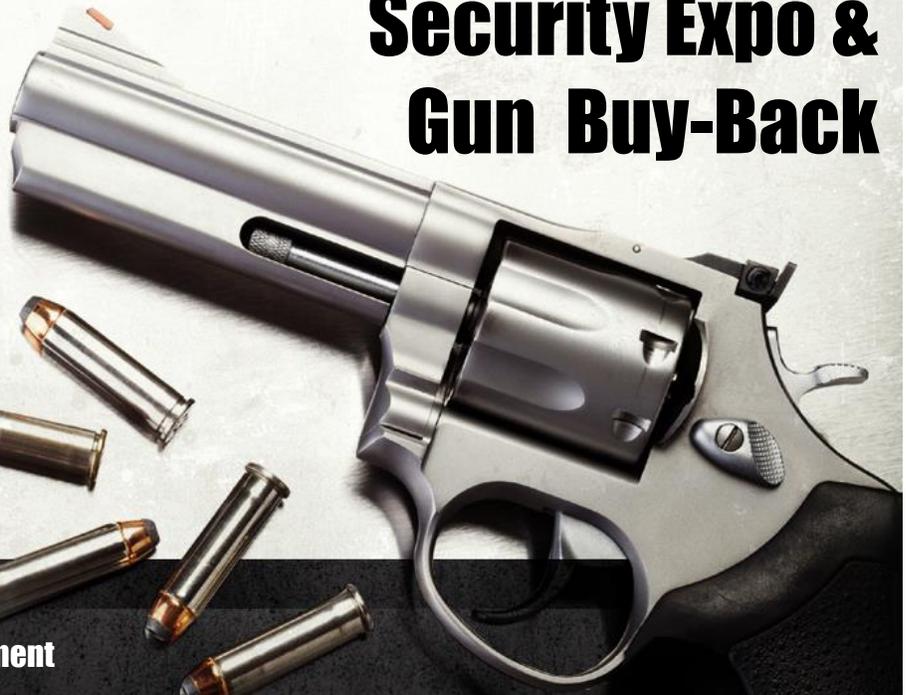




Project S.A.F.E.

Security Expo & Gun Buy-Back



Eureka Police Department

Project **S.A.F.E.** Eureka



Eureka Police Department

Secure
All
Firearms
Effectively



2017 HERMAN GOLDSTEIN AWARD SUBMISSION

Key Project Team Members

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Community Partners

*Eureka Police Explorers Post 104
Humboldt Bay Fire Department
I Like Eureka / Neighborhood Watch
Bayshore Mall
Pacific Outfitters
RMI Outdoors
Advanced Security Systems
Security Lock and Alarm
Brant Electric
Shafer's Ace Hardware
Pierson's Building Supply
Bucksport Sporting Goods
Operations Safe Streets
Redwood Capital Bank
Rotary Club of Southwest Eureka*

Summary

Eureka, a modest coastal city of about 30,000 inhabitants, has a serious gun-related violence and theft problem. Eureka Police Department officers are increasingly encountering criminals who are illegally armed with loaded firearms. What was once a relatively infrequent occurrence has now become dangerously routine. EPD officers are seizing unprecedented numbers of guns from the hands of these hardened felons. As part of the problem identification and analysis process, EPD looked at our gun violence, theft, and arrest data. This information was then dissected in order to better understand the scope, nature and origin of the problem.

- Since 2014, over 213 firearms have been reported stolen within the City of Eureka (data as of 3/31/17).
- In 2016, EPD officers seized approximately 95 guns during criminal investigations and another approximately 25 were collected for other reasons. In the first three months of 2017, officers seized 30 more firearms including 5 assault-type rifles.
- Armed robbery went up 68% in 2016 with about 50% of these cases involving a firearm.
- Residential burglary reports increased by 27% in 2016 as compared to 2015.
- Eureka's violent crime/property crime rates far exceed state and national averages per capita.

An analysis of the problem, including Eureka's violent crime and theft rates, identified a probable causal link between our community's high theft and burglary rates and the upsurge in gun-related violent crime. Project S.A.F.E Eureka was conceived and developed as a problem-solving response to help *reduce gun violence and theft for a safer Eureka*.

Project S.A.F.E. Eureka was a collaborative effort between the Eureka Police Department and our community partners to increase the safety of Eureka's neighborhoods by enhancing residential security and decreasing the number of unsecured firearms ending up in the hands of criminals. EPD asked the community to join with the department in curtailing gun-related violence by doing their part to keep their homes and guns secure.

A "**Wall of Guns**" in EPD Chief Andrew Mill's office. These weapons were taken from criminals by officers.



