

HOW WILL SMALL RURAL SHERIFFS' OFFICES IDENTIFY AND HIRE
QUALIFIED APPLICANTS BY 2007?

A project presented to
California Commission on
Peace Officer Standards and Training

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This Command College project is a FUTURES study of a particular emerging issue in law enforcement. Its purpose is NOT to protect the future, but rather to project a number of possible 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 future's study points the way.

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CHAPTER ONE

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

“Whenever you are asked if you can do a job, tell them, “certainly I can” then get busy and find out how to do it.”

Theodore Roosevelt

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.”

John F. Kennedy

Introduction

Recruiting qualified entry-level law enforcement candidates is one of the most critical issues facing law enforcement agencies today, as well as in the future. Presently, the majority of law enforcement agencies recruit from the same pool of applicants: military bases, local colleges, regional job fairs and other law enforcement agencies and the community at large. Current recruitment efforts include increased education requirements and the need to attract recruits who are ethnically representative of the communities they will serve. Future factors will also include issues such as specialized skill employees, urbanization and the political environment. Additionally, recruitment efforts need to focus on applicants who possess problem solving and interpersonal skills, honesty, the ability to be a team player, and who are technically competent, self-motivated and physically fit.

As technology advances and the value of problem solving or community-oriented policing increases, the demand for specialized police service also increases. Qualified candidates must be educated, effective communicators who understand the value of linkage to government and community resources. Recruitment of qualified, diverse applicants who can meet the standards of modern policing is a significant challenge (Light, 2000).

The new demands placed on law enforcement agencies have a direct impact on recruiting, as a variety of new skills will be needed to provide an acceptable level of service to the

community. With the changing trends in crimes, demographics, technology and community expectations, agencies must be visionary about the way they recruit to provide the needed labor force. Law enforcement agencies must be more systematic and deliberate about the population they target to fill the ranks. To recruit for the future officer, agencies must answer some basic questions, such as:

- What is currently being done and is it working?
- What are our needs today? Tomorrow? One year from now or five years from now?
- Who do we recruit?
- Who will do the recruiting?
- Where will we find the recruit we have identified?
- How/where will we advertise?
- What incentives will we offer?
- What are the positive/negative internal factors that will affect recruiting efforts?
- What are the positive/negative external factors that will affect recruiting efforts?

It is the mission of law enforcement agencies to protect life and property, preserve peace and apprehend criminal offenders. Law enforcement will be successful in accomplishing this mission only by hiring and training qualified personnel (Law Enforcement Online 2001). Law enforcement agencies of all sizes have similar concerns and face similar challenges when it comes to recruitment. This is particularly true in small, rural sheriffs' offices. There is a sense of urgency to maintain acceptable minimum staffing levels. Agencies must be able to adapt and change from the more traditional methods of recruitment to attain a progressive strategy which will maintain a steady flow of candidates to law enforcement.

Law enforcement is a unique profession. It demands that officers confront the darker side of human nature, to be compassionate when dealing with victims of traumatic life changes, to apprehend criminals, to solve crimes and to remain professional and civil under close public scrutiny (Lippert, 2001). To be successful in attaining these goals, peace officers must possess certain traits. In his article, "Use of Unauthorized Force by Law Enforcement Personnel: Problems, Solutions," Walter Lippert states, " the profession requires the recruitment of a special kind of person, possession of high standards and personal qualities, a high level of intelligence, a sincere interest in community service, and values reflecting those of the organization." Only with such recruitment can an agency work towards reducing the use of unauthorized force (Lippert, 2001).

Over the next decade there will be a decrease in both the number and percentage of high school graduates who fall within the age range of most police applicants. The severe shortage of qualified applicants may result in some departments being dissolved (Osborne, 1992).

Management philosophy must change if it is going to survive and become competitive in the recruitment business. We live in a period of profound transitions. The changes that are taking place are more radical than perhaps any other changes in history. The challenges ahead are perhaps greater than those presented in the 19th Century Industrial Revolution, by the Great Depression or by the Second World War. These changes require managers to examine the basic assumptions, or paradigms of reality, for it is likely that the old assumptions about reality are wrong (Drucker, 1999). Everything that affects the performance of an institution, whether or not it is within the organization's sphere of influence, will be an issue of concern in the new century.

Unfortunately, the old assumptions have outlived their usefulness. Organizations must, therefore, rethink the assumptions and formulate new ones, more in line with 21st century reality. First, forget the notion that management is business management. In the new century management skills can be applied to activities not traditionally considered business, such as recruitment (Drucker, 1999).

According to Drucker the notion that there is only one organizational form or hierarchy is wrong. There must be a leader in every organization and the organization must have a structure in place. That structure depends upon the nature of the enterprise. One size does not fit all. Drucker states that another dying paradigm is that employees must be managed, employees must be led, and, in addition employees must be treated as if they are volunteers, not employees. Potential recruits want more than a paycheck, they seek interesting and rewarding work, and are inspired by those who lead and not command them (Drucker, 1999).

The idea of having to recruit qualified applicants is foreign to many. After all, it wasn't long ago when it was thought that most people would come to a sheriffs' office if they wanted to be a deputy sheriff. It was believed if these people wanted to be deputies bad enough, they would simply wait until they were hired. Times are changing. People entering the job market today think differently. Many people tend to look at entry-level positions as a job rather than the start of a new career. The pool of peace officers has declined in the past decade (Smith, 2001).

A once steady stream of peace officer applicants has dried up as prospective peace officers find their way to other sectors of the labor market. Police agencies are struggling to hire officers for vacant positions while maintaining qualified current employees to sustain acceptable staffing levels (Graham, 2001). However, hiring the right person for the job means more than

filling vacant seats in a patrol car. A thorough investigation of each prospective candidate ensures he or she meets minimum standards.

When looking at recruitment, several factors affect law enforcement organizations on a physiological level. First, when staffing levels are low, the overall workload for all sworn officers is affected. There is more territory for each officer to cover per shift. This leads to the following considerations: decreased morale, increase workload and longer shifts, more officers taking time off due to fatigue related injuries or sickness, decrease of the availability for officers to take earned vacation time, and less time available for officers to attend seminars and conferences to keep their education requirements up to date (Bernal, 2001).

Today's employees expect to change jobs and careers several times during their working lives. Prospective employees today are also better informed. The amount of information available at their fingertips is staggering. As a result, employees are apt to be less patient and tolerant with jobs they find undesirable. Employees today tend to want more and to want it more quickly. When this doesn't happen, they are more vocal about their displeasure.

The job market is changing as well; unemployment rates have been low and jobs have been plentiful. However, in view of the September 11, 2001 incident involving the World Trade Center and the financial impact on the national economy, unemployment hit 5.4 percent, which is reportedly the highest since 1996 (San Diego Union Tribune, Nov. 3, 2001).

Nationally, employment in many fields (including public safety) are experiencing huge retirement based attrition rates. The competition for qualified candidates is very stiff. It is believed it will get even more competitive. Many people are applying for employment at several agencies simultaneously and will accept the first offer. Employers from private and public sectors are using a number of strategies to hire qualified personnel. Paid moving incentives,

signing bonuses and delayed hiring programs are seen on a regular basis in advertisements (PORAC News 2000). Competitive pay and benefit packages are now considered key to attracting and keeping good employees. Because of these changes, employers are now having to take their messages to candidates rather than sitting back and waiting for candidates to come knocking at their doors. Care must be taken in the way these messages are presented as well. Perception plays a significant role in the decisions candidates make about potential employers.

