How Can Crime Increase Be Stopped In Lafayette?

Is Lafayette an easy mark for the professional criminal? The evidence is mounting. This year alone:

— Two men fled with more than $25,000 from a local bank after a daytime robbery at gunpoint.
— More than $50,000 in jewelry was taken in a daytime armed robbery in a busy shopping center.
— Armed bandits escaped with the day’s receipts from a local department store after a daytime stickup in the parking lot.
— A woman was brutally murdered in a downtown apartment building.
— Armed robberies have become routine news in Lafayette, with 11 recorded so far this year.
— The burglary rate has been termed “alarming” by the Chief of Police.
— Evidence grows of dope traffic, not only in marijuana, but in harder drugs such as cocaine and speed.
— Crime in every category is on the increase.

Unless the incidence of serious crime is to continue to grow unchecked in Lafayette, local law enforcement must be made more effective. As long as crimes such as these enumerated above remain unsolved, Lafayette will become more and more attractive to the criminal element.

Effective, efficient, professional lawmen, fully trained and fully equipped, in numbers commensurate with the population are essential if Lafayette is to maintain the necessary vigilance against crime.

As noted in our editorial series, “Nine Challenges for ’71,” the task faced by the various law enforcement agencies is too large for them to perform individually.

Lafayette should have a 150-man police force, but neither the city police nor sheriff’s department can now adequately pay the men they have. More training, better equipment, increased personnel, crime specialists are needed.

And there is but one way to get them.

The answer is to be found in the combination of the two departments into a Metropolitan Police Force with the manpower and money available to do the job that is needed.

Combination would bring manpower to sufficient levels, provide men for specialized training, eliminate costly duplication of efforts, provide the first step toward law enforcement of the stature to match Lafayette’s big city status.

Crime has found Lafayette. It’s sophisticated crime. It’s professional crime.

Crime will stay and grow in Lafayette without matching sophistication and professionalism in local law enforcement.