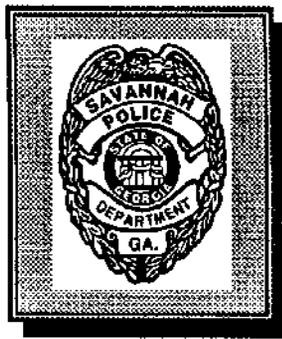


# Community-Oriented Policing: The Savannah Experience



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Chief David M. Gellatly  
Savannah Police Department  
P.O. Box 8032  
Savannah, GA 31412



## INTRODUCTION

Community Oriented Policing (COP) is a partnership between police and the community which seeks to identify and solve community problems. It is an expanded philosophy on crime control and prevention which recognizes that crime is not a problem the police can solve alone; it requires mutual cooperation between the law enforcement agency and the citizens it serves.

Moreover, Community Oriented Policing isn't a program or a strategy. Nor can it be accomplished by specialized units, or individual officers within a department. Rather, COP is an agency-wide doctrine that promotes citizen partnerships and proactive problem solving to address the causes of crime, the fear it breeds, and other community issues. In short, Community Oriented Policing is an organizational attitude that dictates the way a department conducts its day-to-day business.

Recognized as a leader in Community Oriented Policing, the Savannah Police Department's commitment to COP was prominently featured on CNN's World Report. This special segment, viewed by millions worldwide, distinguished the Savannah Police Department as the model agency for Community Oriented Policing. SPD was also featured by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) as one of the top six departments for COP. SPD's Community Oriented Policing experience has been featured in articles in *The Police Chief*, *The Justice Professional*, *Issues in Community Policing*, and other prominent publications. The Savannah Police Department was recognized as one of the top fifteen agencies for Community Oriented Policing in Problem-Oriented Drug Enforcement: A Community-Based Approach for Effective Policing published by the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

The Savannah Police Department has been recommended as an example to other agencies by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Police Executive Research Forum, the Department of Defense, and the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives. We have been visited, and our COP philosophy studied by law enforcement professionals from Israel; China; South Africa; Bedfordshire, England; and Ontario, Canada; as well as from Hillsborough County and Port St. Lucie, Florida; Aurora, Illinois; Macon, Augusta and Atlanta, Georgia; and many others.

SPD staff members have presented COP training for agencies in the Republic of Estonia; Greensboro, North Carolina; Shreveport, Louisiana; Fort Pierce and Palm Beach, Florida; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Lexington, Kentucky; Arlington, Texas; Buffalo, New York; Hemando County, Florida; Cleveland, Ohio; Sarasota Springs, New York; Washington, D.C.; Lowell, Massachusetts; Jesup, Georgia; and Glynn County, Georgia; to name a few.

## ESSENTIALS OF COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

Community Oriented Policing is democracy in action. It combines proactive decision making by officers at lower ranks, with active citizen involvement to jointly resolve the problems that cause crime. The Savannah Police Department's COP philosophy is based upon three distinct components.

### *Citizen Partnership*

SPD's COP philosophy emphasizes that police and citizens are co-producers of safety and order, and must work together to mutually identify and resolve community problems. Open citizen participation allows SPD to clearly understand community concerns, as well as to narrowly and specifically identify not only those factors which contribute to crime, but also those elements which detract from the quality of life in the community. Through their participation, Savannah's citizens become stakeholders in the activities their police department.

### *Problem Solving*

Traditional law enforcement is reactive. That is, officers respond to situations that are in progress, or which have already occurred. But this traditional police response to crime is severely limited by the fact that it relies entirely upon the apprehension of offenders as a means to reduce crime.

Rather than solely reacting to events, the Savannah Police Department takes a proactive approach to eliminate problems that cause crime, or allow it to occur. Problem Oriented Policing (POP) provides SPD a means to attack the conditions that allow crime to exist. By solving these underlying problems, opportunities for crime to occur are removed. This problem solving approach often results in non-traditional police responses such as the installation of lights to illuminate a dark area, seeking the revocation of alcohol licenses of repeat violators, or removing abandoned vehicles to help clean up a neighborhood.

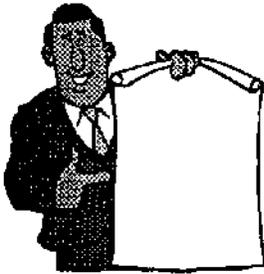
### *Quality Leadership*

Quality Leadership is Savannah's version of Total Quality Management (TQM). Developing the most creative solutions to solve problems and reduce crime requires all officers, even rookies, to be encouraged and empowered to make decisions that will alleviate crime problems. When possible, decisions are made by officers on the street. This affords officers the opportunity to shape the work they do. And they are challenged and held accountable for results. Many SPD officers have conducted POP projects that immediately reduced crime in a specific area, or reduced calls for service.

