

Nassau police pitch training center

by David Winzelberg Published: June 23, 2010 Tags: [Long Island Realtors](#), [Nassau police](#), [training academy](#)

Nassau Police Commissioner Lawrence Mulvey wants Long Islanders to know that Nassau is the safest large county in America. But to keep it that way, he is pitching a \$48 million police academy to be built on 7.5 acres at [Nassau Community College](#) in Garden City to be financed mostly by private money.

Mulvey unveiled the plan Wednesday at a meeting of **the Long Island Real Estate Group** at the Old Westbury Country Club, hoping the industry might pony up for the police academy. The commissioner said \$25 million is the two-year private fundraising goal for the project, with the rest of the money expected to come from grants and public sources.

The 75,000-square-foot academy, dubbed the Center for Law Enforcement and Intelligence, will also house the county police department's intelligence division and will be a far cry from the temporary quarters in Mineola, Williston Park, East Meadow and Massapequa Park that the academy's been in and out of over the last 40 years.

While New York City's police department is planning to build a new \$350 million police academy, Mulvey said Long Island has little in the way of modern training facilities for its law enforcement personnel. But the proposed academy for Nassau will be equipped with the latest in investigative and tracking technology, as well as fully outfitted classrooms, an auditorium, driver training area and indoor running track.

Because of current budget deficits, Mulvey said he can't count on the county government to foot the bill for the academy. So he's formed a nonprofit corporation called the Nassau County Police

Foundation that will direct fundraising efforts for the project.

Individuals and companies can buy naming rights for the various rooms and facilities at the proposed academy. A donation of \$50,000 gets a wall plaque; \$100,000 will put a name on one of the classrooms and for \$8 million, the entire complex will bear a donor's name.

Mulvey said most people think of hospitals and schools, not police academies when it comes to beneficiaries of foundations, although the potential benefits to the community are similar. The commissioner said he came to the LIREG event because those in the real estate industry realize the value of having safe and secure neighborhoods where they live and work.

LIREG President David Einbinder, owner of Hauppauge-based First Development Corp., said Mulvey's pitch rang true. He said LIREG could be a contributor to the academy project.

"We should all be more involved in what's going on around us," Einbinder said.

Gene Bernstein, president of Northville Industries and one of the foundation's members, said it's difficult to rely on public money for anything these days. Bernstein said the foundation's campaign won't only raise money, but it will also raise awareness and a better understanding of what the police actually do.

"Policing needs grassroots support," Bernstein said.

Mulvey said his department has reduced crime - down 9.5 percent from last year - because it's "the most technologically proficient in America." But while they're well-equipped, Mulvey said Nassau's police training has been substandard for decades.

"The way policing is done is changing and we need to keep up," Mulvey said.