2008 Herman Goldstein Award Submission

“BEYOND THE BINGE”

La Crosse Police Department

Chief Edward N. Kondracki
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May 30, 2008

Rob T Guerrette PhD
School of Criminal Justice
Florida International University
University Park, PCA 366B
11200 8th Street SW
Miami FL  33199

Dear Dr. Guerrette:

It is indeed my honor to submit this letter nominating the City of La Crosse Police Department’s Problem Solving Team for consideration in the 2008 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem Oriented Policing Submissions.

The attached submission represents a comprehensive community organizing and problem solving effort “Beyond the Binge” which confronts binge drinking and a community drinking problem. Binge drinking is a phenomenon confronting university communities across the nation. Binge drinking became the topic of extreme focus when between 1997 and 2005 six intoxicated college aged males drowned in the Mississippi River only blocks from the University of Wisconsin campus.

The La Crosse Police Department’s POP effort is both a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis of both the scope and seriousness of binge drinking in La Crosse and across the nation. The response to the police department’s community mobilization efforts have resulted in a comprehensive community plan. This problem solving effort has resulted in well over twenty separate community supported strategies designed to address nearly every aspect of binge drinking. The comprehensive solutions being applied in the City of La Crosse are self sustaining and can be utilized as a blueprint for any community choosing to address this serious problem.

Please do not hesitate to call me at 608-789-7201 if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Edward Kondracki
Chief of Police

EK:aw
Summary

SCANNING
In 2004, after the seventh alcohol related drowning death of a college student in eight years, the La Crosse Police Department took a hard look at its response to alcohol related incidents. These tragedies, set in a deeply entrenched drinking culture, forced the police department to seek alternatives to traditional enforcement responses to alcohol problems.

ANALYSIS
In the spring of 2004, the police department hosted a town hall meeting to determine the scope of the problem. The community’s perceptions of the problem and how it was being handled varied. Some attendees believed the drowning deaths were the work of a serial killer.

Police Chief Edward Kondracki presented his department’s conclusion: excessive alcohol consumption was the major contributing factor in each of the drowning deaths. The town hall meeting helped bring public focus to the harm caused by binge drinking, and drinking that went beyond binge drinking -- aggressive drinking.

Their analysis identified a number of factors contributing to the problem: La Crosse has the second highest bar density in the country; this ease of access, coupled with low prices and a disproportionately large alcohol-prone age demographic, create a volatile alcohol consumption environment.

RESPONSE
A team, the Alcohol Compliance and Education (A.C.E.) team, was established to coordinate department efforts. The A.C.E. team worked with a variety of community stakeholders, including a group appointed by the mayor, the Alcohol Task Force to address the problem. They engaged staff and students from three institutions of higher learning, business owners, alcohol treatment specialists, and concerned citizens in this comprehensive project.

The A.C.E. Team worked with the Alcohol Task Force in four main action areas:

1. Excessive alcohol use/abuse & binge drinking
2. Ordinances that address safety & alcohol
3. The infrastructure & safety of Riverside Park
4. Community readiness for cultural change

ASSESSMENT
The collaboration that resulted led to: decreases in large alcohol parties; increases in compliance by retail alcohol outlets; development and delivery of effective prevention education; enhanced safety in waterfront areas; improved community awareness of the problem; and institutionalization of procedures and relationships established to offer long-term solutions to problems related to binge and aggressive drinking.

The project, and the positive results from it, validated the effectiveness and efficiency of police collaboration with diverse stakeholders in the community, especially when addressing a problem that requires resources and expertise not possessed by any one organization.
Beyond Binging: A Community Confronts Its Drinking Problem

In April of 2004, La Crosse Police Department problem-solving team members used their standard problem solving process, the S.A.R.A. (Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment) model, to initiate a community-based project to address growing public concern over seven drowning deaths and other problems, e.g. injuries, disturbances, and property damage associated with binge and aggressive drinking.

La Crosse is a scenic, college community on the Mississippi River. However, despite its charms, La Crosse has a reputation as a college party town. Visitor guides proudly feature tours of the local brewery that include the “Worlds Largest Six Pack.” Annually, on the last weekend in September, nearly 100,000 beer-drinking revelers visit La Crosse to participate in Oktoberfest USA. Fifty bars are located downtown within a three-block radius (see Figure 1). Most of those bars are two blocks from the Mississippi River. In 2004, following the seventh accidental river drowning of an intoxicated college-age man within the past eight years, the community faced a crisis.

SCANNING

“Colleges cannot tackle this problem alone… Only with community support can real progress be achieved.”

Henry Wechsler, Ph.D
Harvard School of Public Health
College Alcohol Study

On April 22, 2004, the La Crosse Police Department hosted a Town Hall Meeting to obtain community input on the scope of the alcohol problem and the factors contributing to alcohol-related problems in the area. Dozens of community members representing a variety of constituencies spoke to the nearly 500 people in attendance. The attendees included representatives from each of the three institutions of higher learning and both major health care organizations located in La Crosse. The area’s CBS network
television affiliate broadcast the event live. The other area print, radio, and television media outlets also reported on the meeting.

The Town Hall meeting was the police department’s opportunity to gather information about the problem facing the community. Meeting facilitators wanted to identify the real problem, its underlying causes, and distinguish the problem from its symptoms.

Early on, some participants expressed opinions that seemed to indicate they did not support the La Crosse Police Department, especially its conclusions on the latest drowning deaths. A number of citizens feared that a serial killer was preying on young men in La Crosse. According to them, the La Crosse Police Department and other official agencies were ignoring the “facts” and passing the deaths off as accidents.

For the La Crosse Police Department, the Town Hall meeting was a watershed event. The majority of public and expert opinion pointed to a community problem: the high level of binge drinking, and the associated harm caused by binge drinking, that negatively affected the well-being of the community and its citizens.

Following the meeting, the police department created an internal action team to address the problem. This team included both line and staff officers from each of the major bureaus in the department.

Although the community had identified a problem, the goals related to that problem were not entirely clear. After much consideration, the internal team selected two goals for immediate action:

- Engage and mobilize community resources;
• Enhance community safety and reduce harm linked to acute alcohol abuse.

Community Mobilization
The team recognized that community mobilization was necessary because no one stakeholder had the resources to affect or sustain changes in La Crosse’s deeply rooted alcohol traditions. Public institutions, citizens, students, tavern owners, and alcohol experts would have to work together for lasting positive changes to endure.

Community Safety
The tragic drowning deaths negatively influenced citizens’ feelings of community safety, and increased community fear. The team knew that the key to reducing fear, which was a symptom of alcohol-related deaths and injuries, lay with reducing binge drinking. The team would have to retrace the path taken by seven young men, prior to their deaths; to find out how they, and hundreds like them on any given weekend in La Crosse, were ending up too drunk to care for themselves.

The police department took immediate interim action by increasing patrol and enforcement within the downtown entertainment district. The team assigned three officers to work during peak times for alcohol-related incidents, based on an analysis of police department data (Figure 6), on Tuesday through Saturday nights, from 3:00PM until 2:30AM. This group of officers evolved into a dedicated unit: the Alcohol Compliance and Education (A.C.E.) unit.

Chief Edward Kondracki asked the city’s mayor to appoint a task force representing diverse community perspectives. Subsequently, the Mayor created the Alcohol Task Force. Task force membership included:
The Alcohol Task Force, with input from the police department’s A.C.E. team, established four primary objectives with a timeline (see C 1-3) to achieve these objectives by 2010:

1. Increase awareness of the dangers of excessive alcohol use and binge drinking;
2. Establish ordinances that address public safety and alcohol-related issues;
3. Assess and improve infrastructure and safety in the downtown and riverfront areas;
4. Assess community readiness for cultural change.

From the onset, it was clear that the Alcohol Task Force would focus on three distinct action areas: data collection, public and physical safety, and extreme abuse of alcohol, including binge drinking.

**Analysis**

The police department’s team took two paths: first through membership on an Alcohol Task Force and second by conducting analysis to identify opportunities for immediate action. The police team conducted a review of the literature on binge drinking and
efforts underway in other communities to reduce the harm caused by excessive drinking. (See References, B 2-5) The information and data examined included:

- police statistics and the efficacy of past responses by the police department;
- national and local alcohol trends, especially among college age adults;
- hospital data related to drinking;
- an environmental scan of the affected area;
- best practices for reducing binge drinking and high-risk behaviors associated with aggressive drinking, local and national data on the impact of alcohol on accidental deaths and injuries;
- durable options in enforcement, intervention, and prevention.

