

TEXAS CRIME STOPPERS

Volume I, Issue IV

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News Flash

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Texas Crime Stoppers
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The 11th Annual Conference

The 11th Annual Texas Crime Stoppers Conference is fast approaching. Hosted by Tarrant County Crime Stoppers, it will take place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Addison, Texas from August 23 to August 25, 1999. Tarrant County Crime Stoppers, the Governor's Office, and the Texas Crime Stoppers Advisory Council invite you to participate in what promises to be an exciting and enriching event!

Attached is a packet that includes information sheets, registration forms, and award nomination forms. The deadline for the hotel and course registration is **July 30, 1999**. The deadline for award entries is **August 2, 1999**. The conference is limited to 350 participants, so register early!

Crime Stoppers Training & Technical Assistance

The Advisory Council recently approved a training and technical assistance strategy to enhance available instruction and resources around the state, including:

- An annual training plan;
- A needs assessment survey;
- A regional network of volunteer trainers;
- Two annual training events;
- A series of one-day training events; and,
- Other initiatives such as training videos, a resource manual, and exploration of the Internet as a tool.

In response to this plan, the Governor's Office has produced a *Needs Assessment* and a *Trainer Application*, both included with this *News Flash*.

Both forms should be submitted to the Texas Crime Stoppers Program in the Governor's Office.

Needs Assessment

The needs assessment is a basic survey outlining the training and technical assistance needs of Crime Stoppers programs. The responses you give will help the Advisory Council and the Governor's Office to determine what items are the most critical.

Consequently, please indicate the priority level in your responses.

Trainer Application

Part of the Council's plan is to establish a network of trainers and technical assistance throughout the state. An application for trainers is attached for anyone who would like to be considered. Please feel free to forward it to anyone who you feel may be a good candidate. The final selections will be made by the Advisory Council. Consequently, an application submission will NOT guarantee a training assignment.



Legislative Update

The 76th Legislative Session is drawing to a close and there are a variety of bills affecting Crime Stoppers.

SB 1789 is a bill that was recommended by the Crime Stoppers Advisory Council. It clarifies and redefines conditions regarding the duties of the Advisory Council, including encouraging the creation of Crime Stoppers programs, encouraging news and other media to broadcast reenactments, informing the public of

the functions of Crime Stoppers operations and programs, and promoting the Crime Stoppers process of forwarding information about criminal acts to the appropriate law enforcement agencies. The bill also clarifies the requirements for membership on the council, and makes it a third degree felony to use information received by Crime Stoppers for personal gain. The bill has passed and is on the Governor's desk.

HB 2397 increases the terms of Advisory Council members from two years to four years at staggered intervals. The bill has passed and is on the Governor's desk.

HB 2739 would impose a cost on certain convictions to fund reward programs operated by local Crime Stoppers organizations. This bill was left pending in the Criminal Justice Committee. As a result, it will not pass this session.

Currently, Crime Stoppers programs receiving funds in the form of payments from defendants must use at least 90 percent of the money to reward persons who report information concerning criminal activity.

HB 3209 allows Crime Stoppers to use certain excess funds for law enforcement purposes relating to Crime Stoppers or juvenile justice including intervention, apprehension, and adjudication. A Crime Stoppers program qualifies to use excess funds if the organization receives three times the amount of the funds it uses to pay rewards during a fiscal year. This bill has passed and is on the Governor's desk.

Future Conferences

The Governor's Crime Stoppers Advisory Council continues to accept bids from certified crime stoppers programs interested in hosting a conference. Please submit letters of support from the local Board of Directors and the local Convention and Visitor's Bureau. Texas Crime

Stoppers will contract with a professional conference planner to work with local representatives and coordinate the bidding process. The meeting planner will contact hotels and vendors directly. All bids will be presented to the Crime Stoppers Advisory Council who will make a selection.

Campus Conferences 2000, 2001 and the Annual Conference 2001 are still up for bid for any interested programs.

The next scheduled Council meeting is July 9, 1999 in Austin, Texas.

Other News

Additional Crime Stoppers Assistance Funds

In the Governor's Budget for FY 2000, it is anticipated an additional \$60,000 to \$70,000 will be made available to the Crime Stoppers Assistance Fund at the end of the year. This change will bring the total amount available in the Fund to as much as \$470,000!

Programs wishing to take advantage of these funds must be a certified program. If your program is not certified, please contact the Governor's Texas Crime Stoppers Program.

Governor Bush Announces Funding For A Texas School Safety Center

On May 14, 1999, the Governor's Office issued a press release announcing a \$420,000 grant awarded to Southwest Texas State University to create a Texas School Safety Center to help schools deal with violence on campus. The Governor's Criminal Justice Division is providing the funding for the grant.

There were nearly 70,000 acts of violence reported on Texas school campuses and more than 8,000 weapons confiscated last year according to the Texas Education Agency.

The center will provide training to law enforcement officials, parents, and educators to develop school safety plans which will help schools address

security issues and identify as well as prevent behavior that can lead to violence.

The center will hold regional training sessions and a statewide school safety summit. Students will attend a leadership training conference where they will learn the importance of respecting the rights of others and handling disputes peacefully.

Attorney General's School Safety Task Force

On May 5, 1999, Texas Attorney General John Cornyn announced a special task force on school violence. The task force will consist of lawmakers, educators, law enforcement officials, and parents and is slated to conduct four meetings across the state over the next year. The task force will ultimately recommend strategies to local districts to prevent school violence. The first meeting is scheduled to take place in San Antonio late this summer.

The task force and the Texas School Safety Center will be coordinating their efforts.

Register Today!

Summit For A Drug-Free Texas

There is still time to register for the *Summit for a Drug-Free Texas: Exposing the Pro-Drug Agenda* conference sponsored by the Office of the Governor. The conference will take place from June 21 to June 22, 1999 at the Austin Double Tree Hotel in Austin, Texas. A variety of topics regarding the pro-drug movement will be covered.

Please direct inquiries to:

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