

I. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Violent Crime and Gangs in the City of Anderson

As with much of the rest of the United States, gangs are perceived as playing a major role in the commission of violent crimes in the city of Anderson. Law Enforcement recognizes the necessity of aggressively prosecuting persons and groups who engage in *illegal activity*.

According to an internal memo as of July 2011, there are at least 25 documented street gangs with an estimated 450 members operating within the city limits and/or Anderson County. The gangs present in Anderson County include¹:

- MS-13
- Florencia 13
- Crips
- Bloods
- Black Mafia
- Gangster Disciples
- Insane Gangster Disciples
- Brick City Boyz
- Boogie Woogie
- Imperial Gangster Disciples
- Anderson County Goons
- Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club
- Peckerwoods Motorcycle Club
- Red Devil's Motorcycle Club
- Hardwood Cruisers Motorcycle Club

Most if not all of the documented gangs in Anderson are located in economically distressed areas. However, recently graffiti and criminal gang activity has been observed in all areas of the city. The formerly funded PSN *Anti-Gang Initiative Investigator* has had sporadic contact with individuals associated with Hispanic Gangs, such as Latin Kings, SUR 13 and MS-13. There are reports of Hispanic Gang activity occurring in the northern part of Anderson County, which will ultimately filter into the city.²



¹ Internal memo (e-mail) from the PSN Anti-Gang Initiative Investigator. July 11, 2011.

² Internal memo (e-mail) from the PSN Anti-Gang Initiative Investigator. July 9, 2009.

A Gang Task Force has been established which combines the resources of the City of Anderson Police Department and the Anderson County Sheriff's Office. Members of the Gang Task Force include the police department's previously funded PSN *Anti-Gang Initiative Investigator*, an additional officer from the City of Anderson Police Department, an agent from the FBI and a deputy from the Anderson County Sheriff's Office.



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Documented "Crip" gang member implicated in robberies and burglaries in the City of Anderson.

The below photographs are examples of gang graffiti that is prevalent on walls of local businesses and residences.



The City of Anderson Police Department has affected arrests of a number of gang members since September 2005. Some of the cases that the APD has brought against suspected gang members are misdemeanor and felony drug possession and assaults. The assault charges vary in degree from *Simple Assault* to *Assault & Battery of a High & Aggravated Nature*. The department has seen a significant rise in the number of physical confrontations between rival gang members.

During the last seven fiscal years, which end on June 30 of each year, there have been 157 documented gang related incidents of violent activity. The following is a quick-view table of the offense type details by fiscal year. Fiscal Years 2009, 2010 and 2011 include gang related incidents which occurred in the city of Anderson and Anderson County.

Offense Type	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Grand Total
Aggravated Assault	7	3	10	12	7	3	12	54
Forcible Rape	1	1		1			2	5
Intimidation		1	3	3			3	10
Kidnapping / Abduction				1	2	1	2	6
Murder				1	1	1	1	4
Robbery		3	2	10	3	4	11	33
Simple Assault	7	5	11	13	5	2	2	45
Grand Total	15	13	26	41	18	11	33	157

The gang activity in the city limits of Anderson has become increasingly violent to include kidnapping and murder.

The City of Anderson has a long history of violence that may be individual gang members acting alone and/or as a part of a larger undiscovered design. As far back as the early seventies, the city was having problems with shooting at school events. Indeed, circa 1972, City of Anderson Police Department officers were fired upon during a Tuesday night basketball game.³ Four officers were injured (three were hit with shotgun pellets) and three police cars were damaged by shotgun blasts. Three officers were standing outside the gymnasium when someone began firing at them from the dark. Two officers were hit under the chin and in the chest with shotgun blasts and one officer was shot in the leg.