In addition to reviewing scientific literature and data, the team also analyzed the relationships between offenders, victims, and location, derived from routine activity theory, and illustrated these relationships using a crime triangle (See figure 2).

**Police Response History**

During the previous two decades, alcohol consumption by college students and other young adults in La Crosse had been a significant problem, one that the police department addressed in a traditional, reactive way.

In the bar district, police officers would respond to calls that usually concerned one of three problems: fights, extremely intoxicated persons, and underage drinkers. In each case, officers typically responded by arresting or issuing tickets to offenders and returning to patrol duty.

In off-campus areas, the police sometimes proactively warned prospective “hosts” of planned parties of the legal penalties they might face. Usually, however, the response
was reactive. Police officers would respond to a complaint about a loud party, break it up, and take enforcement action against the host.

In 1993, Chief Kondracki established the innovative University Liaison Officer (U.L.O.) program to improve relations between the police department and staff and students at area colleges. The U.L.O. provides prevention education designed to reduce risky or illegal alcohol use by students. The U.L.O. works on a flexible part-time schedule to present on alcohol issues to incoming freshmen and to students before spring break.

The department’s normal response to binge drinking and high-risk behaviors by young adults was flawed. The time and effort devoted to reducing alcohol-related problems was almost exclusively incident-driven and symptom-focused. Without operational changes, officers continued to face these same problems repeatedly.

**National and Local Trends**

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (Higson et al, 2005), alcohol has been a major contributing factor in 1,700 deaths and nearly 700,000 assaults involving U.S. college students annually (Figure 3). Each year, police arrest approximately 110,000 college students for alcohol-related offenses (Higson et al, 2002).

La Crosse has a college student population of 15,000 – a significant number given Wisconsin’s rank near the top of college binge-drinking statistics. Wisconsin also has the highest incidence of adult binge drinking in the United States (CDC, 2006). This high rate of alcohol consumption is the inevitable result of regional social traditions, low
prices for alcohol, a large number of bars per capita, and relentless advertising targeting young adults (Weitzman, 2003).

According to Dr. Brenda Rooney, principal alcohol researcher and epidemiologist for the Gundersen Lutheran Medical Foundation, La Crosse has the second highest bar density in the country (Rooney, 2006). This ease of access, coupled with low prices and a disproportionately large alcohol-prone age group, creates a volatile alcohol-rich environment that contributes directly to crime, deaths, and injuries (N.I.A.A.A., 2007).

An internal study of alcohol consumption by the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse (UW-L) revealed that 32% of male students had six or more drinks the last time they “partied”. Based on UW-L enrollment, that means 1,140 young men at one of La Crosse’s three post-secondary institutions had passed the “binge” threshold of five drinks at one sitting within the previous month.

**Best Practices**

The A.C.E. team consulted with experts and reviewed research on effective, evidence-based strategies for reducing binge and aggressive drinking. The team wanted to identify validated, effective solutions proven by either research or use in other communities.

According to the N.I.A.A.A., effective solutions include: enforcement of drinking age laws; restrictions on alcohol retail outlet density; mandatory beverage server training; compliance checks on retail outlets; and beer keg registration requirements (N.I.A.A.A., 2007).
Community Resources

As major participants in the community’s Alcohol Task Force, police team members built relationships with other task force member organizations. University alcohol experts and medical alcohol-abuse centers provided a wealth of background information that helped the team identify effective, efficient, and enduring solutions. The team augmented this direct information with data and graphs depicting college alcohol trends from national and local sources.

Benchmarking during this phase consisted of interviews with representatives from Winona, Minnesota, a small college city that resembles La Crosse in many ways, and Madison, Wisconsin. Madison is much larger than La Crosse but faces similar challenges: a college age population that is disproportionately large; a defined area of high bar density; and a significant problem with alcohol-related arrests and injuries.

RESPONSE

Based on information compiled during the analytical phase, the team and task force defined two key terms: binge drinking and aggressive drinking.

The task force and team adopted the N.I.A.A.A. definition of *binge drinking*:

> A “binge” is a pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration (B.A.C.) to 0.08 percent or above. For the typical adult, this pattern corresponds to consuming 5 or more drinks for males, or 4 or more drinks for females, in about 2 hours.

(N.I.A.A.A., 2007)
The analysis process identified another concern: the incidents affecting public safety most frequently in La Crosse involved drunken people whose alcohol consumption far exceeded the definition of binge drinking. Their drinking went beyond binging. The term aggressive drinking refers to this extreme form of alcohol abuse.

The Alcohol Task Force focused on four alcohol-related objectives. The goal of the La Crosse Police Department’s A.C.E. team was to develop an action plan designed to support task force objectives. Solutions considered by the team included:

- Implementation of Social Detox: a non-medical alternative to involuntary hospitalization;
- Increased patrols in trouble “hot spots”;
- Strict enforcement of laws, e.g. overconsumption and underage drinking laws;
- Implementation of Responsible Beverage Server training;
- Participation in all relevant committees formed to address alcohol issues.

The A.C.E. Team identified and considered solutions in addition to those proposed by the Alcohol Task Force including:

- Promotion of a new Public Intoxication Ordinance;
- Remedial education for individuals charged with public intoxication;
- Increased activity U.L.O. to facilitate collaboration between all three colleges;
- More frequent tasked patrols of the riverfront area adjoining the downtown;
- Compliance checks on bars and beverage servers;
- Improved service and increased ridership on Safe Ride buses.
The A.C.E. team also recognized that mobilizing the community to address the issue of aggressive drinking was a top priority. The team agreed that the total number of new programs involving community partners would be one benchmark of success. Accordingly, the team focused its efforts on implementing the proposed solutions.

By this time, police department command had reassigned the A.C.E. team. Their primary responsibilities were to focus on alcohol related compliance and educational efforts. A.C.E. officers had the flexibility to work any hours between 3:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m. This flexible schedule freed them to participate in community meetings, to conduct enforcement, and to provide education.

**University Liaison Officer – Tri Campus Group**

The U.L.O. had extensive experience with each of the three institutions of higher learning in La Crosse by virtue of his position. He served as a catalyst for the creation of the Tri-Campus group. The Tri-campus Group convened as a coalition to help change the culture of high-risk drinking, especially among college students. Student and administrator representatives from all three local colleges meet monthly to address issues affecting students and the community.

**Safe Ride**

The Safe Ride program is a transportation initiative intended to provide students a safe alternative to driving or walking from the downtown area back to campus housing areas. Although Safe Ride had been operating for a few years prior to the A.C.E. team’s formation, the team recommended relocating pickup and drop-off points to increase ridership and to reduce vandalism along pedestrian routes (Hingson, 2005).
Operation River Watch

Operation River Watch began as an initiative staffed by La Crosse Police Department personnel to patrol areas along the Mississippi River on weekends during late tavern hours in order to prevent injuries and drowning. The U.L.O. expanded Operation River Watch by including volunteers from student and other civic organizations. The police department provides equipment such as flashlights, reflective vests, and cell phones for volunteers, as well as police department personnel for support.

New Ordinances

According to research (Hingson, 2002, Wagenaar, 1993), keg registration and responsible server ordinances have been effective in reducing the frequency and size of large parties in many communities.

Beer Keg Registration Ordinance

The team proposed and helped gain city council support for an ordinance requiring retail outlets to maintain a registry of beer kegs sold. Retailers record the unique serial numbers from each keg and verify the names and ages of purchasers. Monitoring beer keg sales makes it easier to prosecute those who sell or provide beer at large private parties -- especially those serving underage drinkers.

Responsible Server Training

The A.C.E. team developed and delivered a curriculum for beverage-server training designed to enhance bar compliance with mandated sober-server rules, improved detection of underage persons, and prevention of service to visibly intoxicated persons.
Public Intoxication Ordinance

The team proposed a new ordinance targeting individuals who were extremely intoxicated and behaving contrary to public safety and order. The team recognized that successful passage of the ordinance required community support from students, tavern owners, and the public at large. Many citizens were concerned that the police would use the Public Intoxication Ordinance indiscriminately to target anyone who had been drinking.

To alleviate these concerns, A.C.E. officers received specialized training from Dr. Debra Murray of Viterbo University on evidence-based education and motivational interviewing techniques. Ultimately, the team developed a two-hour class for violators as an option to paying fines. This remedial option became crucial during the ensuing public debate about the proposed ordinance. Having a non-punitive, educational option for offenders validated the police department’s philosophy, which was to prevent the next offense from occurring.

