

## Helping Law Enforcement

### What Is Government Saying About Billboards . . .

#### From the FBI to Your Local Chief of Police

By Ken Klein

Across the country, government is using donated billboard space to promote public safety and other community goals. These public-private partnerships are a continuation of the outdoor industry's long dedication to public service. But don't take our word for it. Read what government officials are saying about billboards:

"In a sense, „wanted? posters are part of American history, from the days of Jesse James to the „wanted? pictures I saw at the Post Office growing up in Chisholm, MN. The success story of „wanted? billboards serves to remind us that billboards are a significant medium of communication. We know that billboards promote brands, sell products, and direct motorists to roadway services. But outdoor advertising is also an important forum for non-commercial speech, helping law enforcement and non-profit groups . . ." -- Congressman Jim Oberstar, D-MN, chairman of the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure.

#### Washoe County, NV

"The use of billboards is a growing trend in law enforcement, ranging from the FBI to local sheriffs and chiefs, with impressive results. The postings on the boards contribute to an environment where the criminal feels pressure that they have nowhere to go." – Washoe County Sheriff Michael Haley (Reno)

#### Janesville, WI

"Calls to Crime Stoppers have almost tripled, and a lot of those calls we're getting are just related to people that are on those billboards. Ten out of 12 people (featured on billboards) captured speaks for itself." -- Chad Sullivan, crime prevention officer, Janesville Police Department.

#### Nashville, TN

"Michael Teasley was arrested in the early morning hours of July 9, 2008. When he was taken into custody, he advised the arresting officer that he was tired of running and hiding. He also made the comment, „I am tired of seeing my face on a billboard.?"-- Detective Jeremy Moseley, Metropolitan Nashville Police Department Domestic Violence Division

#### El Paso, TX

"We think these (digital) billboards will be a great asset to any community, certainly in El Paso, by providing our community with information related to crises such as AMBER Alerts or other emergencies that could occur within the city." -- El Paso Chief of Police Richard D. Wiles

## Federal Bureau of Investigation

“Our agents in the field credit the billboards with reminding the public that the FBI remains engaged in violent criminal cases and armed bank robberies. Furthermore, the billboard access strengthens our relationship with local law enforcement by expanding the services that we can make available to them to assist with their own crime fighting needs.” -- FBI spokesperson, Washington, DC.

## US Department of Homeland Security

“Digital billboards have been effective in supplementing existing emergency-information systems and ... have the potential to further improve our ability to inform citizens in times of disaster. I have directed FEMA ... to explore other ways digital billboards might be employed as an effective enhancement to our Nation’s disaster response effort.”– Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff.

Nationally, the outdoor industry donates more than \$400 million a year in space to promote worthy causes, including public safety. For centuries, law enforcement has been fond of posters, as noted above by Congressman Oberstar.

But in many ways, the modern use of billboards to help public safety can be traced to one man in the middle of America. After his daughter was murdered in 2002, Roger Kemp of Leawood, KS, challenged the authorities and the outdoor industry to display “wanted” information on billboards. The outdoor industry has worked to answer Mr. Kemp’s challenge, as evidenced by the articulate testimonials that appear on this page.

*(Ken Klein is OAAA executive vice president, government affairs)*

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