

William J. Schneider, Jr. Biography

William J. Schneider, Jr., age 33, is currently the Acting City Manager/ Economic Development Director for the City of Des Plaines, IL (POP 56,945). In this role, he is spearheading a downtown redevelopment plan, managing five tax increment financing (TIF) districts encompassing over 200 million dollars within the city and seeking out new development potential. Prior to that, Schneider was the Assistant Director of Finance for the City of Chicago Public Building Commission where he managed municipal bond transactions and project budgets for various city departments and agencies in excess of over 450 million dollars.

In November 2002, Schneider was appointed to the Illinois Rural Bond Bank helping the state finance local municipal redevelopment.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in finance from DePaul University. Schneider resides in Lake Zurich, Illinois with his wife Kathy and their son Ryan.

Statement of William Schneider, Jr., City Manager
City of Des Plaines, IL
Democratic Task Force on Homeland Security Hearing
June 24, 2003

Are we more prepared for terrorism today than we were before 9-11?

- Every village, town, city, county and township in the U.S. has been afforded the opportunity to attend seminars and training designed to increase terrorism awareness. From this standpoint, the first responder's ability to quickly assess a weapon of mass destruction or an act of terrorism has improved. Some equipment and standardized training needs have been addressed through seminars, however, the cost of providing this equipment and training is still the responsibility of each entity struggling with economic woes. We are more prepared in knowing what to expect and who is responsible for handling different phases of an incident. We are not properly equipped or trained to provide adequate protection to first responders or citizens in the event of a chemical, biological or nuclear terrorist attack.

- Is the federal government doing all it can to protect us?

- Recognizing the need and establishing the Department of Homeland Security is a huge step in the right direction. Consolidating the efforts of several federal agencies is imperative for proper case management. The CIA and FBI have a reputation for conducting separate investigations on the same target. Their exclusion from the Department of Homeland Security will continue to impede the exchange of intelligence that ultimately led to the attacks on 9-11.

- Most people in the U.S. realize the magnitude of establishing the Department of Homeland Security. Equipment and training recommendations have been established, however, money has been promised by the federal government and hasn't been delivered at the local level. The Illinois Emergency Management agency is in the process of passing on federal funding by purchasing personal protective equipment consisting of masks and filters to every law enforcement officer in the state of Illinois. However, it has taken more than a year for the federal government to deliver and for the funds to reach the municipalities.

The federal government is moving in the right direction and officials are working to identify threats to our security and ways to avoid catastrophic incidents. However, funding these recommendations adequately is not possible without a major increase in the federal commitment to first responders at the local level.

- What have you been doing on your own that the federal government should be helping with?

- The City of Des Plaines, Illinois has taken a proactive approach concerning terrorism

awareness for its police officers, fire personnel and city employees. Des Plaines, Illinois is a suburb of Chicago that borders a portion of O'Hare International Airport.

The police department has conducted a comprehensive "Terrorism Target Awareness Study" based on intelligence provided by the federal government. The Tactical Response Team (SWAT) has adjusted its training to include the proper response to terrorist initiated incidents. However, extra personnel, equipment and other resources are required to monitor suspected terrorist targets (i.e. schools, government buildings, airport property and infrastructure, etc.) and to cope with demanding posture recommendations during an increase in the alert level.

The federal government has stated that it is not a matter of "if" but "when" the next terrorist attack will take place. Funding for extra police officers, funding for overtime expenses (over \$50,000), funding for equipment (over \$20,000) and funding for training (over \$15,000) are the expenses that the City of Des Plaines has incurred. These are the areas where the federal government should be providing assistance to local communities. The City of Des Plaines has also delayed or eliminated several projects, including a new police and fire headquarters, as attention is diverted to homeland security issues in a difficult economic environment.

Have you been getting enough direction from the Department of Homeland Security?

Fortunately, there are several sources providing direction - including the Department of Homeland Security. The State of Illinois has aggressively initiated programs and provided guidelines for county and municipal government on homeland security issues. Much of this information has been provided by the Department of Homeland Security and other agencies. The direction is adequate - funding is the issue.

What should Congress be doing?

From a municipal viewpoint, Congress must listen to the needs of the communities and the states. Just like the states, municipalities conduct their own terrorist assessment needs and receiving direct federal aid is a critical component to ensuring the safety of their resident. That is why the federal government must appropriate the needed homeland security funds to aid states and municipalities.

What is the impact of paying overtime and staffing for increased security?

It is well known that security costs are mounting as cities await federal aid. During yellow alert police and fire personnel maintain normal manpower allocations with an emphasis on terrorism awareness. In an effort to provide proper staffing during Orange and Red Alert, the police department assigns extra officers to monitor activity at city hall, numerous schools, government buildings, O'Hare International Airport boundaries and other locations identified as potential targets. Overtime staffing for three officers a week

is approximately \$3,820.00. The Des Plaines Police Department responds to approximately 50,000 calls each year. Extra staffing is required during heightened alert status in an effort to maintain a high standard of police service to the community. Ticket revenue and self-initiated arrest activity has declined as assignments and manpower is diverted in an effort to minimize overtime.

The Des Plaines Police Department has submitted an application for the *Homeland Security Overtime Program* through the U.S. Department of Justice - Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. The purpose is to provide extra manpower during heightened alert status, allow extra training for the Tactical Response Team (SWAT), provide community relations seminars for citizens and first responder training for the entire police department. The Des Plaines Police Department is requesting \$108,789 from this overtime program.

In the event of a terrorist attack, overtime staffing will rise dramatically as all police and fire personnel will be required to adjust schedules. The Fire Department would incur a weekly overtime expense of over \$231,000. The Police Department would add another \$235,000 in overtime expenses per week. Your staff can refer to our written report for detailed costs incurred.

Providing funding for overtime staffing is important. It is equally important to recognize the funding of equipment and training. Proper equipment and training is imperative for first responders and shortcuts can't be taken. The City of Des Plaines anticipates purchasing equipment for first responders (police, fire and public works personnel) totaling \$429,900 in the year 2004 as a direct result of Homeland Security initiatives. Training first responders is also anticipated to cost over \$279,000 in 2004.

The impact of paying overtime and staffing has had a direct impact on projects and citywide services provided by the City of Des Plaines.