Retail Outlet Compliance Checks

In accordance with best practice (McKnight, 1994), A.C.E. officers tested compliance by sending civilian volunteers and plainclothes officers into bars to observe door identification checks and server practices. The compliance team included one person under the legal drinking age. Compliance inspectors conducted checks during various times of the year, at bars throughout the city.
ASSESSMENT

The results of this collaborative community effort far exceeded initial expectations. These success stories include improvements in legislation, peer intervention, personal responsibility, and community outreach and education (Table 1).

Tri Campus Collaboration

Students and staff at the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, Viterbo University, and Western Technical College united to form a group to address their common concerns with alcohol issues. The group is permanent, with ongoing support from students, the police department, and school administrations. The group administers the Safe Ride program.

In most cases, students have come up with innovative ideas for reducing aggressive alcohol consumption. For example, a group of university marketing students developed the “Safe La Crosse” campaign that raised awareness about alcohol’s harmful impact on student safety. The class followed the campaign with research showing the intended audience, college students, recalled campaign messages. This impact exceeded national averages when compared with other awareness campaigns.

Safe Ride

The Safe Ride/U-Pass is a partnership between La Crosse Mass Transit Utility (MTU) and local universities to provide bus service free of charge on weekends until bars close. The program continues to evolve based on students’ needs. The U.L.O. has been actively involved with the program since its inception. He continues to provide
advice to the Tri Campus group on ways of improving ridership. Since 2004, ridership increased 16% to more than 50,000 students each year. La Crosse Police Department statistics show a 31% decrease in vandalism complaints (2003-2007) along the route served by the Safe Ride program.

**Operation River Watch**

Operation River Watch is a partnership between the police department, college student organizations, and other civic groups that patrol along the Mississippi River on weekends. Since 2006, Operation River Watch has intercepted 42 extremely intoxicated individuals who were walking toward the nearby Mississippi River. An analysis of La Crosse’s river drowning problem by the FBI Behavioral Sciences Unit concluded that, “without the presence of the patrol, several of these individuals may have ended up in the Mississippi River.”

The transition from relying solely on departmental resources to volunteer staffing saved money and staff time for the police department, while maintaining a high level of service to the community.

**Beer Keg Registration Ordinance**

Since the inception of the Beer Keg Registration Ordinance in 2006, the number of beer kegs purchased decreased by 48%. Police department statistics show 39% decrease in large parties (i.e. 10 or more citations are issued at a single location) and a 12% decrease in underage drinking violations. With the decrease, the police department gained time to focus enforcement resources on the remaining parties. According to enforcement teams in the campus periphery, the average number of attendees at parties has also decreased as a result.
Sober Server Ordinance

Improved bar compliance through mandating sober-server rules, improving detection of underage persons, and preventing service to visibly intoxicated persons has also been successful.

The training curriculum developed by the A.C.E. team receives high marks from servers in post-class evaluations. Additionally, servers report a much higher degree of confidence in their abilities to identify underage and intoxicated individuals and to respond appropriately.

Public Intoxication Ordinance

The La Crosse Police Department took a holistic approach in its response to the Public Intoxication Ordinance by including education and prevention training. Enforcement of the ordinance has led to more opportunities to educate offenders and members of the public about the effects of public intoxication on the community. Consequently, the police department has earned widespread public support for its enforcement of the Public Intoxication Ordinance.

One of the best examples of this support comes from persons charged under the ordinance who have subsequently attended Alcohol Education classes. In anonymous evaluations, attendees overwhelmingly praise the course and A.C.E. instructors, while reporting improved awareness and skills to change their alcohol consumption habits.

During the first year of ordinance enforcement, 171 violators attended Alcohol Education class. Of these, only one has reoffended. Meanwhile, 22 of 78 violators who
did not attend Alcohol Education reoffended. Without Alcohol Education, offenders were 47 times more likely to repeat their offenses.

A recent survey conducted on campus showed that 90% of respondents support the ordinance. The La Crosse Common Council voted unanimously to continue the Public Intoxication Ordinance after its initial one-year trial period.

**Compliance Checks**

During the first three years of compliance checks, inspectors found that most licensed alcohol outlets were in compliance, i.e. most bars check patrons’ ages, have trained door and server staff, and are careful about serving visibly intoxicated patrons. A police department study shows an improvement, from 54% to 94%, in compliance over the four years following implementation of A.C.E. inspections (Figure 4). The ultimate goal is to improve compliance to 100%, i.e. to have all retail outlets doing their utmost to support alcohol laws.

**Community Collaboration**

In the past, community reaction to alcohol problems resulted in a series of ad hoc groups responding to the “crisis of the moment.” La Crosse and the La Crosse Police Department now benefit from a comprehensive array of efficient and effective partnerships that are committed to working strategically to implement lasting solutions to alcohol-related problems (Figure 5).

In many cases, private businesses joined forces with official agencies to help. For example, during Oktoberfest 2007, a local business donated office space in the downtown bar district to accommodate an aid station for revelers who were sick, injured,
or lost. Alcohol abuse specialists, EMS, fire department First Responders, and police officers worked together on site. During the busy weekend hours of the festival 81 individuals received help at the aid station.

**Challenges**

Despite the many achievements discussed above, some problems remained, either because solutions were not feasible or because they lacked sufficient support from lead agencies. For example, Social Detox, an alternative to formal medical intervention, has support from alcohol treatment organizations, but lacks funding. Infrastructure changes have been delayed by a lack of consensus among public works planners, the Alcohol Task Force, and citizens.

Bar density concerns have not been addressed. Although cooperation between A.C.E., the Alcohol Task Force, and the Tavern League (bar owners) has been largely positive, the Tavern League members are reluctant to accept zoning restrictions on their businesses.

These few ongoing challenges aside, the A.C.E. team and its community partners have accomplished every task and objective undertaken by the La Crosse Police Department.

**Summary**

The department’s comprehensive response brought the problem of aggressive drinking to the forefront, raising awareness and ultimately creating community-based response. Public agencies, non-governmental organizations, private entities, and volunteers have joined in to find and to deliver durable solutions to La Crosse’s drinking problem.
The city of La Crosse has benefitted from these ongoing, permanent relationships, including better working relationships between police and media organizations. The public now receives timely and accurate information on alcohol related incidents, and ongoing prevention efforts.

A several police agencies in Wisconsin have contacted A.C.E. team members for information on lessons learned and insights gained during the project. Wisconsin college communities are especially eager to consult with the La Crosse Police Department, including Racine, Eau Claire, Milwaukee, and Madison, one of the La Crosse project’s original benchmark cities.

In 2007, the La Crosse Police Department received a “Success Story Recognition Award” from the U.S. Department of Justice. Project team member Drew Gavrilos accepted the award for the La Crosse Police Department at the Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center’s National Conference.

The La Crosse Police Department has permanently changed its operating procedures: the A.C.E. Team is a fixed, funded unit within the agency. As such, the team will continue to expand its knowledge and apply lessons learned in ongoing efforts to reduce the harm caused by aggressive alcohol consumption.

Based on the number of requests from other communities and police agencies, La Crosse has become a benchmark of success in the area of community response to alcohol problems.
Agency and Officer Information

The City of La Crosse Police Department has found benefit in developing a conceptual organizational structure that demonstrates leadership at the heart of the organization. The traditional police organization structure, as represented in a line chart, sends the signal of top down control. Such organizational charts have looked the same since the industrial revolution.

The City of La Crosse Police Department is committed to Community Problem Oriented Policing (C.P.O.P.) and participatory management. A visual of this commitment is our circle organization chart which reflects institutionalized problem solving teams.

The department’s four major bureaus: Field Services, Investigative Services, Community Services and Administrative Services are shown as interlinked circles with problem solving teams (PST) assigned to each. The problem solving teams are made up of volunteers and meet periodically or as needed to address problems of their choosing. The success of line problem solving teams has resulted in less dependence on senior command staff and serves to empower line personnel.

Every member of the City of La Crosse Police Department received training in problem oriented policing and problem solving as part of the department’s transition to community oriented policing in the mid 1990’s. The department has since intergraded POP training and the SARA Model as a regular component of field training along with
periodic updates for line personnel. The field training component includes a comprehensive training in

**Scanning:**
- define the problem
- learn more about the problem
- verify the problem
- and taking immediate action.

**Analysis:**
- determine the root cause of problems,
- data oriented
- examine the problem from the perspective of actors, actions, and reactions.

**Response:**
- eliminate
- reduce the frequency
- reduce the severity
- improve the processing
- clarify responsibility for the problem

**Assessment:**
- evaluate the solution
- identify criteria for success and failure
- evaluate methodology,

The field training course includes the philosophy and history of community oriented policing including the importance of developing community partnerships.

