LAW ENFORCEMENT RECORDS/INFORMATION SYSTEMS:

"THE ORGANIZATIONAL MIND"

JOURNAL ARTICLE

BY

MICHAEL TYE

Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training

Command College
Class XVI

June 1993

16-0331

LAW ENFORCEMENT RECORDS/INFORMATION SYSTEMS:

"THE ORGANIZATIONAL MIND"

JOURNAL ARTICLE

BY

MICHAEL TYE

Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training

Command College
Class XVI

June 1993

LAW ENFORCEMENT RECORDS/INFORMATION SYSTEMS: *"THE ORGANIZATIONAL MIND"*

"What will be the future of records/information management for small to medium law enforcement agencies by the year 2000?"

Michael Tye. Sponsoring Agency: California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. 1993 Availability: Commission on POST, Center for Leadership Development, 1601 Alhambra Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95816-7053
Single Copies free; Order number 16-0331 .
National Institute of Justice/NCJRS Microfiche Program, Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850
Microfiche free. Microfiche number NJR _____.

ABSTRACT

The study addresses the subject of law enforcement records/information management and the importance of "information" as an invaluable raw resource contributing to an organization's knowledge base. The study is futures based and identifies "regionalization" as an alternative means of ensuring that small to medium agencies will continue to maintain and enhance existing information technology. The study addresses three questions: (1) How will law enforcement identify and address the technologies that have and will influence the future of law enforcement records management system. (2) How will law enforcement continuously acquire and maintain resources to effectively manage the future of records management systems. (3) What kind of personnel resources must be in place to ensure optimal operational productivity for the future of law enforcement records management systems.

This Command College Independent Study Project is a FUTURES study of a particular emerging issue in law enforcement. Its purpose is NOT to predict the future, but rather to project a number of possisble scenarios for strategic planning consideration.

Defining the future differs from analyzing the past because the future has not yet happened. In this project, useful alternatives have been formulated systematically so that the planner can respond to a range of possible future environments.

Managing the future means influencing the future--creating it, constraining it, adapting to it. A futures study points the way.

The views and conclusions expressed in the Command College project are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

Copyright 1993
California Commission on Peace Officer
Standards and Training

INTRODUCTION

In his best-selling book, Megatrends, John Naisbitt, a futurist, describes ten major transformations taking place in the United States society in the 1990's. In characterizing the first of the ten transformations, Naisbitt reports that "none is more subtle, yet more explosive, than the transformation from an industrial to an information society."[1] Clearly, as the law enforcement community moves into the 21st century, it must develop and apply strategies that will enable it to successfully manage its organizations within the framework of this "information society." The purpose of this article is to explore this issue on one major aspect and determine "What is the future of records/information management for small to medium law enforcement agencies by the year 2000?"

DEFINING THE ISSUE:

The forming of this issue and its literal construction came only after recognizing that the terms "records" and "information" were in need of operational definitions, particularly within the law enforcement community. More important, for much of law enforcement, the ambiguity in the terms has possibly gone well beyond the problem of definition and now lies at the root of their ability or inability to manage this issue in the future. Therefore, failure to make a distinction with this term could readily affect the interest and/or understanding of its intended audience.

The term "records" simply refers to data collected by an agency and stored. Records for an agency could be in the form of a police report, field contact report, and /or a details collected by a dispatcher and referencing a police "call-for-service" from a citizen. "Information" is material that can be drawn from "records," frequently via the process of putting various bits of data into an automated system. "Knowledge" is the cognitive activity arising from the mental processing of "information" acquired from

"records." Knowledge can be the product of an officer making an arrest based on a record of a field contact and a person listed on a wanted bulletin.

POLICE RECORDS

The purpose and definition of police "RECORDS" have been well documented over the years by early law enforcement scholars. One such scholar was O.W. Wilson who, in 1951, heralded "a direct relationship between the efficiency of a police department and the quality of its records and records procedures."[2] During the early 1940 and 1950's, the scope of "records" generally included the following: offense reporting, criminal identification, property identification, custody of property, central complaint desk, and communications or "radio." Yes, dispatch operations or "radio" was included as a post function to the overall information gathering processes.

Profoundly, without today's advanced technology, early "RECORDS" management systems incorporated the concepts that police reporting should support decisions in personnel resource management, problem analysis, budget preparation, property accountability and was a vehicle for furthering organizational communications. In short, law enforcement managers recognized the importance of being able to obtain information from records and this being the basis for knowledge. Over the years, the term "records" has had a unique meaning within the law enforcement community and often will apply to an organizational division and/or location within an agency. It is still not uncommon to go into a police or sheriff's department and see a sign over a counter that boldly proclaims "RECORDS."

