Tippecanoe County prosecutor's office has received $25,000 in grant money that will allow it to continue with Project Safe Neighborhoods, a program to reduce crime and gang activity.

Prosecutor Pat Harrington said Monday that the funding is in addition to $27,000 his office received earlier this year from the U.S. attorney's office for the northern district of Indiana.

This means his office will have a total of $52,000 for 2009 to be put toward its already successful landlord and rental property owner training program, the WeTip reporting hot line and a gang-education initiative.

"The rental training program is going excellent. We're very proud of how actively engaged participants have been. ... In the WeTip program, we've set records for the numbers of tips received," Harrington said. "What this additional funding means is that Project Safe Neighborhoods isn't using any taxpayers funds locally or state revenue."

In 2007, the Tippecanoe County prosecutor's office received less than $53,000 to launch Project Safe Neighborhoods, a program that larger cities nationwide have used to combat issues such as drug dealing, weapons offenses, robberies and vandalism.

Harrington said the grant amount was reduced this year to $27,000. His office was later contacted by the U.S. attorney's office and told that additional funding was available from returned grant money.

Harrington said he was also asked to give a presentation next year on Tippecanoe County's success during a seminar being sponsored by the U.S. attorney's office. Both he and Kathryn Redd, local coordinator, will take part.

He said rental property owners and managers representing 799 properties and 11,900 rental units already have taken part in landlord training, which focuses on ways to keep crime out. The data does not include participants from the most recent training class in November.

Tippecanoe County has about 14,000 rental units.

Harrington also pointed to the success of WeTip, which between May 28 and Sept. 20 had been used by residents to report crime activity 540 times. About 47 percent of those tips involved drug activity.

Of those tips, 70 percent involved child endangerment.

"That statistic caught us off guard as to how many times children are present when adults are dealing drugs or using drugs," Harrington said.

-- Sophia Voravong/svoravong@jconline.com

October 31, 2008: Lafayette Journal and Courier

Police investigate school graffiti

Area law enforcement agencies are investigating gang related vandalism recently discovered at two local school properties.

Graffiti including a swastika was recently discovered at a home being built by building trades classes at Jefferson High School.

A large amount of graffiti was also discovered at Harrison High School.

"These aren't isolated incidents," said Kathryn Redd. She's the anti-gang initiative coordinator for Project Safe Neighborhoods. "This is a crime and has to be treated as such."

Anyone with information about any of the vandalism is asked to call the anonymous WeTip hot line at (800) 782-7463. Callers may be eligible for a reward if information leads to an arrest and conviction.

October 27, 2008: Lafayette Journal and Courier

Rental property workshop set in Nov.

The Tippecanoe County Prosecutor's Office will hold a Project Safe Neighborhoods course for rental property owners and managers once during November.

The two-day course will be from 6 to 9 p.m. on Nov. 18 and Nov. 19 at the Tippecanoe County Office Building in downtown Lafayette.

The course provides instruction on preparing the property, code requirements, applicant screening, ongoing management, warning signs of drug activity and more.

To register, send an e-mail with contact information to Kathryn Redd at kredd@tippecanoe.in.gov or call the Project Safe Neighborhoods information line at (765) 413-7238.

Project Safe Neighborhoods is an anti-crime and anti-gang initiative larger cities nationwide have successfully used to combat issues such as drug dealing, weapons offenses, robberies and vandalism

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October 23, 2008: Our Town – Lafayette/West Lafayette Online

The Tippecanoe County Prosecutor's Office has announced the Project Safe Neighborhoods Rental Property Owner and Manager Course for Nov. 18 and Nov. 19 at the Tippecanoe County Building, 20 N. Third St. from 6-9 p.m.

Training for Rental Owners and Managers Set for November

10/23/2008 1:53:35 PM

LAFAYETTE -- The Tippecanoe County Prosecutor's Office has announced the Project Safe Neighborhoods Rental Property Owner and Manager Course for Nov. 18 and Nov. 19 at the Tippecanoe County Building, 20 N. Third St. from 6-9 p.m.

The course includes federal, state and local law and provides instruction on preparing the property, code requirements, applicant screening, ongoing management, apartment watch/promoting community, warning signs of drug activity, clandestine labs, crisis resolution, the role of the police, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and resources to use today.

The course includes tools such as neighborhood associations and Crime Watch programs (maps and contact information), sample forms and community resources (Tippecanoe County Law Enforcement agencies contact listings, Tippecanoe County Fire Departments, City of Lafayette and West Lafayette Government Resources).

Two supplementary presentations have been added to the core course curriculum:
• Illegal Drug Identification, Dan Shoemaker, Detective, Lafayette Police Department
• Gang Identification, Pat Harrington, Tippecanoe County Prosecutor

The six-hour course is will be offered over two consecutive evenings and will be facilitated by Kathryn Redd, Project Safe Neighborhoods/Anti-Gang Initiative Coordinator. Participants who complete the 2-evening course will be certified by Tippecanoe County Project Safe Neighborhoods Program and the Tippecanoe County Prosecutor.

Fifty-eight participants, representing the management of 799 properties or 11,991 units, have completed the course from June through August 2008. Property owners and managers are encouraged to make their reservations for the program, which is offered free of charge. Class size is limited.

The sessions will be held in the Grand Prairie conference room in the T Tippecanoe County Building, 20 North 3rd Street, from 6:00pm to 9:00pm.

TO REGISTER
By email:
Send request to Kathryn Redd at kredd@tippecanoe.in.gov; include your name, personal address, name of the Rental Property you represent, your office and mobile phone numbers and email address.

By phone:
Call the PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS INFORMATION LINE at 765-413-7238, leave a message including your name, personal address, name of the Rental Property you represent, your office and mobile phone numbers and email address.

October 9, 2008: WLFI TV

Area schools to implement crime hotline

Updated: Thursday, 09 Oct 2008, 9:37 AM EDT
Published : Thursday, 09 Oct 2008, 9:37 AM EDT

- LAFAYETTE, Ind. (WLFI) - Schools in Tippecanoe County may soon have access to the national crime hotline already used throughout the community. You may have heard of calling We-Tip to report crime in the community. Now, the goal is to expand the reporting of crime seen or threatened at area schools.

Klondike Middle School principal Chris Cannon said she feels WeTip is needed. "The influx of gangs and gang activities, I think more and more, we see that in Tippecanoe County. I think it's important to be proactive. To have something the students will be able to access," said Cannon.

WeTip Chief Executive Officer Susan Aguilar said WeTip has seen all types of problems in its 36 year history. "Just about every single crime that has gone out into the community has happened in the schools. Fraud, drugs, vandalism, graffiti, threats, bullying," said Aguilar.

And the caller reporting any crime remains completely anonymous.

"If the informant tried to identify themselves in any way we tell them we have to disconnect this call. You're going to have to call back and get a different operator because we cannot know who you are. Then we have no tapping, tracing or caller ID," said Aguilar.

The Tippecanoe County Prosecutor's office funds the $10,000 a year program. Project Safe Neighborhood and Gang Initiative Grant Coordinator Kathryn Redd said the WeTip call center received 560 criminal reports since it started in Tippecanoe County last May.

"At least 70 percent of them involve children in some way, shape or form," said Redd.

Tippecanoe School Corporation's Director of Administrative Services Christy Fraley said TSC may also be on board.
"We see a lot of different tips. Our students and our parents report anything that they see that they're uncomfortable with at school and really aren't comfortable with telling an administrator or a teacher at the school," said Fraley.

To report a crime on the WeTip hotline call (800)-78-CRIME. Crimes can also be reported at www.wetip.com .
A reward up to $1,000 is offered for helpful information.

"Report by Renetta DuBose, WLFI."

October 9, 2008: Our Town – Lafayette/West Lafayette Online

WeTip School Safety Program launched Tuesday

10/9/2008 9:03:45 AM

LAFAYETTE -- Pat Harrington, Tippecanoe County Prosecutor, and Kathryn Redd, Project Safe Neighborhoods Gang Initiative Coordinator, held a press conference Tuesday to launch the WETIP School Safety Program.

As part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiatives that are built upon forming strong partnerships in the community between law enforcement agencies, governmental entities, community organizations, neighborhood associations, and citizens, the WETIP School Safety Program will provide all students (age 5+) and their families a confidential way of reporting illegal activities and behaviors such as abuse, gang intimidation, bullying, school threats to safety, vandalism, and weapons possession, Redd said.

