

Prostitution - The World's Oldest Profession

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An Award Submission

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in Problem-Oriented Policing

Submitted By:

Springfield Illinois Police Department

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Prostitution - The World's Oldest Profession

May it also be one of the world's oldest problem?

This is the question that the Springfield Police Department had to answer. Could this problem be solved thru Problem-Oriented Policing? We believe it could.

The Prostitution problem was brought to the forefront at a meeting in the Chief of Police's Office on November 17, 1998. Two local attorneys complained to Chief Harris about the ongoing problems caused by prostitutes, pimps and customers in the area of the 1100 blocks of South 8th Street. They spoke of pimps threatening their employees with guns, trying to sell drugs and stolen merchandise, along with the lowering of property values in the area.

A review of calls for service in the area, revealed that the problem was occurring almost all hours of the day and night and was concentrated in the 1000 Block of South 8th Street.

An analysis of the problems that were described by the citizens, such as littering, vehicles constantly circling the area, and intimidation of residents and children in the area, could all be traced to one source; the existence of active prostitution.

A response plan was drafted that covers several angles of this mutlipart problem. The plan involved increased uniformed patrol in the area, operating undercover details to arrest both prostitutes and customers, follow thru with States Attorney's Office to insure full prosecution of all offenders, continued monitoring of active court cases on arrested persons, and using media to publish names of arrested and court dispositions. We also have conducted community meetings with our Beat Team officers.

The assement consists of several devices of measurement:

- Maintaining a database of each arrested person, to include charges filed, court dispositions and corrections information.
- Assessing the number of actual calls for police service on a monthly basis to determine if the number is rising or falling.
- Continuing to meet with the community members to determine if any impact, either positive or negative is reportable.
- Organizing the residents, landlords and business owners in this area into a neighborhood association so they can better identify and correct problems in this neighborhood.

(Abstract)(040599)

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May it also be one of the world's oldest problems?

This is the question that the Springfield Police Department had to answer. Could this problem be solved thru Problem-Oriented Policing? We believe it could.

The process we used in this problem solving attempt was:

Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment

SCANNING

The nature of the problem that we attempted to solve was prostitution and it's related crime and quality of life issues.

The identification of this problem was relatively easy. You could hear the repeated calls for police service to the area of 1100 block of South 8th Street for prostitutes working the area.

The residents and citizens in the area continued to call the police whenever they spotted a known prostitute walking or stopping cars in the area. They even provided responding officers with the persons description and name.

On November 17, 1998, two local attorneys, who have offices within the 1100 block of South 8th Street, came to the Office of the Chief of Police, John W. Harris, to ask for help in clearing the prostitutes, pimps and customers from this neighborhood. The attorneys complained of an increase in problems with these elements, threats to themselves and their employees, increase in thefts from their offices and a general decline in property values as well as their inability to rent/lease available office space.

The attorneys relayed complaints of being approached by pimps trying to sell drugs and stolen

property to their employees, using the shadows of their building for illegal acts and a general feeling of helplessness in trying to fight this problem.

The attorneys offered to help the Department by contacting the Sangamon County States Attorneys Office and persuading the States Attorney to prosecute all arrested persons to the fullest extent of the law.

Chief John Harris replied to their complaints by reviewing the other complaints he had received about this ongoing activity. The alderman in the area had been trying to rid the area of prostitutes for several years and had been somewhat successful in moving the activity a few blocks further south of the problem area-

Chief Harris further explained the new process of "Beat Team Policing" that had started on September 1, 1998 at the Department. This process, based on problem oriented policing, has a team of officers from each watch, who under the direction of two sergeants and one lieutenant, work the same area each day. This team is responsible to hold monthly meetings to discuss problems within their area and provide solutions. This issue would be a problem that would be assigned to the beat team for solution.

Chief Harris also noted that the Department had been awarded a COPS Problem Solving Grant in 1997 to develop a plan to combat the Prostitution problem. The administration of this grant and program development also fell under the responsibility of the Beat Team. A portion of this process was to hold community meetings to gather input, concerns, and solutions to the prostitution problem as it existed in this very area.

ANALYSIS

Several methods were used to gather data on the scope of this problem.

We knew a problem existed, due to the fact that a Problem Solving Grant had already been obtained to address the prostitution in this area. However, the emphasis of this grant was to develop *apian* to combat the problem. This plan was to be completed by April 1999.

Since it's award, the group responsible for the grant had been in the process of setting up community meetings to gather input to develop *a. plan*.

