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Merging Community-Oriented and Crime-Specific Policing

Part One of Seven

Neighborhood-Centered Approches

This is one of a series of bulletins describing the integration of community policing and crime-specific strategies among Texas police agencies. The strategies are categorized into Neighborhood-centered Approaches, Targeted Enforcement, Youth and Gang Programs, and Problem-oriented Tactics. Staff and consultants of the Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas (LEMIT) and the Texas Regional Community Policing Institute made over 20 site visits to Texas agencies employing these forms of crime-specific strategies. This year's Executive Issues Seminar Series, and this bulletin series, describes a sample of programs that appear to be working among police efforts to reduce crime in Texas.

This bulletin describes three programs focused upon the quality of life in neighborhoods. Dallas' Support, Abatement, Forfeiture, Enforcement (SAFE) Team is a national model of an integrated

approach to nuisance abatement. The Apartment Manager's Group formed by the Garland Police Department "took on a life of its own," providing benefits for participants beyond those anticipated by the police department. The "Turn Around" program in Corsicana, part of a larger national movement, is given credit for all but eliminating open drug distribution in the community. All of the programs share the characteristic of improving neighborhoods by focusing upon crime reduction.

**Special Bulletin
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Texas Regional Community
Policing Institute**

*Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas
Texas Regional Community Policing Institute*

Support, Abatement, Forfeiture, Enforcement (SAFE) Team Dallas, Texas, Police Department

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Program Summary

The SAFE Team is designed to reclaim, restore, and revitalize Dallas neighborhoods adversely affected by crime through the targeting of properties shown to be criminal havens by using criminal abatement, code enforcement, and civil and criminal processes, including property forfeiture.

Site Description

Dallas is located in North central Texas and is home to a wide range of industries, particularly banking, insurance, and commerce. The largest city in the Metroplex, Dallas covers approximately 462 square miles with a resident population of some 1.1 million people. Roughly 33% of Dallas residents are African American, 19% are Hispanic, 45% are white, and 3% other.

The Dallas Police Department has 2,886 sworn officers and approximately 700 non-sworn personnel, many of whom hold professional positions in the department. Pre-service training is completed at the department's in-house TCLEOSE certified academy. In addition, the police department sends officers to other schools as needed. A number of DPD's command officers regularly attend the LEMIT Executive Issues Seminars, the LEMIT Graduate Management Institute, and other management or specialized training programs. The SAFE Team is organizationally placed in the Investigations Bureau under the Special Operations Division. The team is headed by a lieutenant who reports directly to an assistant chief.

Program Description

Using the team management approach, the SAFE Team operates largely within rigid time constraints stipulated in the Texas Civil Practices and Remedies Code, as well as strict adherence to the unit's case management procedures. Following these explicit guidelines increases efficiency and effectiveness of the unit while maximizing the quality of each case it handles.

The team is supervised by a lieutenant and includes 19 sworn officers and seven civilians. The non-sworn staff includes

attorneys, code enforcement officers, and fire inspectors. In addition, the team works closely with Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission agents. The team also has surveillance resources (e.g., listening devices, night vision devices, audio-visual equipment, etc.) to assist in investigations and case development.

The team works predominantly days, although they are able to flex their time, notably while investigating a case. The team lieutenant creates an oral board to interview candidates (sworn or non-sworn) to fill vacancies on the team. (Attorneys are exempt from this process.)


Cases are brought to the SAFE Team through both traditional and non-traditional methods. These include:

- Traditional Methods
 - Citizen complaints
 - Complaints from elected officials
 - Referrals from Interactive Community Policing (ICP) officers
 - Referrals from patrol officers
- Non-traditional Methods
 - Outreach efforts in the community from the SAFE Team
 - SAFE Team review of reported offenses which fall within purview of their criminal nuisance abatement jurisdiction
 - SAFE Team review of applications for special use permits and zoning change requests

Once a referral is made to the unit, a supervisor assigns the case to a case officer to determine if there is discernible activity where criminal or civil remedies can be used to abate the nuisance. Based upon Texas statutes, explicit activities fall within these parameters. These include:

- Drug trafficking and consumption of drugs.
- Prostitution (manifesting, promotion and compelling).
- Illegal gambling (promotion and communicating).
- Criminal gang activity (combination and/or street gang).
- Random gunfire.
- Commercial obscenity (manufacture, distribution, exhibition).
- Commercial dancing (sexually explicit).
- Bull fighting.