"Our children need our willingness to do whatever it takes to make Tippecanoe County safe for all children," Redd said at the press conference. "They need us all to step up and take a stand against illegal activity. Most of all, they need us to act. Today, I speak for the children; tomorrow, they will speak for themselves."

Mayor Tony Roswarski, Tippecanoe County Sheriff Tracy Brown, State Sen. Ron Alting and other school and law enforcement officials attended the conference.

The goals of the WETIP School Safety Program are to:

*Reduce and eliminate threats, bullying, harassment, including gang intimidation.

*Reduce vandalism and weapons at schools.

*Reduce risk and loss to school districts caused by malicious activity, property destruction, and arson.

*Provide a way for students, teachers and district staff to communicate information about problem situations on campus anonymously and without fear of reprisal or retaliation.

*Develop an emergency plan that includes the WeTip Hotline for reporting any type of threat or crime situation BEFORE it happens.

Through WeTip's School Safety Program (Save Our Schools), WeTip works with thousands of schools nationwide to create a safe and secure learning environment for all students that is free of crime and threats.

WeTip is a clearinghouse on school safety, providing the nationwide anonymous hotline, reward payments, training for students, teachers, administrators, and school resource officers.

October 7, 2008: WLFI TV

WeTip Hotline takes calls from students

Updated: Oct 7, 2008 11:52 PM EDT

Lafayette, Ind. (WLFI) - Law enforcement gives children a say in stopping crime. The WeTip Hotline is now taking calls from students.

School children will soon learn a new number in class. It won't on a math test, but teachers hope students will still remember the combination: 1-800-78-CRIME.

"To rat on a student or to report them is looked is looked down on. I disagree and I think most students will use the hotline because one, it's anonymous, and two it's an avenue they didn't have before," said Lafayette Police Chief Don Rousch.

The hotline has taken reports of many different crimes since it began in May, and most of those calls are related to children.

"We've had over 560 criminal reports with over 70 percent involving children in some shape or form. It's paramount we give our children a voice," said Kathryn Redd of WeTip.

Educators agreed students have the information police need to crack cases. WeTip will give them a safe way to pass it on.

"There has to be some trust because we want to empower children to be able to communicate to adults," said TSC Superintendent Ed Eiler.

"The influx of gang and gang activities, I think more and more with see that in Tippecanoe County and I think it's important to be proactive. To have something students can access," said Chris Cannon, the principal of Klondike Middle School.

Tippecanoe County schools will teach students how to use the hotline and what to report. Calls about bullying, gang activity, vandalism, and drugs are encouraged.

"Unless they feel safe at my school, little learning is going to go on, they're going to be concerned about other things," said Cannon.

The hotline will accept calls from anyone five and older, so even young children can dial in tips. .

October 4, 2008: Lafayette Journal and Courier

WeTip hot line aimed at kids

By SOPHIA VORAVONG
svoravong@jconline.com

Schoolchildren in Tippecanoe County are being encouraged to report crimes -- whether it be a threat against them, word of drug dealings in neighborhoods or information of property destruction -- under a new partnership being launched next week.

The WeTip School Safety program is an effort between the Tippecanoe County prosecutor's office and all public and private schools in the community.

A branch of the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative, the program will be formally announced and launched during a news conference Tuesday at the Tippecanoe County Office Building.

"The rollout will be primarily geared toward students and families," said Kathryn Redd, an investigator with the prosecutor's office and local coordinator for Project Safe Neighborhoods.

"WeTip will offer all children age 5 and up the ability to call in tips anonymously -- if they feel threatened, if there is illegal activity going on in their home."

Project Safe Neighborhoods is an anti-crime and anti-gang initiative larger cities nationwide have successfully used to combat issues such as drug dealing, weapons offenses, robberies and vandalism.

Tippecanoe County's effort launched in May.

Redd said that in that time, more than 560 tips of illegal activity have been reported to the WeTip anonymous hot line. WeTip is a national nonprofit organization based in California.

The toll-free line is staffed 24 hours a day, including holidays.

She said about 75 percent of calls reported thus far have involved children in some capacity. About 5 percent of the calls involved crimes against children, including allegations of abuse and molestation.

"It may not be the primary crime, but in many instances children have been in the home," Redd said. "Really, the driving force behind this is allowing children to have a way to report crimes without fear of retaliation."

The hot line children are being encouraged to call is the same phone number as the hot line launched this past spring.

Ed Eiler, superintendent of the Lafayette School Corp., agrees that the WeTip School Safety program would be beneficial. District officials have attended past Project Safe Neighborhood meetings that have addressed issues such as gang presence in the community.

Training also will take place Tuesday morning and evening for teachers to get an overview of the WeTip program, Redd said.

But Eiler cautions that safeguards must be in place to prevent fraudulent reporting.

"There's always a balancing test that you have to have in place," Eiler said. "We have to be careful that people are not falsely accused.

"But definitely, if something is happening to our children -- if they are being harmed -- this is a great tool to empower them."

He said schools would help distribute information on the hot line to students and families.

October 4, 2008: **Our Town: Lafayette/West Lafayette Online**

Officials to announce WETIP School Safety Program in Tuesday press conference

LAFAYETTE -- Pat Harrington, Tippecanoe County Prosecutor, and Kathryn Redd, Project Safe Neighborhoods Gang Initiative Coordinator, will hold a press conference on Tuesday **at 4 p.m. in the Tippecanoe County Room at the Tippecanoe County Building**, 20 N. Third Street.

The launch of the WETIP School Safety Program (Save Our Schools) will be announced, which will provide a voice for the children in our community against crime, abuse, and gang intimidation.

As part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiatives which are built upon forming strong partnerships in the community between law enforcement agencies, governmental entities, community organizations, neighborhood associations, and citizens, the WETIP School Safety Program will provide all students (age 5+) and their families a confidential way of reporting illegal activities and behaviors such as abuse, gang intimidation, bullying, school threats to safety, vandalism, and weapons possession.

Goals of the WETIP School Safety Program are to:

*Reduce and eliminate threats, bullying, harassment, including gang intimidation.
*Reduce vandalism and weapons at schools.
*Reduce risk and loss to school districts caused by malicious activity, property destruction, and arson.
*Provide a way for students, teachers and district staff to communicate information about problem situations on campus anonymously and without fear of reprisal or retaliation.
*Develop an emergency plan that includes the WeTip Hotline for reporting any type of threat or crime situation BEFORE it happens.

Through WeTip's School Safety Program (Save Our Schools), WeTip works with thousands of schools nationwide to create a safe and secure learning environment for all students that is free of crime and threats.

WeTip is a clearinghouse on school safety, providing the nationwide anonymous hotline, reward payments, training for students, teachers, administrators, and school resource officers.

The public is encouraged to attend.

Attendees include:
*Susan Aguilar , Chief Executive Officer, WeTip
*Ron Alting, State Senator
*Sheila Klinker, State Representative
*Tracy Brown, Sheriff, Tippecanoe County
*Tony Roswarski, Mayor, City of Lafayette
*John Dennis, Mayor, City of West Lafayette
*Kristen McVey, Deputy Prosecutor, Tippecanoe County
*Don Roush, Chief, Lafayette Police Department
*Jason Dombkowski, Chief, West Lafayette Police Department
*Kathryn J. Redd, Project Safe Neighborhoods Anti- Gang Initiative Coordinator, *Tippecanoe County Prosecutor's Office

Special Guests at the press conference include:
*Dr. Edward Eiler, Superintendent, Lafayette School Corporation Superintendent
*Dr. Rocky D. Killion, Superintendent, West Lafayette Community School Corporation Superintendent

*Dr. Christy Fraley, Director of Administrative Services, School Safety Specialist, *Tippecanoe County School Corporation
*Roger Francis, Assistant Principal, Jefferson High School, School Safety Specialist, *Lafayette School Corporation
*Sue Mandell, National Director of School Safety, WeTip
*Brad Hayworth, Gang Specialist, Lafayette Police Department
*Bryan Cummins, Gang Specialist, Tippecanoe County Sheriff's Department
*Rob Rush, Gang Specialist, Tippecanoe County Sheriff's Department
*Mike McIver, School Resource Officer, Lafayette Police Department
*Michael Dunlap, Juvenile Probation, Tippecanoe County

June 30, 2008: WLFI TV

New tipline yields nearly 80 crime reports

Updated: June 30, 2008 02:18 PM EDT

Reported by Alyssa Rossomme, WLFI

LAFAYETTE, Ind. (WLFI) - A new hotline has collected nearly 80 crime tips from people in Tippecanoe County in just one month. The Tippecanoe County Prosecutor's Office started the WeTip anonymous crime tip-line on June first. Project Safe Neighborhood Coordinator Kathryn Redd said so far, citizens have made 78 reports of illegal activity through WeTip. She said some of the tips involve more than one crime. Redd said detailed information given by anonymous tippers is helping police investigate crime in specific neighborhoods. She said she is pleased with the number of callers looking out for the well-being of children.