Officers utilized the Community Oriented Policing COPS “Problem Oriented Guides for Police Problem Solving Tools” to help manage and direct this problem solving initiative. The team identified the success of training the community in the use of the SARA Model as an important issue in the process. The team found that community leaders were willing to utilize the SARA Model and readily accepted the process.

The police department team found that new resources beyond the existing department budget became available in the form of the community and other agencies both public and private. The combined resources committed to this community wide effort is self sustaining and consistent with the goals and roles of a wide variety of community based organizations.

Contact person:

Captain Rob Abraham
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400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse WI  54601
608-789-7207
abrahamr@cityoflacrosse.org
Crime Triangle

Location

Felson & Clarke 1998
Figure 3

Alcohol is Associated with

- 20-36% Suicides
- Up to 60% Rapes
- 37-40% Assaults
- 38% Child Abuse
- 69% Drowning
- Up to 70% Domestic Abuse
- 40-50% Traffic Fatalities
- Up to 80% Homicides
- 68% Manslaughters
- 37-40% Rapes
- 69% Drowning

Source: Public Health Strategies to Reduce Alcohol-Related Illness, Injury and Death in Wisconsin, Milwaukee Academy of Medicine, 1998

Figure 4

Alcohol Outlet Compliance (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent Passing</th>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
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<td>71</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
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Figure 5

Community Collaboration - Beyond the Binge

New Community Initiatives

- School District Champions --
- TIPS --
- Public Health Consortium --
- Evidence Based Alcohol Education --
- SADD/Youth Initiative --
- 3rd Street Aid Station --
- Public Intoxication Ordinance/Evidence Based Training --
- Safe La Crosse Coalition --
- Operation River Watch
- Sober Server Training
- Keg Registration
- Levee Engineering Changes
- Responsible Beverage Server/Door Greeters
- University Liaison
- "ACE" Team
- Liquor License Compliance Checks
- Alcohol Oversight Committee
- Tri-Campus Advocacy Group
- Safe Ride
- Alcohol Task Force
- Town Hall Meeting
- Traditional Law Enforcement
- UW-L Reach and Share

2003  2004  2005  2006  2007  2008
## TABLE 1

### Alcohol Problem-Solving Project

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<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Source (Efficacy)</th>
<th>Project Goal</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Liaison Officer</td>
<td>La Crosse Police Department</td>
<td>Establish coordination of efforts by three higher education institutions.</td>
<td>A permanent Tri-Campus Coalition formed in 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe Ride</td>
<td>UW-La Crosse, La Crosse Police Department, Higson et al, 2005.</td>
<td>Increased ridership to reduce noise and vandalism along pedestrian routes.</td>
<td>Ridership increased 16% to 50,000 riders each year. Vandalism on route decreased 31% (2003-2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation River Watch</td>
<td>La Crosse Police Department</td>
<td>Prevent accidental drowning in Riverside area.</td>
<td>Police and volunteers partnered to prevent 42 intoxicated individuals from entering high-risk areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keg Registration</td>
<td>Wagenaar et al, 1993</td>
<td>New Keg Registration law to reduce large parties and underage drinking.</td>
<td>Police department data shows a 39% decrease in large parties and 12% decrease in underage violations from 2005-2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Compliance Checks</td>
<td>Lewis et al, 1996</td>
<td>100% compliance to prevent serving to underage or visibly intoxicated persons.</td>
<td>Compliance by retail outlets increased from 54% to 94% (2005-2008).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


Literature Review: Binge Drinking

High density of alcohol outlets around campuses correlates with higher levels of frequent and heavy drinking and drinking-related problems including among women, underage students and those who report they were not binge-drinkers in high school but picked up the behavior in college.


Almost one in four victims of violent crime report that the perpetrator had been drinking prior to committing the violence. Alcohol was involved in 32 to 50 percent of homicides (Spunt, et al., 1995; Goldstein, et al., 1992; Greenfeld, 1998)


Roughly one in 20 (4.7%) women reported being raped. Nearly three quarters (72%) of the victims experienced rape while intoxicated. Women who were under 21, were white, resided in sorority houses, used illicit drugs, drank heavily in high school and attended colleges with high rates of heavy episodic drinking were at higher risk of rape while intoxicated.


New findings from the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study (CAS) confirm a strong correlation between frequent and risky drinking behavior among students and a high saturation of alcohol outlets—bars and liquor stores—within two miles of their campuses.


Neighbors living near college campuses were more likely to report a lowered quality of neighborhood life through such secondhand effects of heavy alcohol use as noise and disturbances, vandalism, drunkenness, vomiting and urination. A path analysis indicated that the number of nearby alcohol outlets was an important factor mediating the relationship between colleges, especially those with high rates of binge drinking, and such secondhand effects. The results suggest that neighborhood disruptions around colleges due to heavy alcohol use may be reduced by limiting the presence of alcohol outlets in those areas, and the marketing practices that this engenders.

We estimate over 1,400 students 18 through 24 in two and four-year colleges died in 1998 from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, including motor vehicle crashes. According to surveys conducted in 1999, in the preceding year over two million of the eight million college students in the United States drove under the influence of alcohol and over three million rode with a drinking driver. Over 500,000 full-time four-year college students were unintentionally injured under the influence of alcohol, and over 600,000 were hit or assaulted by another student who has been drinking.


--1 in 5 men reported drinking 10 or more drinks on at least one day (double men’s binge-drinking threshold).

--1 in 10 women reported drinking 8 or more drinks on at least one day (double women’s binge-drinking threshold).

--Nearly 8 percent of men reported drinking 15 or more drinks on at least one day (triple men’s binge-drinking threshold).

--Nearly 2 percent of women reported drinking 12 or more drinks on at least one day (triple women’s binge-drinking threshold).

"In my opinion, we could make additional progress toward reducing the harm that alcohol brings to our campuses by shifting some of our focus away from students drinking at or near the binge threshold, and toward the significant number of students that drink at levels well beyond the binge threshold," said White.

- White, A. (2006); Many College Freshmen Drink at Levels Far Beyond the Binge Threshold, Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research; vol 30: pp 1-5.

The results with regard to modifying server behavior are positive and indicate that server interventions shown to be efficacious should be implemented.

- Stephen L. Buka, Isolde J. Birdthistle (1999); Long-Term Effects of a Community-Wide Alcohol Server Training Intervention Journal of Studies on Alcohol, Vol. 60

“Compliance with the law was measured before and during the enforcement program by the rate at which patrons simulating intoxication were refused service. Refusals of service rose from 17.5 percent before the enforcement program to a peak of 54.3 percent after the first three months of the enforcement intervention. Significantly, the percentage of impaired drivers arrested after leaving bars and restaurants declined from 31.7 percent to 23.3 percent during the same period.”

“Kegs have been shown to be a major source of alcohol for underage drinkers. The same report indicates that the major factors in underage attendance at keg parties are low price of alcohol and the lack of adult monitoring.”


“Two studies from the mid-1990s found that after compliance checks were conducted, sales to underage patrons reduced from 60-80% to 25-30%.”


“...important to note here that restrictions on availability of alcohol that are not aimed at youth may also be successful in reducing youth access. For example, several studies have found a close link between the density of alcohol outlets and the incidence of violence, including youth violence (Alaniz, Cartmill, & Parker, 1998; Parker & Rebhun, 1995). Alcohol-related problem rates are also associated with alcohol prices (lower prices are associated with more problems), the hours and days of the week that alcohol sales are permitted (more liberal hours and days of sale are associated with an increase in problems), and liquor-by-the-drink regulations (permitting liquor by the drink is associated with increased problems). (See Edwards et al., 1994; Wagenaar & Toomey, 1998.)”


