

Gulf Breeze Police Department, Florida

Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing

2006 Submission



**Volunteers provide a missing piece of
the traffic safety puzzle**

CITY OF GULF BREEZE, FLORIDA

Volunteers provide a missing piece of the traffic safety puzzle; an innovative **Volunteers In Police Service** program using citizen volunteers to drive marked **Gulf Breeze Police** vehicles for traffic calming and motorist assistance in order to address a dramatic increase in traffic crashes and disabled vehicles.

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Table of Contents

Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing	0
Executive Summary	2
Scanning	3
Analysis	6
Response	9
Assessment	13
Agency and Officer Information	16

Executive Summary

Citizen volunteers drive marked Gulf Breeze Police vehicles on a daily basis to calm traffic, assist motorists and reduce crime. This innovative endeavor was proposed by a citizen task force intended to reduce traffic crashes in the city. These volunteers have reduced crashes, assisted motorists and directly aided the patrol force as well.

The City of Gulf Breeze created a Traffic Safety Task Force in early 2004 to study the causes of a 35% increase in traffic crashes and make recommendations. Facilitated by the police chief, over 60 members of the community participated in a Task Force that adopted and prioritized 28 recommendations. Many of the suggestions have already been implemented since the conclusion of the Task Force Report in July 2004 which resulted in a 5.24% reduction in crashes for the entire year.

In 2005, we were also able to implement a pioneering volunteer program as a direct result of our empirical data and the objective conclusions of the Task Force. In conjunction with the International Association Chiefs of Police Volunteers in Police Service initiative, we created local Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) program with citizen volunteers driving marked police vehicles primarily on Highway 98 as a traffic calming activity and motorist assistance program.

First we obtained approval from our City Council to proceed with the project as it is a provocative idea. We then reviewed the proposal with our City Attorney and designed a program that provides strict selection criteria, comprehensive training and appropriate supervision in order to mitigate liability issues. We then reviewed Florida Statutes to determine the legality of the proposal. Since the citizens do not perform any enforcement activity and do not stop any vehicles using the emergency equipment, there were no conflicts with Florida law. We created policies, established selection criteria and developed a training program for the VIPS. We began advertising for volunteers and were overwhelmed with over 100 applications. After review and selection we trained approximately 40 volunteers.

The VIPS began their patrols in February 2005 and have completed the year with tremendous success. They have driven almost 15,000 miles without incident, donated over 1200 hours of service, detected 369 violations that were sent courtesy warning letters and assisted 61 motorists. The efforts have contributed significantly to a 1.92% reduction in crashes in our jurisdiction. Traffic patterns changed and volume has increased dramatically in the past 2 years due to the impact of two hurricanes. This increase in traffic is reported to be 15% by the Florida Department of Transportation and has caused a 15% increase in traffic crashes in the remainder of the county. Our efforts have achieved a 17% reduction over what could be expected.

In addition to the intended efforts of the program, the volunteers have accomplished these additional activities to assist our community, our agency and our officers:

- Aided our Hurricane Dennis response by stationing a marked patrol car at our water and ice distribution to maintain order.
- Supported our officers during the Blue Angels air show this past year by bringing water, cold towels, and sunscreen to those stationed on fixed posts.
- Following Hurricane Katrina, they delivered our surplus donated police vehicles to Pascagoula, Mississippi which shortened the delivery time from 2 weeks to 2 days.
- Transported vehicles for routine maintenance, saving many man hours of sworn officer time.
- Expanded their patrols to the shopping malls during the holiday season to provide the perception of an enhanced police presence to deter criminal activity.

Volunteers provide the missing piece of the traffic safety puzzle; an innovative Volunteers In Police Service program using citizen volunteers to drive marked Gulf Breeze Police vehicles for traffic calming and motorist assistance in order to address a dramatic increase in traffic crashes and disabled vehicles.