Through ongoing training, every member of the Savannah Police Department is thoroughly familiar with the Community Oriented Policing philosophy, and the high quality customer service standards that are an integral part of it. Taken together, these interrelated components are unmistakable evidence of SPD's commitment to its COP philosophy.

## PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

The success of SPD's Community Oriented Policing philosophy depends upon the total participation of everyone within the Department. From the Chief of Police, to the newest officer, to the Clerks in the offices, SPD's personnel are committed to these 10 principles.



safety.

**Accountability:** There is mutual accountability - the community holds the police accountable for our actions; and we, the police, hold the community accountable for taking the necessary measures to maintain public order and



**Change:** Change is embraced as an opportunity to improve the way police services are delivered and is the result of broad-based strategic planning.



**Trust:** Trust is necessary for the police and community to collaborate; police only make promises that can be kept, and the citizens must be active participants in COP.



**Vision:** A clearly stated COP vision provides inspiration, motivation and authority to implement the new management approach.



**Partnerships:** The development of collaborative relationships among individuals, and organizations is necessary to jointly solve crime problems.



**Empowerment:** Police officers are provided more autonomy decision-making; citizens should also participate in the decision-making process.



**Problem Solving:** The department has committed to go beyond traditional reactive police responses, and to develop and implement solutions to specific problems.



**Leadership:** Leaders support and articulate the commitment to COP.



**Equality:** All citizens are treated as equal participants in COP regardless of race, gender, religious beliefs, income or other differences.



**Service:** COP provides personalized and decentralized police service to the neighborhoods.

## HISTORY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Community Oriented Policing didn't just happen. Its inception at the Savannah Police Department required changes in the basic structure of the Department itself, as well as in the practices and attitudes of the Department's employees.

Since the success of COP is closely tied to the empowerment of lower level employees to make decisions, the first major change to facilitate COP was the decentralization of the Department's command structure. Implementation of a precinct system on October 1, 1991 created command accountability on a geographic basis. In effect, the four Precinct Commanders are completely responsible for everything that occurs in their respective Precincts, twenty-four hours a day. Precinct Commanders own the successes, as well as the failures, that occur in their Precincts.

At the same time the Precinct System was born, SPD officially adopted COP and undertook to develop a series of practices, programs, and tactics to reflect this commitment. And though October 1, 1991 is the official birth date of Community Oriented Policing at the Savannah Police Department, COP didn't just magically appear - fully matured - on that day. Rather, implementation has been a gradual yet steady process of training, learning from mistakes, and continuous evolution.

Like many law enforcement agencies, the Savannah Police Department was working with the community long before anyone coined the term Community Oriented Policing. Since 1987, SPD has worked diligently to improve the cooperation between Department and citizens of Savannah. Many of those early efforts, and the units which carried them out, have been incorporated into the Department's overall COP design. SPD's transition to COP complements the broader effort to address the systemic conditions fostering crime from multi disciplinary perspective. This brief history of implementation of COP at SPD reflects the Department's efforts.

### *Showcase Savannah*

The move towards COP began with the Showcase Neighborhood Program established in 1987. The program originated in the City's Community Development Department as an effort to implement comprehensive strategies for improvement in targeted neighborhoods. The concept was to build partnerships with community residents, and to concentrate resources in depressed neighborhoods to improve their livability. As the program gained momentum, progressive expansion of the program to other neighborhoods was planned.

The program philosophy was that City government was a partner with the community residents, not a provider for them. The police worked with the residents and other City departments to identify needs, establish goals and priorities, and to implement solutions. Both the City and the residents were given tasks to accomplish. In 1990, Savannah received a City Livability Award from the U.S. Conference of Mayors for the Showcase program.



## **Mini-Stations**

In 1987, the Department opened police mini-stations in four of the public housing neighborhoods. The first one, in Hitch Village, was quickly followed by mini-stations in Yamacraw Village, Fellwood Homes, and Garden Homes. One officer is permanently assigned to each mini-station to provide an on site police presence, and to preempt potential problems.

Mini-station officers have developed positive relationships with area residents, especially with children and the elderly. The mini-station officer in Hitch Village created that neighborhood's first Boy Scout troop. By 1993, children could play freely in these communities without the fear of being caught in a crossfire between drug dealers. Residents were no longer barricading themselves in their homes due to fear.

