



## Questions and Answers

**Q: What is the Eastern Washtenaw Safety Alliance (EWSA)?**

**A:** The EWSA is collaboration between Washtenaw County, the City of Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti Township and Eastern Michigan University, which are combining efforts to enhance the safety and security of the residents of eastern Washtenaw County.

**Q: Why is the alliance being announced at this time? Why haven't you engaged in such collaboration all along?**

**A:** Rep. David Rutledge, D-Superior Township, spearheaded the alliance during the past year. Rutledge, whose district includes nearly all of the Ypsilanti region, called together area police agencies and governmental units and asked for a way to combine resources and strategies to have a greater impact on crime and on reducing fear of crime.

In addition, it has become clear that no one agency working alone can solve its crime and community disorder problems. Criminals have become more mobile, and communication is more sophisticated. The alliance seeks to adapt policing methods to address these new problems and the changing dynamics of our communities. By collaborating, we can all do a better job of protecting our communities.

**Q: Didn't these agencies and governments cooperate before?**

**A:** Yes, there has always been a level of cooperation and mutual respect among area governments and police agencies. But the crucial initiatives associated with the EWSA have come out of a focused commitment of resources, money and time, and are the product of serious discussions over the past year.

**Q: Does the alliance add any more officers on the street?**

**A:** Yes. The Ypsilanti Police Department has added eight new officers since last fall, bringing its overall total to 29. Eastern Michigan is hiring 10 additional police officers this year. Four are already on patrol, with four additional officers to be hired this summer and two more in the fall. The increased staffing will give Eastern 43 fully professional, deputized officers.

**Q: What is another central element of the alliance that the community should understand?**

**A:** The officers from each agency in the alliance now share jurisdictional authority, meaning they all have countywide powers of arrest. The Washtenaw County Sheriff's office now swears in all Ypsilanti police officers, and EMU police officers are sworn in with the city of Ypsilanti and Washtenaw County. This is an important change, because now officers can move freely and without jurisdictional concerns to help respond to quickly changing crime or emergency situations. Cooperation saves time and solves crimes.

**Q: What are the other key features of the alliance?**

**A:** Members of the alliance are contributing to expanded police patrols, installing new streetlights, increased camera surveillance and targeted collaborative policing efforts.

**Q: What is an example of a "targeted collaborative policing effort?"**

**A:** One example is the Ypsilanti Community Action Team, or YCAT. YCAT is a unit of officers employing various tactics to increase safety throughout the city, with an emphasis on off-campus, high-density student housing.

**Q: What is being done in terms of increased lighting?**

**A:** The City of Ypsilanti has contracted to convert all of its streetlights to LED lights, resulting in increased illumination and improving safety conditions for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

The extensive city upgrade includes three city-owned lights at the intersection of Huron River Drive and Leforge Road, and at least seven city-owned lights on Leforge Road.

In addition, EMU is working with DTE Energy in adding new streetlights in the Westview residential area, located off Huron River Drive to the west of campus. The University also plans to add new streetlights on Huron River Drive, adjacent to campus; on Clark Road, east and west of Leforge Road; and on Cornell Street, north of the former Fletcher School building. EMU will also replace several existing lights on Oakwood Street, south of Huron River Drive.

**Q. How much do these new initiatives cost?**

**A:** This year, Eastern Michigan is committing more than \$1.7 million to safety and security upgrades. Those improvements include:

- Funding for the additional police officers.
- New surveillance cameras on campus, to go with the more than 500 cameras already in place.
- Expanding the lighting on the perimeter of campus and in nearby areas.
- The renovation of the Department of Public Safety headquarters to accommodate the new officers joining the force.

**Q: What have organizations in the alliance done to improve safety in off-campus apartments?**

**A:** Eastern Michigan has taken a central role in working with private rental properties in the campus area, pressing for further safety measures in those complexes. So far, the response has been good with a number of complexes. For example, The Red Lion, University Green and Peninsular Place apartments in Ypsilanti have increased their private security patrols, added blue emergency phones and together have installed more than \$300,000 in video surveillance equipment.

In addition EMU has established a website for students considering living off campus. The website includes:

- A safety checklist that renters should ask of landlords.
- Links to EMU public safety resources.
- Online crime mapping links for EMU and the cities of Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor.
- Links to renter's guides and other tenant resources.
- Housing reviews provided by outside organizations.

Also, landlords who want to participate in an annual off-campus housing fair must complete a safety checklist to qualify.

**Q. An area of particular recent concern is the Leforge Road corridor, off Huron River Drive just north of campus. What is being done there?**

**A:** Last October, EMU, the Ypsilanti Police and the Washtenaw County Sheriff began coordinated patrolling in the Leforge Road area north of campus. Expanded patrols now include neighborhoods surrounding campus on its south, east and west borders, where a concentration of EMU students and employees and Ypsilanti residents live. In addition, the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office is conducting neighborhood watch programs in the area, to determine the root causes of crime. Residents there report they have noticed the increased police presence.

**Q: What is being done to enhance security in downtown Ypsilanti?**

**A:** The City and the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority (DDA) are partnering to specifically address any emerging concerns in the downtown district. Along with regular police patrols, a special development authority area police officer, to be appointed later this year and equally funded by the City and DDA, will engage with residents, students, businesses and visitors in enhancing safety initiatives downtown. The officer will at times patrol on foot and by bike in making regular contact with downtown businesses and visitors. The DDA will use this officer as a primary contact person for issues that arise in the downtown district.

**Q: What kind of cooperation existed among area governments and police agencies before this alliance was formed?**

**A:** It's important to remember that while the alliance adds a variety of crucial new efforts to enhance safety and security in the area, area collaboration in fighting crime has existed in many ways. Examples include the Washtenaw Metro SWAT Team, the Washtenaw Metro Hostage Negotiations Team and the K-9 Patrol Unit, which includes Pittsfield Township and a countywide consortium. The agencies also have together developed countywide policies on domestic violence response, active shooter response and mutual aid.

**Q: What is the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority's role in the alliance?**

**A:** The AAATA's active involvement adds a crucial element to fighting crime and reducing fear of crime in the area. The AAATA (The Ride) has numerous routes that extend into Ypsilanti, with further expansion planned for this year under a recently approved millage. Mutual efforts with AAATA will include:

- The AAATA working with its drivers to act as eyes and ears to report suspicious situations.
- The Ride's security firm, DK Security, will participate in the alliance.
- The alliance will develop a communication plan between the three police agencies and The Ride's dispatch center to quickly react and cooperate in solving area crimes.
- Video will be made available whenever necessary from AAATA cameras at the Ypsilanti Transit Center and from the cameras on board of buses. The transit center is located at the corner of Pearl Street and North Adams Street in downtown Ypsilanti, just east of the EMU College of Business.

**Q: What can we do at the neighborhood level to work with the alliance and enhance our safety?**

**A:** The police chiefs emphasize that the alliance includes you and your neighborhood helping yourself and each other in reducing crime and fear of crime. Said simply: If you see something, say something.

Call the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office (734- 971-8400), The Ypsilanti Police Department (734-483-9510) or the EMU Department of Public Safety (734-487-1222) to report any concerns or information.

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