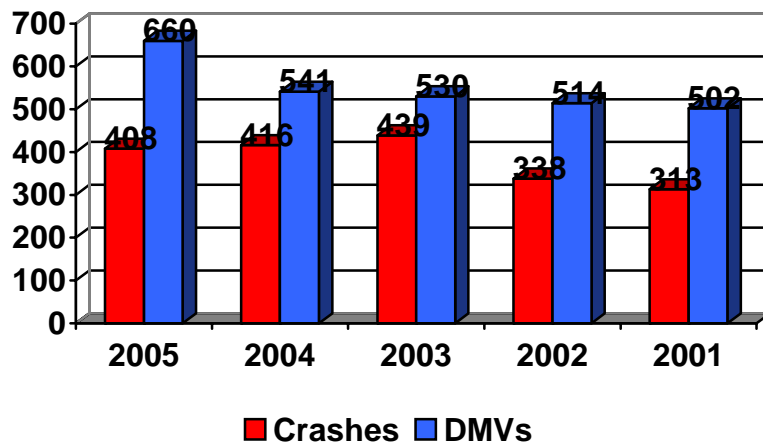
Scanning

The City of Gulf Breeze had created a Traffic Safety Task Force in early 2004 to study the problem of a 35% traffic crash increase that was observed in 2003 and to make recommendations to mitigate the problem. Over 60 members of the community participated in a Task Force facilitated by the police chief that adopted and prioritized 28 recommendations to address traffic crash increases. Many of the suggestions have already been implemented since the conclusion of the Task Force Report in July 2004 which resulted in a 5.24% reduction in crashes for 2004. One of the most provocative, yet potentially effective, suggestions of the Task Force remaining was the implementation of citizen volunteers to drive marked Gulf Breeze Police cruisers. Our agency was already deploying static spare marked cruisers alongside the roadway and parking them for a period of time as a traffic calming measure. The Task Force wanted to increase the visibility of police cars on the roadway as a traffic calming measure and to assist motorists. They felt that the addition of a dynamic patrol car driven by volunteers would prove effective. Data analysis showed that aggressive driving contributed significantly to the large spike in traffic crashes in 2003. The police had received an aggressive driving grant to purchase a covert vehicle, however the increased visibility of marked patrol cars is also a known deterrent to aggressive driving. Our community of 6000 has a small agency of 19 full time sworn officers. The use of volunteers allowed us to increase our visibility on the roadway by 25%. This activity resulted in a further 1.92% reduction in traffic crashes in 2005 and provided aide to over 60 disabled motorists.

The Gulf Breeze City Council was approached with the proposal in 2004 and were informed that

the citizens
Traffic Safety
Task Force had
recommended
the endeavor.
With City
Council
approval, the
next step was a
review of
Florida Statute
and liability
issues with the
City Attorney.
The City

Crash & Disabled Vehicle History



Attorney recommended that we create the project with clear guidelines, a valid selection process, proper training and proper supervision; so that there would not be any extraordinary liability issues. We also participated in the International Association of Police Chiefs Volunteers in Police Service initiative in 2004 to use national volunteer models to establish our program. The Gulf Breeze Police Department officers had been active members of the Traffic Safety Task Force and had supported the use of volunteers for this purpose as well. A sergeant and a patrol officer were recruited to oversee the VIPS program and to conduct the training. The police officers were assured that the volunteers would not be performing any enforcement actions at all and were actually trained to summon the patrol officers immediately if enforcement action was needed. We also made certain that our volunteer force was attired in distinctly different garb. The VIPS have yellow shirts, white hats, and red windbreakers. There is no possibility that their uniform can be confused with that of a law enforcement officer, yet is highly visible for the environment in which they work.

The creation of very clear-cut objectives was essential to avoid any misunderstanding of this project. First, we absolutely did not want to send the wrong message to our officers that we were trying to undermine or obviate their efforts at traffic control. We believe that we succeeded in this endeavor as our officers' enforcement actions have remained at a high level. Gulf Breeze police officers wrote almost as many citations this year as last. We did observe a 2.45% dip in ticket productivity this year, but attribute much of that minor discrepancy to unusual hurricane activity and significant rain events last spring which flooded our city for weeks. We have sustained direct hits from two Category 3 hurricanes (Ivan and Dennis) in the past year and the rain events that flooded our city were three 'one hundred year rain events' over a one month period that deluged us with over 24" of rain. These natural events have diverted a significant amount of our resources for a significant period of time. Next, we wanted to assure the city fathers and the community that we were not creating a vigilante force. Third, we wanted to make certain that we were operating well within the law and liability concerns. To achieve these goals, we established very clear and limited goals for our VIPS. They were to drive on the roadway acting as a traffic calming activity and were to render aide to motorists in need. For clarity's sake, a corollary directive was created that they were not to perform any enforcement action. Before any recruitment was undertaken, we created policies on the recruitment, selection, screening, training, retention and behavior of our volunteers. Volunteers must meet the following selection criteria:

- 18 years of age
- Have a valid Florida driving license and no adverse driver history
- Completed a Citizens Volunteer Program Application
- No adverse criminal history and pass a background check
- No adverse health conditions and sign a hold-harmless agreement
- Must understand their services are voluntary and without compensation

