

## ORANGE CROSSING GUARDS EMPOWERED TO ISSUE PARKING TICKETS

Orange school crossing guards will begin writing parking summonses during times when they are on duty but children are in school if the City Council passes a resolution designating them as parking agents. As part of the City's effort to increase revenues and increase employee productivity in a severe recession, Orange would train its crossing guards as parking enforcement officers. The measure would also free up police officers to devote more time to crime fighting patrol duties.

The guards would be sworn in as parking enforcement agents by a municipal judge. When they are not performing their more typical duties, guards would issue tickets for parking in front of a fire hydrant, expired meters and other nonmoving violations. The guards issuing tickets would stay in the vicinity of their crossing duties, which will remain their priority.

The added duties are part of givebacks negotiated with O.M.E.B.A., the municipal workers union. Through the givebacks Orange was able to save jobs and rehire several employees who had been laid off.

"In a terrible economy, a city

must be creative and develop innovative ways to survive and fund its necessary programs," Mayor Eldridge Hawkins, Jr. said. "Our initiative is among the first of its kind in the nation, and could be the only one. Other innovations we have made to save money and prevent layoffs are cross-training other employees to perform more than one job, negotiating money-saving changes in work rules, and redirecting federal grant money.

"The safety, health and welfare of our children are of paramount importance. We are not trying to change the crossing guards into police officers. We will carefully monitor the arrangement to ensure that it is working as intended and we will address any unanticipated problems."

"The safety of children is our number one concern," Police Director John Rappaport said. "The parking enforcement duties will take place outside of the hours when crossing guards are protecting children."

"There is no question that the duties of the particular employees is something that is permissible by law and certainly would pass legal muster," City Attorney Marvin Braker said.