



OUTLOOK *Lite*

a glance at what's happening in Lancaster

COMING SOON

Upcoming Events in Lancaster

January 9

City Council/Redevelopment Agency Meeting, 6 pm

January 14

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration, 4 pm
Lancaster Performing Arts Center

January 17

Planning Commission Meeting
7 pm

January 23

City Council/Redevelopment Agency Meeting, 6 pm

CLOSE CALLS

Phone numbers to keep handy

Lancaster City Hall

661-723-6000

Public Safety Office

661-723-6063

Sheriff's Department

Emergency: 911
Non Emergency: 661-948-8466

Graffiti Hotline

661-723-5985

Hate Crimes

877-728-7322

Traffic

661-723-6155

Animal Control

661-940-4191

Code Enforcement

661-723-6121

Lookin' Good Lancaster

661-723-5985

Crime Tip Hotline

661-948-COPS (2677)

Abandoned Shopping Carts

800-252-4613

Section 8 Violations

661-723-5879

New Initiatives Aim to Improve Public Safety

Public safety is everyone's concern. The City wants its citizens to know that it takes crime seriously and has put a high priority on programs to improve public safety.

Recently, a group of Lancaster residents participated in a discussion with Assistant City Manager Mark Bozigian and Lancaster Sheriff's Station Captain Carl Deeley. They learned that the City is taking an active role in improving public safety with innovative programs that keep more deputies on the streets preventing crime.

This issue of Outlook Lite takes a closer look at how the City is tackling the problem and some results achieved so far.

"The City Council set a goal to reduce the crime rate by 30 percent over the next five years," said City Manager Robert LaSala. "We're adding staff, employing new technology and learning from the best practices of other cities around the country."

These new initiatives are already showing strong results.

- **Routine response times are down 35 percent since 2004. Priority and emergency calls were also trimmed.**
- **Directed patrol teams have been created to target specific areas – problem rental properties and major crimes.**
- **Recently, gang crime task force operations netted nearly 140 fugitives and recovered stolen property.**
- **New surveillance cameras in selected City parks help deter crime and nab suspects in the act.**
- **Traffic cameras and radar signs are helping to slow traffic and reduce red light violations.**
- **17 School Deputies are on campus to help deter crime while gaining trust of students.**
- **Citizens and the City's new Crime Prevention Officer are starting Neighborhood Watch and Business Watch programs to help identify problems and address them.**

"The most important part of this program is to have an engaged citizenry," said Bozigian. "You can make a difference. Educate yourself on the issues and what's being done. Let us know when problems arise, and help identify those who cause them. Together, we can make Lancaster safer and more secure."

The City's Community Safety Budget has grown by 43% over the last two budget years to \$19.3 million this year.

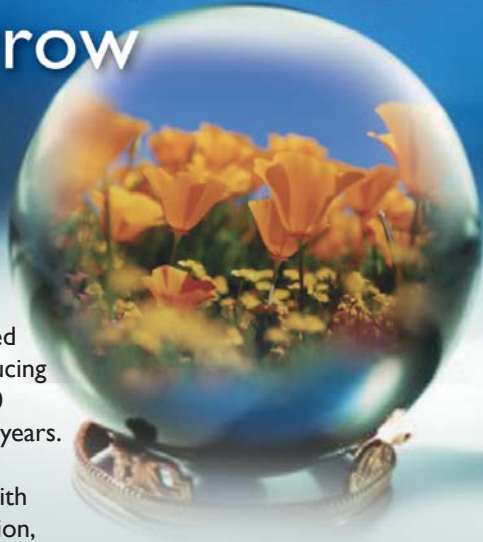
22 new sworn positions were added to the Lancaster Sheriff's Station roster since the beginning of 2004.

Lancaster is on the GO! Are you in the KNOW?

Police Reports Go Online!

Crime fighting has entered the Internet Age with the advent of new tools to help citizens report minor incidents quickly and conveniently. Visit the City website at www.cityoflancasterca.org or look inside this issue for more details.

VISIONS of tomorrow



City Goal: Reduce Crime Rate by 30 Percent

A key element of the City's forward-looking Vision statement established last year is the goal of reducing the major crime rate by 30 percent over the next five years.

The City, in cooperation with the Lancaster Sheriff's Station, has established concrete plans to help achieve this goal.

