

Officials plead: Money's root of crime prevention

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Give us more funds for long-term police protection and don't restrict drug forfeiture funds.

Those were the pleas of some law enforcement and community officials who attended U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg's task force meeting Friday morning at the Farmington Hills City Hall. Detroit-area community leaders addressed the issues of crime prevention and prosecution.

The House Republican Task Force on Crime session was called "The Federal Government as a Partner in Local Crime Prevention."

"Today's hearing clearly illustrates the impact of crime is not limited to the inner city," said Knollenberg, a Republican from Bloomfield Township.

"While community leaders in the fight against crime are employing innovative strategies to stem the growing tide on the local level, we in the federal government must do our part by helping to provide the resources they need to keep violent criminals off the street."

He added: "The people of Michigan want to know that when someone is sentenced to a certain number of years, they will in fact serve that sentence. The federal government can help by assisting with additional prison facilities for those states who guarantee that convicted felons will serve minimum of 85 percent of their original sentence. We need to get

the career criminal off the street and truth-in-sentencing is the best way for the feds to be involved."

Hills police Chief William Dwyer stated his concerns, urging the introduction of a new crime bill that would focus on drugs, gangs and guns.

"The package must offer resources to curb gang violence, keep schools safe and create facilities to place additional convicted criminals," Dwyer said.

The nationwide rate of violent crime — murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault — has increased 371 percent since 1960, Dwyer said. During the past 30 years, the rate of violent crime has increased nine times faster than the population, and citizens are victimized every 17 seconds.

Dwyer urged cooperation and coordination between police agencies. "We need to create federally funded and maintained low-cost regional facilities for convicted non-violent offenders," Dwyer said.

"This would free up much needed space in our maximum security prisons for both the violent and repeat offenders. This would reduce the early release of many of these individuals, keeping them off the streets longer so they cannot prey on our society."

He urged the support of asset forfeiture of criminals' assets which takes the profit out of crime at all levels.

Southfield Police Chief Joseph Thomas recommended a "non-

traditional look at solving non-traditional crimes." He wants to augment a community policing effort to reach into the family unit and "change young people's attitudes about life."

"We're told crime doesn't have political boundaries, but law enforcement does have political boundaries," Thomas said of funding.

Thomas also pushed for continued support of asset forfeiture and other efforts to make crime "economically unsound" and serve as a way to alert parents to monitor their children more closely.

Ken Johnson, Redford Union schools superintendent, said more funds for early identification of students at greater risk are needed.

Early child care professionals can accurately assess as early as age 4 or 5 "who will end up with problems in the community," Johnson said. All students are not a "square peg that fits into a square hole," he said.

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POLICE/FIRE CALLS

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week.

■ ACCIDENT

A Novi woman cited icy road conditions as a reason that her 1992 Grand Am skidded into both a tree and the Fred Falke Brokerage on Grand River Feb. 23 about noon. She was ticketed for speeding.

■ AUTO THEFT

A 1988 white Monte Carlo was reported stolen from a parking lot near Executive Office Supply on Grand River in Farmington Feb. 24. The vehicle was later recovered on Archdale in Detroit after it was involved in a hit-and-run accident. The occupants fled from the scene.

■ THEFTS

Wire wheel covers (\$150) were stolen from a 1992 Olds parked behind Luigi's Bar-b-que on Farmington Road in Farmington Feb. 24.

■ CONCEALED WEAPONS

Two men were arrested by Farmington police after a search turned up a variety of weapons, including

a billy club, a pair of brass knuckles, a wrist rocket and firecrackers Feb. 22 on Lakeway and Shiawassee, near Farmington High. An officer stopped occupants of a 1979 Ford LTD with a Florida license plate and informed them they were in a school zone and told them about the loitering ordinance when he noticed a billy club between the front seats. A subsequent search of the vehicle and individuals turned up the other weapons. In addition to the wrist rocket, which was in the

trunk, police found 27 silver ball bearings.

■ VANDALISM

A sunroof of a 1982 Ford Explorer was smashed out causing \$200 damage while parked near First of America Bank on Grand River in Farmington Feb. 23.

Passenger and sliding door windows were broken causing \$400 damage on a 1989 GMC Rallyway, parked near Dan's Giant Sub on Orchard Lake in Farmington Feb. 22.

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