

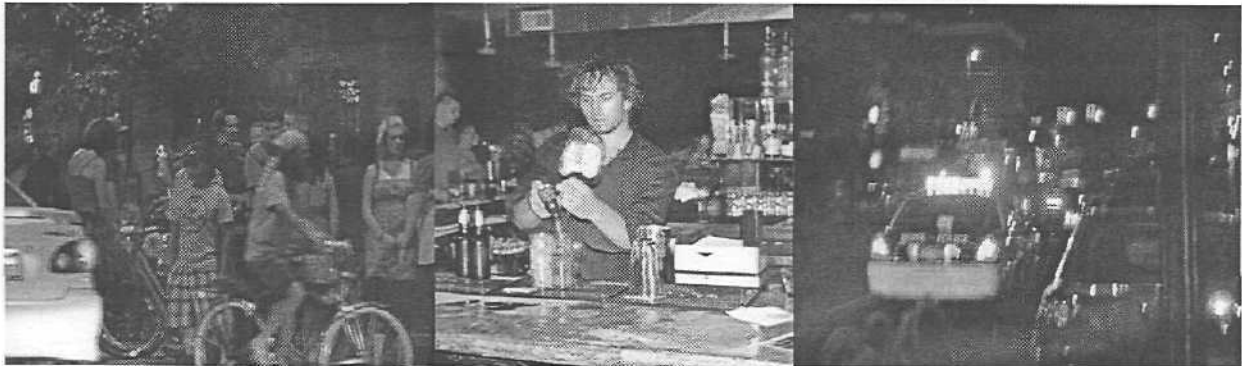


To Protect and to Serve

Boise Police Department

A Multi-Disciplinary, Collaborative Approach to
Policing Boise's Downtown
Entertainment District

Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem Oriented Policing,
2008





Boise Police Department

May 29, 2008

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Robert Guerette
School of Policy and Management
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11200 S.W. 8th Street
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Dear Mr. Guerette:

It is my pleasure to submit the Boise Police Department's Multi-Disciplinary, Collaborative Approach to Policing Boise's Downtown Entertainment District for consideration for the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem Oriented Policing. The project has been a terrific success in Boise. It reflects a community-based approach for problem identification, solution assessment, and sustainable results.

Boise is Idaho's Capital City with a vibrant, dynamic downtown, buzzing as the state's financial and business center during the day, lively with restaurants and entertainment in the evenings. Boise's downtown is also increasingly a residential community, with homes ranging from upscale lofts and condos, to modest but charming apartments, and bordered "by neighborhood of historic, well kept homes.

The concerns that began building largely reflected the incredible popularity the downtown enjoyed in recent years. However, increasing crime, real or perceived, is not compatible with an area the city expects to prosper and further expand. Crime issues had to be addressed or risked jeopardizing the vitality of the downtown. City leaders and business owners joined together to study three components to the problem: education, engineering, and enforcement. Assessing ongoing strategies, being flexible with solutions, and closely monitoring results has, several years later, meant a return to downtown's unique energy while creating programs to sustain downtown safety.

Thank you for sponsoring this distinguished award and for your consideration of our nomination.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Masterson
Chief of Police

A Multi-Disciplinary, Collaborative Approach to Policing Boise's Downtown Entertainment District



Summary:

The City of Boise is the hub of western Idaho and the capital of the state. With a population of 213,500 people within the city limits, it is the third largest city in the Northwest. In addition to the resident population, the greater Treasure Valley, where Boise is located, has a combined population of approximately 450,000 people. Because of its status as a population center, many residents and non-residents alike use city amenities for work and recreation.

Downtown Boise is home to an area commonly called Old Boise. It is an area with a high concentration of upscale shopping, business offices, restaurants, bars and taverns. It is also home in summer months to a traditional teenage car cruise. Because of these circumstances, Friday and Saturday nights in this vicinity have traditionally drawn large crowds. Due to the large numbers of establishments providing alcohol, the area of Old Boise at the intersection of 6th and Main Streets has become a center for large, often drunken crowds.

Downtown Violent Crime 2003 to 2004			
	2003	2004	03-'04 % change
Murder	1	0	-100.0%
Rape	10	16	60.0%
Sexual Assault, other	10	11	10.0%
Robbery	8	15	87.5%
Aggravated Assault	62	81	30.6%
Simple Assault	229	287	25.3%
Arson	2	6	200.0%
Weapon Violations	31	35	12.9%
Total	353	451	27.8%

In January, 2005, a disturbing trend emerged showing a significant increase in violent crime in Old Boise from the prior year, including two homicides in early '05. That led to a concern for the methods and consistency of the police services being delivered in the area. It was also noted that while crime in the city was generally decreasing, the four reporting districts in our downtown core encompassing Old Boise had shown significant increases.

