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*Executive Summary*

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**James K. Stewart**

*Director*

# Crime Stoppers: A National Evaluation of Program Operations and Effects

by

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## SUMMARY

The National Evaluation of Crime Stoppers Programs was a two-year research project designed to examine, for the first time, how Crime Stoppers works, to identify the primary advantages and disadvantages of the program to local communities and law enforcement, and to discuss the policy implications of these findings.

A variety of methodologies and data sources were employed to collect information about Crime Stoppers Programs. In addition to reviewing and synthesizing the literature in the field, several national surveys were conducted, including a telephone screening survey of all known programs, and separate mail questionnaires to Program Coordinators, Chairpersons of the Board of Directors, and executives from participating media outlets. Also, two sites were selected as experimental case studies to examine the impact of current Crime Stoppers practices. Seven other sites were selected for in-person visits to collect additional information about program operations.

### Key Findings

The following are some of the main empirical observations to emerge from this national assessment:

#### Program Description

- o Crime Stoppers is a highly standardized program. Although programs may differ in their degree of success, virtually all Crime Stoppers programs are comprised of the same actors -- a program coordinator (usually within the police department), detectives who investigate the cases, a board of directors representing the community, one or more media outlets, and citizen callers who provide tips. Furthermore, virtually all programs offer rewards and anonymity to callers, even though the reward amounts and criteria sometimes vary.

- o A major distinguishing feature is the type of service area. Many programs serve primarily rural, suburban, or urban areas, and the nature of the program varies accordingly. For example, urban programs place great emphasis on the use of televised crime reenactments, whereas rural programs rely on weekly newspapers to bring cases to the attention of local citizens. About half of the programs serve a mixture of urban, suburban, and/or rural areas, and the available resources/needs generally dictate the configuration of the program.
- o The number of Crime Stoppers programs is growing at a rapid pace, from only 48 known programs in 1980 to an estimated 600 programs by the end of 1985.
- o Program "networking" has developed at the local, state, regional, national, and international levels. In their initial stages of operation, two-thirds of the programs surveyed received a substantial amount of help and advice from existing programs. Moreover, there is a widespread practice of sharing services and resources via multi-jurisdictional programs.

#### Perceptions and Attitudes About Crime Stoppers

- o Crime Stoppers was found to be highly visible and well received by a national random sample of media executives. Ninety (90) percent of the media executives surveyed were aware of the concept, even though a large majority was not participating in Crime Stoppers at the time. Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of the respondents reported that their organization would be "very likely" to participate if a local program were to start.
- o Local and national surveys indicate that Crime Stoppers is looked upon very favorably by persons involved with the program. The enthusiasm for the program is very strong among police coordinators, the board of directors, and participating media executives, and each group views the program as quite successful.
- o Although most interested parties have expressed favorable attitudes toward this relatively new strategy of crime control, a small number of critics, including journalists, defense attorneys, and legal scholars, have expressed misgivings about Crime Stoppers. Given the program's focus on anonymous callers and sizeable reward payments, a variety of concerns have been registered, ranging from questions about civil rights and privacy, to complaints about undermining citizens' "civic duty" to report crime without pay. Survey results in one major city revealed that the public

shares some of these reservations. Yet many feel that Crime Stoppers can be an effective tool for leading to the arrest of criminals.

#### Effectiveness of Crime Stoppers

- o In terms of their ability to "stop" crime, these programs can report a number of impressive statistics in their short history. Collectively, they have solved 92 thousand felony crimes, recovered 562 million dollars in stolen property and narcotics, and convicted more than 20,000 criminals. However, there is little reason to believe that Crime Stoppers programs will immediately or substantially reduce the overall crime rate in most communities. While numerous crimes are cleared through these programs, their successes amount to only a small fraction of the total volume of serious crimes committed each year in most communities.
- o Crime Stoppers can be viewed as a cost-effective program by taxpayers. Funding for most programs is provided by private contributions. For every crime solved, Crime Stoppers recovers, on the average, more than 6,000 dollars in stolen property and narcotics. Nationally, a felony case was solved for every 73 dollars spent in caller reward money. However, this figure is difficult to interpret without comparable data on other crime control strategies.
- o The available anecdotal evidence suggests that Crime Stoppers programs are able to solve certain felony cases that are unlikely to be solved through traditional criminal investigations or by devoting a "reasonable" amount of law enforcement resources. The program was specifically developed to handle "dead-ends" cases, and indeed, Crime Stoppers has repeatedly "cracked" cases that have remained unsolved after a substantial investment of investigative time. The difference in effectiveness in these cases is believed to be the result of wide-spread media coverage, the promise of anonymity, and/or the opportunity for a sizeable reward.

#### The Impact of Citizen Attitudes and Participation

- o Crime Stoppers is intended to stimulate citizen participation in the fight against crime both in the private and public sectors. In addition to a regular commitment from media companies, the program has been able to generate citizen involvement as callers, contributors, and active members of the board of directors. The thousands of calls received from anonymous callers and the millions of dollars in paid rewards are clearly indicative of community support and

citizen participation. Nevertheless, as with many crime control programs, the base of community involvement appears to be concentrated in certain subgroups of the population who have the needed resources. Specifically, financial support comes primarily from the business community (although telethons and other broad community appeals are increasingly used as fund-raising techniques). Moreover, the majority of anonymous tips -- especially those that are perceived as useful -- come from either the criminals themselves or "fringe players" (i.e. persons who associate with the criminal element).

- o The results of a special impact study conducted in Indianapolis, Indiana suggest that a new urban Crime Stoppers program, with strong media cooperation, can quickly and dramatically increase people's awareness of this new opportunity for citizen participation in anti-crime activities. However, the findings also demonstrate that one should not expect residents, police officers, or business persons to change their attitudes and behaviors about crime prevention or Crime Stoppers within a relatively short period of time (in this case, six months).
- o A caller's level of satisfaction and willingness to continue using Crime Stoppers is widely believed to be influenced by the size of the reward given after a case has been solved. However, a controlled experiment in Lake County, Illinois, challenges this notion, showing that variations in reward size had virtually no effect on the caller's satisfaction and intentions to participate in the future.

#### Factors Associated with Program Productivity

Program productivity was measured by the number of calls received (per 100,000 population), the quality of calls (as indicated by the number of cases forwarded to investigators), the number of suspects arrested (per 1,000 Part I crimes), and the number of cases cleared or solved (per 1,000 Part I crimes).

- o With regard to the law enforcement component, the best predictors of program productivity at the national level were the program coordinator's level of effort and job satisfaction. Coordinators who work more hours, make more public speaking engagements, and report more job satisfaction were involved in more productive Crime Stoppers than those reporting less activity and satisfaction. However, if a causal

relationship exists, it is unclear whether the coordinator's effort or perceptions affect program productivity, or the influence works in the reverse direction.

- o The number of media outlets that participate in a Crime Stoppers program did not affect the level of program performance. However, programs that received more special coverage (e.g. front page or news time coverage) and those who reported more cooperative relationships with the media enjoyed greater success. The importance of establishing a consistently cooperative relationship with the media in the early phases of program development was emphasized by program coordinators as a means of preventing problems and maximizing success.
- o The level of effort exhibited by the board of directors seems to be the predominant factor in determining its level of success. The more time and energy invested by board members, the more success the program experienced with its primary task of fundraising.
- o When program components were compared, ratings of media cooperativeness were consistently more important for predicting program success than were ratings of the police coordinator or the board of directors.
- o Productivity was highest in communities with the lowest crime rates and communities with medium-sized populations (i.e., 100 to 250 thousand).

#### Record Keeping and Measurement Issues

- o Accurately documenting the performance of Crime Stoppers programs is presently a very difficult task because of measurement problems. There are several identifiable limitations of current record keeping practices: (a) most Crime Stoppers programs do not maintain a full range of basic statistics on productivity and effectiveness; (b) there has been limited standardization of measurement across programs because of definitional problems; and (c) the commonly employed measures of "cases solved" and "property recovered" are biased in favor of large programs (i.e., those serving populations of 250 thousand or more) and programs with a high volume of narcotics cases. In essence, there is a shortage of valid and reliable measures of program activities and effects in this field.

## Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

A wide range of conclusions and policy recommendations are offered in the final section of this report. Many of these recommendations are tailored for law enforcement, the board of directors, and the media. Others focus on general issues and concerns facing all Crime Stoppers programs.

In general, these empirically-based suggestions are intended to be of practical significance for individuals seeking to improve existing programs and policies, or persons contemplating the startup of Crime Stoppers in their community.

This national study is, to our knowledge, the first and only social scientific inquiry directed at Crime Stoppers programs. Stated simply, there has been no previous research on this relatively new strategy of crime control. While the present research constitutes an important first step toward understanding the nature and effects of this program, our knowledge is still very limited. Many of the conclusions reached here are tentative and require further substantiation through controlled research.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Background

One of the most rapidly expanding and visible crime control programs in the United States is "Crime Stoppers". Variouslly known as "Crime Solvers," "Secret Witness," and "Crime Line," these self-sustaining programs utilize the mass media, the community, and law enforcement in an unprecedented way to involve private citizens in the fight against serious crime. Based on the premise that many individuals are unwilling to provide information to the police about criminal activity, either because of apathy or fear of retaliation, Crime Stoppers provides cash rewards as an incentive (typically ranging from \$100.00 to \$1000.00), and offers anonymity to persons who come forth with details that lead to the arrest and/or indictment of suspected criminals.

Solving crimes is a difficult job that constantly challenges the law enforcement community. There are many factors that limit the effectiveness of police performance. Of paramount importance is the ability of witnesses and callers to provide reliable information about the identity of suspects. Without this basic information from people who know about the crime incident, the probability of solving any particular offense is drastically reduced (cf. Skogan & Antunes, 1979).

Recognizing the critical role of the private citizen in solving crime, Greg MacAleese, a police officer in Albuquerque, New Mexico, started the first Crime Stoppers program in 1976. Although the Albuquerque program was preceded by other programs in the early 1970s that used cash rewards and anonymity as their primary incentives (see

Bickman & Lavrakas, 1976), Officer MacAleese was the first to feature the media in a central role. Since 1976, Crime Stoppers programs have rapidly appeared across the United States and have been touted as one of the nation's most cost-effective anti-crime measures. A number of programs have recently started in Canada, and adoption is also being considered in European countries.

The proper functioning of Crime Stoppers hinges upon the joint cooperation and concerted efforts of its various elements, which include representatives of the community, the media, and the police department. Each program's board of directors -- reflecting one aspect of the community's contribution to the program -- is responsible for setting policy, coordinating fund raising activities aimed at public and private contributors, and formulating a system of reward allocation. The media play a major role in disseminating basic facts about the program's objectives, general operations, and achievements. Moreover, they serve to regularly publicize the details of unsolved offenses by presenting a reenactment or narrative description of a selected "Crime of the Week". Finally, it is the task of law enforcement personnel to receive and process reported crime information and to direct it to detectives for further investigation. The police coordinator also functions in a variety of other capacities, which entail such tasks as selecting the "Crime of the Week," drafting press releases and radio feeds, consulting in the production of televised crime portrayals, keeping records and statistics on programs performance, and serving as a liaison with the board of directors and the media.

