

## **Seminar on gang activity, youth crime at North H.S.**

October 17, 2008 6:00 AM

A "Community Safety Awareness" presentation on youth crime and gang activity in the Poconos will be held on Saturday at two locations/times (same presentation): Technology and Learning Center (old ESE building) from 9 to 10:30 a.m. and the East Stroudsburg High School-North Auditorium from 1 to 2:30 p.m. This is a free presentation sponsored by the East Stroudsburg Area School District.

The presentation is open to everyone and will be especially informative for the community leaders, community associations, parents, teachers and students of East Stroudsburg. The featured speaker will be Michael Leonard Sr., a criminal justice consultant, author and gang expert. A member of the East Coast Gang Investigators Association, Leonard is a certified trainer with extensive New York City experience dealing with adult and juvenile offenders.

He is knowledgeable about gang identifiers, gang characteristics, nation sets, group symbols (e.g., graffiti and hand signs), gang allies/enemies, and inception behaviors. He teaches how to distinguish youth involved in gangs from youth making fashion statements.

The Rallying Youth Organized Together Against Rape from Safe Haven, Inc. will also present a socio-drama on the dangers of gang-related activity. A socio-drama is an interactive theatrical portrayal of real-life situations facing the youth of today.

Funding is provided by a Community Revitalization Program for an Anti-Gang Initiative from the Department of Community and Economic Development.

Plan to attend because awareness is the first step towards creating a safe and healthy community. Attendance at this presentation is also encouraged for those interested in a subsequent workshop being planned for November to discuss issues and resolutions in more detail.