

Pennsylvania Director Of Homeland Security Addresses Group

Vector Security Patrol recently hosted the June 2004 meeting of the Lehigh Chapter of the American Society Of Industrial Security at Alliance Capital Management. VSP provides corporate uniformed security service for Alliance Capital Management, and the meeting was held at their corporate services building located on Montage Mountain, Moosic PA.

On hand was Keith Martin, who was named Pennsylvania Director Of Homeland Security by Governor Rendell. Director Martin addressed a packed house, presenting the challenges his organization faces in guarding the entire state of Pennsylvania from the threats of terrorism. His agency is also tasked with coordinating the efforts of first responders located in cities like Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to the smallest suburbs and rural communities that dot the Pennsylvania landscape.

Martin, a long time military associate of VSP General Manager Dave Hoffman, indicated that stopping terrorism doesn't only mean dealing with big threat items. "Most in the room tonight might be surprised to learn that the plan for the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center was germinated in a small town in Perry County, where the location's rural qualities allowed the perpetrators to plan out of the view of major Federal & State Police Agencies", remarked Martin who urged that vigilance is a key deterrent. "We vow to investigate ANY reported threat, regardless of its initial significance simply because history has proved that ignoring those long shots could prove fatal".

While Martin preaches empowerment as the key to vigilance, he also cites the increasing role of the private security industry as a root resource. Given the decline in Federal & State budgets, Martin believes that the role of private security providers will help fill the gap. "Oftentimes private security officers do not receive the respect they deserve because they are branded by the public as poorly trained or incompetent. While quality training is the sole responsibility of the provider, government can help by making things easier for uniformed guard companies and the officers themselves."

He suggests and is actively supporting a triangular approach, whereby the state adopts a strict uniformed guard certification program, combined with INSTANT criminal background checks. It then should include private uniformed guards in a protected class of service providers like police and hospital workers who, if assaulted during the performance of their job, would expose their assailant(s) to a higher crime statute including felony.



Pictured left to right: Dave Hoffman, General Manager VSP, Keith Martin, Pennsylvania Director of Homeland Security, and Steve Bandura, President, Lehigh Valley ASIS Chapter.