

# Salinas Gang-War News

## Two Gang Members Pulled Over for Not Wearing Seatbelts

FOX NEWS

Posted: Dec 18, 2009 7:29 AM PST

SALINAS, Calif - On Thursday December 17th just after 2:30 p.m. members of the Monterey County Joint Gang Task Force stopped at 1992 Chevy Blazer on Rider Ave & Garner Ave in Salinas for a seatbelt violation.

When deputies walked up to the car they smelled marijuana coming from the car. Deputies then searched the vehicle and found drugs along with a loaded gun.

The driver, Francisco Heredia, 19, and his passenger, Jose Garcia, 18, both of Salinas were taken into custody for the above violations.

Both were admitted gang members and were booked into Monterey County Jail.



Paramedics seen rushing 29<sup>th</sup> homicide victim away

## Salinas police ID latest homicide victim

The Monterey County Herald

Posted: 12/17/2009 10:04:24 AM PST

Updated: 12/17/2009 10:04:24 AM PST

The young man shot to death Wednesday night near Hartnell College was identified today by Salinas police as Brian Beecher, 18.

Police said he died at Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital after being found about 6:45 p.m. by officers to the rear of 525 Central Ave. with multiple gunshot wounds to his upper torso.

The victim was not a Hartnell student, police said, and was known to associate with gangs. The killing, the 29th homicide in Salinas this year, is being investigated as gang-related, police said.

All of the homicides in Salinas this year, police say, have been gang-related.

Witnesses described two males in dark running from the scene toward Nacional Street. A vehicle that might have been involved was described as a dark-colored, four-door sedan that drove away westbound on Archer Street, police said.

Anyone with information related to the crime or who may have been a witness is encouraged to contact Detective Jim Godwin at 758-7270 or Detective Brian Canaday at 758-7145.

If you would like to remain anonymous, you can call the Salinas Police Department Anonymous Tip Line at 831-775-4222, or the We-Tip Line at 1-800-78-CRIME, or text information to the Text Tip Line with the code "SPD831" to "847411".

## **Salinas marks 29th homicide of 2009**

Man shot near Hartnell College parking garage  
The Monterey County Herald  
Herald Staff Report  
Updated: 12/17/2009 01:27:45 AM PST

A man died of gunshot wounds after he was shot near Hartnell College in Salinas late Wednesday.

Officers said the man, in his mid-20s, was shot about 7 p.m. on a lawn in front of the college's parking garage on Cypress Street near Central Avenue.

Police said the man was on foot when he was shot. He was taken by ambulance to a local hospital, where he died.

The slaying is the city's 29th homicide of the year, four more than the toll that set a record last year.

The homicide came as the city shuffled police assignments to devote more officers to Ceasefire, an anti-gang program that has had success in other cities. Salinas police have categorized the first 28 killings of the year as gang-related.

Students waiting to drive their cars home from the crime scene Wednesday said they heard shots fired while they were in classes. Police did not say how many shots were fired, but said it was more than one.

The school's security staff locked down the college for about 15 minutes.

Police said witnesses described seeing two men run toward Central Avenue from the shooting scene, but no physical description was given.

Salinas police Cmdr. Terry Gerhardstein said the victim did not appear to be a Hartnell student.

He had not been identified as of 9 p.m. Wednesday.

The shooting took place as a community meeting started at Sherwood Hall, where possible police and other staffing cuts were expected to be discussed. It came six weeks after the defeat at the polls of a proposed sales tax measure that would have generated money to hire more police officers.

Salinas resident Santiago Cardenas Amezcua, 31, was the city's 28th homicide victim of the year. He died Friday after being shot multiple times while sitting in a car in the 1200 block of Rider Avenue, near his home.

Five people have been killed by gunfire in Salinas since Nov. 29.



Police secure scene of fatal shooting (28<sup>th</sup> gang-related homicide)

## Salinas father of five fatally shot

### Friday's slaying marks the 28th homicide in Salinas in 2009

BY MARIA INES ZAMUDIO • MZAMUDIO@THECALIFORNIAN.COM • DECEMBER 12, 2009

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Santiago Amezcua, 31, was sitting in his silver Ford Mustang about to drive a short distance to visit his four girls and son when he was fatally shot Friday morning, family members said.

Amezcua's car was parked in the 1200 block of Rider Avenue about 10 a.m. when a gunman shot him at least six times. Amezcua was taken to Natividad Medical Center, where he later died, police said.

Amezcua's slaying is the fourth killing in 13 days and marks the city's 28th gang-related homicide this year, the city's deadliest on record.

For at least an hour, Amezcua's cousins, aunts and the mother of his children waited for news outside Natividad Medical Center.

They tried to comfort one another, but every time they saw a police officer, detective or what appeared to be someone from the coroner's office, many broke down in tears. When a police officer broke the news to the family, some relatives screamed painfully, while others hugged each other.

The grief and tears paralyzed family members for a few minutes before they managed to leave the hospital.

"He was so loving and caring," said Sonia Cornejo, the mother of his children. "I just talked to him this morning. He was going to come over to my house to help me with my daughter."

Their 6-year-old daughter is disabled, and Amezcua helped Cornejo take care of her, she said.

Amezcua worked the night shift at Fresh Express to support his young daughters and son — all under the age of 6, Cornejo said. Attempts to verify employment at Fresh Express were unsuccessful.

### **Cousin died in January**

It is not the first time this year that the family has lost a relative to gang violence. On Jan. 15, Amezcua's 30-year-old cousin, Gabriel Amezcua, was fatally shot when a gunman opened fire on a family gathering in the 700 block of Las Casitas Drive.

## **Man dies in north Salinas shooting, city's 27th homicide of year**

The Monterey County Herald

Posted: 12/09/2009 12:32:19 PM PST

Updated: 12/09/2009 12:32:19 PM PST

Another man succumbed to Salinas' grim, record-breaking wave of homicides today.

Salinas police responding to a report of shots fired about 11:15 a.m. found a man lying near the curb at Sutter and Trinity streets on the city's north side. He had at least one gunshot wound to the chest, a spokesman said. The man was pronounced dead at the scene.

Witnesses provided generic descriptions of vehicles leaving the area, said police spokesman Detective Lalo Villegas.

Officers said there were signs of a struggle between the victim and his assailant or assailants, Villegas said.

He said it was too early to say whether the killing was gang related.

The killing was the city's 27th homicide in 2009 — two more than last year's 25, which was the city's previous high-water mark for homicides.

Police have said all the previous killings this year have been related to gang violence.



## **Two arrested after shots fired in east Salinas**

DECEMBER 9, 2009

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Salinas police say they arrested two people following a shooting in east Salinas early Monday.

Police said they received a report of shots fired at 1:52 a.m. Monday in the 1100 block of East Laurel Drive, followed by two men running from behind the KK Market.

Officers arriving in the area saw a parked vehicle with fogged windows and a man — Humberto Ramirez, 21 — standing outside. Both Ramirez and the front passenger, Jonathan Lara, 19, were nervous and wearing Sureño gang apparel, police said.

A gun magazine was seen inside the vehicle, and a search revealed a Marlin .22 caliber rifle and a bullet, police said.

Both Ramirez and Lara were arrested without incident and booked into the Monterey County Jail on suspicion of possessing a firearm and gang crime.

## **2 Injured In Salinas, Watsonville Shootings**

### ***Both Victims Airlifted To Bay Area Hospitals***

POSTED: 11:24 pm PST December 8, 2009

UPDATED: 9:04 am PST December 9, 2009

**SALINAS, Calif.** -- Two people were injured Tuesday evening in separate shootings on the Central Coast.

Already facing its most violent year in its history, the city of Salinas witnessed more violence Tuesday when a 20-year-old man was shot multiple times.

The shooting took place in the 700 block of Elkington Avenue at about 7:30 p.m. Minutes later, a teenager was shot on Jefferson Street in Watsonville. Both victims were life flighted to hospitals in the Bay Area.

"There were four to five really loud gunshots," Arcelia Muniz said.

Muniz said she heard gunfire outside her home in the 400 block of Jefferson Street in Watsonville at about 7:45 p.m. She said she ran out to find her friend shot several times and spitting up blood.

"It was, 'Oh my God'. It's sad, it's not something really good to see," Muniz said. "A lot of my neighbors and people I know and friends were screaming as well. I saw a bunch of people running around."

The victim was a young male teenager. One woman told Action News 8, off-camera, that her son is friends with that victim, and that he is only 15 or 16 years old.

Muniz said the victim is "really quiet" and just hung out with some friends who lived on the street.

Just minutes before the shooting in Watsonville, gunfire rang out near a home in East Salinas, hitting a 20-year-old multiple times.

Salinas police officers said they combed the crime scene; an area neighbors said is continuously riddled with gang activity. It's a scene Muniz said she's scared Watsonville will see more of.

"I'm like really scared. I'm like praying. It's really scary because our neighborhood wasn't really like that. (It) didn't have much violence," Muniz said.

Muniz said she hopes the Watsonville will unite, preventing her town from becoming "another Salinas."