In response to the increase in crime, the Police Department, in conjunction with the Mayor's Office and affected stakeholders, formed the Mayor's Downtown Taskforce. The goal of the Task Force was to counteract the increase in crime by using innovative problem solving initiatives specifically tailored to the uniqueness of Boise's downtown.

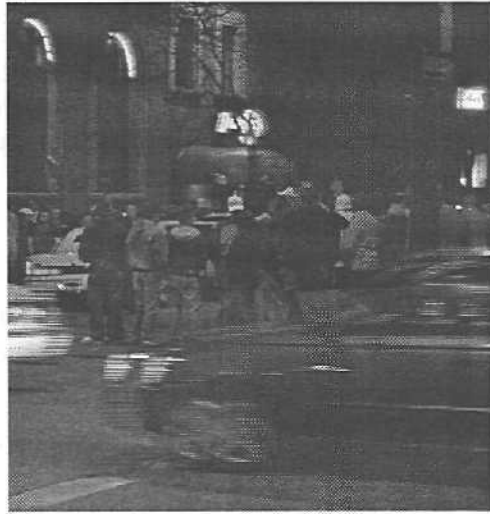
Problem Description

- *Scanning*

As a result of the increase in crime, especially violent crime in the area, the Boise Police Department, with the support and leadership of the Mayor's Office, assembled a task force of interested stake holders to examine the nature and scope of the concern. The Task Force met monthly during the initial implementation of the program. The identified stake holders included the following groups: The Mayor's Office, Boise City Clerk's Office, Boise Police Department (BPD), Boise City Code Enforcement, Boise Fire Department (BFD), the Downtown Boise Association (DBA), taxi owners and operators, bar and restaurant owners, Boise State University (BSU), owner/operators of street vending businesses, and managers of the Qwest Arena event center that's located Downtown. Periodically, other interested members of the community were invited to give input and offer suggestions. The task force was designated as the Mayor's Task Force on Downtown.

- *Analysis*

The stated goal of the Task Force was to determine the causes of the increase of crime in the downtown core and how it could be addressed more effectively. Of special concern was the fact that while violent crime, as defined by assaults, batteries, fighting in public, and disorderly conduct, were decreasing city wide; they were increasing downtown. It became a priority to determine if these crime trends could be reversed and the downtown core made safer while maintaining the vibrancy of an entertainment district without



significantly increasing the amount of police staffing that was needed to patrol the area. It should be noted that all involved agreed that there were no quick fixes, but that a planned and cooperative effort would have the greatest impact.

The group identified over-consumption of alcohol, service of underage drinkers, congestion on streets and sidewalks, and poor infrastructure, especially lighting, all contributed to the problem issues being observed. It was also determined that two working sub-committees should be formed to address the various issues. One sub-committee was designated to examine issues related to public safety. The second sub-committee was designated to examine infrastructure changes that could enhance the overall environment of the downtown area and identify issues which could be solved through re-engineering initiatives.

- *Response*

Task force recommendations focused on how underlying strategies could be developed that would lessen the number of serious incidents that occurred in the area. It should be noted that responses were tested and implemented as they were developed and not at one time. It was determined this would make it less difficult to identify what was working and what was not, so modifications or new plans could be developed to address the problems. The efforts were broken into the three areas: education, engineering, and enforcement. Major initiatives in each area are covered below.

- *Assessment*

The Task Force desired a way of determining the overall effectiveness of the problem solving initiatives. Because the impetus behind the project was the growth in violent crime, it was determined that the best and most accurate method for determining success was to track the incident of crimes in the four reporting districts that encompassed the downtown and determine if a positive impact was

taking place. Because the plan adopted included an increased police presence, it was determined that officer initiated incidents would be tracked but not used as a measuring factor, as the Task Force expected an increase in officer initiated crime reports with the increased officer presence.

Major Initiatives

The major initiatives in each of the areas of education, engineering and enforcement, and a brief description of why each was taken are listed below.

- **Education**

The Task Force determined that many of the issues concerning disorderly behavior were associated with over service and over consumption of alcohol. Drinking by underage persons, especially Boise State University students, was identified as a problem. Another concern was that patrons were commonly "pre-staging" or drinking in areas other than at the established bars. This led to patrons arriving in the area already intoxicated. While some of this was happening at private parties and residences that the Task Force could not impact, other situations were occurring at sports and concert venues in close proximity to downtown.

In order to impact these issues the Task Force developed the following strategies.

1. **Server Training:** The Task Force, in conjunction with the bar owners and alcohol distributors, developed a training program for bar employees that covered server training, server certification through two national programs (ServeSafe and TIPS), and recognition of false identifications. Prior to this initiative, training of this type (pictured at right) was nearly non-existent in Boise's bars and restaurants. This training has resulted in an average of 150 false identifications being seized and turned over to police each month.

