

## Abstract

## Quantifying Problem Solving Efforts in the Small Agency

The La Vista Police Department has been practicing community policing for many years. As a small agency (24 officers) serving a population of 13,000 it is our policy to work with the community and to form mutually beneficial partnerships. In 1995 the department received one of several subsequent federal community policing grants. As a part of the initial grant that included two officers, training was provided by Michigan State University. After the community policing philosophy was formally adopted it became apparent to senior staff members that while community policing was advantageous it was difficult at best to quantify.

As a result we developed the Police Area Representative program. This program like many PAR programs assigns officers with advanced community policing skills to specific areas of the city and utilizing a problem solving approach community problems are positively impacted. To provide quantifying details we began to number PAR projects, track staff time for each project and keep detailed annual reports. From 1996 to date we have completed 32 PAR projects along with a detailed analysis on each. In addition to detailed records the PAR supervisor also writes a synopsis on each project and maintains a continually updated list of projects.

This approach to community policing not only draws on the 2 PAR officers but also brings the time, effort and skills of all officers to bear on certain community problems. The results have been extremely positive and there is extensive data to support the effort. This information has become the central focus of annual reports, community meetings and city management meetings. In 3 short years the police department has been so successful at quantifying our efforts and improving the community that other police departments in the area are now beginning to develop similar approaches. These agencies include Council Bluffs, Iowa, Papillion, Nebraska, and Waverly, Iowa. While this might seem to be simplistic in nature I must assure you that this was not the case at the beginning. Several new forms had to be developed and institutionalized, additional training occurred and a local approach to these initiatives was developed building on the training provided by Michigan State University.

It has become very clear that the La Vista Police Department has taken a leadership role in not only community policing but developing and implementing a system to show a cost analysis, results, location of problem solving efforts over time, resources used to accomplish the objective stated and the building of a historical data base. I am proud to submit the La Vista Police Department for consideration of the Herman Goldstein Award because for this size agency I have never seen this type of detail, effort and results on a way to quantify community policing/problem solving efforts. The improvement to the community is evident and this is a relatively easy way to maintain a community policing philosophy.

LA VISTA POLICE DEPARTMENT

1999 P.A.R. REPORT

CASE REVIEW

#1. BUSINESS SECURITY - BANKS

JANUARY 4\MARCH 4 CASE # 99-1

A crime spree of bank robberies occurring in the metropolitan area had a direct impact on our community. This impact was felt when a bank in the city was robbed. As a result of this crime a focused patrol was put into effect which prevented any additional robberies from occurring. 154 contacts made with the results of 0 additional robberies while the rest of the metro area continued to suffer from armed robberies.

#2. BICYCLE SAFETY - BIKE RODEOS

APRIL 24\MAY 8\MAY 22 CASE # 99-2

A plan to hold a bike rodeo at all three elementary schools. The goal will be to present and instill the rules of the road for bike riders. Also bike licenses will be issued with registration information acquired, to place bikes and owners on file for follow up for future reference information if the bike becomes lost or stolen.

#3. DRUG INTERVENTION

MARCH 1\AUGUST 31 CASE # 99-3

A plan to try and determine the extent of drug activity in the city. The response will try to reduce or eliminate the drug activity in the city. To date, two drug search warrants have been issued.

#4. RENTAL PROPERTIES - QUALITY CONTROL

MARCH 3\ CASE # 99-4

A concern expressed by home owners, about the increasing rental properties. The renters and landlords are not maintaining the properties causing beginning of blighted neighborhoods. A plan to work with all parties involved to reverse the trend.

LA VISTA POLICE DEPARTMENT

199 8 P.A.R. REPORT

CASE REVIEW

#1. ILLEGAL TOBACCO SALES

JANUARY 1\AUGUST 23 CASE # 98-1

Received information that a local business establishment was selling tobacco products to minors. Youthful offenders came from all over the metropolitan area to purchase tobacco products from the business. The community expressed it's concern, and requested a resolution to the problem. A P.A.R. officer was assigned to the case and an investigation was undertaken. A sting operation was implemented. As a result the owners were arrested for selling tobacco products to minors, abusing a police officer, and disorderly conduct. On August 5, the owners pled guilty to 3 counts of selling tobacco to minors. As part of the plea agreement a \$25 fine with surrender of the tobacco license which was permanently revoked by the county court. One of the owners was additionally charged with 3 counts of abusing a police officer and 2 counts of disorderly conduct. A presentence investigation was ordered.