Description

Scanning:

Eureka is the principle city and county seat of Humboldt County. As the largest coastal city between San Francisco and Portland, it is the epicenter of our region for commerce, tourism, healthcare, transportation, government and social services. The county jail, mental health facility, Probation Department, courthouse, and largest hospital are all located within the city. 55% of Humboldt County's population lives in the Humboldt Bay area and frequent Eureka for much of their daily activity. Eureka is a city of nearly 30,000 inhabitants but the population of the Greater Eureka area, which the city serves, is well over 45,000. Due to its centralized location, Eureka holds a disproportionately high percentage of the County's homeless population and corresponding crime and disorder issues. Unfortunately, it is also the region's hub for heroin, methamphetamine, and marijuana trafficking which fuel many of the community's crime problems.

As an isolated and largely rural community, Humboldt County has a robust and prevalent gun culture. As our gun violence and theft rates indicate; however, too many of Eureka's citizens do not do enough to secure their homes and firearms against theft.

Eureka has a significant gun violence and theft problem. Eureka Police Department officers are increasingly encountering criminals who are illegally armed and carrying loaded firearms. What was once a relatively infrequent occurrence has now become dangerously commonplace. EPD officers are seizing historically unprecedented numbers of guns from the hands of these hardened felons.

Following a disturbing surge of armed commercial robberies in 2016 through early 2017, EPD began scanning and analyzing the root causes of the problem in an effort to reduce gun violence in our city. We looked at our gun violence, theft, and arrest data over the past two years in order to better understand the scope, nature and origin of the problem.

- Since 2014, over 213 firearms have been reported stolen within the City of Eureka (data as of 3/31/17). This figure does not include the likely numerous gun thefts that went unreported for various reasons (e.g. lack of serial number/registration records, dubious ownership histories etc.).
- In 2016, EPD officers seized approximately 95 guns as criminal evidence and another approximately 25 were collected for various other reasons. In the first three months of 2017, officers seized 30 more firearms including 5 assault-type rifles.
- In 2016, the Eureka Police Department experienced a significant increase in commercial armed robbery reports compared to 2015. Armed robbery went up 68% (47 reported cases). Disturbingly, in many of these cases the suspects, armed with firearms, worked in pairs while robbing banks, gas stations, liquor stores, markets and even motels.
- Firearms were used in about 50% of these robberies.



- In one case, the 26-year-old male suspect attempted to shoot a liquor store clerk multiple times but his gun malfunctioned each time. **The handgun he used during the attempted murder and robbery was stolen.**

- Analysis of the offenders revealed many were heroin addicts seeking to feed their habits.



- Residential burglary reports also increased by 27% (232) in 2016 with other burglary types (commercial, vehicle) increasing 12% as compared to 2015.
- According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) data for 2015, Eureka ranked (per capita) #69 of 460 California cities for violent crime and #13 of 460 for property crime.ⁱ
- The overall crime rate in Eureka is **156% higher** than the national average and 141% higher than the California average.
- Eureka has a violent crime rate that is 45% higher than the California average and 66% higher than the national average. For property crime, Eureka is 156% higher than the California average and 170% higher than the national average.ⁱⁱ

Analysis:

In February 2016, EPD held a series of department-wide strategic planning meetings. We also surveyed the community and its leaders for their community policing priorities, and finally held focus group meetings.ⁱⁱⁱ EPD's command staff then published a Leadership Plan to carry our department forward.^{iv}