"People are paying attention to [illegal activity], and people are paying attention to the children. So I found that very encouraging," said Redd.

Anyone can provide information about a crime or suspicious activity completely anonymously. Sheriff Tracy Brown said while police prefer witnesses use their name when reporting tips, anonymous information is better than no information at all.

"The one thing we're very keen on right now, obviously because the clock is ticking for the courthouse bombing. We've had some tips come in through the WeTip line, not only for that, but we continue to get tips for other criminal activity. And it's a pretty wide range. Everything from misdemeanor conduct, to serious felonies are being reported through WeTip so it's going to be a benefit for us," said Brown.

"I would just encourage people to call, if for some reason they're not comfortable with calling law enforcement, or calling another support agency that we have in Tippecanoe County to call WeTip," added Redd.

Anyone can report a crime or suspicious activity 24 hours a day by calling the WeTip hotline at 1-800-78-CRIME. WeTip offers a reward of up to $1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of a criminal.

June 30, 2008: WLFI TV

Citizens calling WeTip hotline, (800) 78-CRIME

Updated: June 30, 2008 12:47 PM EDT

LAFAYETTE, Ind. (WLFI) - In just one month, Tippecanoe County residents have reported nearly 80 crime tips through a new community hotline. The Tippecanoe County Prosecutor's Office started the WeTip anonymous crime tip line on June first.

Project Safe Neighborhood Coordinator Kathryn Redd said so far, citizens have made 78 reports of illegal activity through WeTip. She said some of the tips involve more than one crime. Redd said detailed information given by anonymous tippers is helping police investigate crime in specific neighborhoods. She said she is pleased with the number of callers looking out for the well-being of children. "I found it very good that the citizens were making note of the fact that there was a three-year-old or a six-year-old within five feet of x amount of heroin, or x amount of crack on a daily basis. So people are paying attention to it, and people are paying attention to the children. So I found that very encouraging."

Anyone can report a crime or suspicious activity 24 hours a day by calling the WeTip hotline at (800) 78-CRIME [the digits are (800) 782-7463]. WeTip offers a reward of up to one-thousand dollars for information leading to the arrest and conviction of a criminal.

June 26, 2008: Lafayette Leader

THE LAFAYETTE LEADER

Tippecanoe County's weekly newspaper
Since 1873

Vol. 135, No. 25 | June 26, 2008 | Single Issue Price $1

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Value of Safety

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PHOTO BY REBECCA EDWARDS
Kathryn Redd orchestrates the Project Safe Neighborhood, which is purposed to give rental property owners and managers the tools and motivation to make their properties less conducive to criminal activity.

See story on Page 20

Project Safe Neighborhoods launched in Tippecanoe County

By Rebecca Edwards
fcnrebecca@sbcglobal.net

Tippecanoe County Prosecutor Pat Harrington first heard about a program called Project Safe Neighborhoods while at a conference in the spring of 2007.

He soon applied for a grant to implement the program in Tippecanoe County. The $53,000 grant was awarded and the funds were received last fall.

Shortly thereafter, program coordinator Kathryn Redd was hired to orchestrate the complex program, which is purposed to give rental property owners and managers the tools and motivation to make their properties less conducive to criminal activity.

Aproximately ninety percent of crime in Tippecanoe County occurs at rental properties, Harrington said. "That's why the program is so important to our community."

Harrington said that he was made aware of the severity of Tippecanoe County's drug and gang crime situation during his first days as prosecutor.

"When I took office, the community basically told me the largest problem for our community was gang and drug activity. This grant addresses those activities."

The Project Safe Neighborhood program involves training sessions for rental property managers and owners, which equip them to identify changes they can make to the dwellings they manage which will make them safer, up-to-code and also help eliminate the tendency for criminals to gravitate to their properties.

The program also incorporates the implementation of the WeTip crime hotline (1-800-78-CRIME), a one hundred percent anonymous tip-line, operated by a non-profit organization.

WeTip offers rewards to tippers whose information leads to the arrest and conviction of a criminal in Tippecanoe County. Callers are asked if they would like to receive a reward if their tip results in a conviction. They are then given a three name code which will be their means of collecting their reward.

According to Kathryn Redd, the hotline will help ensure that illegal activity is reported, an essential component of the Project Safe Neighborhood program. She said her passion for the program comes from her concern for the people and children whose quality of life suffers as a result of living in an unsafe environment where drug and gang activity is taking place.

"The purpose is to teach property owners and managers how to take steps and put guidelines in place to keep their property and residents safe and maintain property value. For me personally, its all about the people," said Redd. "Ensuring children have safe conditions to live and play."

Redd has partnered with all five law enforcement jurisdictions within Tippecanoe County to ensure the success of PSN and WeTip.

She has also gained the support of almost all of the area schools, which got WeTip flyers in the hands of students just before school let out for summer break.

The first training session for rental property owners takes place next Monday and Tuesday, but registration is closed because the sessions are full.

However, property managers can still sign up for sessions being held throughout the summer. The next sessions are already half full and will take place July 21 and 22.

After that, interested individuals can sign up for the third set of classes, August 4 and 5.

Property owners can sign up by email: kredd@tippecanoe.in.gov

Property owners can sign up by phone at: 765-413-7238.

June 23, 2008: WLFI TV

Project Safe Neighborhood training begins

Updated: June 23, 2008 11:08 PM EDT

LAFAYETTE, Ind. (WLFI) - Local Law Enforcement is cracking down on crime, and starting with rental properties.

Monday night was the first of a series of Project Safe Neighborhood training sessions for landlords.

The Landlords learned about spotting crime, specifically drug activity.

The training sessions focus on screening applicants better, having a safer property and what to do if there is a problem.

Prosecutor Pat Harrington says, this program is good not only for landlords but also for tenants.

"Tenants can come here to Tippecanoe County and know that the property they're going to rent is going to be crime free, it's going to be good for their families, it's going to be good for the community," he said.

Regional Manager of W.H. Long Companies, Kelly Sell said, "That there are people here in this community that care and that want to be called to help us get the dealers out."

There will be three more sessions held in the Tippecanoe County Building, Tippecanoe Room, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Session 2: Monday, July 21st and Tuesday, July 22nd

Session 3: Monday, July 28th and Tuesday, July 29th

Session 4: Monday, August 4th and Tuesday, August 5th

To register email a request to Kathy Redd at kredd@tippecanoe.in.gov.

Include you name, address, name of the rental property you represent, your office and cell phone numbers, email address and which session you would like to attend.

To register by phone call the Project Safe Neighborhood Information line at (765) 413-7238.

June 20, 2008: United States Attorney's Office L.E.C.C. Informant 4: Volume 6, Issue 2; United States Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney's Office Northern District of Indiana

Project Safe Neighborhoods in Tippecanoe County

Patrick K. Harrington, Tippecanoe County Prosecutor, and Kathryn J. Redd, Tippecanoe Project Safe Neighborhood/Gang Initiative Coordinator, are pleased to announce the first phase of the launch of the TIPPECANOE COUNTY WeTip anonymous illegal activity reporting hotline.

(On Right at Microphone) Tippecanoe County Prosecutor Patrick Harrington makes opening comments during a press conference announcing Project Safe Neighborhood/Gang Anti-Crime accomplishments on May 28, 2008 at Duncan Hall in Lafayette, Indiana.

In response to the citizens desire to become an active partner with law enforcement in ridding their neighborhoods of illegal activities and crime, all Tippecanoe County law enforcement agencies have partnered with We Tip on the war against crime.