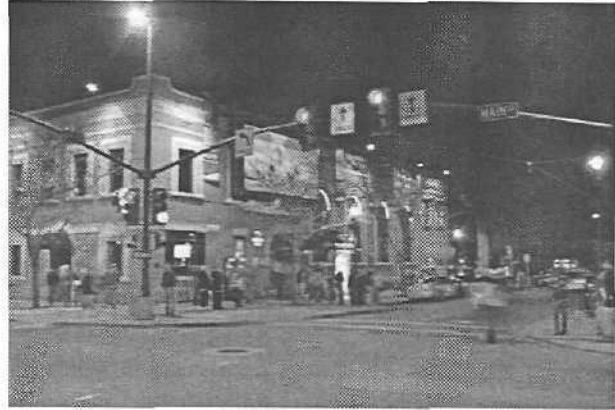


2. **Citizen Education:** In cooperation with the Downtown Boise Association and bar owners, the Task Force developed a pamphlet which was distributed in local hotels and bars and restaurants. The pamphlet included a map of downtown, a list of establishments, and a list of expected behaviors to follow while enjoying the entertainment district.

3. **Boise State University Outreach:** A public service video was produced outlining laws dealing with under age drinking, intoxication, and unruly behavior and potential penalties. The video was produced by the Boise Police Department, but created in partnership with the owner of several downtown bars frequented by college students. This video is shown at BSU student/parent orientations as part of new student programs at the university.
4. **Pre-staging strategies:** The Task Force met with representatives of both Boise State University and the Qwest Arena. Both agreed to voluntary alcohol cutoffs at events where alcohol is served. This meant crowds did not exit events directly after consuming alcohol, but had as much as two hours of non-drinking before exiting the venues and moving into the target downtown area.
5. **AH You Can Drink Specials:** In conjunction with Task Force recommendations, bar owners in the area voluntarily discontinued "all you can drink" for one price specials. In the past, bottomless bucket of beer specials, all you can drink beer for a set price specials, and heavily discounted all you can drink mixed drinks had led to over consumption and over service. Both of these issues were mitigated by the owners voluntarily eliminating these practices. We believe this initiative has contributed significantly to the reduction in aggravated assaults.
6. **Shift Meetings:** The Boise Police Department allows officers to change shifts in January, May and September due of contractual agreements. Just after these shift changes, meet and greet sessions are arranged between the business owners and officers newly assigned to the downtown. These meetings allow officers to meet employees and owners prior to enforcement encounters, and to communicate any concerns brought to either party's attention.
7. **Mobile Substation/Intoximeter Deployment:** In an effort to educate patrons of the downtown, the Boise Police Department periodically deploys a mobile substation with an operational intoximeter. Patrons are encouraged to check their blood alcohol level and also perform field sobriety tests after self reporting the amounts of alcohol consumed. The purpose is to give bar and restaurant patrons some idea of intoxication levels at various amounts of consumption. This effort is in partnership with the local MADD chapter who provide volunteers to staff the events which are generally held four times a year and coincide with special occasions like Mardi Gras and New Year's Eve. On any given deployment the substation is visited by 300-400 of the entertainment district's patrons.

- **Engineering**

The Task Force found that by addressing some of the congestion on both the sidewalks and traffic lanes, that many of the chance encounters which lead to fights could be avoided. Another engineering problem identified was the lack of adequate lighting in certain areas. This created problems with victimization of pedestrians, order maintenance infractions such as urination, and open alcohol containers. Low lighting also made it difficult for officers to safely locate and identify offenders.



Boise City ordinance allowed bars and restaurants to establish sidewalk cafes that restricted sidewalk space but provided patrons the option of open air entertainment and dining. In addition, food vendors were allowed to set up mobile carts on sidewalks. Both of these non-traditional uses of sidewalk space occurred in close proximity to bar entrances and exits which further contributed to pedestrian congestion. As people lined up at the street vendor carts and milled around the sidewalk cafes, inadvertent contact often escalated into physical confrontations. Because alcohol was served at the sidewalk cafes, there were also instances of alcohol being passed to under age drinkers over the barrier fences, as well as beverage containers, especially beer bottles, being used in fights as weapons since they were often easily accessible by those inside or outside the cafes.

Boise City had previously established taxi stands and a queuing system at the Boise Municipal Airport. The system controls taxi traffic congestion in front of the airport. **The** Downtown area was also a destination for large numbers of taxis who slowly cruised busy streets looking for patrons. This slowed traffic to a stand still and often made it very difficult for emergency responses by Fire, EMT and police units. It also created safety issues as taxis would stop in traffic lanes to pick up and drop off passengers.