The image of a police officer today differs considerably from 10 years ago. People entering the job market today have watched extensive coverage of “worse case scenario” events. Some of these include the Rodney King case, the O.J. Simpson trial or cases where police officers have been convicted for crimes they committed while on duty. All of these detract from the professionalism and respect previously associated with police work. It is reasonable to assume that prospective applicants are taking notice of the media attention given to these events. The manner in which to best train and qualify new police officers remains a subject of intense debate.

A framework called “The Model Precinct” suggests a partnership between police agencies and area universities and colleges that would enable law enforcement agencies to offer a more meaningful method of educating future law enforcement candidates (Greenberg, 1998). This is a program currently used today in colleges, by the military, called Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) in which young college students are exposed to military regime.

On September 11, 2001 when terrorists crashed two commercial airliners into the World Trade Center, there were approximately 3,000 people killed and/or missing. Many of these were police officers and firefighters for the city of New York (Imperial Valley Press, Sept. 13, 2001). This tragic incident has placed considerable focus on the importance of police officers and

firefighters in our daily lives. This unfortunate incident may ultimately reflect favorably on the recruitment applicant pools of the public safety industry.

This project will view the problem confronting many small, rural sheriffs' offices in the recruitment of peace officers. The classification of peace officers in this study includes all sworn law enforcement officers at the county level.

In this chapter, we have identified the specific problems dealing with the applicant pool in law enforcement. Many experts have cited many reasons for this draining of the potential applicant pool. We have learned that potential candidates, attitudes, needs and goals have changed over the last several years. In Chapter Two we will discuss Trends and Events that will have an impact or influence the way small rural sheriffs' offices identify and hire qualified candidates by the year 2007.

CHAPTER TWO

FUTURES STUDY

Nominal Group Technique

In an effort to collect pertinent data relative to the issue statement, a Nominal Group Technique (NGT) involving nine participants was conducted.

A Nominal Group Technique is a structured process usually facilitated by a third party. The process identifies and ranks trends and events affecting the issue statement. It is also used for managing participation in the process, scenario planning, ranking the trends and events in their significance and importance relative to their impact on the issue statement.

The purpose of the NGT is to eliminate social and psychological dynamics of group behavior which tend to impact individual creativity and participation in group decisions. Prior to the beginning of the session, the panelists were provided a background on Command College, the intent of the Command College project and the guidelines for conducting and participating in the Nominal Group Technique. Upon arrival at the Training Center, a suggested agenda for the afternoon's events was shared with the panel.

- Step 1 was to create individual silent generation of ideas in writing
- Step 2 was the recording and a round-robin discussion listing ideas on a flip-chart, without discussion
- Step 3 was the clarification and discussion of each item on the chart
- Step 4 was the preliminary vote on priorities
- Step 5 was the discussion of preliminary vote
- Step 6 was the final voting on the priorities

The NGT exercise had two parts. Part One identified trends and part two identified events. The same six steps were used in both exercises.

In the pre-meeting correspondence that was sent to the panelists, they were informed that the session would be similar to a brainstorming session, yet more structured and more focused. The session would specifically identify trends and events relative to the issue statement that was provided to the panelists. In the literature and on site at the session, a trend was defined as a series of incidents taking place which seem to indicate a direction. It's based on the past, present or future and can be quantitative or qualitative. Trends can be positive or negative and should be simple observations. Trends are also identified as estimations of social, technological, environmental, economical and political characteristics over time. The panelists were instructed to look and think on a local, regional, national and international level.

Events were identified as being different from trends in that they are singular occurrences. Events occurred at specific times and dates. The events identified can be actual situations that have occurred or can occur, asking the panelists to use their imagination. The events may be positive or negative and the panelist's opinion has a significant impact on the issue. Events are unambiguous and confirmable when they occur. The future is different. Event statements need to be unambiguous.

An analogy was made to define trends and events as: a trend is a river that continually flows and may change direction. An event is a rock thrown into the center of the river which will create disruption. Again, the impact of the event, in this case, would be based on the size of the rock and the depth and speed of the water or the extent of the trend. The participants are identified in Appendix A. The participants included:

1. Assistant Director of Human Resources, County of Imperial

2. Director of Human Resources, City of Calexico, California
3. Assistant Director of Human Resources, Imperial Irrigation District
4. Chairperson for Workforce Investment Board
5. Vice-President of Human Resources, Government Agencies Federal Credit Union
6. Sergeant, Imperial County Sheriffs' Office
7. Analyst for Youth Program, Workforce Investment Board
8. Chief Deputy, Imperial County Sheriffs' Office
9. Interagency Steering Committee Coordinator, Imperial County Office of Education

Trends

A total of 46 trends were identified in the initial discussion through continued group analysis and exchange of ideas. After two rounds of voting and discussion by the panelists, the following eight trends were identified for their significance. A complete list of trends may be found in Appendix B.

1. Level of qualifications of candidates.
2. Level of work ethic.
3. Employees willing to change agencies.
4. Privatization of law enforcement responsibilities.
5. Level of management and union conflicts.
6. Level of complexity of hiring procedures.
7. Level of visibility of law enforcement in the community.
8. Number of agencies applied to simultaneously.

The panelists were asked to compare the trends against one another and rate their relative impact on the issue statement and rate their relevance to each other with a numerical score. The

ratings were placed on a graph relative to three dimensions: The trends were rated 5 years in the past, 5 years into the future and 10 years into the future. A base line figure of 100 was used to represent present status of the trend in order to project the future levels. The methodology used for the following figures was based on the mean. The following summary trend table displays eight trends based on these dimensions.

Trend Summary Table

	- 5 Years	Today	+5 Years	+10 Years	Concern
Trend #1 Level of qualifications of candidates	120	100	75	50	9
Trend #2 Level of work ethic	120	100	80	90	9
Trend #3 Employees willing to change agencies	80	100	125	150	8
Trend #4 Privatization of law enforcement responsibilities	100	100	125	130	7
Trend #5 Level of management & union conflicts	100	100	125	130	7
Trend #6 Level of complexity of hiring procedures	65	100	150	200	9
Trend #7 Level of visibility of law enforcement in the community	100	100	100	80	8
Trend #8 Number of agencies applied to simultaneously	75	100	125	80	9

Table 1

The column titled Concern is listed to express the participants' rating of that trend on a one-to-ten basis with the rating of 10 being the most and the rating of one being the least.

- Trend 1 – Level of qualifications of candidates – it was the consensus of the panel, that based on the declining values of today's society, it is acceptable for an individual to use recreational drugs and to have minor criminal behavior in their background. However, this is not acceptable for a law enforcement applicant. The panelists feared that due to the influx of this type of black marks on individual's background, agencies would be required to lower the bar for entry-level positions. Several of the panelists made comments that it was their opinion that applicants would lie during the polygraph examination and, subsequently, be disqualified from employment. Any one of these incidents or a combination will disqualify an applicant from police work. One panelist commented that the applicant pools today are represented by applicants who have more education than they had several years ago, yet they are lacking in the overall life experiences that employers experienced 25 years ago. The panelists thought that there really are fewer people to choose from who possess the experience and are willing to gain that experience. Applicants want to go from the front door to the boardroom, overnight.
- Trend 2 – Level of work ethic – the panelists thought this was an issue dealing with the younger generation, often referred to as Generation X. These youngsters come to the work place with no long-term loyalty in mind. They have a what's in it for me attitude. They continually, as one panelist said, rock the ship or create obstacles for management. It was the panelist's opinion that a Gen Xer would be a short-term employee. Once the applicant receives the minimum training standards, the applicant will be job shopping and leaving the smaller agency. In some cases, lying or cheating is acceptable behavior.