The case officer makes an initial investigation (the "clock starts again") to determine if there are at least three separate incidents of the nuisance over a stipulated period. If this



cannot be determined, then the case will either be dropped or investigated again later if there appears to be evidence that the nuisance will meet the standards. In either case, the complainant is notified of the status of the case.

If it is determined that the case meets the minimum standards of being a criminal nuisance, the “clock starts again”—the team has 45 days to develop its response to the complaint. The owner of the property is contacted to set up an inspection of the property by the various team members. In cases where owners are uncooperative, the investigation may use surveillance, undercover, or other investigative techniques to gain the information needed.


Once the evidence is collected, a case package is put together by the various inspectors which is reviewed by both the supervisor and an attorney. Once prepared, the owner is asked to report to the SAFE Team offices (where there is a hearing room) and is given formal notification of the complaint (a process which is videotaped.)



At this point, most property owners will sign an accord agreeing to conditions which must be remedied (e.g., fixing code violations, dealing with criminal nuisance, etc.). The SAFE Team will then monitor the property for 30 days to see if changes occur. If not, (and depending upon the circumstances), they may meet with the owner again to develop a revised plan.

If no reasonable progress has been made after 30 days, or if the property owner does not sign the accord, then the SAFE Team will take an enforcement approach, using a zero tolerance policy. Depending on the circumstances, owners can be fined and/or jailed and may even have to forfeit the property. Only about 1% of the cases go to this phase.

The SAFE Team is currently handling approximately 700 cases per year. Multi-family properties typically provide the biggest problems, while businesses—and particularly sexually-oriented businesses—are the quickest to comply with regulations (and they are the most cooperative).



Beyond the primary activities described above, the SAFE Team is involved in other activities, notably public education and training. For example, the team will regularly give a two hour orientation to the Citizens' Police Academy as well as other public forums. They also provide two hours of training to all DPD personnel as part of the state's mandated in-service training. Because of the success of the team and desire by other police agencies to develop similar programs, the SAFE Team has developed a 40-hour TCLEOSE certified course on Criminal Nuisance Abatement.

Program Effects

The effects of the program can be simply stated: Crime has gone down and the quality of life has increased as a result of SAFE Team operations. The team's activities, which physically change problem environments, coupled with the large number of cases the team has handled in a comparatively short amount of time, equates to a substantial impact on crime and disorder.

Critical Factors

Perhaps the most apparent critical need is resources. Even on a smaller scale, a police department must have personnel which can be devoted to nuisance abatement cases. There is also the obvious need for code enforcement officers and fire inspectors—personnel who may not be available for full time assignment in many cities. The SAFE Team is a labor and expertise-intensive operation. The DPD was fortunate to obtain grant support for much of its operations; not all agencies will have this opportunity.

Other critical factors include:

- Explicit policy-related guidelines must be developed to meet abatement standards of both criminal and civil law. Because the processes used by the SAFE Team are different than the police are accustomed to and because both civil and criminal processes are used, procedures must be detailed.
 - Some level of autonomy is needed for the SAFE Team because of the legal and operational characteristics of abatement. This does not mean freedom from responsibility, but the ability to have needed flexibility for investigations and employing resources external to the police department when necessary.
 - The experience of the SAFE Team is that selective enforcement of nuisance and related code enforcement violations is neither operationally nor politically viable—a “zero tolerance” policy is strongly recommended.
 - Because the process deals with seizure and control of property and the SAFE Team has a degree of autonomy, a series of checks and balances is needed to ensure accountability and control.
 - While it may not be feasible for every agency, the Dallas SAFE Team has found that an invaluable tool is having in-house attorneys whose responsibilities are exclusively dedicated to the SAFE Team.
 - SAFE Team administrators must be contemporary managers with a team orientation.
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Apartment Managers Group Garland, Texas, Police Department

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Program Summary

An organization called the Apartment Managers Group (AMG) was formed in 1992 to serve as a problem identification, communications, and resource tool to reduce crime problems in the city's apartment complexes.

Site Description

Garland, Texas, is located contiguous to Dallas on its north east side, adjacent to the I-635 Loop. Garland is a commuter community with some retail shopping areas and most residents working outside of Garland in the Metroplex. Covering approximately 57 square miles, the resident population is approximately 200,000 people. Roughly 35% of Garland's residents are Hispanic, 14% are African American, 49% are white, and 2% other.