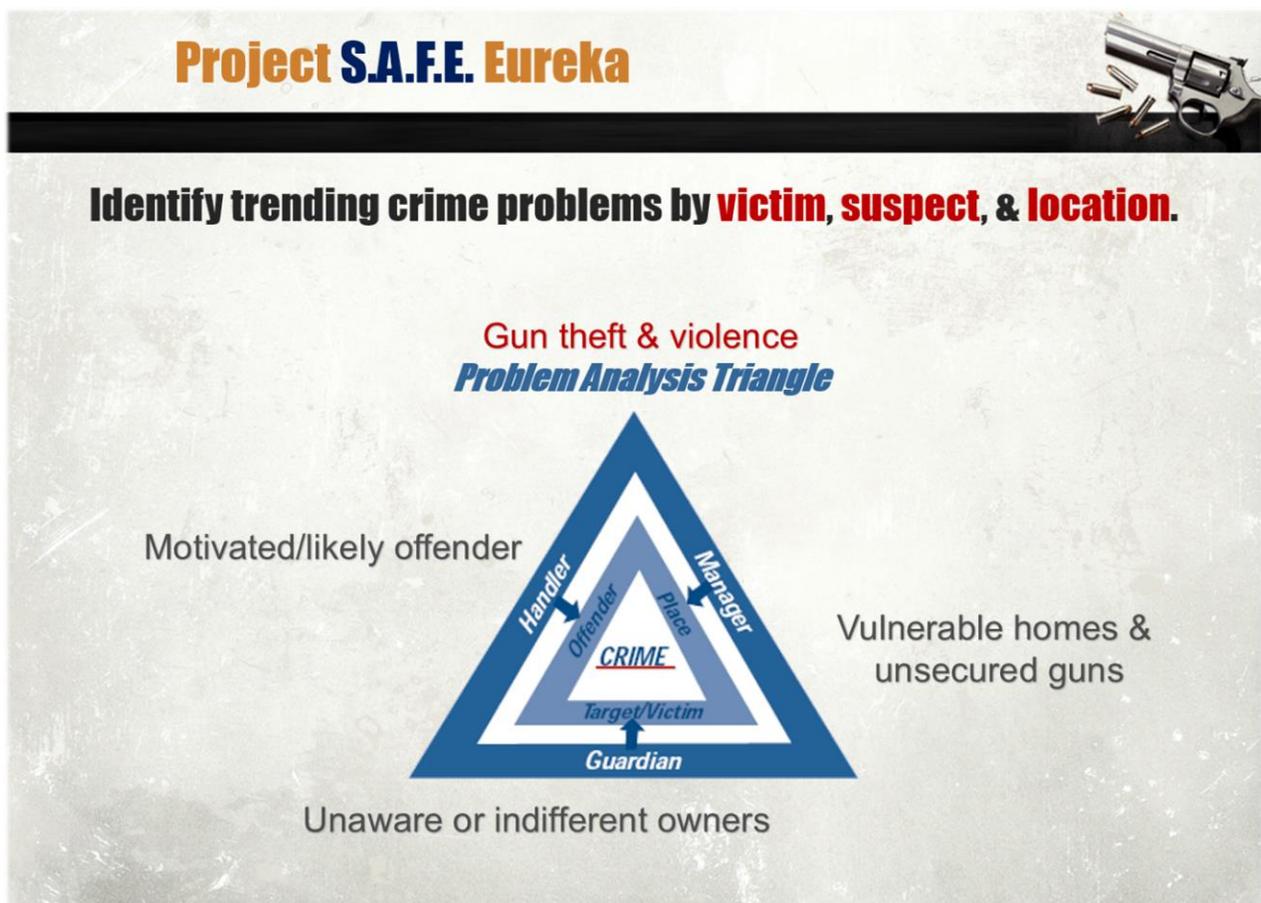
These efforts were filtered through the lens of the City of Eureka's Leadership Guide which identified several key Strategic Directions including *Improving Operational Effectiveness and Efficiency* and *Engaging the Community*.

As part of this strategic planning process, EPD's Leadership Plan was completed in June 2016. EPD's primary mission is Crime Control: preventing, reducing and controlling crime for public safety. Key crime control goals that were identified included:

- Effectively address crime and disorder.
- Identify trending crime problems by victim, suspect, and location.
- Communicate effectively with the community about crime prevention.

EPD's top crime fighting priorities were identified as **gun violence** and **burglary/theft**.

EPD sought to better recognize and reduce these emergent crime problems by analysis of victim, suspect, and location factors using the "Problem Analysis Triangle" (or "Crime Triangle").



Offender

Eureka has no dearth of motivated and willing offenders. Following the Criminal Justice Realignment Act of 2011 (AB 109), which effectively shifted the burden of supervising and incarcerating many of California’s most habitual criminals from the Department of Corrections to local jurisdictions, our communities have generally seen an increase in crime and the numbers of recalcitrant crooks loose on the streets. Many of these are Post Release Community Supervision (PRCS) offenders released into our community from prison and mandatory supervision offenders released from county jail. This problem has been compounded by the effects of other legislation such as Proposition 47 (making many former felonies, such as low-level drug crimes, misdemeanors) and our region’s heroin epidemic.^v In January 2016, the Chief Probation Officer of Humboldt County, Bill Damiamo, reported 34% of the realignment population was on abscond status. At the time, there were 104 of these individuals at large in our community—90% of whom were considered at high risk to reoffend. Guns are ending up in far too many of these offenders’ hands.

However, with the realities of reduced incarceration, diminished consequences, and chronic jail overcrowding, it is clear we cannot simply arrest our way out of these problems.^{vi}

Victim / Place Factors

With over 200 firearms reported stolen in Eureka during the past two years, it became quite evident unaware or indifferent owners coupled with vulnerable homes and unsecured guns were helping fuel the gun theft and violence problem.

