

Merriam Police Department



Above is a photograph of an arrest in progress of a trio of armed robbers on April 16, 1997.

1997

Highlights and Statistics

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Credits

This 1997 Report of Highlights and Statistics was made possible due to the assistance of the following persons:

**Bill Lietzke, Bob Smith, Larry Birt, Dave Thomas, Lisa Aldrich
and Karen Gibson.**

HISTORICAL FOOTNOTE:

Mr. Perry Sarver was the first Chief of Police for the City of Merriam. He was appointed by the first City Council in 1951, under **Mayor Carl Engel**. The first appointed law enforcement officers to work for the police department as volunteers were **C.L. Curry, Joe Plumm, Harold Arnsperger, Bennie Wiliker, and Frank Mueller.**

INTRODUCTION

The City of Merriam continues to demonstrate that it is a progressively managed community. In 1997, 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 1997 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.



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.



Chief's Message

The Honorable Mayor Irene French
City of Merriam, Kansas

Dear Mayor French,

As I reflect on the past year, I must admit that the Merriam Police Department experienced many unexpected challenges. These unplanned events caused a change in the general operational plans of the department. During the year the department experienced an inordinately high amount of personnel turnover when four officers left the department. One sergeant with 18 years of experience took a job-related medical retirement. Three other officers resigned, including another sergeant with 17 years of experience and two regular police officers, one with 13 years of experience and the other who had been with the department for only three years. These four officers made up over 20% of the department's patrol force. As a result of these losses our department has had to invest time and resources with overtime manpower replacement, supervisory promotions, training and the hiring of new officers.

I am happy to report that as 1997 comes to a conclusion, two sergeants have been replaced with experienced master police officers. Two regular police officers went through a lengthy promotional process and have been recently promoted to the rank of master police officers to replace those promoted to sergeant. During the year we hired and trained two new officers and are planning to hire the remaining three officers during the month of January 1998. While these are very exciting times, there needs to be much focused energy in the area of training and development of the people in these new positions. Our success in doing this will help to shape the future of the department. This will be one of my main goals in 1998.

There have been many successes over the past twelve months in the area of Community Policing. As you know, in November, after much planning, a Merriam Town Meeting took place at City Hall. This event was well attended by a cross-section of our community. The group focus is to make Merriam a better place for our children. This meeting was just the beginning of a process that I believe will benefit all the members of our community both now and in the future. The next important meeting is scheduled for January 1998.

Our department has made great strides in implementing our Service Delivery Initiative Program that was previewed in the 1996 Annual Report. Our officers are now giving a higher level of service to our citizens and businesses than in the past. We will continue to develop this initiative and fine-tune it to give greater effectiveness.

Another major accomplishment was in the area of enhanced radio communications. During 1997, our department made a very successful transition to a new 800MHz-radio system. This culminated a project that has been in the planning stages for the past five years. Together we have worked with the Johnson County Sheriff and other area cities to implement a radio system that will last well into the next millenium. In the process we were able to acquire the majority of our radio equipment from Motorola at half the price of new equipment. This little used equipment was used in the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia.

In October we completed the development of our physical abilities test for our police officers. We now have a legally defensible physical standard that will ensure that our current and future officers are in shape and able to properly respond to the physical challenges that we face from time to time. This will improve our professional appearance and increase the health of our officers so they can be productive officers for a longer career period. It will also assist in our hiring process by giving us enough data to make a more informed selection when hiring new officers. We are the only department in Johnson County that has a tailor-made physical abilities test and this could not have occurred without the cooperation of the City Council.

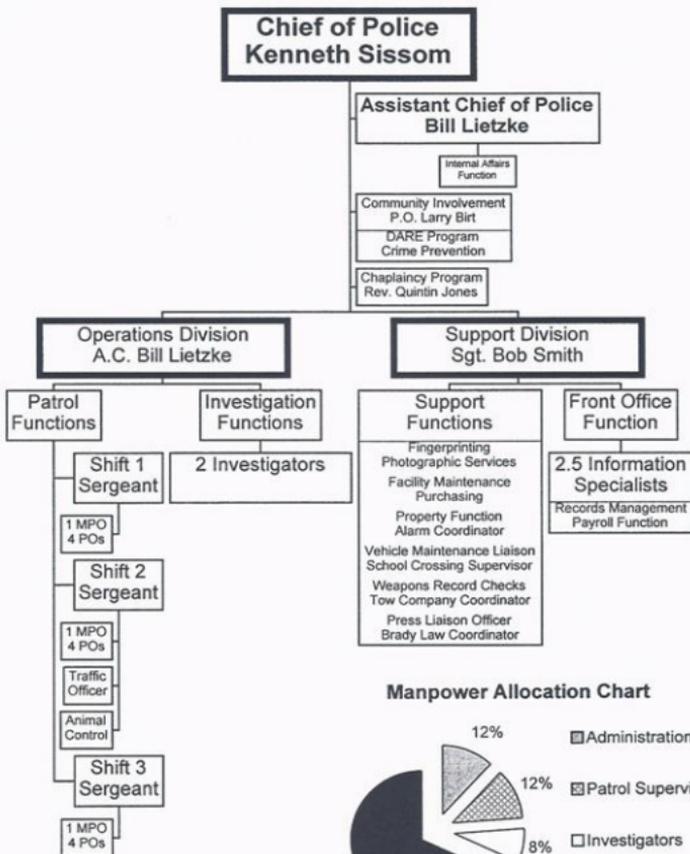
In closing, I want to thank you and the City Council for all the support that our department receives. The most recent enhancements in our compensation program are a testament of this. I look forward to a busy and productive year in 1998.

Respectfully Submitted,

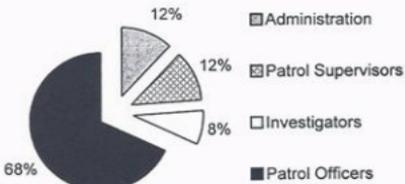
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kenneth Sissom". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Kenneth Sissom, Chief of Police

MERRIAM POLICE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
January 1, 1998



Manpower Allocation Chart



POLICE DEPARTMENT ROSTER

12/31/97

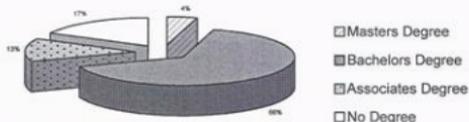
RANK	NAME	ASSIGNMENT	TENURE
Chief of Police	KENNETH SISSOM	Administration	18
Asst. Chief of Police	BILL LIETZKE	Administration	17
Sergeant	BOB SMITH	Administration	20
Sergeant	RANDY DAVIS	Patrol	16
Sergeant	TIM BURNETT	Patrol	15
Sergeant	AL JONES	Patrol	14
Average tenure for Staff Officers =			16.8 Yrs.
Master Police Officer	DAN KELLERMAN	Patrol	13
Master Police Officer	JOAN HUETTENMUELLER	Patrol	12
Master Police Officer	MIKE DANIELS	Investigations	10
Master Police Officer	LORI VICTORINE	Investigations	9
Master Police Officer	ROBERT SCHLUBEN	Patrol	7
Police Officer	CHARLIE YOCUM	Patrol	20
Police Officer	JEFF MAGEE	Patrol	10
Police Officer	LARRY BIRT	D.A.R.E.	9
Police Officer	DARREN MCLAUGHLIN	Patrol	8
Police Officer	CHARLIE SWEANY	Patrol	7
Police Officer	TODD SPARKS	Patrol	7
Police Officer	GERRY EICKHOFF	Patrol	6
Police Officer	TROY DUVANEL	Patrol	3
Police Officer	STEVE GRIGSBY	Patrol	2
Police Officer	TODD ALLEN	Patrol	1
Police Officer	GREG LENKIEWICZ	Patrol	<1>
Police Officer	JASON SAIKIN	Patrol	<1>
Average tenure for MPOs & P.O.s =			7.3 Yrs.
Animal Control Officer	DAVE THOMAS	Animal Control	10
Information Specialist 2	LISA ALDRICH	Clerical	6
Information Specialist 2	KAREN GIBSON	Clerical	5
Information Specialist 1	BETTINA JAMERSON (Part-time)	Clerical	<1>

Education Level

Masters Degree	1
Bachelors Degree	15
Associates Degree	3
No Degree	4

Average Age for
Police Officer is
34.4 years of age

Education Level of Officers



ADMINISTRATION



DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL:

The success of any police department depends on the people that it employs. A progressive and professional group of employees will greatly reduce liability and increase their job effectiveness. The Merriam Police Department is authorized to have twenty-five officers, one animal control officer and two full-time and one part-time information specialists. Of the commissioned officers, three are assigned to Administration, two are assigned to Investigations, one is a full-time DARE and crime prevention officer. All other officers work in regular patrol, handling calls and enforcing the laws and ordinances.

