

Reduction in Alcohol Related Fatal and Serious injury Crashes

Virginia Beach Police Department

submission for the 200?

Herman Goldstein Award

REDUCTION IN ALCOHOL RELATED FATAL AND SERIOUS CRASHES VIRGINIA BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Problem: An increase in the number of fatal and serious injury crashes involving alcohol.

Analysis: Officers developed a multi-disciplined approach to the dilemma of drivers operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol. Individuals Driving Under the Influence (DUI) have been responsible for a number of fatal and serious injury crashes. Officers concluded a special enforcement team was needed to designate a group of officers who would become experts in DUI enforcement strategies. These officers would also conduct training and lectures, as well as increase public awareness by interacting with community members and other law enforcement professionals.

Response: In 2000, the Department assembled a response including a "zero tolerance" enforcement effort that emphasized methods to promote education and accident prevention in the community. A three year timetable was established to have the program fully implemented. The Department's response included:

1. Establishing a group of highly trained officers to increase nightly enforcement efforts and provide additional lectures and programs for prevention efforts.
2. Interface with local media outlets to promote the efforts of the Department to influence public perception of this problem.
3. Increase training from outside resources to expand the knowledge of all department officers.
4. Increased education of newly licensed juvenile drivers.
5. Partner with the different military Commands in the region. With our extensive military population, military personnel often are victimized in DUI related crashes.
6. Provide DUI enhancement training for officers rotating to the night shifts.
7. Increase the Department's visibility in the public's view using media outlets, education and stepped up enforcement strategies.
8. Educate the business and restaurant communities to solicit their cooperation in preventing their patrons from drinking and driving.

Assessment: Since the creation of the Selective Enforcement Team, the number of alcohol related fatal crashes has been reduced: 58% in 1999, to 37% for 2000 and 33% in 2001. The number of alcohol related serious injury crashes has also been reduced: 62% in 1999, 34%in 2000 and 29% in 2001.

Scanning

The City of Virginia Beach has a population of slightly over 425,000 people, making it the most populated city in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Virginia Beach is also the 38th largest city in the United States. The City is ethnically diverse, with a large contingent of military personnel being stationed at military installations throughout the Hampton Roads region. The tourism industry annually brings over 3 million guests to our resort City. These tourists are in addition to the thousands of "day trippers" that visit the City each day. Tourism within the City generates over 11,000 jobs and 630 million dollars in revenue annually. The "resort area" has the highest concentration of establishments licensed to sell alcohol anywhere in the Commonwealth. These businesses are some of the biggest attractions for people year round.

The City was experiencing an increased number of alcohol related serious injury and fatal crashes; these numbers were exceeding the state and national crash averages. In 1999, City-wide fatal crashes involving alcohol reached 58%, nearly 20% more than the state average. This unacceptable statistic was identified as the target to reduce.

In 1994, the introduction of community policing philosophies was incorporated into the curriculum for the Police Academy; tenured officers were instructed on this philosophy during routine in-service training sessions. Initially, community policing officers were positioned in specific geographic areas with high crime patterns. These assigned community officers were tasked with helping empower the communities to take control of their problems and create problem solving systems. The impact of the program was

immediately realized with the reduction of crimes in those neighborhoods. Community policing programming evolved throughout the City, expanding into schools, recreation centers and other geographic territories.

In 1999, the number of alcohol related traffic fatalities reached fourteen. These fourteen fatalities exceeded the number of homicides (12) committed in the City. In addition, there were 71 serious injury crashes, with 44 being alcohol related. These alcohol related crashes were a community problem effecting the entire City's population and was impacting large numbers of persons; it became a turning point for the Department.

Our stakeholder group was determined to be every citizen, tourist or person that came to our City. The ramifications of alcohol related problems within the City would have a negative effect on the quality of life in the City.

Analysis

The Department realized that the overall problem of alcohol related crashes starts long before a driver put the keys in the ignition of a vehicle after having a few drinks. The idea of arresting every drunk driver was only a dream that would never be achieved. The Department's goal was to focus on problem solving approaches utilizing a multi-faceted plan. This plan included prevention aspects, increased educational opportunities and a "zero tolerance" enforcement stance.

Crash data maintained by the Department for its annual report to the City Council showed the percentage of alcohol related fatalities was always above the state average. While the state average was consistently 40% or below, the City was always above that figure. This statistic was disturbing since Virginia Beach promoted itself as a safe city to be in.