In order to impact these issues, the following strategies were developed.

1. **Sidewalk Café Ordinance Revision:** The sidewalk café ordinance was revised so after midnight only plastic containers could be served. It was also modified to prohibit establishments from allowing tables to go unserved for longer than fifteen minutes, and to further describe the types of barrier fences, signage and capacities that would be allowed. Prior to this revision of the ordinance, cafes had operated in a manner that was contrary to public safety in the area as described above. Owners who desired to be in compliance found it difficult as the code had many

ambiguous sections. Because of the ambiguity of the ordinance, consistent enforcement was lacking. This led to an adversarial relationship between owner/operators and the police. These mutually agreed upon modifications relieved the concerns mentioned above, and significantly strengthened the relationship between the restaurant operators and the police while enhancing overall public safety.

2. **Taxi Ordinance Modifications:** In order to discourage cabs from circling to look for fares, the city ordinance was modified to prohibit drop off and pick ups in the streets intersecting the Old Boise district on Friday and Saturday nights. Taxi stands, with taxi only designated parking, were established in two areas in close proximity to the district. The informational pamphlet mentioned in the education section directed passengers to those locations for pickup.
3. **Vendor Ordinance Modifications:** The ordinance allowing street food vendors was modified so that vendors were required to vacate several locations that were directly in front of bar entrances. Designated vending areas were moved to locations that were visible from, but across the street from those locations. This encouraged crowds to become more geographically dispersed when patronizing those vendors, cleared the view of the street for the officers on foot patrol, and allowed the sidewalks to become less congested in those areas directly next to or in front of the popular venue entrances.



4. **Lighting Grant:** To finance the cost of installation of lighting in the area, the Downtown Business Association, with Boise Police Department support, applied for and received a neighborhood reinvestment grant. The grant paid for the installation of upgraded lighting that drastically curtailed problem behaviors that had been encouraged by the lack of adequate visibility. Some business owners, recognizing the safety and deterrent value of this improvement, then voluntarily added lighting in the areas where their business exited into alleyways so the problem behaviors were not displaced onto their property.

- **Enforcement**

As with any initiative of this nature, many of the educational and engineering changes would not be as effective without enforcement practices that complimented those efforts. The Task Force looked at ways that enforcement could complement the changes while maintaining the partnerships established through the Task Force meetings.

The following strategies were implemented.

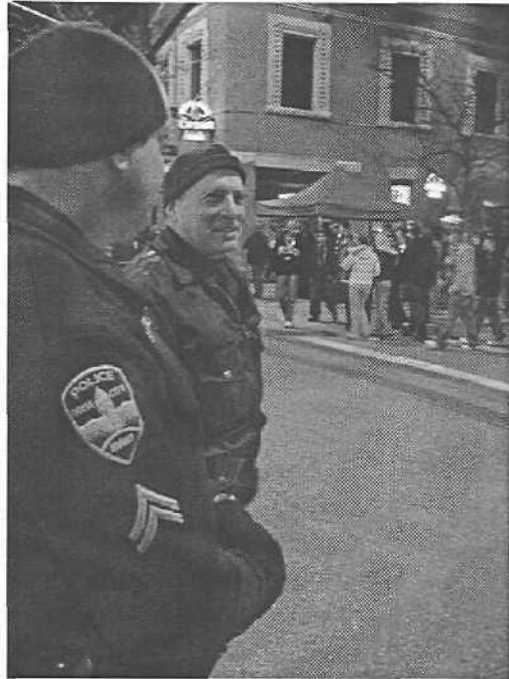
- 1. Designation of a Directed Patrol Team:**

Patrol Team: After a thorough study, it was determined that best practice nationwide for policing entertainment districts was for officers to be assigned to the area. This allowed them to become familiar with