EDUCATION:

The Merriam Police Department is fortunate to have a highly motivated and educated work force. Studies have shown that officers with higher levels of education are usually more receptive to new ideas. They are generally more capable of dealing with persons of differing ethnic and economic backgrounds, present a more professional image for the department, and are also easier to train. All Merriam officers are college educated. Seventy-nine percent hold an associates, bachelors or masters degree in various majors including Criminal Justice, Psychology, Business, Accounting and English.

EMPLOYEE TURNOVER:

At the beginning of 1997 the department was at full-strength. During the next twelve months, four officers left the department. Two of these officers were tenured patrol supervisors. While turnover can be a detriment to any department, it also has its benefits. Losing two patrol supervisors has opened up positions for promotion. During the year, two master police officers were promoted to sergeants and they were assigned to work the evening and midnight shifts. Two regular officers were promoted to master police officers to replace those that were promoted to sergeant. While having four officers leaving during a single year is unusually high, historically, turnover has not been a problem for the department. The average tenure for regular officers and master police officers is 7.3 years. For supervisors and administrative staff the average tenure is 16.8 years. During 1997 two new officers were hired for replacement. Two more officers are scheduled to be hired after January 1, 1998.



Greg Lenkiewicz

Hired on April 21, 1997, as a police officer.

Age: 25 Lives in Roeland Park, Kansas

Married to Christina since 1995. They have no children.

Grew up in Salina, Kansas. Went to college in Topeka where he received a Bachelors Degree in Criminal Justice from Washburn University.

Prior to working at Merriam, Greg was a Deputy at the Johnson County Sheriff's Department in Olathe. Greg is also a certified scuba diver.

Jason Saikin

Hired on August 4, 1997, as a police officer.

Age: 25 Single Lives in Shawnee, Kansas

Jason grew up in Glenview, Illinois, which is a Chicago suburb.

He attended Kansas University where he graduated in May of 1996 with a degree in English. In college he was interested in Rugby and Judo.



OVERTIME COSTS:

Each year many thousands of dollars are spent from the budget to pay officers for working overtime. The factors that cause overtime are varied. The primary reasons are court attendance, mandatory training and vacation replacement. In 1997 there were increases in two areas. The first area was in manpower replacement. During the year there were four resignations. At the same time two other officers were on extended injury leave or light duty. As a result, overtime was assigned, creating a 12% increase for manpower replacement. The other area which shows a dramatic increase in overtime was in "Other Overtime". In 1997 our department stepped up the amount of self defense and defensive tactics training. This important training will better equip officers to handle serious stressful incidents. More training was offered in 1997. Most of the time this training was attended while off-duty. These training/replacement overtime costs should start to decline in 1998.

O/T TYPE	1994	1995	1996	1997
REPLACEMENT	1138.5	880.5	696.5	789.5
REPORTS	77.3	97.5	182.5	310.75
HOLIDAY DUTY	804.5	480	480	540
LATE CALL	34.75	249	183.5	192.25
DOUBLE BACK	26	22	40	50
OTHER O/T	616.5	208.5	254.75	1252.25
OTHER NON O/T	0	79.5	26.5	29.25
TOTALS	2697.55	2017	1863.75	3164

PROMOTIONS IN 1997:

There are three shifts of officers in the Patrol Division. Each shift is supervised by a sergeant. They are responsible for supervising shift activity and conducting officer evaluations. This is a key position in the department. There is a master police officer assigned to each shift. It is their job to assist the sergeants in the day-to-day running of the shift. They are supervisors when the sergeants are on days off or vacation.

During 1997, two veteran master police officers were promoted to sergeants. Consequently, two regular officers were also promoted to master police officers. In August, MPO Tim Burnett became patrol sergeant assigned to the midnight shift. Officer Burnett had worked for the past nine years as the department's lead investigator. He started his career at MPD in 1982 and worked as a regular officer until 1986 when he was promoted to the rank of Corporal/MPO. As an investigator, Officer Burnett was awarded "Police Officer of the Year" in 1996 for his excellent work performance.



Sergeant

In October, MPO Al Jones was also promoted to the rank of patrol sergeant and assigned to the evening shift. Officer Jones started with the MPD in 1983 as a regular officer. He was promoted in 1988 to Master Police Officer and was later transferred into investigations. He was awarded "Police Officer of the Year" in 1982, becoming the first officer to receive this annual award.



In December, two regular officers were promoted to the rank of Master Police Officer. Officer Lori Victorine, one of our new MPO's, was hired in 1988 and has worked as a regular officer since that time. In addition to her work in patrol, Officer Victorine is also trained as an On-Call Investigator. She has served on the Rape Evidence Collection Team for a number of years and is on the Metro Squad. She has also served as a Field Training Officer for new recruits just out of the academy.

Officer Robert Schluben was promoted to MPO after serving seven years as a regular officer. He was hired in 1990. While working in patrol, Officer Schluben has been very involved as the coordinator of the Merriam Explorer Program. He is also an On-Call Investigator and is the only officer that holds a Masters College Degree, a degree he obtained after coming to work for Merriam.

All four persons promoted will receive specialized training in police supervision in the coming months. They have all been assigned to work in the Patrol Division.

CRIME STATISTICS



It is a requirement for police departments in Kansas to collect crime statistics. The information collected is used for local, state and federal data bases to compare rates with previous years to get a picture of the amount and types of crimes that are happening in a given area.

Within the police department, we use 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 can include economic conditions, weather, incursion of drugs, gangs, organized crime, development of new businesses and the increase or decrease of law enforcement presence in the community.

1997 CRIME RATES: As predicted above, there were fluctuations in some of the crime rates when 1997 is compared to the previous year. The two most notable increases in crime were in the areas of stolen vehicles and check forgeries. There is no known explanation for the 44% increase in stolen vehicles. Researching the problem has determined that there is no set pattern on type of vehicles stolen or any specific problem location. Normally

auto thieves take advantage of apartment parking lots and after-hours business lots. This was the case in 1997. Forgery cases increased from 10 cases in 1996 to 53 cases in 1997. We have determined that there is a

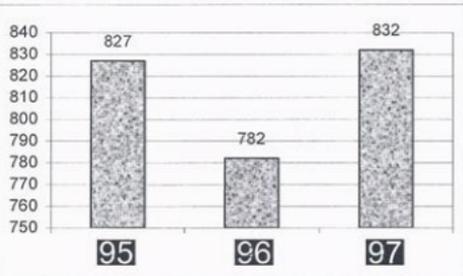
County/Metro-wide forgery problem. It seems that a group of very active drug users have figured out ways to convert stolen checks into cash, which they use to buy drugs. Large, busy retail outlets are particularly vulnerable to this type of crime. To combat this problem, retail stores need to be more conscientious at verifying personal identification at the time the checks are accepted. With the opening of Merriam Town Center the number of forgeries will continue to increase in the next few years.



While most types of crimes remained stable, there were categories where there were notable decreases. One area was business burglaries. In 1996 there were 43 business burglaries. In 1997 the number of business burglaries dropped to 19, representing a 56% decrease. This is a crime that is directly effected by aggressive patrol procedures.