They've put more deputies on the street, leveraged new technology to help make existing personnel more productive and are working pro-actively to prevent crime through early intervention. They are addressing the issues that lead to crime and strictly enforcing laws already on the books.

Progress is being made. Already many criminals have been removed from the streets. Sheriff's response times are quicker and citizens are finding it easier to report incidents thanks to a new team of Community Service Officers and innovative online reporting.

There is much still to be done and our goal can't be accomplished without the public's help. Speak up. Report suspicious activities you see. Call with your concerns over code violations. Work together through a Neighborhood Watch to help keep an eye on things.

Thirty percent less crime is achievable, when we all are united.

LAN-CAP [Lancaster Community Appreciation Program] Roots Out Rental Property Problems

The Lancaster Sheriff's Station has a special team of officers dedicated to removing the criminal element from problem apartments and other rentals in Lancaster.

The team of eight deputies and their sergeant made over 5,000 arrests since their inception. This year alone, over 1,500 arrests were made – three times the normal apprehension rate. They have trained over 300 property owners and managers on how to spot potential problems and have performed over 200 Section 8 compliance checks. Along the way, they've impounded over 700 vehicles, issued over 400 traffic citations and executed nearly 80 planned enforcement operations. Officers have served over 100 search warrants and taken hundreds of undesirable characters off the streets.

The City is sending a clear message to criminals who choose to hang out here – enter at your own risk.
You are not welcome in Lancaster.



Lancaster Sheriff's Station LAN-CAP Team

Task Force Nabs 137 in Warrant Sweep

A recent Sheriff's Department sweep of the Antelope Valley resulted in the arrest of 137 individuals on a wide range of outstanding warrants.

The one-day operation targeted known gang members believed to be responsible for a string of robberies and burglaries here. Those apprehended included 19 adults and 16 juveniles. Eight vans full of stolen property were recovered.

A second "Save our Streets" sweep went after 400 fugitives believed to be in the Antelope Valley. Over 100 were apprehended on charges ranging from Fish and Game violations to suspicion of murder.

According to LA County Sheriff Lee Baca, the task force consisted of 250 officers from local, state and federal agencies, all working together to remove a significant criminal element from the community.



Consider the Fine Before Posting a Sign

The signs are out there taped and stapled to utility poles. They advertise everything from instant weight loss to “gigantic” yard sales, but they all have one thing in common. They’re illegal. Both the Lancaster Municipal Code and the California Penal Code make posting of any temporary signs along the public right-of-way illegal.



Recently, the City has beefed up its Code Enforcement Office, so the likelihood of being cited for posting such a sign has increased substantially. When found, these signs will be removed and the advertiser can face a fine of \$100. Repeat offenders can face criminal charges with fines up to \$500 for each sign posted.

So why risk a hefty fine? Advertise your event or sale in the newspaper or post your message on public bulletin boards. Doing so will help create a cleaner, safer neighborhood for all.

Community Service Officers Make a Difference

Since their inception last year, Lancaster’s Community Service Officers (CSOs) have made a significant impact.

These City employees, under the direction of the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, provide support to County Sheriff personnel by dealing with the multitude of issues that do not require a response by a sworn deputy.

In the months of September and October, CSOs logged over 17,000 miles responding to over 1,400 calls for service and over 1,700 observations by citizens. By simply having more eyes and ears on the street and by handling routine crime reports, CSOs have freed up time for deputies to better address serious crimes. CSOs have helped reduce response times on routine calls significantly – 12 percent since August.

CSOs are often instrumental in solving crimes and following up. Two officers were recently recognized for their outstanding duty. One CSO’s effort to thoroughly investigate a burglary led to the arrest of five suspects. In another case, the CSO who took an initial report on a stolen computer, followed through and saw that the computer was returned, much to the relief of its owner.



The City’s Community Service Officers

A City@Work City of Lancaster Welcomes Crime Prevention Officer

This month the City of Lancaster welcomes the newest member of its community safety team, a Crime Prevention Officer (CPO). Shelli Henson will work closely with Community Relations & Crime Prevention Deputy Kelly Simon of the Sheriff’s Department and local residents to make Lancaster a safer place to live and work.



Henson will coordinate Neighborhood Watch and Business Watch programs within the City of Lancaster, working with residents and the Sheriff’s Department to energize and expand these important programs. “When these programs are strong,” she explained, “they provide more and better information to law enforcement, leading to better control of crime.”