Every applicant signs a release that allows us to check these facts and understands that they may not be accepted if adverse information is found. We further developed a comprehensive training curriculum and an FTO program for the police radio and

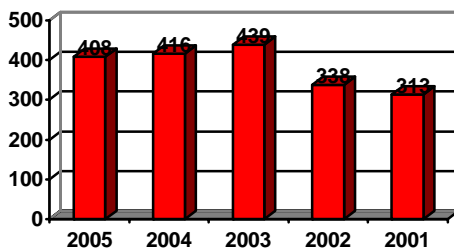
vehicle operations. A patrol sergeant was assigned to oversee the volunteer program and was assisted by a patrol officer as well. At the conclusion of all of the training, volunteers drive with uniformed officers who monitor their activities, make suggestions and validate their successful performance. The activities of the volunteers were stressed at each step and it was made clear that they have a two-fold role of traffic calming by their driving action and to render aide to those in need. Every volunteer was trained in first aid and in cardiopulmonary resuscitation in case they happen upon a medical emergency on their rounds. Police radio use was also a part of the training and volunteers use a designated administrative radio channel unless an emergency situation requires they summon police assistance immediately. They are also familiarized with the operation of the emergency equipment in our patrol cars so they know how to properly activate and deactivate it.

The program would not have achieved its goals, nor would it have been well received if the roles were ambiguous or not clearly understood. It is an innovative project and a unique use of citizen volunteers in our area. The City Council, the patrol officers, the supervisory staff, the community and the volunteers had to have a clear grasp of their roles and the program goals. The policies that were created and the selection and training requirements allowed us to impart that information. When television and print media arrived to cover our initiative and the progress we were making, we had reporters actually role play the actions of volunteers to get a clear understanding of the intention and focus of the project. Reporters drove the marked police vehicles and also observed the effect that a marked police vehicle had on surrounding traffic. They were able to see and assist disabled vehicles. They were able to observe traffic actions and were also able to understand the need for 2 volunteers to be involved at all times; one driving and one observing. The experience with the reporters allowed us to fine tune our role assignments for our volunteers. We observed that many civilian drivers drove the marked patrol cars as they drive their POVs and were actually speeding along with surrounding traffic. When they were told to set the pace of traffic at the speed limit, they actually had to focus on that and were less able to observe for disabled vehicles and other traffic situations. The assignment of a passenger observer corrected this difficulty immediately. The reporters were able to very clearly articulate their experiences to the public and were a very valuable asset in getting our message out to the public. The clear and limited role of our volunteers was easily understood and publicized.

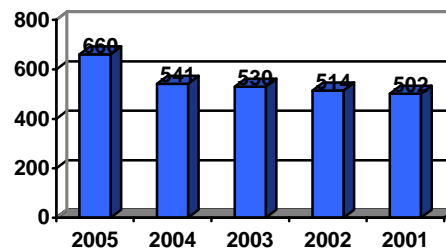
Analysis

The Data Analysis Committee of the Traffic Safety Task Force identified the primary cause of a 35% increase in our traffic crashes in their work in 2004. That committee was chaired by Dr. Julie Kunselman, Professor of Criminal Justice at the University of West Florida who extensively analyzed our crash data. Data revealed that drivers involved in these crashes were from the local area, were younger or were commuters and the crashes were occurring during commuting time. The analysis also revealed the primary crash locations in the city and pointed to aggressive driving as a major contributing cause. Armed with this information, the Task Force recommended

Crash History



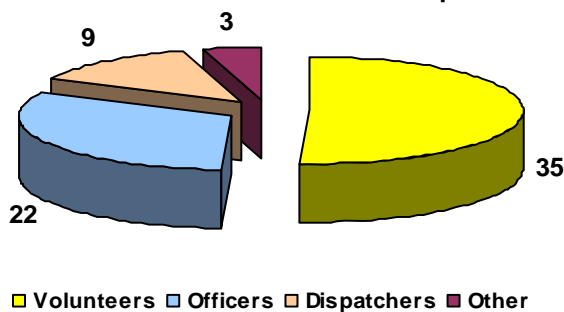
Disabled Vehicles History



citizens driving spare police vehicles to heighten police presence on the roadway as a deterrent. The monthly activity reports of the Gulf Breeze Police also pointed out another looming problem of a 22% increase in disabled vehicles in 2005. Both of these activities create a demand for police services and place pressure on our ability to deliver the services without adversely impacting other operations. Using volunteers to assist other motorists is an effective use of resources.

