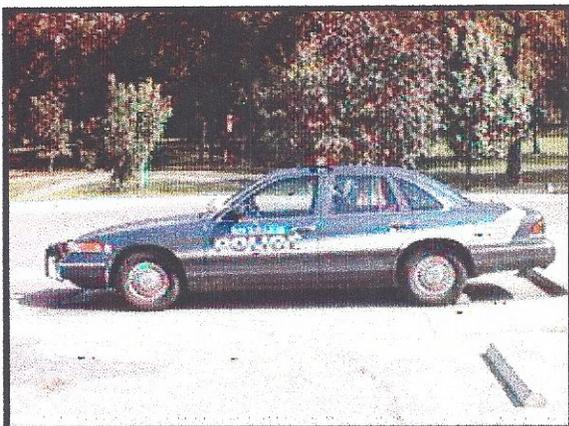
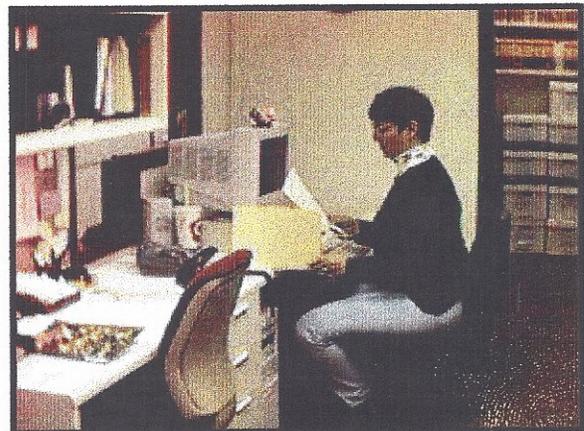


Merriam Police Department

Committed to
the philosophy
of Community
Policing.....
through
Innovation
and Partnership



1996 Highlights and Statistics



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Credits

This 1996 Annual Report was made possible due to assistance from the following persons:

Bill Lietzke, Bob Smith, Steve Haynes, Dan Kellerman, Larry Birt, Bob Schluben, Dave Thomas, Lisa Aldrich, Karen Gibson, and Randy Rash.

INTRODUCTION



The City of Merriam continues to demonstrate that it is a progressively managed community. In 1996, much work was done to ensure that the City would continue to grow and prosper. The City has demonstrated that its primary mission is to improve the quality of life for its residents and businesses.

Merriam is widely known for the high quality level of service that is provided. This success is possible for two reasons: (1) professional city employees that are committed to excellence; and (2) the high degree of dedication and support they receive from the Mayor and City Council.

This document was compiled and organized by Chief Kenneth Sissom. It has been written to chronicle the 1996 events and experiences of the Merriam Police Department. It is written in a series of reports, listed by category. Its purpose is to illustrate the activities and provided services through narrative form, statistics, charts and graphs.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

PARTNERSHIP:

We are committed to working in partnership with the community and each other to identify and resolve issues which impact the community, ourselves and the other professional agencies.

DEDICATION:

We are committed to providing the highest quality of law enforcement service to the community with the goal to enhance the quality of life within Merriam.

RESPECT:

We are committed to the respect of individual rights, human dignity and the values of all members of the community and the department.

INTEGRITY:

We value the adherence to the rule of law, to the Constitutions of Kansas and of the United States, and to utmost honesty. We are committed to nurturing the public trust by holding ourselves accountable to the highest standards of professionalism and ethics.

COMMUNITY:

We value working with Merriam's diverse community to ensure the safety and security of our neighborhoods. We are committed to the highest level of communication and cooperation with both the residential and business communities of Merriam in an effort to reduce crime and increase the feeling of security and well-being within the city.

EMPOWERMENT:

We are committed to empowering our employees and the community to resolve problems by creating an environment that encourages solutions that address the needs of the residential and business communities.

ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH:

We value the creation of an environment which focuses on solving problems through teamwork, participation, cooperation and enthusiasm, fostered by decisive, professional leaders who support creativity and innovation.

MERRIAM POLICE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

We, the Merriam, Kansas Police Department, are a community-oriented police department. We are committed to providing the highest quality of police services by empowering our employees to work coactively with the community toward the goal of improving the quality of life within Merriam. We pledge to maintain the highest level of respect for an individual's rights and human dignity.

**Our purpose is to provide safety and security for all persons within our city with responsive and professional services utilizing compassion and concern. Our mission is accomplished within the moral and legal standards of our community, through a partnership of the community and the employees of the
MERRIAM POLICE DEPARTMENT.**



NOTE:
The Mission Statement and Organization Values were developed by a committee of Merriam Police Officers with the assistance of a group of concerned citizens in June, 1993.



The Honorable Irene French
Mayor, City of Merriam

Chief's Message

Dear Mayor French:

It is the goal of Municipalities to render the best service possible to its residents while keeping the tax rate at a reasonable level. Most cities in our area accomplish this and maintain an inadequate level of service from year-to-year. As conditions or circumstances change, these cities try to evolve and meet the challenges they face. The City of Merriam is different.

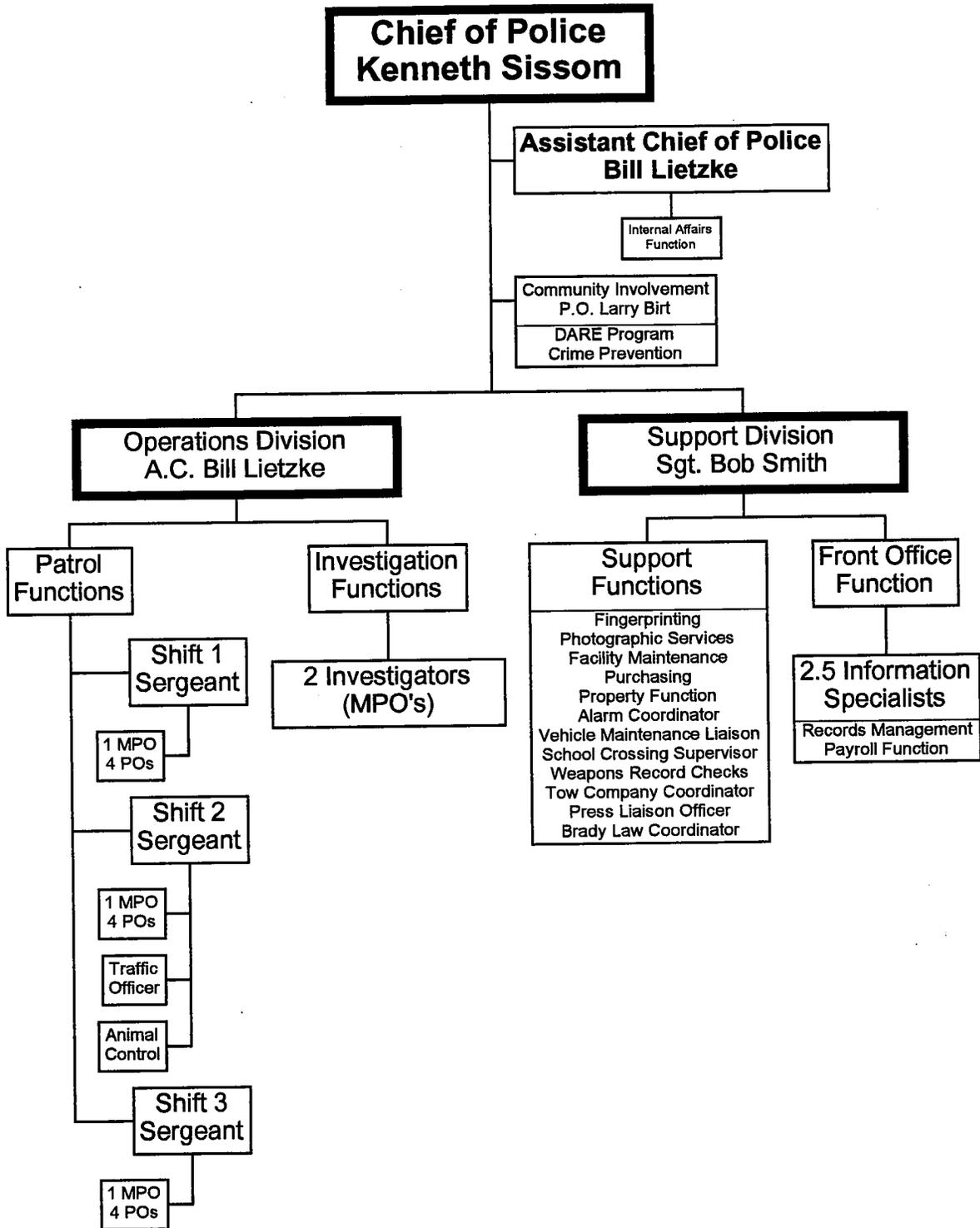
This is my fifth year as Chief of Police. I am amazed that the City of Merriam has made significant progress each year in the level and quality of service to our residents. During this time frame our tax mill levy has declined. This success was not an accident! A commitment to innovative change and a strong, broad spirit of cooperation has been the benchmark of our City.

Through these times, the Merriam Police Department has tried to match the pace. We have seen significant progress toward the transition to Community Policing since 1993. The benefits are evident in our neighborhood and business communities. The level of police service and individual employee productivity is at its highest level in our Department's 35-year history.

While 1996 was certainly another successful year as indicated by this Annual Report, 1997 will hold even more promise. I will announce a new innovative initiative at the Police Department's annual employee meeting in February, which will significantly increase police service delivery. I will make changes in individual officer assignments and responsibilities which will maximize their effectiveness. It will empower the officers to have a more positive impact on this community. This change in our policing strategy will be called the Service Delivery Initiative (SDI) and will be the next phase in our transition toward Community Policing. The transition will require a lot of hard work. I believe that this new policing process will make a dramatic and positive difference in how our Department and City is viewed by citizens in our community.

