

# **A HISTORY OF THE ILLINOIS STATE CRIME STOPPERS ASSOCIATION**

## **THE FORMATION**

In the spring of 1983, principal members of the Greater Peoria Area Crime Stoppers (Eugene Holmes, Ken Camp, and Joe Pasquesi) met at the Illinois Central College to discuss the potential for a state Crime Stoppers organization.

In the fall of 1983, 40 individuals from Crime Stoppers programs throughout the state gathered at the Pere Marquette Hotel in Peoria. This group, consisting of both civilian and law enforcement Crime Stoppers members, voted unanimously to establish an Illinois State Crime Stoppers Association with the purpose of developing new Crime Stoppers programs and facilitating existing programs in Illinois. They promptly elected a 10-person planning committee with Officer Roger Sether, Coordinator of the Crystal Lake Crime Stoppers, as committee chair.

The planning committee set to the task of creating bylaws for the new organization, and electing state board members to include an equal number of civilian and law enforcement representatives on the board. The committee successfully prepared and submitted materials for the Incorporation Status and 501-C-3 non profit on State and Federal levels. In accordance with the bylaws, the board met every two months to ensure the success of the Illinois State Crime Stoppers Association (ISCSA).

## **MISSION AND GOALS ESTABLISHED**

### **OUR MISSION**

The Illinois State Crime Stoppers Association is a broad-based crime fighting program whose mission is to develop and facilitate Crime Stoppers programs throughout the State of Illinois.

### **OUR GOALS**

In order to accomplish this MISSION, we have established Organizational Goals, which require the Illinois State Crime Stoppers Association to:

1. Promote, through marketing and awareness, the concepts of Crime Stoppers by facilitating the partnership between the community, media, and law enforcement for the purpose of crime fighting and crime prevention.
2. Promote the creation of local and scholastic Crime Stoppers programs throughout the State.

3. Provide leadership through the use of an Annual State Conference, continuing education, resources, statistics, and mentoring, as well as maintaining, improving, and expanding training programs.
4. Maintain a high level of program standards through a system of certification.
5. Communicate through networking and publications and to provide representation at the local, state, national and international levels.
6. Secure and provide funding to meet Association goals.

### **ANNUAL MEETING & TRAINING CONFERENCE**

In May of 1988, the Greater Peoria Area Crime Stoppers welcomed programs from throughout the state to Peoria for the Illinois State Crime Stoppers first annual meeting and conference. Since that historical day, the May annual meetings and State Conferences have been hosted in various areas by programs all over the state.

### **PROGRAM CERTIFICATION**

To insure the integrity of the Crime Stoppers concept, the Board of Directors approved a plan to implement a process of certification for which the local programs could apply. In 1999 a process was adopted. By meeting a series of criteria as set forth in the state bylaws consistent with national standards, local programs could apply for a five year certification from the State Association. Review and renewal occurs every five years. By meeting these standards, they are to be congratulated for their dedication to excellence.

### **SHOLASTIC CRIME STOPPERS**

In February 2000 after two years of planning, Crime Stoppers of the Quad Cities and their Scholastic Crime Stoppers club at Moline High School hosted the very first statewide High School Crime Stoppers Conference in Moline, Illinois. Over 150 teenagers from Illinois and Iowa High Schools attended the two day Conference which provided teens with information on how to start a High School Crime Stoppers program in their school and how the students themselves can help keep their school safe.

In February 2001 Crime Stoppers of the Quad Cities and the Moline High School Scholastic Crime Stoppers hosted a second Illinois Student Crime Stoppers Conference. Over 200 students, teachers, administrators, counselors, and Crime Stoppers Board members, joined law enforcement officers from throughout Illinois and Iowa at the Mark of the Quad Cities. This day and a half conference featured two students from Columbine High School, Littleton Colorado, as keynote speakers. Their personal accounts of the tragic shooting and the events that led up to it helped the students see the need for Crime Stoppers in their school. Founder and past

president of Crime Stoppers International, Larry Wieda of Boulder, Colorado also spoke to the conference attendees.

## **WEB SITE DEVELOPEMENT**

Since its creation in December 2001, the Illinois Crime Stoppers web site has seen a lot of changes in appearance and functionality.

Today, [www.illinoiscrimestoppers.org](http://www.illinoiscrimestoppers.org) serves not only the Illinois Crime Stoppers internal organization, but also the general public.

In addition to the most valuable link, which enables visitors to offer anonymous crime tips, the site educates the public on our organization's mission, history, bylaws, local programs, and program statistics.

A second area of the web site, accessible only by password, is maintained for members of local programs. Here local programs can report statistics, maintain a board member roster, archive board minutes and other documents, manage program information, and email their board members collectively.

A third area, accessible only by password, offers state board members many of the same features provided to the local programs. In addition, committee assignment, mass e-mail capabilities, and website maintenance are available.

## **PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD**

In October 2002, the Illinois State Crime Stoppers Association was awarded a United States Department of Justice grant to publicize an anti-crime initiative called Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). Aimed at identifying, arresting, and prosecuting felons in possession of firearms in the Federal Court, Crime Stoppers of the Champaign, Moline, Peoria, and Springfield shared \$170,000 over a two-year period as the Community Outreach and Media partner for Project Safe Neighborhoods. These cities in the Central District of Illinois were selected based on statistics showing the highest rates of violent crime per capita.

Each program was tasked with advertising Project Safe Neighborhoods through local media outlets, neighborhoods, and faith-based associations, with the goal of having citizens call Crime Stoppers with information about gun violence in their communities. If a tip led to the arrest and indictment of a felon in possession of a firearm, the local board could increase their usual reward with PSN grant money. The Illinois State Crime Stoppers Association was proud to assist these local programs in boosting their visibility and effectiveness in our fight against urban violent crime.

## **TIPSTER PROTECTION**

After a tipster was identified in a 2004 Quincy, ILL, murder case, the ISCSA Board of Directors realized greater protection must be provided to tipsters in Illinois. Following 2 years of hard work and determination, state board members successfully achieved passage of legislation that greatly helped protect the identity of tipsters. Legislation (HB 0598) amended the Illinois Code of Civil Procedure to give Crime Stoppers' tipsters greatest anonymity possible. The state board continues to seek legislation that is beneficial to the ISCSA and all programs in Illinois.

In 2011 the Legislative Committee of the state board again successfully lobbied state government to achieve the signing of legislation SB 2293. This legislation created the Illinois State Crime Stoppers Association Fund in the State treasury and amends the Illinois standard tax form to include a check off for voluntary donations to the ISCSA fund. This fund will be used by the ISCSA for the enhancement and development of Crime Stoppers programs in Illinois.

## **ASSOCIATION FUNDING**

Founding members of the Illinois State Crime Stoppers Association desired to be of service to all programs in Illinois and opted not to implement a dues structure. The state association relies on voluntary donations from local programs, businesses, organization, individuals, and fundraising events.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

With the combination of a dedicated Board of Directors, multi-functional web site, and annual training conferences, the Illinois State Crime Stoppers Association remains a viable and growing umbrella organization that allows every Crime Stopper program and member in Illinois to learn, share, and benefit from each other's experience and knowledge.