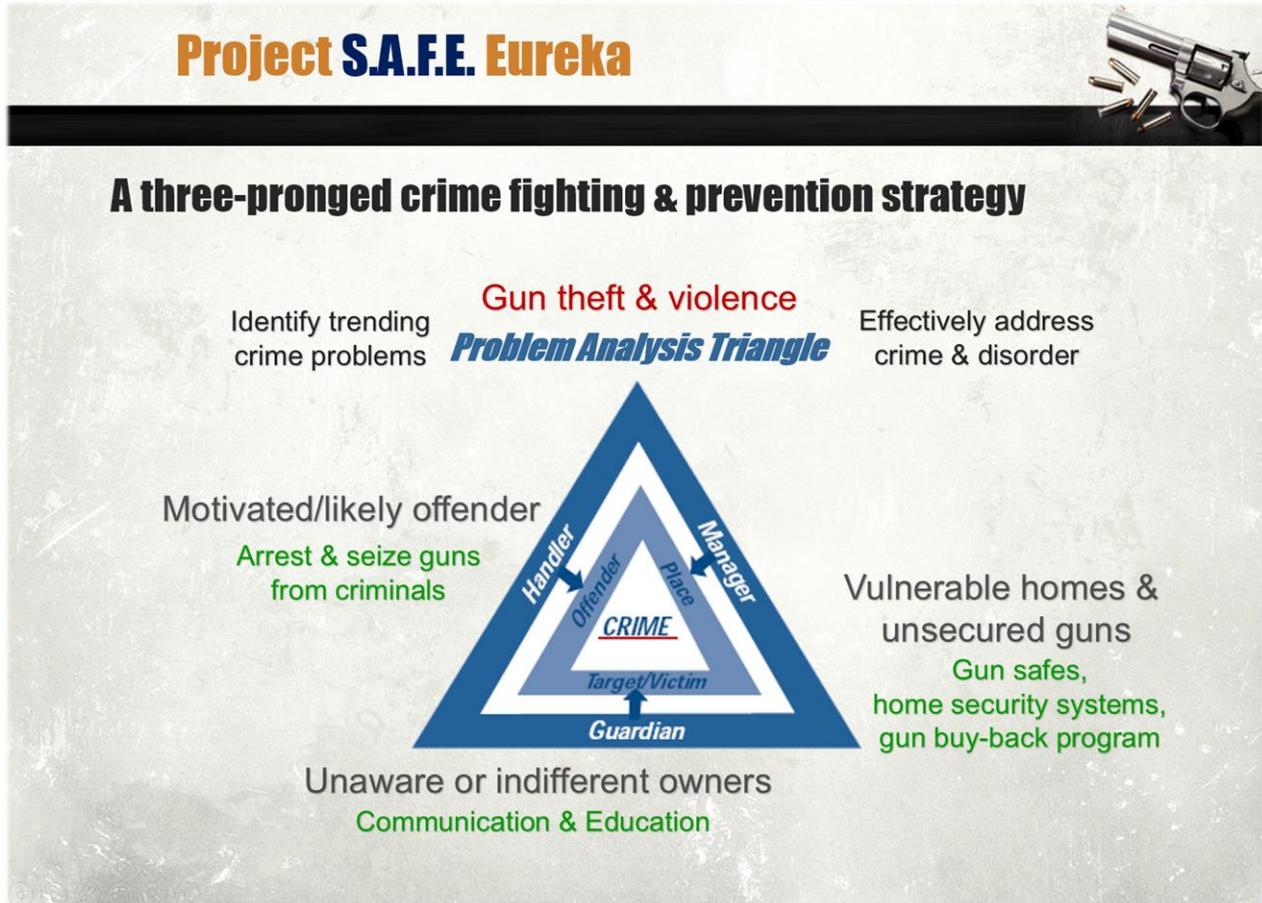
Response:

EPD developed a three-pronged response strategy to reduce the twin problems of gun theft and violence in our community:

1. Continue to proactively arrest and seize guns from the illegal criminal element.
2. Help people better secure their homes, vehicles and firearms through community engagement, education, and target “hardening” (Project S.A.F.E. Eureka Home & Gun Security Expo).
3. Take guns out of play that are vulnerable to theft (Gun Buy-Back Program).

This approach was constructed upon several underlying beliefs:

- Responsible gun ownership obligates every owner to have a proper safe in which to effectively secure their firearms and ammunition when unattended.
- Home security/alarm systems are effective deterrents to burglary.^{vii}
- Gun safes and security systems can be expensive—but not nearly as costly as the potential consequences of not making the investment. EPD wanted to make safes and security systems more accessible and affordable to those without them while increasing community awareness.
- It was more feasible for EPD to focus on the source of many illicit guns used in violent crimes rather than on attempting to tackle other contributory factors such as the endemic heroin plague. *How do you think crooks get guns if they cannot buy them legally? (They steal them.)*



Response Strategy #1: Cuffs & Confiscations

EPD collected 120 guns in 2016, 95 of which were seized as part of criminal cases. In the first three months of 2017, officers seized 30 more firearms including 5 assault-type rifles. Dozens of arrests were made associated with these weapons seizures, including 30 arrests in 2016 under California’s “felon with a firearm” law (Penal Code 29800). *The county with the highest arrest rate in California from 2005 - 2014 is Humboldt, and Eureka’s officers are responsible for a substantial share of these.*^{viii}

Eureka Police detectives also worked tirelessly behind the scenes to solve each armed robbery case and make arrests. During a 13-month span, February 2016 through February 2017, EPD’s Criminal Investigation Section (CIS) solved 29 armed robberies, 9 of which were from other agencies. In total, 11 suspects were arrested. Nearly 100% of Eureka’s armed robbery sprees during this period were solved with resultant arrests made.

