



## WHAT IS CRIME STOPPERS AND HOW DID IT BEGIN?



Crime Stoppers is a not-for-profit community-based charitable programme involving the cooperative efforts of the community, the media and the police in the fight against crime. Crime Stoppers encourages the public to call with information concerning crimes that have been committed, are being committed or are about to be committed.

Crime Stoppers is based on the simple principle that for every crime committed someone, other than the criminal, has information that might solve it. Crime Stoppers is the brainchild of a Canadian-born Albuquerque New Mexico police detective Greg MacAleese. In 1976, MacAleese was assigned to a robbery-gone awry that resulted in the senseless murder of a young service station attendant. Frustrated by the lack of information that would assist in the investigation, MacAleese fittingly realized that the two prohibitions against the public coming forward in this, or any other criminal investigation, were fear of reprisal and general societal apathy. He reasoned if he were to offer complete anonymity to address

the fear of reprisal and a cash reward to overcome apathy this and other criminal cases might be brought to a successful conclusion.

He approached the local media and re-enacted the crime on local cable television hoping this would prompt members of the public to call in on a special "tips" line with information concerning this crime. It worked as the crime was solved when, as a direct result of the tips MacAleese received, two local men were arrested and charged with the homicide of the young victim. Reasoning that this fledgling crime prevention programme would be more efficient were it to be managed by members of the community, he approached several prominent Albuquerque citizens to serve on the governing board of directors for this initial Crime Stoppers programme.

The concept of the community, working in concert with the media and the police, spread rapidly to a point today where there are an estimated 900 Crime Stoppers programs around the world 107 of which

are operational in Canada and 39 in Ontario. Since their respective inception, beginning in 1984, Ontario Crime Stoppers programmes have been responsible for the arrests of 63,000 persons and the recovery of \$780 million dollars in recovered stolen property and seized illicit narcotics all without a single tipster's identity ever being revealed.