The Department's Special Operations Bureau was tasked with maintaining records for the number of crashes that involved fatalities and serious injury (serious injury being defined as crashes where Fatal Crash Team investigators were called but the victim did not succumb to their injuries). These statistics showed alcohol was a factor in a percentage of crashes that were always above the state average.

	1997	1998	1999
Fatal Crashes:	20	17	24
Fatalities involving alcohol	10	07	14
Percentage:	50%	41%	58%
Serious Injury crashes:		50	71
Serious Injury crashes involving alcohol:		18	44
Percentage:		36%	62%

* Exact numbers could not be verified. Percentage shown to be between 42-45%

The economic impact on the community from just those crashes listed above exceeded 4.28 million dollars.

It was these statistics that were most alarming. The numbers for 1999 became the focus of attention prior to the end of the year. The Selective Enforcement Team was proposed late in 1999 with initiation of the actual program to begin in early 2000.

Statistics from the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Commission showed that Virginia Beach had the highest concentration of ABC licensed establishments in the state, especially along the resort area.

The average BAC for a driver arrested in Virginia was just over .13; in Virginia Beach it was just over .15.

The Department had received several grants over the three previous years from the Division of Motor Vehicles to enforce a .08 campaign. When the Department looked at the statistics for officers working this grant, they found the success of these officers in finding impaired drivers was very high. Officers were consistently arresting one to two DUI drivers for each shift. They were also issuing more summonses for other violations than was the norm. It was found that when officers were tasked with only one goal for the shift, they were very successful.

The Division of Motor Vehicles gave the Department a one year grant to follow up on persons arrested for DUI and their compliance to the seven day automatic license suspension. The numbers found that many of the offenders continued to drive during that seven day period with no fear of the consequences. The violators did not believe follow up was a priority or important to the Department.

A DUI Task Force was originally created in 1987 to handle the DUI and fatal crash problem. In the late 1980's, the City averaged 35-40 fatal crashes a year. The members of this task force were credited with helping bring the number down into the 20's.

In 1998 and 1999, lectures and training hours had been drastically reduced; the total number of hours for each year was less than 100. This was directly attributed to the reduction of personnel in Special Operations. Only two officers were left whose main task was DUI Enforcement, and one of them had been cross trained in Motor Carrier Safety. The scheduling of any proactive prevention programs had almost stopped. Programs like "Every 15 Minutes" had not been presented for five years. Lectures to military commands for safety stand downs and orientation were not done unless they were requested, despite trends showing an increase in DUI arrests when a carrier battle group returned to port.

Public displays at City sponsored events were never done. The manpower involved to plan and create these displays was not available. These events attracted thousands of people, but were never tapped as sources for proactive prevention work.

Response

The Department believed the problem with the high number of alcohol related crashes should be looked at in many different ways. The solution would have to include not only strong enforcement efforts, but a change in peoples behavior and beliefs. These principals would be addressed in several *ways*:

1) Selective Enforcement Team: The Department created the Selective Enforcement Team under a Community Policing Grant. This unit would be comprised of eight officers assigned specifically to attack the problems of drinking and driving. These officers were selected after completing an oral interview board and written test. Each officer would receive additional training in DUI Enforcement, Radar, Crash Investigation and would become state certified instructors sanctioned by the Department of Criminal Justice Services. These officers would be assigned primarily to work nights, weekends and major holidays to enforce the "zero tolerance" stance. These officers would also be tasked with completing programs, and creating new ones, to educate the public and promote all traffic safety. Their work would be enhanced from coalitions they would create with not only other city agencies, but with insurance companies, traffic safety groups, local businesses and military commands.

2) Media Participation and Awareness: The media were allowed to become more involved with the inner workings of the DUI enforcement efforts. They were given an open door policy that allowed them to participate in any facet of training or enforcement. This was kicked off with the start of the Selective Enforcement Teams efforts. Reporters were

allowed to ride with officers while they were on patrol to witness them truly at work. The success of the first night was well documented on TV with every officer making a DUI arrest during a saturation patrol. The local CBS affiliate even allowed two of its employees to participate in a controlled drinking session given to the Police Academy for training. This allowed the reporter an unbiased look at the training and the technicalities involved in it. The media also participated in numerous ride-along programs and crash investigations to help keep the problem of DUI drivers in the public eye.