## **Shooting death marks 26 homicides in Salinas**

**Salinas: Man gunned down early Wednesday**

By LARRY PARSONS

Herald Staff Writer

Updated: [12/03/2009 08:55:51 AM PST](#)

A man was gunned down early Wednesday walking to his car to go to work, becoming Salinas' 26th suspected gang-related homicide of 2009.

That eclipsed the city's previous record for homicides in a single year, which was established just 11 months ago with 25 homicides during 2008.

The victim in the latest killing was identified as Jose Espinoza, 25, who was found by police shot multiple times in the 18000 block of Lohman Street about 5:30 a.m. He died at the scene.

Witnesses said the victim was shot by a man in dark clothing who walked up to him and fired several shots before running toward Eisenhower Street, police said.

"A lone gunman came up to him in the dark and shot numerous times," Police Chief Louis Fetherolf said.

The gunman may have used a car, but police only had vague descriptions of the shooter and the possible getaway car, Fetherolf said.

The slaying, like all of Salinas' previous homicides this year, was being investigated as gang-related, the police chief said.

"We have got a very violent group of gangsters working in this city," Fetherolf said.

But for a number of factors — including quick emergency responses, skilled medical care and amateurs doing much of the shooting — Salinas's number of homicides could be far higher, the police chief said.

"I don't want to diminish the horrible fact that it's the 26th homicide," Fetherolf said. "But that's just one indicator of the level of violence."

Since May 2007, he said, there have been 190 homicide attempts in Salinas. Some resulted in deaths, while in others the shooting victims survived. The city also is weathering a "flood of armed robberies" and other violent crimes, he said.

"We're dealing with an inordinate amount of violence in an otherwise wonderful community," Fetherolf said. "My officers and staff are running from pillar to post."

In November, city voters rejected a 1 percent sales tax increase that city officials promised would be used to sharply beef up police resources.

"We need help," Fetherolf said. "We're now in the position to try to find some other funding sources. We need to better protect the community."

Mayor Dennis Donohue said he "mourned the loss of life" in the city's latest slaying, but said it, like so many others, underscored the "life or death" risks inherent in being "involved in the lifestyle or around" gangs.

"I continue to be saddened that there is a group of folks who choose to not be part of the mainstream of Salinas," the mayor said.

The city's 25th homicide this year happened about 1 a.m. Sunday when Carlos Alfaro, 27, was fatally shot as he walked home in the 700 block of Williams Road. Though police called the case gang-related, friends of the victim said he had been away from gangs for quite a while.

This week's killings came after Salinas went seven weeks without a homicide. The city's 23rd and 24th homicides came in a horrific Oct. 14 shooting in which four young males in a car near Hartnell College were shot at close range. Two died and two were injured.

Police later arrested two 17-year-olds, Matthew Ruiz and Albert Hernandez, who are facing two counts of murder and two counts of attempted murder for the multiple shooting.

Police asked that anyone with information about Wednesday's fatal shooting call the Salinas Police Department at 758-7137. To remain anonymous, people can call the department's Anonymous Tip Line at 775-4222, the We-Tip Line at 800-78-CRIME, or can text information to the Text Tip Line with the code "SPD831" to "847411."



Memorial at the scene of 25<sup>th</sup> gang-related homicide

## **Salinas police seek information, motive in 25th homicide**

**27-year-old Carlos Anthony Alfaro worked for a gang intervention group**

**The Californian • December 1, 2009**

Salinas police are still seeking witnesses and a motive in the early Sunday morning fatal shooting of a 27-year-old man in east Salinas.

Carlos Anthony Alfaro was shot several times about 1 a.m. at an apartment complex in the 700 block of Williams Road. Alfaro was returning home when he was confronted by at least one gunman along a parking lot sidewalk, police have said.

His death marks the city's 25th homicide this year, tying 2008's record. All homicides this year have been blamed on gangs.

During Mayor Dennis Donohue's weekly news conference Monday, Police Chief Louis Fetherolf briefly spoke about Sunday's homicide, as well as four attempted homicides since Nov. 24.

"These crimes affect our resources," Fetherolf said. "We're struggling to keep up with capacity, but folks are working real hard."

Officials said Alfaro, who worked for the Second Chance Youth Program of Monterey County, was recently laid off from HSBC. He was married and had two children.

As of Monday afternoon, no arrests had been made in his homicide.

To report information, contact the Salinas Police Department Detective Division at 831-758-7226. To remain anonymous, call 831-775-4222, or the We-Tip Line at 1-800-78-CRIME.



**Salinas Police Chief Louis Fetherolf announces arrests**

## **Salinas police arrest 2 in Archer Street gang homicides**

**Chief: Savvy detective work led police to teen suspects**

BY KIMBER SOLANA • [KSOLANA@THECALIFORNIAN.COM](mailto:KSOLANA@THECALIFORNIAN.COM) • OCTOBER 31, 2009

Extensive detective work, along with witnesses' help, led to the arrest of two Salinas teenagers in the fatal shooting of an Alisal High School sophomore and Salinas Community School student, police announced Friday.

"We've been working on this case constantly since the shooting," said Investigating Sgt. Don Cline, lead detective in the case.

The two-week investigation culminated Wednesday with the arrests of two boys, ages 15 and 17, suspected in the Oct. 14 shooting in the 700 block of Archer Street that left two teenagers dead.

The suspects were both booked into Monterey County Juvenile Hall on Thursday on two counts of murder and two counts of attempted murder, police said.

"But we're only halfway done. We still have the whole trial process," Cline said.

### **'Bits of information'**

Cline stood next to Salinas Police Chief Louis Fetherolf during a press conference outside City Hall as officials announced the arrests.

"We had a number of bits of information from folks at the scene as well as information that came to us afterwards," Fetherolf said. "So it's a composite of a lot of work."

Despite the arrests, the chief and detectives declined to share more details in the case, citing the ongoing investigation and the suspects' ages. Fetherolf wouldn't say whether the shots came from inside or outside the car, the relationship between suspects and victims, the suspects' gang affiliation, or any known motive.

"More [information] will come out as we wait for the filings, so we don't jeopardize the case," he said.

Fetherolf did say that both suspects were arrested without incident about 4 p.m.

Wednesday in the area of North Main and Curtis streets.

Cline said officers spotted the two suspects and arrested them.

### **Boys shot in car**

On Oct. 14, police said, six boys were driving near Hartnell College when the driver pulled over on Archer Street near University Street. One of the rear-seat passengers pulled out a handgun and shot the four victims, police said.

Alisal High School sophomore Rodolfo Cristobal, 15, died immediately after arriving at Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital. Two days later, Salinas Community School student Ociel Montiel, 14, became the city's 24th homicide victim of 2009.

Two other victims remain in serious condition at a Bay Area hospital, Fetherolf said, while one of the victims is on life support.

Fetherolf said witnesses told police that two boys ran from the vehicle into the south Salinas neighborhood.

The chief said investigators believe only one firearm was used. Both suspects are known gang members, he said.

### **No other suspects**

Police delivered the investigation packet Friday to the Monterey County District Attorney's Office.

The DA makes the final decision regarding the official filing of criminal charges.

The chief credited the department's Investigations Division, officers from its Violence Suppression Unit and Narcotics Unit, school resource officers, patrol officers and the Crime Scene Unit in helping make the arrests.

Cline said detectives are seeking more witnesses and investigating more physical and forensic evidence. The DA may request other evidence or clarification, he added. No one else is being sought in the case, police said.



**Victim is rushed to hospital after being shot multiple times**  
**The Californian**

**Oct. 16, 2009**

Salinas police have announced the identity of a boy who died after four people were shot Wednesday on the 700 block of Archer Street. Rodolfo Cristobal, 15, of Salinas, was transported to Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital, where police said he died from his injuries.

Principal Dan Burns said Rudolfo was a student at Alisal High School. The school lost six students to gang violence in the 2008-09 school year, Burns said. Grief counselors are in place at the school today, he said.

The three surviving teenage victims, who were either flown to the Bay Area or transported by ambulance to local hospitals, remain in critical to serious condition. The investigation has determined that the four victims were acquainted with each other prior to the shooting. The investigation continues and the case is being investigated as gang-related. If you would like to remain anonymous, you can call the Salinas Police Department Anonymous Tip Line at 831-775-4222, or the We-Tip Line at 1-800-78-CRIME, or text information to the Text Tip Line with the code "SPD831" to "847411".



Joseph "the Tank" Bustamante taken into custody

## Salinas Police arrest Joseph Bustamante after standoff, 2-month search - updated 9:15 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 18, 2009

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At least 16 Monterey County Gang Task Force and California Highway Patrol officers with guns drawn surrounded a residence on San Luis Street between Cayuga and Church streets in south Salinas this evening, where they said a wanted fugitive was inside a house with children inside.

One of the men arrested appears to be Joseph Bustamante, a known gang member wanted since he was wounded in a July shooting that left a 28-year-old man dead. By 7 p.m., about a dozen people had been taken out of the house and placed in handcuffs while neighbors watched.



Police at scene of the 22<sup>nd</sup> homicide in Salinas

## East Salinas shooting claims 14-year-old

Boy becomes city's 22nd homicide of the year

STAFF REPORT • SEPTEMBER 11, 2009

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A Salinas teenager became the city's 22nd homicide of the year Thursday night when he was struck several times by assailants' gunfire, police said.

