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**Mayor Becker Continues Gang Prevention Efforts in Salt Lake City**  
*Agencies and Organizations Meet to Coordinate Reduction Strategies*

**SALT LAKE CITY** – Mayor Ralph Becker believes the recently formed Salt Lake City Gang Reduction Forum will help address Salt Lake City’s gang issues. Members of the group include community leaders, government officials and law enforcement experts who are already working individually to address gang violence. The goal now is to coordinate efforts and create a clearinghouse of ideas and strategies that can be used effectively to curb gang activity.

The Gang Reduction Forum, assembled under the direction of Mayor Becker, meets on a regular basis in order to reach an improved understanding of the community’s gang problem and decide on the most holistic and sustainable way to take action. Mayor Becker has asked his Community Liaison, Michael Stott, to coordinate the work of the group and provide organizational vision and support.

The group’s initial focus is to address the problem from a variety of angles and create partnerships, services, and programming that will be sustainable. The group has already mapped out the existing gang reduction efforts in the community and is working collaboratively across agencies and organizations to identify gaps in those efforts and improve the overall approach to the growing gang problem.

Three key elements of gang reduction are prevention, intervention, and suppression. The Gang Reduction Forum concluded that prevention and intervention efforts need to improve and recently formed committees to focus on those two elements.

Prevention refers to activities aimed at preventing members of the general public from joining gangs. These activities might include educating kids and parents about the dangers and signs of gangs and improving access to positive activities. Intervention refers to activities aimed at intervening in the lives of known gang members and those who are at high-risk of joining. With intervention, a group of collaborating agencies may create a

personalized intervention plan for a gang member to address a variety of needs and risk factors in areas such as school, home, work, free time, relationships, substance abuse, and patterns of attitudes and behaviors.

In announcing the group's formation Mayor Becker stated "We recognize there is a problem. We want to better understand the problem, our resources, our strengths and our weaknesses, then move forward in a well-coordinated collaboration between governments, community groups, and residents to truly make a difference."

Salt Lake City Police Chief Chris Burbank added, "The Police Department is committed to working with members of our community to impact gang violence in our neighborhoods. The Mayor's commitment of participation is a crucial component to our success."

The Forum's efforts may also be helpful beyond City boundaries. Some participants, including the state, county, and city, are considering creating a gang reduction framework that could be used by other cities experiencing gang problems similar to those in Salt Lake City.

The Gang Reduction Forum has held three meetings and will continue to meet on a monthly basis. Members of the group include representatives from the following organizations:

- Utah Adult Parole & Probation
- Utah Board of Juvenile Justice
- Utah Commission on Criminal & Juvenile Justice
- Utah Division of Homeland Security
- Utah House of Representatives
- Utah Juvenile Justice Services
- Utah Third District Juvenile Court & Juvenile Probation
- Salt Lake Peer Court
- Salt Lake School District
- Salt Lake City Management Services
- Salt Lake City Mayor's Office
- Salt Lake City Police Department
- Salt Lake County District Attorney's Office
- Salt Lake Area Metro Gang Unit
- University of Utah/Utah Criminal Justice Center

- Boy Scouts of America
- Colors of Success
- Community Councils
- Learning for Life
- NeighborWorks Salt Lake
- Project 180
- The Romero Alternative
- Stripling Warriors Football/SALT Program
- Utah Coalition of La Raza
- Utah Dream Center

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