Additionally, EPD and the Humboldt County Probation Department secured grant funding in 2016 (over \$72,000.00) for the creation and implementation of a joint Fugitive Apprehension Team (F.A.T.) to pursue absconded realignment offenders. The team will work in partnership with Probation and allied Humboldt County law enforcement agencies. The mission of the team is to pursue absconded realignment offenders, safely take them back into custody and enforce terms of their supervision. Their apprehension will in turn reduce their repeated criminal activities, improve the safety of the community and potentially reconnect them to rehabilitative services.

Response Strategy #2: Communication & Collaboration

Project S.A.F.E Eureka was conceived and developed as a problem-solving response to help *reduce gun violence and theft for a safer Eureka*. Project S.A.F.E. was a collaborative effort between the Eureka Police Department and our community partners to increase the safety of Eureka's neighborhoods by enhancing residential security and decreasing the number of unsecured firearms ending up in the hands of criminals. EPD asked the community to join with the department in curtailing gun-related violence by doing their part to keep their homes and guns S.A.F.E. and secure. **(S.A.F.E. = Secure All Firearms Effectively.)**

- On March 18-19, 2017, EPD and its community partners hosted a two-day home & gun security expo at the Bayshore Mall.
- The event highlighted effective products and means people could employ to better safeguard their homes and firearms while lowering their chances of becoming a victim.
- The emphasis was on crime prevention & education, home security, safe & responsible gun ownership, and the promotion of gun safes, residential security systems and products.

Participating businesses offered special "Project S.A.F.E. Eureka" discount pricing and coupons on home and gun security-related products and services such as gun safes and locks, alarm systems, security doors, locks and lighting. Raffles, gift cards, and drawings were also used to encourage people to come visit the expo, speak with our vendors, and browse the crime prevention materials and products offered. Firearm safety classes were offered by one vendor along with free Personal Firearm Records forms (for gun owners to record their weapons' serial numbers).

The event was heavily advertised in advance via news releases, social media posts, media interviews, posters and banners. This raised additional public awareness concerning the issue. Approximately 44 gun safes and several residential security systems were sold during the Project S.A.F.E. event with additional associated sales anticipated over the following weeks. Feedback from the well-attended event was very positive with many vendors stating they would be interested in participating again in the future.



Project S.A.F.E. Eureka



Pacific Outfitters Hook & Bullet

Published by Aaron Ostrom (7) · 16 hrs · Fortuna

Congratulations to Robert Taylor! He was the lucky winner of Stack-On Products Co save giveaway that took place at the Eureka Police Department S.A.F.E. event at the Bayshore Mall last weekend. Please remember to keep your firearms locked up when you are not home. The most common home burglaries take place in the middle of the day. Thank you! 😊



Project S.A.F.E. Eureka



Project S.A.F.E. Eureka



Ask us how you can do your part to keep your home, business & Eureka

S.A.F.E.



(707) 441-4371



Join EPD & our community partners at the Project S.A.F.E. Eureka Home & Gun Security Expo
 Bayshore Mall - March 18-19, 2017 10am - 4pm

- Raffle Prizes!
- Gift cards & drawings
- Discounts on safes & home security products
- Crime prevention tips & more!

HELP KEEP EUREKA S.A.F.E.!!

- Raffle Prizes
- Gift cards & drawings
- Discounts on safes & home security products
- Crime prevention tips
- Fire safety information & more!!!
- For questions, contact Suzie @ 707-441-4371












Join EPD & our community partners at the PROJECT S.A.F.E. Eureka Home & Gun Security Expo
 Bayshore Mall - March 18-19, 2017
 Sat. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. & Sun. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Response Strategy #3: Commutation & Compensation

As a separate event in conjunction with Project S.A.F.E. Eureka, EPD held a Gun Buy-Back program (GBB) on March 24-25, 2017. Funding for this event was raised entirely from private donations. A local bank, Rotary International club, and Neighborhood Watch organization donated \$2,000.00 toward the program.

The Gun Buy Back Program afforded citizens the opportunity to voluntarily and anonymously turn in firearms in exchange for pre-paid gift cards. (*No I.D. required & no questions asked.*) The goal of the GBB was to remove neglected, unwanted, superfluous and improperly stored guns from situations where they were vulnerable to theft and exploitation. EPD made it clear to the community that this was not an attempt by law enforcement to disarm law abiding citizens. Rather, the intent was to promote responsible, legal, safe and secure gun ownership in an endeavor to reduce gun theft and gun-related violence....thereby reducing the number of stolen guns used to commit violent crimes in Eureka.

“A purposeful strategy to reduce the opportunity for crime (i.e. gun theft) in a community where gun violence is frequent”

~ EPD Chief Andrew Mills

How do you think crooks get guns if they cannot buy them legally?

