



WPD NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**** Media Release ****

26th Annual National Night Out Celebration Begins Friday, July 31

The Wichita Police Department wants Wichitans to take back the night from criminals, get to know their neighbors, help feed hungry citizens and fight crime by celebrating National Night Out. This annual crime-fighting event has been expanded to a five-day celebration beginning Friday, July 31 and culminating in block parties throughout the city on Tuesday, August 4.

Wichita began celebrating National Night Out 26 years ago. Like last year, National Night Out 2009 will be a multi-day event, said Neighborhood Watch Coordinator Officer Michelle Tennyson.

"Prior to 2008, Wichita had one event on National Night Out to encourage neighbors to get together informally at block parties and get to know one another," said Tennyson. "Last year, the event was expanded to six days, and the sponsoring organization, National Association of Town Watch, awarded the City of Wichita 5th place in the nation for its National Night Out program." The award was based on partnerships formed with citizens who worked with the Wichita Police Department to take back the night.

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National Night Out 2009 will have different activities each day suitable for everyone beginning on Friday, July 31.

NNO 2009 starts with a kick-off party at the Old Town Farm and Art Market, 835 E. 1st. The party, sponsored by KEYN Radio, will feature the band "Blue Eyed Soul" and will include a motorcycle rally open to all emergency services employees.

Other events are:

- Family Zoo Day at the Sedgwick County Zoo on Saturday, August 1, sponsored by KFDI Radio and the Sedgwick County Zoo with \$3 off admission;
- The NNO family day and concert in Sedgwick County Park on Sunday, August 2 from 3:00PM-8:00PM sponsored by Radio Fiesta and the City of Wichita with free admission;
- On Monday, August 3, Warren Theatres is sponsoring "Movie Monday" all day with discount admissions and reduced price concessions at all the Wichita locations.
- On Tuesday, August 4, neighborhood groups all over the city will have their own National Night Out neighborhood block parties.

As part of National Night Out 2009, the Wichita Police Department has partnered with the Kansas Food Bank to host a National Night Out Food Drive to fight hunger in the city. "Wichita has been hit hard this year with layoffs that have forced more citizens to turn to the food bank to feed their families," said Tennyson. "The food drive is designed to actively engage citizens to help feed those in need. Block parties are encouraged to gather non-perishable food items to donate to the Kansas Food Bank." Donations may be dropped off at any Dillons Store, at City Hall or at any of the Wichita Police substations during NNO week (August 3-8).

One 2009 NNO sponsor, Westar Energy, is providing registered block parties free energy-efficient LED night-lights to adults, a flying disc with the EfficiencyWorks logo on it to youngsters, and information about Westar and ways to save energy. "Serving as a sponsor of National Night Out gives us the opportunity to interact with thousands of customers in Wichita," said Sherii Farmer, account manager with Westar Energy. "It's a great way for us to be visible in the community, and to be able to share energy efficiency tips and other information about Westar that enhances Westar's relationship with its customers."

All citizens are encouraged to register their August 4th neighborhood block parties at no charge by going to the City of Wichita website, www.wichita.gov and clicking on the Police Department link. They can also call the Crime Prevention Section at 316-268-4101.

Block party registration lists will be distributed to members of the Police Department, Fire Department, City Council and other public officials so they can stop by and visit with you and your neighbors.

More information about National Night Out 2009 can be found at the link www.wichitapolice.com, or by calling 268-4101.

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