Kenneth Sissom
Chief of Police

MERRIAM POLICE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
 January 1, 1997



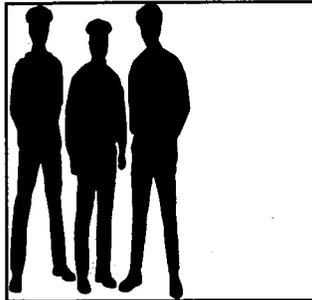
POLICE DEPARTMENT ROSTER			
12/31/96			
RANK	NAME	ASSIGNMENT	TENURE
Chief of Police	KENNETH SISSOM	Administration	17
Asst. Chief of Police	BILL LIETZKE	Administration	16
Sergeant	BOB SMITH	Administration	19
Sergeant	SYD TUBBS	Patrol	17
Sergeant	STEVE HAYNES	Patrol	16
Sergeant	RANDY DAVIS	Patrol	15
Average tenure for Staff Officers =			16.6 Yrs.
Master Police Officer	TIM BURNETT	Investigations	14
Master Police Officer	AL JONES	Investigations	13
Master Police Officer	DAN KELLERMAN	Patrol	12
Master Police Officer	JOAN HUETTENMUELLER	Patrol	11
Master Police Officer	MIKE DANIELS	Patrol	9
Police Officer	CHARLIE YOCUM	Patrol	19
Police Officer	BILL TROUT	Patrol	13
Police Officer	JEFF MAGEE	Patrol	9
Police Officer	LARRY BIRT	D.A.R.E.	8
Police Officer	LORI VICTORINE	Patrol	8
Police Officer	DARREN MCLAUGHLIN	Patrol	7
Police Officer	CHARLIE SWEANY	Patrol	6
Police Officer	TODD SPARKS	Patrol	6
Police Officer	BOB SCHLUBEN	Patrol	6
Police Officer	GERRY EICKHOFF	Patrol	3
Police Officer	TOM LYNCH	Patrol	2
Police Officer	TROY DUVANEL	Patrol	2
Police Officer	STEVE GRIGSBY	Patrol	1
Police Officer	TODD ALLEN	Patrol	<1>
Average tenure for MPOs & P.O.s =			7.9 Yrs.
Animal Control Officer	DAVE THOMAS	Animal Control	9
Information Specialist 2	LISA ALDRICH	Clerical	5
Information Specialist 2	KAREN GIBSON	Clerical	4
Information Specialist 1	TRINA CANADY (Part-time)	Clerical	2

Average Age for Police Officers (All Ranks) = 34.5 Years
Education Level for Police Officers
Masters Degree - 1, Bachelors Degree - 15, Associates Degree - 4



Department Staffing Levels

At the end of 1995 the Merriam Police Department hired a replacement officer. This officer was sent to the police academy in January, 1996. An additional officer was hired in March, 1996 as a result of a 1995 Council approved plan to increase the size of the police department.



- To decrease overtime expenses that are growing as a result of increased seniority. This seniority causes added officer replacement needs due to vacations and personal days,

- To strengthen the department's efforts associated with Community Policing.

It was determined that there was a need to hire an additional officer based on the following three needs:

- To help offset the anticipated increase in activity due to the construction of Merriam Town Center, due to be completed in 1997/98;

By the end of 1996, both new officers had received all police academy and necessary in-service field training. They were assigned to patrol positions. On December 31, 1996, the department was at full strength — 25 sworn officers.

OVERTIME AND PATROL SHIFT CONFIGURATION

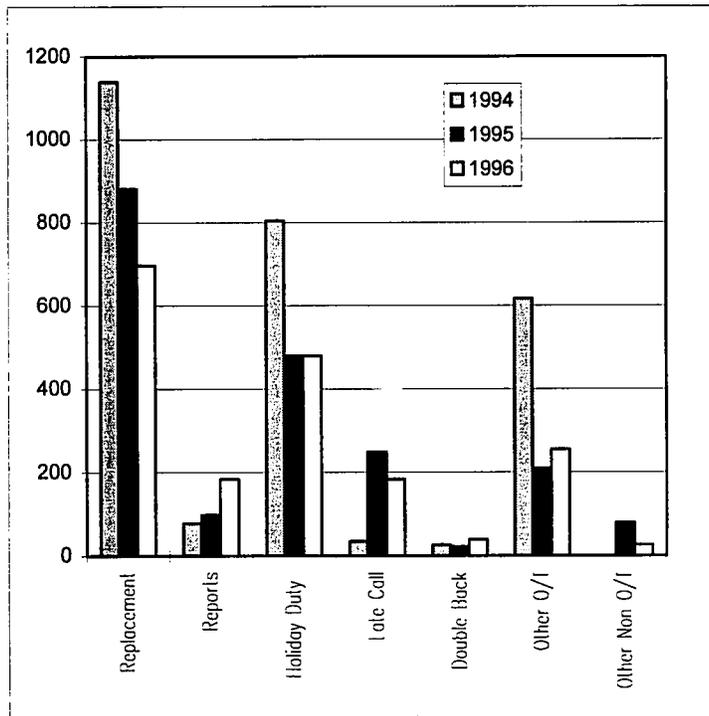
In 1995 the department changed the patrol shift configuration from the "Wheel" schedule to a basic "5 and 2" schedule. This change was made to increase efficiency and effectiveness of our manpower allocation. Under the "5 and 2" schedule an officer could be off work due to illness, vacation or to attend court, and a replacement would not be required. In 1995 we were able to reduce patrol shift-related overtime by **28.2%**.

In 1996 we witnessed further overtime savings. The department used **30%** less shift-related overtime in 1996 compared to two years ago in 1994. An even greater savings is expected in 1997.

Overtime	1994	1995	1996
Replacement	1138.5	880.5	696.5
Reports	77.3	97.5	182.5
Holiday Duty	804.5	480	480
Late Call	34.75	249	183.5
Double Back	26	22	40
Other O/T	616.5	208.5	254.75
Other Non O/T	0	79.5	26.5
TOTALS	2697.55	2017	1863.75

New Officer Introduction

Name: Todd P. Allen
 Date of Hire: March 25, 1996
 Age 26 / Single, Resident of Shawnee
 Education: BS from Northeast Missouri State
 Major - Accounting
 Graduate JCCC Police Academy - July 16, 1996
 Current Assignment - Day Shift Patrol Officer





Annual Crime Statistics

Police departments collect crime statistics for two reasons: 1) it is important to put forth an effort to gain some insight as to what has happened during the year; and 2) the Merriam Police Department is required to provide statistics to the Kansas Bureau of Investigations, who then provides these statistics to the F.B.I.

In-house, the police department uses statistics to plan patrol strategies for the coming year, in hopes of reducing crime. While it is difficult to accurately predict crime statistics, one thing is certain — the statistics will vary from year-to-year. This is especially true for a small city like Merriam.

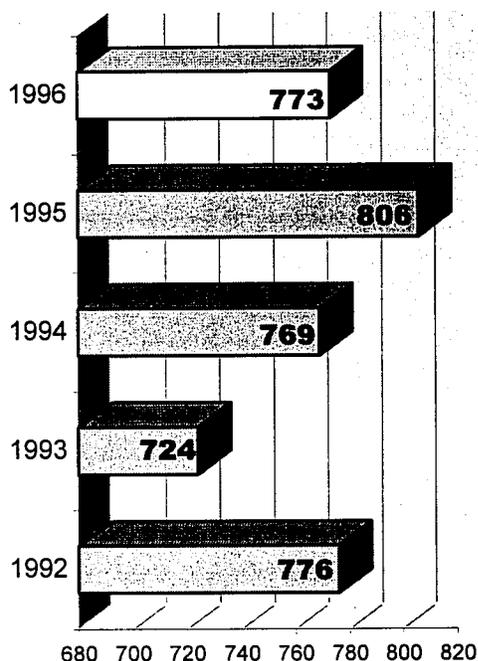
There are many factors that can alter crime statistics which cause this variance. The factors include economic conditions, weather, incursion of drugs, gangs, organized crime, redevelopment and the increase or decrease of law enforcement presence in the community.

There were fluctuations in crime rates when 1996 is compared to the previous year. There was a noted increase in auto burglaries in 1996. Auto burglaries are usually committed by groups of teenagers or young adults. The more groups that are active, the higher the crime rate that given year. 1996 was an active year. On three occasions during the year, Merriam officers were successful in apprehending auto burglars during in-progress crimes. Other area cities have witnessed similar increases in auto burglaries.

During 1996, the crimes against persons incidents, including assaults and batteries, were down considerably, which follows a nationwide trend. We are required to report Part One Crimes to the F.B.I., which are listed below. A more complete breakdown of crimes is listed on the following page.