By incorporating, We Tip Municipal, Law Enforcement, and School programs into a comprehensive initiative, all citizens are assured that they can use the system and that their crime tips will be forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

As the first phase of the We Tip program, over 65,000 flyers will be distributed, through the schools, to every child in Tippecanoe School Corporation, Lafayette School Corporation, and West Lafayette Community School Corporation. Based on the model used in the Compton Unified School District, in California, each child will be given three flyers and asked to distribute one to each neighbor adjacent to their home.

This grassroots initiative puts the power back in the hands of the citizens and away from those involved in illegal activity.

We Tip operates "800" toll-free lines, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, by trained operators who are able to field calls in English and Spanish and with a TIDY machine for the hearing-impaired.

We Tip is one of the most effective tools that we can use to keep our community safe.
The We Tip Hotline will be live on June 1.

Further announcements will be made at the Tippecanoe County Prosecutor's Project Safe Neighborhood Anti-Crime Initiatives Press Conference on May 28, 2008 at 5:00pm, Duncan Hall. Susan Aguilar, WeTip CEO, will be speaking to the press at that time.

June 13, 2008: Lafayette Journal and Courier

More training classes scheduled for rental property owners

STAFF REPORTS

The first Project Safe Neighborhoods training course for rental property owners and managers, scheduled for June 23 and June 24, is full.
Three other six-hour sessions will be held July 21 and July 22, July 28 and 29, and August 4 and August 5.

They will be taught by Kathryn Redd, an investigator with the Tippecanoe County prosecutor's officer and the local Project Safe Neighborhood coordinator.
The program is free to rental property owners and managers, though registration is required.

Project Safe Neighborhoods is a federal program that larger cities nationwide have used to combat issues such as drug dealing, weapons offenses, robberies and vandalism.
Tippecanoe County received its $52,398 grant last summer.

To register, e-mail Redd at kredd@tippecanoe.in.gov or call (765) 413-7238 and include your name, personal address, name of the rental property you represent, office and cell phone numbers and e-mail address. Participants are asked to choose two session preferences.

June 10, 2008: Lafayette Journal and Courier

Dates set to train landlords on safety

STAFF REPORTS

Dates have been set for rental property owners and managers interested in taking part in a training course as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, the Tippecanoe County prosecutor's office announced Monday.

The first six-hour session is scheduled for June 23 and June 24. Three other courses will be held July 21 and July 22, July 28 and 29, and Aug. 4 and Aug. 5.

They will be taught by Kathryn Redd, an investigator with the prosecutor's office and the local Project Safe Neighborhood coordinator.

Representatives who work with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, neighborhood organizations and law enforcement will give guest presentations.

The program is free for rental property owners and managers, though registration is required.

Project Safe Neighborhoods is a federal program that larger cities nationwide have used to combat issues such as drug dealing, weapons offenses, robberies and vandalism. Tippecanoe County received its $52,398 grant last summer.

To register, e-mail Redd at kredd@tippecanoe.in.gov and include your name, personal address, name of the rental property you represent, office and cell phone numbers, and e-mail address. Participants are asked to choose two session preferences.

You also can register by calling (765) 413-7238 and providing the same information.

June 9, 2008: Lafayette Journal and Courier

Dates set for landlord training

STAFF REPORTS

Dates have been set for rental property owners and managers interested in taking part in a training course as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, the Tippecanoe County prosecutor's office announced today.

The first six-hour session is scheduled for June 23 and June 24. Three other courses will be held July 21 and July 22, July 28 and 29, and Aug. 4 and Aug. 5.

They will be taught by Kathryn Redd, an investigator with the prosecutor's office and the local Project Safe Neighborhood coordinator.

Representatives who work with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, neighborhood organizations and law enforcement will give guest presentations.

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drug dealing, weapons offenses, robberies and vandalism. Tippecanoe County received its $52,398 grant last summer.

To register, e-mail Redd at kredd@tippecanoe.in.gov and include your name, personal address, name of the rental property you represent, office and cell phone numbers and e-mail address. Participants are asked to choose two session preferences.

You also can register by calling (765) 413-7238 and providing the same information.

June 8, 2008: Lafayette Journal and Courier

Safety program to train landlords

SUNDAY
June 8, 2008
8 a.m. Noon 6 p.m.
77 86 89
Winds: High 16. Mostly clear tonight.
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JOURNAL & COURIER
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We know what they're doing this summer: reading. Locals share their to-read lists. D1

BUSINESS
Membership holds: Bright Futures for local business-to-business group. B10

Safety program to train landlords

By SOPHIA VORAVONG
svoravong@journalandcourier.com

Deb Evans and her husband, Jim, own and manage two apartment buildings on Lafayette's south end, along with smaller properties in West Lafayette and Rossville.

Over the last couple of years, some tenants have been victims of vehicle break-ins and property thefts. A few others were worried that neighbors had been involved in illegal drug use.

"It wasn't this way two years ago, but things seem to be going steadily in this direction," said Deb Evans, a lifelong Tippecanoe County resident who was raised in Battle Ground.

"We do try to stay on top of things and screen our tenants as best as possible. We are very hands-on and do everything, management-wise, ourselves."

The Evanses are among dozens of rental property owners who will take part in landlord training through Project Safe Neighborhoods, an anti-crime initiative recently announced by the Tippecanoe County prosecutor's office.

The first six- to eight-hour class is expected to begin early this summer.

Sheila Paul, an inspector for the Tippecanoe County Health Department, checks the temperature of food in a refrigerator at Jeanne Fortune last month in Lafayette. The day was 39 degrees, below the minimum 40.

How clean is your kitchen?
Our findings could help you avoid food-borne illness

About this report

Every year in the United States, an estimated 76 million people contract some form of food-borne illness, about 5,000 of them fatal. Many experts believe that the incidence of food-borne illness increases as more people prepare food and eat outdoors.

For this report, the Journal & Courier asked Tippecanoe County Health Department to inspect three household kitchens to see how closely they have to food safety standards demanded of restaurants and other places that serve the public.

The willing hosts of the inspections include two members of the newspaper's reader advisory panel and one as the special projects editor.

The results may be surprising to some, embarrassing to others, and, we hope, educational for all.

Inside

Details: A kitchen-by-kitchen glance at the three homes

Tippecanoe County Health Department inspector Sheila Paul evaluated for this article. A4

Quiz: How much do you know about food safety? Test your knowledge with our quiz at jconline.com.

At jconline.com

How much do you know about food safety? Test your knowledge with our quiz at jconline.com.

Regulatory Weekly restaurant inspections. C10

See KITCHEN, Page A4

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Volume 93, Number 160

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Clinton formally suspends campaign
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COMING TOMORROW
Mosquito season
What can you do to protect against the disease that is predicted to be a more dire threat this year than it was last? Mosquitoes. See Page 1.

ON JCONLINE.COM
Dining guide
Looking to go out to eat. Take a look at menus and more from Lafayette area restaurants at jconline.com/dining.

unity HEALTHCARE
Vast Resources. Extensive Experience. One Responsibility.
Our experienced physicians' first and only responsibility is to their patients – to you – and that's a better way.

Kathy Redd, an investigator with the prosecutor's office and the program's coordinator, said a large part of the training will focus on steps rental property owners should take before accepting a tenant.

The class also will go over standards for safe and decent housing.

"It goes through the role of checking the applicant -- setting criteria that they want for their property, bearing in mind fair housing laws," Redd said. "They could choose to have all vehicles parked on their property be registered. ... They could require that applications only be accepted in person."

Redd, who had been meeting with rental property owners and neighborhood groups since December, said she came across several incidents of applications being sent to Chicago on a weekly basis.

To ensure that everyone is treated fairly, Redd said, standards set by property owners should be applied to all applicants.

"That's where it does become challenging," she said. "But you can't do it to one potential tenant and not another. That's absolutely imperative."

Deb Evans said she is excited for the program to start. She and her husband took part in one of the focus groups hosted by Redd.

"I am really impressed," Evans said. "My husband and I walked away feeling like we have somebody on our side. This has always been a great community. We need to keep it that way."

Project Safe Neighborhoods is a federal program that larger cities nationwide have used to combat issues such as drug dealing, weapons offenses, robberies and vandalism. Tippecanoe County received its $52,398 grant last summer.

