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## **PUBLIC SAFETY FORUM PRESENTED BY SUFFOLK CITY COUNCIL**

SUFFOLK, VA (February 11, 2010) Suffolk City Council presented a Public Safety Forum on Tuesday, February 9, 2010, from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. at the Northern Shores Elementary School cafeteria. The main focus of the evening was to educate citizens about law enforcement challenges and successes, as well as introduce the newly formed N.E.T. (Neighborhood Enforcement Team) serving northern Suffolk. Councilman Leroy Bennett and Councilman Robert Barclay hosted the event and Suffolk City Manager Selena Cuffee-Glenn served as moderator.

More than 100 citizens were in attendance as Police Chief Thomas Bennett and Sergeant James Buie gave presentations on the prevention of gang violence and the formation of community watches. "Don't let the streets raise your kids. Spend time with them," said Sgt. Buie.

Senior Officer Chris Butler presented information on crime prevention and how to start a Neighborhood Watch program, and emphasized the benefit of utilizing social media sites such as Facebook and MySpace to kick-start community activism.

Captain Stephanie Burch gave a presentation on the growth of "sexting" among teens (sending sexually explicit messages and/or photos by electronic methods) and the increasing popularity of alcoholic energy drinks, both of which pose potential problems for not only teens but also parents. In addition, citizens heard from Debbie George,

Director of Media and Community Relations, on how to get involved in Suffolk's nationally ranked "National Night Out" police-community partnership activities taking place this year ([www.suffolk.nno.org](http://www.suffolk.nno.org)). A panel of police officers and city officials took time to answer specific questions from the community on gang prevention, traffic issues and youth-oriented activity formation.

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