PART ONE CRIMES

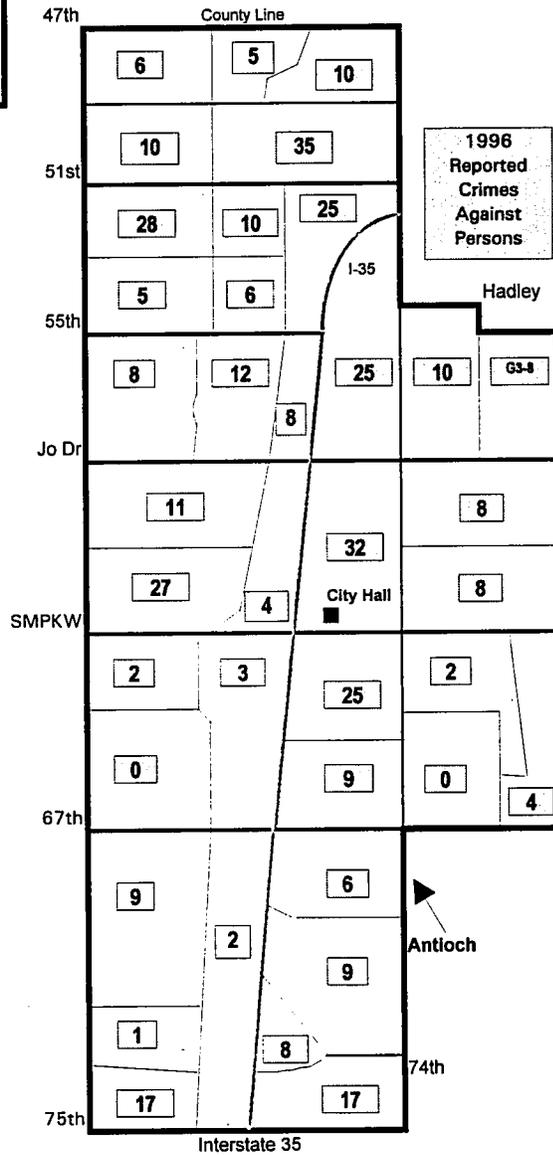
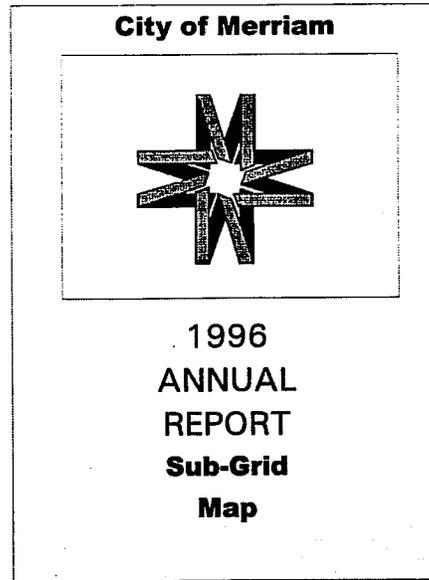
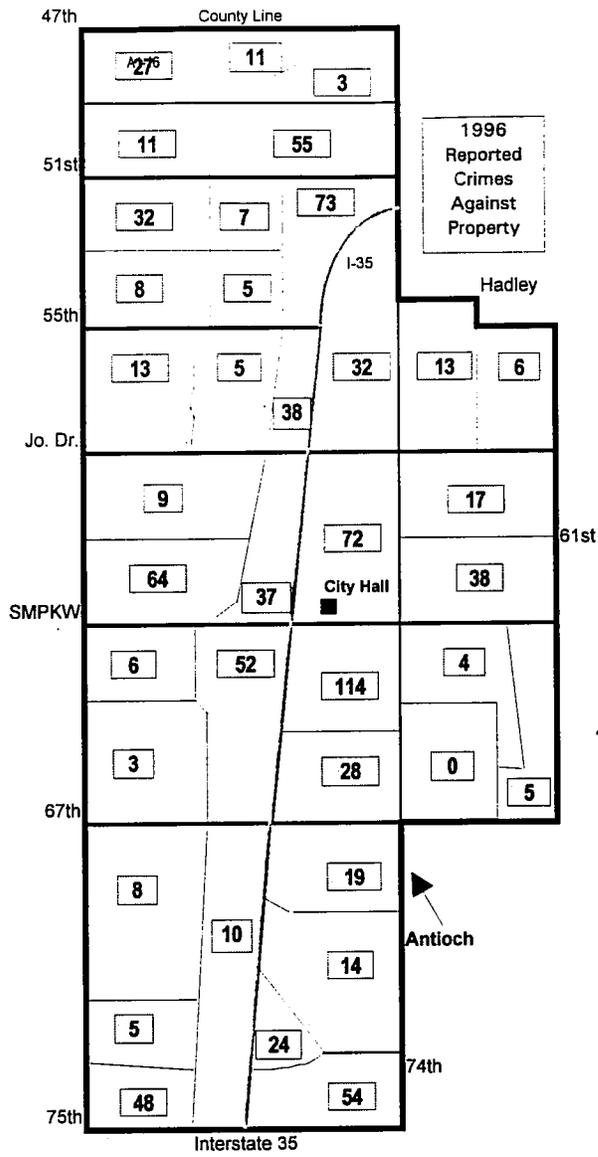


PART ONE CRIMES	1995	1996	Difference
MURDER	0	0	No Change
RAPE	5	7	28.6% Increase
ROBBERY	18	12	33% Decrease
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	27	9	66% Decrease
BURGLARY	249	256	2.8% Increase
THEFT	429	417	2.8% Decrease
AUTO THEFT	71	68	4.3% Decrease
ARSON	7	4	42.8% Decrease
TOTALS	806	773	4.1% Decrease

1996 Reported Crimes in Merriam

TYPE OF CRIME	1995	1996	TYPE OF CRIME	1995	1996
Agg. Arson	2	1	False Impersonation	1	0
Arson	5	3	Falsely Obtaining a Prescription	1	1
Agg. Assault	16	8	Forgery	20	10
Agg. Assault D/V	9	1	Furnishing Alcohol or CMB to a Minor	3	0
Agg. Assault LEO	2	0	Habitual Violator	0	4
Agg. Battery	18	6	Harassment by Phone	36	17
Agg. Battery D/V	2	3	Harassment by Phone D/V	19	20
Agg. Battery LEO	1	0	Indecent Solicitation of a Child	0	2
Agg. Burglary to Residence	8	6	Interference with Parental Custody	2	0
Agg. Criminal Sodomy	1	1	Intimidation of a Victim/Witness	1	1
Agg. Indecent Liberties	5	1	Kidnapping	1	0
Agg. Intimidation Victim	1	1	Kidnapping D/V	1	0
Agg. Robbery	11	8	Lewd and Lascivious	2	5
Assault	7	1	Littering	2	5
Assault D/V	2	3	Minor in Possession of Alcohol or CMB	10	4
Battery	41	31	Nuisance / Barking K9	1	0
Battery D/V	104	68	Obstruction of Legal Process	21	14
Battery LEO	5	3	Possession of Controlled Substance	52	48
Bribery	0	1	Possession of Drug Paraphernalia	13	1
Burglary to Auto	146	171	Possession of Marijuana	12	0
Burglary to Business	32	24	Possession of Stolen Property	9	7
Burglary to Residence	39	43	Possession of Stolen Auto	1	0
Burglary to Residence (attempted)	2	0	Rape	5	10
Burglary to Storage	22	12	Robbery	7	4
Child In Need of Care	14	19	Robbery (Attempted)	0	1
Criminal Discharge of Firearm	1	1	Sale of Narcotics	1	0
Criminal Damage Over 500	30	34	Sexual Battery	1	0
Criminal Damage Over 500 D/V	1	1	Stalking	3	0
Criminal Damage Under 500	107	132	Theft of Lost or Mislaid Property	7	15
Criminal Damage Under 500 D/V	11	8	Theft of Services	5	3
Criminal Deprivation of Property	12	10	Theft Attempted	3	0
Criminal Possession of a Firearm	2	1	Theft Attempted Auto	11	13
Criminal Threats	13	17	Theft Auto	73	68
Criminal Threats D/V	9	11	Theft D/V	2	0
Criminal Trespass	13	17	Theft Over 500	86	66
Criminal Trespass D/V	15	3	Theft Under 500	346	351
Criminal Use of Financial Card	1	4	Theft Under 500 D/V	4	4
Criminal Use of Weapon	11	3	Unlawful Restraint D/V	1	0
Cruelty to Animals	1	0	Violation of a Court Order	2	0
Disorderly Conduct	36	18	Worthless Check	5	1
Disorderly Conduct D/V	16	23	Yard Farming	2	1
Disturbing the Peace	0	1			
<i>D/V = Involved Domestic Violence</i>			TOTALS	1546	1375

In 1996 there were 10.9% fewer crimes reported to the Merriam Police Department.





Traffic Accident Summary

One of the fundamental duties of any police department is to investigate motor vehicle accidents. In 1996, reports were taken on 873 traffic accidents in Merriam. This represents a 10.4% increase in accidents over 1995. There are two predominate reasons for the increase in accidents.

The first reason has to do with changing policies of the Kansas Highway Patrol with working accidents on Interstate 35. In years past the Kansas Highway Patrol have worked the majority of accidents on I-35. In the past year the Highway Patrol has cut back on the number of troopers working in this area. With the Highway Patrol being less available, Merriam officers are being called to investigate more of the accidents that occur on I-35 (see below statistics).

The second reason for the increase in accidents is road reconstruction. In 1996 there were several road reconstruction projects. These projects caused traffic delays which resulted in accidents due to back ups.

OTHER ACCIDENT STATISTICS

Total accidents reported in 1996 = 873.

Fatality accidents = 0 (3rd year in a row.).

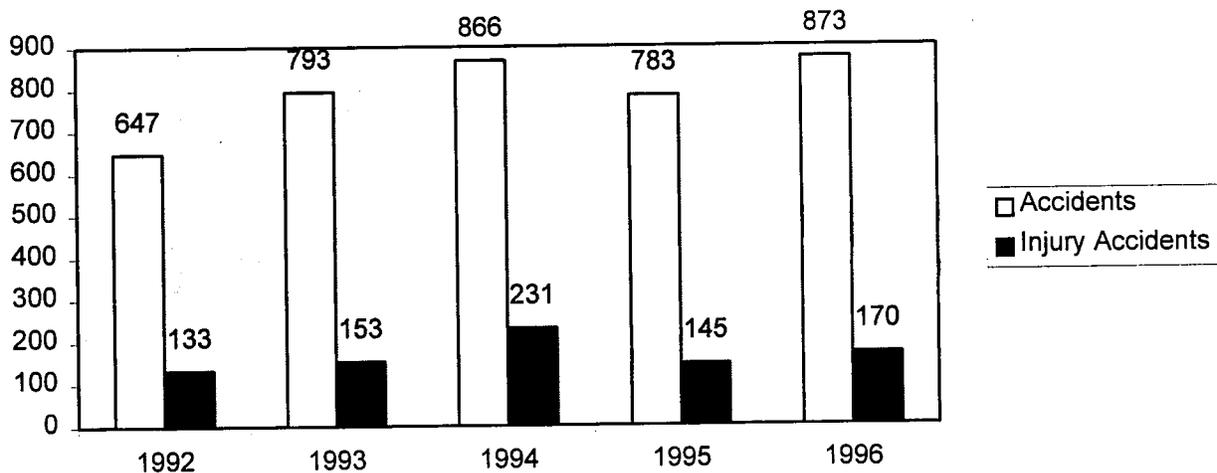
Injury accidents = 170.