- Trend 3 – Employees willing to change agencies – one panelist used the phrase, it's an occupation, it is no longer a career. It was the opinion of several panelists that the new officer will stay with a small department until he or she successfully passes probation, receive a basic POST Certificate and then go on to a larger department for more money and more available resources. One of the panelists reported that there were several officers they knew of, with less than five years of service who had worked for five different agencies. One of the panelists made a comment that with today's employees, loyalty is only skin deep.
- Trend 4 – Privatization of law enforcement responsibilities – the panelists discussed the ever growing trend of private security services, gated communities and part-time law enforcement officers providing those responsibilities and duties normally carried out by full time officers. One panelist indicated that in her opinion law enforcement is becoming so stressed and unable to provide these services, people have taken the initiative of hiring security officers to provide duties normally provided by a public entity. The same panelist suggested that if this trend continues, law enforcement resources could be reduced and possibly eliminated.
- Trend 5 – Level of management and union conflicts – the group thought low morale contributed to officers not focusing on what they are supposed to be doing because of their perception that management is taking advantage of them. It was the general consensus that employees dispute managerial prerogatives and they want to run the place instead of letting management run the operation. They can't focus on what their mission is supposed to be. In short, there were too many chiefs and not enough Indians. The entire panel indicated that increased union activities exacerbate the feeling of diversion. The panel expressed concern that employees don't understand management rights and it was the general consensus that new employees thought management should negotiate on every issue. There is a general

dislike among employees that management has some managerial prerogatives, they can do things because they are management, particularly in view of Assembly Bill 301. Penal Code 3300 spells out the peace officer bill of rights. It was the opinion of the law enforcement representatives on the panel that this stymied effective management. Comments were made that most of the administrative duties deal with personnel issues such as discipline or grievances and not planning organizational goals. One of the senior law enforcement agents on the panel felt that law enforcement unions in California had lobbying power at the state level. He thought that, at the current rate of laws being passed that favor unions, it will be difficult to continue to focus on providing public safety.

- Trend 6 – Level of complexity of hiring procedures – the participants of the panel were unanimous in their opinion that the hiring procedure for law enforcement officers is a long, drawn out process that usually takes a minimum of a year from the initial application until the officer is sitting behind the wheel of a patrol car. This process involves the entry-level test, an oral interview, a physical agility test, a psychological test, an extensive background investigation and, in some cases, several oral boards of inquiry. It was the consensus that because of this long, drawn out procedure, the Generation X individuals who are representative of the applicant pool today are low in tolerance, low in patience and they want immediate gratification or immediate answers to their questions. The panel thought that if something were not done to streamline the hiring process, the problem would exacerbate in a negative manner.
- Trend 7 – Level of visibility of law enforcement in the community – discussion centered around the enhancement of the image of the sheriffs’ office compared to other law enforcement agencies’ image. It was suggested that the sheriffs’ office be redefined,

externally as well as internally. One panelist commented, and several others agreed, that recently at a career fair, the California Highway Patrol was present, the fire departments were highly visible, but there were no sheriffs or other law enforcement agencies represented. It is this kind of example which suggests that higher visibility will make law enforcement more marketable. If the prestige of the sheriffs' office versus other law enforcement agencies is improved, there is a possibility that potential applicants can be lured to the department.

- Trend 8 – Number of agencies applied to simultaneously – the panelists stated that applicants were applying at more than one agency at the same time and would accept the first employment offer. By doing this, it creates unnecessary work for those agencies that were not successful in hiring the candidate. The panelists thought this trend would stabilize after ten years and they could not explain why they had come to this conclusion.

Events

Upon completion of the discussion on trends, the participants were again provided with a description of an event and informed that the same methodology would be used to identify events and the impact they would have on the issue statement. The group identified 33 total events which would likely occur in the next ten years. After two rounds of voting and discussion by the panelists, the following seven events were identified for their significance to the remaining 28 trends and a consensus was reached with the following seven events having the most significance on the issue statement. A complete list of events may be found in Appendix C.

1. Military draft reinstated with branch selection option.
2. Local law enforcement academy created.
3. Statewide pay scale established for all law enforcement.
4. A private prison built in Imperial County.

5. Hiring age lowered to 18 years of age.
6. Mandatory pre-employment polygraph eliminated by law.
7. Mandated law enforcement curriculum in grades 7 through 12.

The panelists were asked to assign numerical values to the events in order to portray their importance and impact on the issue statement. The summary event table that follows charts these events along five dimensions. The first column identifies the earliest the participants believed the event could occur. The second column identifies the estimated likelihood expressed in a percentage that the event would occur within five years from today. The third column identifies the likelihood, again, expressed in percentage that the event would occur 10 years from today. The fourth column expresses whether the panelists believed that the event would have a positive or negative effect on the issue statement. The methodology used for the following figures was based on the mean. A rating scale of -5 to +5 was used for the impact column.

Event Summary Table

	Years>0	5 Years	+10 Years	Impact +5 to -5
Event #1 Military draft reinstated with branch selection option	6	0%	50%	+3
Event #2 Local law enforcement academy created	5	80%	100%	+4
Event #3 Statewide pay scale established for all law enforcement	3	100%	100%	-3
Event #4 A private prison built in Imperial County	5	50%	60%	-3
Event #5 Hiring age lowered to 18 years of age	10	0%	30%	+3
Event #6 Mandatory pre- employment polygraphs eliminated by law	5	0%	25%	-5
Event #7 Mandated law enforcement curriculum in grades 7-12	10	0%	100%	+3

Table 2

- Event 1 - Military draft reinstated with branch selection option – the panelists believed that if the military draft were reinstated and the inductees were allowed to select their military branch of service, it would ultimately be beneficial to the issue statement. Several panelists made the observation that when the draft was discontinued in the early ‘70s law enforcement lost the applicants with military experience. The transition from military to law enforcement is a natural jump, yet when the draft was discontinued, that applicant pool dried up. As a result the applicants who used to be able to say, I can be a cop, or I like the regimented

discipline of law enforcement, disappeared. The panelists thought this event; during the last 25 to 30 years had a significant impact. The panelists felt there was a 50% chance that the draft would be reinstated within ten years.

- Event 2 - Local law enforcement academy created – overwhelmingly, the panelists saw this event as having a major significance and a positive impact on the issue and the earliest it can happen is five years. Currently, the trend by local agencies in this jurisdiction is to send recruits to a police academy approximately 150 miles away. This causes considerable hardship on the officer and his family, as well as additional expenses. The panel thought that if a local academy were established, there would be a joint sharing for instructional purposes and resources, as well as dispersing the cost to multiple agencies. It would also provide local ownership.
- Event 3 – Statewide pay scale established for all law enforcement – the panelists felt strongly this would occur and would happen in approximately three years. They made the analogy of the military having an established pay rate, regardless of the location or the branch of service the individual was serving in. They saw this as a positive event because officers would no longer be looking to the larger departments that have the capability of paying higher salaries.
- Event 4 – A private prison built in Imperial County – the panel suggested the earliest this can happen is five years and it will have a negative effect on the issue. The panelists believed that a private prison would draw from the applicant pool; it would be much easier to get hired at a private prison than a public entity because of the mandatory testing requirements and background checks. The private prison hiring procedures are much faster and less restrictive than public entities.

