

# Cops cooperative effort hits snag

By Marie Chestney  
staff writer

Livonia police chief Robert Turner called "all shot to hell" a plan to have 40 suburban and outside officers, including one from Livonia, take part in a police chiefs' convention at Detroit's RenCen in October.

The year-old plan, spearheaded by Turner and a Detroit deputy police chief, seemingly crumbled this past week under a torrent of opposition from Detroit police and union officials, from a union representing officers across the state and from local police chiefs themselves.

The plan, billed as a public relations gesture by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) but eyed suspiciously as a way to beef up security around the RenCen area by police rank-and-file, apparently was also led to its doom by Turner himself.

In statements which he denies making, Turner was quoted as telling a Detroit newspaper columnist the officers would be used to protect the some 10,000-plus visiting police chiefs in the "jungle" of Detroit.

"I WAS quoted incorrectly and the words were taken out of context," Turner said Tuesday. "I never said they were needed to protect, and I never used the word 'jungle.' The plan had nothing to do with suppressing crime. The (officers) were to be there to handle crowds and as a courtesy. Forty extra officers would not have given that much extra protection. There was no inference that Detroit (police officers) can't do the job. If the plan goes, Detroit will not be losing that much, except the courtesy part of it. As it stands today, the plan is all shot to hell."

Turner's statements, as written Thursday by the columnist, were reported to have angered a whole line of Detroit officials, from Mayor Coleman Young to police chief William Hart to executive deputy chief James Bannan. Bannan told an Observer reporter Tuesday that the plan is dead.

News of the use of suburban police officers in Detroit at a time when 224 Detroit police officers were soon to be laid off also angered the Police Officers Association of Michigan (POAM), the state's largest police union, and the Detroit police officers' union.

POA executive director Carl Parsell said the plan a "slap in the face to everypolice officer." Detroit union boss De Witroba was reported to have cited the plan a violation of the city's own contract.

And a ensuing furor, together with news about Sept. 9 layoffs and a tight budget, also led at least one suburban police department to withdraw support the plan.

REDFORD Township was one of 18 communities to sign up to send police cars as officers to the convention for at least one night of its three-day stay in the RenCen-Cobo Hall area. Other communities volunteering at least one officer were West Bloomfield, Beverly Hills at Farmington.

According to an IACP handout explaining the plan, the officers were to be teamed up with a Detroit officer for patrol duty from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. Oct. 3, 4 and 5 the police cars were to be put on display in a special exhibit area.

"I initially thought it was a good idea," said Michael Manog, Redford Township police chief and president of the Wayne County Association of Chiefs of Police. "Then I had the opportunity to talk with chief Hart, who indicated the baselayout in Detroit, with the possibility of 200 cops. I rethought the plan thinking it would not be a positive station to send my officers into a city where extensive cop layoffs were anticipated."

The furor against the plan fell into two main categories. One was over the reason the officers were being sent to Detroit and the inference that Detroit police could not handle the job.

The other was the poor timing of the plan in light of pending layoffs.

TURNER insisted the reason for the plan was the same reason suburban police officers had been used in such other IACP convention cities as Los Angeles, Denver, Dallas, New York and Chicago. It was no visiting police chiefs, he said, could see the insignia of many police departments on officers and cars. At the most, Turner said, the 40 officers would be used for crowd control.

"There was no inference that they couldn't do the job. The (columnist) gave me a lot of 'what if' questions, such as 'what if a police chief came out of a bar and was attacked, would the (suburban) police officers come to his aid,'" Turner said. "I've also been known to call areas of Livonia a 'jungle,' also. They made it look like we're baby-sitting the chiefs. But in any city, that city baby-sits conventioners as best they can so that they leave the city with a good view of their stay there."

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