Hit and run accidents = 107

Private property accidents = 132.

Accidents involving drunk drivers = 27

Major Streets	Accidents	Injuries Involved
Shawnee Mission Parkway	192 (1995=177)	52 or 27%
Johnson Drive	76 (1995=94)	24 or 32%
Interstate 35	107 (1995=64)	17 or 16%
Antioch Road	62 (1995=63)	25 or 40%
75th Street	75 (1995=57)	24 or 33%
Merriam Drive	43 (1995=45)	7 or 16%
67th Street	20 (1995=25)	6 or 30%
TOTALS	575 (1995=525)	155 or 27%





Patrol Activity Statistics

Police patrol activity can be a difficult thing to measure. Activity levels are measured under three headings: 1) Calls for Service; 2) Report Writing; and 3) Self-Initiated Activities or Random Patrol.

CALLS FOR SERVICE

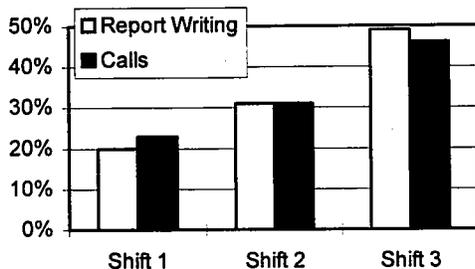
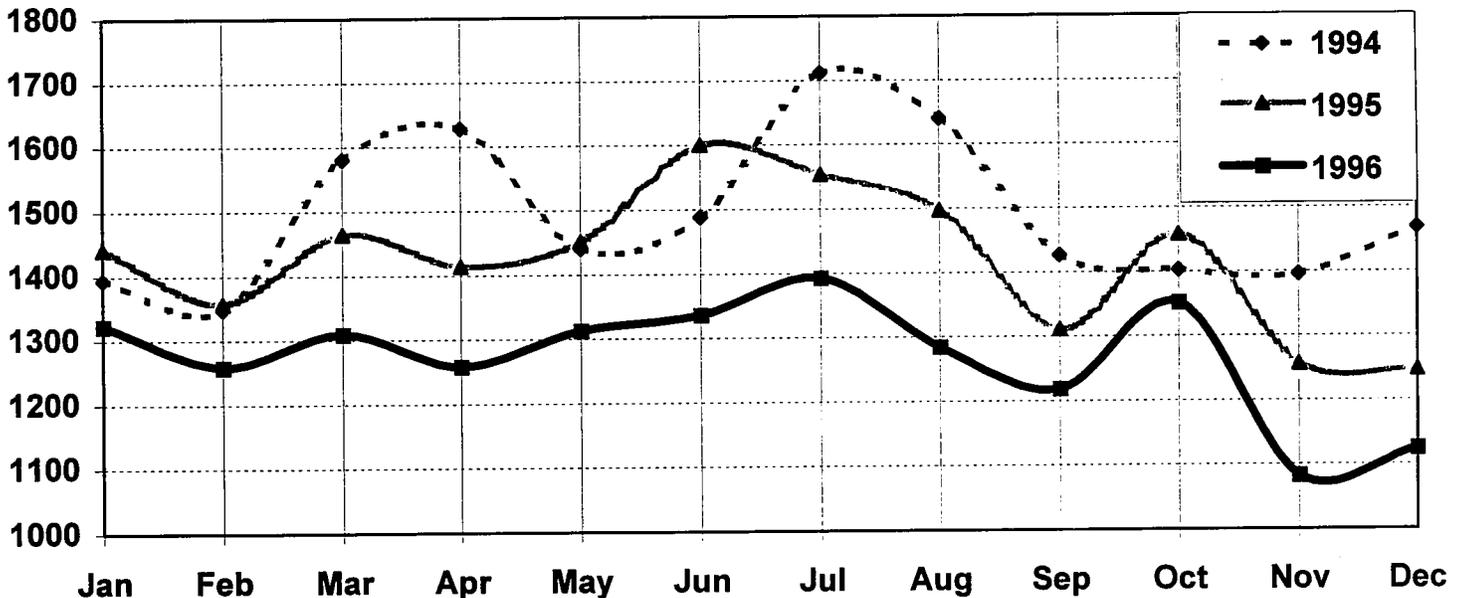
Each time a citizen calls the dispatcher or police department and requests some type of service, it is recorded and later tabulated. This data is used to indicate how much the police department is depended upon by its citizenry. It is also used to determine the level of activity that is encountered on each shift, during each day of the week, etc. This information is used to plan for staffing needs.

In 1996, Merriam police officers responded to **15,253** calls for service. This represents a **10.5%** decrease in calls for service over 1995. Calls for service have declined each year since 1991. The reason for this decline is not known. A check of previous years' calls for service statistics will show the trend toward fluctuation.

1996 = 15,253 1995 = 17,049 1994 = 17,922 1993 = 18,152 1992 = 18,959

The graph below shows how calls for service can fluctuate from month to month:

CALLS FOR SERVICE BY MONTH 1994-96



ACTIVITY BY SHIFT: It is traditional that the evening shift receives the most calls and consequently the most reports are written on that shift. In response, a larger number of patrol officers are assigned to work the evening shift.



REPORT WRITING

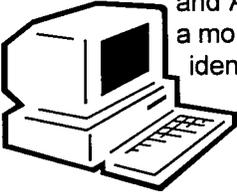
An officer will spend a significant portion of each shift writing reports. The amount of time will vary from shift to shift, depending on the number of calls for service received and the type of activities that may require a report. Officers are required to keep a log of the number of minutes they spend each shift writing reports. This data is used to evaluate an officer's efficiency and report writing proficiency.

There are a variety of reasons that reports are written. These include:

- * OFFENSES
- * ARRESTS
- * TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS
- * SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES
- * CIVIL MATTERS
- * CODE VIOLATIONS

In 1996, Merriam officers spent **2,612** hours writing police reports. As a result, **3,221** new case files were created. On the average each patrol officer spends in excess of 14 hours writing reports, per month.

During the year a new computer program was purchased that allows officers to complete State Offense and Arrest Reports on a personal computer. Using this program, the finished product has a more professional appearance and spelling errors have been reduced. These reports are identical to the State reports, but instead of being hand written they are now typed. It has also been determined that many officer can type faster than they can write, so this system speeds up the report writing process.



SELF INITIATED ACTIVITIES / RANDOM PATROL:

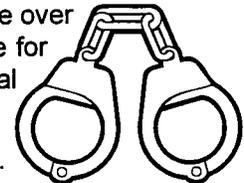
An officer's self-initiated activity is measured in four categories. These categories include: a) patrol miles driven per shift; b) number of arrests made; c) traffic enforcement; and d) completion of special assignments.

A] PATROL MILES

In 1996, police officers in Merriam drove a total of **174,334** miles patrolling the streets. This is a **5.4%** increase in the number of miles driven, compared to 1995. There is a policy that limits patrol officers to driving no more than 50 miles per shift. This policy helps to reinforce that officers are urged to get out of their cars and interact with residents and business persons in the city.

B] ARRESTS

In 1996, the Merriam Police Department made **1,257** arrests. This is a slight increase over 1995. Of the **1,257** arrests, approximately **10%** were for felony charges, **42%** were for misdemeanor or traffic charges and the remaining **48%** were for outstanding municipal court failure to appear warrants.

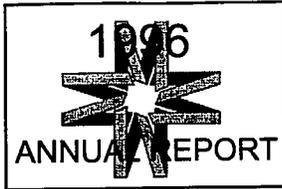


During the year **82** persons were arrested for on-view violations of domestic violence. The Merriam Officers themselves were victims of batteries on five occasions.

C] TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT

In 1996, Merriam police officers issued **6,203** traffic tickets to violators. This number represents a 30% increase, compared to 1995. In the past few years our department experienced a decline in the number of tickets being written. This decrease is normal with Community Policing as less emphasis is placed on traffic enforcement.

(Continued on page 14)



A midyear patrol activity study was conducted. This study determined some officers had reduced their traffic enforcement to almost zero. The administration, in an effort to address this problem, setup patrol standards for all officers assigned to patrol. Under the standards, regular police officers and master police officers were required to write two tickets per shift (average). The sergeants were mandated to write one ticket per shift. Immediately ticket production doubled. This accounts for the 30% increase over 1995. This standard remains in effect and is expected to continue throughout 1997.

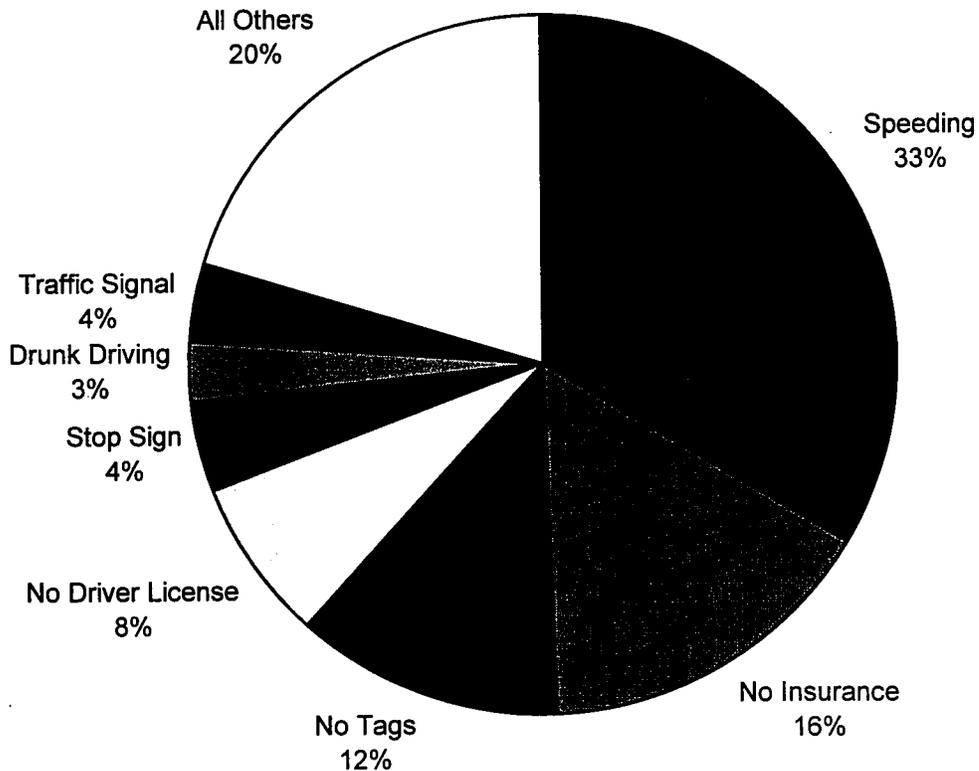


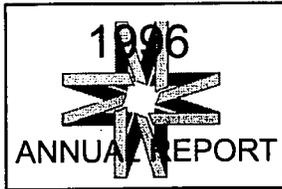
Drunk driving continues to be a problem in our community. In 1996, 147 persons were arrested for driving under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, compared to 155 in 1995. Of this number, 12 were under the age of 21. There were 27 alcohol related traffic accidents.