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

During the 1950 and 1960's, "records" became semi-automated with the broader use of transcription devices, duplication systems, and microfilming.[3] In the 1970's, the

demands on "police records" management increased at a phenomenal rate. Directly attributable to these increases were the spiraling crime rate, state mandated reporting, increased community awareness, mass duplication capabilities and the basic litigious nature of the society. The problem of keeping effective "records" was exacerbated by personnel shortages brought on by the tax revolts of the 1970's.

In the 1980's the information "technologies" quickly continued to reshaped the role and disciplines of traditional "police records" management and apparently with little regard for the basic understanding of its purpose. Unintentionally, agencies throughout the country began viewing their computer technology as being synonymous with their "information systems." The acquiring of these technologies brought with them the acronyms of CAD (computer aided dispatch) and RMS (records management systems) and AFIS (automated fingerprint identifications system). The responsibility for managing these new "information systems," was often outside the purview of "records" and frequently given to the department's data processing or management unit with limited accountability at the organizational level.

In addition, in the late 1980's, law enforcement began embracing the personal computer and with the same expediency began applying specialized application such as NIN (Narcotics Information Network), GREAT (Gang Reporting Evaluation and Tracking), as well as various photo, document, and form based reporting systems. Again, most of these efforts were generated outside the scope of traditional "records" management, and the divisions making use of them brought their own specific agendas for their use. Despite the warnings of early scholars, the "evils" of decentralizing records-keeping was being realized and have contributed to "islands" of information without the proper personnel structure to support them.

Unintentionally, a major contributor to this decentralization, or fracturing, of records operations was the department's designated or self proclaimed "technocrat." In

this context, the responsibility for systems-need analysis, acquisition and use of new technology has been typically delegated to one or more persons in the department. The "technocrat" most likely came from the ranks of the sworn officer with an interest and/or inclination toward the complexities of technology. Also, the technocrat came with little or no formal training in the area of records information systems administration.

Under ideal conditions, the "technocrat" has done an excellent job in managing information technology and has ensured that it has met the challenge of contributing to his/her organization's operational efficiency. Based on earlier discussions, the "technocrat," in this case, would clearly have understood the relationship of "information" systems and the principles of sound "records" management. The less successful "technocrat" would have been oblivious to the relationship of "information" and "records" management and acted more from his/her insatiable appetite for new technology.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The manual processes of obtaining, storing and retrieval of a police report, the data or information contained therein has no knowledge value in itself. It is only after someone reviews the information and makes some observation(s) that knowledge is obtained. Similarly, an organization may have the most advanced "information" gathering technology with extensive data (reports), incredible speed, and massive storage capability but still lack the ability to use those systems for the purposes of obtaining knowledge.

Almost from the start, managers in both the private and public sector have complained that computers have contributed to information overload. Naisbitt, in further discussing the transformation from the industrial to the information society, states:

We are drowning in information but starved for knowledge.

> *This level of information is clearly impossible to handle by present means. Uncontrolled and unorganized information is no longer a resource in an information society. Instead, it becomes the enemy of the information worker. Scientists who are overwhelmed with technical data complain of information pollution and charge that it takes less time to do an experiment than to find out whether or not it has already been done.*[4]

The very nature of law enforcement functions provide for an ideal setting for information collection, processing and analysis functions by both current and future technologies. Unfortunately, the above is not the case; according to the 1982 study conducted by the I.A.C.P. (International Association of Chief's of Police) few agencies that have computers use them for planning, and only 10% use them in innovative ways. In a study, as reported by law enforcement futurist, Dr. William Tafoya, 90% of the computers used by police agencies are used as little more than filing cabinets[5].

THE EMERGING ISSUE:

INFORMATION - ECONOMIC RESOURCE

To accomplish the major feat of "doing more with less", the law enforcement executive must understand the value of "information" as an organizational resource. During the industrial age, which ended in the 1950's, law enforcement was only faced with working with the two basic resources of labor and capital. To accept information as a third and valuable resource is to acknowledge what economists, corporate executives and managers of the private sector are beginning to realize. Successful police managers must use their organization's information resources for problem-solving and decision-making.

Information is at the core of creative thinking, which can lead to new ways of improving programs, processes, and alternative policing strategies. In business, the information resources of the organizations can have dual application - for internal operations and external marketing potential. The parallel for law enforcement would be to use information resources for work load analysis and external marketing geared toward community awareness and involvement.[6]

INFORMATION STRATEGY

In January of 1993, the Governor of California submitted a budget proposing a State-level information technology strategy as a response to helping its agencies meet increased demands for service. The State of California intends to employ information technology as a primary means of responding to the social, political and economic challenges of the 1990's. Central to the state's information strategy is the understanding that information is a "resource" and one that will be needed to effect and implement organizational change.[7] In light of the State's reaction to the prolonged economic recession, it seems only logical that small-to-medium-size law enforcement agencies are at the same crossroads. It appears that the time has come, if indeed overdue, for law enforcement to develop its own "information" strategy that will carry into and beyond the year 2000.

