



MINNEAPOLIS POLICE DEPARTMENT

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

**Update to PSRS Committee
December 17, 2008**

**Presented by Inspector Robert Skomra
For Chief Timothy Dolan**

**MPD Information Resource:
ISAC (Intelligence Sharing Analysis Center) Unit**

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT – 2008

Presented to PSRS – December 17, 2008

Minneapolis Police Department – Inspector Robert Skomra

2008 Minneapolis Facts:

Summary

NNO is a 25-year, widely supported, very popular institution in Minneapolis. It has proven to be an excellent time to bring block clubs and neighbors together and to get new groups involved. Participants describe a number of long-range impacts including building community, reducing crime and improving the quality of life. NNO helps groups achieve priorities that are important to them. No single-day event involves more Minneapolitans and none has greater long-term impact.

- **1111 events** confirmed; organizers estimated attendance of 62,729.
- **NNO events continue to grow --**

2001: 813	2002: 872	2003: 863	2004: 813
2005: 845	2006: 969(rain)	2007: 1,122	2008: 1,111
- **NNO events took place in 82 residential neighborhoods** (out of 83).
 - 967 blocks held meetings before NNO to plan their celebrations.
 - More than 87% of all NNO events had attendance of less than 75 people. (Most events are small by design so neighbors get to know each other better.)
- **Sponsors** included Minnesota Twins, Nickelodeon Universe, Target, AAA, Qwest, Litin.
- 55 different **businesses** (other than sponsors) donated gift cards or merchandise.
- Many **City departments** and units helped with different aspects of NNO. City contributors included City Council, Mayor, 311, Public Works, BIS, Fire, Communications, Print Shop.
- 288 **food drives** took place at NNO events, thanks to **United Way promotion**.
- **Materials available to NNO organizers** included:
 - Vouchers for 20 low-cost Twins tickets (donated)
 - Up to 25 Mystery Park passes to Nickelodeon Universe (each worth a single ride, a day of rides or a year of rides-donated)
 - Up to 15 child safety information cards (donated)
 - A gift card to use as a door prize (for registrations by July 22 deadline) (donated)
 - Name tags (provided by MPD)
 - Reminder door hangers (provided by MPD)
 - Coloring sheets (provided by MPD)
- National Association of Town Watch named Minneapolis **first in the nation** for the quality of our NNO campaign, beating San Antonio, Houston, Los Angeles County, many others
- 2008 was the sixth time in eight years that **Minneapolis was ranked first**.

Recent Enhancements to NNO Campaign

- New City ordinance made street closure on NNO free (2006).
- 311 began handling basic NNO questions and taking phone registrations (2006).
- All NNO street closure materials mailed to registrants (2006). Previously, street closure tape and signs had to be picked up at police precincts or fire stations.
- Online “one stop” process to register for NNO and apply to close street (2007).
- Online NNO follow-up report/survey (2007).
- Increase in business support due to intensive phone outreach campaign (2008).

The 2008 Minneapolis NNO summary on line at: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/nno.



Building Community for 25 Years – Join the Celebration

We all know each other. [NNO] has been instrumental in increasing safety, creating friendships and improving quality of life. Patricia, Audubon Park

2008 Minneapolis National Night Out

1,110 confirmed events*
62,698 NNO participants**
16.4% of the City's population involved in NNO**
98.7% of residential neighborhoods participated (82 of 83)
2,382 blocks involved in NNO**

Pre-National Night Out

936 local planning meetings
1,137 events registered

* This figure combines people who completed the online NNO survey and those we reached by phone. It is **not** an estimate. The actual number of NNO events could be higher; we could not reach some people who registered. Also, some groups may have held events without registering.

** Each NNO organizer estimated the attendance and blocks involved at their own NNO event.

Introduction

Involved residents, advanced planning, energized businesses, supportive local government, a helpful non-profit agency, generous volunteer groups, coordinated publicity and convenient registration made the 25th Annual National Night Out in Minneapolis an incredible success. More accurately, NNO was more than 1,100 simultaneous successes spread throughout every corner of the City of Lakes.

Minneapolis' 2008 NNO Campaign

Involved residents

The Police Department continued its long-time practice of encouraging grassroots leaders to organize block parties on NNO. Many heeded the call; volunteers held more than 1,100 separate NNO events which involved more than 62,000 residents. NNO celebrations were held in 82 separate residential neighborhoods. Most were small, involving 1-3 blocks, which gave neighbors a chance to get to know each other better, compare notes, and talk about the future in a relaxed, friendly environment.