#2. CHILD SAFETY RESTRAINTS

MARCH 22\ATTGUST 17 CASE # 98-2

A pro-active effort to encourage the community to take measures to protect the youthful passengers in motor vehicles, while in transport. An informal survey of a designated location showed a 33% compliance in safety belt use. An education plan was put in place, plus a concentrated enforcement effort. A repeat survey was conducted using the same location and guidelines. The survey results showed a 44% score. An increase of 11%. National, state, and local programs were incorporated into the project, which was well accepted by the community. The enforcement activity resulted in 87 traffic citations and 38 written warnings.

#3. BICYCLE SAFETY

JULY 11 CASE # 98-3

A bike rodeo planned for young riders. An inspection station, instructions on basic riding skills and an obstacle course to promote the understanding of mandatory bicycle laws. Trained 7 juveniles on bicycle safety. An excellent program, with a good amount of staffing and a quality location. Scheduling interrupted having a good turn out. The location was on a business parking lot with several other commercial events in progress at the same time. An assessment determined that the bicycle rodeo will be held in conjunction the elementary schools

and on school property in 1999.

- #4. BUSINESS DOORS MAY 31\OCTOBER 16 CASE # 98-4  
A chronic problem experienced by officers when responding to emergency calls, was trying to locate the correct back door on business' in strip malls. This prevented obtaining the position of advantage during alarm calls, and delays when responding to emergency rescue calls. The simple and inexpensive way to correct was to place the business numerical location on the back door. A simple but very important remedy that was handled by the property managers.
  
- #5. ELDERLY CARE JULY 17\AUGUST 10 CASE # 98-5  
This project reached out to the elderly citizens of the community. A series of luncheon meetings that presented information on preventative measures to protect against becoming victims of crime, elder abuse, along with senior citizen personal safety.
  
- #6. SPECIAL NEEDS YOUNGSTER AUGUST 25\SEPTEMBER 22 CASE # 98-6  
This case focused on' reducing calls for service and eliminating the possibility of serious injury. One of our young citizens had the misfortune of suffering from medical condition that caused violent episodes. As this youth reached adult status and because of his size he became a danger to himself and others. With assistance this person was placed in the Norfolk Regional Center.
  
- #7. TRAFFIC HAZARD AUGUST 31\OCTOBER 14 CASE #98-7  
This unique case dealt with an effort to reduce calls for service, and protection the public from a dangerous situation. A light pole in the parking became notorious for causing more personal injury accidents than some of the city's busy intersections. From July 14 to August 31 13 accidents occurred and 7 of the accidents were personal injury. The business has agreed to remedy the situation by removing the light pole.
  
- #8. BUSINESS SAFETY DECEMBER 1\DECEMBER 31 CASE # 98-8  
This case was a high profile, heavy task oriented assignment which involved contacting 112 businesses in the city. The goal is to reduce calls for service through preventative measures, obtain information for use during calls for service and promote a psychological comfort: and physically safe environment to conduct business and work. This assignment has become an annual respocr.se. A survey was made to assess fucure presentation needs. Topics requested were internal theft prevention, protection against fraud, and business alerts when robberies are occurring in the area.

**#9. DEAD STORAGE VEHICLES**

**OCTOBER 8\NOVEMBER 11 CASE #98-9**

This assignment involved assisting a council person address some of the ordinance violations occurring in his Ward. All the designated violations were corrected in a timely manner either through compliance, or citation and tow. A total of 7 complaints: 2 no violations, 3 brought into compliance, 2 citations, 1 tow. This information was forwarded to the council person, who gave a positive response, and was pleased with the results.

