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SECTION: A, Pg. 19

LENGTH: 350 words

HEADLINE: Police target juvenile joyriding

BYLINE: CHRIS SOSNOWSKI; Of The Post and Courier

BODY:

Car theft - mostly by juveniles - is on the rise in Charleston, but Police Chief Reuben Greenberg is pointing some new tactics at the thieves.

The problem has reached epidemic proportions, Greenberg said Wednesday. Nearly 270 vehicles have been stolen in the city in the last two months, compared to an earlier average of 30 to 40 per month.

~~Reuben~~  
Truancy Laws

Bruce -  
Greenberg - Truancy  
DB

Some 770 vehicles have been taken so far this year, compared to 545 last year and 253 reported in 1989, Greenberg said. He said 123 had been reported stolen so far in November, and 145 were reported in October.

Thirty-two cars were taken in the city just last Friday, but Greenberg attributed the bulk of that to youths being out of school for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Greenberg said joyriding by juveniles has been curtailed somewhat by the police department's truancy program, in which school-age youths found off-campus during class time are picked up and returned to school. Also helping is Operation Midnight, in which parents put youngsters under a voluntary curfew. If police officers see young people on the streets after the curfew, they will take the youths home.

The newest efforts to cut back on thefts include stopping any drivers who appear too young to have driver's licenses, as well as pulling over any car with a freshly broken window.

In the past, when juveniles were caught in stolen cars, family members were called to pick them up at the police station. They received no real punishment and often went right back to hot-wiring vehicles for midnight rides, he said.

Now, Greenberg said, joyriders will spend a night or more in the county juvenile detention center.

Greenberg also asked the public to take part in preventing car theft. He displayed several anti-theft devices, including a couple of versions of a steel bar device that locks a steering wheel so it can't be broken. Also on display were car alarms and an item that protects the ignition from unlawful entry.

The department doesn't endorse any particular item, but Greenberg encouraged car owners to get something that is visible to car thieves.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO; Color mug of Chief Reuben Greenberg

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Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

October 16, 1995, Monday, SOONER EDITION

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HEADLINE: Hard-nosed police chief impresses city audience

BYLINE: Mark Belko, Post-Gazette Staff Writer

BODY:

Reuben Greenberg is a business predator.

But his targets are not corporate titans such as CBS, Microsoft or Xerox.

Rather, they are the drug dealers, gamblers and prostitutes of Charleston, S.C. And his hard-nosed approaches to law enforcement may be adopted in Pittsburgh's public housing areas.

In 13 years as Charleston police chief, Greenberg has made fighting crime simply a matter of market economics and common sense. The fact that he's a Texas-born, Berkeley-educated black man who practices the Orthodox Jewish faith of his grandfather makes him stand out even more.

To disrupt Charleston's drug trade, he put uniformed officers on street corners with dealers -- not necessarily to make arrests, just to maintain a presence. After all, he figured, who would risk buying drugs with a cop looking on?

Greenberg cut into the profits of gambling organizations by confiscating furniture, telephones, computers and just about everything else during raids. Air conditioners were snatched from windows, on the premise that police are entitled to confiscate anything that gives 'aid and comfort' to criminal operations.

'It says right on the air conditioner, 'Comfort King,' ' Greenberg said with a chuckle.

And to combat robberies, purse snatching and other assorted foot crimes, his fleetest officers have traded in their heavy black oxfords for sleek running shoes, the better to chase the crooks.

Greenberg's unorthodox crime-fighting strategies have made him a national figure who has authored a book, written guest columns for newspapers and appeared on such TV shows as '60 Minutes' and 'Both Sides' with Jesse Jackson.

His philosophy in a nutshell: 'Old-style policing is to kick in the door and make arrests. But that's not enough. You have to make drug dealing or prostitution or gambling a way to lose money, not make money.'

His success in reducing crime, particularly in public housing communities, has also caught the attention of Mayor Murphy, who invited Greenberg to address city officials, council members and police.

Administration officials said last week's visit was merely informational and not a prelude to any type of job offer.

But Murphy was impressed.

'Two words sum it up: common sense,' he said after Greenberg's address. 'What we're looking for in Pittsburgh is that same level of common sense.'

Murphy has been troubled by high crime rates in the city's public housing communities. Reducing them has become a top priority.

Greenberg developed two strategies for tackling similar problems in Charleston. The city developed a list of crimes -- drug dealing, armed robbery, sexual assault and receiving stolen property among them -- that "would destroy the quality of life" in public housing communities, and refused to rent to anybody convicted of those offenses.

An arrest will get a resident evicted. Greenberg also assigned an officer to check the records of applicants for public housing. If there's a warrant out for the arrest of an applicant, an officer will entice him to the station by telling him, "Housing is available for you."

"Housing in the county jail," Greenberg quickly added.

One officer arrested 200 people in three months on outstanding warrants.

Police have also established checkpoints at entrances to public housing complexes to screen people entering. If they have business there or are visiting, police confirm it with the resident before allowing them in.

If visitors cannot establish a reason for being there, they are turned away. Greenberg said such checkpoints were no different from those employed at upscale, upper-income apartment complexes or housing communities.

At first, some of his strategies were opposed in public housing communities, where some residents worried about police brutality. But the tide changed as crime abated.

Since 1986, there have been five homicides in public housing communities, compared with 89 in Charleston as a whole. Last year there was one murder in public housing areas and 15 in the city itself.

To keep juveniles off the street at night, Greenberg disdained the type of curfew now under consideration by City Council. Instead, he said, he ordered his officers to pick up juveniles after midnight and take them home. If parents didn't want them, they were taken to the Charleston equivalent of Children and Youth Services.

'There is no constitutional right for a kid to walk the street at 1 a.m.,' he said.

To prevent juveniles from roaming the street during the day, Greenberg established an anti-truancy unit of four officers whose sole job is picking up youths and escorting them to school, or taking them home if they have been expelled or suspended.

Those moves, he said, have helped bring Charleston's burglary rate to its lowest point since 1963 and its armed robbery rate to its lowest level since 1958.

Another reason for the reductions, he said, is that police oppose paroles for prisoners convicted of armed robbery, burglary and rape. Burglary and robbery have high recidivism rates, and opposing paroles for people convicted of those offenses helps to cut the crime rate, he said.

For many years, nobody appeared at parole hearings to oppose releases. Now the job of one unit of the police department is "to keep people who are in the slammer from getting out of the slammer," Greenberg said.

Critics contend that many of the strategies have simply driven crime to the suburbs. Greenberg counters that suburban departments have the same opportunity to employ his methods.

Questions have been raised about his unorthodox methods.

Edmund Robinson, a Charleston lawyer and board member of the South Carolina chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, said Greenberg misunderstood the rule of law.

'He seems to want to take the law into his own hands,' Robinson said, contending that Greenberg is quick to seize property and slow to return it.

Some Pittsburgh officials were skeptical about whether Greenberg's strategies could work here. For one thing, Pittsburgh is a much larger city than Charleston. For another, there are police union contracts here dealing with such issues as job assignment and overtime that Greenberg does not have to contend with on his force.

Nevertheless, Councilman Dan Onorato, who attended Greenberg's address, praised the chief's methods.

'I really liked what he had to say. I thought he was right on with some of his programs.'

Onorato said he would urge the Murphy administration to implement programs sending police officers to parole board hearings to oppose releases, to aggressively evict tenants convicted of crimes, and to establish checkpoints for better security at public housing areas.

"For the majority of public housing residents, this benefits them," he said.

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