

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT



WILLIE L. WILLIAMS
Chief of Police

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July 20, 1995

Sergeant John Lusardi
Police Executive Research Forum
1120 Connecticut Avenue Northwest
Washington D.C. 20037

Dear Sergeant Lusardi:

I am pleased to nominate Police Officer Sol A. Lebus for the Herman Goldstein Excellence in Problem-Solving Award. Officer Lebus's efforts, outlined in the attached project had a significant impact on public safety, and saved lives. His project truly exemplifies the thorough application of the problem solving process to an ongoing problem. The Los Angeles Police Department is committed to encouraging our officers to work jointly with the community in developing responses to problems through the application of the SARA model.

If you have any questions regarding this nomination please feel free to contact Sergeant John Egan, Community Policing Group, at (213) 847-4882.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Willie L. Williams, for".

WILLIE L. WILLIAMS
Chief of Police

Enclosure



**SOL A. LEBUS
WEST TRAFFIC DIVISION
LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT**

EDUCATION:

1960 Oak Park High School
Oak Park, MI - Graduate

1961 U.S. Navy Recruit Basic Training
Great Lakes, IL - Graduate

1962 U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman School
Great Lakes, IL - Graduate

1968 Los Angeles Police Academy - Police Science
Los Angeles, CA - Graduate

WORK HISTORY:

1968 - Present Police Officer
City of Los Angeles

1964 - 1968 United Parcel Service - Driver
Detroit, MI

1960 - 1964 U.S. Navy: Hospital Corpsman
Secondary Classification: Loadmaster
for c-118 and C-130 Aircraft

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1979 - Present West Traffic Division, Two-wheel Motorcycle
Enforcement.

Officer Lebus is currently assigned to the Community Traffic Service Unit (CTSU) and has worked the CTSU since 1984. He investigates traffic related complaints from homeowners associations, individual citizens and the City of Los Angeles City Councilperson for the West Los Angeles Area. He serves as a liaison between those persons and other City of Los Angeles Departments. Prior to assignment with the CTSU, he was assigned as a training officer for new motorcycle officers, instructing them in safe riding techniques and providing training for the proper investigation and reporting of traffic collisions.

1972 - 1979 Los Angeles Police Department - West
Los Angeles Division, Two-wheel Motorcycle -
Traffic Enforcement

Uniform.patrol - investigation/reporting
traffic collisions.

1971 -1972 Los Angeles Police Department, Traffic
Enforcement Division, Two-wheel Motorcycle -
Traffic Enforcement

Uniform Patrol - D.U.I, patrol

1968 - 1971 Los Angeles Police Department
University Division - Uniform Patrol

Field Training Officer - PHI

Crime Prevention through Uniform Patrol

**HERMAN GOLDSTEIN EXCELLENCE IN PROBLEM SOLVING
AWARD NOMINATION**

The Problem

During late 1994 and early 1995, West Traffic Division, of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), made a concerted effort to address a long standing traffic problem on Sunset Boulevard, east of the San Diego Freeway adjacent to the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) campus, to the Beverly Hills City limit. Police Officer Sol A. Lebus was assigned to coordinate LAPD's efforts at addressing this problem. This winding section of Sunset Boulevard has been a problem area for several years due to excessive speeds, off-camber curves and visibility problems. In the early 1960s, a hit song, "Deadman's Curve," was written about this hazardous stretch of roadway. Sunset Boulevard is a major traffic thoroughfare connecting the beach in Pacific Palisades with Beverly Hills, Hollywood, and Downtown Los Angeles. It consists of four lanes of traffic, two in each direction, separated by a single set of double yellow lines. There are no sidewalks, parking lanes, or center median for most of its length. Several single family private residences have driveways abutting Sunset Boulevard on curves or at acute angles, thus further reducing visibility. In several places foliage extends to the curb lane forcing pedestrians to walk in the roadway. The street is typified by grades ranging from zero to eight percent, with numerous turns, and ranges in width from 45 feet to 84 feet. Several of these factors are not readily apparent to the drivers and contribute to many of the traffic problems.

Information on the Problem

A review of statistical information revealed there had been a marked increase in the number of fatal traffic collisions as well as total collisions. In the four year period from 1991 through 1994, 184 injury traffic collisions occurred; seven resulting in serious injuries, and nine in fatalities costing 13 lives. Statistics show 1991 had 32 total traffic collisions with two fatalities and one major injury. In 1992 there were 81 total traffic collisions with no fatalities and three major injuries. In 1993 there were 60 total traffic collisions with one fatality and one major injury. In 1994 statistics showed a marked increase with 111 total traffic collisions, ten fatalities, and two major injuries. From the statistics, Officer Lebus observed that most of the traffic collisions were caused by excessive speed or crossing to the opposite side of roadway causing head-on collisions. What the statistical information did not identify were the causal effects such as shrubbery, lack of parking lanes or turnouts, roadway engineering deficiencies, and minimal lane separation for opposing traffic.

Who Was Affected and How?