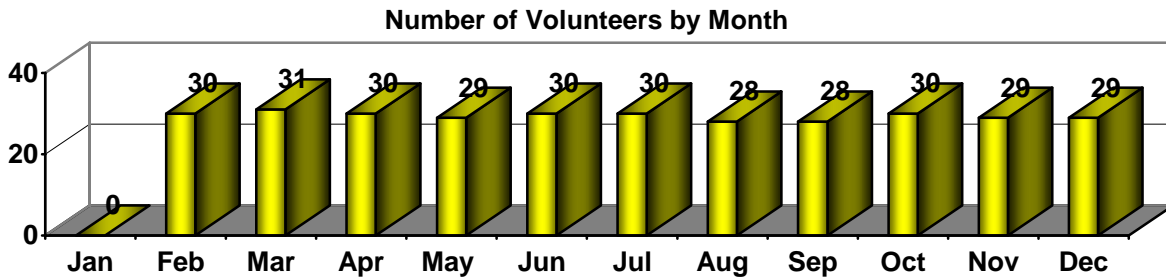
At the conclusion of 2004, the data of the Gulf Breeze Police were again analyzed and the crash numbers have decreased by 5.24%. The most innovative recommendation that the Task Force made was that of the volunteer citizens on patrol. In partnership with the International Association of Chiefs of Police we began to aggressively pursue that initiative in late 2004 and were able to implement our

Gulf Breeze Police Workforce Composition



Volunteers in Police Service program in early 2005. The initiative was intensive and required significant resources to implement, but has been remarkably self-tending and problem free since it began. Our efforts resulted in over 30 volunteers working for us. This is a larger workforce than our 21 full and part

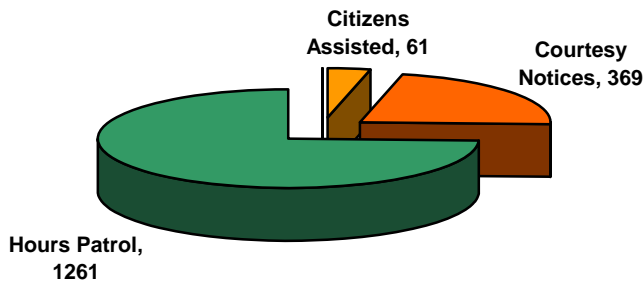
time sworn personnel. The number of volunteers has been surprisingly static and has resulted in very little turnover.



All throughout the implementation and analysis phase of our Volunteers in Police Service initiative, we obtained and made extensive use of data analysis. It was data analysis that pointed out the need for additional presence on the highway to curb aggressive driving, to identify the times of day, days of the week and the locations of our crashes to assist us in targeting our efforts. Once the project was underway, it was essential that the results be objectively assessed to measure our success and point out how we are progressing in achieving our intended goals. The goals we established in 2004 were to reduce loss of life, reduce traffic crashes, and to facilitate traffic flow. Our data shows us that crashes have **decreased 5.24%** in 2004 and an additional **1.92% decrease** since the volunteers began their efforts in 2005. This is not as high a number as we had hoped initially, however the Florida Department of Transportation just released data that identifies a **15% increase** in our traffic **volume** in 2005 due to traffic pattern changes and construction caused by Hurricanes Ivan and Dennis. Florida Highway Patrol report a concurrent **15% increase** in traffic **crashes** in the remainder of Santa Rosa County in 2005 as well. Given this data, we feel that the VIPS program contributed to our 17% lower differential in crashes. During 2005 we also experienced a **22% increase** in disabled motor vehicles. This may be attributed to a significant amount of road debris caused by the enormous clean up and construction efforts generated by the hurricanes. The VIPS have aided

61 of the additional 119 disabled vehicles this year. Their efforts have assisted over half of the increased number of disabled cars.

Volunteer Activities for 2005



The use of the empirical data is the entire basis of our response. The data has allowed us to focus our response directly at the problem. We have identified the time, day of week, location and the driver demographics to help us focus our efforts.

The peak crash time is Monday through Friday during commuter times. Those are precisely the times that we have supplemented our efforts with volunteers. The VIPS drive marked patrol cars Monday through Friday on 3 shifts. They work 6:00am to 8:00am, 11:00am to 1:00pm, and 3:30pm to 5:30pm. They drive primarily on Highway 98 where over 95% of our crashes occur. Our data analysis has also demonstrated the value of the efforts for the first year. By assessing our departmental activity reports, we have noted that the VIPS have provided over 1200 hours of service, have detected 369 violators that were sent courtesy warning letters, and have aided 61 motorists. The results are dramatic and significant. This activity has also contributed to a 1.92% decrease in crashes within our city. This was achieved in spite of a 15% increase in traffic volume and a 15% increase in traffic crashes throughout the rest of Santa Rosa County in 2005.

