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MULTI-AGENCY GANG ENFORCEMENT CONSORTIUM (MAGEC)

INTRODUCTION

The Fresno County Grand Jury of 2005-2006 believes it is important to again review the status and success of the Multi-Agency Gang Enforcement Consortium (MAGEC), as recommended by the Fresno County Grand Juries of 2001-2002 and 2003-2004.^{1 2}

BACKGROUND

“On January 3 of 1994, the Fresno County Sheriff’s Office formally established their gang enforcement team titled C.R.A.S.H. (Combined Resources Against Street Hoodlums).” In 1997, the sheriff proposed one unique law enforcement body be established. MAGEC was formed with approval of the California State Governor.³

“The men and women of MAGEC, believe that a multi-agency and a multi-level approach to combat gang crime is the most comprehensive and effective method in existence.”

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

The Law Committee investigation involved interviews with the office of MAGEC, review of Final Reports of Fresno County Grand Juries of 2001-2002 and 2003-2004, responses to their reports and Fresno County Sheriff’s Office/MAGEC website.

We offer our support and commendation with this report.

FINDINGS

F1 Gang related arrests are up 40% since 2003, according to MAGEC.⁴

F2 The average age of gang members in 2005 is between 14-31, compared to 17-24 in 2003.⁵

¹ Fresno County Grand Jury Report 2001-2002

² Fresno County Grand Jury Report 2003-2004

³ Fresno County Sheriff/MAGEC website

⁴ MAGEC Testimony- Findings:

⁵ Fresno County Grand Jury Report 2003-2004

- F3 Even though the number of gangs has decreased by 23 since 2003, gang membership is never static. New gangs form, gangs divide, separate gangs consolidate, older gangs dissolve and MAGEC still keeps track of them.
- F4 Out of 167 gang related trials, only one person was not prosecuted. This was because of mistaken identity.
- F5 The District Attorney's Office continues to have three full-time prosecutors for gang related cases, one investigator, one Hmong translator and support staff.
- F6 In 2005, MAGEC arrested 29 people who produced and acted in a DVD depicting criminal gang activity in Fresno.
- F7 Temporary and permanent civil injunctions issued by the courts continue to prohibit gang members from associating with other gang members, intimidating people, using guns, other weapons, drugs, alcohol or trespassing and requiring that they obey laws and curfews.
- F8 MAGEC's time is dedicated 100% to gang enforcement, with 897 felony arrests in 2005.
- F9 MAGEC has 38 sworn officers in the team, but according to MAGEC, the unit could immediately put to work at least 25 more officers.
- F10 MAGECs' team is a consortium of personnel from the following agencies: ⁶
- California Department of Justice
 - California Youth Authority
 - Clovis Police Department
 - Federal Bureau of Investigation
 - Fresno City District Attorney's Office
 - Fresno County Sheriff's Office
 - Fresno Police Department
 - Kerman Police Department
 - Reedley Police Department
- F11 None of the above agencies have their own dedicated gang task force, but share in MAGEC.
- F12 At one time the Fresno County Probation Office had one officer in MAGEC, who was later withdrawn.
- F13 MAGEC must have "probable cause" to immediately enter a premises or they are delayed.

⁶ MAGEC Testimony- Findings: F10, F11, F12, F13, F14, F15, F16

- F14 With a probation officer present “probable cause” is immediate because “most gang members are in violation of probation.”
- F15 Both Madera and Tulare Counties have established gang task forces with training by MAGEC.
- F16 MAGEC’s budget in 1997 was \$242,000 per year and has decreased since to \$94,000 per year. The budget is set by the State of California.
- F17 Fresno County was selected with MAGEC to be a node for “Cal Gang”, a statewide database. This system has now developed into a nationwide database for gangs titled “Gang Net”.⁷
- F18 The MAGEC task force has had a 1989 Dodge van over six years that has been unreliable for starting, air conditioning (105° with full armor gear), and is difficult to maintain.⁸

CONCLUSIONS

- C1 The success of MAGEC is reflected in the decrease in the number of gangs, the increase in arrests, the successful prosecution of court cases, national recognition and requests from neighboring counties for training by MAGEC.
- C2 Gangs are recruiting both younger and older members than in the past.
- C3 Civil injunctions issued by the courts continue to be an effective tool for gang control in specific neighborhoods.
- C4 MAGEC needs 25 more officers.
- C5 MAGEC is in need of two dependable vans.

COMMENDATIONS

The Multi-Agency Gang Enforcement Consortium is to be commended for the very effective work it does in keeping control of dangerous gangs, which threaten and coerce citizens in Fresno County. They have been a force in educating other counties and states in a new way of thinking and acting in the war against gangs.

⁷ Fresno County Sheriff/MAGEC website – Finding: F17

⁸ MAGEC Testimony – Finding: F18

The District Attorney's Office is also to be commended for the unwavering support it gives to MAGEC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on what was learned in this review, it is recommended to the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, the Fresno City Council and the Fresno County Probation Office that:

- RI MAGEC continue to receive increased support from County and City governments
- R2 The Fresno County Probation Office recognize the need and reinstate a probation officer to the MAGEC team.
- R3 Two newer dependable vans be acquired or funded for the work necessary for MAGEC.

REQUESTS FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code §933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

The Board of Supervisors:	R1 and R3
The Fresno City Council:	R1 and R3
The Fresno County Probation Office:	R2

Please be reminded that the responses from elected officials are due within 60 days of the receipt of this report and 90 days for others.