Secondly, we collected the calls for police service data (1) as it related to calls of Prostitution. From March 1998 thru October 1998, a total of 473 CFS were received city wide concerning prostitution. A total of 413 calls or 87.3% were located in the area of 1100 block of South 8th Street.

A look at the history of the problem is important to understand that previous attempts had been made to address this problem.

Most of the attempts involved a 'round up' of street prostitutes by an undercover operation.

These projects were short lived in nature, maybe one or two weeks, and the problem would be reduced or moved. As a matter of fact, the problem had moved from the immediate downtown area (2) in the early 1970's, to the southern downtown area in the 1980's and now to south of the

1) Table 1 - Springfield Police Department - Prostitution Calls for Service, September 1, 1998 thru February 28, 1999.

(2) **Table 2** - Map of Downtown City of Springfield outlining movement of prostitution problem over last 25 years.

Lincoln Home area in the late 1990's.

Our analysis also revealed that several groups of persons were involved in this problem.

Offenders:

Prostitutes (mainly females, but one or more males dressed as females)

Pimps (males who operate as both boss and protection for prostitutes)

Customers (males who frequent the area in search of prostitutes)

Victims:

Residents (who are disrupted and sometimes confronted by the offenders)

Property Owners (who have seen a decline in property values and a loss of rent and lease proceeds)

Society (by the spread of sexually transmitted disease and the fear of crime)

Others:

Police (by responding to this ongoing problem without a plan)

Court System (by attempting to prosecute these 'victimless crimes')

Corrections (by trying to house potential convicts)

A quick tour of the area revealed some of the harms that this problem was causing:

- Abandoned buildings
- Building/Offices vacant with For Rent/Lease signs evident
- Trash and litter in the area

A further look at the known prostitutes in the area revealed a different sort of harm that the

problem was causing:

- Health problems for the prostitutes, sexual transmitted diseases
- Drug use and addiction by the prostitutes and pimps
- Crimes of Robbery and Theft for unsuspecting customers

Before the use of this problem solving project, as previously stated, the projects were short lived. They were only short term solutions to a long term problem. There was not the follow up into the cause and effect of this problem. Our initiative would attempt to be an ongoing project to continually address this problem.

At about this same time, the Problem Solving Grant Team conducted a public meeting at Lincoln Library with area residents and business owners to obtain a feeling for the problem. Officers went door to door in the area, leaving flyers at each business and residence to notify everyone of the meeting. Some 37 people from the neighborhood attended the meeting. During the course of the meeting, attendees were surveyed to determine what they believed the main crime problems in the area were. The overwhelming responses was " PROSTITUTION". In fact, some of the citizens were outright angry about the problem and what they perceived was a helpless situation. Another business owner of a local savings and loan, convened a meeting of area business owners. Again the main topic discussed was the prostitution problem and what possible lawful solutions could be used to help alleviate the problem.

Discussion was also held about some environmental conditions that existed in the area that may contribute to the problem. These were identified as:

- Lack of adequate street lighting in some blocks.

- Close proximity of two late night fast food restaurants in the area.
- A package liquor store within two blocks of the main problem area.
- 8th Street not a primary street, but a two way business/multifamily housing street.

At this point the Police Department had a very clear and concise idea of what problem was number 1 on the minds of area residents and business owners - "PROSTITUTION."

Finally it was determined that no good data existed on determining what, if any, prosecution and conviction data existed from past prostitution projects. Although laws existed for enhanced penalties after the second conviction of prostitution, no data was available if these guidelines had been previously followed. It was determined that in the future, close cooperation between the police and the prosecutors office was a necessity to address this problem.

RESPONSE

The beat team was then given the task to develop a plan to deal with this problem. At a beat team meeting in the middle of November 1998, the entire one hour meeting concentrated on this problem. Names of known prostitutes and pimps, along with their know addresses were brought forth. Discussion was held that we must get the cooperation of the States Attorney to fully prosecute persons arrested. The local media would be advised of the names and addresses of all persons arrested during the projects. From this meeting a comprehensive plan was drafted to address the problem, which included:

- Police officers in plain clothes and plain cars to cruise the area and attempt to pick up known prostitutes.
- Make an agreement with the prostitute for sex in exchange for cash.