Of the total persons arrested, 80% submitted to a State required breath or blood test during the arrest process. Of those tested, only 4 had tested below 0.08% (legal limit). The rest were determined to be legally intoxicated and in violation of the law. The average blood/alcohol content was 0.156%.

In 1996 a new Intoxilyzer 5000 breath testing instrument was put into operation. Currently there are 20 Merriam officers that are qualified to operate this machine.

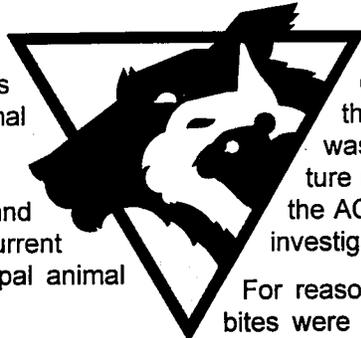
Below listed is a breakdown of the types of citations that were written in 1996.





Animal Control Summary

The Merriam Police Department has one full-time employee that is assigned to take care of all animal related problems. Handling these problems requires special training and equipment. It is a difficult and generally unpopular job. Our current ACO has over 17 years of municipal animal control experience.



Animal control investigations were down in 1996. There are reasons for these reductions. The weather in 1996 was relatively mild. When the temperature reaches extremes, both hot and cold, the ACO will receive more calls that require investigation.

For reasons unknown, the incidents of animal bites were lower in 1996. All animal bites are investigated by the ACO.

During 1996 the Animal Control Officer (ACO) handled **1,336** requests for service from citizens. In addition to this, police officers handled an additional **187** animal calls while the ACO was not available. The total number of animal related calls in 1996 were **1,523**.

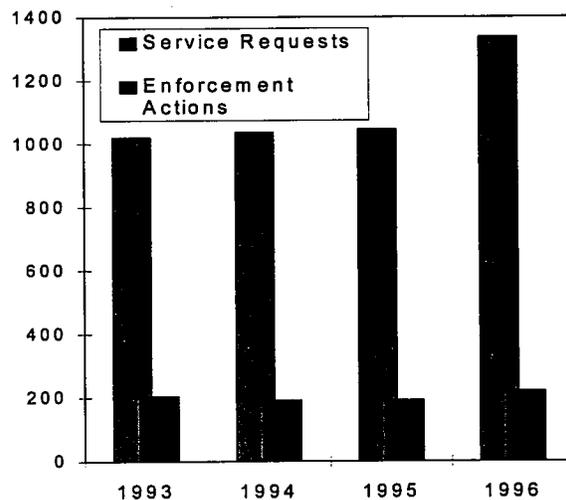
During 1996 a new Ford pickup truck was purchased for use by the ACO. The truck was marked to match the other vehicles in the fleet. It also increases the officer's visibility during patrols.

In 1996 the Animal Control Officer made a concerted effort to increase the time that was spent patrolling the city looking for animal problems and violations. He has somewhat reduced his involvement in other non-animal control duties he had been assigned. He has still worked as an alternate school crossing guard when a regular guard was absent due to illness or other unexpected leave. He is also cross trained to work in the police departments front office. He has helped out in the front office, but on a more limited basis.

Listed below is a breakdown of the statistics as they relate to the animal control function in Merriam.

There was a significant increase in the number of miles driven patrolling the city for stray animals. The number of animal impounds is also up, as well as the number of enforcement actions. Both of these correspond with the increase in patrols.

Animal Control Activity 93-96



Activity Totals	1993	1994	1995	1996
Service Requests	1021	1037	1046	1336
Enforcement Action	205	192	192	220
Animal Impounds	166	232	174	228
Investigations	1086	1071	1079	744
Reports Written	642	626	640	735
Patrol Miles Driven	n.a.	n.a.	6042	9013



Investigations Unit Summary

The Investigations Unit is comprised of two full-time investigators who hold the rank of Master Police Officer. This unit is supervised by the Assistant Chief of Police. He assigns their cases and is responsible for the day-to-day operations.

The officers that are assigned to do investigations are carefully selected because these officers are required to be independent and reliable. There is very little supervision of their daily activities due to the nature of their jobs.



UNIT PERSONNEL

1996 was the second full year that this unit used a call-out team concept to investigate serious crime scenes. When a major crime occurs that requires immediate on-scene investigation, one of the two teams are activated. The two teams are equally trained and work as a team. The two primary investigators are the team leaders. The team assignments are as follows:

ACTIVITY SUMMARY

During 1996, the Investigations Unit was assigned 457 criminal cases. This is a **26%** decrease in case load over 1995.

(It should be noted that 1995 was an unusually high year that had 18.5% more cases than 1994.)

Each investigator can expect to receive an average of four new cases each week to add to their existing case load management.



Below listed are the most common types of crimes that were investigated by the unit in 1996:

- ◆ 142 THEFTS
- ◆ 63 BURGLARIES
- ◆ 30 BATTERIES
- ◆ 23 DAMAGE TO PROPERTY
- ◆ 23 HIT AND RUN ACCIDENTS
- ◆ 21 AUTOMOBILE THEFTS
- ◆ 13 CHILD IN NEED OF CARE
- ◆ 13 TELEPHONE HARASSMENT'S
- ◆ 10 ROBBERIES
- ◆ 9 RAPES
- ◆ 9 CRIMINAL THREATS
- ◆ 7 FORGERIES
- ◆ 4 ASSAULTS
- ◆ 4 MISC. SEX OFFENSES
- ◆ 4 CREDIT CARD VIOLATIONS

TEAM ONE

- MPO Tim Burnett
- PO Darren McLaughlin
- PO Lori Victorine

TEAM TWO

- MPO Al Jones
- MPO Mike Daniels
- PO Bob Schluben

In 1996, investigators were called out on **14** occasions. This resulted in **52.5** hours of investigative overtime.

UNIT TRAINING

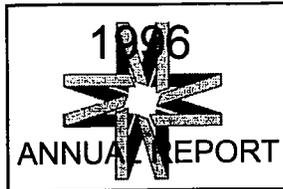
Each year, investigators receive specialized training to improve their skills and abilities. In 1996 the training topics included:

- PROCESSING CHILD SEX ABUSE CASES
- DRUG CASE INVESTIGATION (D.E.A.)
- DRUG INTERDICTION
- ADVANCED INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE
- INVESTIGATION OF HIGH PROFILE CASES
- CRIMINAL INTERDICTION TECHNIQUE
- COMPUTER CRIME INVESTIGATIONS
- AUTO THEFT INVESTIGATION

METRO SQUAD SYSTEM

The police department has been a member of the Kansas City Area Metro Squad for many years. This squad is designed so that when small metro-area cities have a homicide, it can request the Metro Squad. Within 24 hours, a dozen or more specially trained and experienced detectives will respond to a department and launch an intensive and focused investigation. This system has proven

(Continued on page 17)



Investigations Unit Summary (cont.)

to be very effective in investigating homicides. Nearly every homicide that Merriam has had over the past 20 years has been investigated by the Metro Squad.

Our department also supplies trained officers to other departments who have requested the Metro Squad.

In 1996, Merriam officers were involved in three area Metro Squad cases.

1. March 5. Investigator Al Jones was involved in a homicide investigation in Harrisonville, Missouri. There was one male victim. Two female suspects were arrested and charged from this investigation.

2. May 30. Officer Bob Schluben was assigned with the Metro Squad to investigate the homicide of a 16 year old female in Olathe. There were no arrests made during this Metro Squad investigation. The case was later cleared after a second homicide occurred in Shawnee, Kansas.

3. June 15. Sgt. Robert Smith and MPO Mike Daniels were assigned to the Metro Squad to investigate an Overland Park Car Jacking/homicide which occurred in the 7800 block of Shawnee Mission Parkway. There was one male victim. The investigation resulted in two male suspects being charged in this case.

Significant 1996 Cases

FEBRUARY 4, 1996 BURGLARY

On the evening of February 3, 1996, officers were contacted and a request was made to do extra patrol at a business. The owner felt that a previous tenant would return to commit a burglary that night. At 1:30 a.m., officers noticed a light on inside the business. Further investigation discovered a burglary, in-progress. As officers watched the burglar, there was enough time that an officer was sent to the police station to retrieve a video camera. The video was later used to video the burglary. The burglar was arrested and charged.

MARCH 8, 1996 ROBBERY

A couple, both 58 years of age, were leaving the Furr's Cafeteria when they were approached from behind by a stranger. The stranger grabbed the woman's purse and fled the area. This crime is still unsolved.

MARCH 26, 1996 DEAD BODY

Officers were called to an apartment at King's Cove. There they were led to the body of a 39-year-old female who was found by a roommate. At the scene there was no evidence that the woman was the victim of foul play. An autopsy was performed and the results indicated that the woman died from an alcohol related illness. She had a long history of substance abuse.

JUNE 7, 1996 BANK ROBBERY

At 2:32 p.m. a man came into the branch

bank in the Georgetown Marketplace. He asked about transferring his out-of-town account. Another customer was present. When the customer left, the man produced a handgun and stuck it in the back of a teller who works in the lobby. He then handed a paper sack to another clerk with instructions to fill the bag with money. The robber then fled the scene.

