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SUMMARY

Scanning

The Traffic Safety Outreach to the African American Community (TSOAAC) project was developed upon review of a recently published report from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) entitled, *Blue Ribbon Panel to Increase Seat Belt Use Among African Americans – A Report to the Nation*. The report presented alarming information regarding the over-representation of African Americans in injury and fatal traffic collisions. Within the report, motor vehicle collisions were presented as the leading cause of death for African American Children through age 14 and the second leading killer of young African American Adults ages 15-24. The lack of seat belt restraints and child safety seats were listed as the primary reasons for injuries and fatalities.

Analysis

To facilitate the development of an effective information campaign, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) solicited participation from community members throughout California. Advisory groups were established to work with the CHP to develop strategies that included creating information advisories, purchasing media air time, conducting child safety seat clinics, and distributing printed and promotional items.

Response

The CHP's primary mission is to provide the highest level of safety, service, and security to the people of California. To achieve this objective, the CHP has initiated numerous projects that are designed to enhance traffic safety. One such project, the TSOAAC, was implemented as a means to nurture relationships and create partnerships by working together to enhance safety within the African American communities of California.

Assessment

To date, the TSOAAC has successfully developed partnerships between CHP and African American communities throughout the state. Advisory groups were established which now meet with the CHP regularly to address mutual concerns regarding traffic safety. As statistics have shown in the *Blue Ribbon Panel* report, the lack of use of seat belt restraints and improper use of or lack of child safety seats were listed as the primary reasons for injuries and fatalities. By implementing a media effort for safety and awareness, other state and governmental entities worldwide can establish a permanent and meaningful dialogue throughout African American communities. This dialogue will enhance the effectiveness of traffic safety programs within that community and it will assist in developing

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community-appropriate traffic safety messages through the fostering of close working relationships at all levels.

SCANNING

Considering the continuing increase in the number of vehicles on California roadways and the increasing number of miles driven each year, California enjoys a remarkably low mileage death rate. Mileage Death Rate (MDR) is considered the primary statistical indicator of relative roadway safety. From 1989 to 1998, the MDR within California fell from 2.1 deaths per 100 million miles of travel to an all-time low of 1.19, a decline of over 43 percent. In 1999, the MDR remained at 1.19. In 2000, however, the MDR took a slight upturn to 1.22 and in 2001, the MDR was 1.25.

Two common elements in a large portion of fatal collisions are unrestrained passengers and the use of alcohol. Over half of all fatal collisions involve someone who was not properly utilizing their occupant restraint system and about one-third of all fatal collisions involve alcohol. Unrestrained passengers in motor vehicle collisions face an elevated risk of sustaining fatal injuries, and driving after consuming alcohol lowers a driver's ability to safely operate their vehicle.

A goal of the CHP is to reduce the number of traffic collisions. The recent trend in the MDR caused the Department to look closely at its various traffic safety programs to determine where additional efforts could be placed to improve traffic safety. Among the

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results was a surprising discovery: an apparent lack of traffic safety program effectiveness in the African American community. This information came to light, in

part, upon review of a recently published report from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

The report entitled, *The Blue Ribbon Panel to Increase Seat Belt Use Among African Americans – A Report to the Nation* was published in October 2000. The report was completed subsequent to a study facilitated by Meharry Medical College at the request of U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Rodney Slater.

According to the report, seat belt use among African Americans is lower than the national average. African Americans are more likely to be killed in motor vehicle collisions than Caucasian Americans, and African American youths are 50 percent less likely to use seat belts than Caucasian or Hispanic Americans. The study also concluded that 100 percent seat belt use nationally by African Americans could save as many as 1,300 lives per year and prevent 26,000 injuries, at a cost savings of nearly \$2.6 billion.

While it appears on a national level that African Americans are over-represented in fatal collisions and are not wearing seat belts proportionate to the general population, it cannot conclusively be stated that this phenomenon is occurring in California. Seat belt surveys

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conducted by the CHP did not collect the ethnicity of the driver until 1999. But, available statistics and anecdotal information for California do support an overall cause for concern.

For instance:

- African Americans account for 6.7 percent of California's total population.¹
- During the year 2000 in California, African Americans accounted for 8.1 percent of the total arrests for felony driving under the influence and 6.7 percent of the total arrests for misdemeanor driving under the influence.²
- California statistics indicate that in 1999, 191 African Americans died in traffic collisions. In 2000, the number rose to 198.³ This equates to an increase of 3.7 percent.
- Statistics from the California Department of Health Services indicate that motor vehicles continue to be a leading cause of death for African Americans. This includes any death associated with a motor vehicle, e.g., pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.



¹ 2000 US Census

² *Adult and Juvenile Arrests Reported, 2000; Race/Ethnic Group by Specific Offense*. California Department of Justice.

