

Summer gang violence kept in check, authorities say

Gangs
No homicides have been reported so far

By JENNIFER SQUIRES
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

COUNTY Four men have been injured in gang-related violence in the last week, but authorities say the street violence is not a significant upswing.

"Summertime always picks up," Sgt. Mario Sulay at the Sheriff's Office said.

The summer of 2006 seemed particularly bloody, with one gang-motivated murder in Santa Cruz and a slew of shootings, stabbings and street fights, many in the densely populated Beach Flats.

While gang violence this summer has spread throughout the county, no one has been killed.

"It really, really, really slowed down," District Attorney Bob Lee said, crediting countywide gang enforcement operations

started last summer. "We've had some stabbings, but we haven't had a homicide."

The most serious gang-related injuries this year came during a May double-shooting on lower Ocean Street in Santa Cruz. Two men, ages 18 and 21, were hit when a man in a green sedan sprayed bullets into their vehicle. No arrests have been made.

"There are peaks and valleys. We had that

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Alleged recent gang violence

■ Tuesday, 2:30 a.m.: A man was stabbed on Sumner Street in Santa Cruz.

■ Tuesday, 1 a.m.: A 24-year-old Watsonville man suffered stab wounds in a fight with three men and a teenage boy on Marchant Street in Watsonville.

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■ Saturday, Aug. 4, 9:30 p.m.: A 20-year-old Santa Cruz man was shot in the foot on Canfield Street in Santa Cruz after he was confronted by gang members.

■ Saturday, Aug. 4, 9 p.m.: A 19-year-old man was slashed in the face in a 17th Avenue parking lot in Live Oak.

SOURCE: County law enforcement.

Violence

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big fight down on San Andreas where four people went to the hospital for stab wounds," Sulay said, talking about men who suffered minor stab wounds during a 40-person free-for-all at a farm labor camp

on July 27.

Even with the slowdown in serious injuries, police say the level of gang crime hasn't fallen across the county. The countywide gang enforcement team contacted 54 suspected gang members and arrested or cited a handful of them during a sweep at the end of July.

"There hasn't been a decrease in gang activity, there's just been a decrease in

high-profile gang violence," Santa Cruz police spokesman Zach Friend said. "We've just been very fortunate that somebody hasn't been killed."

Watsonville police Deputy Chief Kim Austin agreed. Gang crime, she said, "seems like it's probably about the same."

Contact Jennifer Squires at
jsquires@santacruzsentinel.com.