

**POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF BOYNTON BEACH**

2008 REPORT TO THE CITY COMMISSION

I. CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

During calendar year 2007, the city experienced 5,046 reported index crimes. (Index crimes are defined by the Uniform Crime Reporting system as Felonious Homicide, Sexual Offenses, Robbery, Assault, Burglary, Larceny, Motor Vehicle Theft and Arson). Compared with the 4,810 Index Crimes reported in 2006, this represents a single year increase of 236 crimes or approximately 5%. Violent crimes (Homicide, Sexual Offense, Robbery and Assault) for 2007 numbered 1,468, and in 2006 numbered 1,398 for a single year increase of 70 crimes or approximately 5%. Property crimes (Burglary, Larceny and Motor Vehicle Theft) numbered 3578 in 2007, and 3,412 in 2006 for an increase of 166 crimes or approximately 4.8%.

The 2007 crime figures are largely impacted by the increased police arrest activity. In 2006, our officers made 1,188 arrests for part one crimes. In 2007, there were 1,506 arrests for part one crimes for an increase of 318 arrests or approximately 27%. The largest increase for any crime category occurred in the shoplifting sub-group. There was an increase of 312 shoplifting crimes in 2007 which is largely due to the increased emphasis on security by area retailers and our increased presence in the shopping areas during the holiday season.

A five year analysis reveals that crime in 2007 is 24% lower than it was in 2003 and 18% lower than it was in 2004.

Criminal Homicide decreased by 4 offenses for a 4% reduction. None of the criminal homicides were related to gang activity. Three of the homicides were domestic or acquaintance killings (where the perpetrator was known by the victim), two were the result of a drug deal gone bad, one homicide was gambling related and one was an accidental shooting.

In 2006, there were 11 instances of gang related violence. In 2007, there were no instances of gang violence in the city. Through tactical deployment of SWAT officers in the neighborhoods and on the streets where gang leaders and members live or congregate along with a highly visible CAT presence in these same areas, violent gang activity was essentially eliminated. The department continues its support of the countywide Violent Crimes Task Force (VCTF) and Multi-agency Gang Task Force (MAGTAF) with one detective detailed to each unit on a full time basis.

Although robberies increased by a total of 16 offenses, the increase was almost completely within the category of *Highway Robbery*. This is the category that covers instances where one person forcibly removes property from another's person or presence using force or the threat of force. This category includes everything from an armed car-

jacking to the juvenile who takes another child's lunch money by threatening him with harm. The other categories of robbery (armed robberies of businesses, convenience stores, gas stations, banks, etc. - all armed robberies) experienced a 16 offense **decrease**.

In 2007, the department began its holiday deployment on the Friday after Thanksgiving concentrating on the mall and the shopping areas along Congress Avenue (many of which did not exist last year). From the beginning of the holiday deployment through the first of the New Year, there were no crimes against persons committed anywhere in the commercial areas along Congress Avenue including the mall.

In early 2007, we began to deploy in the residential areas where we noticed an increase in burglaries. These offenses are almost always committed by persons who live in close proximity to their victims (12 blocks) and are largely soft-target crimes of opportunity. **This means that most houses are not properly secured and easily entered by a non-skilled perpetrator.** Many of the burglaries involved theft of generators, pressure washers or lawn care equipment from unsecured porches, garages, sheds and car ports. An increase in arrests (+22) along with a crime resistance campaign by our CAT team and Crime Prevention Unit resulted in the decrease in frequency of burglaries in the second half of the year. These efforts will continue in 2008.

An analysis by zone (zones are the 10 reporting areas drawn as a grid which are used for geographic crime analysis) indicates that zones 1, 2, 3 and 4 experienced a significant reduction in crime (146 less part one offenses). These zones comprise the area between I-95 and the ICW and from Woolbright Road to the northern boundary and were the primary operating area for our Community Action Team. Zone 7 (and Zone 8 – the mall) experienced the largest increase of part one crimes (+366); however, these zones take in almost all of the retail areas along Congress Avenue including the mall and the increase is mostly accounted for by the increase in shoplifting cases. Zone 5 experienced an increase of 104 part one crimes. This is the area east of I-95 between Woolbright Rd. and the southern boundary. Zone 6 (area west of I-95 between the southern boundary and Woolbright Rd.) experienced an increase of 17 part one crimes. Zone 9 (area west of I-95 and east of Congress Ave. between the C-16 canal and the northern boundary) had a decrease in part one crime (-27). Zone 10 (area west of Congress Ave. between the C-16 canal and the northern boundary) also experienced a significant decrease in part one crime (-78).