The Garland Police Department has 287 sworn officers and 119 non-sworn personnel. Pre-service training is completed at the department's in-house TCLEOSE certified academy. In addition, the police department sends officers to other schools as needed. The chief and command officers regularly attend the LEMIT Executive Issues Seminars and have several graduates of the LEMIT Graduate Management Institute. The city is divided into four patrol sectors, each of which is broken down into beats. In addition, the police department has Neighborhood Police Officers (NPOs) who overlap geographic areas with patrol.

Program Description

The Apartment Managers Group is the responsibility of the day shift patrol lieutenant who serves as the police department's formal point of contact and who is also responsible for organizing meetings, distributing information, and preparing a newsletter. While there are about 100 members of the AMG, a core group of 20-25 people regularly participate in meetings (although this will vary depending on crime problems).

The AMG was formed because of growing crime problems—notably burglary, auto burglary, and drug dealing in apartment complexes, largely in lower socio-economic ar-

reas. It was felt that if the police and apartment managers were able to establish a dialogue and develop mutual trust, specific problems could be identified and meaningful solutions developed.


The daytime patrol lieutenant was designated as the program coordinator because the complex offices were open during the day, and the most frequent contact with managers would be through patrol officers. A database was developed of apartment managers and a board of directors was appointed representing the most active and visible managers. The board of directors is not a leadership group, but an advisory body and communications mechanism to identify and facilitate concerns to the managers.

The lieutenant schedules a monthly meeting held at the police department which has several purposes. Crime analysis data are given to the managers as well as reported crime data stratified by address, date, and time. This not only informs the managers about crime problems but it also stimulates discussions of trends, problems, and offenders as well as potential problem interventions. Each monthly meeting also has a guest speaker intended to provide new information for the managers. Topics such as fire prevention, code enforcement, landlord obligations, and responsibilities, eviction processes, and crime prevention are examples of the programs provided. The meetings also have a time set aside for a general discussion of issues concerning the managers.

To supplement the meetings, the department publishes a monthly newsletter which is sent to all AMG members. The newsletter includes specific items of interest, special alerts, meeting announcements, and related information. The department also has a dedicated hot line (with voice mail) exclusively for AMG members to use for reporting problems or making inquiries.

As the department has evolved more broadly in the adoption of Neighborhood-Oriented Policing (NOP), the relationship with the AMG has changed somewhat. Primarily, there is more communications between the managers and the NOP officers and a more proactive response to problems by the police department. This adds a new dimension in the police/AMG relationship which has made the department more responsive and the AMG members more open.

Limitations to the program include the high rate of turnover for many of the apartment complex managers. Essentially, the police department is constantly "building bridges" with many of the managers. Another problem is that complexes which are owned by large corporations tend to be less supportive and less willing to work cooperatively with others. Perhaps there is a greater atmosphere of indifference or the corporations simply feel it is bad for business, that




being involved in such a program with the police is an admission of problems. A final problem is that some of the issues which are of the greatest concern to the managers are simply outside the jurisdiction of the police. This may give the impression that the police are not as helpful as they say.

Program Effects

Crime reduction has been recorded in auto burglary, residential burglary, and drug trafficking in the Garland apartment complexes. Most recently, auto theft has increased and a strategy is being developed to address this problem. While not specifically directed toward quality of life issues, it has nonetheless improved as a consequence of the law enforcement activities. Similarly, there has been some reduction in calls-for-service, most likely as a result of eviction or displacement of problem residents.

Critical Factors

Successes of the program can be attributed to a number of factors. These include:

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- Having meetings on a *regular* basis, regardless of the number of people who attend.
 - Providing information which is of practical use to the managers at the meeting, even if the

information falls outside of the law enforcement purview, per se.

- Holding the monthly AMG meetings at the police department; this appears to provide reinforcement that the police are concerned and involved in problems faced by the apartment managers.
 - Regular contact with the police—beyond the monthly meetings—has increased the quality of the relationship with apartment managers. This is particularly evident through the activities of the NPOs.
 - Having constant and open avenues of communications between the AMG members and the police department (vis-a-vis the newsletter and “hot line”).
 - Providing information on crime and calls-for-service to apartment managers. In most cases, apartment managers were unaware of the amount of police activity which was occurring on their properties.
 - Help the apartment managers to see the need to communicate with and cooperate with the police. Once the need is understood, participation comes much more freely.
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Turn Around Texas Corsicana, Texas, Police Department

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Program Summary

The intent of *Turn Around Texas* is to provide a targeted confrontation, mobilization and education process led by citizens in conjunction with and support from the police department intended to intimidate drug dealers and drug buyers to stop transactions and displace drug dealers.

