

Orange celebrates National Night Out over three days

By Chris Sykes
Staff Writer

Even though most cities around the country will celebrate the 27th annual National Night Out on one day next week, city officials have plans to spread its celebration over a three-day period.

Neighborhoods throughout Orange will join thousands of communities nationally for the crime-and drug-prevention event. The city has been involved in the program since its inception. National Night Out involves communities from across the country, as well as Canadian cities and military bases around the world.

On Tuesday night, residents in Orange will be asked to lock their doors, turn on outside lights and spend the evening outside with neighbors and police. Some of the neighborhoods will have special events such as block watch parties, which can include cookouts, youth activities and visits from police.

"This gives the police a chance to enhance their relationships with their community," said Mayor Eldridge Hawkins Jr. "The purpose of the Night Out is to remind residents and businesses that they are partners with the police in the fight against crime."

The city of Orange, however, extends its initiative beyond the one day by having a multitude of

activities, including a caravan, softball games and a family fun day.

On Tuesday, participants in the Night Out caravan will gather at 6 p.m. outside the Freddie Polhill Law and Justice Complex at 29 Park St. The complex serves as police headquarters as well as the municipal court. The caravan will stop at several block watch events, where give-a-ways will be provided to children and residents.

The annual Family Festival will follow the Aug. 6 start at 6 p.m. at the Central Playground at Central and Lincoln avenues. The event will feature the "Stop the Violence Basketball Game," the Hassan C. Miller All-Stars against the Stop the Violence Dream Team, which will start at 7 p.m.

The following week, on Aug. 13 at 6 p.m. inside Monte Irvin Orange Park, the Marty DeMarzo annual softball game will be played. It will be a rematch of players from the Orange Police Department and the Orange Fire Department.

Additional information about the city's planned National Night Out celebration and later events is available by contacting police Lt. Orlando Soto at 973-266-4111, ext. 5061.