[Since 1989, violent crime has decreased 64.3% in Hitch Village, 76.7% in Yamacraw Village, 50% in Fellwood Homes

But proof of the mini-stations' success is in the statistics. Since 1989, violent crime has decreased 64.3% in Hitch Village, 76.7% in Yamacraw Village, 50% in Fellwood Homes, and 52.8% in Garden Homes.

## **Horse Patrol**

Established in 1987 as a result of keen public interest, the Department's Horse Patrol is an important component in Community Oriented Policing. Horses provide the flexibility to patrol areas that vehicles cannot easily reach, such as squares, parks and other pedestrian areas. They also provide an elevated "perch" from which their riders can easily observe crowd activities.

The horses are immensely popular with residents and tourists, and provide a means for maximizing citizen contacts in the downtown area. The five mounted officers project a highly visible police presence, and reinforce the image of police officers as approachable and friendly.

## **Problem-Oriented Policing**

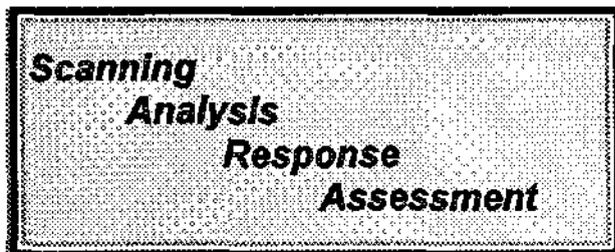
Also in 1987, the Department introduced Problem Oriented Policing (POP) as a tool for officers to use in solving the problems they encountered on the streets. Problem Oriented Policing accords officers a means to attack the circumstances that breed continual problems and calls for service. Early on, officers on special assignments initiated POP projects in several problem areas, and thoroughly documented the results. This led to a formalized system of conducting and tracking all POP projects.

The structure of this system follows a process known by the acronym "SARA" which stands for scanning, analysis, response and assessment. Following the SARA model, officers *scan* the environment to identify problems that are causing crimes or excessive calls for police services. Once a problem is identified, the officer conducts an in-depth *analysis* of all

underlying causes of the problem. The goal is for the officers to learn everything they possibly can about the problem.

From this data, officers formulate a *response*. The response can take virtually any form and frequently involves the resources of many different City departments and outside agencies. This is where employee empowerment, which was discussed earlier, becomes so extremely important. At this stage of a POP project, officers must be permitted to assemble resources from as many agencies as is necessary to successfully alleviate the problem.

During the *assessment* stage, officers view the results of their work to determine if the response was successful. Some problems are solved, or at least lessened, the first time the SARA model is applied. It is not unusual, however, for a problem to be of such complexity that assessment reveals the need to return to the analysis stage for additional work on the problem.



Problem solving is an integral part of the overall Community Oriented Policing philosophy. Several recently completed POP projects illustrate how attacking the root of a problem can have far reaching effects. Each of these POP projects was completed by SPD officers employing the "SARA" model.

- "Disco Night" at a mid-town VFW hall was the site of frequent fights, stabbings and shootings. Calling on a number of city resources, an officer successfully eliminated "Disco Night" at the club. The problem has been completely eliminated.
- Skateboarders in the downtown area were posing a hazard to pedestrians and damaging monuments and fixtures in the parks and squares. SPD officers assisted in the creation of an ordinance to prohibit skateboarding on sidewalks and in parks. Repair costs for skateboard damage in the City's parks has been dramatically reduced.
- In the Carver Heights section of Precinct I, public safety personnel were experiencing problems responding to emergency calls due to the lack of visible addresses on many buildings. Two officers coordinated efforts to install easily readable addresses on house houses and apartment buildings in the area. As a result, emergency response times in that area have been reduced.
- Traffic was a recurring problem for residents of the Fellwood Homes neighborhood. But efforts to improve the quality of life hit a snag when officers discovered that stop signs could not be installed at intersections of unnamed streets. Working with residents and the Traffic Engineering department, officers conducted a campaign to name the several streets in the neighborhood. Remarkably, residents themselves chose to name three of their streets in honor of three Savannah Police officers. Once the names were adopted, installation of stop signs eliminated many of the traffic problems in the area.
- Another successful project involved development of a means to close River Street to vehicular traffic during special events. Traditionally, special events along the river necessitate stationing officers at wooden barricades at the top of each of the ramps.