Firearms had to be functional in order to qualify for a gift card exchange. \$50.00 pre-paid gift cards were exchanged for operable handguns, rifles and shotguns, and \$100.00 gift cards were exchanged for assault-type weapons (such as AR-15, SKS/AK-47 platform semi-automatic rifles). Guns collected were later checked for lost or stolen status and, if applicable, would be returned to their legal owners if the owners were not otherwise prohibited from possession of a firearm. All other firearms were to be destroyed.



A total of 48 guns were exchanged for gift cards during the two-day event, which exceeded expectations (26 handguns, 10 shotguns and 12 rifles).

Additional Theft-Reduction Response (Target/Victim Oriented)

In October 2016, EPD quietly launched a new crime prevention program^{ix} aimed at reducing the number of vehicle-related thefts occurring in the city. The Old Town and Downtown commercial districts in particular had been “hot spots” for vehicle thefts and burglaries over the past year and EPD’s efforts began there. Via a news release and social media posts, EPD advised Eurekaans, “*If you happen to find one of these “Vehicle Security Report Cards” on your windshield sometime don’t worry, it is not a ticket.*”

 EUREKA POLICE DEPARTMENT	Date/Time: _____
	Vehicle: _____ Officer: _____
VEHICLE SECURITY REPORT CARD	
The Eureka Police Department cares about your safety and the security of your property. Theft from vehicles is a common but preventable crime. This courtesy notice is intended to inform you of possible security risks you may have overlooked and to help you safeguard your property. <i>It is not a ticket.</i>	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: 150px; margin: 0 auto;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin-right: 10px;"></div> <div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; color: green; font-size: 1.2em;">PASSED</div> </div> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> Good job! You have taken the necessary precautions to lower your chances of becoming the victim of vehicle theft. Thank you for doing your part to help </p> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px; font-size: 0.9em;"> <i>Questions or concerns? Contact EPD at: (707) 441-4060</i> </p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: 150px; margin: 0 auto;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin-right: 10px;"></div> <div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; color: red; font-size: 1.2em;">FAILED</div> </div> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> Your vehicle failed the inspection for the following reason(s): </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Door(s) unlocked <input type="checkbox"/> Window(s) open <input type="checkbox"/> Valuables in plain view <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ </div>

Officers and police volunteers randomly spot check parked vehicles and occasionally place these report cards under windshields as a courtesy notice (often disguised inside orange envelopes similar to those used for parking violation tickets). Officers rate the security of each vehicle by marking PASSED or FAILED on the card based on the vehicle’s susceptibility to theft. Vehicles “fail” the inspection for reasons such as unlocked doors, open windows, keys left inside, and valuables left in plain view. Officers may also elect to recognize and further encourage those who are doing their part to reduce their chances of becoming a victim by checking the “PASSED” box.

During one Thursday afternoon, an EPD Captain spot-checked over 20 parked vehicles in one neighborhood and found that approximately 40% had valuable property plainly visible inside

Project S.A.F.E. Eureka: Reducing Gun Violence & Theft for a Safer Community

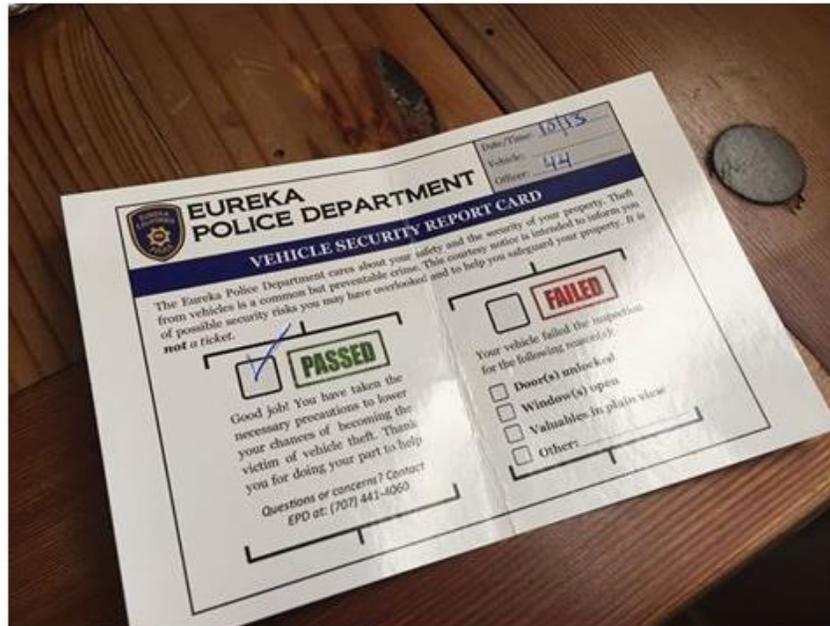
including smart phones, purses, backpacks, digital cameras and other electronics. Our message to the community was that theft from vehicles is a frequent but easily preventable crime. These courtesy notices are intended to inform people of security risks they may have overlooked and encourage them to do their part to safeguard their own property.



