

## 1997 HERMAN GOLDSTEIN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING

### PROJECT ABSTRACT

#### *Combined Accident Reduction Enforcement*

From November 1996 to March 1997, the Department of Public Safety, Highway Patrol District Six, teamed up in a joint traffic accident reduction effort with the Casa Grande Police Department. The focus of our combined efforts was a stretch of State Route 287 located within the city limits of Casa Grande.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

#### Scanning

This stretch of highway had been the scene of 10 fatalities during the prior year including six teenagers.

The information needed to set up the project came from a variety of sources. These included the media, local citizen groups, official statistical records, police officers, and local businesses. The date selected was important because many of the local citizens believed that much of the problem was caused by the many winter visitors we have in the area. This proved to be a false assumption.

#### Analysis

In looking at statistical data, we knew that the majority of the accidents and traffic volume occurred between 0600 hours and 2200 hours. Prior to this project, the area was patrolled by Casa Grande Police Department officers on an "as they can" basis. An occasional Highway Patrol officer would pass through the area en route to the interstate.

Studying the data and the area, we found that there was a 1-1/2 mile stretch of highway that was a 45 mile per hour zone. This stretch was situated in a gap between the developed area of the city and the Interstate. People were forgetting they were in a populous area and far exceeded the speed limit. They would then suddenly come upon congested traffic, thus causing frequent accidents.

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### **Response**

The project was titled *Combined Accident Reduction Enforcement* and consisted of the following action being taken by both the Department of Public Safety and Casa Grande Police Department.

1. Combined patrol of the area by both DPS and Casa Grande Police from 0600-2200 hours. Both marked and unmarked vehicles were used. The patrols initially ran seven days a week, adjusted for the weekend traffic flow, and then were gradually reduced as compliance was obtained.
2. Aggressive use was made of the local media. The local newspaper printed several articles and letters regarding the project. The local cable channel broadcasted bulletins as well as having their personnel ride with officers and film stops. Weekly information was given to the media on the activity generated.
3. Business owners along the highway were contacted by officers to solicit support from their employees and arrange for safety talks when possible.
4. Both the City Court and the Justice Court judges were consulted and used to further educate the motoring public.
5. The Arizona Department of Transportation was asked to study the current speed limit, lane markings and signs, offer any suggestions and make any necessary changes.
6. A Speed Measuring and Recording Trailer (SMART) was used to advise motorists what their speed was and record the number of vehicles and speeds during different times of the day.

### **Assessment**

Part of our effort required our officers to fill out a daily log of activity for this detail. One of the items we captured was the ratio of violators who were local residents to the number of out of town visitors. The overwhelming majority were local residents.

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As a result of the combined effort, only one minor accident was reported on this stretch of highway during the program length. We occasionally now work a unit for a few hours on the stretch which seems to have the desired effect of slowing traffic and getting compliance. Support from the public has been overwhelmingly in favor of the program.

The only problems that we encountered were the overall lack of adequate manpower from both agencies. Both had to adjust to dedicating an officer full time out there. We have found, however, that neither agency is responding to the number of calls there now as before.

**Agency and Officer Information**

1. This initiative was adopted at the district level.
2. The district commander had received some training in Problem Oriented Policing prior to the project.
3. No additional incentives have been given to officers involved.
4. None
5. None
6. Nothing went beyond the current budget. Individual patrol assignments were moved.
7. Project Contact Person:  
  
Roger L. Vanderpool  
Lieutenant/District Commander  
410 West Centennial Road  
Casa Grande, Arizona 85222  
520-836-1057  
520-836-9594
8. Project Coordinator  
  
Brian Wilcox  
Sergeant/Area Two Supervisor