



ROGERS PARK BUILDER

SPRING 2006

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CTA to Go Ahead with Howard Station Rehabilitation

Alderman Joe Moore announces that the Chicago Transit Board has approved a \$56.7 million contract to rehabilitate the Red Line Howard station. The contract is expected to bring major improvements to the facility, the busiest station in the entire CTA system, and boost ongoing neighborhood revitalization efforts in the Howard Street area.

"The Howard station is a vital transportation link between the City of Chicago and several northern suburbs," said CTA President Frank Kruesi. "Bringing the facility to a state of good repair, making it accessible to our customers with disabilities will greatly enhance our passengers' train experience."

The work will result in a state-of-the-art accessible station. It includes renovating the existing station house and platform areas, and upgrading communications, electrical and lighting systems. The station will also feature new benches, signs, and bike racks and new wind breaks and canopies to protect customers in inclement weather.

Also included in the contract is the rehabilitation of the existing Howard Street viaduct and the retail space on the north side of Howard Street, and a new entrance at the south end of the station which will provide a convenient, accessible path between the station platforms and the multi-story parking garage and the bus terminal on the west side of the station. Additionally new facilities will be built on the second floor of the station house for the Red Line Rail operations and CTA Maintenance Department.

When learning of the CTA's decision to renovate the Howard El station, Alderman Joe Moore said: "This development has been a long-time coming. I'm very excited that contracts have finally been signed and look forward to the start of this project very soon.

"We formed a task force several years ago to develop the design of the new station and to make sure it meets community needs," Moore added.

In addition to the proposed construction, the station will be equipped with security cameras linked to the CTA security camera network when complete. In addition artwork will be installed to enhance the appearance of the new station.

The project is scheduled to begin in spring 2006 with a 2009 completion date. Funding is being provided by the RTA and proceeds from CTA bonds.

The Howard station serves as a transfer point between the CTA Red, Yellow and Purple lines. It is the northern terminal of the Red Line, the southern terminal for the Skokie Swift Yellow line and serves the Evanston Express Purple Line as well.

The station is the busiest line in the CTA rail system. It serves as an entry point on an average weekday for 6,054 rides, 5,078 rides on an average Saturday and 3,083 rides on an average Sunday. Ridership for year at the station was 1,926,006.

Cook County Board Okays Lower Property Tax Assessment for Multi-Family Properties

There's good news for building owners and renters not only in Rogers Park but throughout Cook County. Cook County Assessor Jim Houlihan announced that the County Board has approved his plan to phase in additional gradual assessment level reductions for Class 3 multi-family properties.

In 2002, Houlihan, with County Board approval, took first steps toward relieving the property tax burden on homeowners and renters by effecting a phased in reduction in the assessment level of multi-family rental buildings from 33% to 26%. The plan approved by the County Board will phase in additional assessment level reductions of from 26% to 24% in 2006, from 24% to 22% in 2007, and from 22% to 20% in 2008.

Houlihan explained that the number of rental units available in the county has been dropping because of the escalating costs to operate them and the pressure to convert these property taxes to condominiums. Nineteen percent of the renters in Cook County are what Houlihan termed as rent burdened—they spend more than 50% of their income on housing which is 66% more than the 30% maximum standard. The new tax assessment reduction will go far toward easing this tax burden on renters, he noted.

The Annual Sing-Along Messiah at St. Ignatius Church



Part of the crowd which packed the hall at St. Ignatius Church for the Annual Sing-Along Messiah Concert one of the several community events that the RPBG is delighted to support each year.

Mike Glasser: Portrait of a Big-Time Leader Who Has Led Builders Group to Success

What makes Mike Glasser run? That's the question that anyone could ask following Mike's six-year term as president of the Builders Group, a term in which he has served with distinction and success.

Owner of Magellen Properties, which owns multi-family properties in Chicago and the western suburbs, Mike is involved in the active management of all properties in his portfolio.



Mike Glasser

"I'm proud of the fact that I joined the Builders Group at least a week before Carla Price," said Mike with tongue in cheek alluding to a fact that his good friend fiercely denies. But there is nothing fluky or accidental about the great leap in membership which the RPBG has sustained under his leadership. Through equal amounts of hard work, imagination and creativity, Mike has been instrumental in increasing the Group's membership from ten in 1993, when he joined, to about 135 today.