According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics, an examination of bar concentration within the problem area revealed that La Crosse has the highest bar density (number of bars per capita) of any city in the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations:</th>
<th>Recommended Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeline:</th>
<th>Metrics:</th>
<th>Cost/Funding:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Taskforce recommends implementing recommendations made in a future commission engineering study of the levee and the Pearl Street Wallway. To be considered are signage, lighting, railing, gates, etc. (The Taskforce recognizes that its members do not have the knowledge or expertise of an engineering expert to make recommendations on safety at Riverside Park Levee.)</td>
<td>La Crosse City Council Public Works Engineering Dept Downtown Mainstreet Inc. (DMF) City Vision 2020 Action Committee (CVAC)</td>
<td>Upon completion of the study</td>
<td>Study recommendations</td>
<td>Unknown at this time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Develop a Social Detox (non-medical) Facility that will serve as a resource for law enforcement when working with intoxicated individuals.</td>
<td>Medical Facilities Law Enforcement Health &amp; Human Services Coles Council on Addiction (harm reduction model)</td>
<td>Fall, 2005</td>
<td>Facility and staffing to provide harm reduction for up to 10 people</td>
<td>TBD Funded by fees charged to individual housed. Start-up grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Increase police patrols in identified &quot;hot spots&quot; and suspected house parties (party patrols).</td>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>Spring, 2005</td>
<td>Number of patrols increased</td>
<td>Reallocation or reallocation or reassignment CARD Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Continued enforcement of existing ordinances that minimize high risk drinking, such as:</td>
<td>La Crosse City Council Inspection Department City Attorney La Crosse County Health Dept.</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>Number of citations Compliance checks</td>
<td>Enforcement costs Funding through fines CARD Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Strict enforcement of the legal drinking age.</td>
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<td>b. Strict enforcement of state laws that prohibit the sale of alcohol to intoxicated persons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Issue citations to bars that allow overconsumption.</td>
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<td>d. Strict enforcement of building codes and connect to license renewal</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Strict enforcement of the posted Riverside Park closing time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Enforce building codes on &quot;notorious&quot; house party sites where alcohol is being served.</td>
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<tr>
<td>g. Closely monitor the purchase of alcohol for persons under 21.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Establish and/or strengthen ordinances that minimize high risk drinking, such as:</td>
<td>La Crosse City Council La Crosse County City Attorney Planning Dept. Courts.</td>
<td>Fall, 2005</td>
<td>Passage of ordinances</td>
<td>Enforcement costs Funding through fines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Increasing fines for underage drinking, house parties and providing alcohol to underage persons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Limiting bar density in a geographic area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Consistency in assessing fines/sanctions between city and county courts</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Holding both tenants and landlords responsible for disruptive behavior, underage drinking and selling w/o license at house parties.</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Requiring bar owners, sellers and all servers go through Responsible Beverage Server training</td>
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<td>f. Eliminating alcohol consumption by those serving drinks in licensed facilities.</td>
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<td>g. Limiting purchase of 2 half barrels (11/27 gallons of beer) per address and approximately 10 gallons or 17.5 liters of liquor or wine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>h. Uphold limit of 125 Class B and Class A liquor licenses. (Currently 195 Class A+B licenses in city)</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Segregating all liquor sales areas for fermented liquor and spirits to designated check-out area. (One clerk check out for all sales)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Reduce the total number of tavern facilities in the city through renewal process, density standards and attrition.</td>
<td>Law enforcement City Attorney, Planning Dept. Neighbors</td>
<td>Fall, 2005</td>
<td>Oversight Committee or Tri Campus is invited to provide annual input during the license renewal process and that input is part of the record regardless of renewal/non-renewal of license</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Reduce the density number of bars in any single district.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Create a moratorium on bars in the central business district now.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Expand the Responsible Beverage Server Training curriculum.</td>
<td>State Legislature Western Wisconsin Technical College</td>
<td>Fall, 2005</td>
<td>Enhanced curriculum</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
<td>Number ofGold Star Awardbars/outletsDecrease in alcoholrelated incidents</td>
<td>Costs ofplaque/certificatesPursue grants to fund ID scanner technology</td>
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<td>8. Recognize bar owners and outlet owners (Class A &amp; B) that operate at a higher standard to discourage high risk drinking by creating a Gold Star Server/Seller Recognition Program. Gold Star Servers/Seller may: a. Require all servers/sellers to go through an expanded Responsible Server training. b. Check for false ID's using scanner technology. c. Standardize drink servings. d. Limit sales of discount sales. e. Provide food in order to slow the absorption of alcohol into the bloodstream.</td>
<td>La Crosse City Council DMI City Attorney Tri-Campus Advocacy Group</td>
<td>Number of Gold Star Award bars/outlets Decrease in alcohol related incidents</td>
<td>Costs of plaque/certificates Pursue grants to fund ID scanner technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Standardize a parental/legal guardian notification process of underage individuals cited in alcohol and other drug (AODA) related offenses. This will ensure that all agencies providing assessments are consistent in performing parental notification. a. Notification is to be used in a developmental manner and part of a comprehensive educational process.</td>
<td>Coulee Council on Addictions Courts Law Enforcement Other agencies or individuals providing underage drinking assessments</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
<td>Decrease in underage drinking offenses. None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Request higher education institutions to review their alcohol policies and work to develop consistent enforcement and intervention. a. Pilot a reporting mechanism between the police department and colleges for arrests/citations. b. Conduct parent notification in a developmental manner as part of a comprehensive education process in conjunction with assessment referrals cited in 9.</td>
<td>Viterbo, UW, WWTC</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
<td>Decrease in alcohol related disciplinary issues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Keg Registration in City of La Crosse Keg registration would track the number and location of large quantities of beer. a. Recommend to La Crosse County Health &amp; Human Services Bd. b. Further recommendations to State of Wisconsin</td>
<td>La Crosse City Council County Board City Attorney</td>
<td>City of La Crosse – July, 2005</td>
<td>Passage of legislation and implementation of pilot project by 2006. TBD Deposit per keg/could be self funded/as a statewide demonstration project. Grant funding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Enforce Class A and Class B liquor licensing. Maximum fines for those: a. Failing to meet building codes for health and safety. b. Operating with no licensed bartenders on premises. c. Serving to intoxicated individuals. d. Selling to minors. e. Selling without a license.</td>
<td>Law enforcement Building inspection &amp; Licensing entities Vendors City Attorney</td>
<td>December, 2005</td>
<td>Increase fine revenue and decrease underage drinking and selling alcohol to minors. Compliance checks Funded by increased fine revenue and reallocation of law enforcement personnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Develop an ordinance or request voluntary compliance to eliminate all late night (after 10 PM) drink specials. Examples include: “two for one”, “fish bowls”, midnight madness, all you can drink specials, free drinks for birthday guests.</td>
<td>Tavern Owners City Attorney</td>
<td>Fall, 2005</td>
<td>Provide notice to all Class B licensed facilities and monitor the number of offenses. Interview and follow up on offenses as reported Collect consistent data for public reporting reallocating law enforcement as needed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Assess the attitudes and perceptions of the community concerning alcohol a. Assess the readiness for change and education of the community. b. Integrate readiness assessment into a comprehensive education plan.</td>
<td>United Way COMPASS Group</td>
<td>Spring 2006</td>
<td>Survey completed and results promulgated widely to the community. Grant funding Corporate support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendations:</td>
<td>Recommended Responsibility</td>
<td>Timeline:</td>
<td>Metrics:</td>
<td>Cost/Funding:</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Develop and implement a comprehensive Community Education Program.</td>
<td>United Way Coulee Council on Addictions</td>
<td>Winter 2003</td>
<td>Increased awareness and knowledge of alcohol and alcohol-related issues</td>
<td>Grant funding donations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Direct educational efforts to address the culture and attitudes of alcohol abuse of the entire community.</td>
<td>Area K-12 Schools Tri-Campus Advocacy Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Coordinate with existing educational programs in the community, i.e. the colleges, K-12, Coulee Council on Addictions, etc.</td>
<td>Vibe, UWL, WWTC Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Develop PSAs &amp; feature stories on prevention.</td>
<td>Mayor La Crosse City Council Business community Tri-Campus Advocacy Group</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Decreased incidents of alcohol abuse and related negative consequences. The perception of a city that is not rooted in alcohol or its abuse—Party Town</td>
<td>Support of local businesses and economic development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Develop and implement environmental strategies to support long term cultural change. These strategies include the development of other forms of entertainment and social activity that do not focus on alcohol.</td>
<td>Police &amp; Fire Deps. Coulee Council on Alcohol K-12</td>
<td>Fall, 2005</td>
<td>Increased awareness and decrease in river incidents.</td>
<td>In-kind public service of local media outlets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Address &quot;mixed messages&quot; through education, public policy and practice changes.</td>
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<td>b. Limit Oktoberfest to one weekend or make the second weekend alcohol free.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Develop PSAs on Cold Water Drowning and an implementation plan to distribute them.</td>
<td>Mayor La Crosse City Council Tri-Campus Advocacy Group</td>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
<td>Active and viable group is formed with semi-annual reports to city leadership</td>
<td>Contributions of stakeholders and possible grant funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. This would include involvement and partnering in the area of health, education, economic development, Class A &amp; B liquor license granting/renewal review, and policy &amp; ordinance development/review.</td>
<td>La Crosse County Public Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. The &quot;Coalition&quot; could include representatives of law enforcement, city and county leadership, local taverns, campus leadership, landlords, advocacy groups, neighborhood associations, AGDA Services, health care providers, municipal courts and business leaders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Establish a city liaison position to work with all constituencies and ensure that recommendations of the Task Force and the Tri-Campus Advocacy Group are implemented and coordinated. (i.e. Madison model)</td>
<td>Mayor La Crosse City Council Business Community Advocacy Groups United Way COMPASS</td>
<td>Fall 2006</td>
<td>Recommendations are reviewed, considered and enacted. Increased communications and education of the community.</td>
<td>Reallocation or reassignment of a position or part of a position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Develop consistent reporting criteria and tools to aid in the collection and display of high risk alcohol consumption related data. Use this data to monitor the cost to the community of high risk drinking, to identify additional community needs, and the effectiveness of initiatives recommended in this document.</td>
<td>City Liaison position Law Enforcement Healthcare providers United Way COMPASS</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>Semi-Annual Reports to the public and where requested.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chief sets meeting on river deaths

By DAN SPINGER
La Crosse Tribune

City officials hope a special “town hall” meeting Thursday evening will help calm fears and end rumors that a serial killer is preying on college-aged men in the Mississippi River.