The precipitous growth of Crime Stoppers programs in the past few years is obvious from the statistics. In 1978, there were only 5 Crime Stoppers programs in the United States. Today there are an estimated 600 programs accepting calls, and new programs are emerging on a weekly basis. In addition, national statistics compiled by Crime Stoppers International indicate that the total number of felony crimes reportedly solved by Crime Stoppers programs has increased from 4,683 in 1980 to 92,339 at the end of 1985.

#### B. The Scope of the National Evaluation

The National Institute of Justice, interested in the possibility that Crime Stoppers might be an effective new strategy for controlling crime and enhancing citizen participation, elected to fund a national evaluation of these programs. If Crime Stoppers is a sound program with benefits for the communities involved, then other communities without this program should be informed about its existence and advised regarding some of the factors that contribute to a successful program.

Given that Crime Stoppers programs had never been evaluated or researched by social scientists, the unanswered questions were numerous. Three general questions were proposed as a guiding framework for this national evaluation. First, How does Crime Stoppers work in both theory and practice? What operations and procedures are involved in making the program function as it should? One major objective of the national evaluation was to better understand the respective roles and functions of the media, the community, and law enforcement as they contribute to the Crime Stoppers program. How do these components operate and interact to achieve such program objectives as effective

media coverage, successful fund raising, and the proper disposition of information supplied by callers? Another objective of the national evaluation was to examine differences that exist as a function of the size and type of populations served by Crime Stoppers. For example, how does the operation of the program differ for large versus small population areas?

A second guiding question was -- What are the advantages and disadvantages of Crime Stoppers programs to law enforcement agencies and the community? Does Crime Stoppers really stop crime? Is it an effective tool for obtaining important suspect-relevant information? How do people feel about Crime Stoppers? What factors are associated with high program productivity? These questions were addressed under this evaluation by examining a number of issues and outcomes associated with Crime Stoppers programs. A variety of performance measures were analyzed, ranging from program productivity to community perceptions. The evaluation also tested a number of hypotheses about the possible impact of Crime Stoppers on the police, the citizenry, the business sector, and callers. At the national level, the primary research agenda was to explore the relationship between measured input variables (e.g. the performance ratings and behaviors of the law enforcement, board, and media components) and measured outcome variables (e.g., performance statistics such as calls received and cases solved).

The final guiding question for the evaluation of Crime Stoppers was -- What are the policy implications of this research for existing or new programs? Specifically, what has been learned from studying these programs that could improve current practices and/or aid in the

development of new programs? One approach to policy analysis focused on operational issues, beginning with the knowledge of which configurations of activities and processes were the most likely to yield high program productivity. After significant relationships between input/process and outcome variables were identified, these findings provided the foundation for selected policy analyses. The main predictor variables were examined in three broad categories: (a) law enforcement and the police coordinator's role, (b) the board of directors, and (c) the media. Special attention was given to the level of cooperation, skill, and resources supplied in each of these critical domains. In addition, techniques of fundraising were carefully examined to evaluate their relative cost-effectiveness. Finally, the payment of rewards is sufficiently important to the Crime Stoppers program that a special randomized experiment was designed to explore the effects of varying reward sizes on callers' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The National Evaluation of Crime Stoppers Programs was a multi-stage, multi-method research endeavor. A variety of data collection strategies were applied, including literature reviews, telephone and in-person interviews, self-report questionnaires, archival data analyses, case studies, and site visits. This broad and systematic approach was designed to yield a rich knowledge base about the essential aspects of program operations, procedures, and outcomes. The data collection plans were designed to address the three basic questions outlined earlier. Both descriptive and evaluative findings were useful to our policy analysis. The following summarizes the major research activities:

### A. Literature Review

Apart from two or three articles describing the origin and operations of Crime Stoppers, there was essentially no scholarly literature to review. A computerized search of more than 70,000 documents kept at the National Criminal Justice Reference Services uncovered less than a dozen that even mentioned the words "Crime Stoppers." Hence, we widened our search to encompass any social science and criminal justice research or expositions that were germane to the fundamental principles and procedures of Crime Stoppers. The literature review encompassed four major topic areas: (a) the use of callers; (b) bystander intervention and victims' reporting of crime; (c) the effects of rewards and anonymity; and (d) the participation of the mass media in public crime prevention efforts.

## B. Telephone Screening Surveys

The first stage of the National Evaluation of Crime Stoppers Programs involved a telephone screening interview of known programs whose names, addresses and phone numbers were furnished largely by Crime Stoppers International. The content of the survey consisted of items relating to program length and scope of operations, media coverage, record keeping practices, problems in implementation, and measures of success. The fundamental purpose of the telephone survey was to ascertain the number, status (e.g., operational, discontinued, or planned), type (e.g., city-wide, community-wide, etc.), size (i.e., population served), and location of all existing programs, and to elicit information that would be helpful in constructing detailed data collection instruments for subsequent studies. More than 600 telephone interviews were conducted in February and March of 1984.

A number of state-wide programs were also screened by conducting telephone surveys with the directors of the programs. These surveys explored the development, status, purpose, and day-to-day operations of state-wide programs, as well as their relationships with local programs and their future plans and goals.

## C. The National Mail Questionnaires

The completion of the telephone screening survey paved the way for the second stage of the evaluation during which we administered two comprehensive mail questionnaires: a Police Coordinator Survey and a Chairperson of the Board of Directors Survey. In addition to the national surveys of Crime Stoppers programs, we conducted a national study of the media's involvement with, and assessment of, Crime Stoppers.

1. Police Coordinator Survey. In May of 1984, Crime Stoppers' police coordinators across the United States and Canada were mailed a 42-page questionnaire which encompassed the law enforcement, media, and community aspects of the programs. Of the 443 operational programs which were sent the instruments, 203 or 46% of the coordinators completed the questionnaire. The survey was designed to yield a thorough exploration of such topic domains as the police coordinator's background and experience, program development and support, day-to-day operations and procedures, program records and statistics, reward setting and distribution, and program relations with the media, law enforcement, and the board. The police coordinator survey served as the primary data base for our descriptive and inferential analyses of program processes and outcome measures.

2. Board of Directors Survey. In May of 1984, the Board of Directors mail questionnaire was completed by 37% of the Chairpersons, who represented 164 separate programs. This survey examined all basic aspects of the board's functions and responsibilities. Similar to the Police Coordinator questionnaire, the Board of Directors survey comprised a wide gamut of inquiries and issues including the membership and performance of the Board, fundraising strategies, and ratings of the program.

3. Media Executive Survey. Based on a series of unstructured telephone interviews with eight media executives, a detailed structured questionnaire was devised for mailing to executives in two samples of media organizations. The first was a representative sample of media organizations listed by Crime Stoppers Coordinators as participating in their program. This sample was comprised of

newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. The second sample was a random sample of daily newspapers, radio stations, television stations, and cable television companies. This random sample was drawn from annual industry yearbooks listing all operating media organizations in the United States for a given year. The objective of the survey was to gather independent information regarding the media's perception of, and participation in, Crime Stoppers. We were particularly interested in comparing the responses of nonparticipating media outlets with those participating in Crime Stoppers. The media questionnaires were completed in June 1985. A total of 136 or 25% of the surveys were returned by media participating in Crime Stoppers, while 99 or 13% of the surveys were completed by those in the random sample.

#### D. Case Studies and Site Visits

The third stage of our national evaluation consisted of an in-depth exploration of a number of programs via case studies and extensive site visits. Two programs were chosen for specialized case studies. First, Indianapolis, Indiana was selected as the site to conduct an "Impact Study" examining the effects of introducing a new Crime Stoppers program on community residents, businesses, and police personnel. A pretest-posttest panel design allowed us to examine changes in perceptions, attitudes, and behavior by collecting data before and 6 months following program implementation. Second, Lake County Crime Stoppers in Waukegan, Illinois was selected as the site for a Reward Experiment designed to assess the effects of different reward amounts on the perceptions and behavioral intentions of program callers. A randomized experimental design was employed.

During the final months of the project, seven specially selected Crime Stoppers programs were studied through site visits, while one program was examined by means of telephone interviews and written documents. This phase of our evaluation was structured to elicit insights into program procedures, operations, and problems which were not as likely to emerge from statistical analyses of quantitative survey data. In essence, site visits were conducted to provide a rich understanding of how the program functions across different settings and circumstances and to identify the key issues and concerns facing program participants.

### III. A SUMMARY OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

As discussed earlier, we reviewed four bodies of literature which are pertinent to the basic principles and procedures of Crime Stoppers programs. Summaries of each of these areas, and the implications of this research for program policy are presented below.

#### A. The Use of Informants

Despite the widespread disdain with which criminal informants are generally regarded, they are a necessary and integral component of the criminal justice system in America. Evidence offered by informants is frequently instrumental in the apprehension of perpetrators and the solving of serious crimes. Informants, whose motivations for reporting to the police cover a broad spectrum, may be categorized as criminals, criminal accomplices, police informants, fringe players (i.e., persons who are not actively engaging in crimes but are privy to information about criminal activity) and citizen-complainants. Some informants are often valuable to the police because they have criminal contacts and, therefore, information about criminal activities. However, their affiliation with the so-called "criminal element" is often problematic, and requires police agencies to develop clear policies guiding the use of informants to forestall legal and constitutional difficulties. Such policies, if complete, explicate which members of the agency are authorized to bargain with informants, how and when they are compensated, appropriate responses to their law-breaking behavior, and the protection of their identity (Eck, 1983).

The mechanics for developing and paying police informants have been firmly entrenched in most urban police departments for decades.

Conventional wisdom and empirical evidence suggest that police informants are the most useful category of persons who provide information to the police regarding criminal activities (Moore, 1977). However, it does not appear that police informants, as a rule, are involved in the daily operations of most Crime Stoppers programs. Our observations have shown that the law enforcement agencies which house such programs have formulated implicit rules governing transactions with police informants. These rules include prohibiting police informants from "double-dipping," i.e., receiving a financial reward for information from both the police officer/investigator working the case and the Crime Stoppers program. Further, some programs actively prohibit the payment of rewards to known police informants out of a serious concern that their participation in Crime Stoppers would generate adverse publicity and would lend credence to the notion that the program provides a legitimized means for "common criminals to earn a living." More importantly, regular police informants are discouraged from participating in the program to avoid interfering with the crucial relationship these individuals maintain with department detectives.