During large events such as St. Patrick's Day, the manpower required to close down all the ramps was considerable. One officer conducted a lengthy POP project which resulted in the installation of movable metal bollards at the top of each ramp. When needed, the bollards are raised and locked into place; when not needed, they're recessed below street level.

- POP is not just a downtown strategy, however. Another long running problem involves students using a dangerous foot path at the back of Windsor Forest High School to easily leave the campus when cutting classes. A Precinct IV officer worked with the school board to dean up debris and seal off the fence. Periodic checks have assured that the area has remained sealed off.

### *Bicycle Patrol*

After experimenting with bicycle patrols during the late 80's, the Department formed a permanent bike patrol unit in 1990. Assigned to the downtown area, these officers are responsible for suppressing crime and maintaining order through high visibility.



Like the Horse Patrol, the Bike Patrol was immediately popular - especially among downtown workers who had frequently complained of being accosted by highly aggressive panhandlers. And like the Horse Patrol, the Bike Patrol is extremely mobile. Bicycle officers can move easily in tight areas or on crowded streets.

During its existence, Bike Patrol officers have conducted a number of POP projects. The Police Executive Research Forum's *POP Quarterly* published one POP project as a model for other projects.

In 1992, the Bicycle Patrol became the Crime Suppression Unit (CSU) for Precinct 1. Similar units were formed in the remaining three Precincts during 1994 and 1995. The CSU's are an integral part of COP because they provide patrol resources that are free from the continual task of responding to calls for service - resources that can effectively work on more complex problem-solving.

### *Precinct System*

Decentralizing the Department's command structure was essential to the successful implementation of Community Oriented Policing. The precinct structure created a system of geographic accountability that allows for a better focus on specific problems in specific areas. In addition, the precinct system empowers street level officers to make decisions and initiate actions which can quickly and effectively address problems.

Prior to the precinct system, Watch Commanders were responsible for the entire City - but for only an eight hour shift. This structure made it virtually impossible for a Watch Commander to specifically address the unique problems or situations in individual neighborhoods. With the precinct structure, each Precinct Commander is directly responsible for their portion of the City twenty four hours a day. This ownership of both the successes and

the failures that occur in their respective precincts presents a direct challenge to the imagination, and the leadership talents of the Precinct Commanders. And the Precinct Commanders have responded to the challenge. They have developed unique patrol tactics and creative problem solving techniques to address the intricacies of each area.

### **Multi-Agency Collaboration**

During 1991, the Ricky Jivens drug gang assaulted Savannah with a level of senseless violence never before seen in this area. The gang's brutal practices propelled the area's homicide rate to a level far beyond that of previous years. In response, area law enforcement developed a coordinated attack which included the sharing of resources and information. The FBI's "Safe Streets" initiative provided the framework, and the Savannah Violent Crimes Task Force was born.

Along with the FBI, the core group of agencies included the Savannah Police Department, ATF, the Chatham County Sheriffs Office, GBI, and the Chatham County Police. Through the collective efforts of these six agencies, the Jivens gang was soon broken and all its key players convicted and sentenced to lengthy prison terms. In the years since, the Savannah Violent Crimes Task Force has grown to include a dozen area agencies. Their efforts regularly result in the removal of violent offenders from Savannah's streets.

One of the more successful tactics developed by the Task Force is the distribution of "wanted posters" in the Penny Saver weekly newspaper. The paper, which donates space for 6 photos in each edition, has been responsible for a continual flow of information to the Task Force on wanted fugitives.

Despite the many arrests made by the Task Force however, the group's most significant accomplishment has been the development of a cooperative unit within local law enforcement. This sharing of information and resources assures that no area agency will have to cope with the likes of another Ricky Jivens, alone.



### **Recruitment, Selection and Advancement**

The success of COP is entirely dependent upon the quality of the Department's staff. Community Oriented Policing simply cannot succeed without dedicated personnel who are willing to invest the time and energy to join with the community to solve the problems they encounter. Recognizing this, the Savannah Police Department made significant changes to its officer selection process.

Prior to Community Oriented Policing, the Department's officer selection process did not emphasize social interaction or problem solving skills among its recruits. Rather, the recruiting process was geared more toward attracting applicants who displayed integrity, stamina and individual courage. This is not to say that social skills or problem solving abilities were ignored; they just weren't as keenly emphasized. But as the Savannah Police Department progressed further on its journey toward Community Oriented Policing, it became

clear that these skills were vital. Consequently, the Department's selection process was modified. Emphasis was placed upon education, community involvement, tenacity, and creative thinking.

