

# Crime line celebrates birthday by going national

Primedia's Crime Line - the anti-crime campaign endorsed by the South African Police Service (SAPS) - is to be extended nationally. A massive media partnership, a road show to high schools in Gauteng and an "ambassadors" programme were some of the announcements made at the first anniversary of the initiative in Johannesburg on Thursday afternoon, 12 June 2008.

A celebration took place at The Round House, Constitution Hill in Johannesburg, with the Minister of Safety and Security, Charles Nqakula, as the guest speaker.

## SABC on board

Primedia made several important announcements, including that the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) is coming on board to as a partner of Crime Line.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between Primedia and the SABC, which will see Crime Line being promoted extensively on the public broadcaster's radio and television stations.

"When it comes to issues such as crime, we have to act in the national interest. There is no such thing as opposition when it comes to these issues. We must unite and form partnerships," said Crime Line's head, Yusuf Abramjee, who is also group head of news and talk programming at Primedia Broadcasting.

It was also announced that Algoa FM in Port Elizabeth would be allocating R1 million worth of airtime to promote Crime Line over the next 12 months. Several community radio stations have also come on board.

## Crime Line ambassadors

The official Crime Line ambassadors were unveiled to the media and community. The ambassadors have pledged to help spread the message of Crime Line across the country by telling people about the SMS line and website, and by encouraging the community to join in the fight against crime by using Crime Line's anonymous tip-off platforms.

The first group of ambassadors consists of 40 prominent and influential South Africans. More such ambassadors are expected to join the campaign over the coming months.

The ambassadors include the likes of Leon Schuster, Kurt Darren, Steve Hoffmeyr, Vanessa Carreira, Ali Bacher, Alan Heyl, Baby Jake Matlala, Breyton Paulse, Clive Rice, Danny K, Gayton McKenzie, Imtiaz Patel, John Vlismas, NKD, Mark Fish, Craig Hinds, Florence Masebe and Claire Johnston.

Crime Line also launched its “Crime Is Not Cool” road show - a new initiative sponsored by LG and aimed at educating high school children that ‘crime is not cool’. Crime Line ambassador Alan Heyl will be instrumental in getting the message to the South African youth.

Talk Radio 702 and 94.7 Highveld Stereo will be inviting high schools in Gauteng to participate in the road show campaign. Over a period of four months, Heyl will visit schools, taking the ‘crime is not cool’ message directly to the youth.

## **“Educate our children to say no”**

Gauteng Education MEC Angie Motshekga said she was excited about this programme. “We must educate our children to say no, no, no to crime. We must also urge them to blow the whistle on criminals. This roadshow will assist in spreading the message.”

Abramjee added: “We are grateful to LG for sponsoring this roadshow. We have to spread the message that crime does not pay.”

Twelve awards were made to SAPS members and to the Johannesburg Metro Police Department (JMPD) for outstanding work over the past year. Congratulations went to constable TJ Nale (deceased), inspector WJ Pickard, inspector J Fourie, director Sally de Beer, senior superintendent Attie Lamprecht, inspector Brett Clark, superintendent Jan Dawid Esterhuyse, superintendent Martin Engle, inspector JJ de Jager, reservist Captain JS Mitcheletti and director David Tembe of JMPD. A Certificate of Achievement was also awarded to Gauteng, the province with the most arrests.

In just one year, Crime Line has resulted in almost 500 arrests and the recovery of just over R20 million of stolen property, drugs and counterfeit goods. The campaign has the full support of Nqakula, and it encourages the public to report crimes anonymously if necessary, without fear of victimisation or reprisal.

## **More and more**

With each passing week, more and more members of the public are blowing the whistle on crime by SMSing their crime tip-offs to 32211 (at a cost of R1 each), or logging onto [www.crimeline.co.za](http://www.crimeline.co.za). All information Primedia receives is passed on to the SAPS on a real-time basis. They in turn act on that information immediately, as well as report back regularly on successful arrests.

From time to time, the campaign also zooms in on wanted criminals and focuses on certain priority crimes and cases, depending on where the police's need for information is.

The anti-crime campaign follows on the success of a pilot project run by Talk Radio 702 in 2006, where the station received hundreds of SMSes about drug-dealers and peddlers. Gauteng police commissioner Perumal Naidoo assured Talk Radio 702 and its listeners that his men and women in blue would act on the SMSes and the result was dozens of arrests and the seizure of drugs and illegal arms.

The operation was so successful that the board of Primedia decided to explore other ways of contributing positively to the fight against crime, but on an even larger scale. After months of discussions with the authorities, they came up with a plan of action - a crime campaign based on the Crimestoppers International system.

“Crime Line breaks the barriers by giving people the opportunity to provide information without directly speaking to the police,” said Abramjee.

“The campaign promises no comebacks. We don't want your name or address unless you volunteer to give it to us and there is no need for any statements or court appearances. All we want is information about criminals so that the police can act on it.”

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