3) DUI Conference: One of the first ideas brought to completion was the promotion of a regional DUI conference. This idea came from a group of officers from the Fatal Crash Team. Until the start of the Selective Enforcement Team, the Fatal Crash Team was the main entity focusing on the problem of drinking and driving. Officers who had attended other conferences around the country, conceived the idea of promoting a conference locally which would allow a large number of officers from the City to receive excellent additional training. This allows local officers, as well as officers from all over the state, to attend a conference dedicated solely to DUI enforcement. Grants were written and corporate donations were accepted to help cover the cost of promoting this three day conference the first year. Attending officers and their agencies were only charged \$25.00 to attend. This allowed even the smallest departments to have officers participate. The conference hosted nationally recognized speakers and instructors on various topics and allowed officers to network with each other to learn about "on street" experiences. The first conference was attended by Hoffman Beverage, a local distributor for Anheuser Busch products. This distributor was one of the original donators to the conference, and had assisted with

prevention efforts before. They were so impressed that they invited a regional executive from Anheuser Busch to attend. The success of the conference the first year with approximately 150 attendees lead to Anheuser Busch of St. Louis giving corporate sponsorship the following year. The sponsorship allowed the cost for officers to remain at \$25.00. In 2001, the conference expanded to 180 attendees, and in 2002, the conference was promoted in the Mid-Atlantic region with 220 attendees.

4) High Schools: The Department decided to use increased education and awareness to reach high school students in a straight forward manner. A coalition was formed involving personnel not only from the Police Department, but also the School Board, Fire Department, Rescue Squad, hospital, media, funeral homes, Medical Examiner's Office, wrecker services, Commonwealth Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Department, the General District Court and local hotels and restaurants. Based on the concept that someone is killed in a DUI related crash every 15 minutes, students are brought in as role players. Nearly 40 students are involved in the presentation of this program as "walking dead". Their parents are required to participate by writing good bye letters and obituaries for their child. The students are also required to write letters apologizing for their actions. The program combines a staged crash scene viewed by the entire student body, with the role players continuing on to the hospital, morgue, jail, court and funeral home. After leaving home on the day of the presentation, students do not have any contact with friends or family for the remainder of the presentation. At the end of the first day, the students are transported to a hotel were they write their apology letters. The next morning, an assembly is held to reunite the "dead" students with their parents. Obituaries and letters are read to

the entire student body. The impact of the program can easily be seen on the faces of all those participating. Selective Enforcement Team officers are those responsible for participating in this program. They also receive assistance from the Fatal Crash Team, School Resource Officers and Crime Prevention Officers.

The Selective Enforcement Team created a PowerPoint presentation to be given to high school students at the schools that were not viewing the "Every 15 Minutes" program. Due to the sheer size and magnitude of the "Every 15 Minutes" program, it can only be done at two or three schools per year. For this reason, a 45 minute presentation was developed to be shown to students during one class period. This would allow Selective Enforcement Team members to cover all of the other public and private high schools. The program is very graphic and shows only crashes involving high school age students.

A coalition was formed of local business owners, schools, attorneys, MADD and other public safety groups to work in preventing underage drinking. In a one day training session (Youth In Action), a representative from MADD's national office taught a group of area high school students how to empower themselves and create programs like SADD to curb the abuse of alcohol by high school age people.

5) Military Safety Stand Downs: The military represents nearly 30% of the population in the City. The rotating nature of military assignment brings an ever changing community. Selective Enforcement Team officers created a lecture for the military that would be presented at safety stand downs. The PowerPoint presentation details not only the dangers of DUI, but also the dangers of not wearing a seatbelt and gives alternative ideas to promote designated drivers and ride share programs. As Hampton Roads is home to the worlds largest naval base, Norfolk Naval Base, the Navy's Master Jet Base, Naval Air Station Oceana, the Langley Air Force Base in Hampton, plus numerous smaller military commands throughout the region, this presentation is presented outside Virginia Beach to these commands as requested. This insures that the personnel visiting the resort area on a daily basis also understand the consequences.

Commands were also provided with options and programs they could employ to assist their personnel if they have been out and have had to much to drink. These include having duty drivers in vans on call to pick up people, agreements with taxi cab companies to transport military personnel back to their commands and then bill the command at a later date, and free use of passenger vans to responsible designated drivers.

Each year Naval Air Station Oceana hosts a large air show. This air show culminates a week long festival sponsored by the City. This show attracts over 100,000 people each year. The Selective Enforcement Team presents an inter-active display for people to participate in.