II. DEPARTMENTAL MANPOWER

The department is divided into two divisions; Uniform Services and Support Services - along with an administrative staff consisting of the Professional Standards and Training units. The administrative functions are: conducting mandated and enhanced training programs, recruiting, accreditation compliance (the department was once again awarded accredited status at the October meeting of the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation), internal investigations, staff inspections and public information. Commenting on the department's organization, the Police Executive Forum (PERF)

Management Audit Report published in 2006 stated “the organization of the police department is essentially sound...there is no excessive rank in either levels or numbers. Patrol staffing is sufficient and should be so through 2010.” The **Uniform Services Division** is organized as follows:

Road Patrol

- Consists of 4 shifts that provide coverage 24/7. Officers assigned to the shifts work a 12 hour rotation. Roll call times are staggered throughout the day to provide more coverage during peak times.
- Both day shifts (A) have 1 lieutenant, 3 sergeants, and 17 officers assigned to the shift
- Both evening shifts (B) have 1 lieutenant, 3 sergeants, and 18 officers assigned to the shift
- The primary responsibility of road patrol is to respond to calls for service
- Road Patrol is 911 driven
- They also provide high visibility directed patrol
- The shift lieutenants prepare a bi-weekly Platoon Deployment Plan which is an analysis of problem areas in which the platoon plans for directed patrol during the 2 week period are outlined.

Traffic Unit

- Investigates all accidents involving serious injury or death - the unit has investigated 9 traffic fatalities this past year
- Conducts selective enforcement
- Participates in DUI task force initiatives and has accounted for 131 DUI arrests this year.
- Participates in the aggressive driving enforcement program - street racing, road rage incidents
- Handles majority of traffic complaints

K-9

- One K-9 team is assigned to each of the 4 platoons providing coverage 24/7
- K-9 Unit has conducted over 100 tracks this year
- Each K-9 team has recorded at least 6 hours of training weekly
- Bite to apprehension ratio is below 25% which is the national average

Marine Unit

- 4 officers assigned to patrol the water 7 days a week (these officers are also used to supplement CAT and patrol operations when needed)
- Two vessels - one for off shore and one for inland water ways
- They make over 5,000 contacts a year with boaters, mostly for safety inspections, boater awareness, and boater education
- Unit works closely with ICE, USCG, FWC, and PBSO
- All officers are US Customs Blue Lighting certified

Community Action Team (CAT)

- Divided into two teams: one sergeant and five officers are involved in community intervention (patrol) projects. The other team of one sergeant and six officers handles narcotics enforcement in the neighborhoods along with other vice activity

SWAT

- Assignment to SWAT is in addition to the officer's normal duties
- The teams have been used very successfully for high visibility gang suppression duties throughout the year
- Normally used for the resolution of hostage, barricade and sniper type incidents in addition to serving high-risk search and seizure warrants
- Called out 19 times during the year for hostage and barricade incidents

Crime Prevention Unit

- Staffed by two officers
- Administers the Citizens on Patrol and Citizens Police Academy programs
- Conducts Shop-with-a-Cop during the holidays
- Provides Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) inspections to businesses and citizens
- Provides gang awareness lectures to elementary and middle schools
- Addresses numerous citizen groups and HOA's regarding safety

Police Athletic League

- Staffed by one officer
- Conducts football, basketball and cheerleading programs for children
- Conducts summer football camps

The Uniformed Services Division responded to 64,056 requests for service in 2007. This represents a decrease of 1,652 calls compared to calendar year 2006 and is indicative of the success of our community policing efforts (See *Community Policing* below).

