



WPD NEWS

Wichita Police Department
455 N. Main Wichita, KS 67202
(316) 268-4340 FAX (316) 858-7704
www.wichita.gov

DATE: November 6, 2007
CONTACT: Lt. Darras Delamaide
316-268-4101

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**** Media Advisory ****

Wichita Police Department Wins Another National Night Out Award

The National Association of Town Watch ranked the City of Wichita tenth in the nation for Block Party participation in National Night Out on August 7, 2007, Lt. Darras Delamaide announced today.

“NATW, the sponsoring agency for Neighborhood Watch, began the National Night Out program 24 years ago as a way for neighbors to join together to fight back against crime,” said Delamaide, the commander of the WPD Community Affairs Section. “The Block Party concept is designed to allow neighbors to get acquainted and strengthen or form Neighborhood Watch Groups to protect themselves and their neighbors by calling the police when illegal activity is observed.”

The local event this year involved nearly 300 different groups and an estimated 10,000 Wichitans holding Block Parties. Those organizing the neighborhood gatherings included Neighborhood Watch Groups, Neighborhood Associations and other community groups. Their goal was to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness, generate local participation in anti-crime programs like Neighborhood

- MORE -

Watch and strengthen police-community partnerships. This year's event registered an 85 percent growth from 2006 in the number of people participating and reflects a strong effort by the Community Affairs Section to rejuvenate the Neighborhood Watch and Business Watch Programs.

"This is a distinct honor and reflects the commitment by the entire community, the sponsors and local law enforcement agencies to address the problems of crime," Delamaide said. "Law enforcement officers rely on the citizens to be the eyes and ears of the community in the fight against crime. This annual event is an attempt to raise awareness that we all need to take responsibility for our own safety and that of our neighbors and call police when we see something amiss," he said.

The event was made possible with help from national sponsor Target Corp. and local sponsors including BOB 100.5 Radio, Westar Energy, Cricket Wireless, and Durham School Services. The NNO Kick-Off event was hosted by the Wichita State University Police Department

Officers from the Community Affairs Section joined with other WPD officers from Community Policing, School Liaison and beat patrol officers to visit every registered National Night Out Block Party in the city. Other participants and visitors to the Block Parties included the U.S. Marine Corp., U.S. Navy, WPD Specialty Units, and Sedgwick County Sheriff's Department. Other visitors included city council members, Wichita Fire Department members and Sedgwick County EMS medics.

The city has been honored numerous times in the past for NNO participation by NATW but tenth is the highest ranking achieved and matches the tenth place award received in 2005, Delamaide said.

“We’re very happy to have been honored with a tenth place ranking. Keeping in mind we are going up against cities like Los Angeles, Boston and Houston, we think this is a very credible showing for Wichita,” Delamaide added.

To organize a Neighborhood Watch or Business Watch for your area, contact the Community Affairs Section at 268-4101 for additional information or visit the Crime Prevention website by linking from www.wichita.gov.

You can learn more about the award and see city rankings at www.nationalnightout.org.