³ *Fatality Analysis Reporting System*, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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ANALYSIS

One of the fundamental components of the CHP's Community Outreach and Marketing Section (COMS) is building long-term partnerships and collaborations with traditional and non-traditional entities to improve the overall traffic safety environment. These partnerships work in unison to identify and resolve traffic safety problems impacting quality of life.

COMS is based on the collective involvement of the CHP, residents, local businesses, media, government officials, and elected officials in a cooperative partnership to increase the level of awareness of traffic safety problems, and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the CHP's efforts to reduce traffic collisions and traffic complaints.

Utilizing the "COMS" approach, community members are invited to participate on advisory panels to address the common goal of improving public safety and the quality of life within the African American community. Advisory panels then partner with the CHP

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to commit available resources, experiences, and talents necessary to create the changes that will positively impact the community.

The CHP has a successful tradition of working with governmental agencies, community groups, private businesses, and public organizations to accomplish goals and to promote traffic safety. Examples of the CHP's involvement in community outreach include

working with local allied agencies to curb escalating crime rates, developing partnerships with public and non-profit agencies to discourage underage drinking, meeting with community residents to resolve local traffic complaints, and teaming with private businesses to promote responsible alcohol consumption.

By working with various agencies and groups with similar interest, traffic safety efforts result in more long term voluntary compliance with traffic safety regulations and are more effective, efficient, and economical. Nurturing community involvement, participation, and partnerships at the Area level decreases traffic collisions and incidents. It also provides the public with an opportunity to be part of the CHP team, thereby increasing understanding and support for departmental operations and programs.

Interaction with community groups is viewed as an invaluable, positive resource with unlimited potential. The team spirit and synergy created by the partnership between the

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CHP and the African American community promotes increased communication, more efficient and effective traffic safety programs, and a greater understanding of issues creating barriers to partnership.

To accomplish the goal of creating partnerships, Area commanders are encouraged to integrate community involvement with CHP strategies for improving service. Functions such as, town hall meetings, city council meetings, county Board of Supervisors

meetings, homeowner association meetings, community functions, and education facilities, provide opportunities for the CHP to identify stakeholders and develop alliances for responding to issues or concerns within their area of responsibility.

Community service surveys are also provided at each CHP Area command to assist commanders in the identification of traffic issues and assess the quality of service provided locally by the CHP.

In partnership, the capability and capacity to impact traffic safety increases significantly. Partnerships involving the CHP, residents, business owners, allied agencies, and other governmental agencies can decrease the MDR more than this Department could do alone.

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RESPONSE

When confronted with a traffic safety problem, the CHP conducts an initial assessment then enlists the assistance of community members and stakeholders to address the issue. Specialized task forces are formed from these groups to provide analysis and develop a strategy for resolving or mitigating the problem. Problem solving is built on the systematic review and analysis of data to determine who or what is causing the problem, where and why the problem is occurring, and how to best utilize the combined resources of the Department and the community to resolve the problem.

Historically, the Department has utilized a three-prong approach to solve traffic-related problems and incidents. These applications are enforcement, education, and engineering. Each application can be used proactively to impact potential problems. The main focus of

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engineering is to design, construct, and maintain functional and efficient transportation networks which do not contribute to or promote traffic collisions. Education is proactive and preventative by increasing the knowledge base and awareness level of users of the highway transportation network. Finally, enforcement is both proactive and reactive.

In-view patrol promotes compliance with established traffic safety laws and discourages violations. Moreover, citing motorists and pedestrians for a violation of law is reactive to their non-compliance.

Problem solving requires judgment, communication skills, imagination, and the ability to consider variables as they are related to the particular problem in order to develop short

and long term solutions to recurring problems. Problem solving includes proactive problem identification from all stake holders, detailed analysis, team building and consensus reaching, innovative and comprehensive solution development and task sharing, and fault-free assessment to determine the effectiveness of the implemented solutions, and provide a platform for even greater efficiency.

To address this serious problem, the CHP requested assistance from African American communities throughout California to help develop an information campaign that focuses on improving traffic safety. The CHP also submitted a grant request to the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) to fund the outreach effort.

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From this combined effort, the CHP, OTS, and community members developed and implemented a multi-faceted traffic safety education and awareness program specifically designed to influence driving behaviors within the African American community statewide. Elements of this program include efforts to reduce the incidence of driving under the influence, and improve compliance with California's safety belt and child safety seat laws.

The following are a result of the objectives set for the project:

- The CHP conducted five regional symposiums throughout the state to raise awareness and solicit assistance to create a media campaign that addresses the traffic safety issue within African American communities.
- The CHP conducted one statewide symposium to present the proposed media campaign developed by the contracted media agency using the ideas submitted by community leaders during regional symposiums.
- A media campaign was implemented during 2004, which focused on the traffic safety concerns presented by the Blue Ribbon report.
- A total of 64 child safety seat clinics/checkups were conducted throughout the state focusing on African American communities.
- The CHP distributed 2,173 child safety seats and provided training on proper installation and use of the seats.
- Post-campaign research will be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the marketing strategies used in the public awareness campaign.