The shooting occurred at 8:16 p.m. on the 1000 block of Rider Avenue in east Salinas. Police and the California Highway Patrol responded to a report of shots fired.

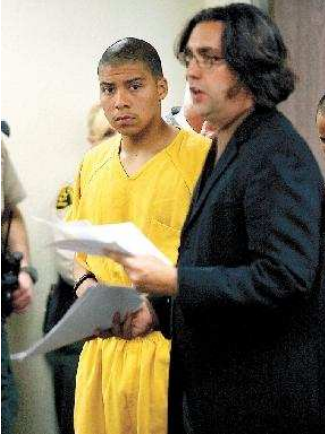
An emergency response team performed CPR at the scene and the victim was transported by ambulance to Natividad Medical Center, where he was later pronounced dead, according to Salinas police Sgt. Don Cline.

Police said officers in the area of Sanborn Road and Garner Avenue heard the shots being fired and later found Erik Lopez Garcia, 14, of Salinas lying on the front porch of an apartment.

Garcia had several gunshot wounds to the torso, police said. The homicide is being investigated as gang related.

Cline said the teenager was apparently on foot, and late Thursday investigators were trying to determine whether the assailants were also on foot or in a vehicle.

To report information, contact detectives Arlene Currier at 831-758-7125 or James Godwin at 831-758-7270. To remain anonymous, call the Salinas Police Department Tip Line at 831-775-4222 or the We-Tip Line at 1-800-78-CRIME, or text information to the Text Tip Line with the code "SPD831" to "847411."



Carlos Espinoza, 17

## **Teen charged as adult in shooting death of 15-year-old**

### **Pleads not guilty to killing boy**

By VIRGINIA HENNESSEY

Herald Salinas Bureau

Updated: 08/12/2009 08:48:28 AM PDT

Dressed in the yellow garb of juvenile hall, a 17-year-old from Salinas was arraigned as an adult Tuesday on charges that he gunned down a younger boy he saw talking to a rival gang associate.

Carlos Espinoza is charged with murder, conspiracy to commit murder, street terrorism and the attempted murder of the gang rival who ran from Thursday's Terrace Street shooting. If convicted of the charges, which also carry alleged gang and weapon enhancements, he would be sentenced to life in prison.

Espinoza made his first court appearance Tuesday, joining co-defendants, Antonio Gayoso, 19, Julio Luna Montoya, 21, and Juan Pablo Nunez, 19, whose arraignments had been continued from Monday.

Deputy Public Defender Dan Clymo pleaded not guilty on Espinoza's behalf. Defense attorney Scott Erdbacher accepted appointment of the Alternate Defender's Office for the other defendants and pleaded not guilty for them.

Visiting Judge Timothy Buckley set their next court date for Aug. 25, when a preliminary hearing will be scheduled.

Clymo put the court on notice that Espinoza was invoking his Fifth Amendment rights and wanted his attorney present during any questioning.

The four are alleged to be Sureño gang members who were hunting for Norteño rivals when they shot and killed 15-year-old Jose Manuel Perez.

Police say Perez had no gang affiliation and froze in fear when his friend, a Norteño associate, saw two suspicious cars turn onto the street and yelled for him to run.

The friend escaped uninjured. Perez, who was on his bicycle, was shot multiple times and died at Natividad Medical Center. Nunez and Gayoso were arrested minutes later based on witness reports. Espinoza and Martinez were arrested the next night.

Bail for the four defendants was set at \$1.02 million or more, but immigration holds have been placed on each of them, meaning they cannot be released. Espinoza is being housed in Juvenile Hall.

A sheriff's official said Tuesday the jail is struggling to house the large numbers of suspects streaming into the facility because of stepped-up enforcement and probation sweeps in Salinas. Space is especially strained in the G Pod, where Sureño gang members are housed, because of the five murder suspects arrested in the past week.

In addition to Gayoso, Montoya and Nunez, the jail is holding Jorge Ruiz, 22, and Raul Lopez, 19, who are charged with the murder of 17-year-old Andres Chavarin. Like Perez, police say, Chavarin was an innocent victim who was killed because he was wearing a red shirt, a color often associated with Norteño gangs, with which he had no affiliation.

## **'Not guilty' pleas in Saturday stabbing at Salinas home**

BY SUNITA VIJAYAN • SVIJAYAN@THECALIFORNIAN.COM • AUGUST 11, 2009

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Two Salinas men pleaded not guilty this afternoon to charges of attempted murder and assault with a deadly weapon in connection with a gang-related stabbing during a party Saturday.

Sergio and Omar Zamudio, ages 20 and 23 respectively, also face gang enhancements in the crime.

They're expected to return to court later this month.

Salinas police said the stabbing occurred about 11 p.m. Saturday on the 1200 block of Rider Avenue.

Police said witnesses told them the two men showed up to the home uninvited, soon got into an altercation with an 18-year-old man at the party and proceeded to stab him with a knife.

Police said the pair fled the home, but were found immediately by officers in the area.

The 18-year-old man who was stabbed was taken to a hospital with a collapsed lung, police said, but he is expected to recover from his injuries.

The two men are each being held at Monterey County Jail on \$1.1 million bail.



**Pablo Nunez, 19**



**Antonio Gayoso, 19**



**Julio Luna Montoya, 21**

## **Four arrested in Salinas High teen's death**

BY SUNITA VIJAYAN • SVIJAYAN@THECALIFORNIAN.COM • AUGUST 10, 2009

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Willing witnesses and some savvy detective work led to the arrest of four suspects in last week's fatal shooting of a 15-year-old Salinas High School student, a police official said Sunday.

Sgt. Don Cline said "an extensive two-day investigation" culminated on Thursday and Friday with the arrests of four individuals Antonio Gayoso, 19; Pablo Nunez, 19; Julio Luna Montoya, 21; and a 17-year-old boy.

Three of the suspects were booked into Monterey County Jail the fourth into Juvenile Hall on charges of first-degree murder, conspiracy and participation in criminal gang activity in the shooting death of Jose Manuel Perez. Police said the suspects also are charged with the attempted murder of a teenager who was with Perez at the time of the attack.

Montoya, on an immigration hold, is being held without bail. A deputy at the jail refused to provide bail amounts for Nunez and Gayoso, citing orders from Salinas police.

Perez, who played football for Salinas High, was on his way to campus to practice with his team when he was shot at 2:15 p.m. on Thursday in the 500 block of Terrace Street.

Police said he was transported to a local hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

### **Cline praises detectives**

Cline credited the narcotics unit detective and lead detective in the case for enabling the arrests.

"Witnesses were helpful, but it was the detectives and their skills I would give the majority of the credit to," he said. "Witnesses got us on the right path ... and we were able to solve the how and why."

Cline declined to say whether the suspects knew Perez, but said it wasn't a case of mistaken identity.

Two of the suspects were arrested during a traffic stop, one at work and another on foot while walking the streets. Cline declined to give more details about the arrests.

He said investigators are seeking more witnesses who may be able to provide more information about the suspects' activities prior to and after the shooting.

This is the second homicide case in which police have made arrests since a wave of gang violence began on July 27, beginning with the fatal shooting of Roy Simon Ramirez, 28, in the 500 block of San Benito Street.

Perez's death on Thursday was the seventh gang-related homicide in a string of shootings that spanned 11 days.

So far there have been 21 homicides in the city this year all blamed on gangs.

### **Arraignment scheduled for today in another case**

In another homicide case, police arrested Raul Lopez, 19, and Jorge Luis Meza Ruiz, 22, on Tuesday on suspicion fatally shooting Andres Chavarin earlier that day outside his home in the 700 block of Yucatan Way.

The pair is scheduled to be arraigned today on charges of murder and acting for the benefit of a criminal street gang. Ruiz is additionally charged with the personal use of a firearm.

"We worked around the clock in these cases ... and we'll continue to work until we run out of leads or arrest everyone involved whichever comes first," Cline said.

## **Investigators: 15-year-old victim had no gang affiliations**

The Monterey County Herald  
Herald Salinas Bureau  
[Updated: 08/10/2009 04:51:17 PM PDT](#)

Recent gang violence in Salinas makes it imperative for parents to talk to their children about the potential danger in hanging out with the wrong people or wearing colors associated with gangs, a prosecutor said today.

Prosecutor David Rabow said investigators have concluded 17-year-old Andres Chavarin was gunned down Aug. 4 merely for wearing a red shirt. He said Chavarin had no gang affiliations.

Two days later, Rabow said, 15-year-old Jose Manuel Perez was shot to death because he was talking to an acquaintance who was a gang associate. Perez was not affiliated with gangs.

Three of the four defendants arrested in that slaying — Antonio Gayosso, 19, Juan Nunez, 19, and Julio Luna Montoya, 21 — made their first court appearances this afternoon. They are charged with murder, conspiracy to commit murder, attempted murder and street terrorism. A fourth defendant, 17-year-old Carlos Espinoza, is charged as an adult and is alleged to have

been the shooter. He was not transported to court and will appear tomorrow with his co-defendants for entry of pleas.

According to Rabow, the four met, obtained a weapon and went out together in two cars "looking for rival gang members" to shoot.