While many investigators would maintain that the "bottom line" is to solve cases irrespective of the source of information, there is also a consensus that Crime Stoppers should foster the more favorable public image of enlisting law-abiding citizens in the fight against crime, as opposed to drawing the interest of criminals to "rat against" their compatriots. From the perspective of the police informant, contacting one's regular officer/investigator rather than Crime Stoppers is essential to maintaining the "quid pro quo" aspect

of that relationship. Indeed, some informants may regard calling the program as stepping outside the boundaries of the relationship, and depriving their contacts of the first opportunity to make an arrest. Nonetheless, it should be noted that many investigators openly condone the involvement of police informants in Crime Stoppers -- especially in circumstances in which the department's "reward kitty" is diminishing or depleted.

#### B. Bystander Intervention and Victim's Crime Reporting Behavior

Social psychological research on bystander intervention has uncovered a number of variables that have been shown to inhibit or facilitate peoples' involvement in emergency situations. This literature highlights some of the factors that may affect an individual's decision to report criminal information to the police, and hence, has implications for Crime Stoppers. Whether a person who witnesses a crime incident or is knowledgeable regarding the details of an offense will contact authorities is a function of various situational determinants, as well as the personal characteristics and traits of the prospective caller. Studies suggest that a situation is conducive to the reporting of a crime when: (a) the caller is or believes him/herself to be the sole witness to the crime (Latane & Nida, 1981); (b) it is clear that a crime has actually occurred i.e., the situation is low in ambiguity (Shotland and Stebbins, 1980); (c) others are present to encourage the potential caller to call (Bickman and Rosenbaum, 1977); (d) the caller feels some responsibility to report the crime (Moriarity, 1975); and (e) the costs of reporting are minimal relative to the benefits (Piliavan and Piliavan, 1969). Other studies, which have examined personality variables (e.g. Wilson,

1976), discuss findings that are mixed and limited in their applicability to the circumstances involving crime reporting via Crime Stoppers.

The basic philosophical and operational tenets of Crime Stoppers are quite consistent with empirical findings. For example, portraying the specific details of a criminal incident through the media should reduce ambiguity surrounding an observed event which witnesses may have misinterpreted as a non-criminal occurrence. Also, Crime Stoppers programs are designed to lower the "costs" of crime reporting by offering anonymity and paying caller rewards. Finally, through its advertisements and broadcasted successes, Crime Stoppers intends to disabuse citizens of the notion that crime reporting is "a waste of time" or that "nothing can or will be done," as citizens often relate when asked why they did not report a criminal incident to the police.

### C. Rewards, Anonymity, and Crime Reporting

#### Intrinsic Motivation Research

In recent years, psychologists have conducted extensive research on the impact of rewards on intrinsic motivation i.e., examining whether presenting people with external incentives (e.g. money) to engage in tasks affects the inner satisfaction they derive from the activity or their judgments of its inherent worth. Research in this area can be categorized on the basis of the four types of expected external rewards which have been the focus of study (Ryan, et al., 1983): (a) task-non-contingent rewards, i.e., rewards are given for engaging in a task, regardless of what the person does. Thus, task completion or quality of work is irrelevant; (b) task-contingent rewards, i.e., rewards are given for completing a task, regardless of

quality; (c) performance-contingent rewards, i.e., rewards are given for a certain level of performance. Thus, the individual must reach a specific criterion, norm, or competence level before a reward is given; and (d) competitively-contingent rewards, i.e., rewards are given when people compete directly against one another for a scarce number of rewards. (Findings relating to competitively-contingent rewards will not be discussed inasmuch as they have no clear relevance to Crime Stoppers.)

Although there have been only a few task-non-contingent reward experiments, the available literature suggests that such rewards do not decrease intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1972; Pinder, 1976). However, studies of task-contingent rewards show rather consistent undermining effects. That is, when subjects are told that the reward is contingent upon merely completing the task, their intrinsic motivation for the task declines (e.g., Calder & Staw, 1975; Deci, 1971, 1972; Pittman, Cooper, & Smith, 1977; Weiner & Mander, 1978).

Research on the effects of performance-contingent rewards is more equivocal. Some researchers have found that this type of reward undermines intrinsic motivation (e.g., Harackiewicz, 1979), whereas others have found no effect (e.g., Karniol & Ross, 1977), and still others have shown that it enhances intrinsic motivation (e.g., Enzle & Ross, 1978). Essentially, Ryan, et al. (1983) argue that performance-contingent rewards can either decrease or enhance intrinsic motivation depending on whether the reward is administered (and perceived) as informational or controlling. If the rewards are administered in a controlling way (i.e., indicating that the subject

is doing what he/she "should" be doing), they tend to decrease intrinsic motivation for the activity. However, if the rewards are administered in an informational way (i.e., providing feedback to the subject that he/she is competent or giving information about how to become competent in the context of self-determination), they tend to enhance intrinsic motivation.

Crime Stoppers reward system is structured to be task-performance contingent. Not only do callers have to call the police, but they must supply "good" information before they become eligible to receive a reward. Most programs require the arrest of a suspect as a prerequisite for reward, and many even require indictment. It may also be concluded that Crime Stoppers rewards are essentially controlling, by virtue of the fact that citizens know in advance what is needed to obtain a reward. If this interpretation is correct, then there is some potential for rewards administered through Crime Stoppers to undermine an individual's internal motivation to report crime without financial compensation. Nevertheless, many questions could be raised about the applicability of these experiments to the urban setting of Crime Stoppers programs.

Research on Rewards and Moral Behavior. The small literature on the effects of rewards on moral behavior is more directly relevant to Crime Stoppers than reward-contingency studies. Kunda and Schwartz (1983) reviewed the available studies and concluded that the results do not show the "undermining effect" on moral behavior. For example, Clevenger (1980) found that students who were payed to engage in an activity supporting an environmental protection law did not report a reduction in their moral obligation to support such a law in

comparison to students who were not payed. Other studies on altruism and helping behavior produced ambiguous findings. (e.g., Batson, et al., 1978; Thomas, Batson, & Coke, 1981).

One could argue that the reward aspect of Crime Stoppers is intended for a particular segment of society that clearly feels no moral obligation (i.e., intrinsic motivation) to get involved with the criminal justice system. For these individuals -- especially the criminal element -- money is the only way to bring them forward. Although monetary incentives may be the best strategy for motivating these individuals, there is a larger issue regarding the impact of the program on "good citizens". Whether widespread media coverage of Crime Stoppers rewards will adversely affect the moral responsibility of the general public to report crime remains to be seen.

#### The effects of anonymity

Caller anonymity is purported to be one of the basic ingredients contributing to Crime Stoppers' success and effectiveness. Although a small percentage of persons refrain from reporting crime because of a fear of retaliation, there is some evidence to suggest that for particular witnesses to crime, the guarantee of anonymity may be the critical impetus for volunteering criminal information. However, some social psychological research suggests that Crime Stoppers' promise of caller anonymity may encourage certain individuals to act in socially destructive ways (e.g. Watson, 1973; Zimbardo, 1970). For example, the knowledge that their identities will remain unrevealed, may encourage individuals to intrude on their neighbor's privacy for the sole purpose of detecting unlawful activities, and to report any and

all observed infractions out of a desire for unscrupulous and selfish gain.

While recognizing that anonymity may create some potential for abuse, it is also important to be aware that Crime Stoppers has built-in safeguards against "snitching" and "surveillance". Most programs adhere to the policy of publicizing and providing rewards for only felony offenses, thus providing no incentive for citizens to pursue less serious law-breaking behavior. Further, there is no solid evidence that protecting the anonymity of callers has ever resulted in deleterious effects for either the operations of the program or the rights of law-abiding citizens.

#### D. The Participation of Mass Media in Crime Prevention

Data on the effectiveness of media crime prevention campaigns are limited to a small number of studies. The most substantial evaluation was funded by the National Institute of Justice to assess the impact of the Advertising Council's "Take a Bite Out of Crime" national campaign, sponsored by the National Crime Prevention Coalition (see O'Keefe, 1986). The campaign, initiated in October, 1979, focused on encouraging citizen involvement in crime prevention, primarily in the form of increased burglary prevention and collective neighborhood action. O'Keefe and his colleagues found that "McGruff" did in fact influence the American public regarding crime prevention. The public service advertisements were able to reach over half of the nation, and for persons exposed to them, there were effects on a number of dimensions. In a panel sample of 426 respondents reinterviewed after two years, persons exposed to the campaign reported increases in their knowledge of crime prevention, more positive attitudes about the

efficacy of citizen crime prevention activities, greater feelings of competence in protecting themselves from crime, and increases in various crime prevention behaviors (O'Keefe, 1986).

Others have assumed a more conservative and cautious view of McGruff's impact. As Tyler (1984) reminds us, only 13 percent of the national sample reported any attitude change and only 4 percent reported any changes in behavior. Looking at other studies, the evidence is somewhat mixed about the effects of mass media and crime prevention campaigns on citizen reactions to crime. On the whole, there is some consistent evidence of positive changes in crime prevention knowledge and societal-level judgments and attitudes, but little empirical support for the hypothesis that media campaigns will modify the behaviors of potential victims or offenders (see Riley & Mayhew, 1980; Tyler & Cook, 1984; Tyler & Lavrakas, 1985).

Although the impact of the mass media remains uncertain, Tyler (1984) has sought to explain what he sees as the absence of any compelling effects. According to Tyler's analysis, media reports have a limited influence on personal crime-related responses because (a) citizens do not find the reports informative, and (b) they do not find them arousing or upsetting. As we have noted previously (Lavrakas, et al., 1983), informativeness is a problem because most media coverage does not refer to local crime, but rather covers a large geographic area (cf. Heath, 1984). Moreover, media crime communications are often uninformative because they offer little in the way of suggesting effective strategies for avoiding crime. With regard to arousal properties, Tyler (1978) found that media reports of crime were viewed

as less emotionally arousing than either informally communicated reports or personal experiences.

The problems of information and arousal should be less of a concern in the case of Crime Stoppers. The appropriate course of action is very clear -- citizens should call the phone number boldly displayed. Also, the issue of failure to arouse is less likely to be a problem with Crime Stoppers media coverage. In the case of television, most reenactments of the "Crime of the Week" -- regardless of their production quality -- are quite dramatic.

To conclude, we know virtually nothing about the impact of Crime Stoppers' media coverage on citizen attitudes and behaviors. Some stations claim to have documented changes in television ratings after introducing the Crime Stoppers program. While such results may suggest viewer interest in the Crime Stoppers segment (even though rating changes cannot be confidently attributed to the program), they tell us very little about possible changes in public attitudes or behaviors.

