

# TIN TỨC CỘNG ĐỒNG

*Virginia, Thứ Sáu, ngày 12 tháng 8, năm 2011*

*Xin chuyển tin đến Quý Vị, Quý NT và CH...*

*Một cuộc hành quân của Cảnh sát thành phố Falls Church, Virginia, đã được tiến hành từ đêm hôm thứ năm đến 4 giờ sáng ngày thứ Sáu, 12 tháng 8, 2011, nhằm truy quét những tổ chức băng đảng, liên quan đến cờ bạc trong một số quán Café... tại Trung tâm thương mại Eden.*

*Tin sơ khởi trong cuộc họp báo của Cảnh sát Falls Church, VA vào sáng hôm nay cho biết, cuộc hành quân đạt kết quả tốt, đã bắt giữ khoảng 1 triệu Mỹ kim tiền mặt, 250,000 Mỹ kim giá trị của những máy đánh bài, games, và bắt giữ khoảng 20 người.....*

*Xin mời Quý Vị xem bảng tin dưới đây...*

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Washington, D.C.*

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# Regional Gang Task Force Announces Success Thwarting Eden Center Gang

By Nicholas F. Benton

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CITY OF FALLS CHURCH Police Chief Harry Reitze opened a press conference on the steps of the Falls Church City Hall this morning accompanied by leading representatives of law enforcement agencies from all the jurisdictions participating in the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force. They announced and answered questions about the successful penetration and termination of a major gang operation at Falls Church's Eden Center. (Photo: News-Press)

A major gang bust went down in Falls Church's Eden Center last night. Over 60 law enforcement officers from jurisdictions throughout Northern Virginia, members of the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force including 20 from the City of Falls Church, swept into the center with 13 search warrants to confiscate over \$1 million in cash and \$250,000 in illegal gambling machines.

Officers did not complete their work until 4 a.m. this morning, Falls Church's Police Chief Harry Reitze and Sheriff Steve Bittle told the News-Press at a press conference reporting the culmination of a months-long investigation held today. Fifteen Falls Church police, and five Falls Church sheriff's deputies were involved.

Honest small business owners and their patrons in Falls Church's busy, predominantly Vietnamese-American Eden Shopping Center at Seven Corners openly expressed relief and appreciation as the bust unfolded last night, Prince William County Police Lt. Charlie Dean, the head of the task force, stated at today's press conference, held on the steps of the Falls Church City Hall.

The law enforcement operation, conducted by the combined, cooperative efforts of the task force, was focused on the illegal gambling operations of a gang identified as the Dragon Family, a Vietnamese-American gang that has intimidated businesses at the Eden Center for years, Chief Reitze said.

The investigation will involve more arrests, as 20 felony warrants and an array of misdemeanor warrants are now out for gang members, of leaders of the gang, he said. An ongoing investigation persists that could intersect the "long tentacles" of other gangs in the region, Leesburg Police Chief Joe Price said.

Officials at today's press conference touted the cooperative effort among law enforcement agencies, under the aegis of the task force, that produced the result.

"In this case, our relationship paid off," said Ray Colgan, executive director of the task force. "It proves that relationships matter. Law enforcement entities are often criticized for not working cooperatively, but they did in this case."

The task force operation was known as "Aces and Eights," a gambling reference to the "Dead Man's Hand" that the legendary Wild Bill Hickok was holding when shot to death in 1876. It was put together following Chief Reitze's appeal to the task force for help in addressing growing complaints and reports of illegal activity at the Eden Center.

"We simply knew we did not have the resources we needed, as a police department in Falls Church, to effectively penetrate and root out this gang activity," Reitze said today. "I approached leaders of the task force, and they were immediately responsive. Within a week, the operation was being set up."

While the spokesmen at today's press conference were not at liberty to discuss the investigative means used, they said that with the cooperative effort they were able to successfully penetrate the operations of the gang.

Reitze told the News-Press that due to budgetary constraints, the Falls Church department has not been able to man its auxiliary station at the Eden Center, using it now only for storage. But he said there are routine patrols in the center, and that patrons of the many highly-acclaimed restaurants and other retail business there have always enjoyed a high level of safety. The gang operation, he said, did not target them.

"The safety of the general public will not change one way or the other with this development," he said, because it's always been safe at the Eden Center for them.

But it has been a different story for retail business owners, according to the account of the Dragon Family gang operation at the center. Extortion, violence and intimidation have always haunted them there as long as the gang was active, and stabbings, shootings (mostly among the gang members, themselves) and narcotics dealing were frequent components. The "close-knit" Eden Center community was "paralyzed" and "very intimidated" by the presence of the gang, Dean said.

The gang, described as "significant and well-organized," was composed of males ranging in age from 16 to 50, Reitze said.

The illegal gambling operation involved jimmying table-top video machines, ostensibly designed for entertainment purposes only, by adding a money slot onto their sides. There are cases involving individuals who lost over \$100,000 in a year, facing consequences from the gang for not paying up.

According to the Falls Church Public Information Office, the following are the establishments at the Eden Center that were served with warrants and searched yesterday: Café Nho, Cafe Ha, Cafe H20, Cafe Le Mirage, Cafe Quan 7 Lo, Cafe Bay 11, Cafe De Paris, Cafe Dang, Cafe Hoanh Qanh, Cafe Gio, Cafe Hai Lua, Cafe Vv-6779.