The suspects in Chavarin's killing were also arraigned today. Jorge Ruiz, 22, and Raul Lopez, 19, pleaded not guilty to murder and gang charges. A preliminary hearing was set for Aug. 21 in their case.

## **Salinas tackling deadly gang violence**

Associated Press

Posted: 08/09/2009 07:52:12 PM PDT

**SALINAS** — Police in Salinas are getting help from fellow law enforcement agencies to stem gang violence that has left seven dead and six injured in 12 days.

The Monterey County Sheriff's Department Commander Mike Richards says he is temporarily reassigning eight deputies to work with the Salinas gang task force.

The California Highway Patrol will add two officers to the six usually assigned to the city, says CHP Officer Brian West.

Salinas Police Commander Dino Bardoni says an unspecified number of traffic and patrol officers are being temporarily reassigned to the department's 16 - member gang task force.

All 21 homicides in Salinas this year are blamed on gangs.



## **Four Suspects Arrested in Teenager's Murder**

KCBA FOX News

Updated: Aug 8, 2009 10:47 PM PDT

SALINAS, Calif. - Until Saturday, only two homicide cases of 21 in 2009 had resulted in arrests in Salinas. Police have now added their most recent case to that list by putting four men behind bars.

According to Salinas Police, a team of officers and detectives conducted an extensive two-day investigation resulting in the arrests 19 year-old Antonio Gayoso, 19 year-old Juan Pablo Nunez, and 21 year-old Julio Luna Montoya. A 17-year-old male juvenile was also arrested.

The four suspects were charged with First Degree Murder, Attempted Murder, Conspiracy, and Participation in Criminal Gang Activity. The three adults were booked into Monterey County jail and the juvenile was booked into juvenile hall.

It's connected to a homicide on August 6th. Police say Jose Manuel Perez, age 15, was shot and killed in the 500 block of Terrace Street in Salinas.

Although suspects have been arrested, the investigation continues. The Salinas Police Department is asking that anyone with information please call Salinas Police Detectives Luis Bravo (831) 758-7124 and James Godwin at (831) 758-7270.

If you would like to remain anonymous, you can call the Salinas Police Department Tip Line at (831) 775-4222 or the We-Tip Line at 1-800-78-CRIME, or text information to the Text Tip Line with the code "SPD831" to "847411."

## **Police Arrest Gang Members Following Car Chase**

KCBA FOX News

Posted: Aug 8, 2009 10:42 AM PDT

SALINAS, Calif. - Officers arrested two men Saturday morning following a car chase from Central to South Salinas.

According to police, both suspects, Gustavo Hernandez, 21, and Oscar Corona, 18, admitted to being gang members; during the chase, police say Corona threw a loaded shotgun out of the car.

The car pursuit began after Hernandez failed to yield to officers on East Alisal and California just before 1 a.m.; the pursuit ended on Lang Street and Capitol when the car spun out.

Both were arrested and jailed on vehicle and weapons charges.



North Sanborn Road shooting victim being rushed to hospital

## Salinas violence escalates

Boy dies, two men injured in brazen Salinas shootings

By DENNIS TAYLOR

Herald Salinas Bureau

Updated: 08/07/2009 08:40:32 AM PDT

A ferocious epidemic of violence continued Thursday in Salinas when three more victims were shot in two incidents less than an hour apart at separate locations.

One victim, a 15-year-old boy, died a short time later at a Salinas hospital.

His death was the seventh homicide in Salinas in the past 11 days and the 21st homicide this year. The body of another homicide victim, a Salinas resident, was found in the Arroyo Seco River on Sunday. Last year, Salinas had a record 25 homicides.

"We've ramped up our staffing to try to get uniforms on the street and hopefully prevent future shootings," Deputy Police Chief Cassie McSorley said.

"We've had crime spurts in the past, of course, but I can't remember one of this magnitude in quite some time, especially with the two today, back-to-back," she said. "We're obviously very concerned."

McSorley said her department is stretched thin, even with the help they received at Thursday from the California Highway Patrol and probation department officers.

"We'll continue to strategize daily regarding how many officers we need to put out on the street, and whether we need to ask for more assistance from outside agencies," she said. "This is an evolving strategy, and we may either ramp up further or change some of our tactics day to day."

Two weeks ago, Salinas Police Chief Louis Fetherolf issued a report stating that the department

needs 84 new officers to battle the rising crime rate in the city.

Police were summoned about 1:30 p.m. Thursday to North Sanborn Road and Del Monte Avenue in East Salinas, where two men had been shot. As they were investigating that crime, a boy was fatally shot about two miles away in the 500 block of Terrace Street.

Witnesses of the North Sanborn Road shooting reported that a 19-year-old victim was shot at least twice in the torso. He was transported by air ambulance to a San Francisco Bay Area trauma center. Police said late Thursday that he was in life-threatening but stable condition.

The second victim, a 26-year-old, reportedly was shot in the arm and was taken to a local hospital. No update on his condition was available late Thursday.

McSorley said both men apparently were standing on Del Monte Avenue near a bus stop when they were shot. One or both then ran a short distance to a taco shop to seek help.

As officers were interviewing witnesses and gathering evidence about that shooting, the unidentified 15-year-old boy was shot to death as he stood in the driveway of a four-plex on Terrace Street. Witnesses there said he had been shot in the stomach.

Police believe that the boy, who was reportedly a good student at Salinas High School and played on the football team, was not the intended victim.

"He wasn't breathing at all," said former ambulance attendant Michael Craddock, who ran half a block from his home to aid the Terrace Street victim. "I got his brother to start breathing into his mouth while I was pumping on his heart. From what I could see, there were at least two bullet casings lying near him."

McSorley said people witnessed both crimes and are cooperating with police, but details from the shootings are still being pieced together.

She said vehicles were used in both crimes, but she couldn't confirm whether the shootings were drive-bys, whether the shooters exited a vehicle before shooting, or whether they got into a vehicle after firing the shots. She said shell casings were found at both scenes.

"Whenever we have shootings like this, we pretty much make an assumption that it's gang-related," McSorley said. "This was the M.O. of a crime that is consistent with gang violence, but I don't have enough details yet to say whether any of the victims were gang members or gang associates."

The two shootings come on the heels of nine other shootings in Salinas over the past 11 days. On Tuesday, police arrested two men on suspicion of homicide, with gang enhancements, in connection with the fatal shooting of 17-year-old Andres Chavarin earlier that day.

"A lot of the parents around here are working in the fields and don't have time to guide their children," Craddock said. "From what I can see in this neighborhood, child is raising child and the gangs are giving the kids what the parents aren't giving them.

"They're giving them emotional support, and they're teaching them how to get worldly possessions the wrong way."

"This (violence) isn't something I grew up with, and I haven't a clue what to make of it," said Craddock's wife, Ellen. "We've lived here 11 years now and I don't understand it and don't know how to deal with it, other than the fact that people need to speak up and tell the police what they see."

Herald Staff Writers Claudia Mélenlez Salinas and Julie Reynolds contributed to this report.

## **Salinas police identify boy killed in apparent gang-related shooting**

Bay City News Service

Posted: 08/08/2009 09:49:20 AM PDT

Salinas police Friday identified a 15-year-old boy who was the victim of an apparent gang-related fatal shooting in Salinas Thursday.

Jose Manuel Perez was found at about 2:15 p.m. by officers who went to the to the 500 block of Terrace Street on reports of a shooting victim, police said.

The officers found Perez suffering from multiple gunshot wounds. He was taken to Natividad Medical Center where he was pronounced dead shortly after arriving at the hospital, according to police.

The shooting is being investigated as gang-related, according to police. No arrests have been made in connection with the shooting.

Anyone with information regarding the case is asked to call Salinas police Detective Luis Bravo at (831) 758-7124 or Detective James Godwin at (831) 758-7250. To remain anonymous, call the Police Department's tip line at (831) 775-4222 or the We-Tip line at (800) 78-CRIME.



## Accused killers make first court appearance

By VIRGINIA HENNESSEY  
Herald Salinas Bureau

Updated: 08/07/2009 08:40:04 AM PDT

Two Salinas men arrested in connection with the slaying of a 17-year-old boy made their first appearance in a Salinas courtroom Thursday.

Raul Lopez, 19, and Jorge Luis Meza Ruiz, 22, are charged with murder with gang enhancements. Ruiz also is alleged to have fired the gun that killed Andres Chavarin of Salinas.

Chavarin was gunned down outside his residence in the 700 block of Yucatan Way about 8p.m. Tuesday, the sixth of seven homicides that have rocked Salinas since July 27. The most recent victim, a 15-year old boy, died Thursday.

The arraignments were put off until Monday at the request of defense attorney Larry Biegel, who said Lopez's parents may retain him. The Monterey County Public Defenders Office was appointed to represent Ruiz.

Both men are in Monterey County Jail with bail set at \$1 million or more.

Prosecutors and police maintain both suspects are gang members, though neither has any serious criminal record in Monterey County Superior Court.

Thursday's hearing was attended by family members of both defendants as well as the victim. Chavarin's parents left quietly with a victim's advocate from the District Attorney's Office after the proceeding.

Outside of the courthouse, Ruiz's father tried to comfort the young man's tearful mother.