Data from the Lafayette Police Department shows a rise in narcotics-related investigations, from 410 in 2004 to 632 in 2007. Aggravated assaults -- batteries that resulted in seriously bodily injury -- also steadily rose during the same time frame, from 147 in 2004 to 194 in 2007.

Officials say they hope that Project Safe Neighborhoods will help drive those crime numbers down. The program also falls under "weeding" efforts for Weed & Seed, another federal initiative Lafayette is participating in to combat crime.

Ken Weller, executive director of Legal Aid Corp. of Tippecanoe County, applauds the efforts of the prosecutor's office. But he also has concerns.

"I'm not convinced that if they target rental property tenants, all our problems are going to magically disappear," he said. "They will just move elsewhere in the Lafayette area. Some attention needs to be paid to that.

" ... Some criminals, too, are homeowners."

Weller has been working on a standard lease that he would like to see used in Tippecanoe County. He has had clients who have had no written lease from their landlords.

"This whole program is very interesting," Weller said. "But Tippecanoe County has such a wide variety of tenants that they may have to take a more individual approach than originally envisioned."

May 29, 2008: Journal and Courier Newspaper

Correction: Make a difference in your neighborhood

Editor's note: An earlier version of this story contained an incorrect telephone number. This story contains the correct information.

By SOPHIA VORAVONG; svoravong@journalandcourier.com

Beginning Sunday, Tippecanoe County residents can anonymously report tips of illegal activity to any law enforcement agency.

Police and Lafayette, West Lafayette and Tippecanoe County schools recently partnered to launch the Tippecanoe County WeTip anonymous illegal activity reporting hot line. The hot line is part of the Tippecanoe County Prosecutor's Office's new Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative.

WeTip, a national nonprofit organization, staffs the toll-free line 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, executive director Sue Mandell said. All tips will be forwarded within hours to the appropriate agency.

"We need citizens to be the eyes and ears for law enforcement," she said. "They can't do it alone anymore. We need to watch out for each other -- that's the key."

The phone number will be (800) 782-7463 or (800) 78 CRIME.

Earlier this month students in all three of the county's school corporations were sent home with three fliers announcing WeTip. They were asked to keep one and give the other two fliers to both adjacent neighbors.

More than 55,000 fliers have been distributed.

Prosecutor Pat Harrington said WeTip has 100 percent confidentiality. For example, he said, if anyone gives their name during the call, they will be asked to hang up, call again and speak to a different operator.

May 29, 2008: Journal and Courier Newspaper

Leaders aim to crack down on crime before it gets out of hand

By SOPHIA VORAVONG; svoravong@journalandcourier.com

In the early '90s, when residents of Historic Ninth Street Hill learned someone was selling drugs out of a home there, neighbors sat nearby and recorded the license plate numbers of vehicles seen leaving the home.

"I was mad," Jane Boswell said. "How dare people do that in our nice neighborhood."

Now Ninth Street Hill -- and much of Tippecanoe County -- is dealing with illegal drug activity on a larger and more frequent scale. Getting a strong hold on a problem before it worsens is one of the key initiatives behind Project Safe Neighborhoods.

Representatives of law enforcement, local dignitaries, the prosecutor's office and other Tippecanoe County officials came together Wednesday at Duncan Hall to formally introduce the federal anti-crime and anti-gang program.

"It's critical that we attack the problem now," said Kathy Redd, an investigator with the prosecutor's office and the Project Safe Neighborhoods' coordinator. "If we don't handle it aggressively, it is quite possible for us to lose this city in three years, according to trends."

Redd, who was raised in Lafayette, has spent the last year researching crime trends and analyzing trouble spots in Tippecanoe County.

During a ride-along with the Lafayette Police Department's Street Crimes Unit, she witnessed firsthand suspected cocaine dealers on street corners.

After handing out fliers for WeTip, an anonymous hotline residents can call to report illegal activity, she was threatened by suspected gang members.

And in Redd's conversations and meetings with residents, she encountered dozens of people who said they knew of crimes taking place but feared reporting them.

"We are facing a problem with safety," Redd said. "We're seeing the degradation of neighborhoods. There is no one person to blame. What Project Safe Neighborhoods is trying to do is mobilize the community -- that's it is up to all of us to fight this."

Project Safe Neighborhoods also has been implemented in Allen, Lake and Saint Joseph counties, said David Capp, interim U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Indiana.

Each community was allowed to use the grant -- $53,398 for Tippecanoe County -- to address its most prevalent problem.

"I knew there were some growing law enforcement issues in Tippecanoe County. They were seeing an influx of problems from the south side of Chicago and Lake County," Capp said. "We felt this was an area that we should start focusing on."

Boswell, a resident of Historic Ninth Street Hill for more than 30 years, was part of a focus group to inform neighborhoods about the program.

Part of Project Safe Neighborhoods includes training rental property owners how to recognize signs and, proactively, better screen applicants before they become tenants.

"We started seeing changes in our neighborhood in the last couple of years," Boswell said. "More and more crimes were being reported. We are a diverse neighborhood with a nice bell-shaped curve of ages and incomes.

"But to have gang-related vandalism and gang graffiti, it was very unnerving."

Residents there soon plan to create window clings to hang in their vehicles that will identify them as part of the neighborhood. That way, Boswell said, police will more easily recognize cars that are out of place.

It's this kind of community cooperation that officials -- among them Lafayette Mayor Tony Roswarski, West Lafayette Mayor John Dennis and Prosecutor Pat Harrington -- hope to encourage.

Russell Conard, who graduated this past weekend from Harrison High School, too urges the community to recognize a problem does exist. He pointed out the recent knife fight at Faith Community Center, in which five people were injured, as an example.

Conard lives near the center and exercises there.

"There's rising violence in our community," he said. "I have to admit that it's quite unsettling."

May 29, 2008: Journal and Courier Newspaper

New project gives crime fighters a major ally

By SOPHIA VORAVONG; svoravong@journalandcourier.com

THE NEWS

Officials on Wednesday formally announced the start of Project Safe Neighborhoods in Tippecanoe County.

The federal program is an anti-crime and anti-gang initiative that larger cities have implemented to combat issues such as drug dealing, weapons offenses, robberies and vandalism.

Project Safe Neighborhoods will take proactive and reactive approaches to fight crime.

Part of the funding will be used to train rental property owners in ways to keep out illegal activity, in part by training them to better screen potential tenants.

The second aspect is the launch of WeTip, an anonymous hotline that residents can use to report crime tips to any law enforcement agency.

THE BACKGROUND

Last summer, the Tippecanoe County prosecutor's office received a $53,398 grant for the initiative. Funding was used to hire an investigator and project coordinator and to purchase notebook computers so that police can track and analyze trouble spots.

David Capp, interim U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Indiana, said he approached Tippecanoe County Prosecutor Pat Harrington about the program as a way to address growing problems believed to stem from criminals originally from Chicago and northwest Indiana.

THE IMPACT

Jane Boswell is a resident of Historic Ninth Street Hill in Lafayette, where about one-third of the neighborhood is rental properties.

Herself a rental property owner, Boswell was one of dozens who participated in focus groups for Project Safe Neighborhoods.

"Lafayette is not the same as it was 20 years ago," she said.

"I don't believe that any neighborhood in Lafayette is immune to problems were are seeing as a community."

May 29, 2008: WLFI TV

Community members learn about new crime tip-line

Updated: May 29, 2008 04:26 PM EDT

LAFAYETTE, Ind. (WLFI) - The Tippecanoe County Prosecutor's office has launched a crime tip-line to get citizens involved in keeping neighborhoods safe. Community members learned more about the tip-line in free WeTip training sessions. Susan Aguilar, WeTip C.E.O. said the hotline is used in hundreds of cities as a way for citizens to report crime or suspicious activity. Tips are passed on to local police for investigation.

"We have helped law enforcement to arrest over 15,000 criminals, we've taken nearly a half million tips and we have helped law enforcement confiscate $340 million worth of illegal drugs and narcotics. So we've made a real impact on communities all over the nation," said Aguilar.

Aguilar said WeTip is effective, primarily because callers are completely anonymous. WeTip does not record or trace calls, and the phone system does not have caller I.D.

