

**FREEHOLD** - Law enforcement officers in Monmouth County have made four arrests as a result of tips called into Crime Stoppers since its inception one year ago, authorities said.

The arrests included a commercial burglary, the discharge of a firearm, a fugitive warrant and drug distribution – and \$1,275 was issued to the anonymous tipsters, authorities said. Out of the 129 tips called into the Crime Stoppers program, 45 were narcotics-related crimes.



Monmouth County Crime Stoppers offers money in exchange for anonymous tips about crimes.

*Ashley Peskoe/NJ.com*

“I’m very happy with the amount of people who have provided information,” Monmouth County First Assistant Prosecutor Marc LeMieux said.

Monmouth County Crime Stoppers Chairman Kevin Burke said he does not know how Monmouth County stacks up against other places that have the Crime Stoppers program, but is still pleased by the response in the county’s first year.

He said it’s hard to compare Monmouth County’s response in its first year to other places because of the different tools available to push the message out to various communities.

“We’re very enthused by the response that we’re seeing from the community,” Burke said. “People want to get involved and they certainly are by picking up the phone and calling the Crime Stoppers hotline.”

The program is a registered non-profit organization and is paid for through donations and fundraising, Burke said.

Burke also reminded the public that Crime Stoppers gives complete anonymity to tipsters and there is no caller ID. Callers are given a unique PIN number to pick up the payout if the tip leads to an arrest, he said.

Burke said the type of case determines how much the tips pay out based on severity of the crimes, with homicides at the top of the scale. He also noted that nationally, many people don’t end up collecting the reward money despite being eligible for it.

“They [tipsters] just call in because they want to be part of that community, they feel compelled to say something because it doesn’t sit with them,” Burke said.

Law enforcement has said the “no snitching” mentality has made solving some violent crimes difficult. As of November 2013, **there were 91 non-fatal shootings** in Asbury Park over a six-year period, and more than 85 percent of them remained unsolved.

LeMieux spoke at several National Night Out locations last week including Long Branch and Asbury Park, again urging the community to come forward with information they may have about any crimes.

“We’re not unhappy with what we have,” said LeMieux, referring to the number of tips the organization has received. “The reality is ... we’re just hoping for more.”

The Crime Stoppers program **was launched in August 2013** in Asbury Park during the National Night Out festivities.

Both LeMieux and Asbury Park Deputy Chief Anthony Salerno said even small tips can be helpful to investigators - by either corroborating information authorities already have or providing them with an additional piece of the puzzle.

“Sometimes just the leads that we get from anonymous tips put us in the right direction and set us on the right course and help us solve major crimes,” Salerno said. “When that

happens, we're able to take violent criminals off the street that we would not otherwise be able to prosecute and convict."

Anonymous tipsters who provide information that leads to the arrest of a criminal can be paid up to \$5,000 for the information and they will be assigned a unique confidential code number to pick up the money from a Crime Stoppers designated bank.

"Every tip is taken serious, and every tip is investigated. The people in communities throughout Monmouth County are the eyes and ears of their respective neighborhoods. They see and hear things related to crimes and we want them to be our partners in keeping our county safe," LeMieux said in a release. "We welcome any bit of information."

Tips can be called into Crime Stoppers at 1-800-671-4400, by texting "MONMOUTH" and the tip to 274637 or online at [www.monmouthcountycrimestoppers.com](http://www.monmouthcountycrimestoppers.com).