Eliseo Ruiz said his son is a quiet person who never argues and has never been in trouble. He goes straight home from work most nights, the father said, saying his son is a field worker for Foothill

Packing who travels with the lettuce crops between Salinas and Yuma, Ariz.

Bundled in a jacket on a balmy afternoon, Imelda Ruiz said her son's charges would make her fight against cancer all the more difficult. Through a neighbor who had attended the court hearing to translate for the couple, she recalled the telephone call her son made from jail.

"He said not to worry," she said, then added, "I didn't do anything. My conscience is clear. I'm fine."

Prosecutor David Rabow referred all questions to Managing Deputy District Attorney Chuck Olvis, who said he is convinced the defendants carried out the slaying for the benefit of their gang. He said police have not yet determined why Chavarin was targeted.

Judge Adrienne Grover had to referee a verbal tussle between Rabow and defense attorney Biegel during Thursday's hearing. Biegel asked Rabow to let him review the police reports, saying he needed to know more before deciding if he would accept the case.

Rabow shook his head and said the reports hadn't been redacted to remove witnesses' names. Grover continued the case until Monday to give the prosecutor time to do so. Rabow said he was not promising to let Biegel look at the reports, even after they are redacted, if he is not retained as defense counsel.

"How do you do an operation without looking at the X-rays?" Biegel asked outside the courtroom.

Olvis said it will be up to Rabow to decide whether the reports are reviewed in court Monday. He said it is routine for his agency to withhold reports until they are redacted and an attorney is retained.

"It is standard procedure to redact all witness names and addresses from reports because of the potential for violence against them if the names are released," he said. "We try to protect victims and witnesses at all cost."

Olvis said all of the witnesses being protected in this case are private citizens who came to the aid of police.



Raul Lopez, 19



Jorge Luis Meza Ruiz, 22

## **Police arrest two after teen is slain**

**Salinas witnesses help authorities with information on Yucatan Way killing**

By JULIE REYNOLDS  
Herald Salinas Bureau  
Updated: 08/06/2009 01:27:28 AM PDT

Salinas police caught an unusual break late Tuesday when residents gave them information that led to the arrest of two men after a 17-year-old boy was fatally shot.

Raul Lopez, 19, and Jorge Luis Meza Ruiz, 22, were arrested on suspicion of homicide with gang enhancements shortly after 17-year-old Andres Chavarin was killed at his residence in the 700 block of Yucatan Way about 8 p.m.

Salinas police Cmdr. Dino Bardoni said the assistance of witnesses made the case different from most of the six homicides that took place in the city over the past week and a half.

"There's a feeling with citizens that enough's enough, and they want to cooperate. In this case, good citizens did come forward," he said.

That is in contrast to the frustration felt by homicide investigators for most of the previous week, as police grappled with a barrage of targeted "hits" that came nearly every day.

Investigators are looking into relationships between some of the victims and whether Norteño gangsters were deliberately eliminating gang dropouts and rivals in at least some of the recent homicides.

"In so many of these cases, the witnesses are gang members themselves," Bardoni said.

He said investigators have been stonewalled by family members and friends who won't talk.

In one case, he said, friends have refused to tell officers where witness and shooting victim Joseph Cruz Bustamante may be hiding. Bustamante, 26, was injured in the same shooting in which Roy Simon Ramirez, 28, was killed July 27.

The lack of cooperation means police are now working on other means of bringing in those who know who the killers are.

"They won't come to us ... we'll find a reason to make a lawful arrest," he said. He said officers have already started to bring in some people who have been "less than cooperative."

But Tuesday's shooting was the exception. Witnesses told police that they saw a white Ford F-250 pickup leave the scene of the crime.

Other witnesses pointed officers to a mobile home park on Rider Avenue. Officers pulled over the truck in a traffic stop, which was occupied by the suspects.

Bardoni said he could not give more details about the case Wednesday because the investigation is continuing.

The two suspects have only minor citations on their adult criminal records, but Bardoni said both are known to be gang members.

All of the year's 20 slayings are being investigated as having gang involvement, he said.



## **Salinas led state in percentage of gang-linked killings** **Only three comparably sized cities in California were worse last year**

BY MIKE HORNICK • [MHORNICK@THECALIFORNIAN.COM](mailto:MHORNICK@THECALIFORNIAN.COM) • AUGUST 6, 2009

All 20 Salinas homicides in 2009 have been gang-related, a number that threatens to repeat a dubious distinction from the prior year when the city led the state in the percentage of slayings involving gangs.

In 2008, 92 percent, or 23, of the city's record 25 homicides were gang-related.

"That is very unusual," said Paul Seave, director of the California Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention program, the state's anti-gang initiative.

"Most of the cities that have serious gang homicide problems typically are in the 40 to 60 percent range. And then you [Salinas] are where you are."

And where is that? Well, in 2008 Salinas' homicide rate was the fourth highest in the state among cities with a population of 90,000 or more. Only Compton,

Oakland and Richmond were worse than Salinas. The city had 16.4 homicides per 100,000 residents.

In Salinas, gang homicides often happen in bunches. In January, there were six killings in a seven-day period. February had three in two days.

"We've seen this in the past where one incident of gang violence can spark retaliatory violence back and forth," Salinas police Cmdr. Dino Bardoni said. "It's imperative that we as law enforcement stop that cycle immediately."

### **2008 report**

An FBI report in May 2008 sketched a growing threat to public safety in Monterey County from the emergence of new gangs Nuevas Flores and Northern Riders ' both considered "Norteno dropouts" from the Nuestra Familia gang. But Salinas police don't identify the gangs suspected in homicides, nor offer theories as to what's happening in gang organizations to explain spates of violence.

"There are some links between these homicides," Bardoni said. "We have a couple of ideas [why it's happening], but nothing we're publicly releasing."

### **Statewide homicides**

Statewide, gang homicides are up this year, Seave said except in Los Angeles. But it's difficult to identify trends beyond that.

"It's more important to look at individual cities," he said. "Not every city goes up, or down, together. Criminologists find it hard to explain after the fact, let alone predict why it's happening."

"Gang violence does tend to be cyclic," said Wes McBride, executive director of the California Gang Investigators Association and a retired sergeant from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office. "We're on down cycle [in Los Angeles] at the moment. It'll come back again. As crime goes down, politicians withdraw funding. Gangs are a social cancer; the crime comes back."

"Six homicides in eight days is unique, particularly for a town the size of Salinas," McBride said.

Walk-up or home-invasion killings have become common in the Salinas outbreak. It hasn't been the usual drive-by shootings.

"It's up close and personal," Bardoni said. "The [targets] are actually being hit whereas often before they were missed."

In Los Angeles County, McBride said, prison gangs at one point opted to favor home executions over drive-bys.

"You're more likely to get who you're after," he said. "And the drive-bys were bringing too much heat on the gangs; they were killing too many innocent people."

In 2008, the 20th Salinas homicide happened on Sept. 16. This year's 20th was Aug. 4.

Nearby Watsonville, an agricultural community with a population of 47,297, has three homicides so far in 2009. Two were gang-related.

"I feel rotten for you guys [in Salinas]," said Lt. Darren Thompson of the Watsonville Police.



## Teen is Salinas' 20th homicide

**Police investigate whether recent violence is part of Norteño power struggle**

By JULIA REYNOLDS and DANIEL LOPEZ

Herald Salinas Bureau

Updated: 08/05/2009 07:53:04 AM PDT

A 17-year-old Salinas boy became the city's 20th homicide victim of the year after he was shot about 8 p.m. Tuesday outside his home on Yucatan Way.

Sgt. Don Cline said the youth was entering his house when at least one gunman fired multiple times, striking the boy. He was taken to Natividad Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead a short time later. His name was not released late Tuesday.

Witnesses told police they saw the gunman and at least one person flee in a white truck. Cline said police have made no arrests and are searching for the assailants.

He said it is too soon to tell if the shooting is gang-related or related to any recent homicides.

Tuesday's slaying was the sixth homicide in eight days in Salinas.

Gang investigators are looking into whether recent brazen shootings in Salinas are part of a "clean-up" or power struggle among Norteño gang members.

Investigators have taken note of the boldness of the recent attacks in Salinas and said several of the victims were specifically targeted.

Six people were killed and another critically wounded in a series of shootings that began when two men were shot July 27.

In past decades, the city has witnessed prolonged periods of violence at times when power struggles within the Norteños and their "parent" crime organization, the Nuestra Familia prison gang, have translated into battles in the streets. At times, the shooting sprees included attacks on gang deserters and rivals who

competed with the gang for drug-dealing turf.

"These spikes of violence are not uncommon in Salinas. Unfortunately, we have been suffering from these for years," Cline said late Tuesday.

At least three of the six recent slaying victims were affiliated with Norteño gangs, police said, as was Joseph Cruz Bustamante, 26, another targeted man who was shot July 27 but has not contacted police or local hospitals.

Several people who were shot were gang "dropouts," a designation that could put them on hit lists, investigators said, although dropouts are sometimes left alone if they are not thought to be competing with the gang for revenue.

Police were quick to say Tuesday they do not know if Monday's shooting victim, Arturo Navarro Marquez, 30, had gang ties, but said they have not ruled it out.