Response

In years past, the traditional law enforcement response to an increase in crashes has been the increase in enforcement and the targeting of enforcement efforts to the suspected locations and causes of crash increases. To achieve this, we have used aircraft speed enforcement, 'slicktop' cruisers, marked cruisers, display radar units, radar enforcement teams, unmarked cars running the Highway 98 corridor, wolf pack enforcement with other agencies, the Highway 98 Strike Force enforcement efforts, a regional DUI enforcement Task Force where we hosted a DUI checkpoint every quarter, assigned all of our patrol officers to spend one hour of undedicated patrol time each shift to traffic enforcement, parking 'dummy' patrol cars on the roadway to control traffic and maintain a safe driving environment. Data analysis showed that in spite all of these efforts and a steady increase in traffic citation activity we had failed to contain the traffic crash problem.

Since we were unsuccessful in containing the problem through the use of traditional enforcement methods, it was felt that a more in-depth analysis of the problem was in order. After our data analysis was completed in 2004, the Traffic Safety Task Force made 28 recommendations to impact traffic crashes. The implementation of over 66% of the recommendations resulted in a 5.24% decrease in 2005. The implementation of the volunteers driving marked police cars in 2005 has resulted in an additional reduction of 1.92%. Over the past 5 years, virtually every traditional enforcement response was employed with limited success or minimal failure. The volunteers have made a difference. They have reduced crashes. They have aided motorists. They have calmed traffic. They have also assisted our patrol officers by taking cruisers for routine maintenance, delivering spare patrol cars that were donated to Pascagoula, Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina; assisted our traffic direction efforts at the food, water and ice POD following Hurricane Dennis; delivered water, ice, and sunscreen to our officers on fixed posts during the Blue Angels airshow; and patrolled shopping center parking lots during the holiday season to deter criminal activity. A strong case can be made for the success of the VIPS program and its value to our traffic calming efforts. The data shows the results to be effective. The volunteers have driven almost 15,000 miles without incident. The volunteers have not created any significant management issues and have been perhaps the most self-tending aspect of our entire operations. The number of volunteers has always been surprisingly high. We heard from over 100 citizens initially and processed over 50 applications. The final number of about 40 accepted volunteers resulted in 31 trained volunteers by the beginning of our efforts in February 2005. The number has remained fairly constant and the turnover has been minimal. The VIPS program is bigger than the entire paid of staff of the Gulf Breeze Police Department and the volunteers have proven themselves to be a valuable and welcome asset.

We knew all along that it is not possible to eliminate traffic crashes. The goals established were within this framework of containing the problem by reducing the number and severity of crashes while still facilitating traffic flow. The VIPS program

has allowed us to reverse a long-standing upward trend in traffic crashes in spite of very significant upward pressure caused by a dramatic increase in traffic volume. They increase the public visibility of the Gulf Breeze Police and they directly aide our sworn officers in the performance of their duties as well.

The data for the Gulf Breeze Police Department is analyzed each month. At year's end, it is reviewed again and trends detected. The focus of the following year's initiatives is largely driven by the empirical data obtained and trends noted. As we succeed in reducing crashes in the City in general, we will continue to focus on specific 'hot spots' as they are identified by monthly crash analysis. We will also analyze the crash data annually to detect trends and measure progress. We also post our crash and traffic citation data each month for staff and all operations personnel to reference. The data is also shared with the VIPS to allow them to focus their efforts and to give them feedback. Their volunteer hours are accumulated and keep track of so that those who achieve over 100 annual hours of annual volunteer time can receive the Presidential Volunteer Service Award to recognize their efforts. For their efforts completed in 2005 we are very proud to have 5 volunteers who have completed enough service to be eligible for the Bronze Service Award and will be presenting those awards at our annual City volunteer dinner on April 7, 2006.