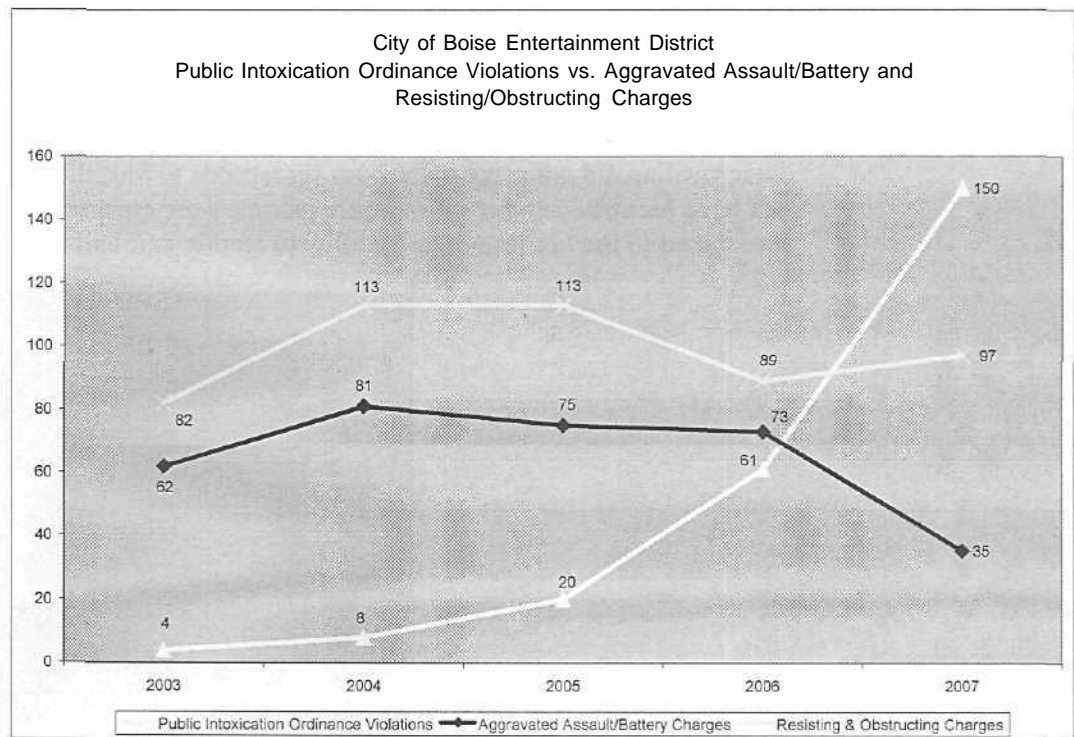
problem locations, develop relationships with business owners, and create consistency in enforcement. Traditionally, the Boise Police Department had rotated the assignment of patrol teams through the downtown with each individual team working the area for two weekends. A designated downtown directed patrol team was identified and staffed with a sergeant and seven officers. They were given the assignment of policing this area as their primary duties for Friday and Saturday nights. This led to greater consistency of enforcement, and also gives the officers, patrons and business owners to ability to establish and nurture long standing relationships which improves communication.

- 2. Foot and bicycle patrols:** Patrol cars proved to be a somewhat ineffective way of patrolling this area as traffic was often congested and driving cars made it difficult for officers to view problems and intervene at early stages. It was found that a combination of foot and bike patrols was a more effective means of early intervention into disorderly behavior. It was

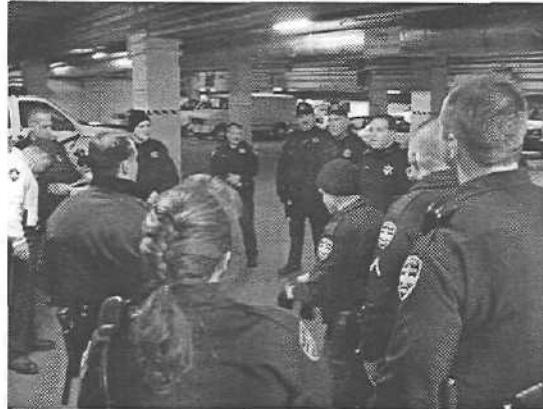
also determined this gave the officers more access to interact with businesses and citizens in non-enforcement situations and develop positive relationships. As calls for service decreased, this also gave greater opportunities for officers to target specific crime issues.



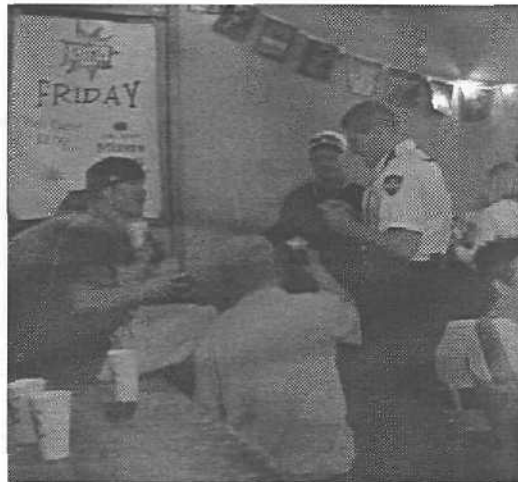
3. **Compliance Checks:** In conjunction with the State Alcohol Beverage Control, alcohol compliance checks were instituted to curtail over service and underage service. These checks included both overt uniformed officer presence, as well as covert checks involving plain clothes officers and juveniles using their own identification to gain alcohol or admittance to restricted areas.
4. **New Ordinances:** It was determined early on that there was a gap in applicable State law and City ordinance that did not allow officers to address unruly behavior prior to it progressing to a full fledged fight or assault. Working with the City prosecutor, the Task Force drafted and presented to the City Council a "Public Intoxication" ordinance which allowed officers to make arrests or issue citations when an intoxicated person was involved in unruly or challenging behavior but who had not yet become involved in a physical confrontation. The value of this ordinance is that officers can proactively address problems to gain **voluntary** compliance rather than take enforcement after a situation becomes violent. We believe the chart below reflects the value of having an ordinance regulating prohibited behavior while intoxicated versus waiting for the egregious behavior, i.e. aggravated assault to occur.