6) DUI Refresher Training: With officers continuously being reassigned, it was found that officers working the late night hours were often not proficient in DUI procedures and laws. Currently, the state code book has thirteen pages of case law and decisions on **DUI** and is a reason the Department started a **DUI** refresher class. The class is given four times a year, and allows officers to become more familiar and proficient in the investigation, arrest and prosecution of persons suspected of driving under the influence.

7) DUI/Traffic Safety Checkpoint Trailer: Purchased with grants, the trailer is fully equipped to assist officers in setting up and operating a traffic safety checkpoint. One of the most critical issues in any police function is public perception. This trailer allows officers to easily set up checkpoints and move to other locations during shifts. This increased visibility enhanced public awareness of the Departments enforcement efforts. On the first night the trailer was used, officers were able to complete three different checkpoints at various locations throughout the City. Additionally, all three major news channels participated the entire evening and made live broadcasts at different times to promote our work. From the phone calls received, and the editorials written, there is no question that it made an impact. The increased public perception that "they are everywhere" was exactly the goal.

8) T.I.P.S. Training: (Training for Intervention ProcedureS) In another approach to the problem, this training was offered free of charge to all establishments serving or selling alcohol and their employees at the resort area. A partnership agreement was reached with one of the local alcoholic beverage distributors to provide all of the manuals as well as the instructors to teach these classes. By providing this intervention training, we attempted to educate the servers on how they can recognize potential problems, what laws pertain to them and ways to handle problem patrons. The idea was to give the establishments ideas to better prevent the problem of alcohol abuse.

Assessment

Since the creation of the Selective Enforcement Team and the "zero tolerance" prevention strategy, the City has witnessed a reduction in the number of alcohol related fatal crashes; from 58% (14 of 24) in 1999, to 33% (8 of 24) in 2001.

The number of alcohol related serious injury crashes has also been reduced: 62% in 1999, to 29% in 2001.

There has been a small decrease in the overall number of motor vehicle crashes each year since 1999. This occurred while the population and number of registered motor vehicles, has increased in the Hampton Roads Area. The overall number of crashes occurring within the City has been reduced in 2001 to 8,754, the lowest number in 10 years.

The number of manhours provided in lectures, training and programs increased from less than 100 a year in 1999 to 1045 in 2001.

The eight person Selective Enforcement Teams aggressive "zero tolerance" efforts lead them to make 27% of the total DUI arrests in the City for 2000 and 23% of the total in 2001.

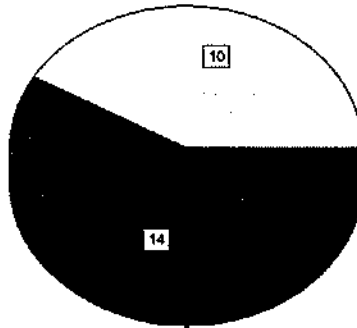
"Zero Tolerance" enforcement efforts Department wide lead to a 17.9% increase in summons issued for 2000 over 1999. The increase for 2001 was 14% over 1999 totals.

For More Information

For more information about the Virginia Beach Police Departments enforcement activities, contact Sergeant Scott Roughton Virginia Beach Police Department Operations Division, 2509 Princess Anne Road, Virginia Beach, Va. 23456. Phone (757) 426-5020 or Lieutenant Tony Zucaro at 757-426-5626.

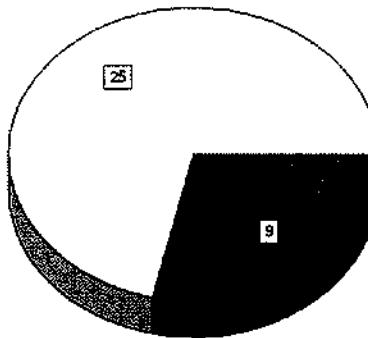
ALCOHOL RELATED FATAL CRASHES

1999 (24 TOTAL)



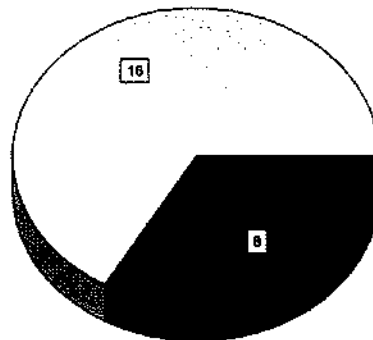
□ NON-ALCOHOL ALCOHOL

2000 (25 CRASHES)



