

Camden, N.J., most dangerous city, Vegas is 8th

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — Camden has been named the nation's most dangerous city, snatching the top spot from Detroit, according to a company's annual ranking based on crime statistics.

Officials in Camden, which was ranked third last year, downplayed the dubious designation Sunday, saying many steps have already been taken to reduce crime in the city. "We must give our people jobs, training and opportunity," said City Councilman Ali Sloan-El, who pointed out that Camden's poverty is an important contrib-

uting factor to its high crime rate.

Atlanta, St. Louis and Gary, Ind. rounded out the top five in the most dangerous city rankings, which was released Monday by Morgan Quitno Corp. The company publishes "City Crime Rankings," an annual reference book that will be published next month. Detroit fell to second in this year's list.

However, company president Scott Morgan told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in its Sunday edition that he had been unaware that St. Louis police omitted 5,760 crimes from their 2003 crime data. Provided with the

correct data, Morgan found that St. Louis would have switched places with Atlanta.

In the annual survey, Las Vegas finished No. 8. This is up from the 12th most dangerous city in 2003. Authorities say the crime data isn't reflective of safety, because the statistics reflect the resident population and not the tourists, who can swell the city's population by about 100,000 on any given day. The news wasn't all bleak for New Jersey. The state's Brick Township was rated second-safest city for the third straight year, behind only Newton, Mass., while the Gar-

den State's Dover Township was ranked tenth. The other communities in the top five were Amherst, N.Y., followed by Mission Viejo, Calif., and Clarkstown, N.Y.

The rankings look at the rate for six crime categories: Murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary and auto theft. It compares 350 cities with populations of 75,000 or more that reported crime data to the FBI. Final 2003 statistics, released by the FBI in October, were used to determine the rankings.

Election

(Continued from Page 1)

or have opted for early buy-out programs, are trying their hands at business. And to some experts, that's long overdue.

"One of the things people do is when they go to college, they feel like they're going to college 'So I can work for IBM.' But entrepreneurship is what makes America and what has made America and that is a viable option," says Rosalind Pennington, president of the National Black Business Council (NBBC) in Culver City, Calif.

The 823,000 Black-owned businesses in the U. S. make up only 3 percent of the 21 million companies in the U.S. Both Latino businesses (6 percent or 1.2 million firms) and Asian-American companies (4 percent or 913,000) exceed the presence of Black companies.

Louis Sullivan, former secretary of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, says African-Americans also need to take care of some personal business — their health. Of the 15 leading causes of death in the U.S., Blacks top the list in 11 categories, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Our population generally needs to focus on healthy lifestyles and disease prevention," Sullivan says.

Lack of health insurance contributes to those numbers.

Research by the University of Minnesota commissioned by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that 18 percent of working African-Americans have no health care, compared to 11 percent of working Whites. The report, made public in May, gave several healthcare options for working people without health insurance, including free community health screenings and clinics.

It also recommended a free brochure by Families, U.S.A., a health care consumer advocate, that lists low cost health

insurance programs, community health centers, free clinics and pharmaceutical assistance programs throughout the country for uninsured working people.

The "Free Care Manual" can be obtained by going to www.healthinsurancepartnerships.org or by calling 202-737-6340.

Both conservatives and progressives agree that more emphasis should be placed on education.

Although Blacks have made tremendous progress in closing the gap in high school graduation rates, there is still a 12 percentage point difference between the high school graduation rates of White and Black students.

"We're going to have to have to find ways to get our children to stay in school, do well in school. We need to take control of our schools and help them graduate in record numbers," says Washington Bureau Director Hilary Shelton.

The NAACP has a 20-year-old Back to School/Stay in School Program that gives academic and personal guidance to youth who have dropped out or are in danger of dropping out of school. It operates from more than 40 sites around the nation and focuses on academic excellence, improved self-esteem, cultural enrichment and parental/community involvement.

At the other end of the education scale, the NAACP operates its annual talent competition called ACT-SO (Academic, Cultural, Technical and Scientific Olympics).

"We put as much emphasis on academic success as athletic success and the young people go and cheer each other," Shelton says, referring to the program created by Vernon Jarrett, a journalist who died earlier this year.

The Urban League's Read and Rise program is also available. In Read and Rise: Preparing Our Children for a

Lifetime of Success, NUL has partnered with Scholastic, the worldwide children's publishing and media company, to equip children with early literacy and pre-reading skills to prepare them to do well in school.

Affordable housing and homeownership is another goal that needs attention, says Derrick Span, national president of the Washington, D.C.-based Community Action Partnership (CAP), a non-profit coalition of anti-poverty organizations.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) predicts that between 700,000 and 800,000 people are homeless on any given night and over the course of a year between 2.5 and 3.5 million people will experience homelessness in the U. S.

NAEH links the problem of homelessness directly to the shortage of affordable housing, incomes that do not pay for basic needs and the lack of appropriate services

for people who need them. In addition to affordable housing programs, NAEH says the answers lie in advocacy for increased funding for homeless programs, training homeless individuals for employment through community organizations; registering homeless people to vote, and organizing or participating in community fundraising drives for homeless service agencies.

"Home-ownership is the most effective anti-crime, anti-poverty program, asset-building program available to low-income people in this country," Span says. "We're going to have to build coalitions with housing organizations. We're going to have to build strong coalitions with banks and credit unions and things of that nature."

Within the African-American community, less than 50 percent of U. S. citizens are homeowners, compared to 70 percent for Whites.

The Pearl River Valley Opportunity, Inc., a CAP affiliate in Columbia, Miss., is working to change that. It formed a coalition between the organization, local contractors and banks to produce an entire low-income community of 293 houses, Span says.

Intervention must also be sought to reduce the number of Blacks headed for prison.

Approximately 4,810 Black males per 100,000 are incarcerated compared to 549 per 100,000 White males, a difference of nearly 776 percent. The disparity is drastically wider for African-American females at 349 per 100,000, compared to 66 per 100,000 for White women, a difference of nearly 429 percent, writes James R. Lanier, senior resident scholar for Community Justice Programs at NUL's Institute for Opportunity and Equality in Washington, D.C.

Lanier conducted special research for the NUL's 2003

State of Black America report that proposed alternatives to incarceration such as developing more community programs with education and work components.

Ninety percent of Black voters supported the Democratic Party in the Nov. 2 elections, but Democrats failed to win the White House or a majority of the U. S. Senate or House of Representatives. Therefore, while placing pressure on government, placing that same pressure on private corporations will also be a key, says Julia Hare, co-founder of the Black Think Tank in San Francisco, Calif.

"We need to go back and complete the unfinished revolution and the business of the 60s because in that one decade, Black people got more than we got probably 60 years before and 60 years after that period. Corporations opened doors to bring Blacks in because they saw we were not kidding."

Law Firm of Timothy C. Williams

ATTORNEY AT LAW



TIMOTHY C. WILLIAMS

Timothy Williams is a member of the Nevada & Illinois State Bar, practicing primarily in personal injury cases.

EMPHASIS ON PERSONAL INJURY CASES

- Automobile Accidents
- Motorcycle Accidents
- Wrongful Death
- Dog Bites
- Pedestrian & Other Bodily Injuries

892-0000

844 E. Sahara Avenue
Las Vegas, Nevada

Neither the State Bar of Nevada nor any agency of the State Bar has certified any lawyer identified here as a specialist or expert. Anyone considering a lawyer should independently investigate the lawyer's credentials and ability.