La Crosse Police Chief Ed Kondracki set the open meeting for 7 p.m. Thursday in the Central High School auditorium.

Kondracki said he called the meeting to discuss circumstances surrounding the death of University of Wisconsin-La Crosse student Jared Dian, whose body was found in the Mississippi River near Riverside Park on Thursday, and the six other young men who have died in the river since 1997.

A panel will give an overview of the cases, then take questions from the public. Kondracki said.

The panel will include members of the La Crosse Police Department, La Crosse County Medical Examiner John Steers, the state Division of Criminal Investigation, Wisconsin Lutheran Medical Center and representatives from the UW-La Crosse and Western Wisconsin Technical College.

Kondracki said he knows some people will remain convinced the men were victims of a serial killer.

Meanwhile, City officials hope a special meeting will address fears.

MEETING WILL ADDRESS FEARS

Still on the loose. But he hopes the session will calm most people's fear about the deaths.

"What is troublesome is that the public doesn't always understand what goes on into our investigations," Kondracki said. "There are many people who think a couple of hours go into an investigation, not knowing the hundreds of people who are interviewed and the days and weeks that go into an investigation.

Even though the initial investigation found Dian was hastily immersed when he drowned and foul play was not suspected, Kondracki said the case remains open.

"The investigation is not over. It continues well beyond that. That is simply an initial finding based on the obvious evidence," Kondracki said, "so no way does that mean the investigation is over." 

City hall officials have been flooded with phone calls, emails and letters in the past week from people complaining police were too quick to rule out a serial killer. Mayor John Medinger said:

"I'm 99 percent sure. The police department is correct, which is a pretty high percentage. But, since one was there when Dian went into the river, there is no way to know for sure," Medinger said Monday.

"Do I think there's a serial killer out there? No. Am I absolutely sure? No. Who can be?"

In a story in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel this weekend, Medinger was quoted as saying: "Most people here believe that there is something going on." Then added, "My wife thinks it's a serial killer. She's totally convinced."

Medinger also said the disagreement has caused a "disconnect" between the community, and the police, and the city needs to find a way to help the public understand the evidence in the cases.

Kondracki called Medinger's comments disappointing and said some members of his staff were offended by the mayor's suggestion the department is disconnected from the community.

"Our officers consider themselves part of the community, not removed from the community they serve," Kondracki said.

He questioned why Medinger's wife is certain a killer is running free.

"He says she is totally convinced, yet she has not asked to see the police reports. She has never talked to me. She has never talked to Captain (Mitch) Bohmer. And, she has never talked to the DCI (Division of Criminal Investigation)."

"It makes me wonder what she bases her conclusions on."

Kondracki suggests barrier, cameras

By DAN SPINGER
La Crosse Tribune

With seven young men drowning in the Mississippi River in the past seven years, La Crosse Police Chief Ed Kondracki said now is the time for the city to take steps to make sure no more lives are lost in the river.

In a letter Monday to La Crosse Mayor John Medinger, Kondracki renewed his concerns about the drinking culture in downtown La Crosse and suggested ways the city could reduce intoxication and make the riverfront safer.

Among his suggestions were installing a barrier, cameras and fencing.

"The task force's mission will be open-ended — to look at ideas already raised, such as surveillance cameras and fencing, and consider new options," Medinger said.

"La Crosse's drinking culture is 150 years old. It didn't come up overnight, and we shouldn't expect that we can solve it in two weeks. We are not going to do knee-jerk reactions."

Mayor to request alcohol task force

By JOAN KENT
La Crosse Tribune

Mayor John Medinger said Monday he will ask the La Crosse Common Council to create a task force to look at ways to minimize the effects of excessive alcohol consumption in La Crosse.

Police Chief Ed Kondracki asked for the task force a month ago.

La Crosse Police Chief Ed Kondracki talked to the DCI (Division of Criminal Investigation) about the possibility of a task force to look at alcohol-related deaths.

"There is a lack of agreement has caused a "disconnect" between the community and the police, and the city needs to find a way to help the public understand the evidence in the cases."

Kondracki called Medinger's comments disappointing and said some members of his staff were offended by the mayor's suggestion the department is disconnected from the community.

"Our officers consider themselves part of the community, not removed from the community they serve," Kondracki said.

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"It makes me wonder what she bases her conclusions on."

City engineers show levee barrier

By JOAN KENT
La Crosse Tribune

City engineers Thursday proposed several proposals for new barriers at the Riverside Park levee to the La Crosse Park Board.

After the Sept. 30 death of University of Wisconsin-La Crosse student Lucas Humann in the Mississippi River near the park levee, the Common Council asked the Engineering Department to prepare possible plans and estimates to increase safety at the levee.

Humann was the eighth college-age man to drown in La Crosse since 1997.

"The plans address the north, central and south portions of the levee, and contain measures such as ornamental railings, grass and new posts and chains."

"Most create a maze effect for pedestrians so people would be more aware they are entering a different section of the park, said City Engineer Randy Turkewitz."
College substance abuse becoming more extreme

By JUSTIN POPE
The Associated Press

Substance abuse on college campuses is nothing new, but it is taking a more severe and dangerous form, with higher rates of frequent binge drinking and exposure to drug abuse, and more negative consequences for students such as stress and risky sexual behavior.

That's the picture painted by a new, comprehensive report tying together a range of recent research on college substance abuse, supplemented with some of its own survey data.

The report by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, argues substance abuse isn't an inevitable stage of passage for young adults. Rather, it argues a particular culture of excessive consumption has flourished on college campuses, and calls on educators to take bold steps against students and schools to combat it.

"If they make this a priority, they can do something about it," said Joseph Califano, chairman and president of the center, who among other efforts called on colleges and the NCAA to stop allowing alcohol advertising during high-profile events such as the NCAA men's basketball tournament.

"Hard-drinking college town struggles to curb drownings"

By ANASTASIA MERCER
La Crosse Tribune

"Series of Deaths rattles a city"

Changing the binge drinking culture

By ANASTASIA MERCER
La Crosse Tribune

If a community wants to reduce the problems associated with binge drinking, it's leader, campus officials and tavern owners have a stop finger-pointing and come to consensus on what the problem is, an expert in college alcohol abuse prevention said Wednesday.

Susan Crowley, director of an alcohol abuse prevention program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said even though the Madison campus has not solved all its alcohol-related problems, it has reduced the rate of binge drinking on campus from 67 percent in 1999 to 59 percent this year.

"We've all been looking for solutions and strategies," she said. "These won't solve the problem, but there are some that are promising.

Crowley said the first step was to get stakeholders to define the problem. The group decided to prevent the negative consequences of binge drinking (like sexual assault and property damage) instead of addressing other issues like underage drinking.

"One mistake the campus made initially was depending on the community to provide social alternatives to drinking," she said. "That has since changed, although the degree of success is varied. Keeping campus recreational facilities open late didn't interest students, but subsidizing live music at bars that agreed to go alcohol-free for the night did.

Crowley said it's important stakeholders are true to their message and are consistent. If only taverns are targeted for change, the students have more house parties. If residence halls ignore rules, the drinking moves there.

"If a community wants to stop getting drunk, drowning in rivers," she said, "the community needs to be really clear in its message and are consistent. If residence halls ignore rules, the drinking moves there."

"American Today"

"If we don't have an alcohol-free night, we lose a lot of money," said Greg Johnson, an owner of one of the city's 100 taverns.

Crowley said balancing enforcement, education and policy is the key to success. "It wasn't real easy, but I would say eight years later, we do have a really strong campus/community coalition," she said.