During the investigation it was learned that the suspect had probably cased another bank in Shawnee, just prior to this robbery. The robber also matched the description of a man who robbed the Emporia, Kansas, Bank in February. This crime is unsolved.

JUNE 13, 1996 AGG. ASSAULT

On this date at 6:30 p.m. there was a homicide in the 7800 block of Shawnee Mission Parkway in Overland Park. Just after the killing took place the suspects fled the area in the victim's car. A non-involved witness began to pursue the suspects and this pursuit led into Merriam, westbound. During the pursuit the suspects shot at the victim. Luckily, no one was hurt during this exchange.

The suspects were later identified and have been charged in the homicide.

JUNE 27, 1996 AGG. BATTERY

A disturbance occurred at the Merriam Municipal Pool between two groups of minors from Kansas City, Kansas. One group left the pool area and got into their car. As the second group left the pool entrance, the first group drove by and

shot several times toward the second group. In the process three persons were struck with bullets or bullet fragments. There were no serious injuries.

An intensive investigation began, which lasted for several days. Within the week, two suspects were charged with Attempted Murder and were placed in the Adult Detention Facility. This court case is still in progress.

JULY 24, 1996 SUICIDE

At 4:34 a.m., a 23-year-old Overland Park man committed suicide by jumping off the 75th Street Bridge onto I-35, where his dead body was then struck by a vehicle. There were no witnesses and the motivation for the suicide is unknown.

JULY 30, 1996 RAPE

At 1:50 a.m., Officers responded to the Dutch Maid Motel reference a reported rape. There they met a 29-year-old Kansas City resident who stated that she was raped by a man she met less than a month earlier at an area bar. She met the suspect at a bar in Shawnee and accompanied him to another bar in Olathe. The suspect invited the victim to his motel room for a drink. She complied. The suspect went into the bathroom and disrobed. He then came out of the bathroom and forced himself on the victim. The victim was very intoxicated at the time. The suspect was arrested and the matter was sent the D.A.'s office. Charges are pending.

(Continued on page 18)



Investigations Unit Summary (cont.)

JULY 30, 1996 DRIVE-BY SHOOTING

At 10:03 p.m., an unknown person drove by a house in the 9200 block of West 50th Terrace and fired nine .22 caliber handgun rounds into an occupied home. There was a previous verbal disturbance between the resident and an unknown motorist in the street in front of the house earlier in the evening. It is believed that the man may have returned and committed the crime. This case is unsolved at the time of this report.

SEPTEMBER 9, 1996 ROBBERY

At 8:54 p.m., a man came into the Burger King Restaurant. He was carrying a gun and announced a robbery. He was given the money from the registers and he fled from the area on foot.

It is believed that the man involved had also robbed the Taco Bell Restaurant in Lenexa on the same night. This case is unsolved at the time of this report.

OCTOBER 8, 1996 RAPE

Officers were called to the sixth floor of the Shawnee Mission Medical Center. There they contacted a patient who claimed that two days earlier she was the victim of a sexual assault while a patient. The suspect identified by the victim was an employee of the Medical Center. The employee was later charged with sexual battery and the case is pending in District Court.

OCTOBER 12, 1996 SUICIDE

At 11:46 a.m., officers were sent to a house in the 9100 block of West 70th Terrace on a suicide. There they found a 16 year old male lying on a bed with a gunshot wound to the head. The minor was dead. Upon investigation it was determined that the man had left a series of suicide notes with friends and family and was planning his death for weeks. The parents were not at home at the time of the incident.

OCTOBER 19, 1996 ROBBERY

At 3:15 p.m., a woman and two children were accosted by a burglar who was hiding in their house when they returned home. The three victims were tied up and the woman's car was stolen. A couple of hours later, police in the Junction City area located the suspect still driving the stolen car. The police got into a pursuit. The suspect wrecked the stolen car and was arrested. It was later determined that the man was a walk-away from a halfway house in KCMO. The man was charged in District Court and the case is pending.

OCTOBER 22, 1996 SEVERE STORM

From 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., the City of Merriam received a very wet heavy snowfall — most of which fell just before the evening rush hour. Hundreds of trees fell, many across power lines and into roadways. During the next 12 hours, Merriam officers responded to calls including 12 stuck vehicles, 7 cases of check the welfare on children and elderly citizens. Officers worked 6 traffic accidents, had 6 traffic signals that were completely out and helped the fire department to respond to 4 fire calls. KCP&L reported that this was the most severe winter storm for emergency repair in their history.

OCTOBER 24, 1996 ROBBERY

At 9:09 a.m. the Mark Twain Main Bank had just opened for the day. A man walked up to the teller and handed her a note, announcing a robbery. The teller handed the robber money from her drawer. The man fled the building. This case investigation was turned over to the FBI and it remains unsolved.

NOVEMBER 17, 1996 ROBBERY

Two men walked into the Drury Inn at 8:15 p.m., and inquired about the price of a room. One of the men left and the other man ordered the clerk to put all the cash from the register into an envelope and give it to him. The clerk complied as she

believed the man had a gun under his coat. The men fled the Hotel. This case is unsolved at the time of this report.

NOVEMBER 18, 1996 ROBBERY

A 21 year old woman and her three passengers were driving southbound on Antioch in the 7000 block where they were struck by another vehicle. They stopped to inspect the damage and were accosted by two armed men who robbed them of all their money. The suspects drove away from the scene. This case remains unsolved at the time of this report.

NOVEMBER 23, 1996 ROBBERY

At 2:23 a.m. the night clerk at Star-Mart was approached by a man in the store. The man announced a robbery and ordered the clerk to give him all the money from the register. He then took the clerk's jewelry and made him go back to the back room. The robber then fled the store. This case is still being investigated and currently no one has been charged in this case.

DECEMBER 17, 1996 ROBBERY

A man pretending to put money into a Salvation Army kettle at K-Mart instead ripped the red bucket from its stand and sped off in a waiting car. A short while later, the same man took another kettle in Mission. The loss was between \$200 and \$400. The suspect has not been located or identified.

DECEMBER 24, 1996 AUTO THEFTS

At some time during the Christmas Holiday, a group of unknown thieves removed four cars (three Range Rovers and one Cadillac) from the Aristocrat Motors car lot. The loss was \$174,875. It is not known how the cars were started or removed. One of the cars was later recovered in KCMO. It was found abandoned with a bullet hole in the rear of the vehicle. The case is still being investigated.



Support Division Summary

Police service to the community in Merriam is usually viewed as meaning police officers on the street in patrol or answering calls. There is another side of the department that remains hidden to most of the community — administrative services. In 1996 the Merriam Police Department continued the high level of service provided to the citizens. A synopsis of these services is listed below.

POLICE REPORT PROCESSING

The responsibility of processing police reports is very important. It is imperative that each report be handled properly to ensure quality and success. Having an organized and efficient operation has assisted us in this success. Once a report is written it is logged, entered into the in-house records management system and then properly filed away. During the processing, multiple copies of a file are made and sent to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, District Attorney's Office, the Drivers License Bureau or the victim's insurance company. Each year we get hundreds of requests from victims or attorneys for copies of police files.

In 1996 the Merriam Police Department processed **3,221 individual reports**. *This is an 11% decrease from 1995.* This decrease coincides with our decrease in calls for service and reported crimes. The processing of these reports are the responsibilities of two Information Specialist; one full-time and one part-time.

BRADY LAW CHECKS (Handgun Purchase Requests)

This is the third full year that the police department has been mandated to do background checks on all Merriam residents who purchase a handgun. On **126 occasions**, an official request was received from area gun dealers to approve an application for the purchase of a handgun. *This is a 32% increase over 1995.* Record checks are time consuming. They involve data requests from three separate computer systems to determine if the customer has any record of past felony or drug/alcohol related convictions. During the year, **4 out of 126** requests for approval were denied due to criminal or arrest records. After 20 days these application request records must be destroyed, according to Federal law, making this duty even harder to manage.

During 1996, the Brady Law was amended. The new version of the law forbids anyone with any past conviction for a domestic violence related offense (misdemeanor or felony) from owning, possessing or purchasing any firearm or ammunition. This new law is retroactive. If a person has a 20 year old record, it will count. This amendment will further increase the time it takes to research past criminal records.

COLLEGE INTERN PROGRAM

Each year the Merriam Police Department recruits college students from Kansas Universities to work for the police department. As college interns, these students are asked to complete a variety of duties. They are unpaid but receive college credit for their time spent with the department.

During 1996, the department hosted two interns. Kendra Travis, a senior from Kansas State University, spent 240 hours working for the police department this past summer. Mike Jones, a senior from Kansas University, worked approximately 120 hours during the fall semester.

This program has proven to be very beneficial for the City of Merriam. These talented young people are eager to work, quick learners and in some cases they provide for an addition to a qualified applicant pool in our department's future hiring efforts.

(Continued on page 20)



Support Division Summary

PROPERTY/EVIDENCE PROCESSING AND STORAGE

Each year the police department investigates a number of crimes that involve criminal evidence. The proper handling and storage of this evidence is crucial to the success of any criminal prosecution. It is important that one or two persons be responsible for this function to ensure continuity.

Currently, Information Specialist II Lisa Aldrich is assigned as the property custodian. Her supervisor is Sgt. Robert Smith. During 1996, the property custodian processed **1,031** items of property connected with **309** cases.