#### IV. WHAT WERE THE MAJOR FINDINGS?

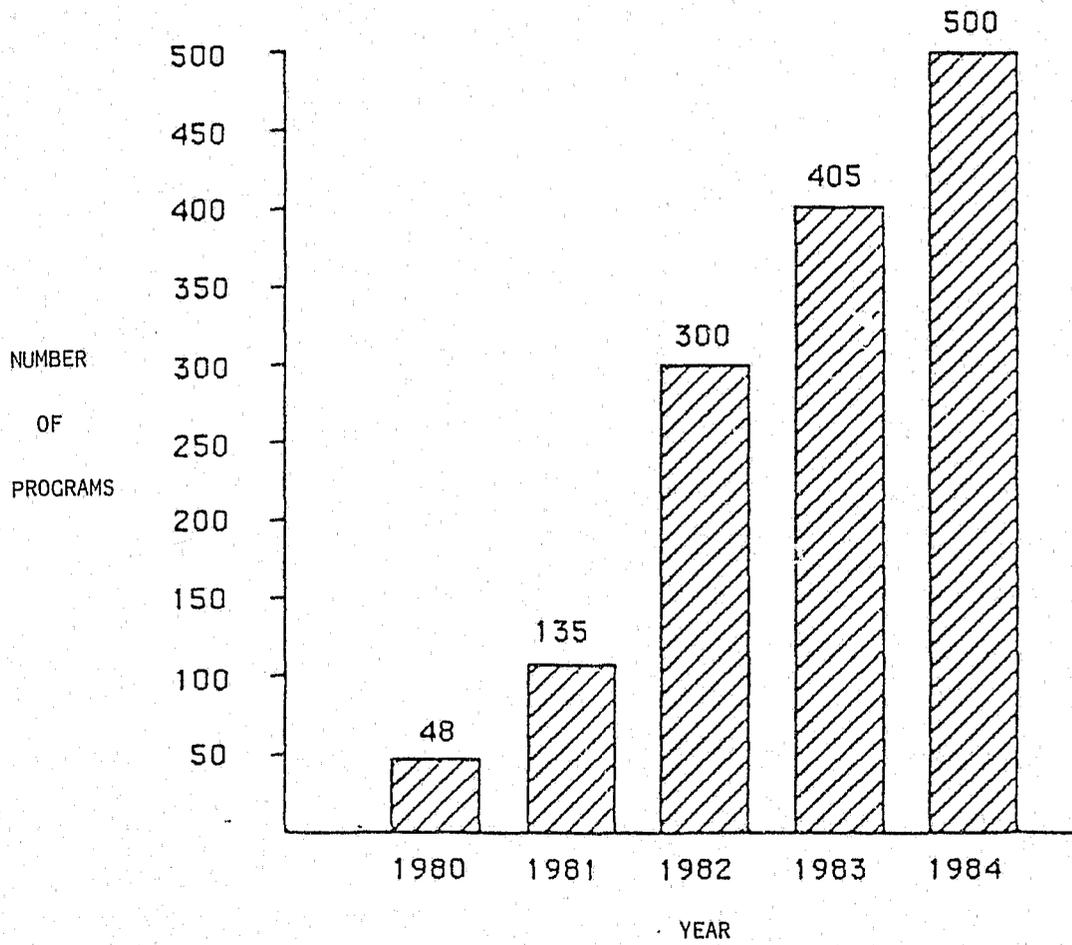
##### A. How Does Crime Stoppers Work?

The first basic question addressed in this study was -- "What is a Crime Stoppers program and how does it work in both theory and practice?" This is an important question, especially for persons who are unfamiliar with the operations of the program. Findings regarding the growth, type, and specific operations of Crime Stoppers programs are reported below:

##### The Growth of Programs

- o Since its inception in 1976, Crime Stoppers programs have rapidly appeared across the United States. Three-fourths of the programs existing in 1984 had been in operation for 4 years or less. Figure 1 shows that between 1980 and 1984, the total number of programs had multiplied ten-fold from 48 to nearly 500 programs in 38 states. Furthermore, 70 additional communities were planning implementation during 1984. Therefore, it was estimated that more than 600 programs would be operational through 1985.
- o The "typical" Crime Stoppers program is not located in a large urban center. The majority of programs serve populations of less than 100,000, and one-third serve populations of less than 50,000. Three-fourths work with law enforcement agencies having less than 200 officers, and one-fourth work with agencies having less than 25 officers.
- o Crime Stoppers is a network of "programs helping programs." When getting started, two-thirds of the programs surveyed received a substantial amount of help and advice from existing programs.
- o Networking occurs at the local, state, regional, national, and international levels. At the local level, half of the programs surveyed are involved in a multi-jurisdictional program where they share a phone line, coordinator, media outlet, and/or board of directors with a separate community. At the state and regional levels, a number of statewide programs and associations have emerged to provide technical and financial assistance to new and existing programs. At the national and international level, Crime Stoppers USA (founded in 1979) grew into Crime Stoppers

FIGURE 1  
NUMBER OF CRIME STOPPERS  
PROGRAMS BY YEAR



International in 1984, with membership in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

#### Media Awareness and Participation

- o The amount and type of media participation in Crime Stoppers differs as a function of the size of the population being served by the program. As shown in Table 1, programs serving small areas rely most heavily upon radio and weekly newspapers to publicize Crime Stoppers, whereas larger programs are most likely to utilize VHF/UHF television as their primary media outlet. However, programs serving larger areas tend to capitalize on all forms of media available to them, including daily newspapers, weekly newspapers, radio, and cable television.
- o More than one-fourth (28%) of the programs reported that enlisting some form of media participation had been a major problem in becoming fully operational. Crime Stoppers programs serving small population areas reported this as a major obstacle less frequently (i.e., only 1 in 5 said it was a major obstacle) than Crime Stoppers programs in larger population areas. Specifically, half of all programs in areas with over 50,000 population noted that getting the initial cooperation of the local media was either the greatest or second greatest obstacle they had to overcome; only a third of the Crime Stoppers programs in areas serving less than 50,000 experienced a severe start-up problem due to the lack of initial cooperation from their local media.
- o After any start-up problems have been resolved, most program coordinators find that participating media are quite cooperative. However, media cooperativeness is not the same across all types of media, as shown in Table 2. Weekly newspapers are viewed as the most cooperative, whereas daily newspapers are seen as the least cooperative according to program coordinators. Other data suggest that weekly newspapers are the most likely media outlet to express reservations about the concept of Crime Stoppers, and voice their need to remain the detached "watch dog" over law enforcement. Across the board, Crime Stoppers programs serving medium to large population areas (i.e., 100-250 thousand people) reported more cooperation from the media than did the smaller or larger programs.
- o Nearly half of all program coordinators reported that their Crime Stoppers program currently did not have any major problems in soliciting an adequate amount of cooperation from the local media. Of those that did list some current problem, the most frequently

Table 1

Size of Population Served  
by Type of Media Participation in 1984

Size of Population	Type of Media										N <sup>a</sup>
	Daily Newspaper		Weekly Newspaper		Radio		VHF/UHF Television		Cable Television		
	% with	Ave. #	% with	Ave. #	% with	Ave. #	% with	Ave. #	% with	Ave. #	
Less than 50,000	51	.75	59	1.25	73	1.83	15	.22	35	.41	61
50,000 to 99,999	73	1.11	59	1.52	75	3.48	52	.86	23	.39	47
100,000 to 249,999	86	1.44	58	1.50	86	4.75	69	1.19	36	.44	38
250,000 or larger	75	3.34	61	3.18	80	7.50	89	2.68	36	.55	46

<sup>a</sup> Average sample size.

Table 2

## Cooperativeness of Local Media at Present Time

Media Type	Ratings <sup>a</sup>		
	Cooperative	Neutral	Uncooperative
Daily Newspapers	68.3	22.7	9.0
Weekly Newspapers	85.6	11.5	2.7
Radio Stations	81.8	10.9	7.3
VHF/UHF TV Stations	73.5	15.0	11.5
Cable TV Companies	78.1	12.3	9.6

<sup>a</sup>Ratings of cooperativeness were made on a 0-10 scale by program coordinators. Ratings of 0-3 were grouped as "Uncooperative", 4-6 were grouped as "Neutral", and 7-10 were grouped as "Cooperative." Numbers indicate percentage of respondents in each rating group. N varies by type of media.

mentioned were the sometimes troublesome deadlines that the media set, and the media's desire to include information that law enforcement was often not willing to give out, e.g., the victim's name. More programs in small areas reported such current problems than did programs in large population areas.

- o Crime Stoppers was found to have very high national visibility, with 90 percent of the media aware of the concept.
- o Executives with a Crime Stoppers program in their community were asked to rate the success of the program and to describe their perception of public opinion towards the program. Overall, the average rating given to local programs was that they were "quite successful" and that the opinion of the public was "positive". Newspaper executives, though, rated the success of their local program as significantly lower than did radio and television stations.
- o Of all media organizations that currently participate in Crime Stoppers, slightly over half (54%) indicated that their organization helped start Crime Stoppers in their community. None of the three media types were any more likely than the others to have helped start their local Crime Stoppers program.
- o Only seven percent of the media responding to the national survey stated that their organization has an "exclusive arrangement" with Crime Stoppers, whereby their organization is the only medium of its type that participates in the local program. This arrangement differed significantly by media type, with only two percent of radio stations and 8 percent of newspapers indicating they had exclusivity. In contrast, 29 percent of the participating television stations had an exclusive arrangement with Crime Stoppers.
- o Three-fourths of all the media executives surveyed reported that they do not currently participate in Crime Stoppers, although most are not opposed to participation (as reported later).
- o Coordinators indicated that radio is the most frequently used media outlet with about 90 percent of the programs using it. About 80 percent use daily newspapers. Television was used by about 60 percent of the Crime Stoppers programs, but these were concentrated primarily in large population areas.
- o Crime Stoppers programs in areas with less than 100,000 population were significantly more likely to share media outlets with other programs than was the case in larger areas: whereas 50 percent of all programs in

small and medium sized population areas share media outlets, only one third of those in medium-large and large sized areas do. Of the programs that share media, only one in ten expressed any dissatisfaction with this arrangement.

- o When asked what the most successful type of medium was for creating public interest in their program, nearly six out of ten programs operating in smaller population areas said it was newspapers, whereas seven in ten programs from larger areas reported that it was television. Open-ended questions revealed that the media most preferred by coordinators was whichever one they felt was reaching the largest local audience. In other words, there appears to be no consistent preference for either print or broadcast media.
- o In contrast to the conflicting opinions about the relative effectiveness of different media channels in reaching the general public, data collected from a random sample of Indianapolis residents before and after program implementation paints a more one-sided picture. As shown in Table 3, residents in Indianapolis were much more likely to have been exposed to Crime Stoppers via network television than by listening to the radio or reading the newspaper, even though the program was publicized through all major types of media.
- o The "Crime of the Week" is a feature for about 80 percent of all programs.

