

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

INTRODUCTION

The Grand Jury studied the areas of proactive partnerships between the public, Police and Sheriff's Department entities involving several programs functioning in several Cities. Community Policing is known by a variety of names: Fillmore as a Police Storefront; Oxnard, a Community Policing Programs (COPS); Thousand Oaks, a Community oriented Policing & Problem Solving (COPPS); and San Buenaventura, a Community Problem Orientated Policing (CPOP) and Storefront Operation. The Grand Jury decided to spot check several facilities in each of these cities to determine if their organization and operation is having an impact on crime reduction.

FINDINGS

- Funding of these above programs was made available through the Federal Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Block Grant, Office of Community Policing Services, (COPS Universal Grant), and Special Budget Appropriation Funds, from local cities, School Districts, and private sources. The Homeless Employment Resource Opportunity Center (HERO) assisted in grant applications to COPS. Funds were also available through a Family Preservation Grant.
- The Ventura County Sheriff's Department has established several COPPS Units. The City of Thousand Oaks budgeted matching funds in 1997, to establish a COPPS Unit with monies from a Federal Crime Bill Grant. The objective was to focus on improving the overall quality of life in the community. A "Citizen's Academy" was established in 1994 to develop an inside look with local law enforcement. The "Volunteers in Policing" Program is a step further to train citizens in the community to perform routine police functions. As of February 7, 1997, 175 citizens graduated from the "Citizen's Academy" and 45 volunteers in policing have donated 1300 hours monthly to the Community Oriented Policing effort.
- The City of San Buenaventura has its own Police Department and operates its own version of this program CPOP; this includes Storefront Operations, Community Partnership, and a 12-Plan Scheduling and Geographical Team Policing. Therefore, crime has decreased by 12%.

The Harbor Storefront handles tourist information and also doubles as Police Precinct Station. The officers are working to develop a home page on the Internet to alert citizens of current issues, and to assist in making reports of minor crimes. Volunteers, working with the officers, handle business-telephone calls and direct tourists to various points of interest. They also assist in clean-up of surrounding neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Watch Meetings also have been established in the Storefronts. They continually work with other enforcement agencies, the School and Fire Districts, business community and very importantly, the public. The program operates within the Crime Prevention Unit, having 450 Block Captains in the City. Teams are scheduled to deliberately overlap during the hours of greater volume of activity. A three day course of training is required for

patrol officers, detectives, and other community agencies that are certified by the California Peace Officer's Standards of Training (POST). As of February 3, 1997, this course has been offered five times and 142 officers and personnel have participated.

- The City of Oxnard has had a COPS Program in place for over 20 years. Its patrol officers are trained in a more humane approach to problem solving. In 1996, the City approved an expenditure of \$365,000 which was provided by the California COPS program to match available Federal COPS Funds.
- North Fillmore Police Storefront began in 1994 when working with the Ventura County Sheriff's Department. They received a three year matching grant of \$329,867.00 from the Federal Government. A 36% drop in the crime rate was achieved and pride was restored in North Fillmore during the first year of operation. The grant will expire this spring if funds are not renewed. This Storefront was the beginning of the "Community Based Policing" in Fillmore and serves 1300-1600 citizens in any given month. Three deputies were added as a Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) officer, a Special Enforcement Deputy and a Community Resource Deputy. The City of Fillmore donated items and supplies which were supplemented by citizens' donations.

The Fillmore Lemon Way Homeowner's Association leased an abandoned laundromat to the Ventura County Sheriff's Department with an option to buy in three years. Extensive remodeling was done so that the building could also serve as an Emergency Operating Disaster Center. The building has 25 telephone jacks, plus installation for a connection of an alternative electric generator, if needed. Plans have been established to have emergency supplies stored nearby in case the City is cut off by any disaster. Residents of Piru, an unincorporated City 5 miles east of Fillmore, also utilizes the facilities. In 1996, a vacant lot was leased by the City of \$1.00 per year for 10 years. It was graded, lawns and basketball courts added and fenced, again with volunteers from the community. The buildings and grounds also provide delinquent youths with community services hours ordered by Ventura County Probation Department assignments and local courts. The youth also help in neighborhood clean-up. The Center has several computers for classes. Individual tutoring is available for students (M-Th). Also offered are classes in English, Citizenship, Red Cross Volunteer Training, First Aid and CPR, Earthquake preparedness, Salvation Army Camp, Prenatal, Planned Parenthood, Women's Support Group, Child Gun Safety, Eligibility Interview (Unemployment Office), Legal Aid Service, Auto Electric, Pyle Boy's camp, Nutritional, a Cub Scout Troop, Neighborhood Council and Watch Program, Bread Give Away, Christmas Program, Victory Outreach, HIV Prevention, Palmer Drug Abuse Counseling, Health Fairs, Boy's and Girl's Club Outreach and Crisis Intervention, 1st Time Home Buyer Seminars, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Community Policing units continue to work with law enforcement and are providing strong support to the partnerships between Cities, County, Law Enforcement and Community Policing Programs with the citizens.
2. Community Policing has made great strides and is accepted throughout Ventura County.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Law Enforcement should make every effort to encourage Community Policing principles.
2. An effort needs to be developed by the communities to establish measurable goals for each facility.
3. Annual detailed financial records and reports should be established by the communities to maintain accountability for continued funding.

COMMENDATION

The Ventura County Grand Jury salutes the efforts of the many officers and volunteers of all cities. The City of Fillmore has instituted a program which demonstrates a most positive effect within its community. These efforts are a positive approach to educate the communities about concerns, problem areas which safeguard neighborhood citizens.

RESPONSE REQUIRED

Ventura County Board of Supervisors
Ventura County Sheriff's Department
City of Fillmore
City of San Buenaventura
City of Oxnard
City of Thousand Oaks