"When we first started," said Mike, "we were a small group meeting at the Granada Center. All were highly concerned about the state of their investment in the community and were bouncing around ideas to help change the public's image of our area."

"It had reached the point where some landlords and home sellers were using the words "Loyola Park" in our classified ads and marketing material so as not to scare off potential tenants and buyers," recalls Mike. "We knew that was unacceptable."

Mike likened the Builders Group role in making the community more attractive for investors and residents alike to providing flame in a fireplace. "The growth was going to happen. What the Builders Group did," he said, "was to put a good squirt of lighter fluid in the fireplace to get the fire going."

"At the time," he said, "we were working with a PR firm which we had hired in 1994. In addition, the Builders Group, under the leadership of our second president, Mike Wallk, hosted a series of special events attended by real estate developers, bankers, investors and community leaders."

"We also developed the first of several versions of our Rogers Park brochure, which has received rave notices by nearly all who have seen it. Next we produced a highly professional newsletter, distributed triennially to developers, real estate professionals and other interested people. Finally we actively collaborated with and supported many worthwhile organizations within the community, often providing critical financial support."

"And that basically is how we managed to reach our present status as a good neighbor interested in making Rogers Park a destination community for investors, developers and residents alike."

Mike is a graduate of the University of Rochester (New York) where he received his bachelor of arts degree and he then enrolled at The John Marshall Law School, which he proudly described as the "Harvard of the Loop." After receiving his law degree, he practiced for nearly five years in the state's attorney's office in Kankakee County and in a litigation firm in Chicago.

Mike served the Builders Group as membership chairman for a few years before assuming his rank as president. His achievements with the RPBG have been recognized by both DevCorp North and the Rogers Park Community Council, both of which have honored him with special awards in recent years.

Mike is the father of three children: The youngest of whom, a girl, who will have her Bat Mitzvah in April; a son, who Mike thinks will become the first player/manager/owner in the major leagues, and his oldest daughter, who as a freshman in college is pursuing an artistic bent. Not the least of his loves is his dog, a Shar Pei, abandoned years ago in Rogers Park, whom Mike says with some bravado has "marked every tree in the community."

Marty Max Heads Builders Group Slate of Officers for 2006

Marty Max, owner and vice president of **MLC Properties**, has been elected the new president of Rogers Park Builders Group. Marty, a member of the Builders Group for nine years who has served as vice president for the past three years, succeeds Mike Glasser, who served as president for the last six.



Marty Max

Max's firm, MLC properties, owns buildings in Albany Park and Chatham, as well as Rogers Park, and has been active in condo conversions in Rogers Park, Albany Park, Chatham and Logan Square. Prior to being elected vice president, he served on the Builders Group planning & development and membership committees. He is a liberal arts graduate of Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. Married and the father of three children, Marty noted that his youngest son will soon be Bar Mitzvah. He also has a daughter in high school and another daughter is in college.

In accepting the presidency, Marty said, "I hope to be able to build on the firm foundation that my predecessor, Mike Glasser has built, and to follow through on our mission to create a climate which will attract investment in the community as well as people who want to live in Rogers Park permanently."

Elected as the Group's new vice president is **Tina Winger**, a senior account representative for **Chicago Title and Trust**. Active in the Builders Group for the past three-and-a-half years, she served as the Builders Group fundraising committee head during 2005. She is a graduate of Drake University where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in business administration.



Tina Winger

Re-elected as treasurer is **Tom Heineman**, a charter member of the Builders Group who served as treasurer from 1995 to 1999 and after a brief hiatus was re-elected to that post in 2002. Tom, who also serves as an assistant editor of *The Builder*, is the owner/occupant of a three-flat building on Eastlake Terrace, and he rents out a condominium he purchased in 1978. In addition, he has worked with other members of the Builders Group on a number of condo conversions. He is also active in the Chicago Area Sea Kayaking Association of which he is a former president.



Tom Heineman

The Group's new secretary is **Mike Glasser**, who recently stepped down after serving with distinction as the RPBG president for six years (see *Member Profile, left*).