Very quickly the citizens of Savannah began to see a different breed of men and women filling the ranks of the Savannah Police Department - better educated, more energetic, more innovative. And though integrity, stamina and courage are certainly no less important for an officer, they have been complemented by those individual qualities which also make a good "community oriented officer."

Education, community involvement and innovative thinking are also attributes sought in candidates for promotion within the Department. In order for COP to be successful, street level officers must be empowered to effect change without the impediment of constantly having to seek decisions from higher authority. Allowing subordinates this level of autonomy takes a special breed of supervisor. Consequently, like the recruit selection process, the Department's promotion process has been revised. The assessment center promotional testing used by the Department has been extremely successful in distinguishing those candidates who are not only capable managers, but also flexible enough to permit their officers the degree of freedom required to make COP successful.

### *COP Training Program*

In addition to modifying the selection process to mirror the COP philosophy, the Department also recognized the need to train its employees in the theories and practices of Community Oriented Policing. This was because the knowledge and skills needed to make COP work are somewhat atypical when compared to more traditional law enforcement. The training began in early 1992 with modules of four hours each. By January of 1994, five training modules had been presented to all SPD employees - both sworn and civilian. By July of 1994, two additional modules were added. All new police officers and civilians are now required to undergo 20 hours of COP training as part of their orientation.

The seven training modules cover a range of interrelated topics. Module I, Participatory Decision-Making and Leadership Techniques for Management, Supervision and Street Officers, is designed to provide an overview of the principles of COP and to stress the management commitment to facilitate decentralized decision making and problem solving. Module II, Community-Oriented Policing, is designed to provide an overview of COP in Savannah, the context in which it evolved, and the expectations of line officers, supervisory personnel, and managers.

Module III, Problem-Oriented Policing (POP), teaches the SARA process of Problem Oriented Policing and the steps in conducting a POP project. Module IV, Referral System, Materials, City Ordinances, examines the importance of particular city ordinances and referral systems in dealing with various issues. Module V, Developing Sources of Human Information, shows officers how to retrieve information from people and includes listening skills, police-citizen contacts, field interviews, investigatory detentions, and

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informants.

Module VI, Neighborhood Meetings, Survey of Citizen Needs, Tactical Crime Analysis, shows officers how to organize and facilitate community meetings, conduct citizen surveys, and collect, analyze and use crime data. Module VII, Crime Prevention Home and Business Surveys, discusses crime prevention in the context of COP and includes instruction on business and residential security surveys.

As a result of this training, street officers at virtually all experience levels have learned to conduct research into the situations and problems they encounter. Officers are drawing on the resources of other agencies to assist them in solving problems. But most importantly, officers are reaching out to the citizens they serve, listening to their concerns, and working with those citizens to improve their quality of life.

### *Park, Walk and Talk*

Park, Walk and Talk is an integral part of the overall COP philosophy. For thirty minutes at least twice each shift, officers leave their patrol cars to conduct foot patrols. The foot patrols are not necessarily based on a crime problem in a specific area. Rather they are intended to develop a relationship between officers and the people who live and work in the area. Officers are encouraged to make as many citizen contacts as possible.

The most immediate result of Park Walk and Talk is that citizens and officers develop a dialog which "humanizes" each to the other. Citizens discover that police officers are no different from themselves; officers lose the tendency to view everyone they see as a suspect. Citizens and police officers develop a basis for trust.

### *Crime Prevention Officers*

In each Precinct, a Crime Prevention Officer is assigned to work with businesses and residents to prevent victimization. These officers attend all community meetings in their Precincts and direct the formation of Neighborhood Watch groups. The CPO's are particularly instrumental in reducing residential burglaries, commercial burglaries and commercial robberies by offering free security surveys and recommending protection devices and methods of target-hardening.

The Precinct Crime Prevention Officers actively sample citizen concerns. These concerns, which many times are not related to, or reflected by crime statistics, are instrumental in helping the Precinct Commanders to address situations before they develop into serious problems.

### *Volunteer Program*

In June, 1992, the Savannah Police Department implemented a Volunteer Program that provides an opportunity for citizens to contribute their time by assisting with various tasks within the Department. The program has been designed to facilitate the Department's community



oriented policing approach, to encourage understanding and positive interaction with citizens of our community, and to enable dedicated citizens to become active participants in the Department.