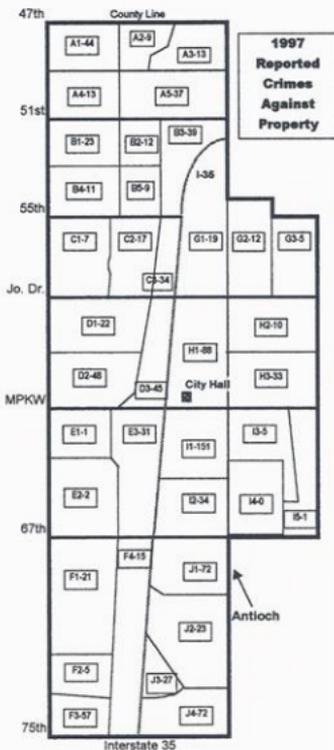
Each year, we are required to report Part-One Crimes to the K.B.I. and F.B.I. The 1997 statistics are listed below. There was a 6% increase in Part-One Crimes. A more complete breakdown of crimes is listed on the following page.

PART ONE CRIMES	1995	1996	1997
MURDER	0	0	0
RAPE	5	7	6
ROBBERY	18	12	9
AGG. ASSAULT	48	18	27
BURGLARY	249	256	256
THEFT	429	417	431
AUTO THEFT	71	68	98
ARSON	7	4	5
	827	782	832



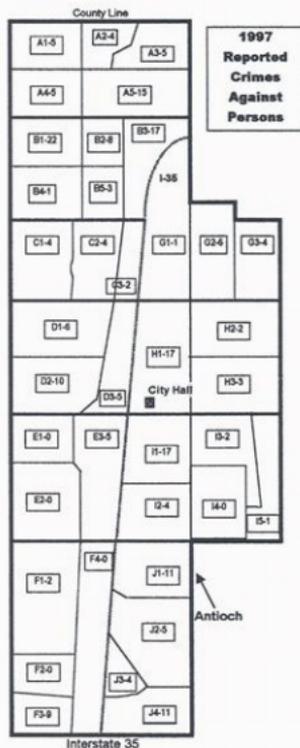
1997 REPORTED CRIMES IN MERRIAM, KANSAS

TYPE OF CRIME	1995	1996	1997	TYPE OF CRIME	1995	1996	1997
Aggravated Arson	2	1	0	Furnishing Alcohol to Minor	3	0	1
Arson	5	3	5	Habitual Traffic Violator	0	4	10
Aggravated Assault	27	9	21	Harassment by Phone	55	37	34
Aggravated Battery	21	9	16	Indecent Liberties with a Child	0	0	1
Aggravated Burglary	8	6	11	Indecent Solicitation of a Child	0	2	0
Aggravated Sodomy	1	1	0	Interference with Parental Custody	2	0	1
Aggravated Indecent Liberties	5	1	2	Intimidation of a Victim/Witness	1	1	0
Aggravated Robbery	11	8	5	Kidnapping	2	0	0
Aggravated Sexual Battery	0	0	1	Lewd and Lascivious Behavior	2	5	3
Assault	7	1	0	Littering	2	5	5
Battery	109	102	118	Minor in Possession of Alcohol	10	4	6
Burglary to Auto	146	171	161	Obstructing Legal Process	21	14	14
Burglary to Business	39	43	19	Possession of Controlled Substance	52	48	56
Burglary to Residence	41	43	41	Possession of Drug Paraphernalia	13	1	1
Burglary to Storage Area	22	12	25	Possession of Marijuana	12	0	0
Child In Need Of Care	14	19	38	Possession of Stolen Property	9	7	5
Computer Trespass (new law)	0	0	3	Possession of Stolen Auto	1	0	0
Criminal Damage - Felony	31	35	22	Rape	5	10	7
Criminal Damage - Misdemeanor	118	140	106	Robbery	7	5	4
Criminal Deprivation of Property	12	10	11	Sexual Battery	1	0	1
Criminal Discharge of a Weapon	1	1	5	Stalking	3	0	1
Criminal Sodomy	0	0	1	Theft of Lost or Mislaid Property	7	15	10
Criminal Threats	22	28	26	Theft of Services	5	3	2
Criminal Trespass	28	20	14	Theft of Auto	73	68	98
Criminal Use of a Financial Card	1	4	4	Theft of Auto (Attempted)	11	13	12
Criminal Use of a Weapon	11	3	5	Theft - Felony	86	66	67
Disorderly Conduct	52	41	66	Theft - Misdemeanor	355	355	364
Disturbing the Peace	0	1	0	Truancy	0	0	3
Falsely Obtaining a Prescription	1	1	3	Violation of a Court Protection Order	2	0	11
Forgery	20	10	53	Worthless Check	5	1	2
TOTAL OF CRIMES REPORTED PER YEAR					1500	1387	1501



City of Merriam, Kansas
Sub-Grid Maps
1997

Total Reported Crimes (Part-One) By Sub-Grid					
Grid	1996	1997	Grid	1996	1997
A1	33	49	F1	17	28
A2	16	13	F2	6	5
A3	13	18	F3	85	66
A4	21	18	F4	12	15
A5	90	52	G1	57	20
B1	60	45	G2	23	18
B2	17	20	G3	6	9
B3	98	56	H1	104	105
B4	13	12	H2	25	12
B5	11	12	H3	46	96
C1	21	11	I1	139	168
C2	17	21	I2	37	38
C3	46	36	I3	6	7
D1	20	28	I4	0	0
D2	91	58	I5	9	10
D3	41	50	J1	25	17
E1	8	1	J2	23	28
E2	3	2	J3	32	21
E3	56	96	J4	71	89



NOTEWORTHY CRIMINAL CASES AND INCIDENTS IN 1997

- January 23 - A drive-by shooting is reported in the 9900 block of West 51st Place. A house and vehicle are found with bullet holes. A suspect was reported.
- January 30 - A victim was stabbed by his brother at his apartment in the 5000 block of Merriam Dr. All persons were extremely intoxicated.
- January 31 - A drive-by shooting was reported in the 8200 block of Johnson Dr. The front window of the home was damaged. This incident is believed to be gang-related.
- February 5 - A man cutting up a tree at the rear of a residence in the 7900 block of West 67th Street was killed when he was pinned under a large log.
- February 7 - A second drive-by shooting occurred at the same house in the 8200 block of Johnson Drive. Police surveillance was conducted and a possible suspect was later stopped. No one has been charged.
- February 21 - The manager of Taco Bell was walking out of the back of the business to go to the bank at 9:30 a.m., when she was approached by a man demanding money. The manager was not carrying any money, so the suspect left the area.
- March 3 - At 21 minutes after midnight, officers were dispatched to an armed disturbance in the 9900 block of West 51st Terrace. There they found a man suffering from stab wounds. The man had argued with another man about a previous burglary. The known suspect then stabbed the victim and fled. He was later charged in this case.
- March 17 - Two men were arrested by officers after they were found walking in the business lot in the 6200 block of Merriam Drive. They were charged with a series of auto burglaries. Fourteen car stereos were recovered.
- March 18 - A man was stabbed repeatedly by his girlfriend while he slept in a motel room in the 5000 block of Merriam Drive. The wounds were minor and the woman was arrested.
- March 20 - A tip from the apartment manager led officers to seize 107 pounds of marijuana, 4.5 pounds of illegal mushrooms, some methamphetamines and \$39,120 in cash. Three cars and two guns were also taken. The alleged owner was out of town during the raid. (NOTE: The suspect in this case has never been found. There are currently warrants for his arrest.)
- March 25 - Officers were dispatched to a burglary in progress in the 7900 block of West 59th Terrace. There they located a suspect who attempted to flee the area by car and was involved in an accident. He then fled the area on foot and was not located. (NOTE: While trying to leave by car, the suspect's vehicle struck the open door of a police car, which pinned the officer between the door causing a minor injury to the officer.)
- March 29 - Officers responded to an armed disturbance at Rieke's Bar. At the disturbance in the parking lot, a man pulled a handgun and pointed it at others in the lot. The suspect fled the scene.
- April 3 - The owner of the liquor store at 47th and Switzer confronted a thief in the parking lot of his store. The man had just stolen a bottle of brandy and some cigarettes. The suspect struck the owner in the head with the liquor bottle, cutting his head open. A suspect was later charged in this case.
- April 5 - During a disturbance in the 6000 block of Grandview, a woman bit her boyfriend on the penis and then attacked him with a razor. The boyfriend retaliated by striking the woman in the head. The woman went to the hospital with charges pending.
- April 8 - A man was found dead in the parking lot of Shawnee Mission Medical Center by their security. He had numerous medical problems and had apparently left the hospital and collapsed.
- April 12 - A search warrant was served on a home in the 5500 block of Hayes. Inside the house, officers found a partial methamphetamines lab.
- April 15 - A man with mental problems was found standing on the bridge just west of Merriam and Johnson Drive. He was coaxed off the bridge and taken to a mental health facility.
- April 15 - An intoxicated driver was stopped on I-35 and arrested. Inside the car, officers found over \$13,000 in cash. The driver did not know who owned the money. It was seized as being possibly drug related.
- April 16 - Two gunmen robbed the convenience store at Johnson Drive and Merriam. They then left and robbed a liquor store in Shawnee. While fleeing this robbery Merriam officers stopped them and three persons were arrested.
- April 22 - A man in the 9500 block of West 55th Street put an ad in the newspaper to sell a gun. A stranger came to the home pretending to answer the ad. He then attempted to rob the man of the weapon and a fight ensued. The suspect fled the area and was caught by police.
- April 26 - A 16-year-old boy was playing basketball on the parking lot of Crestview School with a group of other boys. An argument began and one boy pulled a knife and held it at the victim's throat. A struggle ensued and the boy was cut on the hand.
- May 4 - Patrol worked two separate dead body calls. One was at a home in the 7100 block of Slater. A 74-year old woman was found dead by her son. The woman was reportedly a chronic alcoholic. The