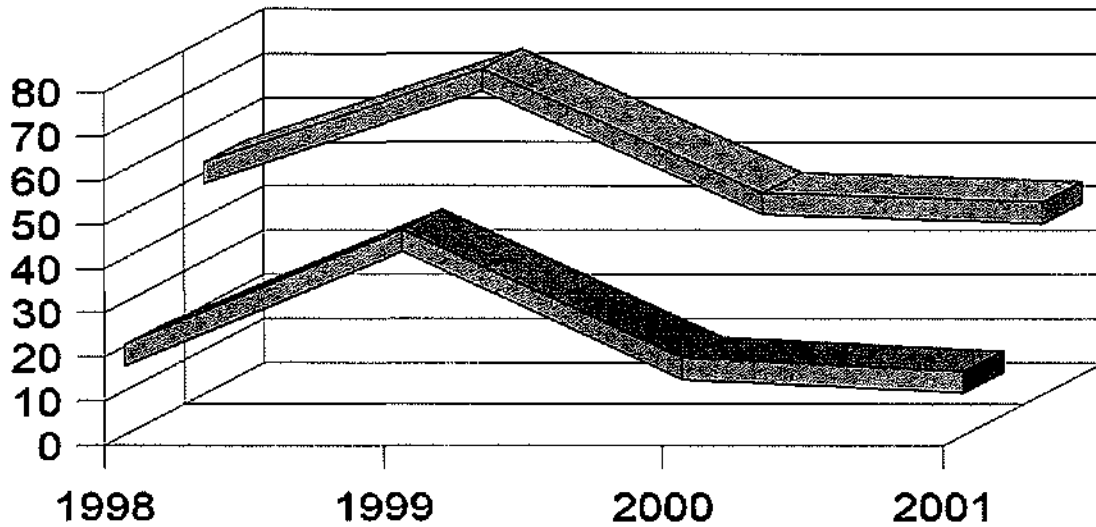
□ NON-ALCOHOL ALCOHOL

2001 (24 CRASHES)



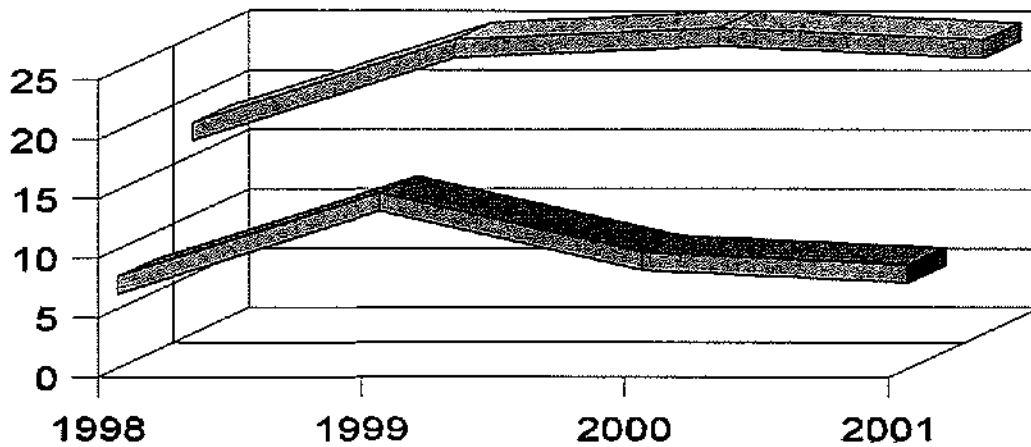
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Serious Injury Crashes