Court records show Marquez was convicted of possessing methamphetamine in 2004 and was arrested several other times on drug charges. His probation terms did not indicate a gang affiliation.

Salinas police Sgt. Christopher Lane said the large number of shots fired at Marquez makes his shooting stand out from the spontaneous or random drive-by attacks that are more common among young gang members.

"It was more like an execution," he said.

Lane said police are investigating whether retaliation shootings have been part of the mix this week.

Two victims, Roy Ramirez, 28, who was shot July 28, and Antonio Quintero, 21, who was killed one day later, had family ties.

Alberto Arizpe, who was fatally shot when gunmen burst into his residence late Sunday, was reportedly placed on Norteño "no good" lists after he was convicted of child abuse in 1999. That case left a 22-month-old boy with a broken leg and head and arm injuries. Arizpe was 18 at the time.

Judge Robert Moody, after hearing testimony that a 12-year-old witness told police he had seen Arizpe torment and torture the toddler, said Arizpe had suffered terrible abuses "at an extremely young age."

"It's an extremely sick situation," Moody said at Arizpe's sentencing. "You have committed acts which are absolutely inhuman. They are unspeakable."

When Arizpe was sent to a state prison in Delano to begin a seven-year sentence in 2000, Norteño inmates assaulted him and forced him out of the gang because of the child abuse conviction, several people familiar with his case said.

Mayor Dennis Donohue acknowledged that the recent attacks were "brazen" and "out of the ordinary," and said "fundamentally, there is no guarantee of anyone's personal safety who chooses to be involved with that life."

He said the city remains committed to putting "game-changer" tactics into place, but insisted they will take time.

"Qualitative and quantitative investments are needed to break the cycle," he said.

The city and its police department have begun to implement "community-involved" policing strategies, including sending emergency response teams that offer support to families of victims and strive to prevent retaliatory shootings.

But residents must remember that results from innovative and even "proven" approaches are not instantaneous, Donohue said.

Salinas is notable among California cities because in recent years its homicide rate has been nearly 100 percent gang-related. Crime experts consider 40 percent or higher to be a very high level of gang crime.

At least 18 of the 20 slayings this year have gang involvement, police said. Of last year's record 25 homicides, 23 were gang-related.

"It's gotten too big," Donohue said. "We need to make the investment."

## **2009 gang-related homicides -- updated Aug. 5**

**Salinas Valley struggling to quell gang violence**

SOURCE: SALINAS POLICE DEPARTMENT • AUGUST 12, 2009

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The following is a tally and description of gang-related homicides in Salinas in 2009

(SALINAS: 20)

SALINAS: Aug. 4: At 8:01 p.m., 17-year-old Andres Chavarin was shot as he arrived at his home at Yucatan Way and Mazatlan Street, dying soon after at Natividad Medical Center. Witnesses said they saw two people drive away in a white Ford F-250 pickup truck, and they pointed police to a mobile home park on the 1200 block of Rider Avenue. Officers then found the truck and arrested Jorge Luis Meza Ruiz, 22, and Raul Lopez, 19. The two were booked into Monterey County Jail on charges of homicide and gang enhancement.

(SALINAS: 19)

SALINAS: At 8:45 p.m. on Aug. 3, a man was shot multiple times by two suspects while

walking at the corner of Noice and Chaparral drives. Arturo Navarro Marquez, age 30, of Salinas was pronounced dead at a local hospital. The suspects possibly fled into a waiting, dark-colored SUV that left eastbound on Chaparral Drive. Being investigated as gang-related.

(SALINAS: 18, 17)

SALINAS: At 9:12 p.m. on Aug. 2, police say two males walked up to a home on the 519 block of Dallas Avenue and fired shots through the open door. Alberto Arizpe, 28, and Josephine Alvarez, 36, died at the scene of multiple gunshot wounds to their torsos. A third person received a gunshot wound to the leg. These homicides are being investigated as gang related.

(SALINAS: 16)

SALINAS: At 11:35 p.m. July 28, police responded to shots fired at Natividad Boulevard and Bradbury Street in northeast Salinas. No victim was found. At 6:30 a.m. on Wednesday officers were alerted to a dead body found in the same area.

(SALINAS: 15)

SALINAS: At 11 p.m. on July 27, Salinas police found Roy Simon Ramirez shot multiple times in the torso in a driveway on the 500 block of San Benito Street in Salinas. CPR was unsuccessful and he was pronounced dead at the scene. Gang-related.

(SALINAS: 14)

SALINAS - At 8:55 p.m. May 18, a man sitting in the driver's seat of a white Honda was shot multiple times in the torso while parked outside the Rancho Salinas mobile-home park on the 100 block of Sherwood Drive. He died at the scene. Police said the shooter was a man wearing a black hooded sweatshirt.

(SALINAS: 13)

SALINAS - At 8:30 p.m. May 8, 33-year-old fieldworker Eleutario Ojeda was shot multiple times in the torso in a driveway on the 700 block of East Market Street. He died soon after arriving at Natividad Medical Center. Witnesses said two men ran from the crime scene wearing dark-colored sweatshirts with the hoods pulled down over their faces.

(SALINAS: 12, 11)

SALINAS - At 7 p.m. March 31, several men on foot shot three people unloading items into a residence on the less-than 100 block of Center Street, Salinas. Two of the shooting victims died at the scene: Juan Carlos Ledesma, 19, and Juan Maciel, 20, both of Salinas. The third was treated for multiple gunshot wounds at a Bay Area trauma center.

(SALINAS: 10)

SALINAS - At 11:23 p.m. Monday, March 30, 16-year-old Ismael Mandujano was shot multiple times by the occupants of a dark sport utility vehicle while he was walking with friends at the intersection of East and North Hebbbron streets. He died at the scene.

(SALINAS: 9)

SALINAS - About 1 p.m. Friday, Feb. 27, 24-year-old Noe Alvarez of Salinas was shot outside an apartment complex at North Sanborn Road and Del Monte Avenue. He died less than an hour later at Natividad Medical Center.

(SALINAS: 8, 7)

SALINAS - About 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26, Carlos Mejia, 17, and Francisco Alfaro, 16, were shot while standing outside 918 Acosta Plaza; both died later that evening. The two male suspects fled. The shootings are being investigated as gang related.

(SALINAS: 6)

SALINAS - At 8:46 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 15, a man in dark clothing opened fire at a family gathering on the 700 block of Las Casitas Drive. Gabriel Amezcua, 30, was hit multiple times and died. A woman, 29, was shot in the leg.

(SALINAS: 5)

SALINAS - About 7:15 p.m. Monday, Jan. 12, two people approached a parked car on Cortez Street near Mae Avenue and opened fire into the vehicle, wounding the driver and passenger multiple times in their upper torsos. The motorist drove himself and passenger **Jose Guevarra**, a 17-year-old student at Alisal High School, to Natividad, where Guevarra was pronounced dead.

(SALINAS: 4)

SALINAS - At 2 p.m. Monday, Jan. 12, **James Lopez**, 26, was driving west on John Street just before McGowan Drive when a light-green minivan drove up alongside of him. Words were exchanged, and someone in the van started shooting at Lopez and his passenger. More than a dozen shots were fired, some hitting Lopez. He stopped the car in a driveway on the 1300 block of McGowan Drive, where someone called an ambulance. Lopez was taken to Natividad Medical Center, where he later died.

(SALINAS: 3)

SALINAS - Just after 9 a.m. Monday, Jan. 12, **Juan Jose Perez**, 15, was fatally shot on the 700 block of Burke Street as he walked to Alisal High School, where he was a student. He was near a soccer field at the back of campus when he was wounded. Perez was taken to a local hospital where he later died.

(SALINAS: 2)

SALINAS - At 10:20 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 10, **Frankie Espinoza**, 20, got into a confrontation with an unknown person outside of a party on the 1200 block of Tampico Avenue. After a brief verbal dispute, Espinoza was shot multiple times in the torso and hand. He died from his wounds early Sunday, Jan. 11.

(SALINAS: 1)

SALINAS - At 2:15 a.m. Friday, Jan. 9, **Luis Fernando Rodriguez Garcia**, 34, answered a knock at his front door on the 1100 block of Cortez Street. An argument ensued between Garcia and at least two people outside. Garcia was shot in the head as he tried to close the door. He was placed on life support and died at 8 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 11.



Josephine Alvarez, 36



Alberto Arizpe, 28

## Families of Salinas homicide victims mourn loss

BY SUNITA VIJAYAN AND MARIA INES ZAMUDIO • SVIJAYAN@THECALLIFORNIAN.COM • AUGUST 5, 2009

Two weeks ago, as his 55-year-old mother recovered from surgery for skin cancer treatment, Arturo Navarro Marquez stayed home from work to help care for her during a difficult time, his sister recalled Tuesday. Today, the family is reeling from another blow to the family: Marquez, 30, was shot and killed shortly before 9 p.m. Monday while walking home from a friend's house at Noice Drive and Chaparral Street.

"We [two brothers and three sisters] were all like a team," said Araceli Marquez, the victim's sister, speaking in Spanish. "We would get together to talk about the family's problems and how we would work together to solve them .... [Now] my mom is asking God to help her accept his will."