**#10 VEHICLE SAFETY CHECK POINT**

**JANUARY 1\JULY 31 CASE # 98-10**

A joint effort with Nebraska State Patrol in setting up a vehicle safety check point. The check point was set up at a high traffic volume location. The location was 72 Street and Michelle Avenue. The response was completed and with a two hour time period 13 traffic citations were issued, 43 vehicle defect cards, 12 written warnings, and 1 arrest for driving under suspension. Assessment of the response identified three areas that needed addressing. #1. The continued need for enforcement for "vehicle violations. #2. A method of insuring that motorist will comply with the lawful order to correct motor vehicle violations. #3. Establish a La Vista Police Department policy and procedure to follow through in cases of non-compliance. Working with the knowledge that the past compliance rate is 37 % the department has established a policy and procedure to be measured in 1999 and years to come. The goal is to provide safer streets by improving safety conditions of motor vehicles. The mission is to improve the compliance rate of 37 %.

**#11 NEIGHBORHOOD DISPUTE**

**OCTOBER 13\NOVEMBER 1 CASE # 98-11**

The complaint of an ATV (all terrain vehicle) being driven in the street brought the department's focus on a long standing neighborhood dispute. The ATV issue was quickly resolved, but as a result of the investigative interview process, one of the residents was identified as a chronic complainer with the intent to disrupt the peace and harmony within the neighborhood. Issues such as personal threats stemming from mistrust and anger had placed one resident at odds with the entire block of neighbors. A series of meetings with all parties involved established options for the neighbors use in coping with, their neighbor. All the options centered around accountability and respect. The resident who was the center of disharmony in the neighborhood was given a warning that any confrontations initiated by him would result: in arrest: and additional charges for those reported violations still pending within the statute of limitations. The neighborhood has calmed. A continued monitor of the case will be made to protect the

established peace in the neighborhood.

LA VISTA POLICE DEPARTMENT

1997 P.A.R. REPORT

CASE REVIEW

- #1. CITY WIDE CLEAN UP APRIL\ CASE # 97-1  
Television coverage of the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts of America earning their merit badges by cleaning up the parks and vacant lots. This event was concluded by a picnic lunch. Good turn out with 250 Scouts and Scout leaders, documented with good press coverage. Potential annual event.
- #2. CRIME PREVENTION - SPORTS COMPLEX MAY 1\OCTOBER 1 CASE #97-2  
Focused patrol using the combination of stake out, motor, foot, and bike patrols. A long term complicated assignment with excellent results. The results were; a 50% reduction in crime, afforded international recognition, established team work between shifts, and promoted good recognition in the metropolitan area. This case provided excellent patrol options for the future. Reduced calls for service from 1996; burglary 2 in '96, to 0 in '97, thefts 8 in '96 to 4 in '97. Criminal mischief and rescue calls remained the same. Increased patrol activities went from; foot patrol 16 in '96 to 44 in '97, parking tickets 2 in '96 to 22 in '97, red tags 6 in '96 to 14 in '97,
- #3. BUSINESS COMMUNITY PROGRAM NOVEMBER\ CASE # 97-3  
Class room instruction on employee, and parking lot safety. Crime prevention and CPTED topics covered in conjunction with the standard safety issues. Excellent department wide effort. Potential biannual or quarter annual event.
- #4. LA VISTA DAYS MAY 2S\JUNE 1 CASH # 97-4  
City wide celebration with several major events, including a parade, carnival with midway for vendor booths, fireworks display, celebrity ball games, and 5K run. Incorporated the SARA model and CPTED for handling this major event. Reduced man hours with better patrol coverage. Department wide involvement along with city, business, specialty, and other agency involvement. A very successful assignment which established format guidelines that can be used for years to come.
- #5. NEIGHBORHOOD NUISANCE AUGUST 29\NOVEMBER 30 CASE # 97-5  
An in home business brought an increase in vehicle traffic into the area. Employees responding to the business caused a parking congestion problem. There was enough concern that a council person became involved.

the problem was resolved.

- #6. NEIGHBORHOOD DISPUTE** **SEPTEMBER\ CASE # 97-6**  
Aggressive conduct by children led to a confrontation involving the parents. A neighborhood meeting with all parties involved resolved the matter, and restored peace back into the neighborhood.
- #7. YOUTH AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITY - OUT DOOR AND SUMMER SAFETY** **JULY\ CASE # 97-7**  
A field day in the park provided an opportunity to work with the youth of our community. The business community provided refreshments and food for the function. Excellent turn out. Second annual event.
- #8. NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME PREVENTION** **AUGUST\ CASE #97-8**  
A focus on crime prevention in the residential community. "A flashlight walk against crime", in conjunction with national night out to emphasize the importance of community involve to prevent crime. Second annual event.
- #9. YOUTH ACTIVITY - DRUG PREVENTION** **MAY\ CASE # 97-9**  
A focus on young people having fun without drug involvement. A school sponsored dance, chaperoned by P.A.R. officer.