#### Law Enforcement and the Coordinator

- o There are sizeable differences among the programs on a number of dimensions, including the amount of time that coordinators are able to devote to managing the program, the level of support received from law enforcement administrators, the level of training provided to police officers and investigators, and the procedures for handling calls.
- o Program operations and procedures are uniformly guided by the Crime Stoppers Manual prepared by Greg MacAleese, founder of Crime Stoppers and coordinator of the first program in Albuquerque, and Coleman Tily, board member of the Albuquerque program and organizer of Crime Stoppers International. Although 1 in 10 program coordinators had not read the Manual, 3 out of 4 respondents indicated that they followed "all" or "most" of the procedural and policy recommendations articulated in the Manual.

Table 3  
 Before-After Changes in Citizen Awareness  
 of Crime Stoppers in Indianapolis

Awareness Measures	Percent Aware <sup>a</sup>		
	Pretest	Posttest	Change
1. Heard about Crime Stoppers	38.0	92.9	54.9 (+)
2. Saw TV Reenactments	34.8	70.8	36.0 (+)
3. Read Newspaper Coverage	40.6	52.6	12.0 (+)
4. Heard on the Radio	23.2	25.3	2.1 (+)

<sup>a</sup> N=184 panel respondents.

- o The types of callers available and the quality of the information they supply are important to the success of the criminal investigation process. According to police coordinator estimates, the most frequent callers are "fringe players" (41%), followed by "good citizens" (35%) and "criminals" (25%). Coordinators estimate that nearly half of the tips received are "good tips" that could be helpful to investigators, and fringe players are viewed as the best callers in this respect (i.e., they provide the most useful information).
- o The usefulness of most tips received by programs varied by size of the population served. According to the survey, the larger the program, the smaller the percentage of tips that were judged useful (e.g., 39% for large programs vs. 49% for small programs).
- o Most programs have backup systems for handling calls when the regular staff are not available, but many coordinators are not satisfied with the arrangement of forwarding calls to the communication center because oftentimes the interviewers are not properly trained to handle anonymous callers. In addition, nearly 1-in-5 programs uses an answering machine at certain times to receive calls.
- o The majority of coordinators felt that the present number of staff was "somewhat" or "very" sufficient given the current demands of the program. Furthermore, a commitment to Crime Stoppers by Police administrators is clearly reflected in 1 out of 3 programs in which the number of staff and/or percentage of time committed to Crime Stoppers has increased since the program was originally implemented. However, substantial variation exists in response to these questions, and more than 1 in 3 coordinators felt that the current number of staff assigned by the police department was "somewhat" or "very" insufficient.
- o Programs differ considerably in the extent to which the program staff (as opposed to investigators) screen calls to determine the accuracy of the information supplied by the caller. In 36 percent of the programs, the staff screens all of the calls, whereas in another 23 percent of the programs the calls go directly to investigators without any staff screening (the remaining 41 percent fall somewhere in between). These differences are not related to program size, as one might expect.
- o As indicated in Table 4, narcotics calls are an important component of many Crime Stoppers programs. Coordinators estimate that narcotics account for about

Table 4

Types of Crime-Related Calls Received by Crime Stoppers  
(Coordinators' Estimates)

Type of Crime	Percent Breakdown <sup>a</sup>
Crimes Against Business	17
Narcotics	32
Personal Crimes (homicides, rape, robbery, assault)	16
Property Crimes (burglary, theft)	33
Other Crimes	11

<sup>a</sup> Percentages represent an averaging of participants' responses for each category and therefore do not sum to 100 percent.

one-third of all the crime-related calls received on the Crime Stopper's phone.

- o Keeping track of Crime Stoppers cases within the investigative process has been difficult for some programs. One-in-four programs does not have a follow-up form for investigators to use, and the large majority of programs have neither a "tickler" file to remind them to follow up nor departmental policies that require feedback to the program.
- o There is considerable awareness and support of Crime Stoppers programs among both investigators and patrol officers. As one might expect, according to the coordinator, investigators are (a) more likely than patrol officers to have a complete understanding of how the program works, (b) less skeptical about the benefits of Crime Stoppers, and (c) more likely to cooperate with the program.
- o Most coordinators (73%) feel that investigators spend the same amount of time on both program cases and non-program cases. The remainder were split, with 12 per cent arguing that Crime Stoppers cases receive proportionately "more" investigative time and 15 percent arguing that they receive proportionately "less" investigative time than other cases. However, Crime Stoppers investigations certainly receive "high priority" in terms of case assignments. Compared to other cases that need to be investigated, Crime Stoppers cases are given "high" or "very high" priority in 55% of the departments surveyed.

#### Board of Directors

- o Most programs (80%) have an active board of directors that meets once a month. However, less than half have established an executive committee to handle specific business, and less than one-third have created other types of special committees.
- o Clearly, fundraising is the major issue facing the board of directors in most communities. There are nearly as many fundraising techniques being used as there are programs. These techniques vary in cost-effectiveness, and must be evaluated on several dimensions. For example, in-person solicitations (relative to mail solicitations), require a large investment of person hours, but produce the most funds. For some fundraising techniques, the high cost and small amount of money raised may be offset by the public relations benefits (e.g. booths or sales).

- o One of the most promising fund-raising techniques is court restitution. Although only a few programs were involved, this strategy yielded the highest cost-effectiveness score of any technique mentioned. Essentially, this approach involves encouraging judges to require offenders to contribute to Crime Stoppers as a condition of probation. Once this agreement has been established, the cost of enforcing it is very minimal (e.g., follow-up letters). Houston Crime Stoppers is one example of how this restitution program can be successfully implemented. However, judges must be careful to avoid using this disposition as a standard policy without considering the circumstances of each individual case. They must also refrain from violating their canon of ethics by engaging in organized fund-raising.
- o Reward systems for paying callers are quite different from one program to the next, both in terms of eligibility requirements and criteria for determining reward size. There are considerable differences of opinion about whether the recovery of property/narcotics or indictments are sufficient by themselves to justify eligibility for a reward, but almost half of the programs felt that arrest of a suspect is "always" sufficient.
- o Table 5 illustrates that reward amounts vary substantially depending on whether the incident is the Crime of the Week, a personal crime, a narcotics crime, or a property crime. Also, it can be seen in Table 5 that larger programs tend to offer larger rewards. Aside from the severity of the crime, there was little agreement across programs on the criteria that should be used to determine the size of the reward. Most boards handle reward decisions on a case-by-case basis and use a variety of criteria that can sometimes come into conflict with one another.

B. What Are the Advantages and Disadvantages?

Unlike the descriptive findings reported above in section A, this section is primarily evaluative in nature. The results summarized below assess (a) the possible benefits of Crime Stoppers in terms of crime control and citizen participation, (b) how various groups feel about Crime Stoppers, (c) the effects of a new program on law enforcement, businesspersons, and the community, (d) factors associated with program productivity among law enforcement, the media, the board of

Table 5

Average Reward Size (in dollars)  
by Type of Crime and Size of Population Served  
January - December, 1983

Size of Population	Type of Crime				N <sup>c</sup>
	Personal <sup>a</sup> Crimes	Narcotics	Property <sup>b</sup> Crimes	Crime of Week	
Less than 50,000	289	177	171	165	61
50,000 to 99,999	406	146	139	344	47
100,000 to 249,999	394	271	203	676	38
250,000 or larger	400	253	178	774	46
OVERALL AVERAGE	379	207	171	505	192

<sup>a</sup> Includes homicide, rape, robbery, and assault.

<sup>b</sup> Includes burglary, theft and auto theft.

<sup>c</sup> Average sample size.

directors, and the local environment, (e) the effects of rewards on callers, and (f) measurement issues and problems in this topic area.

#### Crime Stoppers as a Crime Control Program

Does Crime Stoppers really help law enforcement and the community in their fight against serious crime? Does it enhance criminal investigations and encourage citizen participation?

#### Crime Reduction

- o In their short history, Crime Stoppers programs have accumulated some impressive performance statistics, having solved more than 92 thousand felony crimes, recovered more than half a billion dollars in stolen property and narcotics, and convicted more than 20,000 criminals (see Table 6). With a property recovery rate averaging more than 6,000 dollars per incident, and with program funding provided largely by private contributions, Crime Stoppers can be viewed as a cost-effective program by the taxpayer.
- o Nearly half of the program coordinators felt that Crime Stoppers had reduced the overall crime rate in their community. However, there is little reason to assume that the program would have such widespread impact. While numerous crimes are solved through Crime Stoppers, these successes amount to only a small fraction of the total volume of serious crimes committed in a given community each year. Available statistics suggest that Crime Stoppers programs, on the average, clear only 6.5 percent of all the crimes cleared by the cooperating law enforcement agency. Furthermore, the total number of cases cleared by law enforcement is only about one-fifth of the crimes reported, which in turn, is only one-third of the felony crimes that occur in any given community. Thus, we should not expect the overall crime rate to be immediately or substantially reduced by the introduction of this type of crime control program.

#### Enhancing Criminal Investigations

- o The available anecdotal evidence suggests that Crime Stoppers programs are solving many felony cases that are unlikely to be solved through regular criminal investigations or by devoting a "reasonable" amount of law enforcement resources. The program was designed to handle "dead-end" cases where investigators have exhausted their leads. With the help of widespread media coverage, the promise of anonymity, and the

Table 6

International Crime Stoppers Statistics

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Felony Crimes Solved	92,339
Stolen Property and Narcotics Recovered	\$562,219,371
Average Amount Recovered per Case	\$6,089
Defendants Tried	21,959
Defendants Convicted	20,992
Conviction Rate	95.5%
Rewards Paid	\$6,728,392

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Source: The Caller, January 1986. (Published by Crime Stoppers International). Based on statistics reported by 380 programs through the end of 1985.

opportunity for a sizeable reward, Crime Stoppers has repeatedly "cracked" cases that have remained unsolved after a substantial investment of investigative time.

- o The effectiveness of Crime Stoppers seems to vary by type of crime. Although the program has documented some success stories with all major crimes, it appears to be especially effective in solving cases involving fugitives, bank robberies, and narcotics. The widespread media coverage of the suspect's photograph or composite seems to be the key ingredient in catching fugitives and bank robberies, while the promise of anonymity is believed to play an important role in the narcotics area.

#### Enhancing Citizen Participation

- o Citizens become involved in Crime Stoppers as callers, financial contributors, and board members. In each of these areas, the program has documented its successes. The large volume of calls received over the anonymous tip lines and the amount of money raised, are good indicators of community support. However, the base of community support is concentrated primarily in the business community (and those who are financially able to support the program) and in the criminal element (where people have the opportunity to witness or have knowledge of felony crime with some regularity). Nevertheless, the general public is certainly encouraged to participate as callers, and "good citizens" have come through in many cases. Recently some programs have sought to expand the pool of participants by directing attention at the youth population in school, and attempting to change social norms about "snitching".

#### Perceptions and Attitudes About Crime Stoppers

How do participants and nonparticipants feel about Crime Stoppers? Do they view the program as effective in fighting crime? Do they envision any problems or disadvantages to the community?

