

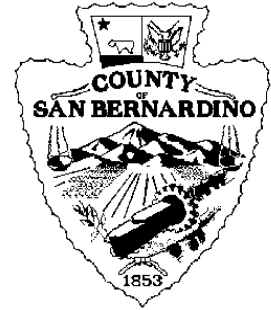
# ***NEWS***

*From the Office of*

## **Bill Postmus**

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors  
San Bernardino County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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For information, contact  
Brad Mitzelfelt (909) 387-4830

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### **COUNTY DECLARES WAR ON GANGS**

**SAN BERNARDINO** – The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors approved a plan today to invest more than \$4.6 million in an effort to combat gangs in the county. The board item authorizes the creation of a 48-member Gang Task Force composed of staff from the Sheriff, District Attorney, Probation, and Public Defender who will lead the fight against the county's growing gang population. Current estimates place the number of gang members in the county at 12,000 - 16,000 members belonging to 287 different gangs.

The task force is being modeled after a pilot program implemented in Supervisor Bill Postmus' high desert district last year. The efforts of that team, along with the reactivation of the San Bernardino County Movement Against Street Hoodlums (SMASH) program—to conduct gang sweeps in other target areas of the county—resulted in 532 arrests and 100 new felony cases, many with multiple defendants. Last year's pilot program consisted of a short-term gang suppression effort in the Victor Valley area that resulted in the identification of 286 new gang members and two previously unidentified gangs. For 100 days, the High Desert Gang Enforcement Team, consisting of staff from the Sheriff, District Attorney, Probation and California Highway Patrol, investigated, apprehended and prosecuted gang members involved in criminal activity.

Supervisor Postmus said, "When I was elected, I promised that I would make public safety a top priority. With the creation of this Gang Task Force, violent street gangs are going to get the message that they will not be tolerated in San Bernardino County."

As part of the plan, the Sheriff will create two regional Gang Enforcement Teams, one in the valley and one in the desert. The teams will be composed of specially trained law enforcement officers who will identify, investigate, track and arrest gang members. The District Attorney will provide prosecutors who are specially trained in dealing with gangs. The Probation Department will work with the partner agencies to educate youth about the dangers of gangs in an effort to keep children from joining gangs.

The creation of the Gang Task Force includes the addition of 10 positions for the Sheriff's Department, 16 for the District Attorney's Office, nine for the Public Defender and 13 for Probation. Funding for vehicles and equipment was also approved as part of the plan.