New Developments Announced by RPBG Directors

CAMELOT REALTY 2022 W. ESTES

Great light-filled open first floor plan with deluxe stainless steel and granite kitchen appliances. Beautiful Brazilian cherry hardwood floors and Pella windows throughout upper level consists of four full bedrooms and two full baths including marble master bath with glass enclosed shower, Jacuzzi tub and double bowl undermount sinks. Convenient full-sized stackable washer rounds out the second level. Additional washer-dryer hookup in partially finished lower level, including a fifth bedroom, a full bathroom and sitting/recreation area. Storage space abundance in lower level as well as in attic. Automated sprinkler system for well manicured backyard and parking for four cars. \$5,000 toward closing as an additional sales incentive. *For additional information, contact Nyan Tucker at (773)294-5554.*

CAMELOT REALTY 2217 W. FARWELL - PENTHOUSE

Last unit in West Ridge. Top floor unit in new construction elevator building. Parking for two cars, heated garage and one outside space included in price. Two large bedrooms and two baths complete with laundry. Extra large private rooftop deck with both covered and uncovered areas. Second outside living area off the front of the building. Deluxe kitchen features granite countertops, maple cabinets and new appliances. Hardwood floors throughout except for ceramic kitchen and baths. Separate living and dining areas next to kitchen. Granite topped fireplace in living room. Steps away from Warren Park. Asking price: \$359,000. *Contact Nyan Tucker for information at (773)294-5554*

CAMELOT REALTY 1522-28 W. GREENLEAF

New eighteen unit construction. High-end finishes including granite, stainless steel appliances and cherry cabinets in the kitchen. Cherry vanities with marble tops and undermount sinks in bathrooms, and whirlpool tubs. Oak hardwood floors in living areas and carpeted bedrooms. Washer/dryer in every unit, gas fireplaces. Parking included, two-bedroom/two-bath from \$345,000; three-bedroom/three-bath duplex from \$490,000; and four-bedroom/three-bath from \$470,000. Spring deliveries. *Contact Diane Wells (630)308-6449 for information.*

CAMELOT REALTY 2310 W. TOUHY/THE PINWOOD

Site of a former restaurant, new construction four-story elevator building with thirteen luxury condominiums and two retail spaces. Brazilian cherry floors throughout. The kitchen has granite countertops and island, stainless steel appliances and shaker style cherry cabinets. Luxurious bathrooms with limestone floors and shower walls, cherry cabinets with granite tops, whirlpool baths. Gas fireplaces, balconies or decks and common area rooftop deck plus in unit laundry and indoor parking included. Two-bedroom/two bath from \$345,000; three-bedroom/two-bath from \$365,000, three-bedroom and two-and-a-half-bath duplexes from \$480,000. February/March delivery. *For brochure or an appointment call Diane Wells at (630)308-6449.*

Mak Browne Introduces Its Latest Rogers Park Offerings

BIRCHWOOD BEACH CONDOMINIUM 1421-29 W. BIRCHWOOD

Over 80 percent sold. Seven units remain in this elegant 1920s building with 28 luxury residences meticulously rehabbed with the finest of finishes, including all new hardwood flooring, ornate crown molding, granite and stainless steel kitchens, marble baths, and in-laundry hook-ups. Remaining units are one & two bedroom/one-two-bath priced from \$209,900 to \$274,900.

THE ESTES NORTH SHORE CONDOMINIUM 1342-1450 W. ESTES

Only two fabulous homes remain in this beautiful turn-of-the-century red brick courtyard building. Just a few steps away from Lake Michigan, these 43 rehabbed homes retain the vintage charm of yesterday while offering modern amenities. Standard features include central heat/air, separate eating areas, romantic fireplaces, chef's kitchens with 42-inch cabinetry, granite counters and stainless steel appliances.

THE LIDIA CONDOMINIUM

1262-64 W. NORTH SHORE - 6905-11 N. LAKEWOOD

The Lidia's old world charm and craftsmanship have been polished and shined. Twelve glorious simplexes and three duplexes are fully rehabbed two & three-bedroom/one and two-bath homes. Elegantly appointed cherry-cabinet kitchens with stainless steel appliances, granite counters, tray ceilings, front balconies, new hardwood flooring, central HVAC, whirlpool, marble baths, and washer/dryer hook-ups.

