

Committee on Homeland Security
Non-National Special Security Events Hearing
Wednesday, July 9, 2008 / 10 a.m. / EPW Hearing Room – 406 Dirkson
Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS), Chair

Testimony by Mall of America, Bloomington, Minn.: *Douglas Reynolds, Director of Security, Mall of America*

Honorable Chair and Members of the Committee:

This testimony is submitted on behalf of Mall of America, the nation's largest retail and entertainment complex located in Bloomington, Minn. It is an honor to be asked to acquaint this committee with the security program in place at Mall of America; and to share our challenges for the future.

Summary Statement

As a major tourist attraction – and a national symbol of consumerism and capitalism – Mall of America (MOA) faces security challenges and opportunities that are unique within the industry. Mall of America remains committed to working closely with local, state and federal agencies to ensure the safety and security of our guests, employees and facilities. We are also committed to sharing our expertise with other entities, and continued growth and vigilance of our security program.

Testimony for Non-National Special Security Events Hearing

For those members of the committee who have never visited Mall of America, it is important to understand that MOA is much more than another shopping center in fly-over country located somewhere in the mid-west. In fact, Mall of America is the nation's largest retail and entertainment complex.

MOA is two to three times as large as the typical super-regional shopping malls found on either coast. Our building is 4.5 million square feet, which is large enough to fit seven Yankee Stadiums, 32 Boeing 747's or 258 Statues of Liberty. MOA also includes a 7-acre indoor amusement park; a 1.2 million gallon aquarium; is home to more than 520 stores and 50 restaurants; and is open to and easily accessed by the public.

Mall of America is one of the top tourist destinations in the United States. We have more than 42 million visits every year – which is more than the combined populations of North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Montana, Wyoming...and all of Canada. In fact, on any given day there are well over 100,000 people in Mall of America, making it the third largest city in the state of Minnesota. Those numbers increase dramatically during holiday and summer seasons.

Mall of America employs more than 13,000 people and has an annual economic impact of nearly \$2 billion on the state of Minnesota. We host more than 350 events every year. Each event is free and open to the public which can pose unique security challenges. These events may attract from a few dozen to more than fifty thousand participants.

Given the sheer number of visitors to Mall of America – and our status as a symbol of consumerism and capitalism – security remains a top priority for us.

Unlike a typical shopping mall, our security department has approximately 100 officers, and we run our operation 24-hours a day, every day of the year. We work closely with the Bloomington Police Department as well as other local, county, state and federal authorities for the protection of our regular visitors, celebrities and VIP's.

We have been able to institute many security programs, procedures and policies over the years that help ensure the safety of our guests, employees and facilities. Some of the programs that are unique to MOA include:

- Parental Escort Policy. We have been a leader in the nation by instituting a policy that helps redirect responsibility for kids back onto parents. This policy has been a model throughout the nation and requires children under the age of 16 be accompanied by parents or adults age 21 or older on Friday and Saturday evenings. In fact, we receive calls from other malls, businesses and reporters almost every week to learn about our program.
- Extensive on-going training. Our security officers go through 240 hours of initial training and 50 hours of recertification training every year (including effective communications, first aid, verbal judo, crisis intervention, terrorism awareness and rapid response). That is more training than some municipal police departments require.
- We have two highly trained canine explosive protection units that patrol public and non-public areas of the mall. We also cross-train with canine units from the 11 county metro area.
- We have recently implemented two separate Ion Detection Systems (one stationary and one portable) that can be used to detect for explosive residue as well as chemical agents. The stationary unit is used to check all delivery vehicles that enter our secured loading docks, and the portable unit can be used throughout the mall.
- Most importantly, we have created our own counter-terrorism unit – our RAM Unit – that specializes in behavior profiling. Our RAM Unit is based on a technique that has been perfected over the years in Israel. In fact, leaders of our unit received training in Israel – at our expense – to help us develop this special program. These officers look for intent rather than means. The objective is to focus on suspicious indicators in three categories: people, vehicles and unattended items like backpacks or shopping bags. Our unit has 8 Full Time Equivalent positions and is staffed every day of the year.

External connections have also helped us strengthen our security program due to strong support from other agencies.

- We have been able to establish a strong working relationship with our local contact with the Department of Homeland Security, Glen Sanders. He has been helpful with sharing relevant information, providing access to needed resources and just as a voice of reason or sounding board to make sure our decisions are on track with the big picture.

- In 2007 I was granted a seat on the Joint Terrorism Task Force Executive Board thru the F.B.I. This was made possible when they activated my security clearance. This has proven to be an invaluable asset to Mall of America and our security program.

However, I would like to note that it took more than seven years for us to forge these strategic partnerships with the Joint Terrorism Task Force and the Department of Homeland Security, and to gain this limited access. Over the years we had to be persistent, diligent and methodical in order to gain access. And this really is just the beginning.

A good example of some of the challenges we face is that of the MJAC. Mall of America was the number one source of actionable intelligence in the state of Minnesota to the Minnesota Joint Analysis Center, supplying more intelligence than any other single entity. Unfortunately, we were pulled off of this system of information sharing. It is actions such as this that make our job of securing a top national tourist destination much more difficult and challenging.

As a testament to our effectiveness, we are frequently asked to share our expertise and knowledge with other large venues and groups across the globe. Whenever time and resources permit, we are more than happy to share with others. For example, we have worked with the Canary Wharf financial and retail complex in London, the world-famous Mayo Clinic and a Canadian retail development company; helping each structure a strong security program.

The success of Mall of America's security program has been the subject of many news stories and reports including in *The New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Inside Edition*, *Nightline*, *The Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, *The Travel Channel*, *Fox National News*, *CNN*, *Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*.

With growing concerns over biological, chemical, explosive and shooting threats we are taking steps to remain effective leaders in the private industry. However, in order to continue to succeed, we need timely, relevant information from proper agencies, insight into new trends or issues. Additional access to training opportunities for our officers would be quite helpful.

In short, here's what we need to remain successful:

- Access to real time, relevant information
- Additional training opportunities
- Resources to strengthen our security program

Although we are a private entity – we are also a national icon. If a major terrorist incident were to occur at Mall of America, the ramifications to the retail industry and other malls throughout the country would be quite severe. Our goal is to work hard to prevent that from ever happening.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify and for your continued leadership on the issue of security in public venues.