

Award doubled in Algiers slaying

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Thursday, February 28, 2008

By Allen Powell II

Stymied in their investigation of an Algiers homicide this year, New Orleans police and Crimestoppers officials are turning to the public for help in locating a "person of interest" and a handgun possibly involved in the shooting.

Police Department officers and Crimestoppers Executive Director Darlene Cusanza joined with the family of David Sisolak Jr. on Wednesday to announce that the reward for information about his death has been doubled, and that a new reward is available for information regarding the 9 mm handgun used in the crime. Sisolak was found dead from a gunshot wound in his car in the 1700 block of Hero Boulevard in Algiers on Jan. 7.

Cusanza said thanks to financial support from the victim's family and friends, Crimestoppers is offering \$5,000 for information that leads to an arrest and indictment in Sisolak's death. The group also is offering \$1,000 to anyone who can provide police with the weapon. Typically the Crimestoppers reward is \$2,500.

She noted that police have identified two "persons of interest" in the crime, but Crimestoppers wants to encourage the public to come forward with any information about the shooting and about the weapon. She noted that often people are willing to provide information if they feel safe.

"What we're here today to do is to bring some focus back to this case," said Cusanza, who noted that the group will also pass out fliers about the reward in the neighborhood where the shooting occurred.

Police have identified Jamaal Tucker, 24, and David Melancon, 25, as "persons of interest" in the case. Tucker is already in custody on an unrelated charge and Melancon is still being sought. Both have previous arrests involving violent crimes. Melancon was convicted of negligent homicide in 2006.

Police have not identified a motive in the shooting, although the victim's pockets were emptied, and it is unclear what Sisolak was doing in that neighborhood. Originally, police claimed they had found narcotics on his body, but that turned out to be incorrect.

David Sisolak Sr. pleaded with the public to help police find his son's killer. He described his son as a "good Christian" who loved playing pool and going fishing. He said his family has no idea who would want to hurt him.

"We're just pleading with someone, anyone, to step forward," said Sisolak, who also asked people to put themselves in his shoes. "We don't know what happened, we don't know why he was here."

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