FORECASTING

METHODOLOGY

It is from a "plan", using a proven methodology, that individuals are more likely to shape their desired objective. Futures research is one such methodology that can identify and articulate alternatives through a process that includes forecasting. The forecasting method is an aid to decision-making in the present and, thus, offers a planner

reasonable control of his/her destiny.[8] The developing of this study's long term strategic plan was accomplished with a futures research model that was divided into six parts.

The research components included: identification of the project issue and sub-issues with potential relevant *trends* and *events*, distillation of *trends* and *events* determined to be most relevant to the issue, forecasting of the identified *trends* and *events*, cross impact analysis of the *trends* and *events*, and the creation of scenarios that ultimately contributed to the policies intended to provide direction for a strategic plan.

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

This project purposely avoided the tendency to focus on technology i.e., communications, lap-top computing, voice recognition, etc. and, instead, intentionally chose the more broader issue of:

"What will be the future of records/information management for small to medium law enforcement agencies by the year 2000?"

In order to provide greater clarification and scope to the issue, sub-issues concerning were structured to address the related concerns of *technology, resource maintenance/acquisition,* and *personnel.*

How will law enforcement identify and address the technologies that have and will influence the future of law enforcement records management systems?

How will law enforcement continuously acquire and maintain resources to effectively manage the future of records management systems?

What kind of personnel resources must be in place to ensure optimal operational productivity for the future of law enforcement records management systems?

DETERMINATION OF TRENDS AND EVENTS

The next step in this process was to identify specific *trends* and *events* that would likely shape the future of the primary issue. The issue was viewed from the broadest of considerations with a STEEP model being used to provide social, technological, environmental, economical and political perspectives. Ultimately, a list of *(5) trends* and (5) *events* were identified with care being taken to ensure the trends were non-directional. In other words, with a trend being a representation of several events, it was important that they neither be high nor low, fast nor slow, increasing nor decreasing, but instead, only indicative of change. In terms of events, its was necessary that each item have a likelihood of being affected by sound policy decisions.

TREND SCREENING AND FORECASTING

The selected *trends* and *events* were reduced to a number workable for this study and ranked in terms of their relative importance to the issue and value to producing a good long-range forecast. In many forecasting models, it is recognized that the years for futures trend level projections are normally established at five (5) and ten (10) year ranges. However, with the particular interconnections with technology and rapid advancements in this area, it was felt that this issue was more accurately viewed within the shorter time ranges of three (3) and seven (7) years.

Resulting from the forecasting process, each *trend* was examined from both a *nominal* - "*will be*" and *normative* - "*should be*"perspective. The "*will be*" situation provides an assumption that current forces affecting the trend continue to operate and affect the future consequences. Conversely, the "*should be*" projection provides that there is a reasonable expectation that certain goals for the future will be reached.

TREND 1 - LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT FUNDING

In looking to the amount of new government funding that was available five years ago, it was determined that there was more than compared than today. In most cases it was forecasted that, within the next seven years, "new" government funding would be less than that of today. Indications are that, within this seven year time frame, law enforcement will have to extend the "life" of its existing technology or look to more creative ways to fund their needs. In terms of what should occur, it is felt that new government funding should double over the next three years and five times as much by the year 2000. In general, it is believed that investments in the new information technology could contribute to agencies doing more with less and otherwise optimize their personnel resources.

TREND 2 - LEVEL OF RELIANCE ON NEW TECHNOLOGY

Certainly, by today's standard, the level of reliance on new technology was much less than it is today. Under the nominal forecast, it is estimated that over the next three years, the reliance on new technology would be more than double, and by the year 2000 would be nearly three and one-half times greater than today. The reliance on new technology would come primarily from an increasingly sophisticated worker, demands for reducing personnel operating costs and escalating charges for the support/maintenance of older information technology. The "should be" projection suggested little change with each expected to be relatively high with their estimated impact.

TREND 3 - LEVEL OF REGIONALIZATION

Estimates on the level of regionalization five years ago was significantly less that it is today. The research and forecasting for this trend suggest that under both the "will be" and "should be" estimates there is a good deal of support and belief that there can be significant increase in regionalization and particular as it affects this issue. It is

recognized that the decision or support of regionalization is not a matter of economics or operations but, instead, based on personal or political ambition for a person or organization.

