

BOARD MEMBERS

WHO ARE THE BOARD MEMBERS?

The board is composed of a diverse group of individuals. Since I represents the community its' members should reflect a variety of viewpoints and backgrounds, each one with different segment of the constituency. Members of civic, minority and youth groups should be considered. The board might include a student, retirees, a fundraiser, a minister a member of the military and representatives of local businesses, such as insurance, real estate, restaurants and advertising. This list is endless.

Most programs discourage elected officials and candidates for office from becoming board members. Board decisions should not be political. It is important to keep the legal entity of the board separate from a political entity. Likewise, it is recommended that persons who work for the law enforcement agencies or the media be used in an advisory capacity rather than as voting board members. This may not pose a problem but much can be said for maintaining the "separation of powers" and avoiding what might be or appear to be a conflict of interest.

Board membership is a commitment of far more than time. Members must give unstintingly of their energy, talents and creativity. Board members are not paid. Dedication should motivate individuals to serve, not prestige or money.

There is an important distinction between the board of a Crime Stoppers program and the board of a profit corporation. In the latter, the board establishes policy and determines what action is to be taken and paid employees carry out their directives. In most Crime Stoppers programs, board members make the same kind of decisions but they are the ones who must execute them.

WHAT DOES THE BOARD DO?

The board has a number of responsibilities. It sets policy within the framework of the legal documents that create and control the program. It raises funds to pay recovers administrative costs and acts as the trustee for investments and disbursements of funds. Note that tax money is not sought for these purposes. The board determines the amount and method of reward payments. It has joint responsibility with the media and law enforcement in the selection and publication of the "Crime of the Week". As a practical matter, however, it generally limits itself to policy questions in the selection of the actual crime and in the method of its portrayal.

The board oversees the administrative work of the police coordinator and ensures that the program is accurately portrayed to the public on a continuing basis. Other important tasks include speaking to civic groups, planning for awards to particularly supportive member of the media, law enforcement and other individuals and organizations.

THE POLICE COORDINATOR

There is a fine line separating successful and unsuccessful Crime Stopper programs. Experience has shown the difference is most often in the quality of the person selected as the police coordinator.

The coordinator is responsible for the internal operation of the Crime Stoppers programs and faces a demanding, time-consuming, multi-faceted task. He or she will handle most of the informant calls, screen and disseminate the information received from these calls, follow up on investigations and act as the police department's liaison with the Crime Stoppers Board of Directors. The coordinator is usually the most visible person involved with the program and ordinarily is responsible for most of the publicity generated by Crime Stoppers.

These are the critical functions and great care should be made in the coordinator's selection.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE COORDINATOR?

The police coordinator is the primary liaison agent between the board and the police department and is the board's expert on law enforcement matters. Good rapport with this person is essential. However, interaction between the board and the police should not be limited to contact with coordinator. On occasion, the coordinator might invite the detective who solved a particular case to make a presentation to the board.

The Chief or Sheriff should have a standing invitation to all board functions but specific invitations should also be issued. Periodic reports should be made to the Chief or Sheriff with care being taken not to damage relations with the coordinator. Certainly, the board president and the Chief or Sheriff ought to feel free to communicate with each other at any time.