second victim was found in an apartment in the 8700 block of West 65th Street. A 54-year-old woman was found by her sister. The cause of death was not determined.

- May 7 - A press release was issued to area media concerning a criminal that was contacting elderly women and asking to use the phone. Once inside the victims were distracted and the suspect stole their wallets or money from purses. This involved three cases in Merriam and cases in other area cities.
- May 9 - An officer was making a routine warrant arrest when he was confronted by two other men. One man was dragging another man toward the officer. It seems that the first man had been following this extremely drunk driver. They came to a stop at an intersection next to where the Merriam officer was making the arrest. The first man got out of his car and pulled the drunk man out and presented him to the officer. The drunk driver was arrested.
- June 22 - An 18-year-old woman reported that she was raped by an ex-boyfriend who had followed her home from a bar. This occurred at a home in the South District. The victim was extremely intoxicated and could not remember details.
- July 6 - A 14-year-old girl reported that she was digitally raped and sodomized by a 28-year-old man while sleeping over at a friends house in the North District. The suspect, who lived in the home, was later charged in District Court.
- July 24 - A 10-year-old girl reported that she had been digitally raped by a 14-year-old boy at a home in the North District. The case was turned over to juvenile officials.
- July 28 - Two masked men entered the front doors of Drury Inn at 45 minutes after midnight and robbed the clerk. The suspects are unknown.
- August 3 - The manager of Taco Bell was robbed in the parking lot of Mercantile Bank when making an after-hours deposit. The robber fled the area on foot.
- August 5 - At 25 minutes after midnight a man with a yellow plastic bag over his head attempted to rob the clerk at 7-11 at 75th and Switzer. The clerk fled out the back door. There was no loss.
- August 6 - A woman visiting from California was approached in the parking lot of Taco Bell. One of two men asked her for her car keys. She refused and the man produced a handgun. The woman surrendered the car.
- September 8 - Officers were called to Fairfield to help them remove a car while their lot was being sealed. Officers ran the tag and attempted to make contact at the room of the registered owner. A woman came to the door reluctantly. She let them in and drug paraphernalia was spotted. The woman was arrested and a search warrant was obtained. The officers recovered one bag containing 152 grams of methamphetamines, one gun and \$11,582 in cash. All was seized for forfeiture.
- October 23 - A woman was stopped in traffic on Shawnee Mission Pkwy when a two persons approached her car and attempted to physically pull her out of the car. The woman was struck several times but fought off the attackers who wanted her car. She was treated at KU Med Center.
- November 4 - A woman was killed as she attempted to cross Interstate 35 at 12:43 a.m. The motorist did not see the woman due to darkness. NOTE: This woman had left the residence where a disturbance had occurred. The police attempted to give her a ride three separate times, but she refused.
- November 5 - Officers responded to the Peppertree Apartments on a window peeper. The victim got a tag number of the suspect who was stopped several blocks away by Merriam officers. The man, who had a long record of this kind of activity, was arrested.
- November 11 - A search warrant was obtained on a duplex in the area of 51st and Knox. One of the occupants was suspected in a series of Merriam home burglaries. The duplex was searched and evidence was located. No one was harmed as the suspect was not home.
- November 20 - Officers responded to Reike's Bar to contact an armed patron. A man who had been displaying a handgun in the bar earlier was arrested.
- November 26 - Officers were dispatched to a burglary in progress in the 5400 block of Mastin during the daytime. The burglar fled just prior to officers' arrival, but was located an arrested a few blocks away.
- December 7 - A doughnut delivery driver got into a non-verbal disagreement with another driver on I-35. The other driver pulled a gun and fired six shots into the delivery van. No one was hurt.
- December 8 - An burglar / arsonist set fire to 6 recreational vehicles parked in the lot at 5500 Merriam Drive. Damage was over \$300,000.
- At 1:30 a.m., a family was watching TV in their home in the 8200 block of Johnson Drive when suddenly a masked gunman burst in from the bedroom and robbed the residents. The man had crawled through a bedroom window to commit burglary. It appeared that the man knew there was money (\$1500) in the home.
- December 31 - The afternoon of New Year's Eve, officers responded to a suicide by hanging at a Georgetown townhouse. An elderly man was found, by his spouse, hanging in the basement. The subject was D.O.A. at Shawnee Mission Medical.

PATROL STATISTICS



Police patrol activity will vary from season to season and can be a difficult thing to measure. Activity levels are measured under three headings: Calls for Service, Report Writing, and Self-Initiated Activities or Random Patrol.

CALLS FOR SERVICE

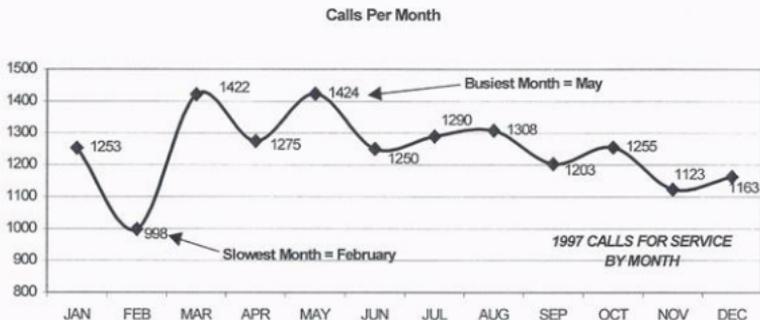
Each time a citizen calls the dispatcher or police department and requests some type of service, it is recorded and later tabulated. This data is used to indicate how much the police department is depended upon by its citizenry. It is also used to determine the level of activity that is encountered on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

This information is used to plan for staffing needs.

In 1997, Merriam police officers responded to 14,964 calls for service. This represents a 1.9% decrease in calls for service over 1996. 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.

1997 = 14,964 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:



AN AVERAGE PATROL SHIFT:

There is an average of four officers per shift throughout the year. This will include one supervisor and three regular officers. The average police officer drives 44 miles of Merriam streets during his or her tour of duty, causing each patrol vehicle to amass nearly 30,000 miles during the 12 months.

