

# Los Angeles Daily News

LAPD focuses on Northeast Valley crime

**By Jason Kandel**

**Staff Writer**

**Friday, October 03, 2003 –**

The LAPD's Foothill Division will deploy its entire force of nearly 300 officers today in an unorthodox 24-hour blitz against crime in the northeast San Fernando Valley. The officers and a team of deputy city attorneys will be spread over three shifts, interviewing witnesses and collecting evidence in a 24-hour effort to solve up to 1,000 backlogged cases, mostly misdemeanors for domestic violence, assault and burglary. "There are a lot of victims who've been righteously victimized," said Detective Tim Brausam, a 21-year veteran who's helping run the operation orchestrated by Foothill Division Capt. Kirk Albanese. "We're getting outrun. We're trying to make up for lost time."

The division is taking an assembly-line approach to the cases, some of which are only in the earliest stages of investigation.

With four officers assigned to each detective, they will canvass neighborhoods and make phone calls in a search for witnesses and victims in cases that have only just been opened. A special phone bank with 25 phones will be set up in the roll call room of the Foothill Division in Pacoima.

Cases that are farther along in the process will be handled by another team of detectives, which will submit them to a "rap sheet" team that will run criminal histories of suspects. Then the cases will be presented to a team of deputy city attorneys for possible prosecution.

City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo said this is another example of law enforcement agencies working together to combat quality-of-life crimes.

"If left unchecked these crimes serve as a welcome mat for more and more serious crimes," he said. "This multiagency enforcement action demonstrates the city's heightened commitment to improving the quality of life in our neighborhoods."

City Councilman Alex Padilla, who represents the Northeast Valley area, praised the program.

"I'm glad to see that this is happening in the Northeast Valley," he said. "I can certainly understand some of these cases have been lingering for a while. This is one way in which we're working to improve public safety in the San Fernando Valley."

Greg Nelson, the general manager of the city's Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, said the effort is a creative way to solve a serious problem.

"This is an attempt to reinvent government by bringing it closer to the people as opposed to trying to solve a serious problem in the traditional way," he said. "I'm excited about this."

Los Angeles Police Department Cmdr. Michel Moore, a former Valley Bureau assistant commander, praised Albanese and others across the city who are organizing similar task

forces.

Division captains are responsible for coming up with new approaches to crime fighting, and are responding to intensified questioning during Chief William Bratton's new Compstat crime tracking meetings, which are held once a month in each of the four bureaus across the city.

"We're hopeful we will have success," said Moore, who has been reassigned to help reorganize the new Detective Bureau.

"It won't solve the problem. But it goes to attending to it, making sure these cases receive their due attention. It demonstrates ingenuity and a commitment to service. I applaud it." Albanese, who's been a captain nearly six years in his 23-year career, said he is committed to his community.

"We need to provide service and conclude our investigations," said Albanese, who came to Foothill this summer after helping rein in a flagrant robbery problem in Koreatown in the Wilshire Division.

For the task force, detectives will hold short training sessions with patrol officers on investigating a crime to build a strong enough case that the city attorney will file a charge.

Many of these officers are looking forward to the shift, said Sgt. Randy Modrell, a field supervisor at Foothill.

"It's a chance to learn a little bit about detective work," said Modrell. "Many of them (patrol officers) want to be detectives in the future. They figure this won't be so bad. It's only one day. And they may actually learn something."

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