Advanced planning

While National Night Out has become a tradition in Minneapolis, we update our efforts each year. Our local staff/citizen committee first gathered in November, 2007 and held five meetings to provide direction to the campaign. The group chose “Building Community for 25 Years – Join the Celebration” as the local theme and focused on major components such as fundraising and materials. Committee members continued to provide valuable input throughout the year.

Energized businesses

The local business community helped the 2008 NNO to thrive. We were grateful that returning sponsors—the Minnesota Twins, Nickelodeon Universe and Target—all increased their support. Qwest provided many kinds of assistance, including bags and funds for start-up kits, printed materials and volunteers. AAA and the Minnesota Crime Prevention Association became first-time sponsors by donating child safety cards. Litin Everything Party-n-Paper offered a discount on party supplies to all NNO organizers for the first time in many years.

We greatly increased our efforts to obtain items that NNO organizers could use as door prizes. Early in the year we partnered with the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce, which promoted NNO to its members in a variety of ways. Through the spring and early summer we contacted numerous local businesses and Minneapolis branches of larger companies. Many such as Holiday Stationstores, M & I Bank, the Minnesota Lynx, Castle Building & Remodeling, McDonald’s, Noodles & Company, Great Clips and Pizza Hut contributed to the campaign for the first time. Others such as Roundy’s/Rainbow Foods and the Shout House made significantly larger donations.

Thanks to funding from Qwest, Rainbow Foods and several smaller local businesses, we were able to offer start-up kits to 26 first-time NNO organizers. Each kit consisted of two Qwest tote bags filled with plates, cups, plastic utensils, a tablecloth, garbage bags, ice breaker games, a deck of cards, a bottle of bubbles, sidewalk chalk, Qwest coloring sheets, a \$20 Rainbow Foods gift certificate, recycling information and a list of start-up kit sponsors.

Supportive local government

Though coordinated by the police department, NNO has become a citywide endeavor in Minneapolis. Street closure is free on NNO by city ordinance; there is a charge every other day of the year. Mayor R.T. Rybak is a long-time proponent of NNO. He and his staff promoted involvement and attended events. City Council members also were instrumental in spreading the word and visiting events. The 311 Center answered questions and assisted people with registration, street closure and the follow-up survey. The Business and Information Services Department updated the online registration process and e-mailed the follow-up survey to participants. The Communications Department created television PSAs, wrote and posted items on the city’s web page and helped coordinate Target’s and Fox Sports North’s involvement in a large event downtown. Public Works assisted with street closure issues. Firefighters attended many events. Elections and Voter Registration provided materials.

Helpful non-profit partner

United Way Twin Cities became a major NNO partner in 2008. Their Caring Connection Project Manager was very active in helping plan our NNO campaign and provided materials on conducting food drives during NNO. She also made a number of radio appearances to support NNO. Some 288 blocks collected food on NNO in 2008; with UWTC's help, food drives are becoming a significant focus of Minneapolis NNO, adding even more community impact to the evening.

Generous volunteer groups

A wide variety of groups including the MPD's Community Service Officers, volunteers from Qwest, YouthCARE Minnesota's Community Service Stars and Single Volunteers Twin Cities helped prepare and assemble packets of NNO materials. The Community Service Stars also distributed NNO promotional flyers in several neighborhoods.

Coordinated publicity

We publicized the 25th Annual NNO in many ways. Our web site (www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/nno) was well-stocked with helpful NNO-related information. Major NNO deadlines were also publicized on the main city web page. NNO materials were available in Spanish and Somali. The city's Cable and Video Services unit created television PSAs. Bob Milner distributed a variety of press releases to the media and set up a number of radio and TV appearances. (In the most significant TV exposure, Minneapolis NNO was featured on a very popular community affairs show which was broadcast several times by the local PBS outlet and posted on the station's website.) We e-mailed neighborhood organizations the latest updates and sent the precincts' crime prevention e-mail lists a series of NNO-related tips over a 10-week period before NNO. Media sponsors KFAI Radio and Minneapolis Telecommunications Network (MTN) featured numerous NNO interviews and stories.

Convenient registration

It was easier than ever to get involved in Minneapolis NNO. We mailed an information packet to new crime prevention block leaders, current McGruff House volunteers and everyone who had organized an NNO event in 2006 or 2007. This information was also posted on our website. People could register for NNO and apply to close their streets in one simple online process. People without Internet access were assisted by phone by Minneapolis 311.