TREND 4 - LEVEL OF COMPUTER LITERACY

This trend recognizes that, to the degree that line personnel and managers are exposed to computer technology, there will be a direct correlation to their use and ability to manage related issues. It is estimated that computer literacy five years ago was less than half of what it is today. However, within three years, it is estimated that the level of computer literacy will increase one and one-half times, and by the year 2000, will double. Even more optimistically, a "should be" estimate suggest that the doubling in this area will actually occur in the shorter term and that over the next seven (7) years the level of computer literacy will actually increase to nearly six (6) time over what it is today.

TREND 5 - LEVEL OF HUMAN FACTORS CONCERN

This trend indicates that there must be a certain level of concern for the human interaction between the worker and his/her environment. Human factors considerations could range from the simplest matter of addressing proper seating position while using a computer to the more esoteric designs of artificial intelligence systems and the impact on the new "knowledge" worker. Estimates for five years ago suggest that the matter of human factors concern was relatively non-existence, but by the year 2000 this overall period would bring about substantial attention. It is projected that the complexities of

EVENT SCREENING AND FORECASTING

Once the (5) events were ranked by order of most importance to central issue, their probability of occurrence was weighted against the same time periods provided for the previously discussed trends. In addition, the event forecasting identified and

analyzed the positive and negative impact on the central issue of this study. In all but one instance, each event was determined to have potentially high impact on the future of this issue.

EVENT 1 - MULTI-MEDIA INFORMATION APPLICATION

It was forecasted that, based on the rapid advancements with multi-media technology, the abilities of this event to first occur could be within the first year. Moreover, the forecast was that there was a 65% probability that it would occur in the next three years. The cumulative forecast of 90% over the next seven years suggests that it is only a matter of time before a major manufacturer targets and successfully develops a fully integrated information system including the technologies of data (text), sound, photo-imaging, video-imaging, and with mass storage capabilities. It is believed that the law enforcement "RMS" (records management systems), as known in 1993, and their associated hardware technology, would be virtually obsolete.

EVENT 2 -BAY VIEW INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

This event determined that several or more local city police municipalities could join to form a regional center for the collective handling of dispatch communications and records management. The framework for records management included: data collection, reporting, distribution, retrieval, analysis, storage and other related information processes. In forecasting this event, indications are that given existing economic conditions, there was a 60% probability that this event will occur within the next three years, and by the year 2000 there could be a 95% likelihood of the event occurring. This event is seen as a very positive occurrence and rated highest in projection estimates. The one caveat to this positive event forecast was that the moving force in creating BVIC would be budgetary considerations, and should the economy improve, the creation of this regional effort would not happen. It was felt that decision-makers on this issue

would continue to shape their directions based on political considerations, despite the operational and economic benefits.

EVENT 3 - TECHNOLOGY RELATED INJURIES

The event considered the possibility that work related injuries associated with the use of technology could become classified as the number two (2) occupational injury for clerical and dispatch employees. In forecasting this event, a 65% probability was given for it occurring within the next three years and a 85% probability that it would occur by the year 2000. In forecasting this event, it was agreed that the incidents of technology-related injuries could actually be influenced by the awareness and classification in reporting. One classic example of injuries related to the use of computer technology is the existing high incident rate of employees suffering from carpal tunnel syndrome[9].

EVENT 4 - EXPERT SYSTEMS

This event speculates that the full integration of multi-media systems (reference event 1) could be complimented by the advanced application of expert systems. It is estimated that with the exponential increase of data or information, there will be a demand for better "knowledge" based technology. This event provided an aggressive forecast which suggested an 85% probability that expert systems would be deployed in law enforcement within the next three years. Equally as optimistic was the indication that by the year 2000 there would be a 95% probability that this event would occur. Even with optimism, it was estimated that this event would likely not occur until well into the third year of the period in question. The event surmised that the event would come in the form of a major announcement from a vendor who would distinguish themselves from the traditional RMS (records management system) and CAD (computer aided dispatch) providers.

EVENT 5 - POST INFORMATION MANAGEMENT TRAINING

This event focus around the probability that POST (Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training) could implement a block of MIS (management of information systems) instruction within its management certification program. In this regard, with a probability rating of 60%, there was little optimism that POST would accomplish this event with the next three years.it was estimated that and, therefore, gave a probability rating of 60%. However, indications were that, by the year 2000, POST would recognize the value of this training and a 95% was projected. It was felt that a primary motivation and shift in attitude from POST would be driven by a "change of the guard" within local law enforcement and the POST administration.

SCENARIOS

Based on the identification and forecasting of the *trends* and *events*, the important, but loosely connected data was synthesized into three scenarios with the express purpose of providing a foundation for future policy consideration. In working through the forecasting phase, subsequent discussion provided excellent background for presenting the alternative futures in the form of *exploratory, normative,* and *hypothetical* modes.