“This job is a great opportunity for me, but more importantly, a great opportunity for the City of Lancaster,” she said. “Since there hasn’t been a position like this in the past, it will be a new and practical way to bring together City government, the Sheriff’s Department and members of the community to combat crime.”

asked & answered
responses to your recent questions

How do I organize a Neighborhood Watch?

If you are interested in beginning or joining a Neighborhood Watch program in your area, please telephone Shelli Henson at 661-723-6063 or email shenson@cityoflancasterca.org

Cameras Help Nab Park Crooks

The recent installation of surveillance cameras in selected City parks has already led to arrests in two cases, just six weeks after they were installed. The new cameras allow both Sheriff's and park personnel to remotely monitor suspicious activities and respond accordingly.

"We can pan and tilt the cameras remotely and zoom in to see details," says Parks, Recreation and Arts Assistant Director Bob Greene. Images are also recorded, allowing authorities to review information after the fact to help identify individuals and provide evidence.

"Most importantly, the cameras serve as a deterrent," says Greene. "The likelihood of a perpetrator being apprehended is greatly improved with the new cameras."

Early successes have led the department to schedule installation in two more parks soon with a citywide rollout to follow.



City and Citizens Together Create Strong Neighborhoods

As you've read in this issue of Outlook Lite, the City of Lancaster is working hard to improve public safety in our community. However, no amount of added patrol cars, special task forces or high-tech cameras can substitute for an aware and concerned citizenry. This is the very foundation of any effort to reduce crime.

City Manager Robert LaSala and the City's entire team of public officials and staff urge Lancaster citizens to get involved. Be aware and alert of what is happening around your neighborhood and report issues that concern you. Get together with friends to form a Neighborhood or Business Watch program. Mentor youth. Volunteer at a homeless shelter. Contribute to local charities that help those coming from broken homes or troubled pasts.

Becoming involved in your community not only feels good, it can have a real positive impact on you and your neighbors. Together, we will make Lancaster a better place for everyone.

TOP Team Expands in 2007

The Target Oriented Police Team (TOP) that has proven to be so successful in addressing key issues is doubling its presence in 2007 to eight deputies plus a sergeant.



Lancaster Sheriff's Station TOP Team

The newly expanded team will target major crimes within the City. These include robberies, assaults, burglaries and auto theft.

In addition, the team will continue to provide expanded coverage in eight key areas:

- Providing extra patrol presence in high crime areas
- Keeping public parks safe
- Dealing with transients
- Handling unlicensed street vendors
- Assisting in locating wanted persons
- Assisting in serving search warrants
- Assisting in code enforcement
- Addressing citizen complaints regarding quality of life issues

The four-man team that fielded calls in 2006 made about 1,600 arrests. With a doubling of deputies in the field, even greater results can be expected.

Neighborhood Disturbance Team

We all enjoy a good party, but when things get out of hand, trouble often ensues. So the City, in cooperation with the Lancaster Sheriff's Station, has established a special weekend patrol designed to curb party problems.

To avoid problems when you host a party, keep these things in mind: Don't invite problems. Turn away uninvited or unknown guests. Prevent underage drinking and keep noise under control. Don't allow the party to spill out onto the street or front yard and keep the festivities indoors after 10 pm to avoid complaints.

Responding to loud party calls can divert resources from other critical calls, so please be responsible.

Residents Can Now Report Crime Online

The City of Lancaster and the Lancaster Sheriff's Station have made it easier for citizens to file a police report for minor crimes, saving both the citizen and the Department valuable time.

"What once took hours can now be accomplished in just minutes," says Lt. Gordon Carn of the Lancaster Sheriff's Station.



The online report allows citizens to complete a questionnaire conveniently in their homes without having to wait for a deputy or Community Service Officer to respond to the scene. Within 48 hours, and often much more quickly, the report is reviewed and an email is returned to the citizen with a link to the official report that can be used for insurance or tax purposes.

Among the categories of incidents that can be reported online are lost or stolen property valued at less than \$5,000 that did not involve forced entry (for example shoplifting, theft from an unlocked home, car or yard), harassing phone calls and vandalism.

According to Carn, "This service is not appropriate for all crimes, and people who believe they are in immediate danger should always dial 911 for assistance. Crimes which involve forced entry or where you believe you can identify the perpetrator should still be handled by a Community Service Officer or a Deputy Sheriff."