#### Participants' Views

- o National and local surveys of persons involved in Crime Stoppers indicate that the program is very well received on all fronts. The enthusiasm for Crime Stoppers is very strong among police coordinators, the board of directors, and participating media executives. The

majority in each group views the program as quite successful.

#### Nonparticipants' Views

- o Attitudes toward Crime Stoppers among nonparticipants are mixed. Public opinion in Indianapolis indicates that the majority of residents were concerned about encouraging undesirable informing on neighbors, but yet one-fourth felt that Crime Stoppers would be "very effective" in leading to the arrest of criminals. In our national survey of media, three-fourths of the executives from participating media rated public opinion about the program as "very positive" or "positive". However, a group of critics comprised of journalists, defense attorneys, legal scholars, and others have expressed a variety of misgivings about the program, ranging from concerns about civil rights to undermining citizens' civil responsibility to report crime without pay.
- o Our national survey of media revealed that nonparticipating media were quite positive about the concept of Crime Stoppers. Nearly two-thirds of the sample reported that their organization would be "very likely" to participate if a local program were to start. The attitudes of nonparticipating media in communities that already have Crime Stoppers programs were less positive.

#### Effectiveness in Changing Awareness, Attitudes, and Behavior

In the national survey of police coordinators, "public apathy and lack of awareness" was listed most frequently as the number one obstacle they had to overcome to become a fully operational program. However, the results of the Impact Study in Indianapolis reveal that awareness of a new Crime Stoppers program can be dramatically increased in only six months, even though the effects on attitudes and behavior are limited. Surveys were administered to the same police, business persons, and community residents three months before and six months after citywide program implementation i.e., 3 months before and 6 months after the program began accepting calls. The Indianapolis program was implemented very successfully. The following results are noteworthy:

### Police Officers and Investigators

- o Virtually all of the law enforcement respondents (100%) contacted after program implementation reported awareness of the program -- an increase of 55 percentage points when compared to the number of officers who reported awareness of Crime Stoppers before the program was implemented.
- o The effects of Crime Stoppers on the police are reported in Table 7. Using before-after comparisons, officers' ratings of Crime Stoppers as an effective program for making arrests and preventing crime were significantly more positive at the posttest. Although there was no change in officers' expressed willingness to accept an assignment in Crime Stoppers, they did report being significantly more inclined toward volunteering their time beyond regular police duties to work with the program. The greater their exposure to the program, the greater their willingness to get involved.

### The Business Community

- o The business community's awareness of Crime Stoppers rose dramatically after the program had been in effect for six months. Awareness reached 96 percent -- an increase of 53 percentage points.
- o As displayed in Table 8, satisfaction with the quality of police services in the business community showed no change during the course of the study, but respondents indicated being quite satisfied on both the pretest and posttest surveys. Similarly, businesspersons' ratings of the police on a number of performance dimensions also showed no before-after changes (ratings on both occasions were generally in a positive direction). The results of bivariate statistical analysis did demonstrate a significant positive change in ratings of the effectiveness of Crime Stoppers in leading to the arrest of criminals, in preventing crime, and in diminishing the likelihood that businesses would be victimized by crime. However, it can be seen in Table 8 that multivariate analyses show no differences as a result of one's level of exposure to the program.

### Community Residents

- o The results of the citywide community survey indicate that the Indianapolis Crime Stoppers program reached the homes of most city residents. Thirty-eight (38) percent of the panel sample reported some exposure to the Crime Stoppers program before the "kick off" date, while 93 percent reported that they had read about, heard, or saw the program within the six-month period after the

Table 7

The Effects of Exposure to Crime Stoppers on the Police  
(Multiple Regression Analysis)

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables					
	Ratings of CS Effectiveness <sup>a</sup>	Ratings of Residents on Crime Prevention <sup>b</sup>	Ratings of Investigators <sup>c</sup>	Ratings of Residents' Perceptions of Safety <sup>d</sup>	Willingness to Accept CS Assignment <sup>e</sup>	Willingness to volunteer time to CS <sup>f</sup>
(standardized regression coefficients)						
<b>Covariates</b>						
Length of time with Department	-.20	.07	.05	-.12	-.03	.07
Assignment	.16	-.24	.09	.20	-.01	.07
Satisfaction with Police Work <sup>g</sup>	-.23*	.24	.07	-.01	.37**	-.01
Marital Status	.11	-.03	-.01	-.02	-.26*	.05
Sex <sup>h</sup>	-.04	.01	.13	-.12	.007	.03
Education	-.09	.23	.10	-.06	.06	.03
Race (dummy) <sup>i</sup>						
White	-.71*	.02	.55	.57	.65*	-.17
Other	-.79*	.25	.51	.50	.73*	-.12
Pretest	.41***	.01	.46***	.46***	.22	.59***
<b>Treatment</b>						
Officers' Level of Exposure to Crime Stoppers <sup>j</sup>	.18*	-.24	-.01	.14	-.05	-.25**
<b>Proportion of Variance Explained (R<sup>2</sup>)</b>						
	.40	.24	.33	.43	.50	.54

\* p .05      <sup>a</sup> 4-point scale (4=very effective, 1=not at all effective)      <sup>g</sup> 4-point scale (1=very satisfied, 4=very dissatisfied)  
 \*\* p .01      <sup>b</sup> 5-point scale (1=excellent, 5=poor)  
 \*\*\* p .001      <sup>c</sup> 4-point scale (4=very excellent, 1=not at all effective)      <sup>h</sup> 1=female 0=male  
                     <sup>d</sup> 3-point scale (3=more safe, 1=less safe than other citizens)      <sup>i</sup> 1=white 0=nonwhite  
                     <sup>e</sup> 4-point scale (4=very unwilling, 1=very willing)      <sup>j</sup> saw TV reenactments, read about program in newspaper, or heard program broadcasts on radio (1=yes, 0=No)  
                     <sup>f</sup> 4-point scale (4=very unwilling, 1=very willing)

Table 8

The Effects of Exposure to Crime Stoppers on the Business Community  
(Multiples regression analyses)

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables							
	Likely to Call CS <sup>a</sup>	Contribute to CS <sup>b</sup>	Participate on Board <sup>c</sup>	Satisfaction with Police <sup>d</sup>	Ratings of Performance <sup>e</sup>	Ratings of Effectiveness <sup>f</sup>	Perceptions of Safety from Crime	Effects of Crime on Business
(standardized regression coefficients)								
<u>Covariates</u>								
Age	.08	.03	.08	-.14	.16	-.21	.03	.01
Education	.14	.02	-.10	.12	-.26	-.05	.17	.03
Prior Victimization	.04	-.01	-.01	.13	-.28	-.14	-.37*	.28*
Size of Business	-.09	.16	-.04	-.19	.33	.26	-.24	.15
Satisfaction with Indianapolis as a place to do business	.07	-.24	.05	-.03	-.33*	-.28	.16	.20
Pretest	.52**	.59***	.53**	.54**	.44**	.48**	.49**	.57**
<u>Treatment</u>								
Awareness of Crime Stoppers <sup>g</sup>	-.19	-.04	.07	.07	-.08	-.05	-.08	-.11
<u>Proportion of Variance Explained (R<sup>2</sup>)</u>								
	.33	.59	.37	.32	.54	.35	.39	.48

\* p &lt; .05

\*\* p &lt; .01

\*\*\* p &lt; .001

<sup>a</sup> 4-point scale (4=definitely call, 1=definitely not call)<sup>b</sup> 4-point scale (4=very willing, 1=very unwilling)<sup>c</sup> 4-point scale (4=very willing, 1=very unwilling)<sup>d</sup> 4-point scale (4=very satisfied, 1=very dissatisfied)<sup>e</sup> 5-point scale (1=excellent, 5=poor)<sup>f</sup> 4-point scale (4=very effective, 1=not at all effective)<sup>g</sup> Heard about Crime Stoppers in Indianapolis (1=yes, 0=no)

program "kick-off" -- an increase of 55 percentage points.

- o Pretest-posttest analyses showed that citizens were more likely (at the posttest) to believe that Crime Stoppers is an effective program for arresting criminals. Also, citizens were inclined to change their attitudes about the acceptability of paying people to report crime. While only 38 percent felt this was a "good practice" on the pretest, 54 percent thought it was a good idea on the posttest.
- o More controlled multivariate analyses were performed to assess whether levels of exposure to the program affected citizen responses. Whether "exposure" was defined as knowledge of Crime Stoppers through all major media or only television, exposure was unrelated to more than a dozen outcome measures. These results cast doubt on whether the few observed pretest-posttest changes were due to the Crime Stoppers intervention (see Table 9).
- o The general lack of impact on citizen's attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors does not detract from the observation that citizens appear to like the program. At least in the televised media, the viewing audience has responded favorably according to news executives. Thus, residents enjoy their exposure to the program even though it apparently did not exert a strong influence on them during the limited time period of the study.

#### Factors Associated with Program Productivity

Data from three national surveys were analyzed to identify key program characteristics that are associated with variation in program productivity. That is, what factors determine whether a Crime Stoppers program is highly productive or experiences little success in terms of citizen participation, suspect arrests, crime clearances, and fund-raising. The characteristics and actions of the police coordinator, the media, and the board of directors were assessed as possible predictors, as well as key contextual variables describing the local community. The following results emerged from these analyses.

Table 9

The Effects of Exposure to Crime Stoppers on the Community  
(Multiple regression analyses)

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables												
	Perceived Crime Rate	Perceived Frequency Robbery/ Assault	Fear of Personal Crime <sup>a</sup>	Fear of Property Crime <sup>a</sup>	Responsibility for Property Crime <sup>a</sup>	Satisfaction with Police	Citizens Should Report Without Pay	Paying is Good Practice	Perceived Arrest Effectiveness	Perceived Prevention Effectiveness	Likely to Call Crime Stoppers	Willingness to Contribute to Crime Stoppers	Called the Police
<u>Covariates</u>													
Sex <sup>b</sup>	-.01	.09	-.15*	-.03	.16*	-.01	.16*	.05	.02	-.04	.05	.01	.08
Age	.13	.03	.08	-.12	-.01	-.20**	.02	.08	-.06	-.11	-.11	-.03	.09
Race <sup>c</sup>	-.01	-.03	.01	.02	-.11	.02	-.01	-.02	-.04	-.13	-.06	-.14	-.01
Education	-.12	-.04	.01	.15*	.01	.01	.03	-.01	-.13	-.18*	.06	-.04	.07
Direct Victimization <sup>d</sup>	.10	.02	-.07	-.11	.06	-.12	-.07	-.07	.03	-.01	-.08	-.03	.39***
Indirect Victimization <sup>e</sup>	.23**	.09	-.07	-.01	-.18*	-.03	.07	-.02	-.03	.02	.06	-.03	.09
Exposure to McGruff <sup>f</sup>	-.04	-.07	-.04	.00	.01	.05	-.15	.03	-.11	.05	-.11	-.01	-.01
Pretest	.30***	.46***	.53***	.48***	.25**	.37***	.28***	.46***	.23**	.36***	.29***	.50***	.28***
<u>Treatment</u>													
Watch Channel 13 <sup>g</sup>	.03	.00	.05	.07	-.07	-.03	-.19*	.12	.04	.02	-.03	-.04	-.06
Proportion of Variance Explained (R <sup>2</sup> )	.24	.26	.41	.33	.13	.20	.16	.24	.12	.27	.13	.32	.35

\* p .05  
\*\* p .01  
\*\*\* p .001

<sup>a</sup> 4-point scale (higher=less fear).