THE LAKEWOOD COURT I CONDOMINIUM 6906-12 N. LAKEWOOD

Stunning two-bedroom/two-bath simplex and duplex homes in the sought after Loyola Park neighborhood. Exquisite attention to detail, including grand arches and columns, crown molding, and dramatic tray ceilings. Units also include granite kitchens, stainless steel appliances, and 42-inch maple cabinetry; luxury whirlpool bathrooms with natural stone flooring; new hardwood floors, gas fireplace and more. Prices from \$229,900 to \$299,900. Generous developer incentives available. *For information on this and all Mak Browne items listed, contact Michelle Browne, Mak Browne & Associates, (773) 604-7111, ext. 227*

COLDWELL BANKER'S ESOTERICA 1528 W. JONQUIL

Great opportunity to own new construction in the booming north of Howard area. Extra wide floorplans range from 1,400-2,800 sq. feet. Four simplex units feature two & three bedroom/two-bath condos with fabulous finishes. Diagonal hardwood floor with walnut border trim in living rooms. Cordovan maple wood cabinets in the island kitchen. Stainless appliances and granite complete the picture. Nine-foot ceilings with generous window sizes provide loads of natural light. Brick front balconies and 20' x 7' back decks provide sought after outdoor space. Luxurious master suite with walk-in closet, two-person Jacuzzi, separate shower and access to deck. Designer stone tile & marble vanities provide a spa-like atmosphere.

Two spectacular duplex homes unlike any other. Four-bedroom/three-bath offer 2,800 sq. feet. Larger than most single family homes. Two gas fireplaces, one on each level. Lovely wood center staircase leads to a huge lower level family room and two good size bedrooms great for home office/exercise rooms. Storage lockers and one garage space included in price. \$349,000-\$379,000 simplexes and \$499,000 per duplex unit. Walk to train, shops and lake. Grand opening soon. Join the hundred or so recent new homeowners in the area.

COLDWELL BANKER 1239 JARVIS

Sneak Preview Coming Spring 2006. Lakeside beauty fully-rehabbed to perfection. Six jumbo units 1,500-1,600 sq. feet. Two-bedroom two & two-and-a-half-bath, three garden level units (one step down) 700-1,200 sq. feet. These homes will feature top-of-the-line kitchens & baths, hardwood floors, high ceilings, true master baths (per floor plan) walk-in closets and utility rooms. Multiple balconies per floor plan. Limited garage parking. Steps to beach and park. Very special: \$425,000. English gardens start at \$160,000. *Call Sharon Kozak, Coldwell Banker, at (847)316-8044 or (cell) (773)908-8002 for details and floorplans on these listings.*

Huffman Appointed to Two-Year Term as Vice President of Education Committee

In January, **Laurene Huffman**, vice president-lending, **Devon Bank**, was appointed director on the Parent Community Partnership Advisory Board for a two-year term. The Board, which reports to the Chicago Board of Education, works with parents, community leaders and elected officials to build a partnership to support NCLB Title I, Part A. Ms. Huffman, a director of the Builders Group, has been a tutor in the Family Matters after school tutoring program and a teacher for OPERATION HOPE teaching financial literacy to 7th and 8th grade students.

Symposium Projects Continued Growth in RP Real Estate

Which way will the real estate market go in the next few years in Rogers Park? The answer is a resounding upward, according to members and guests of the Rogers Park Builders Group at a recent meeting held at Devon Bank. Working in discussion groups of nine or so at a table, the panel at each table grappled with a series of questions designed to obtain their thoughts on real estate trends in Rogers Park and on the economy in general. A record-breaking crowd of 72 attended the meeting, the third such affair in recent years.

Leading the discussion at each table was a panel of experts drawn from the ranks of leading banks in the area. These included: **Thomas P. FitzGibbon, Jr.**, president of **MB Financial Development**, a subsidiary of Chicago-based MB Financial Bank; **Gerald T. Haase**, vice president of lending, **Central Federal Savings & Loan**; **Adam Klingher**, senior vice president of the multi-family lending division of **Washington Mutual**; **Faye Pantazelos**, president, founder and principal organizer of the **New Century Bank**; **John Pritscher**, president of **Community Investment Corporation**, and **Dan Starzyk**, senior vice president and chief lending officer of the newly chartered **Community First Bank**.



Some of the participants at the symposium on trends in real estate in Rogers Park are seen at the table led by John Pritscher of the Community Investment Corporation. Marty Max, the new president of the Builders Group, in the background.