Marquez's death marked the fifth gun-related killing in seven days and the city's 19th homicide of the year.

In 2008, the city recorded 25 homicides 23 of them gang-related. At least 19 of the 20 homicides since January are gang motivated, officials say.

No suspects have been apprehended in any of the homicides this year.

Barely 24 hours before Monday's shooting, 36-year-old Josephine Alvarez and 28-year-old Alberto Arizpe were enjoying a get-together with friends when two gunmen fired at least a half-dozen rounds inside the home in the 500 block of Dallas Avenue. Alvarez and Arizpe were pronounced dead at the scene.

Maria Alvarez, the third person shot and Josephine's older sister, suffered a gunshot wound to her leg.

Alvarez said Tuesday that there were three others at the house that night, including her sister's fiancà. She said she does not know why they were shot at on Sunday. Alvarez said she is grateful, however, that her young son was at a neighbor's house at the time of the incident.

All I heard was the gunshots ... and then seeing my sister hit," she said. "[The gunmen] didn't say nothing."

Meanwhile, in Monday's homicide, Sgt. Chris Lane said it does not appear that Marquez was associated with a gang.

"We wouldn't consider him a gang member at this time," Lane said. "That's why we're trying to figure [why he was targeted]."

Police said witnesses told officers that the gunman or gunmen may have fled in a dark-colored sport utility vehicle that headed eastbound on Chaparral Street.

Lane said Marquez had been walking alone on a route he normally took when he was shot.

According to court records, Marquez has been in and out jail in the past decade, serving time on mostly drug convictions and driving violations and parole violations.

As for Arizpe, court records show prior convictions, including pleading guilty to disturbing the peace in 2000 and pleading no contest to a misdemeanor count of driving without a license and resisting or obstructing a peace officer in 2004.

Family and friends of three Salinas residents who died, however, remembered them not for their brushes with the law, but as loved ones who would be greatly missed.

Maria Alvarez said her sister had been planning to get married soon. Instead of helping her younger sibling prepare for her big day, Alvarez said, she is now worrying about funeral costs.

She called Arizpe, also known as "Chico," her best friend who always knew how to cheer her up with a ready laugh. Alvarez said her sister was someone she could count on to make things better.

"It's hard because we saw them die," she said.

## **Salinas Shooting Near North Hebbroon and Fremont Streets**

### **KION NEWS**

Aug 5, 2009 10:16 PM PDT

SALINAS, Calif. - Police say, it happened around 9 p.m. Thursday night at the 100 block of North Hebbroon Street.

A 24-year-old man was walking by a small, dark car. It was parked with two men inside. One of them got out and without saying anything, shot the victim in the leg. The suspects then drove off.

The victim was taken to a local hospital, where he's being treated for non-life threatening injuries. Also, it's not been confirmed if this shooting is gang related. Police describe the shooter as a Hispanic male adult with a thin build and bald head in his early 20's.

Anyone with information is asked to contact them or the We Tip Line at 1-800-78-CRIME.



## **Salinas violence claims new victims**

Chief links killings to too few officers

By DANIEL LOPEZ and JULIA REYNOLDS

Herald Staff Writers

Updated: 07/30/2009 09:40:02 AM PDT

Salinas Police Chief Louis Fetherolf says a string of shootings this week, including the slaying of two men, underscores the need to hire more officers to combat crime.

"We are grossly understaffed for the crime issues we have in this community," he said Wednesday, after the city recorded its 16th homicide of the year.

The body of Antonio Christian Quintero, 21, of Salinas was discovered about 6:30 a.m. lying on a grassy hill near Nantucket Boulevard and Bradbury Street in the Creekbridge neighborhood.

A person close to both victims, who declined to be named, said Quintero was the brother-in-law of Roy Simon Ramirez, who was killed late Monday on San Benito Street in Salinas. Police said they could not confirm that late Wednesday.

Sgt. Don Cline said investigators believe Quintero died near where his body was found after he was shot the night before.

Cline said detectives are trying to determine if Quintero's death is connected to reports of shots fired from that neighborhood, which were called into police about 10:10 p.m. Tuesday.

"We are looking into that," he said.

The callers indicated the shots were heard near the intersection of Nantucket and Hemingway Drive, about a block from where Quintero's body was discovered, Cline said.

Officers responded, but there was no indication anyone had been injured and officers found nothing, Cline said.

Less than 30 minutes later, police said officers responded to a report of a drive-by shooting at a house on Alamo Way.

No one was hurt and the assailants were seen fleeing in a black sedan, police said.

The car may have been the one involved in a crash at Boronda Road and Constitution Boulevard later, police said.

Two teenage boys were seen fleeing from the car toward a strawberry field, and police said they are searching for them.

Cline said a shotgun was found in the car.

Salinas police Cmdr. Al Ruiz said Quintero's injuries and those of a woman shot Wednesday were caused by bullets, not shotgun pellets. Police were called to that drive-by shooting in the 1100 block of Acosta Street.

A woman in her 40s was struck in the leg by a stray bullet about 2 p.m. when a group of men in a gray sport utility vehicle pulled up in front of a house, according to Ruiz. The SUV's occupants, Ruiz said, started shooting after asking a group of men who were standing in the driveway if they "banged," referring to gang membership.

A bullet went through a wall and struck the woman. None of the men were hit.

The SUV sped away and officers were searching for the vehicle and its occupants.

The wounded woman was taken to a Salinas hospital for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries.

Police are investigating the incident as gang-related, Ruiz said.

The shooting comes on the heels of two drive-by shootings Tuesday and a fatal one late Monday.

A 14-year-old boy was wounded about 2:45 p.m. Tuesday in the 1100 block of Garner Avenue after he exchanged words with men in a car who shot him. Although police at first said he was treated locally, he was flown late Tuesday to a San Jose-area hospital where he underwent surgery to remove shotgun pellets. He is expected to recover.

Late Monday, Ramirez, a 28-year-old Salinas resident, was found with several gunshot wounds to his torso in a parking lot at 551 San Benito St., one block south of East Alisal Street. After CPR was attempted, Ramirez was declared dead at the scene.

Police had not announced any arrests Wednesday and Ruiz said they have not determined if any of the assaults are related.

Fetherolf has requested that 84 new police officers be added to the force. On Tuesday, officials announced that federal funds would allow him to hire nine new officers.

Police ask that anyone with information call 758-7226.



Joseph Cruz "Tank" Bustamante, 26

## **Parolee Sought In Fatal Salinas Shooting**

### ***Police Say Man Could Be Wounded***

POSTED: 1:01 pm PDT July 30, 2009  
UPDATED: 4:59 pm PDT July 30, 2009

**SALINAS, Calif.** -- Police are looking for a 26-year-old parolee in connection with a shooting that took place Monday evening.

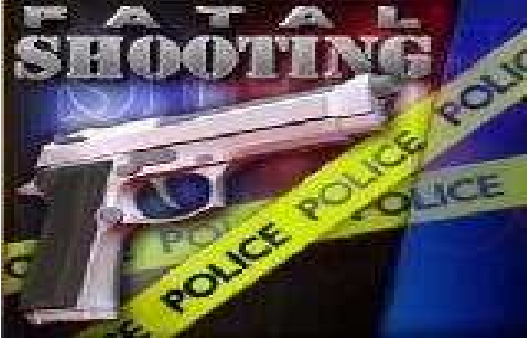
Joseph Cruz Bustamante, who is a wanted parolee with an outstanding warrant, is wanted in connection with the shooting of Roy Ramirez, who was killed in the 500 block of San Benito Street at 11 p.m. Monday.

Police said Bustamante suffered a gunshot wound during the shooting but has not sought medical attention.

"It could turn from something non-life threatening to being life threatening, and that is one of the primary concerns of finding him" said Don Cline, of the Salinas Police Department. "He needs to get treatment, and we need to get the information he has." On Thursday, police also said that Monday's slaying of Ramirez is connected to the fatal shooting death the following night of Antonio Quintero.

Quintero's body was found on an embankment hours after he was shot by someone walking Wednesday morning at Bradbury Street and Nantucket Boulevard.

Police also said some witnesses may be hiding Bustamante and are not cooperating with police.



## **Gang shooting is Salinas' 15th homicide**

Wednesday, July 29, 2009 | 9:58 AM

**Bay City News**

SALINAS, CA -- Salinas police are investigating a fatal shooting that occurred Monday night, the city's 15th homicide of 2009.

Police responded to reports of shots fired in the 500 block of San Benito Street at around 11 p.m.

Arriving officers found the victim, 28-year-old Roy Ramirez, lying in the driveway of an apartment complex. He had been shot several times in the torso, police said.

Paramedics attempted to revive Ramirez but he was declared dead at the scene.

Investigators spoke with several witnesses and believe the shooting was gang-related, police said.

Police have not released any information about possible suspects.

Anyone with information on the shooting should contact Salinas police Detective Robert Hampson at (831) 758-7145 or Detective Thomas Larkin at (831) 758-7127. It is also possible to text information to "847411," including the code "SPD831." An anonymous tip line is available at (831) 775-4222.