The **Support Services Division** is comprised of the **Investigative Services Section** which is staffed by one lieutenant, two sergeants and fourteen detectives. Detectives are assigned general investigations, with specialties in White Collar and Special Victims crimes which consist of crimes against children and the elderly. Two detectives are currently assigned to task forces; one serves in the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Violent Crimes Task Force, and the other in the Gang Task Force.

Currently, eight detectives in general assignment are assigned persons and property cases on a rotational basis. Three detectives investigate economic crimes. Three detectives are assigned to the Special Victims Unit which investigates child abuse and neglect cases. This unit also handles all elder abuse cases. Due to changes in the Florida Statutes and the implementation of the Child Abuse Protocol in the 15th Judicial Circuit, we were given an "unfunded mandate" to investigate all child abuse/neglect and elder abuse cases

along with the Department of Children and Families. These cases require many man-hours of investigation and documentation and frequently require the assistance of additional detectives and patrol officers. Annually, the State Attorneys office convenes a Grand Jury to conduct an audit of all law enforcement agencies to ensure compliance with the Child Abuse Protocol. Our department has consistently remained a leader in protocol compliance in the county. The SVU administers our Child Safety Review database that tracks and monitors those involved in child abuse and neglect cases throughout the county.

The office of the **Victim Advocate** provides those victim services required by Florida State Statutes. Essentially, this is another “unfunded mandate” and requires follow-up on all domestic violence crimes and those crimes where the victim may be in need of social services. Additionally, our Victim Advocate provides counseling to and escorts numerous domestic violence victims to court each week in order to procure orders for protection against domestic violence.

The **Crime Analyst** assists in disseminating officer safety, wanted and informational bulletins received from throughout the tri-county area. She generates mapping information, tracks crime trends and compiles crime statistics and the annual Uniform Crime Report. The analyst participates in tri-county initiatives regarding intelligence and information sharing and assists road patrol in their manpower deployment planning process.

The **Asset Forfeiture** detective is tasked with properly evaluating all cases involving forfeited property to ensure compliance with the Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act. Forfeitures are considered civil proceedings and the specialist navigates through the procedure either negotiating settlement with private entities, or proceeding through the city attorney’s office with legal action to forfeit seized property.

The **Crime Scene Unit** is staffed by four civilian crime scene investigators who provide crime scene processing and evidence collection for the more serious crimes. Our CSI’s are responsible for the collection and processing of crime scenes and critical incidents. Their duties include photographing and video taping scenes, the collection of trace evidence to include DNA and fingerprint evidence. Our crime scene unit responded to 644 scenes in 2007.

The **Evidence and Property Unit** is manned by two civilian custodians. Their responsibilities consist of properly storing and maintaining the integrity of physical evidence and recovered property. The evidence custodians maintain a computer based tracking system, and ensure the transfer of evidence to relevant laboratories for forensic analysis. The unit accepted and processed 9,451 pieces of evidence in 2007.

The **Communications Section** is commanded by a lieutenant who has a civilian Communications Manager and the Sergeant of Records/NIMS who answer directly to him. Communications has recently been absorbed by the police department, and we have shorted the road a lieutenant to accommodate this new acquisition. Dispatchers operate

the 911 and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems 24/7 for the police and fire departments. The communications center received over 233 thousands calls last year. The center is manned by 17 dispatchers and 5 supervisors. Currently, we are one supervisor and two dispatchers below our allotted strength.

The **Records Section** consists of a Records Supervisor and eight records clerks, with two clerks assigned to the Uniformed Crime Reporting (UCR) function. This unit maintains the various records that are required by Florida Statutes, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and Federal Statutes. Additionally, the Records Section maintains the NCIC/FCIC criminal information systems along with the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications Network required of all law enforcement agencies. All court records/summons and field reports are also maintained by this unit along with the Uniform Traffic Control summons system.