- Event 5 – Lower the hiring age to 18 years – the earliest this can occur, according to the panel, would be in 10 years and would have a positive effect, because they thought some individuals, after graduation from high school, would be ripe for the picking, in one of the panelist’s words. This was also viewed as a natural connection with Event 7, Mandated law enforcement curriculum in grades 7 through 12, which would entice younger people to come into the law enforcement field.
- Event 6 – Mandatory pre employment polygraphs eliminated by law – the panelists saw this event as having a completely negative effect on law enforcement in general. They saw this as one of the last means of protection in an effort to maintain the high standards for quality officers. However, they did think that this would not happen within five years due to political pressure. If in fact it happens, it will have a negative impact on law enforcement due to the inability to screen out those individuals who will be less than truthful.
- Event 7 – Mandated law enforcement curriculum in grades 7 through 12 – the panelists believed that a curriculum of school-to-career will have a positive impact because it will familiarize youngsters in grades 7 through 12 with the law enforcement field and provide them with a general background of the functions of sheriffs’ deputies in the county. The panel thought it would be a natural jump into that chosen field if the student were so inclined.

Cross Impact Analysis

The Cross Impact Analysis is a tool to evaluate how events may affect trends. The analysis asks the question, “if this event was to happen, what would be the impact on this trend?” The eight trends and seven events are compared against each other. The panelists were asked to evaluate each of the trends versus the events using a scale of –5 to +5 as the parameters. For example, a rating of +5 indicates the panelist thought the event would have a maximum positive impact on

the trend. Conversely, a –5 rating indicates the event would have a negative effect. The Cross Impact Analysis (Table 3) shows several zeros indicating that it was the panel’s opinion that the event would not impact the trend in any significant way, although there was discussion.

Cross Impact Analysis Matrix

	Trend #1 Level of qualifications of applicants	Trend #2 Level of work ethic	Trend #3 Employees willing to change agencies	Trend #4 Privatization of law enforcement responsibilities	Trend #5 Level of management & union conflicts	Trend #6 Level of complexity of hiring procedures	Trend #7 Level of visibility of law enforcement in community	Trend #8 Number of agencies applied to simultaneously
Event #1 Military draft reinstated with branch selection option	+5	+4	+4	+4	+3	0	+3	+2
Event #2 Local law enforcement academy created	+5	+2	+1	+2	0	-2	+3	0
Event #3 Statewide pay scale established for all law enforcement	+4	0	0	-4	0	+1	+2	+3
Event #4 A private prison built in Imperial County	+4	-2	0	+5	+2	+5	0	-4
Event #5 Hiring age lowered to 18 years of age	+5	+3	+3	0	+3	+5	+4	+4
Event #6 Mandatory pre-employment polygraphs eliminated by law	-5	-5	-5	0	-5	-4	0	+3
Event #7 Mandated law enforcement curriculum in grades 7-12	+5	+5	0	-4	0	+3	+5	+2

Table 3

The following three events were identified as the most significant:

- Event 1 – Military draft reinstated with branch selection option - the panelists identified this event as having the most impact on all the trends in a positive nature. It was the panel's consensus that, initially, it would have a negative effect, however, after several years the applicant pool will become richer with qualified candidates; there would be an esprit de corps for a higher standard of work ethics. Individual loyalty over department loyalty will be lessened because of a sense of dedication and the military bearing of those applicants coming from a military organization who will be more inclined to go to work for a paramilitary organization opposed to a private institution. The panelists felt there would be a deeper sense of loyalty to the organization than to the union, thereby having a positive effect.
- Event 2 – Local law enforcement academy created – the panelists, after much discussion, identified this as a significant event. It was their opinion that considerable time, money and energy was being allocated to sending applicants to an academy outside the local geographic boundaries. It was their consensus that applicants would either fail to participate or fail to complete the regime involved at the academy because of stress, such as family demands. Imperial County does not currently have a local academy. The panel thought it would act as an incentive or enticement for people to join law enforcement. Additionally, there would be local stakeholders who could influence the direction of the philosophy of the academy, such as community oriented policing programs and cultural sensitivity training.
- Event 5 - Hiring age lowered to 18 years old - the panelists saw this as a significant event with a low probability of occurring. They believed that if the hiring age was lowered to 18 years of age, the applicant pool would become deeper and richer, thereby, allowing law enforcement to capture the 18 to 21 year olds before they became involved in a different

career path. The panelists thought that the younger the applicant, the stronger the work ethic, having a positive impact on trend 2, as well as the younger the person, the easier it will be to curry their loyalty. The panelists saw this as a significant impact and rated it as a +4 as it related to trend 7, Level of visibility of law enforcement in the community and trend 8, Number of agencies applied to simultaneously.

Again, similar to Event 1 and the impact of trend 5, a similar argument was made regarding trend 5 with respect to lowering the hiring age to 18 years old. The panelists again thought that lowering the hiring age would have a positive effect on trend 5, Management and Union Conflict. It was their opinion that 18 year olds are coming from a hierarchical system, high school and possibly college, going into a paramilitary organization, and they will be more understanding of management needs as opposed to those of the union. It was their opinion that individuals in their early 20s became somewhat rebellious and resistant to change.

- Event 6 - Mandatory pre-employment polygraphs eliminated by law – this event is one that had significant negative ratings across the board. It was the panel’s belief that state mandated polygraphs in use today are a filtering system used to weed out less than qualified candidates. The panelists also commented that if there were no requirements for polygraphs then the work ethic would be on the slippery slope, thereby having a negative impact on trend 2. It was also the panel’s opinion that the polygraphs, by some means, are able to determine individual loyalty over department loyalty and also rated it as a negative impact. They felt it was a character issue. There was a zero impact on the privatization trend; however, they saw it as having a very negative impact on the management and union conflicts. In general, they saw this event as being the most significant in a negative nature to

all the trends that were listed and commented this is the worst event that could possibly happen to local law enforcement.

Scenarios of the Future

The events and trends generated from the Nominal Group exercise can be used to develop alternative futures. As a component of the analysis of the NGT, scenarios are developed to provide a sense of realism for a potential future. Scenarios are commonly accepted as a means of bringing the events and trends into alignment through a story. The scenarios identify a possible future of realism, pessimism and optimism. Each of these three scenarios is based on trends or events generated from the panel's discussions.

Optimistic Scenario

The Washington Post reported on August 15, 2012 the final passage of the military budget that included \$1.2 billion dollars to reinstate the military draft. However, this draft will be somewhat different in that it will allow draftees to select the branch of the military in which they want to serve.

The mandatory draft was discontinued in the summer of 1973. The proponents of an all-volunteer army boasted that the quality of those entering the military would be of a stronger moral fiber. The opponents argued the military force and strength of the armed services would be compromised and this would eventually lead to a nation that was vulnerable to attack from our enemies.

On the local front, our elected and appointed officials who lead our law enforcement agencies and fire services see this as a windfall of human resources. Sheriff Carter is excited about the new requirements for young men and women. The Sheriff indicated the benefits would take several years to realize. As a matter of fact, there would be something of a void before true

benefits are reaped. Carter explained the draft would have an initial impact on his hiring pool, yet when these young men and women have completed their two-year military commitment, they will enter the job market with better life skills and experiences. Carter also argues that with the existing 28 percent vacancy in the law enforcement ranks in Imperial County, something had to be done to relieve the critical shortfall of qualified applicants and he sees this as a long-term solution to a persistent problem. Joe Big Dog, the Chief Researcher at Who Cares University, suggests that research has indicated that terminations are higher, job tenure was shorter and on-the-job injuries are higher since the draft was discontinued 28 years ago. Mr. Big Dog believes that reinstatement of the draft will have a significant positive impact on the labor pool.

