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Bay Area Council Initiates Campaign against Crime New “Crime Stoppers” Program for Entire Region

Crime Has Escalated to Third Worst Problem Facing the Bay Area

SAN FRANCISCO, February 25, 2008 – Responding to results of its annual poll of 600 Bay Area residents that saw crime suddenly rise to the third worst problem facing the region, today, the Bay Area Council announced that its decision-making Executive Committee has endorsed a new “Crime Stoppers” program for the region and welcomed the support of the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) in launching the effort. San Mateo County Supervisor and ABAG Chair Rose Jacobs Gibson, along with law enforcement personnel from all levels of government joined today to start this major initiative against crime.

Bay Area Crime Stoppers is an anonymous tip-line program – 1-800-222-TIPS for the 415, 510, 925, 650, 408, 707 area codes – that pays rewards up to \$2,000 for information that leads to the arrest and indictment of persons responsible for committing felony crimes. It has enjoyed great success in other U.S. regions, boasting an average conviction rate of 95 percent on cases solved with the help of Crime Stoppers USA tips. Crime Stopper programs worldwide have helped solve more than one million cases and resulted in the recovery of over \$7 billion worth of stolen property and narcotics. The key to success for a Crime Stoppers program is that it must stretch across an entire media market so that TV and radio stations, plus newspapers and the web, can promote the phone number and resolve unsolved crimes.

“Our polling results demanded action and we thank Steve Buster, the President and CEO of the Mechanics Bank, based in Richmond for stepping forward to help champion this on behalf of the Bay Area Council,” said Jim Wunderman, President and CEO of the Bay Area Council. “We also applaud the yeoman efforts of Anthony Fasanella from Bay Area Crime Stoppers to date in bringing this outstanding program to the attention of numerous elected officials, law enforcement agencies and the Council. If you ask any police department, their biggest challenge in pursuing crime is a lack of information. Informants for felony crimes do not come forward either fearing retribution or due to apathy. This program, through anonymity and financial rewards, has a track record of effectively solving the information problem.”

The Bay Area Crime Stoppers program is expected to cost as much as \$700,000 per year. The Bay Area Council and the business community it represents have pledged to work with the mayors of the Bay Area biggest cities to raise the money required. More than 30 law enforcement agencies and departments have pledged support, and ABAG will coordinate further outreach to all nine counties and 101 cities of the region to ensure the maximum benefits are achieved.

Some of the attributes of Bay Area Crime Stoppers include:

- Police-trained operators (30-hours minimum) at the Toronto call center, who speak dozens of languages, answer the tips line in-person 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

- Callers are never asked to identify themselves and, with no recording equipment or phone tracing, anonymity is guaranteed.
- Large-scale media campaigns covering the crime of the week or month and constantly remind and direct the audience to the 1-800-222-TIPS line.
- Bay Area Crime Stoppers is a part of Crime Stoppers USA

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Bay Area Council

Founded in 1945, the Bay Area Council (www.bayareacouncil.org) develops and drives regional public policy initiatives and researches critical infrastructure issues. Led by CEOs, the Bay Area Council presents a strong, united voice for hundreds of major employers throughout the Bay Area region whom employ more than 501,000 workers, or one of every six private sector employees in the Bay Area.