Nearly 14 calls for service will be handled during an eight-hour shift. These calls for service will generate on average one arrest and three primary offense or incident reports. Police reports are now typed on computers in the station. Preparing these reports will take an officer off the street for two hours and 50 minutes of each eight-hour shift.

During the time that is not dedicated to answering calls or writing reports, officers will engage in "routine" patrol and traffic enforcement efforts. These enforcement efforts will produce an average of 13 moving violations and eight non-moving violations during the patrol shift.



REPORT WRITING:

As was indicated previously, a patrol officer will spend a significant portion of his time 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 writing reports during the shift. 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 1997, Merriam officers spent **3,105** hours writing police reports, representing a **23%** increase over 1996. As a result, **3,485** new case files were created. In 1996 a new computer program was purchased that allows officers to complete State Offense and Arrest Reports on a personal computer. We completed the second year using this program and as a result are now producing more professional reports with fewer errors. As officers gain typing proficiency they will speed 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 1997, police officers in Merriam drove a total of **166,139** miles patrolling the streets. Because of the reduced manpower during the year there was a **5%** decrease in the number of miles driven, compared to 1996. Each year citizens and business owners give many complimentary remarks on the department's high patrol visibility. This visibility will increase the feeling of security by residents and businesses, and should reduce crimes in some instances.

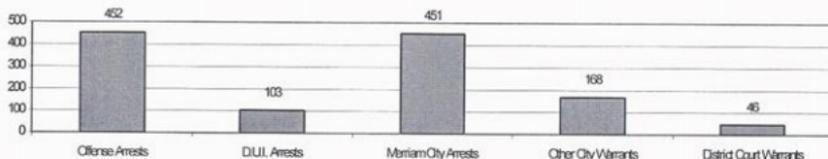
B) TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT

In 1997, Merriam police officers issued **7,854** traffic tickets to motorists. This number represents a **27%** increase, compared to 1996. This is the second year that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of tickets written. A traffic enforcement standard was placed on all officers during the summer of 1996. Getting all officers involved in traffic enforcement has created this increase. A breakdown on the types of tickets can be found on page 15.

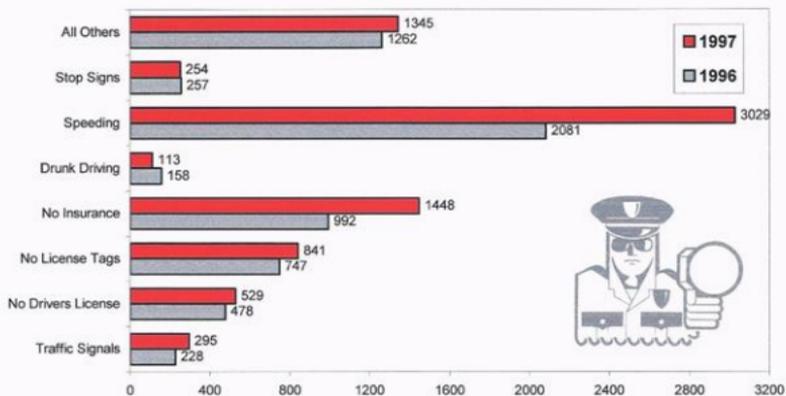
C) ARRESTS

In 1997, the Merriam Police Department made **1,220** arrests. This is a slight decrease over 1996. Of these arrests, **42%** were for misdemeanor or traffic charges and the remaining **54%** were for outstanding municipal and district court failure to appear warrants. During the year **76** persons were arrested for domestic violence related crimes. Out of 1,220 arrests there were only ten cases where a Merriam Officer had to use force. This is an excellent arrest / use of force ratio.

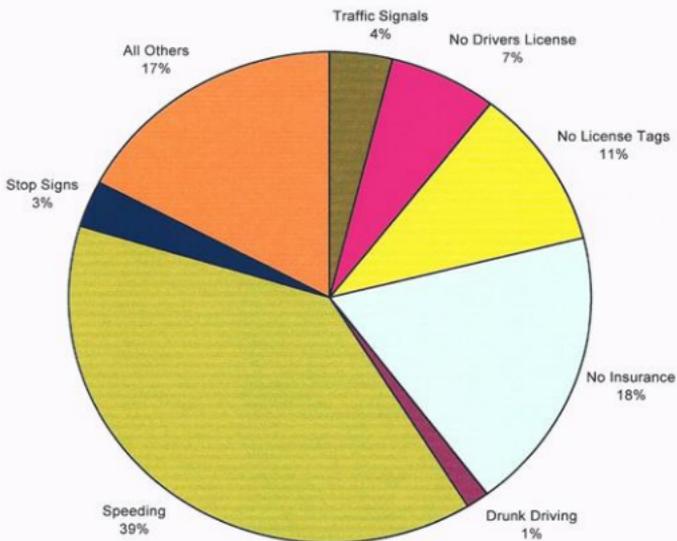
A breakdown of arrests is included in the chart below.



Violations by Type Comparison 1996/1997



Traffic Citations by Type in 1997



TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS



One of the fundamental duties of any police department is to investigate motor vehicle accidents. With the types of roadways and the number of businesses in Merriam this becomes a full-time challenge.

In 1997, reports were taken on **760** traffic accidents in Merriam. This represents a **14.8%** decrease in accidents over 1996. Before this fact is celebrated it should be noted that last year there was a **10.4%** increase in accidents.

There were notable decreases in accidents on I-35, Shawnee Mission Parkway and Antioch. The areas where we saw increases in accidents include Johnson Drive, 67th Street and 75th Street. Road construction is believed to be a factor.

On the positive side, it is possible that increased traffic enforcement over the previous eighteen months has started to have an effect on the accident rate.

ACCIDENT STATISTICS	1996	1997
Total accidents reported	873	760
Fatality Accidents	0	1
Injury Accidents	170	129
Hit and Run Accidents	107	57
Private Property Accidents	132	161
Alcohol Involved Accidents	27	17

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS BY LOCATION

SHAWNEE MISSION PARKWAY

Total Accidents = 139 (1996 = 192)
Injuries Involved = 33 or 24%

JOHNSON DRIVE

Total Accidents = 91 (1996 = 76)
Injuries Involved = 23 or 25%

INTERSTATE 35

Total Accidents = 89 (1996 = 107)
Injuries Involved = 15 or 17%

ANTIOCH ROAD

Total Accidents = 42 (1996 = 62)
Injuries Involved = 4 or 9.5%

75TH STREET

Total Accidents = 84 (1996 = 75)
Injuries Involved = 24 or 27%

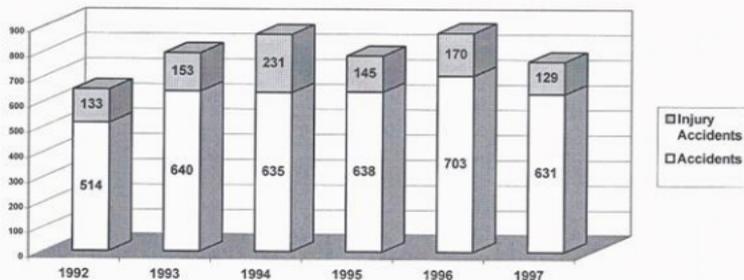
MERRIAM DRIVE

Total Accidents = 38 (1996 = 43)
Injuries Involved = 4 or 10.5%

67TH STREET

Total Accidents = 27 (1996 = 20)
Injuries Involved = 6 or 22%

Total Accidents Since 1992



INVESTIGATIONS



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

The lead investigator is assigned to the unit on a permanent basis. Permanency allows this officer to become proficient in all types of criminal investigations and make all the necessary contacts to make his or her job more effective. The second officer is assigned to investigations for a prescribed time period, usually one year. This allows an officer to get away from the normal patrol duties and learn new police skills. The officers assigned to this unit are required to be independent and reliable. There is very little supervision of their daily activities due to the nature of this assignment.