Pessimistic Scenario

Joe Politician, the Governor of California, on July 15, 2007, signed and passed into law a new minimum wage standard for law enforcement officers in the state of California. This new law will also include the fire services. It is reported that Imperial County will have to lay off 35 officers due to the increase of the minimum wage. Sheriff Carter indicated he is meeting daily with the county officials concerning this new law. According to Carter, it will destroy his existing budget and have a significant negative impact on the general fund of the County of Imperial. Sheriff Carter, along with the Chiefs of Police in the county are very worried they will have to contact the Governor's office and request state and federal aid. Sheriff Carter has been selected to represent the local officials in this matter. It is anticipated this action will cost the local taxpayers in excess of \$1.5 million dollars a year. Carter explains that the money is definitely a concern and will create a shortfall of the budget, thereby, requiring layoffs of public safety employees and impact the safety of this community.

Sheriff Carter reports there is currently a 32 percent unemployment rate in Imperial County. This figure includes the entire work force. The law enforcement community in Imperial County is currently experiencing a 28 percent vacancy in the ranks of its officers. Local agencies have been actively recruiting, yet they are still unable to fill their existing ranks. They believe this new law will deepen the applicant pool because of so many layoffs. Local union representatives have hailed this decision as a milestone for employee rights. They maintain that the stress of being a law enforcement officer is high, accompanied by early death to retirees. They also suggest this decision will attract better-qualified candidates to the law enforcement arena. Carter dismisses this rhetoric as self-serving and one sided. He argues that the safety of the community will be at risk and is unsure if they will be able to provide the needed level of service for the taxpayers.

Realistic Scenario

January 15, 2012, Imperial County Sheriff Harold Carter, announces the creation of a local law enforcement academy. Sheriff Carter, in a prepared press release, stated that after approximately one year of negotiations, a joint powers agreement (JPA) was signed by the seven municipal governments in Imperial County along with the County of Imperial. Sheriff Carter reports that this joint powers agreement will support and encourage, through staffing and financial resources, a local Peace Officer Standard and Training (POST) certified law enforcement basic academy. This academy will be located south of Imperial Valley College and will be managed by a staff officer of the Sheriffs' Office. Sheriff Carter reports that during the last five years, the officer turnover rate in Imperial County has been 35 percent. Currently, according to Sheriff Carter, from the date of hire it takes approximately one year for an officer to become completely independent in a patrol function. Previously, when an officer was hired by a

local agency, he or she was sent to six-month police academy in Riverside, California, approximately 150 miles north of Imperial County. According to Carter and local Chief of Police, Joe Big Dog, this travel is stressful to the officer, not only emotionally, but also physically. They indicate they have lost officers in the transition period because of the separation from their families.

Additionally, according to Chief Big Dog, local officers will be able to provide instruction at the academy, thereby developing some local sense of community values. It is anticipated this will be a cost-neutral endeavor for both the county and the local cities. All those parties at the press conference indicated they were pleased and very hopeful the academy would provide a source of pride to the local officers and the community. Sheriff Carter suggested the academy should be operational within six months; applications are already being received.

In this chapter, the Nominal Group Technique was utilized to provide trends and events that have impact and influence on the issue of how will small rural sheriffs' offices identify and hire qualified applicants by the year 2007. Three scenarios were also presented as possibilities. In Chapter Three, we will identify three strategic initiatives that will address the issue of hiring qualified applicants.

CHAPTER THREE

STRATEGIC PLANNING

“The general who wins the battle, makes many calculations in his temple, before the battle is fought. The general who loses makes few calculations beforehand.

Sun Tzu

“Trying to predict the future is like trying to drive down a country road at night with no lights, while looking out the back window.”

Peter Drucker

Introduction

Strategic planning is the process of determining what your organization intends to accomplish and how you would direct the organization and its resources toward accomplishing these goals in the coming months and years.

Such planning involves fundamental choices about the mission that the department will pursue as well as its role in the community. Decisions must be made as to who will be serviced and the kinds of programs and services that will be offered. Resources must be identified which will be needed to succeed: people, money, expertise, and facilities. Above all, a determination must be made as to how a combination of all these ingredients may be made to accomplish the organization’s goals (Barry, 1998).

Law enforcement is often caught up in a controlled chaos that saturates the five o’clock news. Resource management is disaster-driven with organizations becoming more reactive than proactive. Planning for the future is a complex process that takes more time and order. It requires visions and goals. Environmental scanning of certain events and signals help define a certain future that must be interpreted for significance (Slaughter, 1995).

Scanning is an essential element of the strategic planning process. Failure to recognize and plan for an anticipated future results in reactive leadership, ineffective use of resources and an organization that is unable to move forward (Rubenstein, 1999).

Moshe Rubenstein, co-author of The Minding Organization, defines a minding organization as one that is willing to bring the future to the present and include all involved in the change to the planning table early. “The leadership of the minding organization must focus on the purpose of creating material value, but it must always be mindful of the need to cultivate social and spiritual values in the organization” (Rubenstein, 1999).

The word strategy or stratagem comes from the Greek; stratos meaning an army and agein meaning to lead. Strategy is total processes by which one effectively leads an army or marshals one’s forces to accomplish an objective. It’s not static, but rather represents an ongoing quality of leadership of the organization. A strategy is a continuously adapting integration of both external and internal resources and opportunities (Whipple, 1997).

Strategic plans can be complex and convoluted libraries of manuals, or they can be problem specific, identifying one problem within an organization. The planning process starts by asking the authors several questions.

- What is the mission of the organization?
- How do we accomplish that mission?
- Is there a problem or issue preventing accomplishing the mission or issue?
- What are the solutions to the problem or issues?

The nominal group technique provided insight into specific trends and events that would address the issue statement. Most small, rural sheriffs’ offices today do not have anyone

specifically assigned to the recruitment process. This is usually a collateral duty assigned to a training officer. The strategic plan will answer those previously mentioned questions.

- Mission of a small, rural sheriffs' office is to protect and serve the public and make the county a safe place to live and raise children.
- In order to accomplish this mission, an agency must be able to recruit qualified men and women in a law enforcement capacity.
- Is there a problem? Yes. Small, rural law enforcement agencies are unable to attract and retain those qualified individuals.
- The solution to the problem is to develop a strategic plan including initiatives that will allow these small agencies to attract and recruit those individuals in order to accomplish the mission.

Assessing the Organization

One of the most difficult things for any organization to do is an objective self-analysis. The organization must seek to answer questions such as where are we today, where do we want to be and, how will we get there? In order to accomplish this, a WOTS underlying planning (weakness, opportunities, threats, strengths) analysis model was employed to address these concerns (Esensten, 2001).

For the purposes of this project, the model agency will be the Imperial County Sheriffs' Office that has over 250 total employees. One hundred and eighty are sworn officers, 79 of those are correctional officers, the remaining positions are professional/technical employees. The operating budget of the department is approximately 20 million dollars.

Imperial County has approximately 4,597 square miles. The estimated population of Imperial County is 142,000. Approximately 43,000 of the total population reside outside city limits.

The Imperial County Sheriffs' Office has five sub-stations: Winterhaven, Brawley, Palo Verde, Niland and Salton City. Resident deputies in Palo Verde, Salton City and Ocotillo are required to live in those communities.