"It wasn't real easy, but I would say eight years later, we do have a really strong campus/community coalition," she said.

Lora Gofas, a University of Wisconsin-La Crosse student who was one of about 190 people who attended Crowley's morning presentation on campus, said she agrees college campuses need to have a consistent message.

Gofas attended a university in Minnesota last year, and said drinking was "very prevalent" in her residence hall even though she suspected some of the same things happened at UW-La Crosse.

She said balancing enforcement, education and policy is the key to success. "It wasn't real easy, but I would say eight years later, we do have a really strong campus/community coalition," she said.

"I think alcohol is an issue," she said. "We need to give people information, and educate them on how to get responsibility."
La Crosse police share safety tips
Speaker travels country giving advice on curbing city drinking problems

By Tara Bannow
bannow@uwec.edu

La Crosse Police Department has been sharing the country about its ideas, and will head to Eau Claire next. Javrilos said.

"We're not keeping any secrets here," he said. Javrilos is scheduled to present his speech, "Of using strategies elsewhere keg will be consumed, Gavrilos said. He added if throughout La Crosse County, it only applies to the city of La Crosse.

The Tri-campus Advocacy Group, composed of students from La Crosse, Viterbo University and Western Technical College, has been meeting on a regular basis to aid in the reduction of alcohol-related injury in the area. Recently, Gavrilos said, the group developed a river-watch program.

See La Crosse, page 2A

Eau Claire is very similar to La Crosse, Viterbo University and Western Technical College, has been meeting on a regular basis to aid in the reduction of alcohol-related injury in the area. Recently, Gavrilos said, the group developed a river-watch program.

La Crosse from page 1A

regulation ordinance requiring any retailer in the city of La Crosse force customers to register before being issued a keg. They must provide their name, date of birth and location of where the keg will be consumed, Gavrilos said. He added if the police bust a party with underage drinkers, they can easily track who provided the keg.

"If you have to serve a license plate on every keg," he said. Gavrilos said because the ordinance has not been passed throughout La Crosse County, it only applies to the city of La Crosse.

"It's hard to enforce it when they can go outside the city and not register the keg," he said.

There is also an ordinance requiring servers to be completely sober while on the job. Gavrilos said, adding since fall of 2006, the city requires anyone serving alcohol to take a responsibility class. The class covers false identification, signs of impairment and noise requirements.

Aaggresive public information campaign that community waged against binge drinking.

The Safe La Crosse campaign is a community initiative designed to promote responsible drinking among students and community members alike.

While it may seem like we are beating a dead horse with yet another initiative to combat irresponsible drinking, we feel this campaign to be unique in the fact that community leaders from the UW-L, Viterbo University and Western Technical College are collaborating along with the community to manifest a very forward-minded measure: You wouldn't leave your out door, would you leave your friend? We are not saying that because that person's actions. Instead, we ask that you be responsible when having a few beers with friends. We hope this message will make people of all ages think before they drink too much and to look out for their friends.

An outdoor concert has been organized to kick off the Safe La Crosse Campaign called Concert for Safe La Crosse from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 14, in Viterbo University's Amid Courtyard. The event is free and open to the public. Donations will be accepted, and proceeds will be available for purchase, with all proceeds going to Operation: River Watch and Safe La Crosse.

Officer Drew Gavrilos

La Crosse Police Officer to Speak on Efforts to Stop Binge Drinking

RELEASED: Feb. 29, 2008

EAU CLAIRE — The Bridge Campus Community Coalition on Alcohol Issues in Eau Claire and the Center for Alcohol Studies and Education at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire will present "United We Stand" at 3 p.m. Friday, March 7, in the Hibbard Hall Penthouse at UW-Eau Claire.

The event is an opportunity for the Eau Claire community to learn from La Crosse, Wis., about an aggressive public information campaign that community waged against binge drinking.

After the 10th alcohol-related death of a college-aged person in 10 years in La Crosse, the community came together to take a stand. "United We Stand," presented by Drew Gavrilos of the La Crosse Police Department, will describe how La Crosse utilized new legislation, non-traditional enforcement techniques, alcohol education and an aggressive public information campaign to raise awareness and gain community support. Student-driven initiatives played a major role in gaining support from the city's college community, and new legislation focused on keg registration and public intoxication were enacted with unprecedented public support.

La Crosse has been in law enforcement for 11 years, serving La Crosse as a patrol officer, school resource officer, investigator and, most recently, in community services. He is a tactical operator and crisis negotiator with the department's emergency response team, a defensive tactics instructor and an original member of the alcohol compliance and education team. Gavrilos spent two years as a special agent for the U.S. Secret Service. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and marketing and is a graduate of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Ga., and the James J. Rowley Training Center in Beltsville, Md.

Gavrilos has been in law enforcement for 11 years, serving La Crosse as a patrol officer, school resource officer, investigator and, most recently, in community services. He is a tactical operator and crisis negotiator with the department's emergency response team, a defensive tactics instructor and an original member of the alcohol compliance and education team.
Student is river watchin’

McManus is co-founder of River Watch and serves on three city committees

BY ANNE JUNGEN
La Crosse Tribune

Arctic McManus will leave a legacy in La Crosse.

It could be for co-founding Operation: River Watch and spreading the message of prickly safety after alcohol consumption.

Or maybe it will be for serving on three city committees while simultaneously acting as a liaison between the student body and the city.

But it will definitely be for the dedication and style of this University of Wisconsin-La Crosse student.

"I can really credit him for pretty much all of the positive progress we've made over the last year. He's out there and working hard. He's an amazing kid, he really is. He's remarkable."

DREW GAVRILOS, La Crosse police officer

"If students were more like him, we wouldn't have a problem," said La Crosse police chief Ed Kondracki.

Kondracki and the La Crosse Police Department (LCPD) announced the hospitalization of three people following the last student volunteer巡逻 on April 1.

"They were all intoxicated and had sustained injuries," said Kondracki.

The department recently hosted a "call to action" to fight underage drinking.

"I don't know if this is just an isolated incident, but this is one of the reasons why we're having these calls to action," said Kondracki.

The department has presented several grants in the past, including the McManus grant.

While students will work two-hour shifts in the park from 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday, permanent shift times and days have yet to be determined.

"River Watch never would have gotten off the ground without my father's support," said McManus.

"We are the backbone to this very responsible safety organization," said Kondracki.

Volunteers would be covered under city insurance for liability purposes only, according to Gavrilos.

"It's not about protecting our liability, it's about protecting the citizens of the city," said Kondracki.

"They need to get involved in this situation," said VanLoo.

"We can't let this happen again."
July 2007

Consistent Enforcement Produces Positive Results for La Crosse, Wisconsin

In 2005, the La Crosse Police Department in Wisconsin began conducting compliance checks aimed at reducing the availability of alcohol to underage youth. During the checks, if the minor successfully purchased alcohol, the officers immediately issued citations to both the seller and the establishment’s owner (i.e., the alcohol license holder). If the minor was denied the sale, the officers informed the seller and the owner that they successfully passed the compliance check. To show its appreciation, a follow-up letter was also mailed to the business owner from the Chief of Police praising the sales clerk and the business for not selling alcohol to an underage person.

Wanting to improve compliance rates and understanding the need for regular enforcement, the department continued performing compliance checks in 2006. During the first round of checks, officers visited 56 establishments and issued 36 citations, yielding a 64 percent compliance rate. During the second round of compliance checks, officers completed 139 compliance checks, and the compliance rate increased to 72 percent.

Although there was some initial resistance from The Tavern League (an association of bar and restaurant owners), much of the community supported the compliance checks. In fact, the Mayor’s Alcohol Task Force recommended that the police department conduct the checks as part of a broader enforcement approach.

Another strategy they employed was developing and implementing a hands-on training program for servers and sellers of alcohol. This training helps servers identify fake, altered, or borrowed identification. The training also provides tips on how to prevent underage people from entering taverns. Within four months, the department provided this new training free of charge to more than 200 servers and retail employees.

The implementation of complementary strategies and regular compliance checks has been effective for La Crosse. The most recent round of compliance checks in 2007 produced a 79 percent compliance rate.

Conducting retail compliance checks on a regular basis when they have not previously been conducted often will meet resistance, and initial findings may not be good. Fortunately, when the La Crosse Police Department encountered these realities, it did not retreat. Rather, it enhanced its work and persevered. This perseverance is now beginning to pay off, and with a similar attitude in the future, things will only continue to improve.

