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Operation CLEAN helps wipe out drugs in Dallas

Assistant Chief Sam Gonzales of the Dallas (TX) Police Department is one of 20 people nationwide recently hailed by federal drug czar William Bennett for their efforts "on the true front lines" in the War on Drugs. Gonzales, the only law enforcement official on the list, directs Operation CLEAN (Community & Law Enforcement Against Narcotics), an effort to improve the quality of life in target neighborhoods, to help make them more drug-resistant.

Operation CLEAN depends on strong support and participation from the police, city services, and the community. Target areas are selected because they exhibit a high infestation of drugs, as well a high numbers of offenses and calls for service. The comprehensive plan involves bringing the immediate crisis under control, with six weeks of high saturation police patrols. At the same time, the community receives a "facelift," as the police and community work with city services on efforts such as cleaning and repairing streets, removing trash, checking for code violations, boarding up unoccupied buildings, and expediting demolition of unsafe, abandoned structures. To ensure these short-term remedies have the chance to become long-term gains, the department permanently deploys community officers in the target neighborhoods.

NOTE: Assistant Chief Sam Gonzales will be a featured presenter at the workshop session entitled Drug Sales: Providing a Sustained Police Presence at the Community Policing & Drugs conference. For further details, see the article in this issue.