The *exploratory* mode is essentially a "play-out" of forecasted events as having not occurred and is relatively "*surprise free*". This exploratory scenario reflects the impact of current forces, policies, and anticipated trends as the "will be" forecast for the future of records management and information technology. The second scenario, as the *normative mode* is reflective of a "*feared but possible*" interpretation of the trends of events that were forecasted. In this normative, or "worse case", scenario, what can go wrong does go wrong. The final scenario provides a more positive reflection on this issue and is provided in a *hypothetical* mode, or "*What if..,*" format. It describes a future influenced

by good planned intervention and a conscious decision to affect organizational change based on the knowledge gained from its information bases.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Insights from the examination of possible future trends and events provides the basis for developing a strategic management plan and becomes the next step in addressing the question of "what will be the future of information/ records management for small to medium law enforcement agencies by the year 2000." A strategic management plan has been developed for the fictional City of San Cristobal and reflects this agencies good planning, intervention and conscious decision to affect organizational change based on the knowledge gained from its information bases.

The plan is designed to serve as a theoretical model and not necessarily representative of any particular law enforcement agency, personnel or circumstances. In order for a plan to be whole, it must include: (1) establishing and building a level of commitment for the issue, (2) an environmental assessment of the organization from both internal and external perspectives, (3) the development of alternative strategies and, finally, (4) the recommended approach for ensuring organizational efficiency from the effective management of its information/records management systems.

ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION

Like all organizations, whether they be small or large, a mission statement provides San Cristobal with a mechanism for formally communicating its expressed values, guiding behavior, ensuring consistency, and building commitment for its members.

The following micro mission statement carries with it the embodiment San Cristobal's macro mission statement while laying the foundation for carrying out this strategic plan.

Micro Mission Statement

The San Cristobal Police Department and it members value its information systems as a critical resource in achieving optimal use of its human and material assets. Our members are committed to identifying and applying those information technologies that contribute to its organizational knowledge base while serving the greater good of the department. The Department and its members will employ its information systems as a primary means of responding to the social, political and economic challenges of the future.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Representative of most cities and counties within the State, the City of San Cristobal and its police department have made rapid advances in acquiring automated information technology since the mid-eighties. Indicative of the Departments technology advances is it use of a sophisticated automated records management system which is heavily utilized by both support and operational personnel. In a similar fashion, the Department has acquired and implemented a new communication center console system, CAD (computer aided dispatch, and, most recently, MDT (mobile data terminals) for its patrol vehicles with direct access to its RMS data. Contiguous with the aforementioned efforts have been the on-going realization of PC's (personal computers - micro-processors) throughout the Department with all secretarial personnel benefitting from the advantages of word processing.

The Department has not been limited to its internal involvement with information technology and, in fact, has played a major roll in promoting regional applications. Most

notably, the Department has had active representation in helping to bring about the Alco/Ygnacio County CAL-ID and the Ygnacio "ACCJIN" (All County Criminal Justice Information Network) projects. The dual county CAL-ID effort has brought about a regional automated fingerprint identification system (AFIS) which provides a latent print data base for image comparison. The regional systems is linked to the State and Western Information Network (WIN) and is connected to the State system. The ACCJIN system provides a sophisticated data network that provides a communications link for all local justice agencies, i.e., city/county law enforcement, district attorney, courts, probation, etc. It is through the ACCJIN data communication "backbone" that agency will participate in county-wide warrant, name indexing, crime analysis, booking, photo image capturing and other, yet unidentified applications.

Surrounding agencies to San Cristobal and within west Ygnacio County include; El Pueblo, Nottingham, El Costa, Herculon and Byron Police Departments. Over the years, and to one degree or another, these agencies of west Ygnacio County have made similar advancements and commitments to information technology. Particularly with El Pueblo and Byron Police Departments, each has implemented automation to include a full records management system and some form of computer aided dispatch. San Cristobal, the larger of the six west county cities, has clearly made the greatest investment into the new technologies and with a larger support staff has been able to establish itself as the strongest user of its systems.

San Cristobal, like its adjacent agencies, continue to benefit and increasingly rely on its information knowledge bases for its short and long term decisions. New information technologies are readily available but a severe state-wide economic crisis offers little hope for most agencies to obtain new funding for enhancements. In fact, it is likely that all Cities will continue to suffer budgetary cutbacks that will negatively

impact personnel and operations of their existing information systems. The smaller agencies have already begun to see the effect of reduced funding and are looking to alternatives to minimize potential elimination of sworn staffing and reducing service levels.

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

In order to generate and analyze alternate strategies capable of achieving San Cristabol's macro and micro mission statements, three alternate strategies were developed. The three strategies considered included:

ALTERNATIVE ONE
Maintain Local Control

This alternate strategy would have the Department continue to support its own "records", "dispatch", and related information technology. To the extent possible, the Department would continue to maintain a budget that would provide for personnel and capital required to maintain operations of its information systems.