To utilize the free online service, go to www.cityoflanasterca.org and click on the "File a Police Report" link. To request an on-site report, please call 661-948-8466.

www.cityoflanasterca.org



Traffic Safety

The City has expanded its enforcement efforts to make City streets safer. New traffic cameras are helping to reduce red light violations, a major cause of injury accidents. New radar speed signs help remind drivers to slow down, and for those who choose not to, additional traffic patrols are on the prowl near schools and throughout the City, ready to issue tickets or even arrest those who drive unsafely.

To date, the cameras have captured 3,000 violations while two recent DUI checkpoints screened over 1,200 drivers resulting in nearly 40 impounds and 40 citations. There have been over 300 DUI arrests in the first six months of 2006. Six other Traffic Task Force operations held in cooperation with the CHP, Union Pacific Railroad Police and the Palmdale Sheriff's Station have issued hundreds of citations to those who fail to obey traffic safety laws. All these efforts are aimed at reducing property damage, injuries and fatalities due to careless driving. Please obey traffic laws, drive safely...and buckle up!



Lancaster Sheriff's Station, located on the corner of Lancaster Boulevard and Sierra Highway.



Public Safety Presentation Available to Groups

The City, in cooperation with the Lancaster Sheriff's Station, developed a comprehensive presentation on "How We Deal with Crime in Lancaster." The 50-slide presentation provides facts, figures and specific initiatives that the City has undertaken in order to reduce the crime rate by 30 percent over the next five years.

If your group or organization would like to see the presentation, contact Mark Bozigian at 661-723-6133 or mbozigian@cityoflanasterca.org to schedule a showing.

Let's make Lancaster Better, Together!

Your City works hard to make Lancaster a place in which we can all have pride. But there is always room for improvement. Help us serve you better. Offer your ideas and innovations on how government and citizenry can work together to create a better Lancaster.

Contact us online at www.cityoflanasterca.org.



Just click on the "Contact Us" link in the upper right corner of the page.

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www.cityoflanasterca.org

City Initiates Robbery/Burglary Reward Program

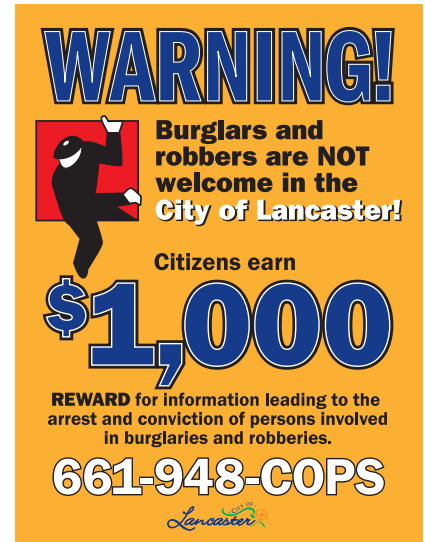
A new poster announcing an innovative anti-crime program makes the premise clear: **WARNING! Burglars and Robbers are NOT welcome in Lancaster!**

Under the program, citizens who provide information leading to the arrest and conviction of a person or persons for robberies or burglaries within the City of Lancaster can receive a \$1,000 reward.

"Robberies and burglaries are often solved with good, workable information provided by the public," noted Lancaster Sheriff's Station Captain Carl Deeley. "When a suspect is apprehended, often multiple cases are solved and increasing convictions will help prevent future robberies and burglaries."

Under the new program, a special reward committee comprised of City and Sheriff's Department staff and the City Attorney will make the final determination on who is eligible to receive the reward.

If you have information about a suspected burglar or robber, contact the Sheriff's crime tip hotline at 661-948-COPS.



Lancaster Looks for Best Law Enforcement Practices

Lancaster's City Council has retained the services of noted law enforcement experts Joseph Brann & Associates to help identify ways in which the City can employ techniques that have proven to be successful in other jurisdictions...the "Best Practices" of law enforcement agencies throughout the country.

Brann, who formerly served as Police Chief for the Cities of Hayward and Santa Ana as well as heading up the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, has performed similar reviews on behalf of Sacramento, Riverside, Denver, Cincinnati and Oakland. The year-long project will provide the City and Sheriff's Department with new insights and ideas on improving public safety within our own community.

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