

WINNECKE FOR MAYOR

Paid for and authorized by Winnecke for Mayor, Gary Dicus, Treasurer



GANG REDUCTION TASK FORCE

Public safety and security impacts Evansville's quality of life in enormous ways. Crime directly impacts the community's growth, prosperity and ability to attract new jobs. This is why my campaign so heavily emphasizes the protection of our community.

In order to address a growing problem of gang activity among Evansville's youth, my administration will create a new Gang Reduction Task Force. We envision this task force working to comprehensively change conditions fueling gang growth and violence.

Our strategy must be tough on gang crime, but we must also address the root causes of gang crime. Reducing gangs depends upon putting people on a path to a productive life. The task force will target neighborhoods with high levels of gang activity through a combination of suppression, prevention and intervention services, all aimed at ending the cycle of gang violence.

I am proud to have earned the endorsement of the Fraternal Order of Police, as well as the support of numerous community leaders in neighborhoods afflicted by gang violence. Working together we will provide citizens with the highest standard of services and performance.

Sincerely,

LLOYD WINNECKE

1. TASK FORCE MAKEUP, COOPERATION AND FUNCTION

The Gang Reduction Task Force will work closely with the Evansville Police Department's Juvenile, Narcotics and Vice Units.

To successfully reign in gang activity, we must foster a sense of community collaboration between the mayor's office, the police department and residents of the communities impacted by gang violence.

The task force will explore the creation of more public-private partnerships, including collaborative efforts like neighborhood walks with non-profits, churches and neighborhood groups impacted most by gang violence.

Part of the task force's role will be gathering intelligence to assist street officers and other units in identifying individuals, gangs and areas susceptible to gang violence.



The task force will aim to intervene in gang activity at the neighborhood level by utilizing individuals whose personal experience with gang life and/or youth development gives them credibility in these targeted communities.

Intervention teams will have three primary functions: (1) violence interruption through day-to-day policing, (2) proactive peacemaking and (3) outreach with incarcerated gang members before and after release.

Proactive peacemaking involves "ceasefire" agreements between rival gangs mediated by police officers. By mediating conflicts before they escalate, proactive peacemaking can greatly reduce violence and help quell rumors that can fan the flames of gang activity.

This intervention program will also involve working with incarcerated gang members immediately before and after their release. During the critical periods before and after

incarceration, we can attempt to reduce their chances of returning to gang life.

2. SCHOOL PREVENTION

Improved education can help address the root causes of gang crime by reducing the number of youths joining gangs.

The EPD's School Liaison Unit currently uses the Officer Friendly program in the grade schools while dealing with disciplinary problems in the middle and high schools. We will have the School Liaison Unit implement a new program in the middle schools that will focus on drug and gang prevention.

We will also develop Law Enforcement Clubs in each high school that will not only teach students about law enforcement and build relationships with them, but will also encourage them to seek a career in public safety.

3. QUALITY EQUIPMENT

To effectively reduce gang activity, police officers need the right tools and latest technology. According to feedback received from FOP members, a new mobile surveillance vehicle would be useful for areas of substantial gang activity.

Cities such as Peoria, IL, and Utica, NY, have successfully used this type of armored vehicles, either donated or purchased at a reduced price, to deter illegal activities in crime-plagued areas. This type of vehicle, which we will call "The Guardian," would be reinforced with top-of-the-line armor and high tech surveillance equipment.

By parking this highly visible police vehicle in neighborhoods experiencing gang and/or drug problems, the Evansville Police Department can deter violence and crime. The video surveillance provided by the armored truck will aid in prosecuting offenders and linking individuals to criminal activity.