In 1997, the Service Delivery Initiative Program was introduced. In this program, regular patrol officers were encouraged to get more involved in investigating the various crimes they were being called to take reports on. The theory behind this was that more "minor" crimes could be solved by patrol as they are more directly involved in the initial incident. This would mean that the Investigations Unit would not get as many cases to investigate. The cases they did get were more serious in nature and many times involved contacting suspects in other jurisdictions. This was the objective of the program – let patrol handle the easy cases and give the investigators the hard or non-local cases to work.

INVESTIGATIONS UNIT SUMMARY:

In 1997, the Investigations Unit followed-up 334* cases. Of those cases, 92 were cleared with an arrest or by exception. This equates to a 27.5% clearance rate.

The investigators and assistant investigators were called out a total of 12 times and totaled 67 hours of overtime.

Of the cases that were assigned to the Investigations Unit, there were:

106 Thefts	41 Burglaries
18 Forgeries	18 Hit & Run Accidents
18 Dead Bodies	17 Auto Thefts
16 Criminal Damages	14 Battery Cases
11 Robberies	9 Telephone Harassment
8 Disorderly Conducts	7 Rapes
6 Assaults	4 Criminal Threats
3 Sexual Offenses	3 Special Assignments
3 Trespassing Cases	1 Arson
1 Credit Card Fraud	1 Weapons Violation

* This number includes cases held over from 1996. There are also 29 cases still open that are not included. This accounts for any difference between the total sums.

INVESTIGATIONS UNIT TRAINING:

During 1997, investigators and assistant investigators received 57 hours of training, attending several classes and seminars to improve their detective skills. The training topics included:

UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL ASSAULT
INVESTIGATION OF AUTO THEFTS
BASIC DEATH INVESTIGATIONS
HANDLING CHILD MALTREATMENT CASES
UNDERSTANDING ASSET FORFEITURE

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 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 Metro trained officers to other departments when requested.

Noteworthy and High Profile Investigation Cases for 1997

- In February a house in the 8600 block of Johnson Dr. was the victim of three separate drive-by shootings. A coordinated effort between Investigations and Patrol led to a suspect being apprehended and charged.
- In February a major auto theft ring moved through Merriam. Six very expensive automobiles were taken from Aristocrat Motors. Investigator Burnett spent numerous hours on this investigation. No charges were filed through our county, but most of the automobiles were recovered. Some were found in Wichita, Kansas and others in Atlanta, Georgia.
- In March over a hundred and seven pounds of marijuana, along with a small quantity of other drugs, weapons and cash, was recovered at the Pinegate apartments. Patrol initially made the recovery and turned the follow-up over to Investigations. Charges were eventually filed against the tenant. The assets were forfeited to the Merriam Police Dept.
- In April a fourteen-year-old patient of SMMC reported an employee of the hospital had raped her. Investigator Burnett's investigation led to charges being filed and the suspect pleading guilty.
- In September a juvenile reported she had been raped while at the clubhouse at King's Cove apartments. Investigator Schluben spent over forty hours on this investigation. At its conclusion, the victim admitted she had made up the story in an attempt to get attention.
- In October and November we experienced several residential burglaries in the north end of Merriam. An extensive investigation by Detectives Victorine and Daniels led to charges being filed against a suspect.
- In December an arson was committed against a recreational vehicle business. To date, Investigator Daniels has logged multiple hours on this investigation. This crime is unsolved and the case is still open.
- In December an auto burglar was extremely active in the area of 74th and Frontage. Investigations and Patrol joined forces and set up surveillance in the area parking lots. This led to the eventual arrest and charges filed against the suspect.
- Also in December a victim was stabbed after he interrupted a burglary to his vehicle. Detective Daniels' investigation into the case led to an arrest being made and aggravated battery charges being filed.

Metro Squad Cases

- In January, Investigator Burnett was assigned to assist the Metro Squad on a murder case in Olathe, Kansas. The victim was an elderly male. A suspect was developed, arrested and charged.
- In June, Investigator Burnett was again assigned to the Metro Squad in Springhill. The murder victim was a 15-year-old female. The Squad disbanded without making an arrest. The Sheriff's Office is still investigating.

SUPPORT SERVICES



In addition to responding to calls for service, working traffic accidents and traffic enforcement, the Merriam Police Department must complete a number of other functions to serve the public. A synopsis of these services are listed below.

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 the responsibility of evidence custodian be taken seriously to ensure proper function and continuity. The proper processing of evidence is a very time consuming and tedious job. It involves proper packaging and marking and report documentation by the officer. The property custodian takes custody of the property and logs it into the computer, verifies that it is properly packaged and then finds a storage location in one of two property rooms.



In 1997 the position of property custodian was held by a specially-trained Information Specialist. She was supervised by the Administrative Sergeant. In 1997, the Property Custodian processed **1,202** pieces of evidence. This is a **16.5%** increase over 1996. This evidence involved **403** cases which is a **30%** increase over 1996.

COLLEGE INTERN PROGRAM:

For the past few years, the Merriam Police Department has utilized the services of college students during the summer months in the College Intern Program. Our department is affiliated with three state universities who provide interested students. During a specified period of weeks the student performs work in the station. This could include clerical or statistical assistance. They are also exposed to various aspects of the policing job through ride-alongs and other associations.

In 1997, two college interns worked for MPD. Alicia Janesko of Kansas University and Megan Pisani of Kansas State worked during the summer months and donated **360** hours of their time at no cost to the citizens of Merriam.



Intern Megan Pisani

BRADY LAW CHECKS (Handgun Background Checks):

This is the fourth year that the Merriam Police Department has taken part in conducting background records checks on Merriam residents that want to purchase guns from various gun shops. On 91 occasions Brady Law applications were forwarded to the department for checks. In that time, all but 5 were approved for purchase.

POLICE REPORT PROCESSING:

Once a police report is written and turned in to the front office it must be properly processed. This is a long and involved process. It has to be logged, copied for various other agencies such as the Kansas Bureau of Investigation and District Attorney's Office, Kansas Department of Revenue, etc. The report is eventually filed into the records storage room. Each year we get hundreds of requests for additional copies from insurance companies, victims, the media and attorneys.

In 1997 the Merriam Police Department processed **3,485** individual report case files. This is an **8%** increase over 1996. The majority of the report processing responsibility falls on the one full-time and one part-time Information Specialists that work in the Administrative Office.

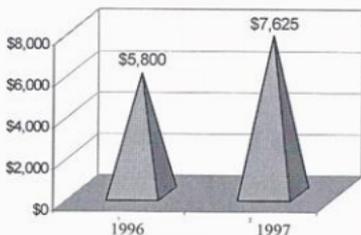
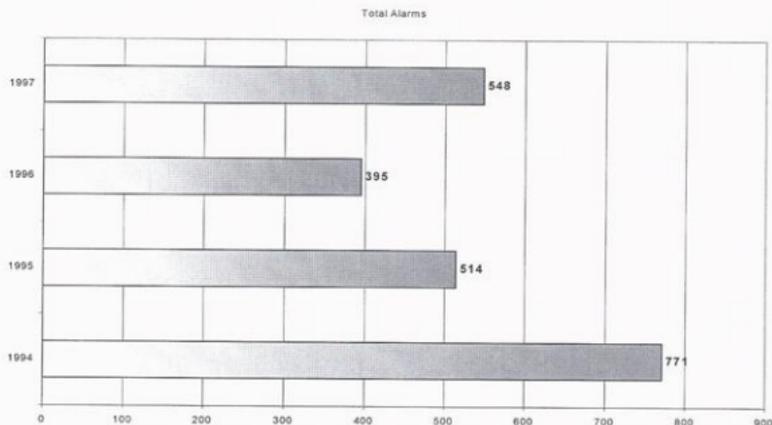
FINGERPRINTING SERVICES:

Each year there are a number of persons that contact the police department with a request that their fingerprints be taken. The Administrative Sergeant provides this function, by appointment, for a small fee. During 1997, fingerprints were taken on **35** persons. Due to the inconvenience and time consumption of this service, it is only provided to Merriam residents or those connected to Merriam businesses.