There are approximately 40 participating volunteers who assist with activities such as answering questions at the front desk, assisting detectives with call backs to theft and burglary victims, or transporting vehicles from one place to another. Acceptance of the Volunteers was slow at first however, as the number of volunteers grew, demand from the various units for their services also grew. The particular talents and interests of the volunteers are matched to the needs expressed by the units. Invariably, the volunteers have become "part of the family" in the areas where they work

Volunteers now serve in the Special Operations Commander's Office, the Traffic Unit, the Criminal Intelligence Center, the Special Crimes Unit, the Information Desk, and at Precinct 2. The placement of volunteers allows law enforcement administrators to focus more of their resources on community problems. They also provide the citizen volunteers with a deeper appreciation of the need for a partnership between the police and the community.

### *Citizens' Police Academy*

The Citizens' Police Academy, which began in January of 1993, is closely tied to the Department's Volunteer Program. This ten week course familiarizes citizens with the operations of the Savannah Police Department as well as with the courts system, and corrections.

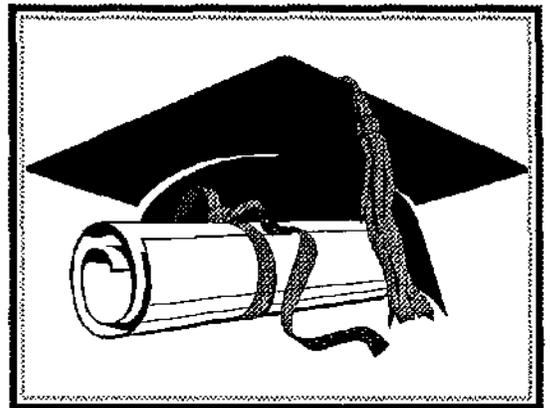
During the once-a-week meetings, representatives of the Department's various units explain their unit's functions and responsibilities. Class members learn about the operation of each unit in the Department, and how the police interact with other criminal justice agencies.

The Citizens' Academy also includes a patrol car ride along of at least four hours. Easily the most popular part of the program, the ride along provides citizens with a unique insight into the situations street officers encounter. It also equips participants with knowledge of how the community and SPD can work together as partners to improve crime conditions in the City.

The first couple of classes were rather small. However, as word of the Citizens' Academy as spread, and as the curriculum has been refined, interest in the class has grown. As of May of 1996, over 200 citizens have graduated from the Citizens' Police Academy.

### *Project Uhuru*

Started in 1992, Project Uhuru is a substance abuse prevention program funded by Columbia University and the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The program, which is geared toward youth in a specific target area, is directed by the Youth Futures Authority and the



Savannah Police Department and is operated out of Hubert Middle School. Two full time officers are assigned to the school to teach Drug Awareness and Resistance Education (DARE) classes, to become familiar with all students, to visit homes as needed, and to be role models who instill a desire to remain drug-free. Two Precinct II units, known as B-Units, establish and maintain Safe Corridors along routes traveled by children.

In a recent letter to SPD, Kenneth J. Finiayson of the Institute for Law and Justice wrote he was "impressed with the institutional commitment the police department is affording the [Uhuru Project] and community policing."

### *Drug Awareness and Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.)*

The D.A.R.E. program in the local schools is jointly administered by the Savannah Police and the Chatham County Police Department. This program targets 5th grade students and is designed to prevent children from experimenting with drugs.

"Gateway" drugs such as tobacco and alcohol are many times only the beginning for kids who end up with substance abuse problems and involvement with the criminal justice system. As the age of the children involved with drugs becomes younger and younger, it is important to employ preventive measures at an early age by teaching resistance to social pressures. The prevention of drug abuse is an important element in COP.



### *Integration of Investigations with the Precincts*

The implementation of the precinct system did not lead to a decentralization of the investigative function due to the need to pool intelligence information. However, there was a recognized need for investigators to coordinate with patrol officers in the precincts.

To meet this need, detectives are "affiliated" with specific precincts and are assigned cases based on the precinct of occurrence. They attend daily roll calls so all patrol officers can be briefed on the latest intelligence information available.

### *Crime Suppression Units*

The success of the bicycle patrol in Precinct I resulted in the creation of Crime Suppression Units in the remaining three precincts. Crime Suppression Unit's were formed in Precincts 2 and 3 in 1994, and in Precinct 4 in May of 1995. The CSU's use both patrol cars and bicycles depending on the territory to be covered and the nature of the operation being conducted.

The major benefit of the Crime Suppression Units is the availability of officers who are freed from responding to calls for service, and who can respond to problems as they arise. This flexibility allows for a much better execution of POP projects than was possible before.

