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******PRESS RELEASE****WALLA WALLA POLICE DEPT******
Police Department hosts Block Watch meeting for Chestnut St. residents

May 28, 2015

Chief Bieber and several members of his staff held a meeting for residents from the area around W. Chestnut and Egan Streets where there has been a recent spike in gang related crime. Volunteers from Walla Walla Area Crime Watch distributed flyers for the Wednesday meeting the previous evening. The event attracted 60 concerned residents from the affected area. Some in attendance expressed fear about living in the neighborhood as a result of the increasing gang activity.

Chief Bieber told the audience that officers have been directed to step up patrols, make citizen contacts, and work traffic enforcement in the area. Detectives from the Gang Unit shared as much information as they could without jeopardizing the on-going cases that have resulted in two arrests thus far.

Audience members asked numerous questions about the increase in gang crimes and why more can't be done. Citizens were strongly urged to call immediately when they suspect a crime is taking place, instead of waiting until the suspects have left the area.

A considerable amount of gang crime takes place at rental properties and some in the audience expressed frustration that landlords aren't doing enough to screen tenants or evict those that are involved in criminal activity.

Washington's Landlord/Tenant Act requires that tenants not engage in gang-related activity at the premises or allow their guests to engage in such activity. Failure to abide by the statute can lead to eviction proceedings by the landlord or property manager.

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