



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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LAKEPORT – Police recently conducted a gang sweep and probation search that began in Lakeport, continued through Kelseyville and ended in Clearlake, resulting in six arrests which ranged from probation and immigration violations to outstanding warrants.

The effort included Lakeport Police Department, Clearlake Police, California Highway Patrol, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Lake County Probation and the Lake County Sheriff's department.

"Our philosophy is to be very proactive in our approach to gang members because there is a presence here," Lakeport Chief of Police Kevin Burke said.

Approximately 13 officers were involved in the sweep, said Burke. Four of the arrests involved individuals who were in the United States illegally who will be processed for deportation, said Burke.

As gangs are predisposed to criminal activity and thrive on conflict, the sweep was general in nature and not gang-specific, explained CHP Officer Kevin Dombay. However, Burke noted, the sweep and search did include a focus on Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs, Nortenos and Surenos. "Those are the principal criminal gangs which operate here in Lake County," Burke said and added that, "When we perform a sweep we are primarily looking for people on probation and known gang members." Nortenos and Surenos are rival street gangs that emerged from California prisons. Historically, the Surenos are associated with the color blue, the Nortenos with the color red.

No search warrants were necessary in the operation, said Burke. "People who are on parole or on probation waive certain rights to stay out of jail and the police can conduct searches for legitimate purposes as long as they don't become excessive." No evidence was recovered during the searches," Burke added.

When investigating crimes for possible gang activity, Burke said he looks for a number of signs, including drugs, gang initiation or turf wars.

"Tattoos are sometimes indicative of gang affiliation," he said. "Also, a lot of times the victim will indicate to us that a crime is due to some gang affiliation."

**Kevin Burke**  
**Chief of Police**

Domby said law enforcement is becoming increasingly aware of a local gang presence. "When you have more than one person making an assault and it seems to be a planned and organized assault, the question then arises is, what is the relationship between the attackers and the victim? And what is the relationship between the attackers themselves?"

At Lakeport Police, Burke said Detective Norm Taylor is the officer in charge of supervising the department's gang unit. "There are two additional officers involved who will be undergoing specialized training in gang enforcement, as well," said Burke, adding that the gang sweep and probation searches were extremely successful and that the Lakeport gang unit intends to conduct regular gang/probation sweeps to prevent gang activity within its jurisdiction.

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**Kevin Burke**  
**Chief of Police**