



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

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MALCOLM A. SMITH March 7, 2013

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**(St. Albans, NY)-** Last night State Sen. Malcolm A. Smith (D-St. Albans) held the 1<sup>st</sup> of a series of crime prevention meetings called Operation Safe Southeast Queens at his district office in Hollis. It was standing room only as about 50 community residents were in attendance along with several members of the NYPD.

“Crime is a serious issue affecting the district,” said Senator Smith. “One of the best ways people can protect themselves is to be informed. I invite all of my constituents to attend my Operation Safe Southeast Queens meetings every month, and arm themselves with knowledge.”

Law enforcement in attendance at the meeting were: Police Officer Robert Dephillips of the 105<sup>th</sup> Precinct, Sgt. Edward Kane of the 105<sup>th</sup> Precinct, Det. Richard Lowe of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Precinct Community Affairs Unit, Deputy Inspector Charles McEvoy, commanding officer of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Precinct, Sgt. Joanne Gonzales of the 113<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Affairs Unit, Police Officer Carlton Epps of the 105<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Affairs Unit and Lt. Don Clear of Queens Patrol Borough South.

The 105<sup>th</sup> Precinct is working to address “deception robberies” and home burglaries and have issued two community alerts.

Perpetrators have been targeting people coming out of banks with money, watching where they place the currency, distracting them by telling them there is something stuck to their coat or that they have a flat tire and then grabbing their cash. Many times the victims don't even realize they have been robbed until they get home.

“On Feb. 15 on Jamaica Avenue there was an elderly woman who had exited a bank, and the perpetrators told her she had received a summons and then another person had come over and was able to spray something on her jacket,” Kane explained. “They told her they would help her clean it, and then they reached into her pocket, removing about \$500 in currency.”

In other incidents within the confines of the 105<sup>th</sup> Precinct, there has been a rash of burglaries in the Rosedale area with perpetrators entering through the rear windows and doors of people's homes between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m. The precinct is asking the community to report any suspicious activity and to make sure that all doors and windows are locked and secured. Officers also warn not to leave valuables, especially electronics such as laptops and iPods, in plain view.

At the 103<sup>rd</sup> Precinct, McEvoy reported a decrease in shootings with none taking place in the last seven weeks. Last year the precinct experienced 44 shooting incidents, the highest amount since McEvoy took over as commander in September of 2009. That year there were 38 shootings. In 2010, there were 30 and in 2011, there were 37, McEvoy said.

“There were two areas that were problematic last year – one was bars/nightclubs - and the other was gangs,” McEvoy said. “A lot of violence came from the Latin gangs in the far western end of the precinct by Rufus King Park toward the Van Wyck Expressway, but we've done a lot of good work and we have made a lot of progress with help from the gang division. That problem seems to have stabilized, so we are going in the right direction.”

The precinct has tackled the rowdy club issue by increasing patrols especially in the early morning hours on weekends when most problems tend to occur.

The 113<sup>th</sup> Precinct has also been effective in curbing crime, Gonzales said, reducing the number of shootings with zero this year through Feb. 28, compared to two last year for the same time period,

according to the latest CompStat Report.

The officers encouraged residents to attend their area precinct's monthly community council meetings for the latest updates on crime in their neighborhood and to voice their concerns about any safety or law enforcement issues.

Operation Safe Southeast Queens is held the first Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. They take place at Senator Smith's district office, located at 205-20 Jamaica Avenue in Hollis. The next meeting will be held on April, 3, 2013. For more information, the district office can be reached at 718-454-0162.