### **Law Enforcement Accreditation**

For most of law enforcement's history, police agencies have had only one method to measure their successes and failures - the crime statistics. If there was an increase in crime, departments searched for causes, then developed responses. If crime went down, attempts were made to duplicate that success in other areas. But there was really no meaningful way for an agency to compare its policies, procedures and operations to those of other departments.

In the late 1980's, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) developed a body of standards that provided a model for professional law enforcement agencies. The over 900 original standards dealt with all aspects of law enforcement operations.



In April of 1989, after an extensive on-site review by a team of CALEA assessors, the Savannah Police Department became only the 94th police agency to successfully meet all of the requirements of accreditation. To date, of the nearly 20,000 law enforcement agencies nationwide, there are less than 400 which have successfully met the standards.

There are several important aspects of the CALEA standards that directly impact upon Community Oriented Policing. One is the requirement that SPD maintain strong citizen contacts. In drafting the standards, CALEA recognized the need for cooperation between the community and its police. Consequently, the standards prescribe that the agency actively seek opinions and inputs from the community.

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Another vitally important aspect of Community Oriented Policing that is addressed in the CALEA standards is that of

officer discretion. The CALEA standards recognize that in order for a law enforcement agency to adequately meet the needs of the community, decisions must be made at the lowest possible level. Consequently, the standards require a clear definition of the limits of officer discretion. The intent is that street level officers be accorded the widest possible latitude in dealing with citizen concerns.

### **Weed and Seed**

Weed and Seed is a comprehensive strategy to "weed" violent offenders and drug dealers out of a targeted area, and then to "seed" that area with social and economic opportunities to eliminate the symptoms that cause crime. Currently targeting a portion of Precinct II, the program coordinates a wide variety of services and involves virtually every law enforcement,

criminal justice and social service agency in the Savannah area.

In addition to Weed and Seed funds, the City received a grant from the COPS AHEAD program to hire ten officers dedicated to the Weed and Seed area.

### *Quality Leadership*

To maximize Community Oriented Policing, SPD supervisors project a leadership style that challenges officers to be accountable for improving crime conditions and to aggressively and innovatively solve problems. This leadership style embraces the philosophy of Total Quality Management (TQM). Quality leadership at SPD includes:

- The creation of "Czar" status for individuals assigned specific tasks. The title of Czar, provides access to any Department personnel or resources necessary to solve the problem at hand; the Czar acts with the authority of the Chief with regard to that particular problem. This method has worked well in addressing street robberies, as well as an escalating auto theft problem.
- A plan to eliminate street prostitution was jointly prepared by members from all bureaus and units. This group is also headed by a Czar of street prostitution.
- An officer designed and conducted a survey of citizen concerns, and organized the implementation of operations that improved order maintenance conditions.

### *Public Access*

One area that is often overlooked when trying to encourage citizen involvement is that of physical accessibility. It is easy to forget that, no matter how hard an agency works to foster citizen involvement, neglecting to ensure the accessibility of the department's facilities will discourage public participation.



Simply stated, SPD hasn't made that mistake. The four precinct offices are in locations where they are easily accessible to the public. And though Savannah's police headquarters, which was completed in 1870, is the oldest continuously active police headquarters in the nation, a wheelchair ramp, wide hallways and elevator service to all floors ensures easy public access.

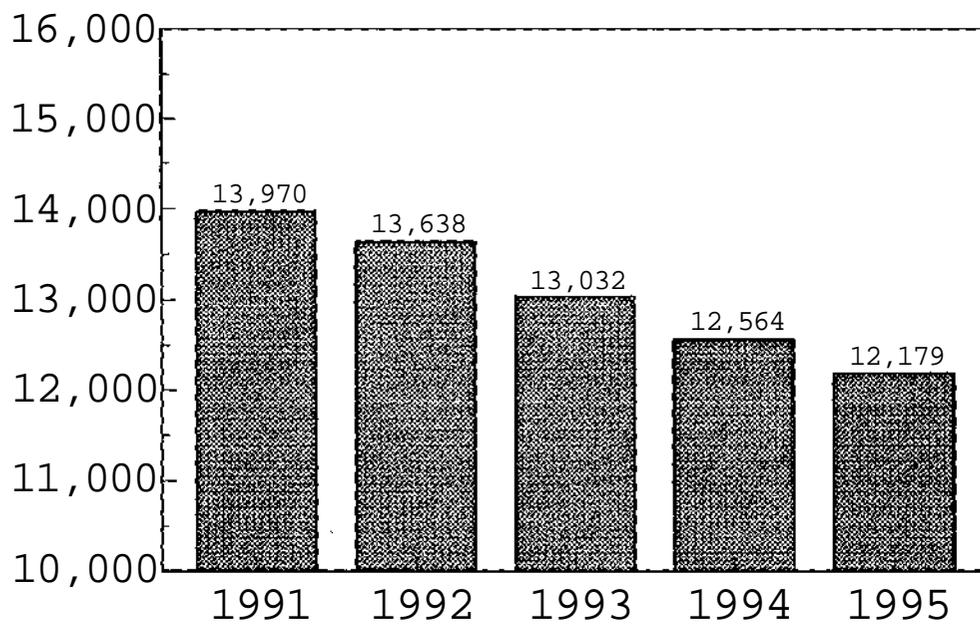
But public access implies more than just getting in or out the door. It also implies that the public is welcome - that facilities are open for their use. At the Headquarters, the Squad Room is a large conference room with adequate seating for 60-75 people. At Precinct II, a comfortable conference room is available for public use.