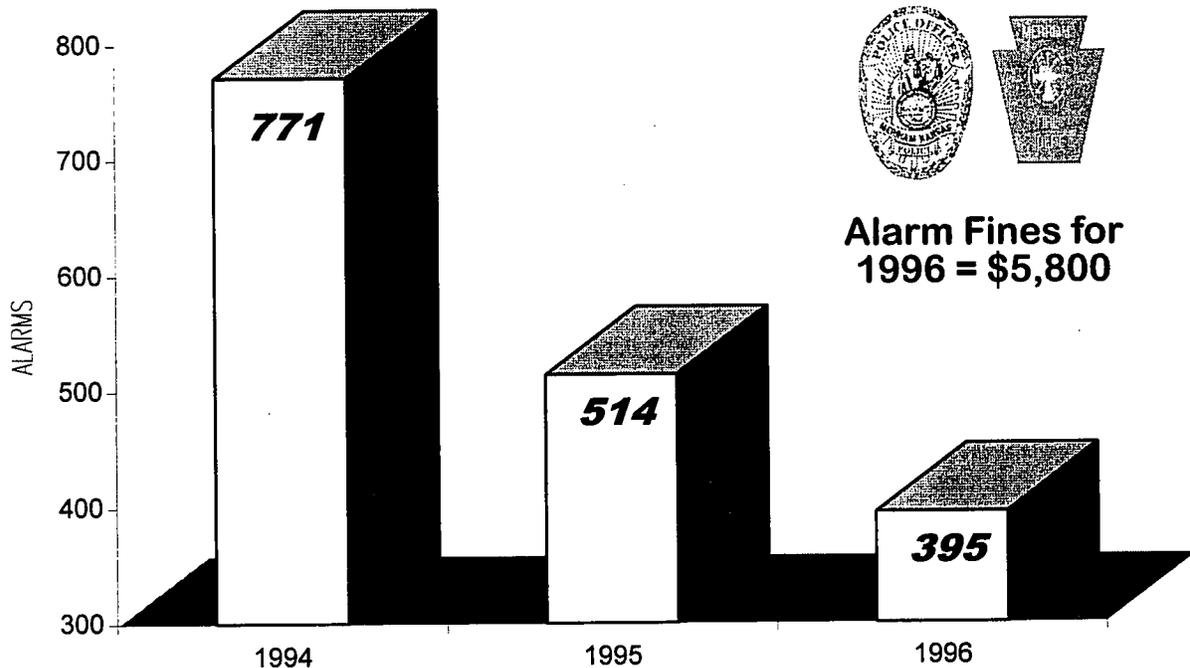
Our evidence and property is stored in a special secured location within the police department. In 1996, a remote property storage area was established inside the new Public Works facility. This new storage room will help with the overflow from our main property room.

ALARM ORDINANCE MANAGEMENT

The Merriam Alarm Ordinance went into effect on January 1, 1995. The purpose of the ordinance is to help reduce the number of false alarms that the police department responds to. In the past two years this alarm ordinance has been responsible for reducing the number of false alarms by **48%**.

This was the first full year that the alarm ordinance was managed with a joint cooperative effort between the Police and Fire Departments. This system has proven to be a very efficient arrangement.

ALARM CALLS PER YEAR





Community Policing Partnership

This is the fourth year that the Merriam Police Department has been involved with Community Policing. This philosophy continues to grow nationwide and is becoming the benchmark for progressive law enforcement agencies.

In 1996 the department was involved in many important functions and activities that are directly related to Community Policing. There was a continued effort made to involve more police department employees in interacting with members of the community. Listed below is a description of some of these activities.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM

During the year a concerted effort was made to reach out to Merriam's neighborhoods. The department has continued efforts of meeting with neighborhood groups to discuss crime patterns and local concerns. During the year the department organized three new Neighborhood Watch areas. The three new areas are the Overbrook/Brookhaven Apartments, El Conquistador Apartments and the Hocker Grove/Fisher Highland areas. In addition to the new areas, meetings were held in six existing neighborhood areas in the city. The areas include:

- * Vernon Place
- * West Vernon Place
- * Brown Park
- * Switzer Meadows
- * 51st Terrace/Farley
- * Sunflower Towers

In all, approximately **300 to 400** Merriam residents were in attendance at these functions.

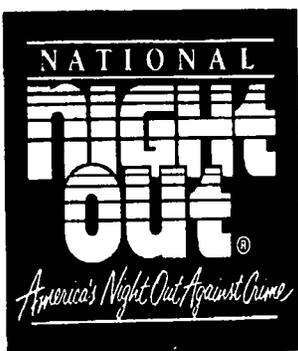
COMMUNITY BLOCK PARTIES

Each year the department makes a special effort to attend community block parties that occur during the summer and fall. At these events the district officer will stop by and interact with residents. Crime prevention and educational materials are also made available. During the season, six community block parties were attended by police officers.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT 1996

This is our fourth year of involvement in the National Night Out Against Crime which was held in August. This event involved community gatherings to show solidarity against crime in their area.

A police officer attended each area to exchange information and ideas. In 1996 officers attended **six** Night Out gatherings.



SECURITY SURVEY PROGRAM

During 1996, DARE/Crime Prevention Officer Larry Birt, completed **seven** security surveys at businesses and homes in Merriam. This service is

offered free of charge. It enhances public relations while it serves a crime prevention function by giving out tips on how to make you home or business more crime resistant.

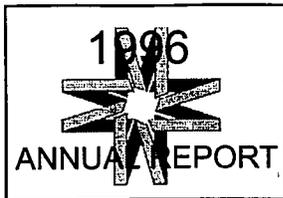
FAX ALERT PROJECT

1996 was the first full year for the FAX Alert Project. Through the use of a computerized network of business FAX numbers, the police department can better communicate with the business community when crime patterns are discovered. During the year group FAX's were sent to business groups notifying them about theft, burglary or other suspicious activities.

RIDE ALONG PROGRAM

The police department offers a program where interested citizens can ride along with an officer during his or her normal shift. This program is offered to bring citizens and officers closer together and attempt to bridge some of the communication gaps through understanding. This program is used each year by high school students who are required to ride with an officer as part of a class assignment. Those persons interested in the field of law enforcement are also served by this program.

In 1996, **45** citizens were involved in the Ride Along Program.



Community Policing Partnership (cont.)

SHOP WITH A COP PROGRAM

This is the third year that the department has worked with the Merriam K-Mart employees to bring a group of **twenty** under-privileged Merriam children together on a Saturday in December for a shopping spree that is paid for by K-Mart employee donations. This is a national program that is sponsored by K-Mart. Its purpose is to give police officers an opportunity to interact with children in a positive environment.

JOB CLUB / DAY ON THE JOB

For the past three years the Merriam Police Department has been involved in area programs that reach out to those high school students that may be interested in Law Enforcement as a career.

There were **four** students from the Shawnee Mission Public Schools Job Club. These are of learning disabled students that are trying to learn about employment fields they have an interest in. Two of the students were from SM North and two from SM Northwest. Each student spent one hour a day for 8 days. All aspects of the department were covered.

In May, the Merriam Chamber of Commerce organized an annual Day On The Job program for students from SM North. This year we had **two** students that spent the day riding with our officers.

EXPLORER PROGRAM

The Merriam Police Law Enforcement Explorer Post was formed three years ago. The post is made up of **14** young men and women that range in ages from 15 to 19. This group is involved with the department and is affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America.

The group meets every two weeks for some training or service duty at the police department. Officer Bob Schluben is the coordinator of their activities. They are trained in traffic direction, crowd control, crime prevention, and other police related activities so that they can help the department out when needed. Each year they are pressed into service during the Turkey Creek Festival. They are all volunteers and their services have helped to offset patrol costs during large events.

In 1996, in addition to training and Turkey Creek, the Explorers were involved in Night Out Against Crime, Neighborhood Watch Program, K-Mart Shop With A Cop Program and the DARE Program. They also help to keep the Streamway Park clean as a service project.

HOUSE WATCH PROGRAM

For a number of years the Merriam Police Department has performed a public service function of checking homes for families on vacation. This is an excellent public relations program. In 1996 our department conducted house watches on **55** different locations within the city.

COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING DEFINITION:

Policing based on a set of established values which reflect beliefs clearly articulated to the community and throughout the department. A commitment to problem solving rather than simply responding to each incident as it is reported to the police.

An increased focus on the city's neighborhoods as a basic level of police service delivery, moving away from specialization toward generalized police service delivery at the neighborhood level.

Getting the neighborhoods and business communities involved in solving the problem of crime in their areas and sharing some of the responsibility for a solution of problems, not just leaving it up to the city to solve problems.

Increasing the accountability of the police to neighborhood residents.

Involving and empowering of police department employees at the lowest level of the department to problem solve.



Community Policing Partnership (cont.)

OTHER COMMUNITY CONTACTS

- During 1996 the Police Chief met with P.T.A. members during monthly meetings at South Park, West Antioch and Merriam Elementary Schools. The department's commitment to the DARE Program and children's safety issues were discussed.
- During 1996, Officer Larry Birt spoke to three preschools about "Stranger Danger".
- In February, Sgt. Steve Haynes spoke to over 100 young people at the St. Thomas Aquinas High School about Careers in Law Enforcement.
- In March and again in November, Officer Larry Birt helped the Merriam Fire Department with their Babysitting Clinic at the Community Center.
- In April, Sgt. Steve Haynes gave a presentation at the Johnson County Community College on "The Role of the Police Officer in the Criminal Justice System".
- In April, Officer Larry Birt spoke to a group of employees with Shawnee Mission Homecare about personal safety.
- In May, Sgt. Steve Haynes, MPO Mike Daniels and Officer Larry Birt spoke to the employees of Mark Twain Bank on two occasions about robbery prevention and personal safety.
- The 11th Annual Turkey Creek Festival was held in May. Several police officers were present interacting with the public. A crime prevention booth was also manned and there was a Seatbelt Safety Awareness float in the parade. Explorers helped by dressing up as McGruff and the Seatbelt Dummies.
- In July, Officer Larry Birt presented a brief seminar, Business Security Tips, for a group of members of the Merriam Chamber of Commerce.
- In August, Sgt. Steve Haynes and Officer Darren McLaughlin gave a brief class to the Merriam Community Center staff about dealing with suspicious persons at the community center.
- In August, Chief Ken Sissom was invited to speak with the South Park PTA about child molesters in the area and to cover the warning signs of child abuse.
- In September, Sgt. Steve Haynes gave a talk about personal safety to the staff of Seaboard

In 1997 there are plans to further enhance the police department's Community Policing efforts.