Jennifer Savage

40 mins · 🌐

Totally thought I got a(nother) parking ticket, was all bummed, but then... happy surprise!



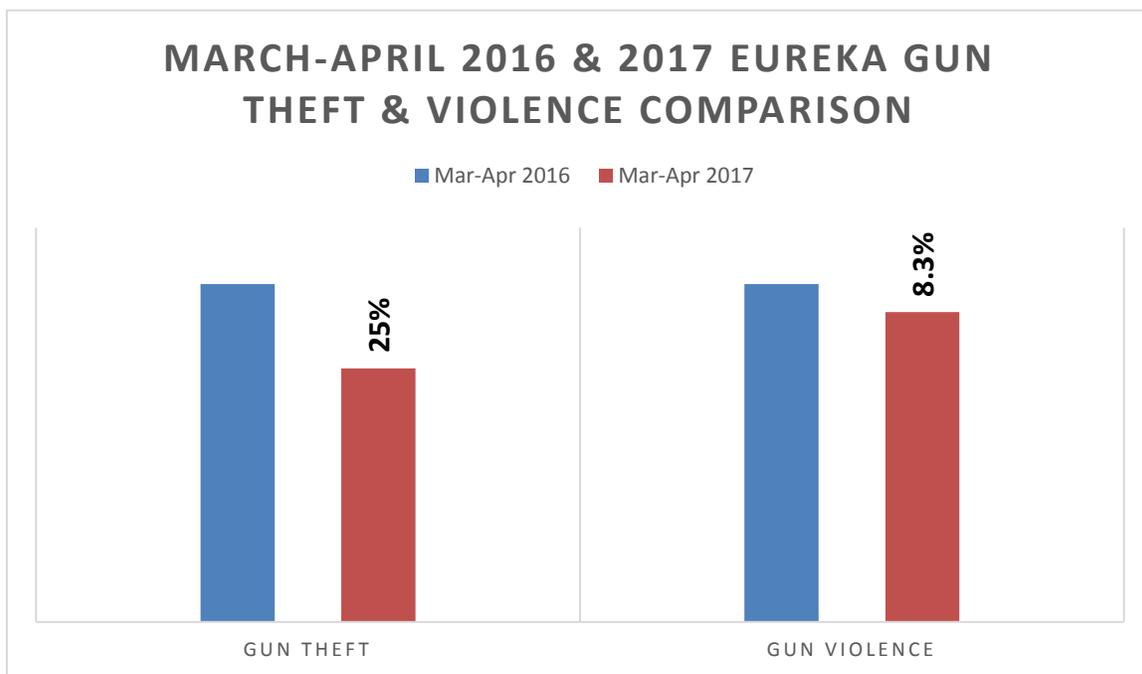
13 Likes 3 Comments



Assessment & Conclusion:

While EPD could not confirm any of the firearms exchanged during the Gun Buy-Back program had been reported stolen, we achieved our goal in removing a significant number of disregarded guns from environments where they were susceptible to theft and subsequent misuse. Many of these were the sort of firearms typically found unsecured and gathering dust in closets or under beds—until an opportunistic burglar finds them. Additionally, over 40 gun safes and pistol vaults were purchased by gun owners during the Project S.A.F.E. Eureka Expo, further reducing the number of unsecured firearms in our community. We also succeeded in raising considerable community awareness and discussion concerning these issues as evidenced by social media posts and local news coverage (print, radio, TV, blogs and other digital media).

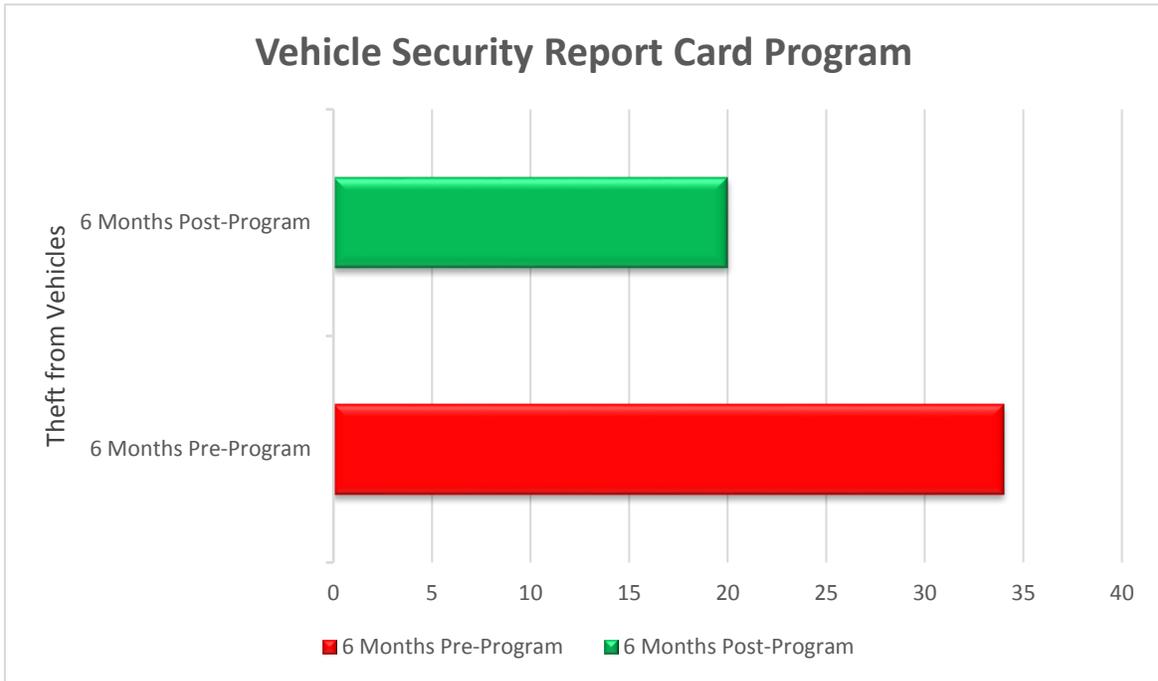
One of the anticipated outcomes for Project S.A.F.E. Eureka is a modest but measurable reduction in gun-related theft and violent crime. When comparing March 1 - April 30, 2016 and March 1 - April 30, 2017 crime report statistics for 1) firearms stolen and 2) firearms involved in crimes, EPD noted a *25% decrease* in gun thefts and an *8.3% decrease in gun violence*. However, the two-month period evaluated is too small to have any real statistical meaning thus far.^x



