



The public deserves to be part of crime discussion

By Joseph W. Brady

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I am writing to report back to the public concerning the Facebook Live forum dealing with the topic of crime on the High Desert that took place on Oct. 2 at the offices of the Daily Press. I want to begin by thanking Steve Hunt, president, publisher and editor of the Daily Press, for hosting this discussion and, more broadly, for recognizing the seriousness of the crime issue confronting the High Desert and its residents. Although this meeting represented a good start, it is only the beginning of what must be a much broader public dialogue on this important topic.

The forum took place one day after the tragic mass shooting in Las Vegas. Consequently, several of the scheduled participants were unable to attend, including First District Supervisor and Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Robert A. Lovingood, San Bernardino County Sherriff John McMahon and San Bernardino County District Attorney Michael Ramos.

More problematic was the fact that some other elected local political leaders chose not to attend out of an apparent belief that talking publicly about this issue only heightens it in people's minds, making them even less likely to view our region favorably. Hiding our heads in the sand will not make the violent crime problem go away. In my view we need more, rather than less, public dialogue on this topic and in a broader format that includes not just elected and appointed leaders but regular citizens whose lives have been the most affected by the crime problem.

I have said many times in the past and I know that some people become frustrated when I state "This is our problem, we own this problem, we need to solve this problem and we need to do it collectively with some of the greatest ideas from our residents within the High Desert region." I for one don't believe that government is going to be able to fully facilitate a full solution.

This is why I am calling for an open public forum at a time and place that can be attended by any High Desert resident who wishes to participate, including the more than 83,000± of our friends and neighbors who commute to jobs down the hill.

There are some who fear that more public discussion of our challenges with violent crime will only enhance the negative reputation of the High Desert, making it even more difficult for our communities to attract investors and new residents. Privately, I have been questioned with regard to my motives for seeking broader public dialogue on this issue.

In my nearly 29.5 years as a resident and commercial real estate broker on the High Desert, I have been among the most active promoters of all that is good about our region, publishing the Bradco High Desert Report, helping to facilitate and participate in the creation of all three economic development councils or organizations, and writing and speaking frequently about the many great things our community has to offer.

After giving nearly 600+ speeches throughout the High Desert region about the positive aspects of the High Desert region, I now simply believe that the growth and persistence of violent crime in the High Desert is too great of threat to be either ignored or dealt with only by increasing taxes on our already overburdened citizenry.

I am also humble enough to recognize the possibility that solutions to the crime problem may actually come not from our leaders, who may have their own preconceived notions about how things work, but from ordinary citizens if they are given an opportunity to voice their opinions in a public forum.

I am not one that believes that government has all the answers.

In the next meeting, in my view, needs to be public, not in a conference room but in a place where residents of the region, including our many commuters, can attend and participate. Perhaps a Saturday morning meeting at places such as Victor Valley Community College District, some of our local high school gyms, some of our larger local churches or the San Bernardino County Fairgrounds could also be appropriate. I encourage those reading this to contact Steve Hunt at

his email at or at my email at
..... and let us know if you believe that
a public forum should be the next part of our discussion.

We do not have anything to fear about engaging in a broad public discussion of violent crime on the High Desert. If anything, we should be afraid of those who wish we would stop talking about it in the hope that the problem will solve itself if we throw more tax dollars at it. People coming together offer our best hope of confronting this vexing public dilemma in a forceful and effective way. Please join your fellow citizens in coming up with meaningful solutions to combat the growth of violent crime on the High Desert.

Joseph W. Brady is president of the Bradco Companies and a Victor Valley College Trustee.

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