

Speaker

From Page 1A

he said.

"We've got to stop looking at how smart they look and innocent they look, and start listening to what they say. ...Everybody's a suspect. Don't be taken by surprise."

Chalmers applauded law enforcement and educators for being the first responders in reducing killings in schools by about 300, though he said such shootings still occur at least once a week in the U.S.

Chalmers stressed the importance of stopping bullying and paying attention to signs - such as teens cutting themselves, harming animals, setting fires, peeping at others, or bed wetting.

He also encouraged residents to learn what is being heard by teens through games and music.

"Killers are getting

younger and more violent. When no one pays attention, these kids fly under the radar," he said.

"...Teen killers don't snap. They plan, they journal, they talk to their friends (beforehand)."

Chalmers is an advocate of school resource officers in every school. He said Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, where 20 first-grade children were killed during a shooting, was the only school in the town without a cop.

"You can't stop bad guys from getting guns, (but) good guys with guns can stop bad guys with guns," he said.

"In Israel there are four officers in the schools and officers on buses with AK-47s. They are serious about protecting their kids."

Wallace Community College criminal justice instructor Myron Williams said Friday's conference was essential to law enforcement practices today.

"Knowledge is power,

and the more area law enforcement that is exposed to this kind of training, the better they are in the field, in the community, and overall," he said.

Daleville Police Chief Harvey Mathis said smaller departments might not have had access to such training without the support of the local district attorneys' offices.

"Law enforcement has changed so much that we have to be even more vigilant," he said.

"This training gives a depth of coverage into something we might not have been able to do."

Dale County Sheriff Wally Olson said the partnership with local school systems that sent representatives to the conference was priceless.

"They are the front lines of defense when it comes to the schools," he said.

Adams said the type of training held at the annual conference is based on topics in which local law enforcement express interest.