ALTERNATIVE TWO
Contract Service to the County Sheriff

This alternate strategy would have the Department contract services to Ygnacio County for support of its "records", "dispatch", and related information technology. The Department would no longer maintain local control of its information systems and, like many agencies through out the county, these services would be a centralized.

ALTERNATIVE THREE
West County Consolidation of Services

This alternate strategy would have the Department join in a consolidated effort to provide information services on a shared cost arrangement. In consideration of San Cristobal's organizational capability and established infra-structure, it would assume the

lead role in managing the consolidated information system that would serve the needs of the West County .

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

In carefully considered the three identified strategies the creating of a *West County Consolidation of Services* was targeted as the best strategy to employ for the San Cristabol Police Department. The decision was based on an examination of the three alternatives which weighed the pros and cons with the macro and micro mission statements for San Cristabol. In terms of the first strategy, it was decided that existing budgetary constraints would make it very difficult for San Cristobal to continue to maintain or enhance its information systems. It was also speculated that, absent any other consideration, the surrounding agencies would have little choice but to discontinue their existing operations and contract for services with the County. Eventually, this would leave San Cristobal as the lone agency providing its own services and with limited alternatives for the future.

The second alternative was the least attractive to San Cristobal and clearly lacked promise for its stake holders. The panel felt that, consistent with current County agreements, the San Cristobal Police Department would find it difficult to realize its mission statement and would be detached from accomplishing their goals and objectives. The panel also recognized that a contract agreement would force San Cristobal to more-or-less abandoned its employees to a County structure which would compromise their years of service and entitlement.

The third alternative was seen as one that allowed San Cristobal to maintain control of its destiny and potentially broaden the benefits of its mission/micro statements by including the surrounding agencies. Geographically, operationally and politically (stake holders), the consolidation of the communications and information

systems of the West County could provide a manageable and mutually beneficial alternative for all concerned. Interestingly, it was the consensus of those involved in this effort that, not withstanding the current economic motivation, a consolidation of information resources was an excellent idea whose time was long overdue.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The first effort in implementing this strategic plan would require the San Cristobal Chief of Police to initiate informal dialogue through the West County Chief's organization. During this meeting, the Chief would present the issue with general background and an overview of a strategy that has lead to the considered alternative. It would be important that the Chief be careful not to force his alternative onto the other Chiefs but to suggest that his initial purpose is to solicit whether or not there is an interest in exploring his recommendation further.

The Chief's initial actions would be followed by use of other for implementation technologies and include: (1) feasibility/cost analysis (2) a marketing plan, (3) and the creation of transition team which would be responsible the actual implementation process.

TRANSITION PLAN

CRITICAL MASS

The first step in establishing a sound transition plan is to identify those individuals and/or groups who, by virtue of their roles, could support the change that will be required to make this project successful. The origin of this group stems from the strategic plan which suggest involvement of line personnel, management, other City Departments, existing vendors of automation and business partners who would be

interested in the entrepreneurial spirit of this effort. It was from this group that a "critical mass" was identified with the knowledge that without their commitment the desired transition to the future would not occur.

- ~ Dispatch/Clerical Labor Manager - Local 790
- ~ Chief of Police - San Cristobal Police Department
- ~ City Manager - City of San Cristobal
- ~ Chief Executive Officer - ACME Technologies
- ~ Technical Services Commander - San Cristabol Police Department
- ~ Chief of Police - City of Byron

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Recognizing that the implementation of this project will contribute to substantial organizational change, it is reasonable to anticipate that a transition state will differ from the future state in terms of roles, tasks and resources. The transition state will likely require a separate structure and form of management appropriate to the uniqueness of this consolidation effort.

Initially, there was some consideration to managing the change at the "chief executive" level. However, neither the Chief, nor Bureau Commanders are in a position to personally manage the change, which would require considerable energy and a delegation of day-to-day operations to others on the management staff. In addition, the effort is sufficiently technical in its application to require specific knowledge in this area. Therefore, a "transition manager" method to managing change seems more ideal and expedient.

IMPLEMENTATION TECHNOLOGIES

To accomplish the implementation of this transition plan, several technologies, or "tools" will be employed to create the desired change. The timing of this effort has to be sensitive to this current state of the organization and, ideally, look for this opportunity to demonstrate continued progress in those areas of planning and communications.

The technologies tools used to support the implementation of change will include the following:

PLANNING. In much the same manner that an organization would activate a business plan, the transition plan will correlate its change to its vision and the mission of the organization. The Department will need to include the participating agencies in an affirmation of its micro mission statement.

