

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING WORKS SAYS "COMMUNITY PEACE," AND METRO

Community Oriented policing works to reduce crime in neighborhoods through the joint efforts of law enforcement and community residents. A recent example of this approach is the cooperation between the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and Community Peace.

Community Peace is a multi-ethnic, volunteer group that intervenes in situations that may escalate to violence.

This group hopes to diffuse tensions at an early stage and work toward positive solutions to problems without the need for law enforcement. A 24-hour hotline was established at 378-1337, staffed by volunteers. Intervention teams will be sent to problem situations to calm emotions and avoid trouble. However, if the situation continues to escalate, volunteers expect the police to protect the citizens in the community.

This type of partnership is at the heart of Community Oriented Policing and is deeply ingrained in Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department policies and Statement of Fundamental Values.

These policies reflect recommendations made by the Police-Community Relations Committee since it was formed in 1990 at the request of community leaders.

First, recruiting efforts de-

signed to encourage minority applicants for all positions, including the Law Enforcement Explorer Post, were strengthened.

Better representation among employees means greater citizen involvement. LVMPD provides service to all cultural groups in the community so it is important that employees be aware of the variety and diversity in our city, thus cultural awareness training is mandatory for all employees.

Several other areas of concern were changed in response to the recommendations. For example, citizens in the Use of Force Board were increased to a majority over police officers. A quality assurance form, Tell Metro What You Think, was developed to provide a direct way to give input to the department. Gang files and field interview cards were studied due to the perception that these are used to harass minorities. It was found that the majority of the field Interview cards document white individuals. The criteria necessary to identify someone as a gang member were strengthened and a system to purge gang files after two years of inactivity was instituted.

Department training updated officers to reduce the unsafe practice of spreadeagling an individual on the hood of a car. Another perception is that police

officers use force on minority males more frequently than other groups. LVMPD has modified the Use of Force form to include age, sex, and race of the person involved to gather statistical information on the issue. An early warning system was instituted to detect officers that most often

receive citizen complaints and to deal with them in a positive manner.

Finally, the department continues to stress Community Oriented Policing and courtesy to citizens. Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department recognizes communities must work

together to solve our problems and address the issues that divide us. Working with Community Peace is part of those efforts. Their teams work with citizens when problems are developing, and at the same time, work with the police if problems escalate beyond what they can

safely address.

It is this spirit of cooperation and teamwork that promotes safe neighborhoods and good relations between all segments of our city, and it is this effort that the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department continues to work towards.

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WILLIAMS

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In addition to his speaking duties at the noon luncheon, Chief Williams will also be present for the ISSUES & ANSWERS panel at 9:30 a.m. on "A YEAR AFTER THE RIOTS—WHAT NOW?" That panel will consist of Mayor Jan Jones, City of Las Vegas, Kirk McCoy of the L.A. Times; Gene Hale, G&E Corporation, Gardena, CA; Carla Rivera, L.A. Times; Lt. Cliff Davis, Metropolitan Police Department; and Linda Williams, L.A. Times. The moderator will be Andrea Ford, also of the L.A. Times.

Griot & The Drum - A Proud Past, A Noble Future, is the theme for the NABJ 1993 Western Regional Conference during the weekend of April 23rd at Bally's Casino Resort.

The conference's theme celebrates the role of the "Griot" (the ancestral African tribe historian) and the "Drum" (histori-

cally important communication medium) in the history and cultural heritage of African-Americans. Today's African-American journalists are in essence the "Griots" in their communities and play a key role in the accurate depiction of the African-American as people and as a culture.

Registration for the conference will begin on Thurs., April 22 from 4:00 p.m. through 8:00 p.m. in Bally's Casino Resort's Garland Ballroom, and will continue on Fri., April 23rd, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Journalists from fifteen Western states are expected to be in attendance.

Tickets for the events are available at the Moulin Rouge and Larry's Sight & Sound Center. For further info. about ticket sales and registration, please call Aird & Associates at 456-3838 or the L.V. Sentinel-Voice at 383-4030