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It's a chance to 'stand up against crime'

By Megan Sprague

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And Mooresville Police Capt. Phil Blocker said his department is looking forward to the National Night Out event, planned for Aug. 3 from 5-9 p.m. along Main Street in front of the Charles Mack Citizen Center.

"This is our second year of co-sponsoring (National Night Out)," Blocker said. "We've always attended the one in Statesville, but we felt it was time for our own and last year there was a great turnout."

According to the official National Night Out Web site, last year's NNO campaign involved citizens, law enforcement agencies, civic groups, businesses, neighborhood organizations and local officials from more than 15,000 communities in all 50 states, U.S. territories, Canadian cities and military bases worldwide.

In all, over 36 million people participated in National Night Out in 2009. In short, National Night Out is a way for the town to "stand up against crime," said Blocker.

"I know our community is tired of the nonsense," he said. "I've been in law enforcement over 25 years and we're at the stage where everyone, black, white or whatever, is tired of the crime."

"There is no blaming or profiling, which I am very happy to see. It's just a community who is sick of what's been going on and that's a breath of fresh air."

He added he believes it's good for police to communicate with the public.

"We want the people of our town to know we're there to extend a hand when they need it and that we're just the same as they are, except our job is to protect them, and that's the best job in the world," Blocker said.

The NNO Web site stated the event is designed to "heighten crime and drug prevention awareness, generate support for, and participation in, local anticrime programs, strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships as well as send a message to criminals letting them know that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back."

Somewhere between two to three hundred people came to last year's event, and Blocker was pleased, especially since there was such short notice.

"It was great, and I expect it to be just as much fun this year," he said. "Target is our main sponsor and they'll be giving away a bike for a boy and a girl, as well as gift cards. There will also be free food, a great DJ with dancing, the Fire Department smoke house and **Lake Norman Tae Kwon Do** will be demonstrating moves."

The kids can also participate in a moonwalk, face painting and Target will be providing a kid's ID kit for safety. "The safety kits are very important to prepare a parent, if, God forbid, something happens," Blocker said. "It's a tool you hope you never need, but a good one."

He hopes that the event will bring "unity" and show that citizens will not tolerate crime in their area. "It's a commitment from all of us that we want to combat crime," he said. "At the end of the night, we'll be passing out glow sticks to symbolize standing together."