COMMUNICATIONS. The scope of communications will include: formal written updates, formal presentations/updates, surveys requesting input, rewards/acknowledgement for persons contributing to the effort, regular planning/assessment meetings, and training.

RESPONSIBILITY CHARTING. All to frequently, good projects fail because of a lack of accountability and/or understanding as to who had responsibility for a particular effort. In order to avoid this pitfall, the "responsibility charting" tool will be employed. It is through the use of this tool that role relationships will be clarified as a means of reducing ambiguity, wasted energy and adverse reactions. The will also facilitate the ability of involved persons to work individually and as a team.

MANAGING THE NEUTRAL ZONE. The Neutral Zone is best described as the period of time between the current state and the desired state of a project implementation. Management of the Neutral Zone can and should include: practical

training, temporary redirection of other non-critical duties, shadowing by trainers during live application, phased implementation of project, and being sensitive to the learning curve of the individuals involved.

TRANSITION IMPLEMENTATION

In cooperation with the transition team the project manager will be responsible for identifying relevant issues, developing tactical goals and setting specific time frames for completion. Essentially, the task details can be broken into the three functional areas comprising *personnel, technology* and *operational* concerns. In addressing these particular task areas, the following information begins to identify sub-tasks that will become critical to accomplishing the objective of establishing the Bay View Information and Communications Center into a centralizing operation.

PERSONNEL:

Needs Analysis: The needs assessment will identify other tasks to be outlined, under the general scope of "personnel," and will likely consider the continued management structure under consolidation.

Council/Administrative Action: Dependent upon the agreements that might be reached with the new employees, there will need to be a modification of existing personnel rules with respect to each agency's Charter. Understandably, the bargaining units representing affected employee groups will be involved in the process and contribute to an amiable transition.

Employee Orientation: To minimize the anxieties associated with this transition of staff, an employee orientation will take place early within the established period. The orientation is intended to introduce staff to the various facets of the consolidated operations as they currently exist and are being considered for the future. It is suggested

that the orientation involve line personnel, supervisors and management from each of the participating agencies.

Dispatcher/Clerical Training: The San Cristobal Police Department currently has an established training course which is patterned after the POST - FTO (Field Training Officer) program for sworn personnel. In the interest of being consistent all new transition employees will receive the same training as previously provided for San Cristobal staff. However, it is recognized that it will be necessary for participating agencies to maintain their existing services until such time of a complete switch over to the regional center. Therefore, a modified training plan, which eventually covers the complete training program will have to be developed.

User Training: Beyond the training required of the support staff, there will be those persons who will need to benefit as "users". To this end, it is imperative that all field personnel have an adequate understanding of the entire work flow processes, from dispatch to information processing. The field training will cover dispatch protocol, equipment utilization, records/reporting, information access and adhoc report capabilities.

TECHNICAL:

Needs Analysis: It is likely that modification and enhancement will be required existing technologies to include both software and hardware considerations. This detailed analysis will need to understand changes that will be required for voice/data communications, telephones connections (including E911services), work space modification(s), remote field/site equipment, etc. In terms of establishing an accurate time frame for implementation, the technical considerations will likely impose the most stringent of limitations. Specifically, the technical implementation will most likely involve outside resources, e.g. vendors, and possibly require procurement steps that

some times difficult to determine and accountability is one step removed from the project management effort.

System Tables Development: Elemental to information technology design and structure are its system tables and files. Additional tables and files may be required of the centralized effort and will include: security access, ``user designator, unit response priority, permanent premise history, agency "info" listings, etc. In the developing of system tables and files, it will be important to consider standardized routines and procedures that will contribute to the full utility by all participating agencies.

Hardware Upgrade: Preliminarily, it appears that existing hardware at each participating site will have to be considered. Specifically, additional disk space for expanded information storage, remote terminal and printer capabilities, an increased memory expansion may be required. The remote capability is essential to San Cristobal's ability to handle the consolidated effort with a minimal increase in personnel. In this regard, it is understood that <u>all</u> agency participants will require adopt remote interface capabilities with the regional center.

Software Upgrade: The various information systems will need to be modified to provide them with multi-jurisdiction capabilities. The modifications should provide functionality that treats each jurisdiction separately for purposes of incident response, reporting and retrieval while allowing users to take advantage of established global information data bases.

<u>OPERATIONS</u>:

Needs Analysis: Once the hurdles of meeting the personnel and technical needs of this effort are met, the real issue will focus on the day-to-day operations. To date, participating agencies are dependent upon various policies, procedures and guidelines which ensure effective dispatch and information services. The challenge for securing the

success of this project will be to blend existing operational considerations into one homogeneous system which still manages to respect the needs and identities of each of the participating agencies.