"We tell our informants, 'Do not give your name or identify yourself in any way.' If they try to identify themselves, we have to hang up that phone and tell them, 'Call back, talk to a different operator, we cannot know who you are,'" she explained.

Tracy Walder, a member of the St. Lawrence-McAllister Neighborhood Association, participated in a training session.

"The anonymous aspect is probably the greatest part of it. And just the fact that they have access to so many law enforcement agencies," she said.

WeTip offers a reward of up to $1000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of a criminal. The WeTip number is 1-800-78-CRIME

May 28, 2008: WLFI TV

New crime fighting program announced

Updated: May 28, 2008 03:18 PM EDT

LAFAYETTE, Ind (WLFI)--A new community initiative is aimed at fighting crime in Tippecanoe County.

The new initiative, "Project Safe Neighborhoods" is designed to keep illegal activities out of rental properties. Project Safe Neighborhoods Gang Initiative Coordinator Kathryn Redd said the project includes a free training program for rental property owners and managers. "We hope to educate them home to keep illegal activity out of their properties," said Redd. "Today it's something they really need to give consideration to because at a minimum 90% of all crimes are being committed out of individuals living in rental properties."

Tippecanoe County Prosecutor Pat Harrington said Project Safe Neighborhoods has proved to reduce crime in communities across the country. "We felt law enforcement agencies and myself that it was important to start this program to try to reduce the crime in those high crime areas," said Harrington.

Another effort Harrington hopes will help is WeTip, a toll-free anonymous crime tip-line. "It goes right along with PSN, because it gives a vehicle for the community to become involved in fighting crime, one neighborhood at a time, and taking back our neighborhoods," said Harrington.

The "We Tip" Tippecanoe County tip-line is funded by the Prosecutor's Office to get the community involved in fighting illegal activity. Any citizen over the age of five can make an anonymous tip by calling 1-800-78-CRIME.

There are 9 WeTip training sessions tomorrow for community members. The 30 minute sessions are held in the Grand Prairie Conference Room at the Tippecanoe County Office Building. The County Office building is located at 20 N. Third Street in Lafayette. Session times are: 8:00a.m., 8:45a.m., 9:45a.m., 10:30a.m., 1:00p.m., 1:45p.m., 6:30p.m., 7:00p.m., 7:45p.m.

Susan Aguilar, Chief Executive Officer, WeTip, and Sue Mandell, Director of Marketing, WeTip, will be providing an introduction to the new WETip Anonymous Crime Tip line program. The sessions are limited to 20 people. If you would like to attend send an email to kredd@tippecanoe.in.gov. Please indicate what session you would like to attend.

May 28, 2008: Journal and Courier Newspaper

Make a difference in your neighborhood

By SOPHIA VORAVONG; svoravong@journalandcourier.com

Beginning Sunday, Tippecanoe County residents can anonymously report tips of illegal activity to any law enforcement agency.

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WeTip, a national nonprofit organization, staffs the toll-free line 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, executive director Sue Mandell said. All tips will be forwarded within hours to the appropriate agency.

"We need citizens to be the eyes and ears for law enforcement," she said. "They can't do it alone anymore. We need to watch out for each other -- that's the key."

The phone number will be (800) 782-8463 or (800) 78 CRIME.

Earlier this month students in all three of the county's school corporations were sent home with three fliers announcing WeTip. They were asked to keep one and give the other two fliers to both adjacent neighbors.

More than 55,000 fliers have been distributed.

Prosecutor Pat Harrington said WeTip has 100 percent confidentiality. For example, he said, if anyone gives their name during the call, they will be asked to hang up, call again and speak to a different operator.

May 27, 2008: Lafayette News Online, Business News

Project Safe Neighborhood launches Tippecanoe County Rental Property Owners and Managers Training Program

Staff Reports

LAFAYETTE, Ind. (Lafayette Online) — Pat Harrington, Tippecanoe County Prosecutor, and Kathryn Redd, PSN Gang Initiative Coordinator will host speakers and special guests from federal, and local law enforcement agencies, state and local government, and national and local agencies as they formally announce the **Tippecanoe County Rental Property Owners and Managers Training Program** to the public at Thomas Duncan Hall this week.

Project Safe Neighborhood initiatives are built upon forming strong partnerships in the community between law enforcement agencies, governmental entities, community organizations, neighborhood associations, and citizens. It is the power that the coalition has when acting together that is most disruptive to crime and criminal activity.

Project Safe Neighborhood Initiatives have five core components that are critical to success: Partnerships, Strategic Planning, Training, Outreach, and Accountability.

The announcement will be Wednesday, May 28, 2008 at 5:00pm, Thomas Duncan Hall, 610 Ferry Street, Lafayette (765) 742-4788.

Key speakers will be available to the public and press following the event. The public is encouraged to attend.

Scheduled Speakers:

- David Capp, U.S. Attorney, Northern District of Indiana
- Susan Aguilar , Chief Executive Officer, WeTip
- Ron Alting, State Senator
- Sheila Klinker, State Representative
- Patrick K. Harrington, Tippecanoe County Prosecutor
- Tony Roswarski, Mayor, City of Lafayette
- John Dennis, Mayor, City of West Lafayette
- David Payne, Acting Chief, Lafayette Police Department
- Jason Dombkowski, Chief, West Lafayette Police Department
- Tracy Brown, Tippecanoe County Sheriff's Department
- Kathryn J. Redd, Project Safe Neighborhood/Gang Initiative Coordinator, Tippecanoe County Prosecutor's Office
- Russell Conard, Student, Harrison High School

Special Guests

- James R. Mesterharm, U.S. Attorneys Office, Northern District of Indiana
- Ryan Holmes, U.S. Attorneys Office, Northern District of Indiana
- Sue Mandell, Director of Marketing, WeTip

Key Community Guests

- Edie Peirce-Thomas, Executive Director, Lafayette Housing Authority
- Sergeant Troy W. Harris, Criminal Investigation Division, City of West Lafayette Police Department
- Brain C. Gossard, Officer, Street Crimes Unit, Lafayette Police Department

Selected Special Guest Attendees

- Dr. Rocky D. Killion, Superintendent, West Lafayette Community School Corporation Superintendent
- Dr. Edward Eiler, Superintendent, Lafayette School Corporation Superintendent
- Brett J. Gruetmacher Principal, Tecumseh Junior High School
- Jane Boswell, Neighborhood Association Leadership, 9th Street Hill
- Kathy Guess, Store Manager, Village Pantry

May 21, 2008: Lafayette Online News – Community News

Lafayette School Corporation distributes 20,000 WeTip flyers to students today

LAFAYETTE, Ind. — The Lafayette School Corporation will be handing out over 20,000 flyers today explaining how the new Tippecanoe County WeTip Crime Reporting Hotline works. The teachers will be sending home three flyers with each child. The Tippecanoe County Prosecutor's office is encouraging parents to visit their next-door neighbors with their children and deliver a WeTip flyer to them.

The model, based on one used in the Compton Unified School District, reduced school incidents by 90% during its first semester of implementation. The distribution process is meant to spark friendly communication between neighbors. The goal is to get out the word regarding the WeTip Hotline and how it works, however, it also encourages neighbors to introduce themselves and to start talking to each other.

"A large part of illegal activity can be stopped when neighbors watch out for each other. Getting to know your neighbor is the first step," said Kathryn Redd, Project Safe Neighborhood/Gang Initiative Coordinator, Tippecanoe Prosecutor's Office.

May 19, 2008: Lafayette Journal and Courier

Law enforcement, schools to partner for crime tip line

STAFF REPORTS

Tippecanoe County residents will have a new way to report crime tips to any law enforcement agency this summer.

The Tippecanoe County Prosecutor's Office announced in a news release today that agencies and schools will partner to launch the Tippecanoe County WeTip anonymous illegal activity reporting hotline. The hotline is part of the office's new Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative.

The WeTip hotline will forward all tips to the appropriate agency. WeTip, a national non-profit organization, staffs the toll-free line 24 hours per day.

The hotline will go live on June 1. The phone number will be (800) 782-8463 or (800) 78 CRIME.

The first phase of the launch will include sending fliers home with all students in the Lafayette, West Lafayette Community and Tippecanoe school corporations. Each child will receive three fliers and be asked to also deliver one to both adjacent neighbors.