<sup>b</sup> 1=female, 0=male

<sup>c</sup> 1=white, 0=nonwhite

<sup>d</sup> victimized by personal (0,1) and/or property crime (0,1) during past year (composite scale).

<sup>e</sup> personally know someone victimized during past year (y=yes, 0=no).

<sup>f</sup> seen any public service announcements on McGruff during past 6 months (1=yes, 0=no).

<sup>g</sup> whether or not reported Channel 13 as "most often" watched station at both pretest and posttest (1=yes, 0=no).

### Coordinator and Law Enforcement Variables

- o The strongest predictor of program productivity among coordinator variables was job satisfaction. At the national level, the higher the coordinator's job satisfaction, the greater the number of calls received (per 100,000 population), the higher the quality of calls (as measured by cases sent to investigators), the more suspects arrested (per 1,000 Part I crimes), and the more cases solved (per 1,000 Part I crimes). Job satisfaction was the only characteristic of the coordinator that was associated with arrests and the best predictor of calls received and cases solved. The most satisfied coordinators were those who made more public speaking engagements and devoted more hours to the program. (Of course, it may be true that program success gives rise to greater job satisfaction.)
- o Working longer hours was another indicator of productivity. The more hours per week a coordinator worked, the more calls the program received, and the more calls that were sent to investigators for follow-up. However, the direction of causality is unclear inasmuch as coordinators may be forced to work longer hours to handle a greater volume of calls.
- o Also associated with program productivity was the coordinator's level of involvement in the community. The more speaking engagements reported by the coordinator during a six-month period, the greater the number of calls received, the greater the number of calls investigated, and the greater the number of cases solved. However, neither the number of hours worked nor the number of speaking engagements retained its significance when controlling for job satisfaction.
- o Coordinator variables that were not associated with program productivity include: age, education, years with the police force, length of time as coordinator, and reported public speaking ability.

### Board of Directors Variables

- o The Board's level of effort seems to be the predominant factor in determining its success. The only board characteristic that was associated with fundraising success (as measured by the amount of money each program had in the bank) was the chairperson's rating of how much "time and energy" the board members invest in the program. Furthermore, boards that invested greater time and energy were also less likely to have experienced "difficult times" as a program and more likely to rate themselves as effective fundraisers.

- o Allocating work evenly among board members appears to have positive results. Boards that managed to allocate the tasks more evenly were less worried about "burn out" and received higher overall performance ratings than boards where one or two members were responsible for most of the work.
- o Many characteristics of the board were not important for predicting fund-raising success or program hardship. Included in this list are factors such as: the presence of an executive committee, board size, board gender composition, and the presence of responsibilities (as a board) other than Crime Stoppers.

#### Media Variables

- o While it is critical to a Crime Stoppers program to have media participation, it is important to note that the actual number of specific media types that participated with the program was basically unrelated to measures of program performance (e.g. number of calls received, arrests, cases solved). Also, there does not appear to be a single best "mix" of media for maximizing productivity (e.g. radio and television coverage only, weekly newspaper only, etc.)
- o Although the number of media outlets did not influence performance, the amount of special coverage was important (e.g. front page newspaper coverage). The more outlets that provided the program with special coverage, the higher the program's productivity in terms of the number of calls received.
- o The importance of getting early cooperation of the media was stressed by Crime Stoppers coordinators, both in terms of minimizing later problems with the media, and in terms of spreading the word to the public. In many instances, the media have even initiated the program.
- o Continued media cooperation was associated with program performance. The higher the level of combined media cooperation, the greater the number of calls received from the community.
- o In general, the larger the population area, the more difficulties reported by police coordinators in getting initial media cooperation.
- o Coordinators rated radio stations as the most cooperative of the various media used by Crime Stoppers. In general, daily newspapers were rated as the least cooperative type of media. Consistent with these findings, executives at daily newspapers were less positive in their ratings of Crime Stoppers success than

were radio and television executives.

- o Ratings by media executives correlated significantly with local coordinator ratings of Crime Stoppers success in those cities where both types of data were available about a Crime Stoppers program. The ratings of Crime Stoppers success also correlated significantly with several of the performance measures computed from program records. Thus, media perceptions of program success correspond to actual productivity statistics and are validated by law enforcement perceptions.

#### Evaluating Program Components

- o Evaluative ratings for each of the major program components (law enforcement, board of directors, and media) were positively related to actual program productivity. This finding suggests that participants hold fairly accurate and objective perceptions of their program's success relative to other Crime Stoppers programs. The only productivity score that was not predicted by these evaluations was fund-raising success.
- o When evaluations of different components of the program were compared, ratings of media cooperativeness were consistently stronger than ratings of the coordinator or board of directors for predicting a program's ability to generate calls, arrest suspects, and solve crimes (see Table 10). Whether media ratings are a cause or consequence of program productivity is not known. Nevertheless, the program's fate is linked to their contribution.

#### Contextual Variables

- o Productivity was higher in communities with less poverty, fewer minorities, and a lower crime rate. However, when all factors were considered simultaneously in the analysis, only the crime rate emerged as important.
- o A close look at population size revealed a curvilinear relationship to productivity, i.e., programs serving medium-sized urban areas (100-250 thousand) were more productive than either smaller or larger programs in terms of calls received, calls investigated, suspects arrested, and crimes cleared (see Table 11). Programs that serve a mixture of communities appear to be more productive than programs that serve exclusively urban, suburban, or rural areas.
- o Crime Stoppers was unaffected by the geographic size of the community or whether the program received technical assistance from other Crime Stoppers programs in surrounding areas.

Table 10

Program Productivity as a Function  
of Overall Success Ratings For Each Program Component  
(Standardized regression coefficients)

Program Component Being Rated	Productivity Measures (Dependent Variables)				
	Calls Received <sup>a</sup>	Calls Investigated <sup>a</sup>	Suspects Arrested <sup>a</sup>	Crimes Cleared <sup>a</sup>	Funds Raised <sup>b</sup>
Police Coordinator <sup>c</sup>	.19	.13	.25*	.17	.20
Board of Directors <sup>d</sup>	-.28*	-.13	-.01	.04	.20
Media Outlets <sup>e</sup>	.34**	.27*	.27*	.23*	.05
Overall Program <sup>f</sup>	.32**	.35**	.37**	.43***	-.04
Proportion of Variance Explained (R <sup>2</sup> )	.29	.26	.41	.41	.07

<sup>a</sup> Per 1000 Part 1 crimes reported to the police.

<sup>b</sup> Total funds in the corporation's bank account per 100,000 population.

<sup>c</sup> Overall coordinator performance rating by board of director's chairperson.

<sup>d</sup> Combined board performance rating by coordinator and board chairperson.

<sup>e</sup> Combined media cooperativeness rating by coordinator and board chairperson  
(averaging separate ratings of each media type).

<sup>f</sup> Overall program success rating by coordinator.

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 11

Program Productivity as a Function  
of Size and Type of Population Served

Size of Population	Productivity Measures					N <sup>c</sup>
	Calls Received <sup>a</sup>	Calls Investigated <sup>a</sup>	Suspects Arrested <sup>a</sup>	Crimes Cleared <sup>a</sup>	Funds Raised <sup>b</sup>	
Less than 50,000	118	122	39	63	\$37838	61
50,000 to 99,999	382	247	53	50	\$11012	47
100,000 to 249,999	616	280	128	173	\$ 9519	38
250,000 or larger	234	136	20	49	\$ 547	46
<hr/>						
Type of Population						
Mostly Urban Residents	350	151	62	67	\$13811	48
Mostly Suburban Residents	244	166	32	36	\$12102	30
Mostly Rural Residents	273	69	68	52	\$ 7754	13
Mixed	355	223	66	114	\$24514	97

<sup>a</sup>Per 1000 Part 1 Crimes reported to the police.

<sup>b</sup>Total funds in the corporation's bank account per 100,000 population.

<sup>c</sup>Average sample size.

### The Effects of Rewards on Callers

Selecting the proper reward size for a given case is viewed as a very important task by board members and police coordinators. The amount of the reward is considered by many to be a critical determinant of the caller's level of satisfaction and willingness to continue a cooperative relationship with the program. However, paying out too much money on a regular basis can create a cash shortage and may lift caller's expectations too high. In light of this situation, a Reward Experiment was conducted, with the Lake County Crime Stoppers program in Waukegan, Illinois, to look at the effects of reward size on caller's perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral intentions (see Table 12).

This randomized experiment allowed us to determine how callers would respond to reward levels that were randomly determined (and thus, had no direct or causal relationship to their case). Given that Lake County Crime Stoppers projected a typical reward size of \$250 per case, this average was maintained by randomly assigning cases to one of three reward sizes: low reward (\$100) medium reward (\$250) and high reward (\$400). The results indicate that the variations in reward size had virtually no effect on the callers. Specifically, callers in the high, medium, and low reward groups did not differ with respect to their satisfaction with the reward, the perceived fairness of the reward amount, their belief in the effectiveness of Crime Stoppers, their intentions to use the program again, and other related measures. With a few rare exceptions, even the callers in the "low reward" group (who received only 100 dollars) reported that they were very satisfied with the amount of compensation.

Table 12

Caller Responses as a Function of Reward Size: A Randomized Experiment  
 (Means with Standard Deviations in parentheses)

Reward Size	Satisfaction with Reward	Perceived Fairness of Compensation	Perceived Effectiveness of Crime Stoppers	Likely to Call Crime Stoppers Again	<u>N</u>
Low (\$100)	6.75 (3.39)	.75 (.45)	3.83 (.39)	3.67 (.89)	12
Moderate (\$250)	7.35 (2.87)	.82 (.39)	3.62 (.50)	3.65 (.79)	17
Moderately High (\$400)	7.93 (2.79)	.71 (.47)	3.73 (.46)	3.60 (.83)	15
Between-groups F value	0.52	0.25	0.72	0.02	

### Measurement Issues and Problems

- o While most Crime Stoppers programs keep some statistics to document their performance, only 1 in 5 programs keep records on seven basic productivity measures, ranging from the number of calls received to the number of suspects convicted of at least one charge.
- o Current measures of productivity are statistically biased in favor of large programs and those with a large number of narcotics cases.
- o There has been only marginal standardization of measurement across programs because of definitional problems. Programs often use different definitions for such variables as "crimes solved," "value of stolen property recovered," and "suspects convicted."
- o Although Crime Stoppers International reports a 96 percent conviction rate across all reporting programs, conviction data are often unavailable to law enforcement personnel without a major effort. Hence, program staff is making an educated guess.