III. COMMUNITY POLICING

Essentially, our philosophy encompasses some key principles in addition to our city's core values:

- Grouping of Incidents – This involves moving beyond just “handling” an incident. Officers look for patterns and relationships among incidents in order to identify “covert” problems.
- Focus on Substantive Problems – Internal management of the police department is not the focus of our sergeants and lieutenants. Instead their efforts are directed to the substantive problems identified by the community such as criminal conduct and areas marked by frequent loitering for some illegal purpose. Instead of focusing on impractical goals such as productivity guidelines, they are empowered to identify and “own” an issue important to the neighborhood.
- Inquiry and Analysis of Problems – Officers, sergeants and lieutenants consider the reason a particular problem exists and formulate a response that will be long-range effective. Follow-up and analysis is performed by the patrol commander to determine if a solution is working or whether another approach may be more appropriate.
- Community Input – This is the heart of community policing philosophy and considers that priorities for a particular neighborhood are best established by the residents. Officers are encouraged and instructed to speak with residents at every opportunity and attempt to identify those problems that most seriously affect the safety of a neighborhood.
- Follow-up with Neighborhood Residents – Determine if the beneficiaries of a particular solution are truly benefiting by our efforts.

In brief, the department responds to crimes and neighborhood issues through directed patrol strategies that insure deployment of available patrol manpower to those areas where emerging crime patterns and neighborhood problems are identified. The Community Action Team is also deployed to these areas in order to establish liaison with residents, provide increased bicycle and foot patrol presence and to assist in the

formulation of a long-range solutions to neighborhood problems. Increased crime patterns also trigger an examination and analysis of field reports for more intensive follow-up by our investigators. The goal is to identify those responsible for the criminal activity and to establish a case against the perpetrators. The department does not wait for the year-end crime statistics in order to formulate a response plan. Crime is analyzed weekly in order to identify and to predict emerging crime patterns with the goal of deploying our forces to those areas where crime will be most prevalent. Our experience reveals that crime is not concentrated in any one area of the city. Rather, it emerges in patterns throughout our neighborhoods requiring us to constantly realign the deployment of the patrol force.

The Boynton Beach Police Department has shifted the responsibility of deployment of forces downward to the operational level. Officers identify problem areas and neighborhood concerns, relaying this information to their supervisors for consideration along with criminal intelligence and statistical data. Patrol commanders then formulate a bi-weekly deployment plan which is submitted to the Uniformed Services Division Commander for approval. Deployment plans can always be changed on short notice in response to critical incidents or rapidly emerging crime patterns. Although the 911 generated work load will always take precedence, officers are empowered to spend the time necessary to identify problems and search for long term solutions which might involve utilizing other components of city government such as Code Enforcement or Public Works. Deployment plans take into account the most serious street crimes and the type of patrol that can best combat and prevent these offenses.

The PERF Report outlines the shift in departmental philosophy to one of community, or more specifically, preventive policing. The PERF report, commenting on our transition to community based policing, noted that “an enhanced community policing focus may enable the city and the department to prevent and control crime, violence and disorder and thus reduce the rate of increase in demand for police services over the next 10 years. By becoming more effective, the department may be able to mitigate the need for future expansion.” However, the report recognized that the demand for police services will continue to increase and that the department’s manpower resources may not be able to keep pace with the increased demand. Reactive policing will always remain an important component of law enforcement services; however, a problem solving approach which concentrates on addressing the underlying reason for crimes and neighborhood problems will hopefully result in a decreased need for police intervention. We believe that effective community or preventive policing begins with an effort to connect police and the neighborhoods in relationships of mutual trust. Without this, we can not effectively determine what is actually happening on the streets of our city beyond our own observation. Our best intelligence information comes from the residents of a particular neighborhood and in this respect we have been very successful. In many, if not most, cases where our investigators are charged with solving a violent crime, we are quickly informed who has committed the crime. This puts our investigators in a situation where they are frequently investigating “in reverse.” Meaning, we know who did it, now we have to gather the evidence to prove it. The other component of preventive policing involves formulating a plan to deal with a particular problem. Officers must develop an

ability to look at a particular situation or problem as being part of a pattern that leads to an underlying cause. Only then, can a long-range solution be found.

The Community Action Team (CAT), composed of one lieutenant, two sergeants and 12 officers, deploys in a bicycle and foot patrol mode in those neighborhoods where crime and nuisance type problems are frequent. Their purpose is to establish a rapport with citizens and apply the principles stated above in order to effectively deal with persistent problems. The Community Action Team is also our primary narcotics enforcement unit.

