

New tools in fight against Compton crime

By GENE C. JOHNSON JR., Staff Writer 07.JUN.07

COMPTON — Deputies patrolling Compton will have new technology to fight crime with high definition video cameras that will assist them in tracking where gunshots are fired, and with an automatic license plate scanning system equipped in some patrol cars.

The Advanced Surveillance and Protection Plan (ASAP) was unveiled June 6 during a morning news conference at the Sheriff's Headquarters Bureau in Monterey Park attended by Compton Mayor Eric Perrodin, county Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke and Sheriff Lee Baca.

"Usually this kind of technology debuts in more affluent neighborhoods," Perrodin said. "It shows how much the Sheriff's Department genuinely cares about the city of Compton.

"Because of the technology the word will get out among the criminals, that Compton is not the place to commit crimes," he said. "Hopefully, this kind of technology can spread to the surrounding cities."

The high-definition digital video cameras will be installed at strategic intersections within the city, and are designed to discourage and prevent crimes.

Also positioned in different areas of the city will be acoustic gunshot detection sensors which signal an immediate alert when shots are fired as well as a digital map to pinpoint the location of shots fire (within 10 feet).

Also, as a part of ASAP, sheriff's patrol cars will be equipped with an automatic license plate scanning device — a computer system and video camera that automatically scans and runs license plates as they pass.

The ASAP pilot in Compton will initially deploy about 20 high-definition cameras and numerous gunshot detection sensors. Three patrol cars will be equipped with automatic plate scanners.

Officials said there are plans to deploy up to 75 video cameras and gunshot detection sensors throughout Compton and the surrounding areas.

According to Deputy Chris Kovac, three license plate scanning patrol vehicles have been on Compton streets in the past three weeks.

In the coming weeks, Kovac said, high definition digital video cameras will be placed in certain locations throughout the city — one of them being the Compton Courthouse.

And, to start the acoustic gunshot detection system will be placed at the new Gateway Town Center shopping mall and at the Crystal Park Casino Hotel.

The Compton ASAP program was funded by the Compton-based Belkin Corp., a manufacturer of computer hardware products such as computer keyboards and surge protectors, and by Target Corp., which is currently building a new store in Compton.

"We all know that with the level of sophisticated crimes occurring in our communities, our methods to

prevent crime must continue to advance as well,” Burke said.

“I am proud that Compton was chosen to implement many of these high-tech crime fighting devices,” she added. “We believe that with the implementation of the ASAP technology, it will strengthen our ability to significantly deter crime and gang violence.”