

Car-A-Van more than just a party

■ Parade, barbecue kick off National Night Out, an event focused on community policing

By Aaron Morrison

STAFF WRITER

HAYWARD — Residents should not have been alarmed if they heard engines revving, horns honking and radios blasting through neighborhood streets Monday evening.

All that noise came from Car-A-Van, the kickoff event for National Night Out, an annual celebration that unifies communities across the nation for a night of community policing.

Car-A-Van, a parade of classic cars,

Please see **NIGHT**, News 4



AARON MORRISON — Staff

VEHICLES GATHER behind Southland mall in Hayward on Monday for the National Night Out Car-A-Van, a parade that celebrates neighborhood crime-prevention efforts.

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police vehicles, tow trucks and motorcycles, gathered at Southland mall on Monday evening to bring attention to crime prevention efforts in Hayward.

"This is the only time we get to run red lights," said Joline Mallory, Hayward's National Night Out coordinator.

Anywhere from 75 to 100 cars and motorcycles came out for a parade around town that ended at Kennedy Park, where a barbecue followed.

The event usually attracts Neighborhood Alert participants, car clubs, biker clubs and tow truck companies who work with police, Mallory said.

Hayward Mayor Mike Sweeney, police Chief Lloyd Lowe and crime prevention Capt. Bob Palermini were among those who came out to show their support for community policing efforts.

"It's a good way to kick off National Crime Watch Night," said Sweeney, who rode in the Car-A-Van.

The Car-A-Van usually takes about an hour every year, and the destination alternates between the north and south ends of the city each year, said Mary Fabian, a crime prevention specialist for the Hayward Police Department.

"By the time the whole parade is over, there are a lot of people out watching," Fabian said of previous years.

Hoise Atkinson of Hayward drives a tow truck for Jack James Towing. He hopes his children benefit from the event.

"If they can convince one kid not to do drugs or to use alcohol, then it's all worth it," Atkinson said.

The kickoff event was just a precursor of larger events to come Aug. 7, the official day of National Night Out.

Along with leaving porch and yard lights on, residents will throw neighborhood block parties.

Several block parties will begin in Hayward around 6 p.m. The deadline to register your street for a block party is

Wednesday. All registered block parties will receive a visit from Hayward city officials and police department employees.

"It's just a night to meet your neighbors and to make things well lit," Mallory said.

Mallory says she's been participating in the event for about 11 years. She will host a block party at 6:30 p.m. Aug. 7 on Meek Avenue at D Street.

There are about 25 other registered block parties scheduled for Aug. 7, Mallory said.

Since 1984, the National Association of Town Watch has introduced National Night Out to more than 11,000 communities nationwide. More than 35 million people reportedly participated in last year's National Night Out.

For more information or to register for a block party, contact crime prevention specialist Mary Fabian at (510) 293-1043.

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