**Gardner Ave. shooting victim taken to hospital**

## **Violence flares up in Salinas**

**One injured in shooting Tuesday, a day after city's 15th homicide of 2009**

BY SUNITA VIJAYAN AND KIMBER SOLANA • SVIJAYAN@THECALIFORNIAN.COM • JULY 29, 2009

It was about 11 p.m. Monday when Derrick Hart heard a commotion followed by an alarming series of "pops" outside his bedroom window.

"I didn't know where exactly [the gunshots were] coming from, just that it was nearby," said Hart, 30. "I told my mom to get back from the window, and I heard [a man say], 'I've been shot!'"

Roy Simon Ramirez, 28, had just been wounded multiple times in the torso.

Emergency crews found him lying in a driveway of an apartment complex in the 500 block of San Benito Street in east Salinas.

Paramedics tried unsuccessfully to revive Ramirez, and he was pronounced dead on the scene, becoming the city's 15th homicide of 2009, police said.

Street violence in the city continued Tuesday when a 14-year-old boy was wounded multiple times in a drive-by shooting in the 1100 block of Garner Avenue.

About 2:45 p.m., the boy, along with two other teens, ages 14 and 15, was walking along Garner Avenue when a white, older-model sedan pulled up next to them.

The teenagers on foot and the three male teens in the car exchanged words, including some gang-related slurs, before a passenger in the sedan pulled out a handgun and fired numerous rounds, Molfino said.

The victim was struck six times in the lower torso and legs, he said.

After running two blocks, trying to get away, the victim collapsed, Molfino said. The teen was taken to a local hospital and treated for nonlife threatening injuries.

Police said the two other targets escaped without injury.

Both Monday night's homicide and Tuesday's shooting appear gang-related, police said. No arrests have been made.

An autopsy for Ramirez is scheduled for today.

Sometime Tuesday morning, Hart said, someone placed a lone candle near a fence next to the driveway where Ramirez was found shot.

Hart, who volunteers at the Bread Box and Hebronn Heights recreation centers, said he was shocked by the violence that occurred in his neighborhood, which he described as quiet.

"The feelings I have inside [are] just really cold, and my stomach is turned upside down," he said. "It's a really sad thing to know that somebody's life is gone."

## **Police searching for gunman, accomplice in Salinas shooting**

**Victim in serious, but stable condition; teen suspects sought**

BY KIMBER SOLANA • [KSOLANA@THECALIFORNIAN.COM](mailto:KSOLANA@THECALIFORNIAN.COM) • JULY 16, 2009

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Police are searching for two teenage assailants in the shooting of a 19-year-old man Wednesday afternoon in the 800 block of Rider Avenue in Salinas.

As of Wednesday night, police said, the victim was in serious but stable condition. He was shot several times in the abdomen about 2 p.m. while children played at a nearby courtyard, investigators said.

The victim, who was found lying in a driveway, was taken to Natividad Medical Center, officials said, then flown to a Bay Area hospital for treatment. Police said the two assailants, described to be 16 to 19 years old, climbed and jumped over a wall and approached the victim.

There was an exchange of words between the assailants and the victim, police said, when at some point of the conversation, one of the attackers pulled out a handgun.

Salinas Police Investigations Sgt. Chris Lane said the gunman fired up to five shots at the victim before he and his accomplice ran westbound on Gee Street.

One of the perpetrators is described as heavyset and wore a black-hooded sweatshirt and dark pants, police said.

The other attacker also wore a black pullover with a hood. Investigators said it's unclear which of the assailants shot the victim.

Although police declined to say whether the victim lived in the residence where the driveway was located, Lane said "the victim lived in the area."

Police also declined to say how many times the victim was struck. Salinas Police Sgt. Don Cline said the victim was "struck in the torso several times."

As of Wednesday night, officers said, the victim's wounds didn't appear to be life threatening.

Police said the shooting is being investigated as gang related.

**Police: Man, woman shot after saying they weren't gang members in Salinas**

Salinas police officers are looking for two men who investigators say shot a man and a woman around 10:50 p.m. Saturday on the 900 block of Garner Avenue.

The victims, a 24-year-old man and a 19-year-old woman, police said were standing in a driveway outside when two men walk up to them.

The victims were attending a party at the residence, said Salinas police Cmdr. Tracy Molfino.

Molfino said, the two men asked the victims if they were gang members.

“When they tried to explain they weren’t,” Molfino said, “(The gunmen) pulled out a (semi-automatic) gun and fired several rounds.”

The woman was grazed by a bullet on the elbow, police said. The man was struck on the lower legs.

Molfino said the man had two wounds but added police are investigating if the wounds were caused by one bullet.

Investigators said the gunmen ran northbound through the apartments.

They’re described to be adult males wearing black-hooded sweatshirts.

The victims were treated at a local hospital and released, Molfino said.

Anyone with information is encouraged to call the We-Tip line at 1-800-7CRIME or 831-775-4222.

## **Police: Salinas Gang Members Arrested At Bar**

***Monterey Joint Gang Task Force Conducts Bar Check***

***KSBW.com***

POSTED: 8:41 am PDT June 29, 2009

**SALINAS, Calif.** -- Two alleged gang members were arrested in the parking lot of a Salinas Bar during the weekend after one was found to have a handgun and the other was in violation of parole, police said.

Eric Rojas, 26, and Raul Carranza Maldonado, 25, were arrested outside Jessie's Bar as officers of the Monterey County Joint Gang Task Force were doing a bar check.

While speaking with Rojas, officers found a loaded handgun in his front pants pocket. Both Rojas and Maldonado were identified as gang members and were booked into the Monterey County Jail.



## **Homicide Total Hits 14 In Salinas For '09**

### ***Man Shot In Head While Sitting In Car***

POSTED: 11:55 pm PDT May 18, 2009  
UPDATED: 7:23 am PDT May 19, 2009

**SALINAS, Calif.** -- Salinas' homicide total for 2009 reached 14 Monday night when a man was found shot while sitting in his car.

Jose Martin Naranjo, 18, was pronounced dead at the scene after suffering from multiple gunshot wounds to his upper torso, police said.

Naranjo was found in his car at about 8:50 p.m. in a parking lot on 150 Sherwood Drive.

A man wearing a black hooded sweatshirt was seen running southbound from the scene, police said.

The shooting is being investigated as gang-related.

The homicide is number 14 for the city of Salinas, which has a population of about 146,431.

Last year, the city set a new record for number of homicides with 25.

For 2009, Salinas is currently on pace to shatter that record with about 37 homicides.

# Deadly Gang Violence Has Salinas Residents On Edge

KTVU.COM

Posted: 2:44 pm PDT March 9, 2009

**SALINAS, Calif.** -- It is another tense night for law enforcement and the people of Salinas -- a 16-year old boy has just been shot to death in what police call a gang-related killing.

On one night, a special Monterey County gang task force says revenge is in the air. Gang task force Sgt. Sheldon Bryan has received word that a group of individuals are looking for retaliation from a shooting that happen the night before.

It might surprise some that Salinas, with a population of only 150,000, needs an intelligence network to battle gangs.

But in just the past year Salinas homicide rate has almost doubled and now far exceeds

San Francisco's, San Jose's, even the homicide rate in Los Angeles. In the last year, 30 or the last 31 homicides were gang-related.

The central coast farming town famous as the salad bowl of America is now infamous for gang wars that are deeply-rooted, violent, and technologically sophisticated.

Brian Contreras, executive director of Second Chance, grew up in Salinas and can vouch for his hometown being a battleground for gang activity. Contreras says they are experiencing a jump in gang-related violence that rivals bigger cities like San Jose and

San Francisco. Contreras believes gangs are vying to control the illicit drug trade and prostitution.

The size and threat of gangs in Salinas has almost tripled over the last few years. And the internet has created a new breed of gangs.

It's call cyber-banging. Gangs now use social networking sites to recruit, communicate, and post threats.

For Salinas officials, the trend brought to mind how terrorist organizations developed and triggered the idea of bringing in terrorism experts from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey.

Salinas Mayor Dennis Donohue was fascinated with how the military methodically figured where Saddam Hussein was by using statistical analysis. He wondered if the same approach in terms of predictability could be used on gangs.

Salinas police Commander Kelly McMillan agrees and said a lot of insurgent groups the military deals with in Iraq and Afghanistan are very much structured like a street gang in Salinas.

The gang task force welcomes the analysis and recommendations from the Naval Postgraduate school. Especially now when the gang task force fears it may lose its funding in July.

## **SFGate.com**

### **Recent gang violence in Salinas leaves 5 dead**

Tuesday, January 13, 2009

(01-13) 16:30 PST Salinas, CA (AP) --

Salinas police are battling a recent spate of violence that's killed at least five people in separate incidents over three days.

Investigators suspect all of the shootings are gang-related. Sgt. Chris Lane says each victim was either connected to the Nortenos gang or its rival, the Surenos.

Among those killed are two Alisal High School students, including a 15-year-old boy who was fatally shot behind the school Monday.

No arrests have been made in the five slayings.

Police say gang violence is an ongoing problem in the city. Gangs were blamed for 23 of the 25 homicides in Salinas last year, which broke the previous record high of 24 killings in 1994.

In October, authorities launched an anti-gang effort called Operation Impact that involves the Monterey County Sheriff's Office and California Highway Patrol.

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