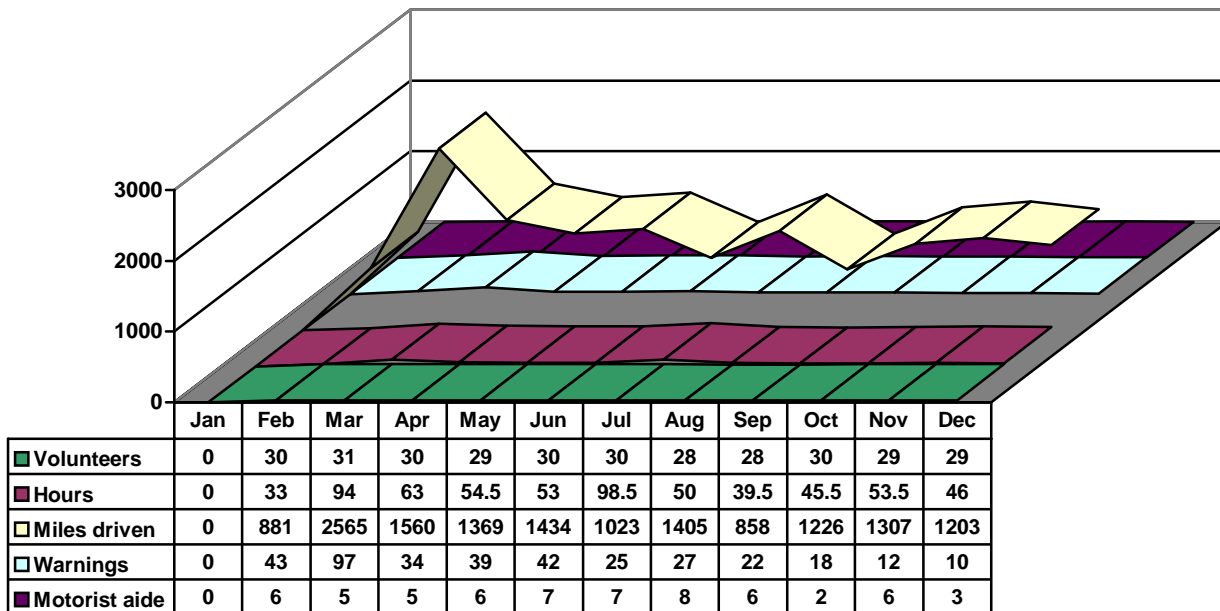
The scope of the project, the broad inclusion of every conceivable stakeholder and the methods by which solutions were generated and prioritized is unique and innovative. The culmination of the planning and analysis process was the melding and prioritizing of all of the recommendations by the Task Force. Citizen participants in our task force proposed the idea of having civilian volunteers drive marked Gulf Breeze Police vehicles on the roadways. As far as we were aware, this has not been done in our area before. There are many Crime Watch programs where citizens patrol neighborhoods and areas to deter crime. Most of those programs go out of their way to clearly mark the vehicles in a way that distinguishes them from active police patrol vehicles. Since we use our spare patrol vehicles and did not have any that could be dedicated solely to this activity, we explored the possibility of using our spare marked cars when they are available. The Gulf Breeze Police Department has had a take-home cruiser program for many years and each officer is assigned a cruiser. Each year we purchase a few new cruisers to replace those nearing the end of their effectiveness. The cars replaced are then placed in reserve for a year. These cars form our spare cruiser fleet. We have between 3 and 4 cars in this status most of the time. The traditional use of these cars is to use them for replacement of damaged cruisers, or to use them when our assigned cars go for maintenance. The volunteers allow us to make much better use of this resource. With appropriate selection practices, a good training program, sound polices and supervision; this unique use of civilian volunteers has proven very valuable. We first developed selection criteria for the volunteers. Those participating must have no adverse criminal history, no adverse driver history and no adverse health issues. After passing that screening, the volunteers had to successfully complete first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation training. Since they would in direct contact with the public and on the roadways where they could encounter medical emergencies, this was deemed essential. The next training component included police patrol

procedures and police radio communication and emergency equipment operation procedures. The detail of shift assignment, the selection and assignment of partners, the pre-shift equipment checklist and post-shift gassing up of the car was also detailed. The most important part of the training was the clear identification of the goal of the program and the purpose of their efforts. The volunteers are trained that the program goals are: they are to save lives, reduce crashes and render aide to motorists in need. They are also explicitly told that they have no enforcement function and this is underscored by policy and state law. We do encourage the volunteers to note violations that they observe and a courtesy letter is sent to the registered owner of the vehicle detailing the action noted. Volunteers are provided a distinctive uniform that clearly identified that they are not law enforcement officers, yet are highly visible for the environment in which they work. They wear white hats with reflectivity, yellow shirts, and red windbreakers. The participation by the community is notable, the assistance the VIPs provide our sworn officers is significant and the variety of roles that the VIPs perform has been very useful to us over time. We initially thought that their use would be very limited to traffic calming and motorist assistance. While those efforts have been



VIP preparing for duty in uniform

Volunteer Activity by Month 2005

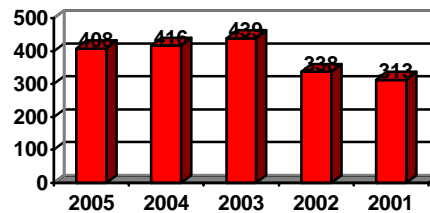


overwhelmingly successful; the supplemental efforts have proven as valuable.