At their tables the attendees discussed eight questions having to do with the state of the economy in general, and with various aspects of real estate affairs in Rogers Park in general as follows: The level at which the Dow Jones will close, the unemployment level, the rate at which an investor in a multi-family property would be able to obtain a loan, how much a newly renovated condo unit near the lake would sell for per square foot, the marketing time it would take to sell a condo unit, the average price per apartment for an older vintage Rogers Park apartment building, and what a four-room, one-bedroom apartment located on Sheridan Road would sell for.

The responses of the discussants were uniformly enthusiastic and positive, although they ranged considerably on several points. **George Cyrus**, chairman of **Cyrus Development Group**, led the discussion on the responses, which followed a power point presentation on the replies for each table.

Perhaps the question drawing the greatest unanimity was that on the Dow-Jones during the next two years, which saw six of the eight tables replying: 11,500. Latest figures on the Dow-Jones taken from January 30, 2006 level were 10,850 but most discussants showed faith in the country's ability to grow.

The rate of unemployment drew similarly close answers and ranged from 4.7 percent to 6.1 percent. Latest figures on unemployment stood at 5.3 percent in January 2006.

Another question which drew a lot of unanimity was that of the cost in January 2008 of a newly renovated condo development located near the lake currently selling for \$225 per square foot. Three tables answered \$250 per square foot while other answers ranged from \$225 to \$275.

As to the sales price of an average apartment in an 18-unit apartment building in Rogers Park in 2008, answers ranged from \$89,000 to \$120,000. According to a team of RPBG experts the same apartment today would sell for an average price of \$85,000.

On the whole respondents, while concerned about the economy in general, were bullish on the ability of Rogers Park to draw investment and residents, based on such factors as its location near the lake, its good transportation, and the growth of retail in recent years with an accompanying growth in residential investment.

As I See It ...

by Mike Glasser
President, Rogers Park Builders Group
Assessing Grumpy Landlords



We landlords are by nature a grumpy lot, and nothing gets us grumpier than that horrible duo of cold weather and high energy prices. Even with this mild winter, heat bills are still reaching stratospheric levels, and we realize that we will recover only a small portion of this massive cost through rent increases. If we raise rents too high, we fear that tenants will move to cheaper apartments, or buy condos.

The apartment industry has gone through amazing transformation in recent years. With such high operating costs (not just gas, but insurance rates have hit dizzying heights), we landlords realize that positive cash flow is a relic of another era, and that one now often needs to reach deep into his or her pocket to cover operating costs.

Yet, shed no tears for us, since the name of the game seems no longer to be cash flow, but rather appreciation. With the values of our buildings increasing several times over the past decade, many of us realize that it makes little sense to continue renting apartments. Rather, it is far more profitable to sell to a condo converter, or to convert the building to condos ourselves. This trend is so predominant that a shortage of affordable apartments throughout the City is a possibility. (Yet Rogers Park is still a renter's community; my guess being that at least 70% of our dwelling units remain rental.)

To curtail this trend, the County has recently lowered the level of assessment for multi-family properties. Only a few short years ago, the Assessor valued our apartment buildings at 33% of market value; the latest County action will bring that rate down to 20% (residential rate is 16%). The Assessor and the County Board anticipate that lowering our most significant operating costs (property tax) will give us incentive to keep our buildings as rental.

Yet reducing the level of assessment will not have any meaningful effect if the Assessor continues to increase our assessed value by the huge amounts that he increased them three years ago. Many of us incurred valuation increases of between 50 to 200%, resulting in exorbitantly high increases in our property taxes. We incur legal fees trying to get our values reduced, relief many of us attain from the Board of Appeals, or, if necessary, from the Property Tax Appeal Board.

As much as I applaud the Assessor for trying to assess properties at "fair market values," I urge his office to realize that the condo conversion market has spiked property values. If his intention is to tax our apartments at levels where we have incentive to keep the buildings rental, he should give due consideration to the "income approach" when valuing properties. Such an approach considers nuts and bolts financial realities of operating a building (i.e. cash flow) This is an appropriate valuation method for those of us needing incentive to preserve rental building stock.

The combined effect of the Assessor giving greater weight to the income approach when valuing property, along with the new 20% level of assessment on multi-family properties, will likely induce many landlords to maintain rental housing.