A press conference on the initiative will be held at 5 p.m. May 28 at Duncan Hall

May 19, 2008: Lafayette Online News

Tippecanoe County anonymous crime reporting hotline launches June 1

LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Patrick K. Harrington, Tippecanoe County Prosecutor, and Kathryn J. Redd, Tippecanoe Project Safe Neighborhood/Gang Initiative Coordinator, announce the first phase of the launch of the TIPPECANOE COUNTY WeTip anonymous illegal activity reporting hotline. The hotline phone number, 1-800-78-CRIME, will be active on June 1, 2008.

According to a press release issued by the Prosecutor's Office, the system has been developed in response to the citizens desire to become an active partner with law enforcement in ridding their neighborhoods of illegal activities and crime, all Tippecanoe County law enforcement agencies have partnered with We Tip on the war against crime.

By incorporating, We Tip Municipal, Law Enforcement and School programs into a comprehensive initiative, all citizens are assured that they can use the system and that their crime tips will be forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

As the first phase of the We Tip program, over 65,000 flyers will be distributed, through the schools this week, to every child in Tippecanoe School Corporation, Lafayette School Corporation, and West Lafayette Community School Corporation. Based on the model used in the Compton Unified School District, in California, each child will be given three flyers and asked to distribute one to each neighbor adjacent to their home.

This grassroots initiative is intended to "put the power back in the hands of the citizens and away from those involved in illegal activity."

We Tip operates "800njtoll-free lines, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, by trained operators who are able to field calls in English and Spanish and with a TIDY machine for the hearing-impaired.

The We Tip Hotline will be live on June 1.

Further announcements will be made at the Tippecanoe County Prosecutor's Project Safe Neighborhood Anti-Crime Initiatives Press Conference on May 28, 2008 at 5:00pm, Duncan Hall. Susan Aguilar, WeTip CEO, will be speaking to the press at that time.

April 9, 2008: Journal and Courier Newspaper Editorial

Proactive approach deters crime

Knock on wood, Tippecanoe County hasn't experienced that kind of violence, and Lafayette police generally report crime trended downward between 2006 and 2007. That said, countywide crime figures indicate slight increases in violent crimes and property crimes from 1999 through 2005.

As the county's crime stats ticked up, area police have addressed problems, reporting more arrests for illegal possession of weapons and robbery. But traditionally police work is reactionary, responding after a crime is reported. That's in the process of changing here.

The first step to addressing any problem is identifying what and where specific crimes are occurring, then figuring out what might be the cause. Tippecanoe County already is addressing these issues.

A federal grant provided the county with funds to hire an investigator and purchase computers to track crimes, gang activities and arrests.

Kathy Redd, an investigator in the prosecutor's office, leads this effort, which includes working with rental property owners and crime watch groups to improve safety in the community.

It is refreshing to see residents and property owners working with law enforcement officials to curtail crimes. The proactive eyes and ears of neighborhood crime watch members, coupled with the efforts of rental property owners to landscape their apartments in a way to minimize crime, will send a message to the criminals and gangs that there is no safe haven to practice their trade.

In the meantime, the tracking figures provided by Redd and liaison officers at Lafayette police and the Tippecanoe sheriff's department will beef up patrols in problem areas, sending the message to the nefarious souls to take their enterprises somewhere else -- preferably somewhere outside our county and state.

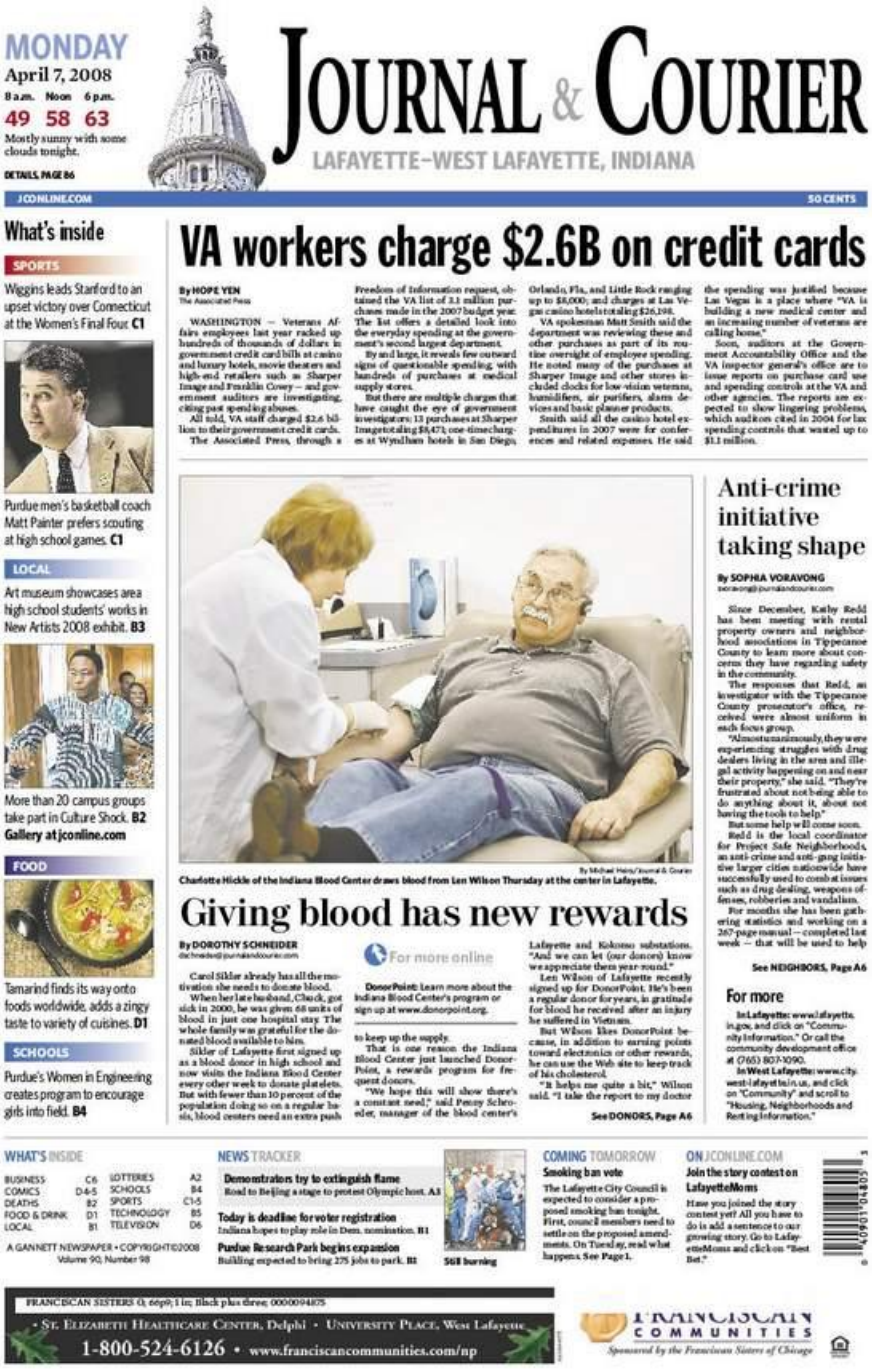
The collaboration of residents, rental property owners, police and the prosecutor's office obviously won't end crime in Tippecanoe County. But the design of the grant and Redd's efforts will give residents and law enforcement officials the tools needed to make it more difficult for criminals and gang members to operate.

Crime flourishes when people allow it to exist. We applaud Prosecutor Pat Harrington, Redd, the rental property owners and residents for keeping Tippecanoe County safe, and we encourage others to get involved and learn what they might do to discourage crime.

April 7, 2008: Lafayette Journal and Courier

Anti-Crime Initiative Taking Shape

By SOPHIA VORAVONG
svoravong@journalandcourier.com



MONDAY
April 7, 2008
8 a.m. Noon 6 p.m.
49 58 63
Mostly sunny with some clouds tonight.
DETAILS, PAGE B6

JOURNAL & COURIER
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What's inside

SPORTS
Wiggins leads Stanford to an upset victory over Connecticut at the Women's Final Four C1

Purdue men's basketball coach Matt Painter prefers scouting at high school games. C1

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Art museum showcases area high school students' works in New Artists 2008 exhibit. B3

More than 20 campus groups take part in Culture Shock. B2
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FOOD
Tamarind finds its way onto foods worldwide, adds a zingy taste to variety of cuisines. D1

SCHOOLS
Purdue's Women in Engineering creates program to encourage girls into field. B4

VA workers charge $2.6B on credit cards

By HOPE YEN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Veterans Affairs employees last year racked up hundreds of thousands of dollars in government credit card bills at casino and luxury hotels, movie theaters and high-end retailers such as Sharper Image and Franklin Covey — and government auditors are investigating, citing past spending abuses.

