

Statement of Ald. Jim Bohl

September 17, 2007

I commend the Milwaukee Police Department for their work in apprehending two individuals associated with a wave of arsons that have plagued a neighborhood on the city's northwest side. The arsonists' activities this past weekend left two families with substantial property damage and could have cost one family their lives.

While I'm pleased with the police department bringing these dangerous thugs into custody, I continue to question if this northwest side neighborhood -- like others in my district and across the periphery of the city -- has seen an uptick in crime this summer relating to the police department's Neighborhood Safety Initiative (NSI).

While many have been quick to label the NSI an unqualified success, neighborhoods like this one, which has witnessed a recent gang-related shooting and a string of burglaries in addition to the recent rash of arsons, have lost their sense of security amid the summer long uptick in crime.

Despite rhetoric that the NSI would not affect patrolling or crime in non-NSI areas, the evidence seems to be weighing in the opposite direction.

I remain opposed to the unilateral attempt to fund the one-month extension of the NSI and support the need for a thorough look at the big picture before re-initiating any similar program in the future.

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