## V. WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS?

The findings described in this report, coupled with the numerous meetings, interviews, and site visit experiences have spawned a variety of issues, policy recommendations, and general observations. It is hoped that these observations will have practical significance for the operations of, and the relationships between the three elements of Crime Stoppers: Law Enforcement, Board of Directors, and the Media.

### Law Enforcement

- o The location of the Crime Stoppers program within the police department affects the program's relationship with investigators. Programs located within the Investigation division (as opposed to crime prevention or administration) reported a significantly higher level of rapport with investigators and higher levels of cooperation. Programs relegated to units that are far removed from the investigative aspect of police work are more likely to experience an uphill struggle for acceptance within an agency. By the same token, police coordinators must strive to foster and perpetuate a strong working relationship with investigations.
- o A sizeable percentage of Crime Stoppers programs need more staff both to stimulate community awareness through outreach activities and to manage the day-to-day activities within the department.
- o Selecting a highly motivated coordinator with the unusual balance of skills in public relations, investigations, and program management is a critical task.
- o The coordinator's level of involvement in the community and job satisfaction (which go hand-in-hand) seem to be important predictors of program success that should not go unnoticed. Coordinators should make a concerted effort to get out into the community. Speaking engagements can stimulate public awareness of the program, which may have a number of effects, including more calls, more contributions, and more public acceptance.
- o Several groups apparently are in need of better and more extensive training with respect to the program: (a) patrol officers on the street; (b) communications personnel who handle after-hours calls, and (c)

civilian volunteers i.e., non-police persons who contribute their time answering phones and doing clerical tasks.

- o The initial processing of Crime Stoppers calls lays the groundwork for the successful creation and pursuit of a criminal investigation. Moreover, the forwarding of quality (i.e. workable) information increases the probability of arrest, and enhances the credibility of the program among investigators. Thus, proper interviewing techniques must be established so that interviewers obtain critical information on the initial (and oftentimes only) call. In addition, the staff must be extremely careful to avoid either under-screening or over-screening potential cases (problems we have observed). The former leads to weak or useless information that is offensive to investigators, whereas the latter impinges upon the investigators expertise and responsibility.
- o To maintain accountability for Crime Stoppers cases, programs should consider establishing (a) a follow-up form that would be completed by investigators assigned to the case, (b) a tickler file to remind staff about delinquent cases, and (c) a departmental policy that requires investigators to cooperate fully with the program. Although personal contact with individual detectives is useful for maintaining rapport, accountability issues should be handled through the chain-of-command, with investigations' supervisors being required to do follow-up work for the program.
- o Program recordkeeping practices generally leave much room for improvement. Key variables related to program operations and effectiveness are often unreliably measured or sporadically documented. There is a need to develop nationally-accepted standards for measuring performance -- standards that are fair to most programs regardless of the size of the population served or the volume of crime reported to the police. The most popular productivity statistics used today (such as the number of cases solved, the amount of property and narcotics recovered, and the number of convictions), are either unreliable or systematically biased. However, improvement in certain of these measures is possible by using more precise definitions and by correcting for the volume of crime in the community.
- o Police Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, and other members of the administrative upper echelon play a pivotal role in creating an atmosphere of legitimacy for the program. The "true" sentiments of administrators are readily conveyed in lukewarm directives calling for the support of Crime Stoppers. Because it is frequently viewed as

an unproven commodity, department heads must actively campaign to insure the unencumbered development of the program. This support should translate into better and more adequate staffing, written directives, greater cooperation from investigators, greater visibility for the program, and a general atmosphere of acceptance. Thus, it is imperative that in the early stages of implementation, officers are offered incentives for their participation in Crime Stoppers. To further increase acceptance, "success stories" should be regularly publicized, and investigators must be frequently shown that the achievements of the program enhance (rather than deflate) the recognition they receive for their personal investigative efforts.

- o Training civilians to properly screen calls should be a priority. Volunteers who are exposed to courses in investigatory, interrogating, and interviewing techniques would be an extremely valuable asset to Crime Stoppers. This type of supplementary training may be a good avenue for improving the solvability ratings of Crime Stoppers cases, and thereby increasing the willingness of investigators to cooperate with and to utilize the program. In addition, members of the Police Department's communications unit should be trained to accept Crime Stoppers calls after program hours. Critical evening and weekend calls can be "lost" because callers are likely to become discouraged by frequent "no answers" or inappropriate questioning.

#### The Board of Directors

- o Given that a board member's willingness to work hard for the program is one of the best predictors of fundraising success, board's must insure that they have the ability to screen out individuals who do not have the necessary motivation to help the program. Creating by-laws which automatically drop members who miss consecutive meetings has been successful for this purpose. Boards should also consider establishing specific responsibilities for board members. We recognize that some board members are really honorary members and programs will need to develop rules and regulations that take this into account.
- o Boards should attempt to allocate work more evenly among board members. Not only does this seem to result in more effective fundraising, but it should help to alleviate widespread concern about "burnout" among the hardest-working board members.
- o Fund-raising is the most critical function of the board, and it should not be surprising that there is no single fundraising strategy or technique that is

guaranteed to work for all Crime Stoppers programs. Boards should recognize that techniques differ in their cost-effectiveness and may be used to serve different purposes. For example, mail solicitations are much more cost-effective than in-person contacts with business, (due to the low cost of mass mailing and the time consuming nature of in-person contacts), although the latter will raise as much money and may benefit the program in other ways. In addition, fundraising programs must be tailored to the characteristics and needs of the community.

- o Dozens of approaches to fundraising have been tried with varying degrees of success. These experiences should be shared and exchanged by means of statewide, regional, and national associations. Trying new strategies is also a good way to avoid burnout. Boards should consider recruiting local fundraising experts as board members. Fundraising is not just a chance event -- it is a combination of knowledge and effort applied to a specific community.
- o To avoid disagreements, boards should consider developing and applying objective guidelines for making judgments about the size of caller rewards. Some programs, for example, assign points or weights to various dimensions of a particular case (e.g., crime severity, victim impact, amount of property recovered, risks encountered by callers), and combine these scores to yield a total that recommends a specific reward or range of rewards. However, these formulas should be reviewed and perhaps rescaled in light of the findings from the Reward Experiment.

#### The Media

- o Given that the number of media outlets does not predict a program's level of success, it appears that the quality of the relationship between the media and other components of the program is what makes a difference. In fact, overall ratings of media cooperativeness were associated with program productivity. Thus, law enforcement and board members should work on strengthening existing relationships, as well as creating new relationships.
- o In order to minimize problems with the media, their involvement should be sought very early in the program planning process. However, obtaining initial media cooperation can be difficult, especially in larger population centers. Strategies for approaching the media can be learned from cities that have developed strong relationships.

- o Media competition for Crime Stoppers in larger urban areas can create a difficult situation for all parties. Media exclusivity has both advantages and disadvantages for the program. If possible, Crime Stoppers should seek to expand the audience for the benefit of public safety. This has been successfully performed in some cities. However, in some cases, the cost to the program may be too great to break up an exclusive relationship.

#### General Observations

- o The Impact Study in Indianapolis demonstrates that Crime Stoppers can be very effective in stimulating awareness of the program among law enforcement officers, business persons, and city residents. However, it is important not to expect too much in the way of changes in attitudes and behavior over a relatively short period of time.
- o When planning training seminars for Crime Stoppers programs, the state, regional, and national organizers should keep in mind that most programs are relatively small, serving populations under 100,000. The relationships, needs, resources, etc. are quite different than would be found in larger urban areas.
- o To avoid the problems and issues that often arise between different components of the program, (e.g. meeting deadlines, disclosing case information, sharing responsibilities), every effort should be made to maintain open channels of communication between the media, law enforcement, and the board. This includes an open discussion of mutual expectations, policies, and problems.
- o The Reward Experiment in Lake County suggests that reward size may not be as important to most callers as many people believe. The findings suggest that the usual advice of "when in doubt, pay more" may not be appropriate. Even 100 dollars appears sufficient to keep most callers satisfied, regardless of the circumstances of the case.
- o Since Crime Stoppers inception, a number of legal questions and debates have arisen with regard to its organization, operations, and staff. Some of the major concerns in this domain include: (a) protecting Crime Stoppers' personnel from criminal and civil liability with regard to such claims as false arrest and imprisonment, defamation of character, invasion of privacy, violations of civil rights, breach of contract, illegal fundraising activities, and the misappropriation and unauthorized use of protected

properties; (b) establishing the credibility of paid callers as witnesses and as a supportable source of probable cause for arrests, searches and seizures; and (c) upholding the privilege of maintaining the anonymity of callers.

It is essential that Crime Stoppers staff at all levels stay abreast of these legal issues, and are adequately equipped to make effective responses to potential challenges and law suits. The best preparation is via formalized training and education. Also, staff should be encouraged to become conversant with precedential cases, and to attend seminars and conferences which focus on the legalistic aspects of program functioning. Other hedges against harmful litigation involve the incorporation of programs, the invocation of government immunity, the purchasing of insurance, the utilization of waivers, releases, and other legal instruments, the solicitation of legal counsel, and the conscientious documentation of decisions and correspondence which may contain legalistic implications and consequences.

- o In most programs, the occurrence of calls reaches a peak in the hours and days immediately succeeding the broadcast of the "Crime of the Week." Hence, it is advisable that phone coverage during these times be expanded. For example, it might be useful to assign personnel to answer telephones beyond regular program hours on both the evening of and following the airing of "Crime of the Week."
- o Creating state-wide programs through legislation has the advantage of assuring that the program will have sufficient staffing and finances to provide support, training, and technical assistance. However, instituting a state-wide program in this manner increases the likelihood that such efforts will become politicized. States considering the formation of a state-wide program will have to weigh the costs and benefits of alternative program structures.

#### Future Research

A few knowledge gaps deserve mention. Future studies should seek to produce better estimates of how often cases are solved through Crime Stoppers that would not be solved (or at least would not be solved as quickly) through the traditional criminal investigation process. There is also a need for additional impact data to determine the nature and extent of media effects on the general public -- how

does the "Crime of the Week" and other media coverage influence people's perceptions of crime, attitudes about citizen participation, and participatory behaviors over an extended period of time? Finally, future research should determine more precisely who uses the anonymous tip lines and for what reasons. The importance of anonymity and reward size in the eyes of different callers should be examined in greater detail. Continued research in these topic areas should advance our knowledge of Crime Stoppers' efficiency as a law enforcement technique, its impact on the general public, and the circumstances under which citizens decide to utilize the program.

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