◆
This is my last column as president of the RPBG. I have enjoyed trying my hand at writing and expressing my views on a variety of subjects. I am also enthused to see that we now send this newsletter to more than 1,600 people, including many real estate professionals and other civic and community leaders. I offer kudos to my friend and successor, the even grumpier Marty Max, who will do an outstanding job putting his own mark on our organization.

OUR MISSION

The Rogers Park Builders Group's mission is to encourage and support residential and commercial property investment, development, and ownership in the Rogers Park community. Looking far beyond bricks and mortar, the RPBG initiates and supports collaboration on city and community actions to create a destination community.

- Marty Max, President
- Tina Winger, Vice President
- Tom Heineman, Treasurer
- Mike Glasser, Secretary
- Michael Wallik, Chairman-Government Relations
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RPBG Executive Committee



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Please Send Information About Becoming a Member of the Rogers Park Builders Group

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Phone (Daytime)

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Mail to: Mary Jane Sacks, Administrative Director
 Rogers Park Builders Group
 1708 W. Jarvis Avenue • Chicago, IL 60626
 Phone/Fax: (773)743-7453
 e-mail: rpbg@rogerspark.com
 Website: www.rpbg.org

A Few Words from Our New President

I was not going to write my first article as the new president of the Rogers Park Builders Group (RPBG) until the next issue of the *The Builder*. However, I think this is a good time to say, thank you to our outgoing president, Mike Glasser. As you are all aware, Mike has been our president and has written an article for this newsletter for the past six years. Mike will still be involved in the organization, as secretary, but thought it was time to step down and let someone else head the RPBG.

Following Mike is like becoming head coach of the Chicago Bears after Mike Ditka. Unlike the Bears, we are not letting our Mike leave and he will continue to guide me and contribute to the RPBG. Mike's passion for Rogers Park and the RPBG has been unrelenting. He has made our organization one of the strongest in the community. He created the rogerspark.com website for the sole purpose of informing others of how great a neighborhood Rogers Park is.

For the past three years, I have been the vice president of the RPBG and have had the honor of, not only working with Mike but, becoming his friend. I have seen firsthand the love Mike has for Rogers Park. The number of community meetings he goes to, the people he meets and the wishes he tries to fulfill are truly unbelievable! Most of our members see what a great meeting Mike arranges for them on the fourth Tuesday of each month. What they haven't seen for the past six years is how much time Mike has dedicated to the RPBG throughout the day – just about every day. I have been lucky that three years ago Mike asked me to be the vice president of the RPBG and has included me in many of those meetings. All of us in the Rogers Park Builders Group want to thank Mike for his dedication to our organization. It's a good thing that my name is not Dave (Wannstedt).

See you next time!
 Marty Max, President, RPBG

Commander Speaks Out on Public Safety in Rogers Park

*In 2005, Bruce Rottner was appointed the new Commander of the Rogers Park Police District No. 24. With a strong background of service in the district, Commander Rottner is well acquainted with the area's ethnic, racial and economic makeup. So recently **The Builder** interviewed him, specifically about public safety issues in Rogers Park. The results of that interview follow:*

The Builder: How long have you been on the police force?

Rottner: I joined the department about thirty-four-and-a-half years ago as a patrolman.

The Builder: And a good part of that period was spent in Rogers Park, was it not?

Rottner: Correct, I spent about 19 of my 34 years in the 24th district. I was promoted to Captain in August of 2004 and I went to the 23rd district at Addison and Halsted. And on March 9, 2005 I was promoted to Commander of this district.

The Builder: What do you see as the main problems in Rogers Park as far as crime is concerned?

Rottner: Well, Rogers Park is much more diverse than a lot of other districts. And this refers to the racial, economic, ethnic and other factors concerned. Many districts do not have this diversity. We have perhaps the largest Orthodox Jewish community in the city in our district, as well as an increasing Latino population. In terms of policing, it presents a challenge; understanding the different customs of some of our immigrants that move in from a policing standpoint. There are certain cultures where you just don't do certain things. For example, some Asians – Indians especially – will wear turbans. Well, you don't dare take off somebody's turban—that's really a terrible thing to do.