Traffic collisions create a problem for all the people who travel Sunset Boulevard, as this is a main thoroughfare from downtown

Los Angeles to the Pacific Ocean. There were long delays as the traffic collisions were cleared and/or police investigations continued, sometimes causing the traffic in both directions to be diverted onto residential side streets. The main community force behind finding a solution to the problem were the residents of Bel-Air, through which this section of Sunset Boulevard passes. The numerous traffic accidents, combined with the related traffic congestion problems, were a constant problem for the residents of Bel-Air. Although not usually the victims of the traffic accidents, the residents were faced with a greater potential of being an innocent victim of the errant driving of commuter or transient traffic violators who were unfamiliar with the roadway.

Past Efforts to Address the Problem

In the past, the traditional approach of addressing traffic problems through increased traffic enforcement and visibility of motorcycle officers, focusing primarily on speed violations, was used. The deployment of an increased number of officers had the short term effect of reducing traffic accidents; however, when the officers were reassigned to other areas, the problem resurfaced.

The Goal

The goal of this project was to reduce the total number of fatal and/or injury collisions along this section of Sunset Boulevard. It was recognized that many of the contributing factors may remain present for quite some time and a long term permanent solution is years away. Such items as the regrading of Sunset Boulevard to remove the off-camber turns will have to wait until the next resurfacing of the roadway. Since the City of Los Angeles has increased the repaving of City streets to once every 60 years, Sunset Boulevard will not be repaved for several years. Additionally, due to its worldwide reputation, stopping all speeding on Sunset Boulevard will never be possible.

Strategies to Address the Problem

Officer Lebus along with Captain Mark Leap, Commanding Officer, West Traffic Division, met with the Bel-Air Homeowners Association, Beverly Glen Homeowners Association, and Roscomare Road Homeowners Association in an attempt to develop new strategies to control the traffic problems. Serving as liaisons with other City departments and the state of California, Officer Lebus and Captain Leap brought the homeowner groups together with representatives from the City of Los Angeles, Department of Transportation, Bureau of Engineering, and UCLA to discuss the communities concerns.

Officer Lebus met separately with representatives from the City of Los Angeles, Department of Transportation. These meetings resulted in new plastic reflective pylons being installed in the center of the roadway at problem locations to warn drivers that they are crossing over into opposing traffic lanes. Large reflective warning "chevron" signs have been installed at the curves and 18 new speed limit signs have been posted. Three new "speed checked by radar" signs were posted for eastbound traffic and one new sign posted for westbound traffic. Limit lines on intersecting streets have been repainted; missing Botts Dots (raised lane delineators) in the roadway have been replaced; and trees and bushes have been trimmed as needed for better visibility.

As a result of a meeting with the staff of the City of Los Angeles' Bureau of Engineering, a turnout for disabled vehicles was recommended. The turnout will be placed on property belonging to UCLA. Officer Lebus worked to bring the Bureau of Engineering together with the staff of UCLA to incorporate the planned turnout into the plans for roadway improvements being made by UCLA on the campus. The turnout will enable disabled vehicles to be pushed off the roadway, as there is no parking anywhere along Sunset Boulevard. This will minimize the traffic delays that are currently experienced. The turnout will be completed in late 1995.

The engineers also submitted plans under the City of Los Angeles' Capital Improvement Project to regrade Sunset Boulevard at the off-camber curves. This should be started within five years.

Working with other members of West Traffic Division, Officer Lebus functioned as the "point man" in the enforcement efforts of the division. By coordinating the efforts of West Traffic Division's Traffic Task Force, and utilizing problem focused cash overtime, over 1,100 traffic citations have been written. This enforcement effort was focused at both citing and educating violators about the dangers of speeding on Sunset Boulevard. An added deterrent was the placement of a "decoy car," with a mannequin inside, at strategic locations along Sunset Boulevard. The use of this vehicle has had a strong deterrent effect, without tying up valuable human resources. Officer Lebus also included the local patrol division in the coordinated effort toward resolving the traffic problem.

Was the Goal Accomplished?

Although traffic divisions are not normally considered responsible for identifying and resolving citizen's traffic problems, West Traffic Division is committed to the concepts of Community Policing. Based upon that commitment, West Traffic Division has established a Community Traffic Safety Unit to

identify and assist in solving traffic problems. Officer Lebus is a member of that unit and this incident is just one of a number of problems the unit is working with the community to resolve. The above improvements are having a major impact on the traffic problem on Sunset Boulevard. The statistics from January 1, 1995 through May 31, 1995 show only nine traffic collisions with no fatal and only one major injury. This represents approximately a 75 percent reduction in traffic collisions from 1994. The goal of reducing the total number of fatal and/or injury traffic collisions was accomplished through the joint efforts of the homeowner groups, Department of Transportation, Bureau of Engineering, West Los Angeles Division and West Traffic Division personnel. The conditions which led to the dramatic increase in traffic collisions on Sunset Boulevard have not been fully removed and an ongoing program of monitoring and modifying the Department's response to this traffic problem is in place. The continued efforts of Officer Lebus will lead to the modification of road conditions and will provide a safer place for those who live in and visit Los Angeles to drive.