- Execute a predetermined signal to alert uniform officers that a deal was made.
- Uniform officers to perform a traffic stop and make an arrest.
- Provide a printout of a computerized criminal history to the States Attorneys office of each arrested person to indicate past conviction information.
- Produce a press release listing arrested person's name, address and charges.
- Follow up with Police Department's Court Liaison Officer to insure proper charges are filed.
- Increase uniformed patrol in the area to stop known prostitutes, advise them of the project, check for wanted persons.
- Use of probation/parole status of arrested persons to increase sentence penalties.
- Refer arrested prostitutes to Positive Options and Referral Agency (PORA) for rehabilitation.
- Use Follow up Community meetings to report results and gauge success.
- Use an 'Area Safety Check' to stop all foot and vehicle traffic in the area for four to five hours and distribute material concerning the prostitution problem.
- Use female police officers to serve as decoys to arrest potential male customers.
- Use the Springfield City Ordinance - Administrative Fee of \$125.00 for a person arrested for 'Solicitation of a Sexual Act' to be paid before his car can be released.

The biggest change in this response plan from previous plans was the follow thru and complete tracking of each person arrested (3).

We had to have a process in place to be able to track each arrested person, insure proper charges were filed, and proper sentences were imposed.

(3) Table 3 - Springfield Police - Persons Arrested on Prostitution Details, November 1998 thru March 1999.

The most important evaluation criteria for this project was going to have to be a reduction in citizens complaints of prostitution, along with a feeling from the public that something was being accomplished by all facets of the criminal justice system. Community satisfaction with our attempt to solve the problem was very important.

The Department's goals were also pretty simple. Reduce the calls for police service concerning prostitution and follow thru with the cases.

In order to implement this response plan the following resources were utilized:

- Uniformed police officers
- Plain clothes police officers
- Marked and unmarked police vehicles
- Court Liaison Officer
- Local Media
- Sangamon County States Attorneys Office
- Sangamon County Court System
- Positive Options and Referral Agency (PORA)
- Computerized Criminal History Information

Before we implemented our response plan, we checked with the Court Liaison Officer to advise the States Attorneys Office that we were undertaking this project. He also advised them of our intentions to provide criminal history information and media releases in order to carry thru to the fullest extent with our plan.

We also conducted briefings with all officers involved with each detail to review:

- The proper legal requirements to make a Prostitution or related arrest.
- Specific assignments of all personnel.
- Copies of properly completed arrest reports.
- Officer safety requirements for this detail.

As we involved police officers from different sections of our Department (Narcotics & Gang Enforcement), and at times police officers from other agencies, the briefings were a very good tool to insure proper defemination of information and review of all procedures and tactics.

During the response phase, we did encounter some problems that had to be addressed. For this reason we were flexible to alter the plans to respond to problems. The main problems were:

- A lack of more than two or three 'undercover' police vehicles. We tried to make our stops outside the target area so the cars did not 'get burned' but sometimes this was not successful.
- Some prostitutes had been arrested before and were knowledgeable about exactly what had to be said to commit the offense of prostitution. Our undercover officers had to take extra care to insure all the elements of the offense occurred before an arrest was made.
- Although our analysis of the time of day indicated the prostitution was mainly happening in the evening hours, we also had received complaints in the early afternoon. Therefore we once started our detail at 3 pm, but did not get any results till closer to 5pm (darkness).
- During the 'reverse stings' we would not allow our female undercover officers to

get into the potential customer's vehicle. This created a lot of potential customers from stopping and talking to our female undercover officers, but only about 1 out of 7 would actually commit the offense of 'Solicitation of Sexual Act' without our females getting in their vehicle.

ASSESSMENT

As of March 28, 1999, 23 persons have been arrested and charged under this project.

We believe that our response plan has also had an effect on both slowing down the number of calls for service in the area for prostitution and perhaps shifting the location of the prostitution to other areas of Springfield. The calls for police service for prostitution was at a high of 88 calls per month in November 1998 when our project started. In February the calls were down to 31 per month. The problem has also been displaced, as some of the known prostitutes are now prowling a local truck stop, approaching vehicles in the parking lot.

On February 18, 1999, Chief Harris received a letter (4) from Mr. Gene Taylor of Sangamon Schools Credit Union. Mr. Taylor had hosted a community meeting on December 16, 1998 where the Prostitution problem had been the only topic of discussion. His letter stated "I really appreciate the additional efforts that have been made to address the problems we have had in the area regarding prostitutes and pimps. Our staff and I have noticed a great deal of improvement."

It is by this type of recognition that we feel that the project is successful.

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The evaluation of this project has six main elements:

(4) **Table 4** - Letter from Sangamon Schools Credit Union dated 2/17/99

- Continued increased uniformed patrol in the area with emphasis on enforcement.
- Continued undercover details, especially as the weather improves.
- Constant monitoring of the court dispositions of arrested persons.
- Recognition that we may be displacing this problem to other areas of Springfield.
- Tabulation of prostitution calls for service on a monthly basis to determine improvement.
- Continued use of the media to publish the results of court actions.