During 2007, the CAT accounted for:

- The seizure of over \$150,000.00 in cash, vehicles and vessels
- Drug seizures of large amounts of cocaine, heroin, marijuana, methamphetamine anabolic steroids and various prescription medications
- The seizure of over 18 handguns, shotguns and military style assault rifles
- The closing of two massage parlors operating as fronts for prostitution
- The temporary closing of a strip club for narcotics and prostitution
- The arrest of numerous individuals for operating a city-wide dog fighting operation along with the seizure of animals and dog fighting equipment
- The service of 42 search and seizure warrants for narcotics
- 144 felony arrests and 128 misdemeanor arrests

IV. DEPARTMENTAL OUTREACH PROGRAMS

The department continues to operate five very successful community outreach programs; Citizens Police Academy, Police Athletic League, Citizens on Patrol, Police Explorer Post and Shop-with-a-Cop.

The Citizens Police Academy recently completed its 28th session, which consisted of 10 three-hour lesson blocks and two officer ride-a-longs. The program is designed to familiarize citizens with the organization and operation of the police department. All of our CPA classes fill to capacity (55) and we will continue to conduct two sessions per year.

The Police Athletic League (PAL) continues to operate football, basketball, cheerleading and summer camp programs at the Ezell Hester Center, serving approximately 700 children per year. All of our PAL programs quickly fill to capacity.

The department's Citizens on Patrol program has over 1,200 participants that serve as the "eyes and ears" of the police department. The COP's patrol neighborhoods throughout the city in departmental COP vehicles and report suspicious activity to our Communications center.

Our Police Explorer Post is a BSA program that introduces young men and women to the operation of a police agency and a law enforcement career. There are currently 20 men and women, between the ages of 14 and 17 participating in our program. They have

traveled throughout the state participating in education and competitive programs designed to develop law enforcement skills.

“Shop with a Cop” is in its second year and provides needy children an opportunity to receive presents during the holidays. Donated funds are utilized to make purchases and Crime Prevention officers work with local elementary schools in order to identify children in need of assistance. Our Crime Prevention Unit also gave away over 600 backpacks with school supplies at the beginning of the school year. Most of the backpacks and supplies were donated by Office Depot which we supplemented with donations from the community.

We also fingerprinted and photographed over 1,500 children last year, providing the parents with identification cards and crime prevention information.

V. SPACE NEEDS

In 2007, the department was fortunate to obtain some additional space in the form of old Fire Station 2, now known as PD2. This provided need office space and garage storage for specialty vehicles and emergency generators. Presently, the Traffic Section and the Community Action Team call PD2 home which resulted in the freeing up of needed office space in the headquarters facility. Unfortunately, one of the offices was taken as evidence storage space and another was used to house the Records Section UCR function. Nonetheless, we were able to move some of the file cabinets and desks from the hallway into an enclosed space. We also moved our Training Unit from the headquarters facility to the range facility on Miner Road converting our only classroom into offices for the Training Sergeant, Recruiter, and departmental instructors.

Still, space is at a premium in the PD and we will need to expand in order to accommodate additional manpower and functions. For example, we will need to expand our Investigative Services Section in order to accommodate additional detectives as the need for follow-up investigations increases and the state requires local PD's to take more of the investigative work load from the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Children and Family Services (these are essentially unfunded mandates where municipal police departments are required to provide investigative services for child and elder abuse complaints as well as community supervision for juveniles as a result of decreased activity from the state agencies.) Additionally, at some point within the next two years, the city and the PD workload will have grown to the point where a “district” type of deployment will be required as opposed to the “temporal” deployment currently utilized. What this means is that the department would divide the workload and geographic responsibility between two or more districts in order to maintain community policing initiatives and insure that deployment of personnel actually addresses the needs of the various neighborhoods and business districts. This will require more office space for supervisors and managers as well as larger briefing rooms.

Evidence storage space is inadequate and there is nowhere, other than the sally-port area outside the detention area, where vehicles and other large evidentiary items can be

processed in a secure location. Other than the hallway, there is no room that officers can utilize to meet with citizen/victims or question suspects. Fortunately, the planning process for the new headquarters facility has begun and we are hoping that there will be sufficient resources to build a new facility next year.