## Outcomes

In a few short years, Community Oriented Policing has been the spark that has forged strong community partnerships in many areas of the City. This atmosphere of mutual trust between the citizens and the Department is clearly evident.

- An officer working with the Uhuru Project was able to intervene when he learned that a child had talked about plans to murder his parent
- Neighborhood clean-ups are regularly organized to remove old tires, abandoned vehicles, discarded sofas and other furniture, and to cut overgrown bushes.
- Shoplifting and commercial robberies have been reduced in many retail areas through the formation of coalitions among retail merchants.
- Working with the City Inspections Department, officers eliminated health and safety hazards and made improvements to the dwellings in a mobile home park.
- Neighborhood Watch organizations have been formed all over the City.
- Savannah's violent crime rate has decreased by 20.6% since 1991, with overall crime declining by 12.8%.

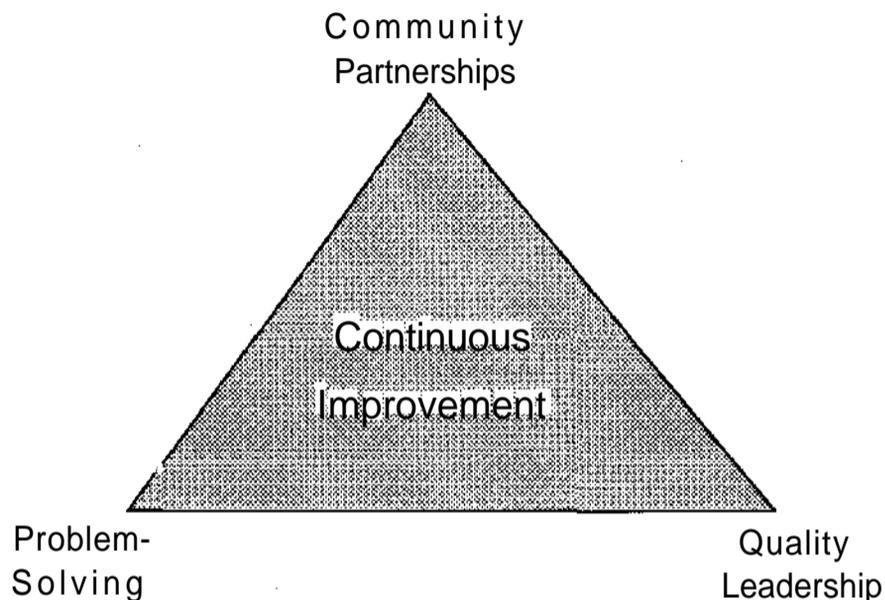
## Crime Trends Since 1991



## THE FUTURE OF COP IN SAVANNAH

Community Oriented Policing was not, and cannot be implemented overnight. SPD's transformation from a traditional police agency to a Community Oriented agency has been occurring gradually over a number of years. The Department is continually reshaping and improving the way police business is conducted. The department has just begun to embrace the Quality Leadership component of our overall philosophy.

In the next few years, we hope to generate creative solutions to problems by unleashing the talents of our police officers and by expanding accountability. The Quality Leadership management approach will be combined with citizen participation and problem solving in a gradual, but continuous effort to improve our crime reduction capabilities.



Savannah's growing national and international reputation is challenging us to continue to refine and improve our COP practices. Our approach is to ensure that we make continuous improvements in three areas: problem-solving; developing community partnerships; and providing quality leadership that brings the best out of every employee.