EPD also assessed the results to date of the implementation of our “Vehicle Security Report Card” program in Eureka’s Old Town beat area. We examined vehicle-related theft statistics in that business district for the 6 months before (May 1, 2016 – October 31, 2016) and after (November 1, 2016 – April 30, 2017) the program’s inception. EPD marked an approximately *41% decrease* in vehicle-related theft following this crime prevention effort designed to increase public awareness.^{xi}

Project S.A.F.E. Eureka: Reducing Gun Violence & Theft for a Safer Community

EPD will continue to analyze our crime data over the next year, paying particular attention to how the facts correlate to our gun-related theft and violent crime problem. This information will be used to assess and systematically tailor our ongoing efforts to reduce gun violence and theft for a safer community.



Endnotes

ⁱ <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2015/crime-in-the-u.s.-2015>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.areavibes.com/eureka-ca/crime/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://eurekapolice.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/leadershipplanning-datapp.pdf>

^{iv} <https://eurekapolice.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/leadershipplan-1.pdf>

^v Humboldt County residents die from drug overdose at more than double the national rate, and a recent report from the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services asserts that local drug/alcohol overdose death rates have been at least three times higher than the state average throughout the past five years. <https://lostcoastoutpost.com/2016/jan/29/humboldt-countys-drug-overdose-death-rate-more-twi/>
<http://www.times-standard.com/article/NJ/20170204/NEWS/170209924>

^{vi} Prison realignment, reduced sentencing and jail time, legislation and laws that are becoming increasingly soft on crime plus a spiraling heroin epidemic.

^{vii} <http://blog.frontpointsecurity.com/convicted-burglars-confess-that-alarm-systems-are-effective-deterrent/>
<http://news.rutgers.edu/news-releases/2009/02/rutgers-study-finds-20090205#.WRtC6-srKUK>

A 2009 Rutgers University study found that a home with a monitored alarm system is **roughly one third as likely** to be burglarized as the unprotected home next door. Also, “A recent study funded by the Alarm Industry Research and Education Foundation (AIREF) found that the presence of an alarm system was a strong deterrent when it came to the selection of potential targets by burglars. The report, “Understanding Decisions to Burglarize from the Offender’s Perspective,” examined the responses of 422 convicted male and female burglars across three states – North Carolina, Kentucky and Ohio. According to the study, about 60 percent of burglars said that the presence of an alarm would cause them to seek an alternate target and more than 80 percent indicated that they would attempt to determine if an alarm was present before carrying out the crime. In fact, only one in 10 respondents said they would always attempt a burglary if an alarm was present, but more than 40 percent said that they would discontinue a burglary in progress if they discovered an alarm was present.”

^{viii} <http://www.breitbart.com/california/2016/02/24/humboldt-county-number-one-in-california-crime-rate/>
<http://www.times-standard.com/article/NJ/20160222/NEWS/160229970>

^{ix} Similar report cards have also been used as a crime reduction tool by other departments in cities such as Carlsbad (CA), Galveston (TX), and Middleton (WI). EPD created a customized report card for our own use after independently conceiving the same idea and then finding and researching similar already existing models.

^x May 2017’s data was not available for comparison due to an impending CAD/RMS conversion.)

^{xi} Data based on Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) reports of thefts from vehicles and vehicle burglaries in the Old Town beat comparing the periods of 05/01/16 – 10/31/16 and 11/01/16 – 04/30/17.