There are seven incorporated cities within the county that have their own police departments. There are eight unincorporated cities that require direct police services. There is no local POST Academy in Imperial County, and as a result, the Sheriffs' Office and local police departments are required to send new, untrained officers out of county for training.

Strengths

- Officers have the ability to receive recognition
- Officers have loyalty to the department or vice versa, when the department is embarrassed, the officers feel embarrassed, due to bad publicity
- Officer's pride in ownership
- Family atmosphere
- Skilled employees are valued as the department's most important asset
- Career opportunities for personal growth includes specialized duties and promotions
- The importance to promote a family atmosphere within the department and the community
- All employees, sworn and civilian, are treated with dignity and respect
- The sheriff knows everyone by name and supports all employees to reach their personal and professional goals

- The spirit of organizational teamwork between the sheriff and the department, which encourages employee's opinions and input at staff meetings

Weaknesses

- Staffing levels of the department are small
- Low quality or outdated technological equipment – computers
- Low pay for employees
- Poor benefits for employees
- “F-troop image”
- The possibility of the election of a new sheriff
- Poor recruitment program
- Training ground for larger departments
- Closeness of the officers encourages code of silence
- The good old boy system for the employees

Opportunities

- The community has a sense of ownership of the department
- The community provides input to the values of the department

Threats

- Citizens expect favors as a result of political contributions
- Budget cuts from county board of supervisors/county commissioners

Stakeholder Analysis

Any strategic plan must identify the stakeholders who are persons or groups of persons likely to have an interest in the outcome or have the ability to affect the outcome. The agency must encourage dialogue that allows complete and full expression of doubts, fears, questions and

other information from the stakeholders. It's imperative that the plan identify stakeholders and address their concerns.

Stakeholders

- The community, including businesses and individuals
- Labor unions
- College district boards
- County Board of Supervisors
- Existing departmental employees
- Local city councils
- Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)
- County executive officer
- Local city managers
- Local news media
- Applicants
- Local hospitals
- Local doctor associations
- Local police chiefs
- Local teacher associations
- District attorney
- City attorney
- Defense attorney associations
- California Highway Patrol
- Chambers of Commerce

- Civic groups (Rotary, Kiwanis)
- High school counselors

Strategic Initiatives

After careful review of the output from the Nominal Group Technique, there are several strategies that can be implemented in an attempt to reach the preferred goal and answer the question of, “how will small, rural sheriffs’ offices recruit qualified applicants by the year 2007?” If the following strategic initiatives are discussed in collaboration with the stakeholders, an action plan of implementation may be developed.

1. Reduce hiring time lines and applicants applying at more than one agency in the same geographic area at the same time.
 - Sheriff
 - Labor unions
 - Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)
 - Local city governments
 - Local county government
 - College district
 - Local hospitals
 - Local doctors associations
 - Local or city police chiefs
2. Create a local POST certified law enforcement academy
 - Sheriff
 - College district
 - Teachers associations

- Defense attorney's association
 - District attorney's office
 - City councils
 - County government
 - Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)
 - City police chiefs
 - California Highway Patrol
3. Creating higher visibility of sheriffs' deputies in the community
- Local school counselors
 - College district
 - Unemployment offices
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - The print media
 - Broadcast media
 - Civic groups
 - Private employment agencies

These three initiatives have been identified as a means to address the issue of how will small rural sheriffs' offices identify and hire qualified candidates by 2007? The initiatives are products of the Nominal Group Technique. The implementation of these three initiatives will be discussed in the transition management plan in Chapter 4. Working committees will have to be established, bringing their own experience and expertise to the table in an effort to develop the transition plan.

CHAPTER FOUR
TRANSITION MANAGEMENT

“Plan your work and then work your plan.”

Author Unknown

Introduction

Up to this point the issue statement was presented to the Nominal Group Technique Panel that was comprised of experts in the field of recruitment and human relations in the private and public sector. Specific trends and events were identified, discussed and prioritized by the focus group. Three strategic initiatives have been identified, that if accomplished, would not necessarily solve, but certainly have a positive impact on, the issue statement that asks the question: how will small rural sheriffs’ offices identify and hire qualified candidates by 2007?

Law enforcement organizations are constantly changing. Those that don’t are forced into changes through consent decrees and litigation. The organizations that have visionary leaders are the organizations of the future. These leaders use the study of the future as a tool to manage change or at least be able to adjust to it (Hoyle, 1995).

Change is a difficult process to tackle even if all involved will benefit. Human beings resist change. They will not leave their comfort zone without a fight, even if it is in their best interest. Change succeeds when entire organizations participate in the effort. Organizations can be divided into roles. Change strategists, change implementers and change recipients, each play a different key role in the change process (Jick, 1991).

This transition management plan will provide the basic guidelines to the implementation of the three previously mentioned strategic initiatives in Chapter Three. The key ingredient to a transition plan is flexibility. All transition management plans must be fluid or have the option to

change or be edited depending on the demands or changing circumstances. It must be a living plan with the managers able to adapt. There are no checklists that fit all purposes (Drucker, 1996).

One of the integral parts to a successful management plan is the stakeholder providing ownership and long-term commitment. In Chapter Three we identified a significant number of stakeholders in each of the initiatives. This commitment on the part of the stakeholders needs to not only be long-term, but also sincere and a high priority within their own organizations.

Many of the stakeholders are the same in each of the three initiatives. Therefore, it would be recommended that an advisory committee be established with oversight of all three initiatives. It's important to have representation from each of the stakeholders, as input would be crucial. This oversight committee should be expanded into a legal binding agreement referred to as a joint powers agreement (JPA) between city, county entities and special district entities, whereby the responsibilities and duties of each of the shareholders would be clearly spelled out. The oversight committee could then suggest the establishment of sub-committees specifically focusing on that strategic initiative. In the end there would be a blending of these initiatives. These sub-committees could create implementation timelines and make progress reports to the JPA oversight committee.

The NGT process provided one trend that was having a negative effect on recruitment. This trend was the long hiring process that in some cases took up to a year and young applicants applied at multiple agencies simultaneously. This process required duplication of efforts, including the testing process, the physical agility test, the background as well as the physical and medical examinations the applicants have to take. It appeared as if there was a clear duplication of efforts and it was felt the hiring process should be considered as one of the primary initiatives.

Implementation Plan

The Sheriff of the County should assume the leadership of the JPA. The JPA should elect appropriate office holders within this board, i.e. secretary, treasurer, and any other appropriate officers. The JPA should have planning, implementation, oversight and auditing review over Initiatives 1 and 2.

A portable office space should be acquired and located at the Sheriffs' facility (due to available ground space and being centrally located). The staffing of the Central Recruitment Center should be composed of a sheriff sergeant, four civilian background investigators and two clerical aides. They should be contract/term employees with the exception of the sheriff sergeant. Term employees are defined as employees who are employed as long as funding from the JPA is available. These term employees should be employed by the JPA. The sheriffs' sergeant should also act as the Academy Coordinator providing liaison to the stakeholders in these initiatives as well as the college.

The location of the Academy should be on property south of Imperial Valley College. Portable classrooms would be placed on the property. The Academy should provide POST certified classes and should also be equipped to provide physical training, operate a high speed driving school and related training needed in the field of law enforcement.

