

Denver PD FBI On Hip-Hop Watch

Written by Robert ID879

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The NBA All-Star Game is Sunday and Denver police and the FBI will be ready.

The two agencies have been meeting with NBA and city officials since last fall to plan security for the weeklong event that is expected to bring an additional 75,000 to 100,000 people into downtown Denver.

"This will generate a larger audience than the Super Bowl, the World Series or the Stanley Cup," said FBI special agent Steve Olson, who heads the bureau's local domestic terrorism program and is overseeing the FBI's involvement in All-Star security. "The FBI's role is largely support. If something were to go wrong at this event that went beyond the Denver Police Department's ability to handle it, we would step in, at the request of the police department, and assume control."

The FBI will have four teams of agents on stand-by throughout the week. The SWAT team, hazardous materials members, bomb technicians and a weapons-of-mass-destruction response team will all be on alert.

Several of the teams will be geared up and waiting at undisclosed locations to respond at a moment's notice, Olson said.

"We will be able to respond in a very short period of time 24/7," he said.

Denver police also will be on a heightened alert.

Virtually every officer in the department will work. About 1,400 officers will work 12-hour shifts, covering the city's hot spots such as LoDo and the convention center.

Police Chief Gerry Whitman also increased the number of hours officers can work off-duty so

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more officers will be able to work as private security at events.

Although police and the FBI are planning for the worst, they don't expect anything besides a bump in misdemeanor crimes and a few traffic snarls.

"We had our agents try to dig up any type of threat against the NBA to prevent anything from happening and to help us build a threat assessment," Olson said. "We looked at potential threats from international terrorism, domestic terrorism, gangs and violent criminals."

As of Monday, he said, "we have no credible, specific threat information targeting the NBA."

That doesn't mean there aren't things that police and FBI are concerned about. The metro-area Safe Streets Task Force and Denver's gang unit have been trying to assess what, if any, threat the city's gangs might present.

"We are not concerned with well-known gangs like the Bloods and the Crips coming into town and causing problems," Olson said.

"What we are more concerned with is some local Blood or Crip trying to impress a fellow gang member.

"We are aware of that potential and are keeping an eye on it."

Olson added that both Death Row Records and Bad Boy Entertainment will be in town for the event but said there have been no specific threats against or by the two.

The two music labels have been at the heart of an East Coast-West Coast rap rivalry that at times has spilled over into violence.

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In 1996, West Coast hip-hop rap icon Tupac Shakur was gunned down as he drove from a Mike Tyson fight in Las Vegas. About six months later famed East Coast rap artist The Notorious B.I.G. was shot and killed after leaving the Soul Train Music Awards in Los Angeles.

"During this entire event there is a major push to stay on top of who is in town," Olson said. "We know who rented what clubs and who's going to be where, when."

Police and the FBI will be in force this week, but they don't want to send the wrong message.

"We welcome everyone to the city," Olson said, "but we are not going to tolerate any criminal activities.

"This is just a deterrent to crime and hopefully it will be perceived as a deterrent and not as being heavy-handed. We want to provide a safe environment for anyone who's coming here."

[Source](#)