All told, VA staff charged $2.6 billion to their government credit cards.

The Associated Press, through a Freedom of Information request, obtained the VA list of 2.1 million purchases made in the 2007 budget year. The list offers a detailed look into the everyday spending at the government's second largest department.

By and large, it reveals few outward signs of questionable spending, with hundreds of purchases at medical supply stores.

But there are multiple charges that have caught the eye of government investigators: 13 purchases at Sharper Image totaling $8,473; one-time charges at Wyndham hotels in San Diego, Orlando, Fla., and Little Rock ranging up to $8,000; and charges at Las Vegas casino hotels totaling $26,198.

VA spokesman Matt Smith said the department was reviewing these and other purchases as part of its routine oversight of employee spending. He noted many of the purchases at Sharper Image and other stores included clocks for low-vision veterans, humidifiers, air purifiers, alarm devices and basic planner products.

Smith said all the casino hotel expenditures in 2007 were for conferences and related expenses. He said the spending was justified because Las Vegas is a place where "VA is building a new medical center and an increasing number of veterans are calling home."

Soon, auditors at the Government Accountability Office and the VA inspector general's office are to issue reports on purchase card use and spending controls at the VA and other agencies. The reports are expected to show lingering problems, which auditors cited in 2004 for lax spending controls that wasted up to $1.1 million.

By Michael Heinz/Journal & Courier
Charlotte Hickle of the Indiana Blood Center draws blood from Len Wilson Thursday at the center in Lafayette.

Giving blood has new rewards

By DOROTHY SCHNEIDER
dschneider@journalandcourier.com

Carol Sikler already has all the motivation she needs to donate blood.

When her late husband, Chuck, got sick in 2000, he was given 68 units of blood in just one hospital stay. The whole family was grateful for the donated blood available to him.

Sikler of Lafayette first signed up as a blood donor in high school and now visits the Indiana Blood Center every other week to donate platelets. But with fewer than 10 percent of the population doing so on a regular basis, blood centers need an extra push to keep up the supply.

That is one reason the Indiana Blood Center just launched DonorPoint, a rewards program for frequent donors.

"We hope this will show there's a constant need," said Penny Schroeder, manager of the blood center's Lafayette and Kokomo substations. "And we can let (our donors) know we appreciate them year-round."

Len Wilson of Lafayette recently signed up for DonorPoint. He's been a regular donor for years, in gratitude for blood he received after an injury he suffered in Vietnam.

But Wilson likes DonorPoint because, in addition to earning points toward electronics or other rewards, he can use the Web site to keep track of his cholesterol.

"It helps me quite a bit," Wilson said. "I take the report to my doctor

See DONORS, Page A6

For more online
DonorPoint: Learn more about the Indiana Blood Center's program or sign up at www.donorpoint.org.

Anti-crime initiative taking shape

By SOPHIA VORAVONG
svoravong@journalandcourier.com

Since December, Kathy Redd has been meeting with rental property owners and neighborhood associations in Tippecanoe County to learn more about concerns they have regarding safety in the community.

The responses that Redd, an investigator with the Tippecanoe County prosecutor's office, received were almost uniform in each focus group.

"Almost unanimously, they were experiencing struggles with drug dealers living in the area and illegal activity happening on and near their property," she said. "They're frustrated about not being able to do anything about it, about not having the tools to help."

But some help will come soon.

Redd is the local coordinator for Project Safe Neighborhoods, an anti-crime and anti-gang initiative larger cities nationwide have successfully used to combat issues such as drug dealing, weapons offenses, robberies and vandalism.

For months she has been gathering statistics and working on a 267-page manual — completed last week — that will be used to help

See NEIGHBORS, Page A6

For more
In Lafayette: www.lafayette.in.gov, and click on "Community Information." Or call the community development office at (765) 807-1090.
In West Lafayette: www.city.west-lafayette.in.us, and click on "Community" and scroll to "Housing, Neighborhoods and Renting Information."

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Volume 90, Number 98

NEWS TRACKER
Demonstrators try to extinguish flame
Road to Beijing a stage to protest Olympic host. A3
Today is deadline for voter registration
Indiana hopes to play role in Dem. nomination. B1
Purdue Research Park begins expansion
Building expected to bring 275 jobs to park. B1

Still burning

COMING TOMORROW
Smoking ban vote
The Lafayette City Council is expected to consider a proposed smoking ban tonight. First, council members need to settle on the proposed amendments. On Tuesday, read what happens. See Page 1.

ON JCONLINE.COM
Join the story contest on LafayetteMoms
Have you joined the story contest yet? All you have to do is add a sentence to our growing story. Go to LafayetteMoms and click on "Best Bet."

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Since December, Kathy Redd has been meeting with rental property owners and neighborhood associations in Tippecanoe County to learn more about concerns they have regarding safety in the community.

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For months she has been gathering statistics and working on a 267-page manual -- completed last week -- that will be used to help rental property managers. Redd said the first six- to eight-hour training class could begin by late May.

"We're looking forward to kicking out the program and getting the community behind us and engaged," she said. "We want the community to know that they can help make a difference. ... We really want to engage both tenants and landlords to become partners so that they do not have to live around illegal activity."

Last summer, the prosecutor's office received a $52,398 grant for the federal Project Safe Neighborhoods program. So far, it has been used to hire Redd and buy notebook computers so that Pat Harrington's office, Lafayette police, and Tippecanoe County sheriff's deputies can track and analyze trouble spots.

Harrington, the Tippecanoe County prosecutor, said the goal is to take a multiprong proactive and reactive approach in crime fighting "before it gets out of hand.

"It's a situation of recognizing the crime -- seeing that there's already been successful programs developed by other cities and bringing it here to Lafayette to implement."

A big part of Project Safe Neighborhoods involves working closely with rental property owners and managers and neighborhood associations, he said.

That's good news to Kyle Gingrich-Fulks, who grew up in the historic Perrin neighborhood just east of Lafayette's downtown and is co-chairwoman of its neighborhood association. An anti-crime committee was established last fall to help deal with issues that include transiency and loitering.

"We just had a meeting ... and talked about what we can do preventatively to tackle crime," she said. "I do think that people are more aware now. They aren't afraid to call police if they see something suspicious.

"It doesn't mean that crime won't happen, but it's a step in the right direction."

The Perrin neighborhood soon plans to put up signs showing that it has an active neighborhood crime watch. Residents also have been encouraged to leave on porch lights to deter criminals.

Gingrich-Fulks said they also plan on approaching city officials about getting additional lighting.

"We have a lot of unity going now," she said.

Part of the training that Redd will provide to landlords includes using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design techniques, which encourages strategies such as making intruders easily observable.

Harrington said the design program would teach property managers other safety tactics: clearing bushes so that they don't cover windows, how to recognize drug labs and encouraging community policing.

Using information obtained from the Lafayette Housing Authority, Redd also compiled a list of rent-subsidized housing units in the Tippecanoe County. What she found is that 24 percent of all rental units in the community are low-income housing.

"The population is denser in those properties than it is for the average rental property in Tippecanoe County," Redd said. "The amount of people we have living in low-income housing is about 14,000. That's pretty substantial.

"It's also spread sporadically, which makes it difficult to manage."

In the Valley Center neighborhood, about 40 percent of all properties are a mix of houses and apartments for rent, said Michael Bittinger, president of its neighborhood association.

Though he said crime is not a huge problem there -- "at least not yet" -- Bittinger and his wife were active in forming the neighborhood association so that they could get to know their neighbors better.

"It's a feeling that I would like to have to be able to call my neighborhood my home," Bittinger said.

A sense of community pride is another goal of Harrington and Redd, who say that strong neighborhoods could drive out criminals.

"To criminals, that's not attractive," Harrington said. "They want to be anonymous."