



## **BURLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT**

1 North Avenue  
Burlington, Vermont 05401

Michael E. Schirling  
Chief of Police

Phone (802) 658-2704  
Fax (802) 865-7579

### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### **Graffiti Vandalism – Update/Progress**

OIC APPROVAL: Lt. J. Morrison #109

This release is intended to provide the community with updated information regarding ongoing efforts to remediate graffiti vandalism in the City of Burlington. The Department is pleased to announce that tremendous progress has been made on this issue.

The Burlington Police Department has worked in conjunction with the following groups in addressing graffiti vandalism:

- the Office of the Chittenden County State's Attorney
- various City Departments
- multiple volunteer organizations
- the Queen City Police Foundation
- the Burlington Business Association
- the City Graffiti Removal Coordinator/Team
- community members

In March of 2009, Chief Schirling, working with the State's Attorney, drafted a standing request for pretrial conditions and sentencing considerations for cases of graffiti vandalism. This memorandum, which is attached for reference, outlines the Department's position on this issue, and requested stringent and substantial conditions and sentencing for persons in these cases. The Judiciary in Chittenden District Court played a crucial role in ensuring that the message about the community-wide impact of graffiti vandalism was sent clearly to a variety of defendants who faced charges.

Simultaneously, the Department increased the number of officers, including Detectives and uniformed staff, assigned to these investigations. BPD created a graffiti reporting line and e-mail address. Additionally, our newly created Street Crimes Unit was deployed and provided a variety of high visibility functions across the city, including graffiti detection and prevention operations.

Utilizing Justice Assistance Grant funding through the U.S. Department of Justice the City has hired a full-time graffiti remediation and removal coordinator working out of the Center for Community and Neighborhoods at CEDO. Coupled with the graffiti removal supplies funded by the Queen City Police Foundation and the Burlington Business Association, this coordination and quick removal has been crucial in combating graffiti blight.

Thanks to these efforts, there were a series of arrests made, and individuals charged. Some cases have already been adjudicated, and some cases remain in the pretrial phases. Over the course of the last six months, there has been a notable decrease in the number of reported cases of graffiti. Community volunteers and work groups have removed much of the existing graffiti, and awareness and prevention measures have begun to have an impact on the recurring problem.

Since June 2009, the following efforts have been undertaken to clean up reported graffiti vandalism in the City:

- over 820 sites have been cleaned
- 12 new Adopt-A-Block members have been added
- 8 Service groups have worked with the Graffiti Removal Team totaling 81 volunteers who donated 198.5 hours of community service
- 10 Youths and Adults have been referred to the program through Restorative Justice/State's Attorney. These individuals have completed more than 100 hours of clean up.

The Department would like to take this opportunity to thank the Community, the State's Attorney and all the partners mentioned here, as well as volunteers and organizations that have supported this effort. Without community support, such an effort would not have been so successful. The Department continues to take this type of criminal activity seriously, and will continue to investigate it as such. Our coordinated graffiti remediation efforts will continue as long as they are needed.

The department has prepared a power point presentation that highlights the graffiti remediation efforts described in this memo. **Please visit our website at [www.bpdvt.org](http://www.bpdvt.org) to see statistics, offender photos and sentences, and more.**