Serious Injury Crashes
Serious Injury/Alcohol Related

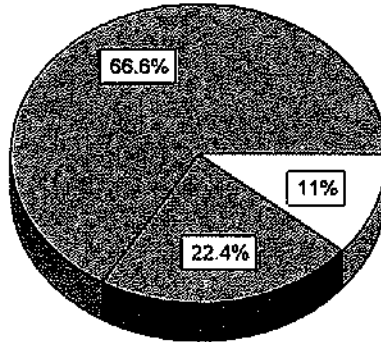
Fatal Crashes



Fatal Crashes
Fatal Crashes/Alcohol Related

DUI ARREST

2001



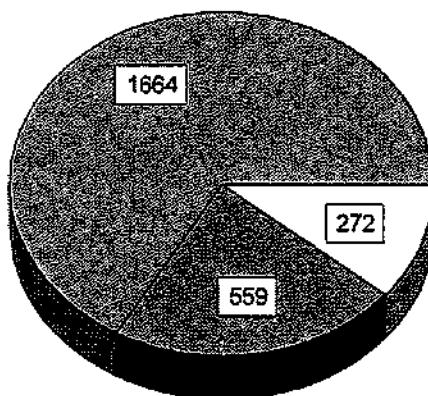
Rest of Department
FaCT

SET

The above chart represents the number of DUI Arrest by percentage comparing the rest of the Department, the Selective Enforcement Team and Fatal Crash Team. This chart shows that nearly one of four DUI drivers is arrested by the Selective Enforcement Team.

DUI ARREST

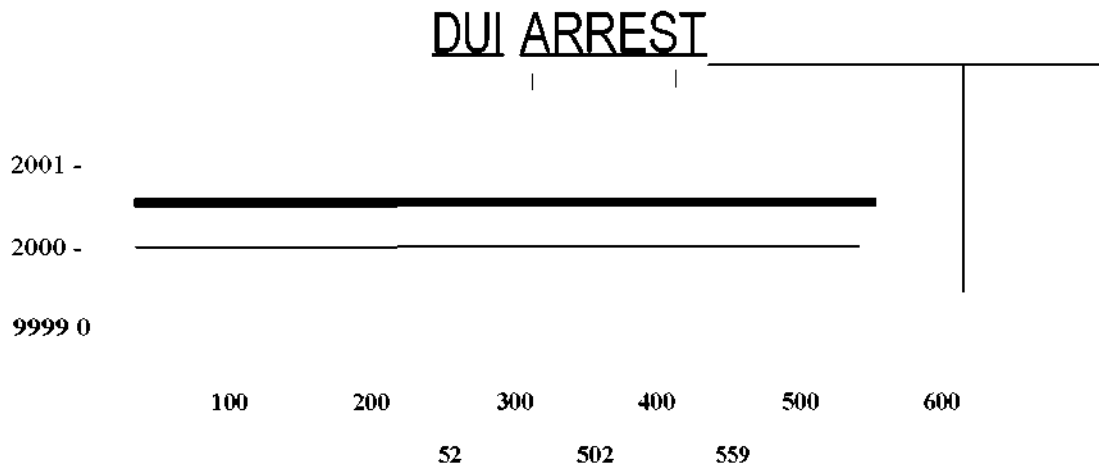
2001



Rest of Department
FaCT

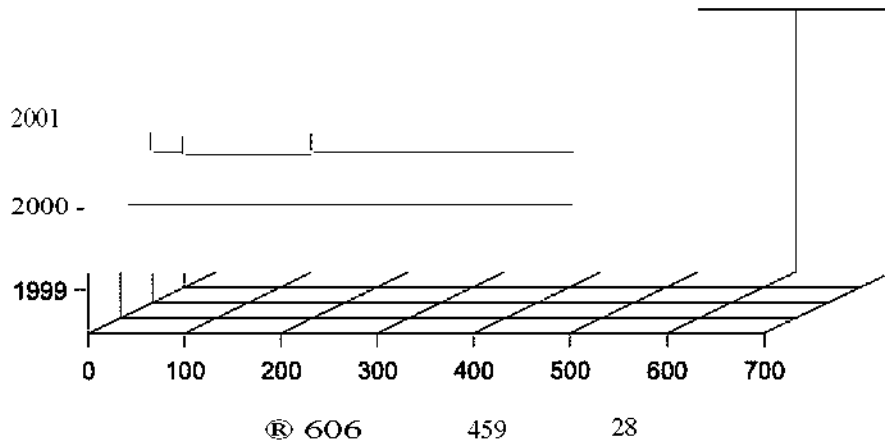
SET

The above chart shows a representation of the DUI Arrest for the City of Virginia Beach for 2001. The total number of arrest is 2495. This number represents only the arrest made by officers of the Virginia Beach police Department, and does not include arrest by other Department or Agencies occurring within the City. Because the Selective Enforcement Team works in conjunction with the Fatal Crash Team, both of the units arrest or shown. This chart shows that these two Teams are responsible for 33% of all DUI arrest.