But of course, from the police perspective, you may be looking for weapons, but you just don't do that. We train our officers in all of these different cultural variances. So when they have to deal with some of these things they know what they are dealing with.

Rogers Park today is not the Rogers Park of 30 years ago, obviously. You know, gangs and drugs are always an issue citywide. I don't care what area you live in.

The way we deploy our police officers today is a lot smarter than the way we used to do it. Our technology has grown so rapidly in the police department that we are able to project where crime will occur – especially violent crime – shootings, homicides, aggravated batteries – and based on that intelligence, that's how we deploy our manpower.

The inclusion of the cameras that we have in this district, at Morse and Glenwood, Howard and Ashland, and at Howard and Damen. We're using technology right now to monitor those cameras, which have been very well received by the community. There may be some who say that it smacks of big brother, etc., but on the other side of the coin, the public way is the public way. The people want to feel safe out there. And these cameras add to that feeling of safety.

The Builder: Are these cameras located all over the city.

Rottner: They are located everywhere – primarily in the south and west sides. We are the only far north district that has them, but there will undoubtedly be more here and elsewhere, if you look at what the Mayor had to say recently about wanting all businesses to have them. He is very much in favor of the camera program. And now every alderman has been using their menu money to buy two cameras per ward. And I have four aldermen in my district – Joe Moore, Bernie Stone, Pat O'Connor and Mary Ann Smith – so we are working with them to figure out what locations we want to put these cameras in.

We've made several arrests based on what we see in the cameras and several of these were based on what we have seen right here

in the station. They are on our computers and they enable us to see what's going on within a 360 degree viewpoint. While they may control crime in the immediate vicinity, we also know that the cameras tend to displace crime and the drugs dealers and purchasers just move a couple of



Bruce Rottner, newly appointed Commander of Police District No. 24 (Rogers Park) in an interview he held recently on the crime situation in Rogers Park.

blocks away, out of range of the cameras. But we are aware of that and we have some strategies that we use to defeat that as well. But cameras can't be installed everywhere. For example, we wanted one at Jonquil and Paulina, but north of Howard Street has the new type of light poles, which are very nice, but they won't support a camera. So what we're trying to do is to get a freestanding 27-foot pole to put up to support a camera.

The Builder: We understand that crime has gone down? Is this for Rogers Park or for the entire city?

Rottner: Crime has gone down for the whole city just under ten percent in 2005. Some of our biggest decreases were in auto thefts. We did a real great job in this area. Our armed robberies were actually down. Our homicides were up by one. We had ten homicides last year, but of these, four were gang related. Also this included the shooting by one of our men of an offender who had killed his wife, and slashed his son. The offender in turn was slain by one of our sergeants which was justifiable, otherwise we would have been down one homicide from the previous year. And we just solved the killings of two people at 6151 Winthrop – one guy was captured and the other is being extradited from Mexico. But we still have a couple of cases open that we are working on. But we know who the shooters are. They are part of gang crime.

The Builder: What about drugs? Is this a bigger problem here in Rogers Park than elsewhere?

Rottner: Here's the big difference. In November we just completed "Operation King Snapper" and that was a three-month investigation, across the street from Gale Academy. This was conducted by our narcotics unit and resulted in the identification and arrests of 13 individuals who were major drug sellers. The difference here is that when we do a big operation like this in Rogers Park compared to when they do a similar operation elsewhere, which is just as infested with drugs, a week later these guys are back in business. Here they don't come back. They'll be back eventually when the weather gets better, but it's been highly dry up here north of Howard Street almost two months now. So we have a lot of drug sellers here and a lot of people buying drugs, but it's not as pervasive here as in some other areas of the city. Most of the information we get about drug selling comes from citizens who call us and then we send people out to investigate. Some of our best arrests have come from citizens' tips. So it's more than a matter of good policing. It's really a partnership with the community residents, but there's no substitute for police community involvement here. And there's no substitute for good old-fashioned police work. We identify the sellers, we make controlled buys, we put together a case, sit down with the state's attorney, and warrants are issued. We make a lot of narcotics arrests here, but they are mainly people who are carrying drugs – a bag of weed, some rock, something like that. But the truth is that there's no district that has the financial resources to go after the big, big drug sellers. So when we find someone whom we think is a major player, we call in the narcotics unit, which does have the resources to help us out.