For further information contact:
Captain Robert Abraham
Director – Community Services Bureau
La Crosse, WI Police Department
608-789-7240
abrahamr@cityoflacrosse.org

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the views of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) or the Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center (UDETC) and are solely of the author/source.
March 19, 2008

Police Chief Ed Kondracki
City of La Crosse Police Department
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Dear Chief Kondracki:

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the City of La Crosse Police Department as it seeks recognition through the Webber Survey and Herman Goldstein awards for innovative policing programs.

I am personally aware of the many efforts that are currently underway in the greater La Crosse community to address the underlying causes of binge and underage drinking. The many efforts currently in place or being developed were the direct result of the police department initiating a town hall meeting in April of 2004 and subsequently calling for an Alcohol Task Force charged with making recommendations and examining community readiness for cultural change. This “call to action” initiated by our police department has resulted in a comprehensive community collaboration that is making a difference. This city-wide effort involving community groups, hospitals, universities, schools, students, elected officials and community members is seeing results.

Our school district has become an important partner working directly with the police department and other community groups to address underage drinking. The City of La Crosse Police has been a tremendous resource to us in our efforts to educate students and their families about this challenging issue. I am particularly pleased with the proactive and preventive approach that has been adopted by our police. I credit you, Chief Kondracki, and your dedicated staff for addressing this community issue in such a positive and forthright manner.

I highly recommend that the La Crosse Police Department receive recognition for innovation in policing. The police department has played a critical role in mobilizing our community in this important effort and has demonstrated that they are true community problem solvers. These innovative programs can serve as a blueprint to help others develop and strengthen their agencies and to make their communities and schools safer.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gerald R. Kamber
Superintendent

March 20, 2006

Ed Kondracki
Chief of Police
La Crosse Police Department
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Dear Chief Kondracki:

I am pleased to be writing this letter of support for the City of La Crosse Police Department as it seeks recognition through the Webber Survey and Herman Goldstein awards for innovative policing.

As president of Western Technical College, I am keenly aware of the serious issues in our community related to high-risk drinking. The City of La Crosse has received notoriety from recent drownings due to the overconsumption of alcohol. The April 2004 drowning raised considerable concern as rumors of a serial killer circulated throughout the community. The City of La Crosse Police Department initiated a town hall meeting resulting in the formation of the Alcohol Task Force. As a result of persistent work with the task force and community leaders, the community perception has clearly shifted from the rumor-based thinking toward a realization that La Crosse has been too tolerant of high-risk drinking. This shift in perception could not have been possible without the innovative leadership of the Police Department of La Crosse.

Western Technical College, along with the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and Viterbo University has formed the Tri-campus Community Advocacy Group, a coalition designed to help change the culture of high-risk drinking in our community. The Tri-campus Group has found the Police Department of La Crosse to be an important ally in this effort. In fall 2007, we jointly sponsored an initiative called Safe La Crosse. The effort was aimed at increasing the awareness of the dangers of high-risk drinking. A follow-up survey among students at the three campuses showed a significant increase in awareness as a result of the campaign. These results could not be possible without this important alliance with the Police Department.

I wholeheartedly endorse consideration for the Police Department of the City of La Crosse for this important recognition. Meanwhile, please do not hesitate to contact me if additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the City of La Crosse Police Department as it seeks recognition through the Webber Seavy and Hermann Goldstein awards for innovative policing programs.

I am personally aware of the many efforts that are currently underway in the greater La Crosse community to address the underlying causes of binge drinking, underage drinking, and the harmful and deadly consequences of this risky behavior. The many efforts currently in place or being developed were the direct result of the police department initiating a town hall meeting in April of 2004, and subsequently calling for an Alcohol Task Force charged with making recommendations and examining community readiness for cultural change. The efforts by our police department have resulted in one of the most comprehensive community collaborations that I have ever seen. This comprehensive effort, including community groups, hospitals, universities, K-12 schools, students, elected officials and community members, is having positive change. The road has not been an easy one but the police department has remained steadfast and continues to be an integral part of this important effort.

I do not hesitate to attest to or recommend that the La Crosse Police Department receive recognition for innovation in policing and for improving the quality of life in our community. The police department has played a critical role in mobilizing our community in this important effort and has demonstrated that they are true community problem solvers. These collaborative and innovative programs through legislation, personal responsibility, peer intervention, and education and training can serve as a blueprint to help others develop and strengthen their agencies and make their communities safer.

Sincerely,

Joe Grew
UW-La Crosse Chancellor

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March 31, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pride and deep appreciation that I submit this letter of support for the La Crosse Police Department as it applies for the Webber Seavy and Hermann Goldstein awards. The leadership of Chief Ed Kondracki has been instrumental in developing and sustaining a strong partnership with the local institutions of higher education toward our mutual goal of reducing alcohol abuse and binge drinking in our community. Through this community collaboration, I am proud to say we have made extraordinary progress.

For the past four years, Viterbo University, the University of La Crosse-Wisconsin, and Western Technical College have collaborated with civic, government and community leaders on multi-level projects to address the drinking behaviors of our college students. This Tri-College Advocacy Group, as we call ourselves, formed because of the appearance and deaths in the Mississippi River of college students from our institutions. Though the impetus for change was tragic, these events provided the momentum and resources for our continued advocacy to change the social norms on our campuses as well as to support legal and policy changes at the city government level.

Often through his initiative, and always with the full cooperation Chief Kondracki and the police department, we have made steady progress on legislative changes. We have improved communication with the Tavern League, increased information and awareness programs during student orientation, implemented a safe ride system for students, and our respective student government leaders formed a student-run, volunteer River Watch program. Our accomplishments to date would not have been possible without the positive relationships between college officials, college students and our police department. A new level of trust has been developed between our student government leaders and police on the beat. We have more work ahead to change the drinking culture, but we are buoyed by the progress made and we are committed to a safe La Crosse.

I trust the application materials for the award describe in sufficient detail many of our mutual accomplishments. I extend my enthusiastic support and my highest recommendation for recognition to the La Crosse Police Department for their innovation in policing strategies. Our successes in La Crosse can be duplicated in other college communities facing similar problems with alcohol abuse and binge drinking. Success in this area requires a significant commitment of time and resources from college presidents and their community police departments. I am truly proud to endorse the La Crosse Police department and Chief Kondracki for this award. It is an honor and privilege to work with them in our efforts to better our community.

Sincerely,

Richard B. Artman
President
Edward N. Kundrati, Chief of Police
City of La Crosse

Chief Kundrati:

It is a pleasure to write a letter of support for the Wobbe Seavey and Herman Goldstein awards to recognize your department’s impressive efforts to provide leadership, education, and enforcement to reduce underage and binge drinking in our community.

Being a college town has its challenges—especially when alcohol is readily available. The deaths of eight young men—all highly intoxicated—all found in the river—has led to a sense of urgency. The deaths of the eight young men has led to a sense of urgency. As Chief, do you have pointed out on many occasions, we do have a social epidemic on our hands. It is called alcohol.

Of course, with our city’s social setting, it’s easy to convince folks that their own behavior is a contributing factor.

The La Crosse Police Department has played a key role in leading the discussion, supporting new legislation, and developing collaborative efforts that have had real dividends for the health and safety of our community.

Randy Cunningham
Assistant Editor
The Tribune
March 17, 2008

Franciscan Skemp
Mayo Health System

March 25, 2008
Edward N. Kundrati, Chief of Police
La Crosse Police Department
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Dear Chief Kundrati:

It is my pleasure to write a letter of support for the La Crosse Police Department’s application for the Wobbe Seavey and Herman Goldstein awards.

Over the past few years many issues have challenged our city. However, we have had national attention and many members of our community have been affected by the problems of excessive alcohol consumption and "binge drinking". In our emergency room, the effects of this problem are seen on a weekly basis and the personal and societal costs of binge drinking are immediately apparent.

The engagement of the La Crosse Police Department in finding solutions and your participation in the alcohol task force have led to a unified community response and protected our citizens. Your enforcement of current law has been vigorous and fair. Just as important, your support for bartender training, safe ride transportation, and your river watch public-private partnership has prevented problems.

Franciscan Skemp Healthcare is proud to be a part of the solution to the issues that challenge our region. We are very proud and supportive of the work of our police department and pleased that you take such a proactive and progressive approach to help improve our community.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Nazar, MD
President/CEO
Franciscan Skemp Healthcare

700 West Avenue South, La Crosse, WI 54601-4796
Phone 608-791-9710 Fax 608-791-9429

- Arcadia, WI
- La Crosse, WI
- Stillwater, WI
- California, MN
- Gainesville, FL
- Holmes, WI
- Houston, MN
- La Crescent, MN
- Wausau, WI

Thank you for your excellent work for the good of our community.