In March 2002, in the City of Anderson, a double murder was committed by a 12 year-old juvenile armed with a handgun. This act of firearm violence occurred in a residential neighborhood, in public, on a city street (sidewalk), and in broad daylight. The shooter actually had control of two weapons. The murder weapon was a .380 semi-automatic that he had taken from one of the victims shortly before killing both victims. The shooter had another weapon “stashed” in a separate location. That weapon was a 9mm semi-automatic that he had allegedly stolen from a car parked at the mall. The department was unable to determine the original source of the .380 murder weapon (where the victim procured that weapon), nor were we able to determine with reasonable accuracy who the 9mm was stolen from. When the weapons were located, the homicide detectives assigned to the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) to investigate this crime

³ Information derived from a copy of an undated article from the Anderson Independent. Reviewed with one of the affected officers, Ray Fousek, via telephone on Friday, June 23, 2006.

cleared both weapons. Those investigators report that the guns had full clips “with a round in the chamber”. That means the weapons were “locked and loaded” (i.e. ready to fire).

In 2005 the infamous “Applebee’s Shooting” took place. In this incident it was alleged that an unsuspecting patron of the Applebee’s restaurant suffered a gunshot wound that resulted from an alleged gang incident wherein evidently the supposed gang member(s) were shooting at people who were unknown to and unaffiliated with the patron who was shot in Applebee’s. The restaurant patron who was reported as having been shot was possibly struck by ricocheting ammunition. It appears that the actual shooting (possible drive-by) may have taken place next door. This is an example of innocent people getting caught in the cross fire of gangs.

The most recent gang violence resulting in a homicide occurred in the city of Anderson on June 22, 2008. The victim and five other individuals were outside of an apartment complex when unknown gunmen began firing at them with either an AK-47 or SKS assault rifle hitting three of the six men, killing one.⁴

In July 2008, a joint operation began with the City of Anderson Police Department and the DEA to investigate a Hispanic individual involved with the importation of Methamphetamine from Mexico. The individual was arrested and this dealt a major blow to the Mexican Drug trafficking in the Anderson Area. The individual was reportedly a member of the “Zetas” under the direction of the Gulf Cartel.⁵

Gang violence in Anderson County is escalating. There are currently 12 open gang related cases which involve home invasions, a drive-by shooting and arson, a shooting at a club with 2 victims, and five drug investigations.

In May 2011, two rival gang members joined forces in order to “take out” a mutual rival. The victim was gunned down in an apartment complex which is a known gang area.⁶

⁴ Internal memo (e-mail) from the PSN *Anti-Gang Initiative Investigator*. July 9, 2008.

⁵ Internal memo (e-mail) from Captain Kevin Marsee. July 6, 2009.

⁶ Internal memo (e-mail) from Sgt. Jeff Mosher. July 8, 2011.

II. EXISTING EFFORTS and CURRENT RESOURCES

During Fiscal Year 2010 (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010) the City of Anderson Police Department handled a total of 68,380 calls-for-service.

The average number of calls per month was 5,851.25.

Officers investigated or were dispatched to “suspicious persons” 3,334 times.

The following tables refer to the target crimes as listed in this paper as well as related crimes. The data-sets include calls-for-service (CFS) and Uniform Crime Reports (UCRs).

Major Crimes Calls-for-Service (CFS) by Year						
<u>Classification</u>	<u>Crime</u>	<u>FY07</u>	<u>FY08</u>	<u>FY09</u>	<u>FY10</u>	<u>Grand Total</u>
Violent	Assault	466	552	556	491	2,065
	Robbery	142	153	179	151	625
	Sexual Assault	46	46	67	76	235
Violent Total		654	751	802	718	2,925
Property	Burglary	679	660	684	688	2,711
	Larceny	1,776	1,750	1,986	1,795	7,307
	MVT	113	189	204	156	662
Property Total		2,568	2,599	2,874	2,639	10,680
Grand Total		<u>3,222</u>	<u>3,350</u>	<u>3,676</u>	<u>3,357</u>	<u>13,605</u>

The above-referenced 13,605 calls-for-service (CFS) averaged 9.32 per day across the board for the above fiscal years and resulted in the generation of 7,861 documented criminal incidents involving the major violent and property (a.k.a. *Target*) crimes on a UCR.

A UCR is an official law enforcement record of what an investigation confirms as a probable crime. A preliminary UCR is generally started by the officer (first responder) on the scene who takes the initial CFS. It may be supplemented in the future by additional investigators as the investigation progresses. For the period of time under discussion, there was an average of 5.38 target crimes per day or 37.79 per week. Because of the complexity of these cases, in the city of Anderson, these types of crimes are investigated almost exclusively by the Criminal Investigations Division.