The Impact of Minneapolis NNO

NNO has many important effects in Minneapolis. Event organizers report that NNO helps them build community, deter crime, improve the quality of life and accomplish important local priorities.

- ***NNO builds community***

All Minneapolis NNO events are organized by volunteers and most are small, involving 1-3 blocks. NNO is a perfect time for neighbors new and old to get to know each other better, as these comments from event organizers show:

It's been a great way to meet people and to connect. The connections end up growing and strengthening all year, based on the NNO. Shannon, Field

It has helped folks on our block get to know each other better & helps us to feel as if we are a community - not just individuals living on the same block. Christy, Keewaydin

It brought a sense of community and camaraderie in meeting the people who live with you and seeing they aren't much different than the rest of us. Jennifer, Cleveland

It's the glue that binds our block together! It builds community, trust, goodwill, friendship. Kate, Kingfield

- **NNO deters crime**

When neighbors know each other, they feel more empowered to watch out for each other and report crime and suspicious behavior throughout the year. This is very important in stopping crime.

It helps us watch out for others all year. Ginger, Audubon Park

The more we get to know each other, the better we can watch out for one another. Celia, Northrop

It has made us more vigilant/informed about crime in our neighborhood. We shared what we have seen/heard, what we are doing about it, what's happened at community meetings, etc. Jeanne, Page

We have had some little theft crimes and it just made sure we are all watching out for one another. Cindy, Linden Hills

We are definitely closer and I think look out for each other more than pre-NNO. Christine, Kenny

We know each other better and take an interest in each other. This includes watching our houses for unusual activity or if someone is out of town. Brad, Linden Hills

- **NNO improves the quality of life**

When people know their neighbors and everyone is watching out for each other, they are less afraid of crime and feel better about where they live.

I feel our neighborhood is safer, kinder, and more of a community. Anne, Audubon Park

It's made me feel like the neighborhood is a more welcoming, safe place. Kara, Waite Park

We all had a great time, and reflected on what fabulous neighbors we have! We feel lucky to be a part of such a great neighborhood. Janet, Waite Park

We know each other better, and feel comfortable asking for help for anything we might need. It makes us feel like a community. Geri, Bancroft

Everyone has gotten to know one another which makes for a friendlier and safer environment for all. Julie, Bryant

I think it helped several of our newer neighbors (including us) feel more secure and less alone on our block. Connie, Central

We are getting to know each other better - this makes it safer, more fun and more supportive to live here! Melissa, Standish

People really feel comfortable with one another when they have a chance to meet face to

face and get to know each other a little more...It is just a great feeling of community and friendliness, and NNO is a big part of getting that going. Justin, Diamond Lake

People acknowledge feeling safer knowing neighbors are looking out for them. Kristin, Armatage

We are a close neighborhood and the NNO helps keep it that way. Jill, Windom

- ***NNO helps neighbors get important things done***

In Minneapolis, NNO is much more than a night of parties. Neighbors use the connections they make at NNO (and often, part of their NNO time together) to work on important local priorities. Examples in 2008 included:

- Exchanging info about jobs, local businesses and services
- Creating contact lists
- Encouraging people to landscape boulevards
- Helping neighbors to take ownership of a new garden/park
- Offering knowledge about and assistance with repairs
- Developing connections that can be used to address problems
- Creating an e-mail log of local crime
- Conducting a food drive
- Learning about a reconstruction project
- Forming a block club
- Sharing information on Internet safety
- Discussing problem properties

Summary

NNO is a 25-year, widely supported, very popular institution in Minneapolis. It has proven to be an excellent time to bring block clubs together and to get new groups involved. Participants describe a number of longer-range impacts including building community, reducing crime and improving the quality of life. NNO also helps groups achieve priorities that are important to them. No single-day event involves more Minneapolitans and none has greater long-term impact.

The 2008 Minneapolis National Night Out was sponsored in part by the Minnesota Twins; Nickelodeon Universe MOA; Target; Qwest; AAA; Minnesota Crime Prevention Association (MCPA); Litin Everything Party-n-Paper; KFAI Radio and Minneapolis Television Network (MTN).

Major contributors included General Mills Foundation; Holiday Stationstores, Inc.; Roundy's; The Shout! House and Castle Building & Remodeling.

To learn more about Minneapolis National Night Out, www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/nno