Assessment

We have accomplished several of our goals and are on the way to success. The number of crashes in 2004 dropped by 5.25% for the year. This year we continued our efforts and added the Volunteers in Police Service citizens driving patrol cars to supplement our traffic crash reduction efforts. The results at the end of the year were as we had hoped. Traffic crashes reduced an additional 1.92% in 2005. This was achieved in spite of a dramatic 15% increase in traffic which did result in a traffic crash increase of 15% in the remainder of Santa Rosa County. Our VIPS also assisted 61 motorists, detected 369 violations, drove almost 15,000 miles incident free and contributed over 1200 hours of service.

Crash Results after Task Force Recommendations & VIPS



The success of the VIPS is attributed to the comprehensive nature and approach that was taken by the Traffic Safety Task Force that birthed the concept. We did not want to continue to function in diverse and fractional ways to address such a broad problem. We have successfully implemented many of the taskforce recommendations; however the Volunteers in Police Service citizens driving marked police vehicles have clearly resulted in the traffic calming and the motorist assistance that we had anticipated. The program has been embraced by the patrol force for its direct assistance to those on the roadway during disasters and intensive public events. VIPS have become part of the fabric of our community work force and attend our city wide employee breakfasts over the past year. They are also recognized by our City Council at the annual city volunteer dinner and awards ceremony.

This endeavor has been perhaps the most effective leverage of effort we have undertaken. We have more than doubled our workforce and brought a significant reduction of traffic crashes and an increase in motorist aide with the VIPS program. The staffing requirements have been minimal. A sergeant committing a few hours a month has operational oversight of the selection, training, and scheduling of the volunteers. A patrol officer has supplemented the sergeant's efforts and has also contributed a few hours a month to the implementation of the program. As the year went on and the success of the VIPS became apparent, a volunteer was selected to do the underwriting required to keep track of hours, duties, send out courtesy warning letters and assist in creating the schedule. Another volunteer was selected to assist with training newly selected replacement volunteers. The manpower demands of our sworn staff have been further reduced by these efforts. There was only one incident requiring upper management attention over the course of all last year and that turned out to be an inadvertent operational error of the emergency lights on a cruiser. No corrective action was required. Volunteers have been successful in every

endeavor they have performed and are punctual, attentive to detail and responsible in their performance.

The traffic calming effects and the motorist aide was an overwhelming success. The inclusion of so many community members helped to provide a better understanding of police operations. We now have a cadre of over 30 trained first aid and CPR responders in the community to respond to medical emergencies that they detect. In addition, the VIPS offered and performed the following services:

- Aided our Hurricane Dennis response by stationing a marked patrol car at our water and ice distribution to maintain order.
- Supported our officers during the Blue Angels air show this past year by bringing water, cold towels, and sunscreen to those stationed on fixed posts in the July heat.
- Following Hurricane Katrina, they delivered our surplus donated patrol vehicles to Pascagoula, Mississippi which shortened the delivery time from 2 weeks to 2 days.
- Transported vehicles for routine maintenance, saving many man hours of sworn officer time.
- Expanded their patrols to the shopping malls during the holiday season to provide the perception of an enhanced police presence to deter criminal activity
- Assisted staffing and moving equipment and supplies to facilitate a disaster response task force involving over 150 attendees from 3 counties, 3 municipalities, the state government and a congressman.

At every step of the process we sought and responded to the input of the City Council and to the community at large. Ideas were generated from within and from outside the Task Force process. No idea was rejected out of hand and all concepts were explored for practicality and effectiveness. The idea of using our spare police cruisers to be driven by citizen volunteers to act as traffic calming vehicles was provocative and innovative. It also ranked in the top half of the 28 recommendations by the Task Force, placed number 11 in their prioritization. The idea was spurred in 2004 by a committee member on our Traffic Safety Task Force who was caught behind one of our patrol cars as they were coming to a meeting. When they commented that it sure controlled traffic, the idea of using our spare cruisers for that purpose was germinated and eventually was recommended and was successfully implemented. The idea also became the foundation of an application to the International Association of Chiefs of Police as a pilot development program for their Volunteers in Police Service initiative. We have been successful in being accepted and are one of only 6 such programs in the country, and the only one in Florida.