MAJOR CRIMES BY YEAR AS PER UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS					
<u>INDEX CRIMES</u>	<u>FY 2007</u>	<u>FY 2008</u>	<u>FY 2009</u>	<u>FY 2010</u>	<u>Total</u>
Murder	5	2	3	4	14
Rape	17	12	12	17	58
Robbery	39	58	65	56	218
Aggravated Assault	<u>107</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>109</u>	<u>119</u>	<u>414</u>
Violent Index	168	151	189	196	704
Burglary	300	358	404	459	1,521
Larceny-Theft	1,065	1,204	1,443	1,372	5,084
Motor Vehicle Theft	108	138	146	124	516
Arson	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>36</u>
Property Index	<u>1,576</u>	<u>1,393</u>	<u>1,479</u>	<u>1,710</u>	<u>7,157</u>
TOTAL INDEX	1,744	1,544	1,668	1,906	7,861

In addition to investigating personal and property crimes, narcotics violations and crimes of vice, the Criminal Investigations Division and the Vice-Narcotics unit spends a corresponding amount of time in court. This reduces their available time to pro-actively follow up on the crimes and reports that potentially result from gang activity. With the current resources, investigators are available to address a criminal act only after it has occurred and someone has been injured or killed. Due to the continuous influx of violent and property crime reports it would be virtually impossible for the existing number of investigators to increase the amount of investigations performed or for them to increase the number of charges filed.

The department desires to continue the efforts of the city officers on the existing Anderson County Gang Task Force by seeking outside funding for specialized training and overtime. The additional funds will be used to build a connection with the growing Hispanic community in Anderson County in order to combat the increasing presence of Hispanic Gang activity. The City of Anderson Police Department and the community realizes the need for more law enforcement resources to be concentrated on gangs, gang violence, and the lawlessness and grief that is generated by that type of lifestyle.

III. CONCLUSION

Anderson, South Carolina has a higher per capita rate of non-educated people than the average for the United States, the southern region of the United States, and the state of South Carolina. Anderson also has comparably less household earnings. These two factors contribute disproportionately to and are correlated with increased levels of violence observed in Anderson as compared to the rest of the nation. Added to this is the fact that persons of low socioeconomic status disproportionately inhabit Anderson City. That class of people tends to value gang affiliation more strongly than persons of higher socioeconomic status. They also seem to acquire firearms at higher rates than the “average” citizen and carry those weapons “on their person” more often. This class of people does not limit itself to positive social, psychological and physical development through legitimate channels. In fact, these types of people seem to seek to fill the voids in their lives by pursuing status and a sense of belonging through being a member of a pseudo-family, i.e. a gang.

The severity of gang violence in the United States, South Carolina, and the City of Anderson is rising. According to federal law enforcement officials, Atlanta, GA has been established as the principal drug distribution centers for Mexican Drug Cartels for the eastern United States.⁷ Due to Anderson’s proximity to the interstate and its geographic location, halfway between Atlanta, GA and Charlotte, NC, the city may be an ideal location for the migrating Mexican drug-trafficking organizations seeking refuge from federal law enforcement agencies.

There has been a 342% increase in the Hispanic population between 1990 and 2005 in the state of South Carolina.⁸ This significant increase creates ongoing issues and challenges for local law enforcement agencies. These challenges include language barriers, the need for cultural training specific to law enforcement, the need for materials and Miranda Rights in Spanish and the need for bilingual personnel and staff. “Many within the immigrant community consider law enforcement personnel corrupt and untrustworthy”.⁹ Therefore, law enforcement must adapt to the changing needs of the communities they serve by building connections with the increasing Hispanic population in their jurisdictions through specialized training, meetings and educational materials. The Hispanic Gang activity in Anderson County will continue to expand unless the Gang Investigators for the city of Anderson are able to build connections and change the perception that law enforcement personnel are “corrupt and untrustworthy”.

⁷ www.usatoday.com/printedition/news/20090309/mexcartels09_st.art.htm

⁸ Mexican Immigrants in South Carolina: A Profile, January 2007.

⁹ South Carolina Hispanic/Latino Report 2006