



BY CHRIS MINOR

## **Guardian Angels want to expand to other local cities**

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QUAD CITIES -- The Guardian Angels arrived on the streets of Davenport last year and think other local cities should get onboard in the fight against crime.

"We would love to see the Guardian Angels in Rock Island, we would love to see them in Bettendorf, we would love to see them in Moline", said local Guardian Angel "Bard". He doesn't want to use his real name, but joined the citizen's patrol group to help clean up his west side Davenport neighborhood, and he says he's seen a difference.

"Drug dealers are gone, violent crime is way down in this neighborhood", said Bard.

New crime stats released Wednesday show overall crime in the city has dropped 17 percent from the same time last year. Hard work by the Davenport police department and increased patrols in high risk neighborhoods are part of the reason.

But Bard says the 25 local volunteers who wear the red berets are part of the solution too, and say other cities should consider forming Guardian Angels patrols. "The Guardian Angels have done some good in every city they've gone to".

Rock Island Alderman Terry Brooks isn't open to the idea. "No. We don't want them here. No way. Rock Island handles it's own problems. I think they're subject to being attacked. That's why we hire police officers".

But back in Davenport near 14th and Gaines, a woman sitting in her front yard says the more police and Guardian Angels, the better.

"I think highly of them, I wish we could see them more often".

The Guardian Angels this week will expand patrols to the riverfront bike path in Davenport and the one on Duck Creek, the 8 bikes donated by the Davenport Police Department. "It's not necessarily so much of a crime issue on the bike paths, it's giving people the feeling of safety, alot of dark areas, alot of remote spots". Bard said.

Bard says he believes more local people trained by the national chapter of the Guardian Angels would benefit other cities in the area, all it would take is an invitation.

" Crime is mobile now, drug dealers are mobile now. We would like to see the entire Quad Cities embrace our program, so we could deal with the problem holistically rather than one little area."