LA VISTA POLICE DEPARTMENT

1996 P.A.R. REPORT

CASE REVIEW

#1. OUT STATE PLATES

JANUARY 1\JULY 19 CCASE # 95-61077

An extremely complicated case that had a far reaching effect into the community. This case not only impacted La Vista, but the Omaha metro area, the Nebraska Attorney General, the Sarpy County attorney, and Offutt Air Force base. With support from the Nebraska Attorney General, the Sarpy County Attorney, and the community, a strong aggressive enforcement policy was implemented. Our results were effective enough to encourage other surrounding agencies to follow with their own enforcement actions. 169 violations, 147 compliances, 16 exemptions, and 6 citations.

#2. HEALTH HAZARD

MAY 2\JUNE 19 CASE # 96-40615

A local business located on the corner of 72 Street and Harrison, was neglected to the point it presented several hazardous conditions that endangered the community. The City Health department, State Fire Marshall, Building Inspector, and Environmental Protection agency, worked in conjunction with the La Vista Police Department to correct this long term violation. The criminal violations were corrected by police intervention. This involved towing non-licensed and inoperable vehicles, with citation issued for non compliance. Public Works cleaned the property by removing junk and other discarded materials. The environmental hazards were handled through the building inspector's office.

#3. CENTRAL PARK

JULY 15\AUGUST 6 CASE # 96-3

A rapidly developing criminal activity of drug activity, assaults, and theft, produced an out cry from the community for a resolution to the problem. A concentrated, directed patrol in conjunction with instructional meetings with the residents and the youth groups, returned the park to the community as a safe environment for everyone's use. Over 50 documented entries and well over 100 contacts were made, which exceeded the goal of 100 contacts.

#4. PEDESTRIAN SAFETY - SCHOOL ZONES

AUGUST 22\SEPTEMBER 20 CASE # 96-4

The rapid growth of the City has developed a problem common to most cities. Over crowding of the elementary schools. This created traffic problems in front of the schools. A short term and long term plan was placed into effect to ease the crowding and provide a safer

environment for pedestrians. The plan started with safe walks to school and meeting with the school officials and parents to determine what each school's particular problem or problems were. G. Stanley Hall school required an overpass as part of the resolution. Also included in the response was establishing a school safety zone which doubled the fine for speeders. The enforcement resulted in 147 citations, 40 written warnings, with a total of 187 contacts. A school safety zone was established with La Vista West Elementary, Park View Elementary, and La Vista Junior High School. Included with the safety zones, were passenger loading zones that were improved with properly posted signs. The short term goals were reached. The foundations for long term goal achievements have been put into the plan to be used when necessary.

#5. BUSINESS SAFETY - NIGHT CALL NUMBERS

NOVEMBER 12\DECEMBER 27 CASE # 96-5

A plan that provided an information seminar for the local business person and employees was given. Along with the information provided night call numbers were obtained for night time emergencies. The night call emergency numbers were obtained and a survey was distributed for the solicitation of information for business concerns and needs. A training seminar was projected for the year of 1997.

#6. YOUTH ACTIVITY - DRUG PREVENTION

MAY 30 CASE # 96-6

A school sponsored dance. A concentrated plan focusing on prevention of drug and alcohol abuse.

#7. YOUTH AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITY - OUT DOOR AND SUMMER SAFETY

JULY 12 CASE # 96-7

A field day in the park provided an opportunity to work with the youth of our community. The business community provided refreshments and food for the function, excellent turn out. Successful enough to plan for an annual event.

#8. NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME PREVENTION

AUGUST 6 CASE # 96-8

In conjunction with nacional night out a, "Flashlight Walk Against Crime", and a local professional baseball game was the kick off for a plan for protecting the residential community against crime.