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April 29, 2002

Mr. Chuck Wexler
Executive Director
Police Executive Research Forum
1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 930
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Wexler:

HERMAN GOLDSTEIN AWARD NOMINATIONS

I would like to present for your consideration the attached nominations for the 2002 Herman Goldstein Award. Both of these programs have greatly enhanced the effectiveness of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and I am grateful to the Police Executive Research Forum for sponsoring this opportunity to have them recognized.

If you or your staff require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Lieutenant James Lopez, Office of the Assistant Sheriff, at (323) 526-5065.

Sincerely,

LEROY D. BACA, SHERIFF

LARRY L. WALDIE
ASSISTANT SHERIFF

LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
-UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES-

The County of Los Angeles has approximately 2,649 square miles of unincorporated area in a region that stretches from the Pacific Ocean to San Bernardino, and from Orange County to Ventura County. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department provides service to 1.1 million residents who live in over 100 separate unincorporated communities. These residents do not have the opportunity to visit a centrally located city hall or government building to request service for a specific problem or community need.

The Sheriff's Department's COPS Bureau has designed and implemented one program, which includes an address based tracking system, that has significantly improved the quality of law enforcement services as well as municipal services to these communities. These two programs, the CORE Task Force (Community Oriented Response Effort), and the Abatement Tracking System, have solidified a strong partnership between residents and agencies responsible for providing public services. These programs have by-passed bureaucracy to resolve the most problematic, long standing problems in a community.

CORE TASK FORCE

The task force is a group of professionals who are responsible for delivering municipal services to a specific community. In keeping with our Community Based Policing Philosophy, instead of requiring the residents to visit a Board of Supervisors meeting or appropriate county building many miles away from their community, *we bring the county departments to the citizens in **the** form of a task force meeting.* The meetings are held in schools, parks, businesses, and halls. Each county department is represented which allows the residents and county employees to meet and form a partnership in solving the most problematic issues in their neighborhoods. A computer database was established to track and coordinate the enforcement efforts of several county departments.

ADDRESS BASED TRACKING SYSTEM

There are several different county departments responsible for providing service and most do not have offices in the communities they serve. The individual department investigators do not work in the same building and have not traditionally shared information or coordinated their enforcement activities on community problems in the past. In an effort to consolidate the enforcement activities between several departments on a particular location, *a county wide, multi-agency, address based tracking system was created to exchange information and assist in resolving **community** problems.* Community problems that have gone unresolved in the past due to government bureaucracy, county investigators being re-assigned, or lack of coordinated efforts by various departments are now streamlined to resolution.

These two systems are a model for community based policing. These systems were created by COPS personnel who identified deficiencies within their community and instituted programs that will significantly improve the delivery of both law enforcement and municipal services to all the residents who live in unincorporated Los Angeles County.

Thomas G. Sirkel, Lieutenant
323-357-5043

CORE TASK FORCE

The Need

The County of Los Angeles has grown at a tremendous rate. In response to this growth, county government has made great efforts to improve and enhance services for the public it serves. However, with the implementation of new departments and programs, the bureaucracy of separate entities managing similar programs grew as well. Some county departments have experienced difficulties trying to resolve criminal problems and quality of life issues within their communities.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff Department COPS Bureau has been very effective in addressing the problems of the community. However, the COPS Bureau has experienced the same problems as other departments when trying to solicit the help of other county agencies. The COPS Bureau developed the Core Task Force to address this problem.

The Concept

The Core Task Force is a group of professional individuals, representing a variety of departments and agencies, responsible for developing and implementing permanent solutions to the long standing community problems of the residents who live and work within the COPS station's jurisdiction.

There were many reasons to develop the Core Task Force. The COPS Bureau saw a need to increase the partnership among many of the other county agencies. In dealing with these ongoing community problems, it was necessary to address the problem from every available angle. Some problems were not our area of responsibility or required the assistance of other agencies to resolve. When notifications were made to other departments, the response was slow or non-existent. There was a need to have other county employees understand the importance of our requests and the history of the problems. Meeting with members from the different agencies allowed us to discuss their options for possible solutions, thus giving us a multi-faceted approach to problem solving. Working in a team problem solving process we are able to maximize governmental resources, which benefits the community. The greatest reward from the task force is the permanent solutions to the problems.

The Structure

The structure of the Core Task Force is vital to its effectiveness. The Region II COPS Lieutenant acts as the head of the task force to coordinate and facilitate the meetings. The task force commander ensures that problems brought to the group are relative to its mission. The COPS team sergeants are the front line supervisors who ensure that the task force has all the vital information and history of the problem. It is their job to make sure that the COPS deputies are actively documenting all contacts at the location to assure the necessary information will be available for the task force to review.

The Town Sheriffs are a critical component of the task force. They are the primary liaisons between the community leaders and the Sheriff's Department. The knowledge and relationships that are developed among the community serve as a resource for gathering information on the problems and arriving at comprehensive solutions.

The Core Task Force includes a patrol element. Information can be easily passed to the field deputies for their assistance. Also included are the station's detectives, narcotic and gang deputies. A majority of the problem locations include or are surrounded by gangs, who sell and buy narcotics. The expertise and knowledge of the detectives are invaluable to identifying and locating wanted subjects.

A member from the station's clergy staff is also included on the task force. The clergy staff attends a clergy academy which orientates them to the procedures of the department. They are available to help with spiritual guidance for members of the community and our Department. There have been several occasions where the clergy staff has helped to calm upset citizens, who did not understand law enforcement procedures or were not willing to listen to our explanations. They are also a valuable resource in soliciting assistance from their parish members.