ALARM ORDINANCE MANAGEMENT:

1997 was the second full year of the Alarm Ordinance. Last year there were **395** alarms that the police and fire departments were called to. In 1997, this had grown to **548**, or a **14%** increase. There were more alarm locations registered in 1997, which is the primary reason for the increase in alarms. Alarm ordinance fines for 1997 totalled **\$7,625**. Of the 548 alarms, **458** were police related alarms. The rest were fire department or medical action alarms.

The top ten false alarm locations were: Shawnee Mission Medical Center, Taco Bell, Charter Funeral Home, Rio Bravo Cantina, Lucent Technologies, IBT, Coca-Cola, Georgetown Apartments, Checkers and Eveland Brothers Body Shop.



ANIMAL CONTROL



The function of animal control has been a responsibility for the Merriam Police Department for many years. 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 technical job requiring special skills. Our current ACO has over 18 years of municipal animal control experience.



was continued through 1997, although the number of animal impounds was down from the year before.

Animal control investigations have begun to climb since 1996 with more calls received concerning wild animal problems. New live capture traps were purchased and put to good use handling these calls.

1997 ACO ACTIVITY SUMMARY:

During 1997 the Animal Control Officer (ACO) handled **1,319** requests for service from Merriam citizens. In addition to this, police officers handled an additional **242** animal calls while the ACO was not available, representing a 32% increase over 1996. The total number of animal related calls in 1997 were **1,561**.

In 1997 the Animal Control Officer spent the majority of his time patrolling the city looking for animal problems and violations. He has also assisted the department with other non-animal control duties such as filling-in as school crossing guard and working in the police department's front office.

The emphasis of routine patrol for stray animals

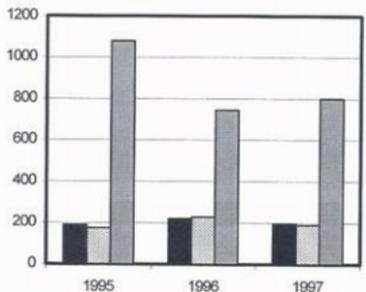
During the summer months of 1997, the Animal Control Officer was assigned to work two weekend days per month to patrol the city parks and neighborhoods for leash law violations. The times worked were varied from mornings to afternoons to maximize effectiveness in patrol.

ORDINANCE UPDATE IN 1998:

The Animal Control Officer has been working on updating the city ordinances that affect his duties. The ordinances have not been revised to any degree for several years. With the anticipated opening of a large pet food supply business, it is important that our ordinances be up-to-date. Copies of a number of area cities' ordinances are being reviewed and a draft is expected to be given to the City Council to consider during the first half of 1998.



Activity Totals	1995	1996	1997
Service Requests	1046	1336	1319
Enforcement Actions	192	220	197
Animal Impounds	174	228	189
Investigations	1079	744	801
Reports Written	640	735	669
Patrol Miles Driven	6042	9013	9057



■ Enforcement Actions □ Animal Impounds ▨ Investigations

DARE PROGRAM



The DARE Program is in its 8th 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. In full uniform, he conducts a series of structured classes 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.

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.

1997 DARE ACTIVITY SUMMARY

In 1997 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 1997 we received more than **\$3,000** from private donations, Parent Teacher Associations and other Merriam businesses.

In 1997, during the school year, Officer Birt made weekly visits to more than **60** classrooms, kindergarten through sixth grade. He gave classes to more than **1,200** 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 March the police department hosted a skating party for DARE graduates at Skateworld in Merriam. Over **140** graduates were in attendance. The evening was offered to the students to reward them for their hard work in completing the DARE course.

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** fifth and sixth grade Merriam students. The second was a special week-long clinic targeted for at-risk Merriam children from the fifth and sixth grades. During this clinic the children were taken on several field trips in the Kansas City Area. Locations included a short introduction to golf at Blue River Golf Course, visits to the Merriam Community Center, Deanna Rose Farmstead, NCAA Visitors Center, KC Zoo, Ernie Miller Nature Park, KC Museum and Science Center and Worlds of Fun. Officer Birt was assisted in this clinic by teachers who volunteered one day to help. The objectives of summer clinics are listed below:

- To provide a structured environment for at-risk

children during a portion of the summer.

- Develop new skills and interests.
- 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.

Forty children were involved in these clinics. The police department also received much appreciated assistance from the Merriam Community Center Staff, the Sertoma Club and the Merriam Optimist Club.

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 1997, Officer Birt attended meetings of local DARE Officers and with educators within the Shawnee Mission School District. He also participated in the 1997 Kansas DARE Officers Association Conference which was held in Lawrence, Kansas.

KANSAS DARE OFFICERS ASSOC.

At the conference in August, Officer Birt was elected as President of the Kansas DARE Officers Association.

In addition to the normal duties of president of an organization with a membership of about 250, Officer Birt is responsible for scheduling, planning and

running the next state conference, with an operating budget of approximately \$25,000. To help offset some of the expenses, he has applied for and received a grant for next year's conference from the Attorney General in the amount of \$10,500.

The conference for 1998 is scheduled for August 4-7 in Olathe. More than 100 DARE officers will be in attendance, where they will receive 15 hours of in-service training specifically related to DARE. During 1996, Officer Birt also attended the National DARE Conference held in St Louis, MO.

Officer Birt has done an excellent job in representing the City of Merriam in this position.

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.

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 4th 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 program provided a greater incentive for students, which translated to a more effective learning experience. This program is expected to continue in 1998, depending on the generosity of the Shawnee Mission Medical Center Foundation.



1997 Winning DARE Essays and Poems

DARE

Growing up in today's world as a young person is not easy. We're faced with many challenges. We live in a world with drugs and violence on our streets, in our neighborhoods, in our schools and even in our homes. We, as young people, live in fear of peer pressure, street gangs, drugs, weapons and violence.

The DARE program is very helpful in teaching young people about the different drugs and the effects they can have on our lives. Drugs today are easily available to us in many ways. There are drug dealers on the street who can make a lot of money by selling illegal drugs to people like you and me. Another source is buying them from a drug store as an over-the-counter medicine, such as sleeping pills and caffeine pills.

(Continued on page 24)

We all want to fit in and belong, but we need to be smart and don't fall in the trap of taking drugs and hurting others and ourselves physically and emotionally.

Our generation can make a difference and stop this cycle of drugs and violence among us by avoiding the temptations and remembering to say NO! The choices we make will affect our lives as young adults in the future.

I hope that the DARE program continues to educate our society for years to come. My hope is that this world becomes a safer place to live in.

By: Jeff Parker
West Antioch School

DARE Our World

Imagine, if you will, a world full of drugs and violence. It shouldn't be too hard. I realized after taking DARE that our world is full of bad things like that. I didn't know that there were so many kids using drugs. A recent poll shows that twenty-three percent of kids in grades four through six have been offered drugs before.

But why? What would cause someone so young to do something so dangerous? Maybe they don't stop and think how much damage they're doing every time they take sniff, or take a puff, or even take a sip. Maybe they don't stop and think or maybe they were never taught what effects drugs can have on you. Instead their friends tell them it's good so they should try it, and they do. They might like it, so they do it again, and again, until they're hooked. Drugs can affect the way you think. That might be the reason kids don't realize the damage they're doing to themselves.

It's very important to know to protect yourself from drugs and violence. If you stay away from drugs, you have a better chance to succeed in school and succeed in life. Living without violence is good because it will keep you out of trouble.

If you do happen to get in trouble, DARE teaches you ways to solve your problems. DARE teaches you ways to say no and what to do when you get in a bad situation.

I think the DARE program is good because it's fun and it teaches us to resist drugs and violence. I think if every kid took DARE, we might not have so many crimes and kids using drugs. But who knows? Maybe we should try.