- 5. Saturation Patrols:** Saturation patrols designed to limit aggressive driving, driving under the influence and other traffic related issues were instituted. It was found these were particularly successful for setting the tone of the downtown during the busier summer months. Patrols were planned and carried out the weekend the local high schools finished classes and then repeated monthly during the warmer months. These focused patrols proved to be so successful at curtailment problems that by 2007 the August patrol was canceled after the first night due to the calm nature of the downtown that weekend. Idaho State Police, Alcohol Beverage Control and several local LE agencies assisted the BPD with these patrols.



- 6. Code Enforcement Checks:** In conjunction with City Code Enforcement and the Fire Department, routine compliance checks began looking for signage, capacity compliance and fire statute compliance. These had the double benefit of easing congestion in the businesses and assured that overcrowding did not make the venues susceptible to tragedies like those that have occurred in other cities where patrons were crushed or succumbed to fire because of an inability to readily exit buildings.



Timeline:

Implementation of Education, Engineering and Enforcement Strategies for Policing the Downtown Entertainment District

ID	Initiatives	2004			2005				2006				2007				2008	
		Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
1	Server Training																	
2	Citizen Education																	
3	Boise State University Outreach																	
4	Pre-Staging																	
5	All-You-Can-Drink Specials																	
6	Shift Meetings																	
7	Mobile Substation																	
8	Sidewalk Cafe Ordinance Revision																	
9	Taxi Ordinance Modifications																	
10	Vendor Ordinance Modifications																	
11	Directed Patrol Team																	
12	Foot/Bicycle Patrols																	
13	Compliance Checks																	
14	Public Intoxication Ordinance																	
15	Saturation Patrols																	
16	Code Enforcement Checks																	

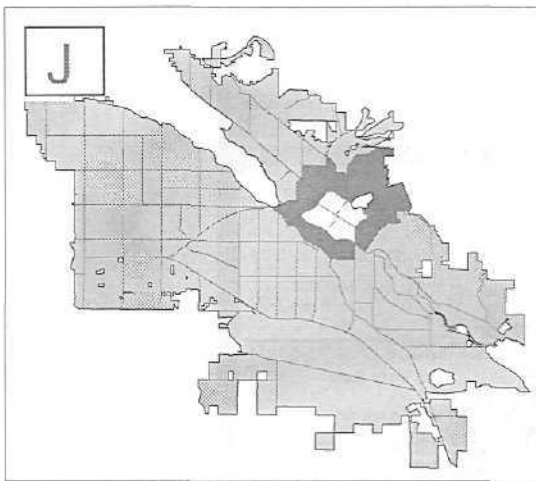
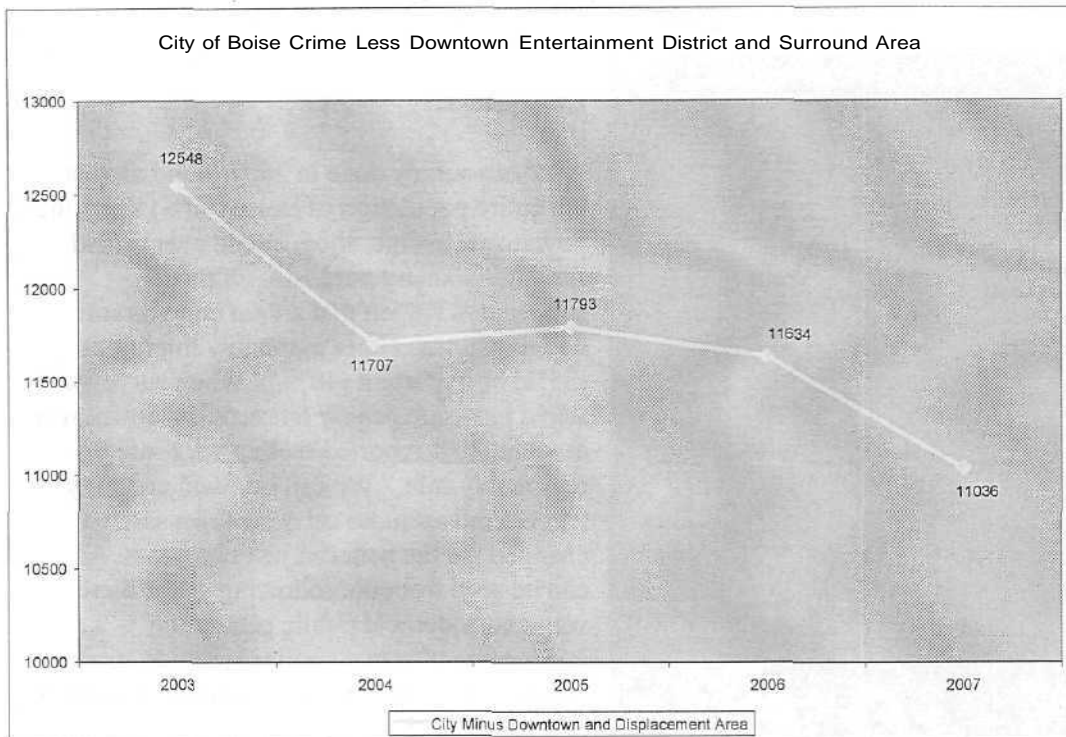
Key:

○ Education ● Engineering ● Enforcement

Results:

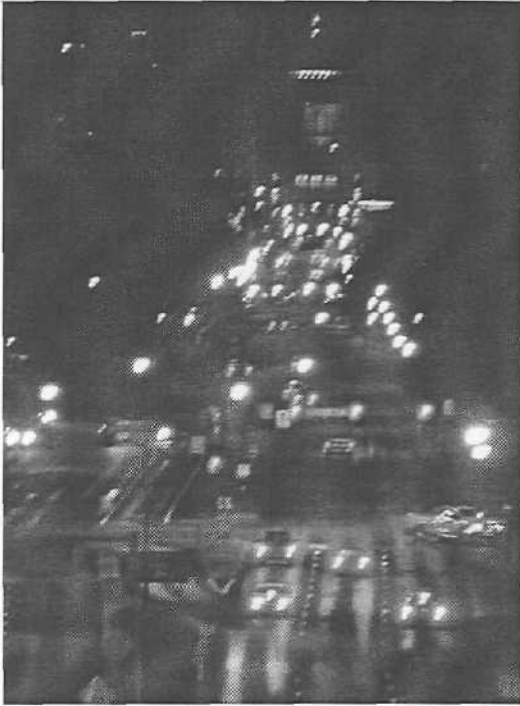
The Task Force efforts have now been in place for approximately two and one half years. As stated in the introductory paragraphs, the test for success was determined by the decrease in crime in the downtown core. At the time the effort was put into place, the City of Boise as a whole was experiencing an overall decrease in crime, while the four downtown reporting districts showed a marked increase. As the Task Force developed, it was determined that the success would not be complete unless crime downtown was truly reduced, not just displaced. During the Task Force process, quarterly crime reports of the four affected districts were compiled and compared. Later in the process, the crime trends for those reporting districts which bordered the four central districts were also compiled. Both showed actual decreases in reported crime. Overall city statistics were also compiled for comparison purposes. The results are shown graphically as follows:

I Downtown Crime 2003 to 2007						
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	06-'07 % change
Murder	1	0	3	0	0	na
Rape	10	16	13	12	14	16.7%
Sexual Assault, other	10	11	9	9	5	-44.4%
Robbery	8	15	8	13	9	-30.8%
Aggravated Assault	62	81	75	73	35	-52.1%
Simple Assault	229	287	269	253	244	-3.6%
Burglary: Commercial	31	25	37	49	31	-36.7%
Burglary: Residential	35	13	25	19	22	15.8%
Theft from Vehicle	126	117	119	106	82	-22.6%
Theft	421	351	430	428	366	-14.5%
Motor Vehicle Theft	37	38	31	34	22	-35.3%
Arson	2	6	4	1	7	600.0%
Counterfeit / Forgery	42	35	39	31	15	-51.6%
Fraud	45	54	73	69	72	4.3%
Vandalism	283	257	267	311	337	8.4%
Weapon Violations	31	35	46	45	22	-51.1%
Total	1373	1341	1448	1,453	1,283	-11.7%



