



Crime (tips) can pay in Monmouth County

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ASBURY PARK – Crime Stoppers is giving the public a new way to call in tips to help solve Monmouth County crimes – an option that could pay off, literally.

Tipsters will be paid up to \$5,000 if their tip leads to an arrest, and the amount will depend on factors including the information given and seriousness of the crime, Monmouth County Acting Prosecutor Christopher Gramiccioni said Tuesday at a press conference.

The newly established partnership between Crime Stoppers and the prosecutor's office, the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office and the Board of Chosen Freeholders is aimed at providing another anonymous way for people to call in tips, while giving them a cash incentive.

"It's a charity that exists for the sole purpose of helping law enforcement crack open cases," said Gramiccioni, stressing that all tips are anonymous. "I'd rather take the intelligence and information rather than have nothing at all."

Gramiccioni gave an example of one crime, from September 2009, that they are asking the public's help in solving. He said 33-year-old Jonelle Melton who was a teacher at Red Bank Elementary School was "viciously murdered" in her apartment.

"Our investigation leads us to believe that it was a case of mistaken identity. They had the wrong place. This poor lady who had her whole life ahead of her, laying in a pool of her own blood, brutally murdered and beaten," Gramiccioni said. "That case is still open, we continue to investigate it, but we need tips."

Crime Stoppers will assign a confidential code number to anyone who gives a tip, which will become the only identity of the person kept in the system. If an arrest is made, the Board of Directors, who is not affiliated with law enforcement, will determine the reward amount and the tipster can pick up the cash at a Crime Stopper's bank in Freehold using their confidential number.

Freeholder Deputy Director Serena DiMaso said at the press conference that every 34 minutes a crime is committed in Monmouth County, and every 18 minutes someone is arrested for committing a crime in the county.

"We need your help to get those numbers down," DiMaso said.

Congressman Frank Pallone also said more needs to be done at the federal level to help with crime prevention.

"We need to be sending money back to cities like Asbury Park so they can hire more police but we also need to have some gun safety legislation passed," Pallone said.

Gramiccioni also said there are 12 unsolved homicides in the county.

To help get the word out about Crime Stoppers, representatives were at National Night Out on Tuesday night in Asbury Park, Long Branch, Neptune City, Neptune Township, Red Bank, Sea Girt and Union Beach.

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.

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