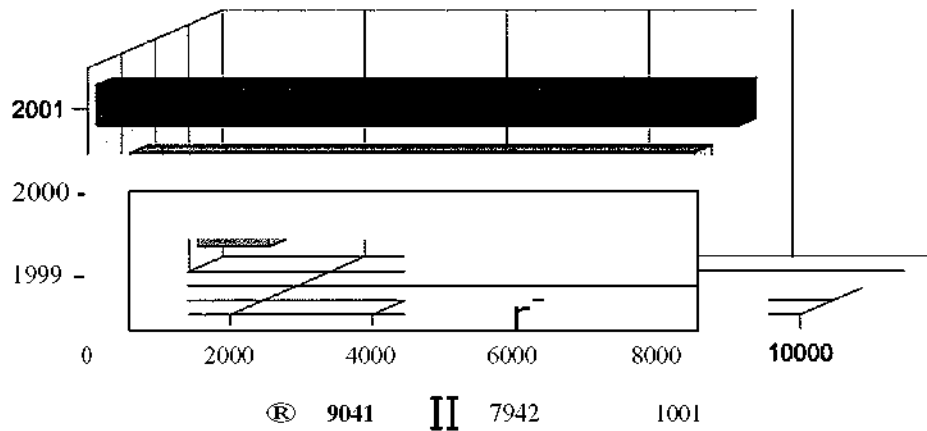
The above graph shows the number of DUI arrest over the past three years for the Selective Enforcement Team. In 1999, there were only two officers assigned to the duties of Selective Enforcement. In February 2000, the Community Policing Grant help develop the Team as we know it now. In 2001, the 559 DUI arrest represented an 11% increase over the 2000 totals.

OTHER ARREST



The above chart shows the number of other arrest from the Selective Enforcement Team. The chart includes all misdemeanor and felony charges. The increase of 32% shows significant work increase for other violations.

TRAFFIC SUMMONSES



The above chart shows the number of summonses for the Selective Enforcement Team for the past three years. The increase of 1099 summonses reflects a zero tolerance attitude taken against certain traffic violations. Many of these can be attributed to proactive enforcement of the street racers.

Virginia Traffic Crash Facts
Quick Facts

General Facts	1998ⁱ	1999ⁱ	2000
Traffic Crashes Reported	136,138 ⁱ	139,573 ⁱ	141,650
Total Fatalities	934 ⁱ	877 ⁱ	930
Total Injuries	81,221 ⁱ	81,204 ⁱ	79,806
Licensed Drivers	4.8M ⁱ	4.9M ⁱ	5.0M
Estimated Vehicle Miles Traveled	76,262M ⁱ	79,463M ⁱ	81,356M
Registered Vehicles	5.9M ⁱ	6.0M ⁱ	6.3M

Alcohol-Related Facts	1998ⁱ	1999ⁱ	2000
Alcohol-related Fatalities ⁱⁱ	336 ⁱ	364 ⁱ	355
Alcohol-related Injuries	8,555 ⁱ	8,359 ⁱ	8,251
Alcohol-related Teen Fatalities (aged 15-19)	36	34	55
Alcohol-related Teen injuries (aged 15-19)	1,128	1,057	1,075
Persons tested with BAC .08% or greater	29,241 ⁱ	29,358 ⁱ	29,725
Average BAC of tested drinking drivers ⁱⁱⁱ	0.1373 ⁱ	0.1354 ⁱ	0.1369
Persons arrested for DUI	30,012 ⁱ	32,954 ⁱ	NIA
Persons arrested for DUI-Male	83.54% ⁱ	83.36% ⁱ	NIA
Persons arrested for DUI-Female	16.46% ⁱ	16.64% ⁱ	NIA
Persons arrested for DUI who were convicted	88.82% ⁱ	86.65% ⁱ	NIA

ⁱ Medical examiner data used in addition to police reports to determine alcohol-related status.

ⁱⁱⁱ This includes an average of both breath and blood tests.

Data for these tables was taken from the 1998, 1999 and 2000
Crash Facts produced by the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

CHANCELLOR MANOR 2000 & 2001 Calls Per Month

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
2000	74	36	58	30	50	66	72	64	55	54	40	49	648
2001	62	60	28	48	31	33	44	44	37	49	33	26	495
of Change	-16.22%	66.67%	-51.72%	60.00%	-38.00%	-50.00%	-38.89%	-31.25%	-32.73%	-9.26%	-17.50%	-46.94%	-23.61%

