
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

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New anti-prostitution initiative meeting with success on South Side

A cooperative, more comprehensive policing approach to prostitution is producing results on Milwaukee's South Side, and command staff from MPD District Two hope that tactics like increased detention periods, public shaming and diversion programs will continue to discourage the activity.

Milwaukee Aldermen Bob Donovan and José G. Pérez, Police District Two Capt. Alfonso Morales, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office Deputy Inspector Tobie Weberg and Patricia Ruiz-Cantu from La Luz Del Mundo Family Services will take part in a press conference on **Wednesday, October 30, 2013, at 2:00 p.m.** to provide details on the new initiative. The press conference will take place in the gymnasium of **Christ Evangelical Lutheran School at 2229 W. Greenfield Ave.**

In response to requests from Alderman Donovan, Alderman Pérez and their concerned constituents, Capt. Morales said his district began regular prostitution sweeps in August. But where previous enforcement efforts have met with limited success, he said police identified areas for improvement and worked to address them.

"Simply making arrests does not necessarily curtail the problem," Capt. Morales said. "When prostitutes and johns are arrested for municipal violations, they are in and out of the police station in an hour, and that puts them right back out on the street."

But by partnering with the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, Capt. Morales said he was able to increase that turnaround time by processing prostitution suspects at county jails instead of city facilities. As a result, suspects are detained at county jails for up to a day before they are ticketed and released.

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Prostitution initiative/ADD ONE

That same partnership now enables police to tow away the vehicles of alleged johns while the men are being processed at county facilities. Capt. Morales said that increases the inconvenience and embarrassment of being swept up in a prostitution sting, and that MPD plans to further “shame” alleged johns by releasing their information and mug shots to the general public.

“Prostitution is not only a crime, it leads to the commission of many other crimes as well,” Alderman Donovan said. “Many of the men who seek out prostitutes are married. They need to know that they not only run the risk of being arrested and ticketed, but also of having to explain their behavior to their wives and acquaintances.”

While prostitution also causes an uptick in other crimes like robbery and violence, Capt. Morales said that prostitutes sometimes engage in the activity to support a drug habit, or because they are the victims of human trafficking. Under the new initiative, he said MPD has partnered with La Luz Del Mundo Family Services to refer those in need of drug treatment or domestic violence options, and is developing additional partnerships with the state Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to pursue leads in cases of human trafficking.

“This new initiative doesn’t just punish those who are guilty in prostitution cases,” Alderman Pérez said. “It addresses some of the root causes of the issue, and the police should be commended for their innovative efforts.”

So far, the new initiative seems to be meeting with success. Capt. Morales said that in the Second Police District this year, robberies are down 18 percent, and street robberies—the kind most often associated with prostitution cases—are down around 10 percent. Police have arrested 65 people since the latest round of sweeps began August 26, and both Alderman Donovan and Alderman Pérez said they have received positive feedback from constituents who say that prostitution problems have declined.

“This is an excellent example of going beyond standard procedure to solve a complicated problem, and Milwaukee police have done great work in addressing these issues,” Alderman Donovan said.

“This new initiative sends the message that there are consequences for engaging in acts of prostitution, and it’s simply not worth the risk,” Alderman Pérez said.