Transition/Evaluation Team: The complexities of managing this project will require the collective understanding, input and talents of persons representing the individual interests of those participating agencies. The accomplishment of the various tasks, within the limited time frame, will also necessitate a balanced distribution of responsibilities. Crucial to the management of this undertaking will be the careful selection of the project manager who will have primary responsibility for confirming, coordinating and securing tasks completion in an systematic fashion. It is recommended that the designated project manager have a strong "working" knowledge of the technical and operational processes associated with San Cristobal's information technology and operational systems.

Protocol Development: It is the intent of this transition plan to closely look at all details associated with the information systems and provide a "joint dispatch operational manual". Prior to the implementation of this project, personnel will be trained from and provided a copy of the protocol manual. Although the issues to be addressed in the manual may seem insignificant by themselves, they become increasingly important when viewed from the perspective of providing consistency and understanding of what is expected from all concerned.

Project Evaluation: In order to attain those goals set forth for this effort, it will be important to develop tool(s) for measuring its accomplishment. Likewise, the continued success of this consolidated information system will require an on-going nurturing of the relationships between the participating agencies. A permanent body/committee will be established with the responsibility for monitoring the personnel, technical and

operational issues that will continue to influence the positive direction of the program. In short, this committee can play a key role in safeguarding against potential problems jeopardizing the on going success of this project.

In developing this transition plan, it should be understood that the early "needs analysis" for the given broad areas of concern will contribute to greater tasks detail, provide more specific time frames, and identify individual assignment/responsibilities. Again, this initial document is offered as a structure and starting point for those who will participate in the implementation of this project.

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATION FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

"What is the future of records/information management for small to medium law enforcement agencies by the year 2000?" To say the least, the future is quite promising and, unlike many futures, it is one that the law enforcement can readily impact. If the law enforcement community is successful in engineering the future of its information systems, it is perhaps the single most important change that will contribute to its future prosperity. If the later part of the 20th century saw a transformation to an information society, then the 21st century will be a society of "knowledge" with vast potential for addressing the social, economic, environmental concerns of the day.

In this study, the various *trends* suggested forecasts that, under the right circumstances, could prove beneficial to the law enforcement community. Likewise, the *events*, if influenced by good planned intervention and the conscious decision to affect change, could contribute to a promising future for law enforcement information systems. Ironically, it is the *trend* dealing with decreased levels of government

funding that becomes the pivotal element in possibly directing the future of this issue. The irony comes from the observation that, if economic times improve too soon, desired changes may not come about and existing forces will continue to contribute to the mis-management of law enforcement information resources.

However, if conditions remain the same, agencies will begin to benefit from a consolidation of personnel and economic resources that will allow them to make prudent investments in the information technology of the future. Ideally, the by-products of regionalization will allow for the creation of sound personnel infra-structures necessary to support the information systems of tomorrow. The challenge for the future is to seize this opportunity and re-evaluate our previous efforts, or lack thereof, to manage information. The first step in this direction will be to ensure that there is a commitment to the information systems and the discipline to properly manage this valuable resource.

Certainly, at one time or another, it has been heard from the scholars of law enforcement that "patrol" operations is the "back bone"of the organization. Interestingly, that cliche continues to typify the importance of the patrol officer as an invaluable resource. In a similar fashion, and in view of increased understanding of the value of information, a new cliche could be coined that describes "records" or a departments information services entity as the "organizational" mind. It is unlikely that these scholars of the past and hopefully of the future would take exception with this analogy.

~END NOTES~

1. Naisbitt, John. Megatrends. Warner Books, Inc., New York. 1984. page 1.

2. Wilson, O. W. Police Records. Public Administration Service, Chicago. 1951. page 1.

3. Waegemann, Peter C. "Redefining Records Management". The Records & Retrieval Report. Vol. 2/No.4 (April 1986).

4. Naisbitt, John. Megatrends. Warner Books, Inc., New York. 1984. page 17.

5. Tafoya, William L. The Futurist. Law Enforcement Beyond The Year 2000. September-October 1986.

6. Meltzer, Morton F. Information: The Ultimate Management Resource. AMACOM. New York. 1981. page 59-74.

7. Miller, Brian. "California's Info Tech Strategy. Government Technology. Vol. 6, Num. 3. Sacramento, CA. (March 1993).

8. Gordon, Theodore J. "The Current Methods of Futures Research". The Futurist, edited by Alvin Toffler. Random House, New York. 1972. page 164-189.

9. Symptom resulting from compression of a large nerve (the median nerve) as is passes through the tendinous "tunnel" of the wrist. Jones, Stephen, mgr. ed. Family Health & Medical Guide. Published by Hearst. USA. 1979. page 260.