The task force has a representative from the respective Board of Supervisor's office. They ensure accountability and timely action from all the county agencies. Many of the problems presented to the task force are referred from their office.

The task force includes a member from the District Attorney's office as part of the problem solving group. They are able to guide the team with step by step procedures in developing and presenting strong cases to local criminal and abatement Deputy District Attorneys responsible for prosecution

Government agencies such as the California Highway Patrol, Probation Department, State Parole, and Alcoholic Beverage Control, assist us with a wide variety of problems. CHP is responsible for providing traffic services in the unincorporated areas of the county. Complaints of speeding or dangerous intersections are referred to their local office. The Highway Patrol monitors these problems and works with Public Works to install/remove local road signs.

Many offenders released from jail have specific conditions of parole and probation. These departments are invaluable to the task force in tracking, monitoring and exchanging information on their clients. If a spike in crime occurs in an area, these departments assist us in planning probation/parole sweeps to check on local probationers and parolees.

Other concerns in the community develop from and around bars and liquor stores. Alcoholic Beverage Control agents bring their expertise in ABC laws and help with the prosecution of these violators. We conduct inspections and operations at these business locations to ensure they are complying with the law.

County agencies such as; Health Department, Regional Planning, Building and Safety, Fire Department, and Public Works are important resources and vital to the task force team. These departments are part of a public safety nuisance abatement team that meets once a week and inspects various locations for county ordinance violations. The most severe and/or long standing cases are presented to the task force for resolution.

Representatives from surrounding police agencies are also on the task force. Problem locations may affect adjoining jurisdictions and we work jointly with the involved agencies to resolve them.

The Plan

The Core Task force meets at least once per month. Priority problems are presented and a detailed report on the progress of the problems is introduced. If a predetermined plan is not effective, we solicit suggestions from other task force members and make necessary revisions. Members assigned a problem are responsible for making the necessary arrangements to resolve it. New problems from task force members are brought before the group for discussion. All members provide input and share different ideas and problem solving experience. With this multi-agency approach, we develop successful solutions to these problems. The task force decides which are the most problematic locations in the community and which problems warrant the most resources.

Maintenance

An important part of the problem solving process is maintenance. Team members are required to conduct regular checks at the problems to ensure that there are no reoccurrences. These follow-ups with the property owners help reinforce our commitment to the community. We provide feedback and follow-up to our informants. The informants are a vital element to problem solving and it is imperative that they know how important they are to this process.

Overview

The COPS Bureau realizes the importance of teamwork. Solutions are more creative as well as easier to attain when working in a group environment. Since the inception of the CORE Task Force we have brought closure to many long standing community problems and developed effective plans for new ones. The greatest reward from the task force is the new contacts and relationships we have made from continually meeting with the other representatives. These relationships are the key to soliciting cooperation from other county departments. We look forward to addressing new problems because we know we can meet as a group and make a positive difference in the communities we serve.

ADDRESS BASED TRACKING SYSTEM

In an effort to address and improve "Quality of Life" issues within Los Angeles County, the CORE Task Force was created. This task force is comprised of the Departments of Public Works, County Health, Building and Safety, Regional Planning, Fire, and Sheriff. Each of these departments is its own separate entity and responsible for enforcing codes and/or all applicable laws associated with problems pertaining to their specific areas of responsibility. The task force deals with complaints generated from concerned citizens in the community, neighbors or confidential informants. These complaints can range from the owner of a residence operating a non-licensed business to the sales of illegal narcotics. Once a complaint is received, a case number is assigned for documentation and tracking purposes. The task force then responds to the location and inspects the problem. Depending on what is discovered at the location, the appropriate agency can either warn the owner of the property or cite for the violation (i.e., an illegal garage conversion may result in a citation issued from Building and Safety for the violation). The problem location is continually monitored even when the owner complies or prosecution is sought.

During a one year period, the CORE Task Force may receive as many as five hundred complaints. This case load, coupled with the follow-up required on these problem locations, has become increasingly more difficult to track. The re-assignment of county employees who work on task force locations, and the lack of sharing information has proved to be detrimental to the problem solving effort. Since each department works independently from the other, information sharing has been limited, thus hindering effectiveness. To resolve these issues, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department along with programmers from the Los Angeles County Internal Services Department (ISD), developed a networking address database system called the "Abatement Tracking System".

The ATS website will primarily be used by members of the CORE Task Force. The ATS will effectively track locations by simply entering the complaint into the database, which will then be assigned a specific case number. The problem or complaint can be tracked and continually updated with pertinent information, such as actions taken against the owner of the property, every time the location is visited by task force members. The benefit of this system is its ability to share information with any other concerned county department. The problems associated with not knowing the current status of a location or what actions (past and present) have been taken to resolve a complaint are curtailed. The status of the case remains open and active until the complaint has been successfully resolved, wherein the case is closed and archived in the system for two years. Another benefit to this system is its ability to track accountability for complaints which have been neglected or unresolved.

The recent implementation of this address based tracking system has proven to be an effective and efficient problem solving tool. Community problems that have gone unresolved in the past due to government bureaucracy, county investigators being re-assigned, and lack of coordinated efforts by various departments, are now streamlined to resolution. These systems will significantly improve the delivery of both law enforcement and municipal services to all the residents who live in unincorporated Los Angeles County.