



City of Hampton

95-27

July 18, 1995

CHIEF OF POLICE  
PAT G. MINETTI

Mr. John Lusardi  
PERF  
1120 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 930  
Washington, D. C. 20037

Dear Mr. Lusardi:

On behalf of the Hampton Police Division, I submit this nomination for the third annual Herman Goldstein Excellence Award regarding our Police Actively Listening Project (PAL) and the role Officer Denise Hinnant played in its success.

The Hampton Police Division has been committed to community policing since the mid-seventies but like most cities, these efforts started in troubled neighborhoods and concentrated mainly on neighborhood concerns. However, in response to increasing concerns among merchants along Mercury Boulevard, the Hampton Police decided to expand our "community policing" philosophy to include the business community. This concept hoped to realize a partnership with the merchants to identify concerns and to jointly resolve these concerns.

In order to establish open communication between the business community and the police regarding their concerns, a police officer, Officer Denise Hinnant, was assigned to work with the businesses on problem solving issues and to expand on the community policing role. As a result, our project known as PAL was implemented. It was a comprehensive endeavor to meet the specific needs of the business corridor as identified by the project officer.

In closing, I am proud of the efforts of Officer Denise Hinnant in delivering quality services to our business merchants. These accomplishments are outlined in the accompanying documentation.

Sincerely,

P. G. Minetti  
Chief of Police



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE  
DIVISION OF POLICE  
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(804) 727-6510

## POLICE ACTIVELY LISTENING (PAL)

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Officer Denise Hinnant is nominated as a candidate for **The Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem-Solving Award** in recognition of her achievements during her assignment as the liaison officer for the PAL project.

Excluding the interstates, Mercury Boulevard is Hampton's heaviest traveled roadway. Highway surveys estimate that between 55,000 and 75,000 vehicles travel the street every day. This volume is primarily the result of the large concentration of businesses, shopping centers and malls that dominate this "corridor".

The Hampton Police Division has been committed to "Community Policing" and "Problem Solving" since the mid-seventies, but like most cities, these efforts started in troubled neighborhoods and concentrated on neighborhood concerns. As a result, our police response to the unique problems of a concentrated business community consisted of random patrols by the district officers and the dispatch of the available district units to handle reported problems. While the officers were doing a good job of responding to the particular problems, concerns were identified that since several different officers may have responded to a merchant's past calls, district officers were not always aware of patterns and trends. In July of 1994, in response to

increasing concerns among the merchants located along the Mercury Central Business Corridor, the Hampton Police Division decided to explore the possibility of expanding our "community policing" philosophy to include the business community. The concept was aimed at fostering a partnership with the merchants to identify concerns and to jointly seek solutions.

The plan involved forming a multi-agency approach to problem solving by assigning an officer from Evening Shift to act as a liaison between the merchants, the Police Division and the other city agencies. Evening Shift was selected because it represented the time frame for the largest volume of calls for service from the businesses. The officer would be responsible for working with the businesses to identify problems, order maintenance concerns, crime prevention needs and enforcement strategies.

Officer Hinnant was selected as the project's liaison and was given the preliminary task of preparing an operational plan outlining the problem, a project description with implementation strategies, and the identified goals and objectives. Throughout the planning stage Officer Hinnant was instrumental in the project's development. She suggested that the title of the effort should be the "PAL" project. (POLICE ACTIVELY LISTENING *to the needs of the business community.*)

The draft identified four project goals:

1. To Decrease Crime in the Target Area.
2. To Familiarize the Business Community with Crime Trends, Patterns and Reporting

Procedures.

3. To Assist the Staff in Development of the Most Effective Community Policing Model.
4. To Increase the Effectiveness of Criminal Investigations in the Mercury Business Corridor.

The operational plan was approved by Chief Minetti in September of 1994 and was introduced by him to the business community during a meeting of the merchants late in September. The response from the merchants was immediate and the "PAL PROJECT" became operational October 1, 1994.

Officer Hinnant immediately began contacting the merchants within the Mercury Corridor to complete an information survey of each business. Her drive and determination have produced a very positive response from the business community.

During the first five months of the "PAL PROJECT", Officer Hinnant established a working partnership that has empowered participating businesses to interact with the police directly to provide a safer, and thereby, a more prosperous business environment. Listed are several significant examples of Officer Hinnant's activities during the early stages of "PAL".

- When graffiti was identified as a concern by businesses near a local nightclub that catered to "punk rockers", Officer Hinnant contacted the vandalized businesses and made arrangements for the graffiti to be removed by workers from the Court's Community Diversions Incentives program. She also made the owners of the nightclub aware of the problem and enlisted their

aid in preventing future acts.

- Officer Hinnant scheduled training for local merchants about topics they identified as being a problem for them (shoplifting and check violations). She talked with the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office and arranged for a Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney to give the training.
- Our ability to share information was greatly enhanced when Officer Hinnant identified businesses with "FAX" capabilities and created a unique "FAX TREE" that enables the police to send timely information to the participating businesses. To date, she has included ninety-seven merchants in the network.
- The ability to identify repeat shoplifters has been enhanced with the assignment of a detective from our Investigative Services to the PAL project to coordinate with Officer Hinnant. As a result, a master file and photo file have been developed that have contributed to the identification and arrest of offenders whose identity had previously been unknown.

As the project nears the end of its first year, the goals are progressing on schedule and an evaluation of the project's impact is scheduled for completion in August of this year. The success of this project can be measured by the fact that other businesses throughout the city, and outside the Mercury Business Corridor, have asked and been included in the PAL FAX project. At this point in time, it seems clear that the partnerships that have been created through this project have resulted in a higher level of awareness and a safer business environment. The achievement of this

project was as a direct result of the efforts of Officer Hinnant coordinating a measure of interaction with the Police and business merchants. With her determination for success, it is clear that Officer Hinnant's accomplishments reflect the commitment and dedication that identifies today's professional police officer and represent exactly what the *Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem-Solving Award* was meant to recognize.