The crime statistics and crash reports of the Gulf Breeze Police Department form the basis of the data analyzed. Reports of the Florida Department of Transportation published in the Pensacola News Journal are the source of the Santa Rosa crash data for 2005. The Florida Highway Patrol crash data serves as the source of crash increase in Santa Rosa County for 2005. Activity data was entered into an Excel spreadsheet by administrative personnel and evaluated monthly. Every recommendation that was made was based upon empirical data or observation. We have analyzed our crash data for the past 5 years and have established an extensive relationship with the University of West Florida Criminal Justice program.

The results achieved over the past 2 years form the basis for a conclusion that this endeavor is worthy and successful. A 5.24% reduction in crashes was achieved in 2004 by enacting many recommendations of our Traffic Safety Task Force. This year's further reduction in crashes of 1.92% in the face of a dramatic 15% traffic volume increase and 15% crash increase in the remainder of the county identifies this project as a significant factor in controlling the problem of crash increases. So long as we continue this initiative, it is felt that our crash numbers will be positively affected. It may also be possible to increase the number of cruisers being driven by volunteers or to expand their hours or days of operation to maintain success.

We believe that similar results would be achieved by other agencies that bring the same resources, factors and efforts to bear on this problem. The predominant investment in the project was time. The recommendation can be implemented with relatively little expense or use of political capital. The community that creates adequate selection, training and oversight procedures will find the results positive and extremely cost effective. Our agency is accredited by the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation and CALEA Recognized and has expanded our policies and procedures to include the volunteers program. We have also expanded our officer and employee of the year program to include volunteers and recognize their contribution in the future. We include our application and selection forms in this submission and will be pleased to provide copies of any of our work product for this program to any agency that should request it. Since our program began there have been several media articles in television and print. One article was picked up by the Associated Press and distributed nationally. CNN also picked up the AP story and broadcast the program for much of a day on Headline news Network. We received inquiries from Massachusetts, Washington, Oregon, Texas, Hawaii and many other jurisdictions. We have shared our program implementation procedure and our policies with any agency that has requested it. With the political will of the governing body and the appropriate program development by the agency, this initiative can be implemented in many jurisdictions and should have the same extraordinary success.

We have adopted the quality principles. The first effort was the creation of a community-wide policing initiative that was proactive. We then succeeded in proactively addressing vandalism in our community and then drug and alcohol abuse by youngsters. We then created a community-wide traffic task force that addressed crash increase. Each year we have achieved significant results and have had success by involving our community in our problem-identification and problem-solving efforts. It is the backbone of our efforts and has resulted in community support and success for our efforts. We know for certain that our citizens know what is wrong in their neighborhoods and what can be done to make things better. By collaborating with all parties, we realize tremendous success in our endeavors.

Agency and Officer Information

It will take several years to begin to control the traffic crash increase we have experienced. Every reasonable approach that can be found is being brought to bear. The frequency and severity must be brought in check. With that goal in mind, the community will strive to respond to the problem and will adapt to circumstances as they change. It is our conclusion that we will be able to sustain our efforts. The results that were obtained in 2004 to address traffic crash increase were significant. In 2005 we will have more strategies in place and more time to see the positive effects of those efforts. The results were dramatic and in concert with our anticipation. Our intention is to continue these efforts and continue to attack the pervasive traffic crash problem in our community. As the population of southern Santa Rosa County continues to grow, the traffic will increase and the pressure in our City will grow. We are the last community at the end of a peninsula and there is no alternative route for the traffic. We will feel the pressure and have taken proactive and positive steps to address the matter before it becomes completely uncontrollable.

Similar results would be achieved by other agencies that bring the same resources, factors and efforts to bear on this problem. The predominant investment in the project was time. The recommendations that were made by the Task Force are very cost effective and can be implemented with relative little expense or use of political capital.

We have adopted the quality principles for several years now. The first effort was the creation of a community-wide policing initiative that was proactive. We then succeeded in proactively addressing vandalism in our community and then drug and alcohol abuse by youngsters. Each year we have achieved significant results had success by involving our community on our problem-identification and problem-solving efforts. It is the backbone of our efforts and has resulted in community support and success for our efforts. We know for certain that our citizens know what is wrong in their neighborhoods and what can be done to make things better. By collaborating with all parties, we realize tremendous success in our endeavors.

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