Evaluation Plan

Within twelve to sixteen months a report would be submitted to the JPA board for review. This report would represent an evaluation of these two initiatives. Areas which would be addressed in the evaluation include, but are not limited to:

- The number of applications received
- The number of applications rejected

- The number of applications requested by individual agencies for review
- The number of cadets enrolled in the academy
- The number of candidates passing and/or failing
- The cost per application for processing
- The cost per candidate to complete the academy
- Review revenue from the average daily attendance from college
- Number of candidates employed by the JPA members who went through the process
- Any other tangible facts requested by the JPA board

Funding of Initiatives

Financial support for both Initiative 1-reduce hiring timelines and applicants applying at more than agency in the same geographic area at the same time and Initiative 2-create a local POST certified law enforcement academy will be based upon an assessment to the membership of the JPA based on population. As an example, if there are seven local entities (city or county) in the JPA and each has a population of 50,000 based on the latest census, a \$1.00 assessment per resident would be levied. The end result would be \$350,000 to finance both Initiatives 1 and 2. It is believed that a budget of \$350,000 would be needed for the first year of operation. If \$1.00 would not cover this, then the assessment would be increased in order to meet the \$350,000 goal.

The local police academy would also receive accreditation from the local college. This would provide additional funding from the state based on the average daily attendance (ADA). This ADA would provide additional revenue to supplement salaries and supplies for the instructors at the academy. It is anticipated that students who are not sponsored by law

enforcement agency would also attend this academy, thus enriching the applicant pool. It is also anticipated that non-county residents would be attracted to this academy, thereby, again providing additional applicants.

Strategic Initiative One

Reduce Hiring Time Lines and Applicants Applying at More Than One Agency in the Same Geographic Area at the Same Time

Central Recruitment Center

The objective of establishing a central recruitment center is to receive the applications and do away with duplication of efforts. It is critical that a commitment be received from all the participants that they will subscribe and adhere to the policy. Theoretically, an applicant would go to this central recruitment center, complete the application, which could either be done in person or on-line and submitted to the application center. The central recruitment center would receive and process all of the following:

- Entry-level applications
- Lateral applications
- Background packages
- Physical agility tests
- Psychological testing
- Oral interviews
- Physicals
- Any written tests

Goals

- Establish sub-committee for rules and guidelines

- Identify central location for receiving applications
- Establish a common entry-level and lateral transfer applications
- Establish and accept a common background information application
- Establish on-line accessibility

When an application is received, it would be screened to be sure it meets the minimum requirements. The application could then be processed up the rungs of the ladder until it arrives at the point that the applicant has successfully completed the minimum requirement stage. At this point he/she would be placed into the applicant pool.

When a local agency needs a police officer or deputy sheriff, the central recruitment center would be contacted for a list of applicant names. The center, either through their training manager, human resource officer or personnel division, would contact the applicant or make a preliminary job-offering contingent upon successful passing of the remaining requirements. If the applicant accepts, then they would continue with the additional steps that include the background investigation, physical agility test and things of that nature. A staff member assigned to the central recruitment center would perform these steps and this would, again, provide commonality and consistency in the hiring process. When the steps have been completed, the applicant would be referred back to the agency of request where he/she would be hired or not. If the applicant rejects the job offer for one reason or another, then his/her name would be placed back into the hiring pool for future consideration. If the applicant fails any of the above listed steps, then in-house staff would review his/her application. There must be a consensus that the applicant would never qualify for employment because of a specific reason, i.e. criminal activity. If this were the case, the application would be purged from the applicant pool.

The primary objective of establishing a central recruitment center is the avoidance of duplication of efforts. It is not uncommon in small rural areas that many agencies will be conducting the same hiring procedures on the same employee at the same time. The intent of this is to provide a one-stop shopping for the employees, as well as the employers. The key to the success of this initiative is that the entities must establish and must agree to adherence to the rules and regulations adopted by the sub-committee.

This will also require an additional commitment of not only financial resources, but also political support from the stakeholders.

Strategic Initiative Two

Create a Local POST Certified Law Enforcement Academy

It was clear the panelists thought that applicants were either being lost or not even captured as a result of the required distant learning demands placed on the applicants when they had to be sent out of the county for their POST training.

Developing, planning and implementing a local academy is not out of the realm of possibility. A sub-committee of the JPA would be formed from the stakeholders. Their mission would be to:

- Locate housing for the academy
- Through a Certified POST curriculum
- Locate and contract instructors
 - Local police departments
 - Local sheriffs
 - California Highway Patrol
 - Drug Enforcement Administration

➤ Local colleges

- Encumber financial resources and commitment from local governing bodies of the city and the county
- Establish accreditation through local college

Strategic Initiative Three

Create Higher Visibility of Sheriffs' Deputies in the Community

The NGT panelists identified forty-six trends. The one trend that dominated most of the discussions was the lack of publicity and less than positive image that sheriffs' deputies have. Law enforcement needs to capitalize on the existing resources and develop a sales plan or public relations blitz.

The sheriffs' office needs to have an open dialogue with the educational institutions in the community. The committee needs to establish a battle plan for active participation in recruitment of applicants. Some of the areas the committee needs to address and have a presence in are:

- High school fairs
- Career fairs
- College campuses
- Explorer posts
- Sheriffs' athletic league
- Public speaking presentations to civic groups, i.e. Rotary, Kiwanis
- Newspaper advertisements
- Television advertisements
- Radio advertisements

- Post job opportunities at employment offices
- Develop a web site
- Web site to be posted on police cars, billboards and all stationery
- Traveling recruitment team to other academies, colleges and military bases

Initiative 3 can be directed from the Sheriffs' Office Crime Prevention Unit. An existing staff member should be tasked with the sole responsibility of this project. Availability of a recruitment team (role models) officers should be available on demand to make appearances at scheduled events, i.e., job fairs and school programs.

Monthly reports will be submitted to the Sheriff detailing progress and updating the Strategic Initiative 3 plan.

Chapter Four discusses how the strategic initiatives would be placed in motion, who the players would be and how it would be paid for. Additionally, this chapter discusses an evaluation process for each of the three initiatives. These initiatives, along with the Transition Management plan will help small, rural sheriffs' offices to identify and hire qualified applicants by 2007. Chapter Five will discuss the conclusions of this research project.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

This research has presented many issues and brought them to the forefront. In small, rural communities it is very difficult to attract new candidates. There are several reasons for this. The lower pay scale for law enforcement based on the small or decreasing tax base. The smaller communities do not offer the cultural amenities, such as plays, operas, amusement parks or recreational facilities, or collateral employment for spouses of the officers. Rural agriculture counties are viewed as backwater and they suffer from second and third generation technology. One of the persistent problems facing smaller agencies is that young officers want to get into the fast pace of the action calls. They want to be fighter pilots. Smaller communities offer a much slower paced life style. Some officers refer to it as “life in the slow lane.” Calls for service are usually associated with mundane issues such as past-occurred burglaries, traffic accidents and barking dogs.

All hope is not lost for small agencies. They should reexamine the way they do business. Unfortunately, many suffer from paradigm paralysis and are unable to get out of the box. It is important to remember that no progress can be made without change. Organizations must look at youngsters living in their communities and start cultivating them at a very early age, possibly in junior high school, through school based curriculum and school resource officers, explorer programs and different events.