Site Description

Corsicana, Texas, is located about 50 miles south of Dallas on Interstate Highway 45. Corsicana is largely a commuter city with residents working in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. Covering approximately 14 square miles, the resident population is around 28,000 people. Roughly 35% of Corsicana's residents are African American and 25% are Hispanic.

The Corsicana Police Department has 45 sworn officers and 12 non-sworn personnel. Pre-service training for officers is typically completed at the North Central Texas Council of Government Police Academy. In addition, the police department sends officers to other schools as needed. The chief regularly attends the LEMIT Executive Issues Seminars and is a graduate of the LEMIT Graduate Management Institute.

Program Description

This program is explicitly designed to eliminate drug dealing within neighborhoods by drawing attention to known drug dealers as well as intimidating the dealers and users through regular citizen marches (demonstrations). The marches go beyond a mere physical presence and include chanting in front of drug dealers residences and in the area of open air drug markets. It is based on the "Wrice Process" started by Herman Wrice in Philadelphia.

Locations of the marches are based upon information from the police department which identifies the "target" based upon past narcotics arrests, tips by narcotics officers, and active narcotics investigations.

Citizen volunteers who participate in the march first go through a training program designed to:

- Give principles of the Turn Around concept.
- Provide police department rules for the march
 - No physical engagements
 - No arguments with the targets
 - Do not go onto private property
 - Marchers must obtain a parade permit
- Marchers are taught the chants that will be used.
- The training is also designed to develop the group of marchers with a team spirit.

Participants, which in Corsicana include all age groups, race/ethnicity and social groups, are issued T-shirts and hard hats as a form of uniform.

Marches occur every week (and have occurred weekly since the program's inception in October 1995). While the average number of participants in Corsicana is in the 40-50 range, there has been as few as nine and as many as 200 marchers.

Marchers' transportation is generally provided by a Corsicana Independent School District bus (which is reimbursed for expenses by the *Turn Around Corsicana* organization), and the march is typically led by a fire truck (both of which indicate the community nature of the program). Marchers are escorted by bicycle officers. However, additional security officers may be provided depending on the nature of the location, target, or other factors. Off-duty officers participating in the marches do so voluntarily and may receive overtime compensation if they request it.

The process used is fairly simple. Marchers stand in front of the target's residence or in the area of a drug trafficking area and chant until "intimidation" is achieved. Most marches last two to three hours, although one march lasted from 9:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m. Beyond the chants, other approaches are also used to achieve intimidation. For example, in some cases, water soluble paint has been used to paint "crack house" and an arrow on the street pointing to the target's residence. In other cases, marchers accompanied bulldozers tearing down crack houses.

A few problems have occurred. At the outset, some city administrators and police officers were reluctant to support the program. That has largely changed since positive results have been achieved. The police department has had a few complaints about the program from the ACLU although no lawsuits have been filed. In another instance, targets of the march threw bleach on marchers. (The targets were subsequently arrested for assault.)

The "Turn Around" program exists in several states as well as 14 cities in Texas (Corsicana, Taylor, Alice, Elgin, Rockdale, Kilgore, Terrell, Greenville, Waxahachie,



Plainview, Marshall, La Marque, Texas City, Longview, and Odessa.)

Program Effects

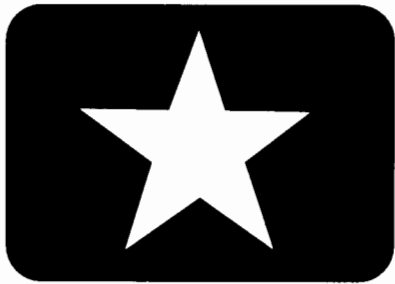
In Corsicana, Turn Around Texas has had demonstrable effects, including:

- Virtual elimination of open air drug markets after about one year.
- A large number of drug dealers have been displaced outside of Corsicana's city limits.
- Some reduction in violent crime.
- Very positive support for the police from the community (including political support).
- The police department has received increased information about drug distribution from neighborhood sources who were previously reluctant to talk with the police.

Critical Factors

The success of Turn Around Texas in Corsicana can be attributed to several factors. These include:

- A commitment by police administration to the program, including a willingness to participate, devote resources, take risks, and permit flexibility for officers to participate.
 - Officers must be present at all marches for safety, security, and support.
 - Officers working with Turn Around Texas must have flexibility.
 - Active support from citizens is essential. If the citizens are not willing to regularly participate, the program will not work.
 - Similarly, there must be support from the city administration.
 - Care must be taken to ensure targets are legitimate and that there is sufficient information to support the allegation. If not, liability may ensue.
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