This new effort has been labeled the **SERVICE DELIVERY INITIATIVE**. This program will have a profound impact on the amount of service that is provided to the community by the police department.

Under this new plan, officers will be urged to make follow-up contacts with a majority of the crime victims in Merriam. (Example) If a person is the victim of domestic battery in the home and the spouse was incarcerated, the reporting officer will re-contact the victim the next day to see if they have any questions, or if there is any need for further assistance or advice.

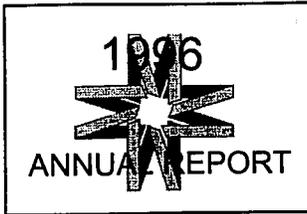
Community Policing In 1997



Officers will be also be responsible for doing many of the follow-up investigations that are now being conducted by the Investigations Unit.

This will have two positive effects. It will keep the patrol officer more involved in cases, which will ease repetition. It will also allow our investigators to spend more time on serious crimes such as rapes, robberies, etc.

Officers will be retrained to take a different approach to their everyday assignments. They will be given greater problem solving responsibilities and more latitude in handling their cases. Merriam citizens should be very pleased with this change in policing technique.



Drug Abuse Resistance Education

The DARE Program is in its seventh year. This program continues to be the most significant public relations program being conducted in the City of Merriam. The DARE Program plays a crucial part in developing positive relations between the police department and the community.

PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

Project DARE stands for Drug Abuse Resistance Education. Its primary goal is to prevent substance abuse among children.

Officer Larry Birt has been assigned as DARE Officer for the past five years. He conducts a series of structured classes in full uniform at all four of Merriam's elementary schools. The primary target group of the DARE Program is the sixth grade. Each sixth grader receives 17 weeks of specialized instruction. This grade level is targeted because studies have shown that children are more likely faced with their toughest decisions about drug and alcohol use during sixth and seventh grade. The DARE mission is to arm these children with as much information as possible during this time to increase their chances of making the right choices.

During the school year Officer Birt spends four days a week, in the classroom. In addition to teaching classes, he participates in many recreation activities and often interacts with children during lunch periods. He is involved with the Parent Teacher Associations and attends those and other meetings with teachers and school officials.

1996 DARE ACTIVITY SUMMARY

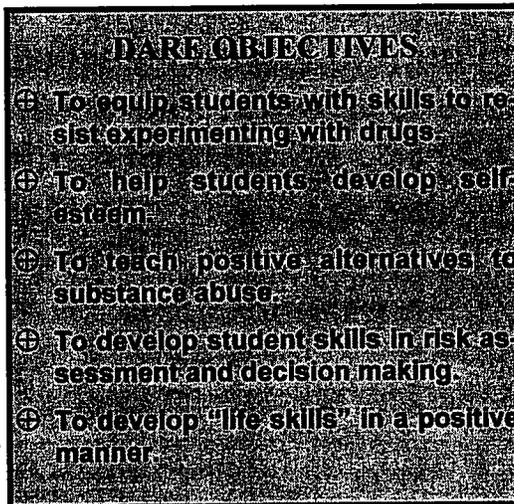
In 1996 the department asked the community and the schools to assist in financially supporting this program. The city received approximately \$1,500 from the school PTA's to help pay for some of the

materials and help support some of the after school functions at the end of the year. In 1996 we received more than \$3,500 from private donations, Parent Teacher Associations and other Merriam businesses.

In 1996, during the school year, Officer Birt made weekly visits to more than 60 classrooms, kindergarten through sixth grade. He gave classes to

more than 1,250 students from South Park, Merriam, Crestview and West Antioch Elementary Schools.

From the four schools more than 170 sixth grade students graduated from the DARE program. In May the police department hosted a skating party for DARE graduates at Skateworld in Merriam. Over 140 graduates were in attendance. The entire evening was offered to the students, free of charge, to reward them for their hard work in completing the DARE course.



DARE OBJECTIVES

- ⊕ To equip students with skills to resist experimenting with drugs.
- ⊕ To help students develop self-esteem.
- ⊕ To teach positive alternatives to substance abuse.
- ⊕ To develop student skills in risk assessment and decision making.
- ⊕ To develop "life skills" in a positive manner.

SUMMER CLINIC

During the summer months the Merriam Police Department sponsored two summer clinics. The first clinic was held at the Merriam Community Center. It was a basketball/volleyball clinic which was held for 30 sixth grade Merriam students. The second was a special clinic targeted for at-risk Merriam children from the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. During this clinic the children were taken on several field trips in the Kansas City area. Locations included the Kaufman Stadium, NCAA Visitors Center, KC Zoo and IMAX Theatre, Ernie Miller Nature Park, KC Museum and Science Center, Kaleidoscope and Worlds of Fun. Officer Birt was assisted in this clinic by Officer Bob Schluben and several members of the Explorer Unit.

The objectives of summer clinics are listed below:

- To provide a structured environment for at-risk children during a portion of the summer.



Drug Abuse Resistance Education Continued

- To provide an educational experience in a positive environment and therefore help build their self-esteem.
- To build on the relationship between the DARE Officer and these at-risk students.
- To teach the student that there are alternatives to getting involved in delinquent behavior.

Fourty children were involved in these clinics. The police department also received much appreciated assistance from the Merriam Community Center Staff.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

It is very important that the DARE Officer is involved in continuing education to remain proficient and up-to-date to provide the best program and the newest teaching techniques. This education plays an important part in the success of the DARE Program in Merriam.

During 1996, Officer Birt attended meetings of local DARE Officers and with educators within the Shawnee Mission School District. He also participated in the 1996 Kansas DARE Officers Association Conference which was held in Salina, Kansas. *At the next conference in August, Officer Birt is expected to be elected to serve as President for*

this association.

During 1996, Officer Birt also attended the National DARE Conference held in St Louis, MO.

DARE ESSAY CONTEST

Each year, through the DARE Program, every student in the sixth grade class is required to write an essay or poem which relates to what was learned in the DARE class that year. These writings are judged and the best examples from each school is selected. The winning students are rewarded during the graduation ceremony.

In 1995, Officer Birt contacted the Shawnee Mission Medical Center Foundation about this writing competition. They agreed to sponsor the program with US savings bonds, to reward the winning students for their writing excellence. The Medical Center has funded this program for a second year.

Five students were selected from each school and given savings bond awards, based on their poems or essays. The prizes ranged between \$100 and \$250. This new program provided a greater incentive for students, which translated to a more effective learning experience. This program is expected to continue in 1996, depending on the generosity of the Shawnee Mission Medical Center Foundation.

1996 Winning D.A.R.E. Essays / Poems

Why D.A.R.E. To See

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
What do you see from afar?
Kids in gangs upon the street,
Kids with sticks and chains to beat.
Is it just because they're bored,
or is this that they're ignored.
Call it fun call it a gang,
But they go out with a bang.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
What else do you see from afar?
Do you see all o'er this land,
Young kids with drugs in their hand?
Do they think that this is smart?

Do they think that this is cool?
Do they know that doing this,
Gets them kicked right out of school?
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
What do you think from afar?
Do you think these kids are miss'n?
If you do look in our prison.
Take a look at our solution,
To this awful mind pollution.
See we really all do care,
That is why we all joined D.A.R.E.

By: **Andrew Lusher**
Crestview Elementary



Drug Abuse Resistance Education

D.A.R.E.

Hi, my name is Joe McCall. This is a story about my cousin that went to Juvenile Hall because she was on drugs. While on drugs she stole my uncle's wallet, their T.V., and a lot more. Then she went to Juvenile Hall and she stayed there for a few years and got out for a couple months then turned to violence and shot at someone. Now she is out and we don't know where she is and that's why I joined the D.A.R.E. program for I won't be like her.

D.A.R.E. is a wonderful program because kids learn how to say no and when. When you avoid violence and don't do drugs you can have lots of friends. I learned a lot about saying "no" like: saying "no thanks", giving a reason or excuse, use broken record, walk away, change subject, cold shoulder, avoid the situation, and strength in numbers. that's some of the things Officer Birt had us practice.

I'm never going to use any kind of drug because my dream is to be a basketball player. I heard that a basketball player Len Bias got into the NBA and he wanted to celebrate. so he took some cocaine for the first time and he died that night. that's why I am not taking drugs and take a chance to loosing my life so young.

I am glad that I have been a part of the D.A.R.E. program at South Park because I feel good about myself that I am drug-free. I know when to say no and how. Being drug-free makes me proud of who I am and I can set my future goals. But I'm so glad that Officer Birt has been our D.A.R.E. teacher as an officer here in Merriam.

By: Joe McCall, South Park Elementary

Why?

As I think back I remember a time
A time when I was happy
I was nine and "cute" or so everyone says
And not the least bit snappy

Then one day it happened
I started doing drugs
I thought they'd solve my problems
I got them from some thugs

I got addicted to them
They were my lord and master
I'd do anything for a hit
My life was a disaster

My friends stopped talking to me
I decided they were geeks
I ran away from home
I've been gone for many weeks

Now here I am
A "jailbird" you see
The drugs -- they are the problem
Oh, why did I do this to me?

by Erin Waters, West Antioch Elementary

D.A.R.E.

- A. avoid drugs and violence
- B. believe in yourself
- C. cigarettes are harmful to your body
- D. drugs destroy your mind
- E. education is a lot better than drugs
- F. find friends that are drug free
- G. go to functions that are alcohol free
- H. have confidence in your self
- I. imagine being drug and alcohol free
- J. jail is not a fun place to be
- K. kids that do drugs are not cool
- L. learn all you can about saying no
- M. marijuana clogs your brain and lungs
- N. never let anyone talk to you into drugs
- O. oppose drugs and alcohol
- P. please yourself by just saying no
- Q. question your friends about drugs
- R. remind yourself your worth it
- S. stay clean of drugs and alcohol
- T. take time to help others
- U. use good judgment about drugs
- V. value your brain and health
- W. warn others of the dangers of drugs
- X. x-ray or examine yourself on drugs
- Y. you are the one that can say no
- Z. zealously seek high goads for yourself

By: Chris Pratt, Merriam Elementary