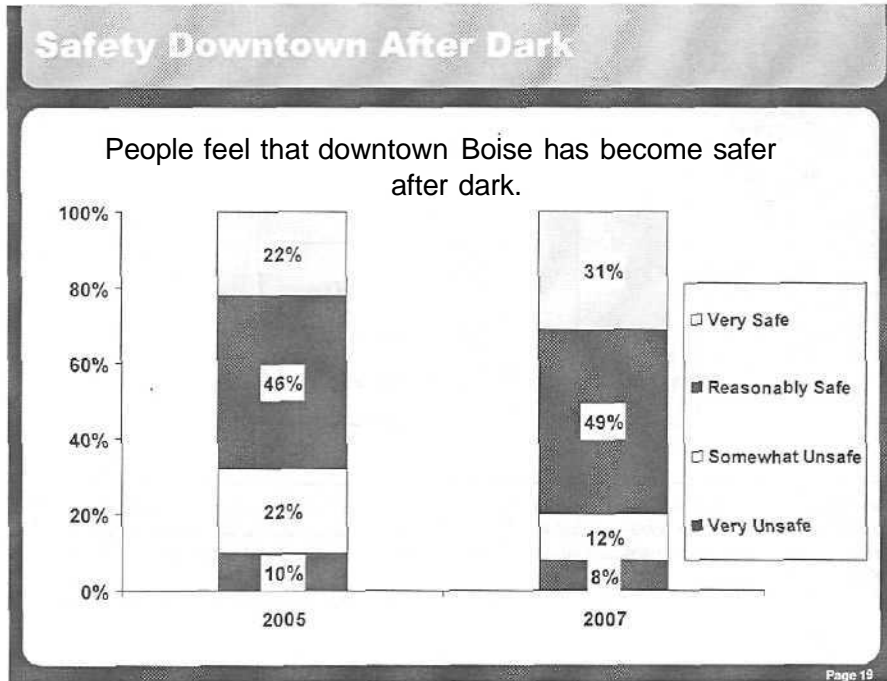
Key:
 () Entertainment District
 ◊ Displacement Area
 © City of Boise

The City of Boise entertainment district is located within four reporting districts in the downtown core. Specific crime types were examined over a two year period in order to monitor initiatives that were put in place in order to reduce the sudden rise in crime. The adjacent reporting districts surrounding the entertainment district were also monitored to ensure that the crime was not being displaced directly outside of the district.



Conclusion:

A citizen survey done in 2007 found almost the entire population of Boise (90%) visits the downtown to dine, shop, attend events, and for entertainment purposes. Of those surveyed, 83% felt that a vital and vibrant downtown was either extremely important (35%) or important (48%). When surveyors asked how safe people felt walking downtown at night, 80% reported feeling very safe or reasonably safe. We can say with certainty that overall attitudes on downtown safety changed for the better in just two years. As can be seen from the following chart, there was a considerable public perception improvement from a similar citywide survey conducted in 2005 by the Northwest Research Group.



The SARA model is consistent with the quality improvement concept of Plan, Do, Check, Act, with the assessment portion of SARA committing us to continuously seek and implement best practices not just for today's solutions but for tomorrow and beyond. We at the Boise Police Department are committed to the concept of continuous improvement, and are currently examining further initiatives addressing taxi driver training, adjustment of taxi lanes, and additions to ordinances to expand taxi stand usage. Ordinances are also being examined that address sound deadening, downtown pedestrian mall areas, and initiatives to address aggressive driving on the downtown cruise, among other projects. We have seen a dramatic shift from problem solving general behavior issues downtown to those which now focus on monitoring specific addresses for the identification and early intervention of problems using repeat calls for service reports and crime reporting. We now monitor crime and other call activity on a quarterly basis to evaluate our operational performance (see following chart).

Reported Crime for RD's: 12, 15, 16, 199: January-1 to March 31					
	1st Qtr 2006	1st Qtr 2007	1st Qtr 2008	2007 to 2008 % difference	2006 to 2008 % difference
Murder	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Rape	4	3	1	-66.7%	-75.0%
Sexual Assault, other	4	3	1	-66.7%	-75.0%
Robbery	0	3	0	-100.0%	0.0%
Aqqravated Assault	19	11	14	27.3%	-26.3%
Simple Assault	58	61	43	-29.5%	-25.9%
Burglary: Commercial	10	18	3	-83.3%	-70.0%
Burglary: Residential	5	3	6	100.0%	20.0%
Theft from Vehicle	32	29	6	-79.3%	-81.3%
Theft	112	101	97	-4.0%	-13.4%
Motor Vehicle Theft	9	8	5	-37.5%	-44.4%
Arson	0	7	2	-71.4%	100.0%
Counterfeit / Forgery	9	3	2	-33.3%	-77.8%
Fraud	16	18	16	-11.1%	0.0%
Vandalism	90	68	62	-8.8%	-31.1%
Weapon Violations	12	7	5	-28.6%	-58.3%
Total	380	343	263	-23.3%	-30.8%

Our City's vision is to keep Boise "The Most Livable City" in the country. We at the Boise Police department believe the initiatives in the downtown will allow us to fulfill this vision.