Some of the early results are very positive and point to a positive outcome for this project.

As of March 28, 1999 twenty three persons have been arrested as a result of this project. Of those twenty three, ten persons have already pled guilty and are serving their sentences. Also, in

Illinois, a person who is already twice convicted of prostitution, will be charged with felony prostitution on the third and subsequent charges. Of the fifteen people arrested for prostitution, four have been charged under the felony clause. One felony charged person was in the group that has already pled guilty. She received 18 months in prison for a sentence.

This problem will require constant and perhaps never ending attention by the Police Department if we wish to continue the success of this project. Once we fail to keep ourselves focussed on this problem, the citizen complaints and calls for service will rise again.

In conclusion, we believe our assessment shows a positive outcome of this project.

Unfortunately since we are in only the sixth month of the project, not all court cases have been adjudicated. We believe the early success rate will continue with further prosecutions.

AGENCY AND OFFICER INFORMATION

John W, Harris became chief of the Springfield Police Department in October 1995 and one of his first initiatives was the institution of a Community Policing philosophy throughout the entire Department. Over time Community Policing has been incorporated into every section and division of the Department. On September 1,1998 the Department adopted a beat team concept. The City is divided into eight areas or beats with officers permanently assigned to work each area. Each area has a Neighborhood Police Officer assigned to work with the beat officers, public and other City agencies on problem solving projects thru use of the SARA mode. The Neighborhood Police Officers have flexible schedules to better interact with the many groups involved. The Investigations Division, as a part of the Department's Community Policing philosophy has assigned a detective to each of the different beats within the City of Springfield.

As Beat Teams began to meet and discuss the different issues facing them, the problem of prostitution was seen as a major problem throughout the city. Each beat team would be responsible for formulating a problem solving solution for prostitution in thier areas. Beat 200 which includes areas of Springfield's central business district and historic sites around the Lincoln Home was identified as having major prostitution problems. The Beat 200 Team was tasked to formulate a problem solving initiative that would address the problem and serve as a model for other beat teams to emulate.

The Agency had provided community policing education and the latest techniques of problem oriented policing at all levels throughout the Department. Staff officers have attended various

schools such as Northwestern University School of Police Staff and Command, FBI National Academy and courses through the Regional Institute of Community Policing. Sergeants, Neighborhood Police Officers and line officers have attended courses in community policing techniques. The Department provides all officers a basic problem solving course. The staff and officers directly involved this prostitution problem solving initiative have all received training in problem solving and community policing.

In order to address this problem better the Beat 200 Team applied for and received a federal COPS grant to formulate a plan to address prostitution. The officers were also supplied with manuals from the Community Policing Consortium, Department of Justice. The University of Illinois at Springfield also agreed to assist the development and review of the overall plan to address this problem. The Regional Institute for Community Policing also provided training and support for this project. The United States National Park Service became a partner in this project to help keep prostitution out of the Lincoln Home National Historical Site.

The most obvious issue was the prostitution in the business district and surrounding neighborhood. However, additional issues were brought out as we developed this project. Thefts, robberies and drug use were also found to accompany prostitution. Citizens and businesses complained about strangers constantly driving thru the area. Trash and drug paraphernalia were left in the yards and on the parking lots of the businesses. Customers and visitors to the businesses and residences were harassed by the prostitutes or pimps. Environmental issues were brought out also. Lighting, security measures and police presence were issues identified in the model.

The Springfield Police Department in an effort to confront this matter utilized the entire beat team consisting of patrol officers, neighborhood patrol officers and detectives. Additionally officers from the Field Support Division were also utilized to conduct prostitution and under cover details. Crime Prevention officers conducted citizen awareness campaigns. The Illinois State Police assisted us with officers and additional equipment.

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SPRINGFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT - PROSTITUTION CALLS FOR SERVICE

March 1,1998 thru February 28,1999

MONTH	Prostitution CFS - City Wide	Prostitution - South 8th Area
March 1998	61	53
April 1998	70	57
May 1998	52	45
June 1998	51	47
July 1998	70	57
August 1998	61	53
September 1998	32	29
October 1998	76	72
November 1998	95	88
December 1998	64	59
January 1999	54	44
February 1999	40	31
TOTALS	726	635

87.4% of all Prostitution calls for police service within the South 8th Street Area.