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# Residents see early success in crime reduction with pol

By **Chris Green**

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ROCKFORD — Shirley and Roger Roberts were awakened by the sound of gunfire this month and found a front of their Mulberry Street and Day Avenue home.

The fact that the couple say this spring has been “quiet” and relatively crime free speaks volumes about the seeing in their neighborhood.

The Robertses, who are 34-year residents, praised Rockford police officers this week for their visibility and neighborhood.

“You still see the drug deals, but it’s a lot less,” Roger Roberts said of the drug trafficking on his street.

The heightened police presence is part of the Police Department’s Summer Crime Initiative, a summerlong started in March. Lt. Joe Rinaldo said the program was initiated early this year in an attempt to thwart the an

The targeted area is bordered by West State Street on the south, Auburn Street on the north, Johnston Ave east.

The area overlaps the west-side Weed and Seed area, as well as an area targeted by police for its Alternati selected nonviolent drug offenders, mostly drug dealers, a second chance to avoid prosecution, jail and a lik crime.

Early crime data analysis shows police might be on the right track. In April, there were 485 offenses, down fi include the eight “Group A” crimes — homicides, kidnappings, sex offenses, robberies, assaults, motor vehi

Deputy Chief Mike Booker added, “Thirty percent of the March incidents were self-initiated by police, which v

From June 1 to Aug. 31, 2008, there was an 11.44 percent decrease in Group A crimes and a 2.86 percent same time period in 2007.

In addition to just making their presence known, police are conducting unannounced traffic details, probator

## **Many agencies take part**

The crime initiative is being conducted with help from the Illinois State Police, the Illinois Department of Corr

County Probation Department, the Rockford Park District police and the Winnebago County Sheriff's Depart

Also assisting police this year is the Law Enforcement Aviation Coalition and its helicopter, AIR-ONE.

"The helicopter has been a big help to us," Rinaldo said. "When we stop a vehicle, they'll circle and light up 1

While police may have a no-chase policy, the helicopter does not.

"They don't take off running because they can't get away from the helicopter," Rinaldo said.

### **Neighborhood rallies**

Glenn Thronsen, a 52-year North Independence Avenue resident and a member of the Westend Doers Ne when his neighborhood was the pride of Rockford. He said thanks in part to police, city officials and resident

"Since we've had the Weed and Seed, we've seen a lot more police," he said. "They've done a tremendous there still are drug houses here, but they took care of the bulk of them immediately. They talk about the terril any part of Rockford."

Shirley DuBoise, a 12-year North Independence Avenue resident, said she agrees that police are making a reserving judgment on how effective the Summer Crime Initiative has been.

"It's not summertime yet," she said.

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