Today’s youth are better educated, live at home longer and are wired to the information age. They live in an instantaneous world where information and communication are at their fingertips. Patience is a 56k modem. Recognition and immediate responses are expected. Finding that ideal recruit, one who seeks a long-term career, as society’s peacekeeper is

increasingly difficult. Many administrators yearn for the days when selecting recruits was comparatively simple. The draft and military service were at their peak. Military veterans innately possessing common sense and a work ethic developed through service and maturity were knocking on the department's door looking for work. The economic boom that followed the cash-depleted early '90s created an atmosphere of four percent or less unemployment, a mobile and selective job-seeking population and high dollar return for little initial effort. The private sector caters to this trend by ignoring a work history that shows numerous employers and encouraging separation in lieu of promotion in order to reduce middle management numbers and keep salaries flat. Performance and production equates to bonuses and commissions. The latter is very appealing to a generation that is focused on today and instant rewards.

Law enforcement, on the other hand, requires commitment and effort from the very beginning. The hiring process, alone, is cumbersome and suffers from the tyranny of time. To those entering the current workforce, the once envied assets of law enforcement career – stability, security and long-term promotion – do not compare with the high entry-level salaries, flexible schedules and the casual work environment associated in the private sector. The end result has been a drastic reduction in the quality of applicants in a period of law enforcement expansion.

Administrators have to consider a whole range of strategies to meet the challenges of filling existing vacancies, as well as pending retirement vacancies. The most obvious strategy is to throw money at the problem. Higher compensation for police officers would be one way of luring qualified candidates. Increased allowances could make shift work more palatable. The chances of this are slim, although current officers would support it. Reality and statistical information dictate this is the not the answer or remedy, it can be in other areas. While the

number of qualified youths attempting to enter a law enforcement career has diminished, it cannot be ignored that the future lies with the youth. Law enforcement must recognize the changes in this generation's values and involve recruitment strategies according to those values.

The tactics necessary to lure recruits into policing need not become overly radical or lower the bar to meet the values of Generation X. This is the communication age and it is through communication that the problem may be solved. Young applicants are looking for recognition. This does not come when they are herded into a faceless throng and treated as merely part of a procedure. Recruiting interested applicants who are indecisive in selecting a career may be achievable through a small scale and frequent recruitment testing process. Consolidating and speeding up the handling of applications at one central recruitment center is a lesson to be learned from the private business world (Tate, 2000).

Small departments need to get back to the basics and sell the department to the community. It is obvious from the lack of response to the growing needs that the youngsters are looking elsewhere for employment.

If a one-stop hiring process through a central or common repository for applications were established, this would reduce the hiring time and the process it takes to get new applicants on board. This application process would be handled through fruition, by a multi-tasked joint powers agreement. This would allow all law enforcement agencies in the community to benefit from unnecessary expenditures of valuable resources. Maybe in several years a standard of pay could be established in the county. Again, eliminating the aggressive recruitment practices of some agencies that have the financial resources to lure candidates from the smaller agencies.

A local academy would be the jewel in the crown. It would provide consistency in training and local ownership as well as cultural sensitivity to the community. Additionally, it

would save considerable amounts of money that would be applied to other areas of need, i.e. equipment and salaries.

This project has been very challenging, and rewarding. If any of the three strategic initiatives could be adopted and implemented, it would have a significant effect on the issue statement, how will small, rural sheriffs' offices recruit qualified applicants by the year 2007? Law enforcement executives must reevaluate the way they do business. They must recruit from existing sources within the community and collaborate with each other if they are going to stay in business.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF NOMINAL GROUP PARTICIPANTS

1. Dan DeVoy, Asst. Director Human Resources
County of Imperial
940 W. Main Street
El Centro, CA 92243
2. Linda Nunez, Director Human Resources
City of Calexico
608 Heber Avenue
Calexico, CA 92231
3. Joe Zaragoza, Asst. Director Human Resources
Imperial Irrigation District
1285 Broadway
El Centro, CA 92243
4. Mary Locke, Chairperson
Workforce Investment Board
1351 Imperial Avenue
El Centro, CA 92243
5. Maria Lopez, Vice President Human Resources
Government Agencies Federal Credit Union
1068 Broadway
El Centro, CA 92243
6. Sgt. Jerry DeMorst
Imperial County Sheriffs' Office
P.O. Box 1040
El Centro, CA 92244
7. Chief Deputy Jesse Obeso
Imperial County Sheriffs' Office
P.O. Box 1040
El Centro, CA 92244
8. Ed Delgado, Analyst for Youth Programs
Workforce Investment Board
760 Main Street
El Centro, CA 92243
9. Janet Thornburg, ISC Coordinator
Imperial County Office of Education
1398 Sperber Road
El Centro, CA 92243

APPENDIX B

LIST OF TRENDS

1. Belief of entitlement to promotion based on seniority
2. Level of work ethic
3. Better educated applicants
4. Trade school education versus formal academic education
5. Employees willing to change agencies
6. Local growth of state and federal agency
7. Flexible work hours schedule becoming common place
8. No integrity or discipline in younger employees
9. Loss of status of law enforcement occupations
10. Creation of new job classifications to encourage retention
11. Level of complexity of hiring procedures
12. More respect for law enforcement
13. Pay viewed as primary reason for employment
14. Current economic slowdown
15. Enhance prestige of sheriffs' office versus other law enforcement agencies
16. Focus on at-risk students and give educational direction
17. Population – more applicants with police record
18. Attempt to create a college going culture
19. Diverse police responsibilities
20. More government rules and regulations
21. Regionalization of services
22. Young officers furthering their education
23. Level of qualifications of applicants
24. Create incubator of qualified applicants
25. Emphasis on commitment and loyalty to the organization
26. Public apathy
27. Need to offer classes for pre-test taking
28. Changing demographics of local community
29. Growing population
30. Privatization of law enforcement responsibilities
31. Technological advances limited to larger organizations
32. Increase competition for experienced personnel
33. Internal competition for advancement
34. General public taking law enforcement for granted
35. Stipend for education above minimum standards
36. Applicants outside of local geographic jurisdiction – short-timers
37. Less spending locally and less jobs in agriculture
38. Lack of civic duty
39. Agency hopping by officers
40. Number of agencies applied to simultaneously
41. Growing concern for domestic security (due to terrorism)
42. Level of visibility of law enforcement in community

43. Less dollars for meeting demands of law enforcement
44. Recruits physically being out of shape
45. Level of management & union conflicts
46. Lack of recognition of employees

APPENDIX C

LIST OF EVENTS

1. Technology grant for sheriffs' office
2. New sheriff
3. New San Diego State University campus
4. Major drug law change – more liberal
5. Hiring age lowered to 18 years of age
6. State budget cuts – 15 percent
7. Privatization of all law enforcement agencies
8. Private prison built in Imperial County
9. New law – non-lethal weapons only
10. Mandatory pre-employment polygraphs eliminated by law
11. Terrorist act at the border
12. Change in governor
13. Closure of United States/Mexican border made permanent
14. Law enforcement becomes a degreed profession
15. Mandated law enforcement curriculum in grades 7 through 12
16. One time state waiver for hiring
17. No U.S. border patrol
18. Mandate equal number of women employees
19. Statewide pay scale established for all law enforcement
20. High profile murder of public official
21. Large wholesaler in Valley
22. NAFTA repealed
23. Military draft reinstated with branch selection option
24. Federal mandate for airports security – federal employees
25. Grants based on population
26. Board of supervisors demand sheriff substations in every community
27. Imperial Valley College closes
28. Local law enforcement academy created
29. Tax increase
30. Standard safety equipment at all law enforcement agencies
31. Imperial Irrigation District allow fallowing of land
32. Earthquake at magnitude of 7.2
33. Civil war in Mexico

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