By: Sarah Duran
South Park School

I D.A.R.E. YOU

I DARE you!!

DARE me??

Yeah, DARE you!

What? I don't know what you are talking about.

Sure you do. Come on with me and we can get high.

HIGH? Like how much can we jump—hey, I can stuff a 14-year-old in volleyball! Can you do that?

Yeah, let's go do some high stuff.

(Continued on page 25)

No, not that! HIGH!!! Aren't you cool?
I'm cool. And I don't need to prove that to you!
Hey, I'm just saying that everybody is doing it.
I don't think so, not my friends and not me.
Oh? How do they get HIGH?



Well we get HIGH on life and sports and music and things like that. Like my friends and I, we like to read and have fun together but we don't need to do THINGS like SMOKE, DRINK, or DO DRUGS to get HIGH! We are HIGH on each other and that's enough for us!

Oh, you are just way too weird... definitely not cool in my book.

That's okay. I don't think I need to be cool in anybody's book. I have to be me and not answer to anyone but me. I surely don't need to be puffing a cigarette to be cool or accepted. I think maybe you better look again. Maybe you are not the one who is cool. Maybe I am.

You? No way!

No way? Let me ask you some questions. What's your favorite hobby?

Hobby? Uh, I don't got no hobby. I'm too busy trying to get money so I can buy these cigarettes and have my beers.

Gee, that's too bad. I'm saving for my school and my future. Why would I waste it on stuff that is going to cut my future short?

Short? Oh, it doesn't do that!

Yes, it does. And I'm just not into that. I want a long life and I have made my choices now to be totally drug free. It is the only way I know to be able to really get HIGH on what is ahead in my life and be able to do it with a healthy body and mind. I have school and a career and my own family to look forward to.

Oh, go on. You are a loser!!!

No, I'm a winner because I DARE TO SAY NO and it is not that hard a thing to do. Now, I DARE you to say NO starting today, and find a lot of other things to get HIGH on. Like, I DARE you to stand me in a game of volleyball. Are we on? DARE you!

By: Colleen Mahoney
Crestview School

D.A.R.E. Essay

To me, DARE is a way to keep children from not only doing drugs, but teaching them how to have self confidence and how to set high and challenging goals for themselves. DARE has taught me that if I do any sort of drug I will deeply regret it and probably not have much of a chance in school, which will lead to not achieving in life itself.

DARE has also taught me to be assertive and how and when the appropriate times to say no are. It has taught me not to be fooled by television and radio ads by their untruthful slogans that try to get you to buy the product. Or, in the same way of speaking, lies by other peers saying that it will help you, when in the truth, it will only make your life much more dangerous, troublesome, and empty. So, the way I think of it, if they lie about something so severe, then they are no friend at all, besides the fact that they are trying to get you to do something that you don't want to do.

DARE has helped me and a many additional number of students that I know and have discussed with

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usually the people that don't pay any attention to the officers that try so hard to keep kids off of drugs. They usually end up being the ones that just try it and see that they really should have listened to that officer in grade school that taught them how to be safe. That is when they truly regret not listening and learning about what I have learned this past quarter or so. I personally believe that DARE has helped me realize what to do and what not to do. The word DARE stands for Drug Abuse Resistance Education, and to me, Officer Birt has done more than educated me about drugs, he has helped me make a very important decision that would have extremely affected my life in more ways than I want to imagine, and I thank him. Thank You.

By: Carley Mostar
Merriam School



During 1997, Superior Chevrolet donated a Chevrolet Lumina Van to the Merriam Police Department DARE Program. Officer Birt used this van to make school visits and attend DARE conferences. During the year, this van won an award for graphic design at the Kansas State DARE Officers Conference.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP



This is the fifth year that the Merriam Police Department has been involved in the transition towards Community Policing. This important philosophy has grown in acceptance in nearly every corner of the country.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY POLICING?

- *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 neighborhood 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; and*
- *Involving and empowering of police department employees at the lowest level of the department to problem solve.*

COMMUNITY POLICING EFFORTS:

The Community Policing philosophy is supported in every level of the police department. Each employee is trained so that they are familiar with this philosophy. Each employee is encouraged to look for ways that the department can improve its interaction with the public. This empowerment makes this department more effective.

In addition to the overall practice by employees, the Merriam Police Department engages in a number of specific efforts that promote and support the philosophy of Community Policing.

COMMUNITY INTERACTION:

During the year the department met with a number of citizen and business groups to facilitate communications and partnership.

Through the NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM, and the NATIONAL NIGHT OUT effort in August, citizens were educated on how to make their homes and neighborhoods safer. The department met with nine different neighborhoods during the year. These neighborhoods included:

- ◇ Sherwood Forrest
- ◇ West Vernon Place
- ◇ 50th Terrace and Farley
- ◇ Wellington Woods
- ◇ Vernon Place
- ◇ Switzer Meadows
- ◇ Sunflower Towers
- ◇ 56th Street and Perry Lane
- ◇ Overbook Hills



Through these efforts our department reached out to over 400 residents.

RIDE ALONG PROGRAM:

The police department offers a program where interested citizens can ride along with officers in an effort to bring citizens and officers closer together to bridge some of the communication gaps. This program is also used by a number of high school students as part of a school assignment and by those interested in entering the law enforcement field.

In 1997, 35 citizens were involved in the Ride Along Program.

FAX ALERT PROGRAM:

In 1996 the Merriam Police Department started a new program that increased communication with city businesses. When a crime trend is discovered that affects a certain group of businesses, the department sends a group information FAX to the businesses. In 1997 this program continued with success.

CRIME PREVENTION EFFORTS:

The department has one officer that is assigned to take care of crime prevention needs. Officer Larry Birt, the DARE Officer, is responsible for crime prevention requests.

SECURITY SURVEY PROGRAM -

Officer Birt is a Certified Crime Prevention Officer. During the year he has completed security surveys on homes and businesses in Merriam. This service is offered free of charge, by appointment.

HOUSE WATCH PROGRAM -

For several years the MPD has provided a house watch program for residents who are on vacation. If the resident completes the required house watch form, an officer will check their home each day while they are gone. This increases security for these vacant homes and it gives the residents peace of mind while they are gone, knowing that their property is being watched.

In 1997, there were **59** house watch requests in Merriam.

CRIME PREVENTION ARTICLES -

During the summer of 1997, Chief Ken Sissom began submitting crime prevention related articles to the Chamber of Commerce for their monthly newsletter -- *VANTAGE POINT*.

These articles feature information about the police department, tips to combat seasonal crime trends, information about new ordinances and general crime prevention tips. The articles are written for the business community of Merriam.

OTHER COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS:

JOB CLUB / DAY ON THE JOB -

For the past four years the MPD has been involved in two programs that work with high school students. This is in conjunction with the Merriam Chamber of Commerce, Shawnee Mission North and Northwest. In both programs high school students spend one to four days observing the activities of the police department. These are students that have an interest in law enforcement.

EXPLORER PROGRAM -

The MPD formed the Explorer Post four years ago. It is made up of young men and women that range

from 15 to 19 years of age. They are affiliated with the Boys Scouts of America.

The group meets twice per month to learn about police work. They are trained to complete certain functions that have assisted the police department. Each year they are very helpful during the Turkey Creek Festival with traffic direction and crowd control.

COMMUNITIES THAT CARE PROCESS -

During the Fall of 1997 the MPD, in conjunction with the Regional Prevention Center of Johnson County, sponsored a Town Hall Meeting to address community concerns regarding juvenile related crimes, alcohol and drug abuse.

The first public Town Hall Meeting was held on November 11th at City Hall. At this meeting approximately 60 persons attended to take a positive step to counteract the frustration caused by drug and alcohol abuse by our city's youth. The perceived problems facing Merriam were identified and the large group was broken into smaller groups to start talking about solutions.

Merriam is the first community in Johnson County to be involved in this organized process. The next meeting is scheduled for January 1998.