The greatest challenge for this program, in today's environment, is the community's concern about racial profiling. The CHP recognized that the program concept must include a strategy that dealt with relational history between law enforcement and the African American community. In an attempt to address that sensitivity, the outreach grant did not

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contain any enforcement component. The grant was educationally based with funds available to purchase child passenger safety seats.



ASSESSMENT

The TSOAAC program ended as planned on September 30, 2004. Results were excellent. The project goal to develop and conduct a comprehensive traffic safety education outreach program in cooperation with California's African American community was accomplished. Analysis of post-campaign research confirmed the media campaign's effectiveness. The state's African American community also welcomed the outreach efforts as indicated by the very favorable attendee response at the symposiums and child safety seat clinics.

Use of both regional and statewide symposiums proved extremely effective in securing African American community support for the project. The cooperative environment at the

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symposiums greatly contributed to the development of an effective media campaign specifically tailored to the community's needs. The campaign was well implemented and highly visible, which led to the involvement of the American Automobile Association (AAA). AAA volunteered to provide an additional 204 billboards at no cost to the project. Post-campaign research conducted by California State University, Sacramento, indicated that the project's traffic safety messages effectively reached the target audience and awareness levels were high.

To measure the success of this project, the CHP used quarterly reports to ensure planned project activities were effectively implemented. Using the data compiled during each element of the project, the project manager evaluated: (1) how well the stated project

goals and objectives were accomplished; (2) whether all the activities outlined in the method of procedure were performed in accordance with the project agreement; and (3) the project's cost effectiveness. Additionally, statistical information about the focused safety issues was collected from reportable traffic collisions that occurred between December 31, 2003, and June 30, 2004, from the California Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) and then used to evaluate the project's impact.

In 2004, the CHP received a \$50,000 grant from OTS to continue the effort of enhancing traffic safety in the African American community. Under the Alcohol Involved Collision Reduction Efforts Grant, the CHP focuses on Driving Under the Influence (DUI) education

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for the African American community through various means such as media, safety presentations, and community partnerships. The CHP anticipates continuing this campaign through 2005 as well.

According to the Crossover Creative Group (CCG) Final Report, the media campaign was effective overall. Among the target audiences, awareness of the three traffic safety messages was high: 27.6 percent (DUI), 35.0 percent (seat belts), and 20.7 percent (child safety seats). There was an increase of 6.0 percent in actual seat belt usage. Of those hearing the advertisements, 39.9 percent reported using seat belts more often as a result. 30.4 percent of survey respondents reported using child safety seats more often as a result of the media campaign.

The CHP is committed to the community oriented policing concept as a management philosophy. Various programs, as well as day-to-day operations, are coordinated utilizing the community outreach approach. Numerous challenges have been addressed and resolved with the implemented strategy of proactive problem solving and community partnerships.

During the implementation of this community outreach project, the CHP strengthened alliances with community members, business owners, service groups, allied law enforcement agencies, and other emergency response personnel to address a common goal

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of improving traffic safety. The project presented a platform for the CHP to create a partnership and a mutual acceptance of the responsibility to improve traffic safety conditions within California's African American community.

Through the implementation and administration of the TSOAAC program, the CHP developed a wealth of knowledge on the importance and necessity of an effective community-policing philosophy. The CHP's TSOAAC program became a model community-policing program that was designed to aid in problem solving and to address the needs of the African American community. While there were many lessons learned during the growth of the TSOAAC program, perhaps the most important lesson learned was the need to build upon the program's successes and to continually evolve as the needs of the community changed.



AGENCY AND OFFICER INFORMATION

1. The TSOAAC was adopted by the entire department.
2. CHP management and staff received no specialized training in problem-oriented policing prior to becoming involved with the TSOAAC. Personnel involved with the TSOAAC are primarily uniformed officers; however, non-uniformed researchers and analysts are available for consultation and assistance, as needed.

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3. Other than the satisfaction of increasing communications with the African American community, no special incentives were offered to officers involved with the TSOACC.
4. The 'El Protector' Program is a community outreach program geared towards the Hispanic community. The 'El Protector Program' has been in existence since 1987, and has served as a guideline to the TSOACC.
5. The greatest challenge for this program, in today's environment, is the community's concern about racial profiling. The CHP recognized that the program concept must include a strategy that dealt with relational history between law enforcement and the African American community. In an attempt to address that sensitivity, the outreach grant did not contain any enforcement component. The grant was educationally based with funds available to purchase child passenger safety seats.
6. The TSOAAC is coordinated by personnel in the CHP's Community Outreach and Marketing Section (COMS), a section of the Planning and Analysis Division.
7. Initially the CHP received a \$2,000,000.00 grant from the OTS and the NHTSA. This grant was effective April 1, 2002 and continued through September 30, 2004. In 2004 the CHP received an additional \$50,000 grant from the OTS to continue the TSOAAC.

8. Project contact information:

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