



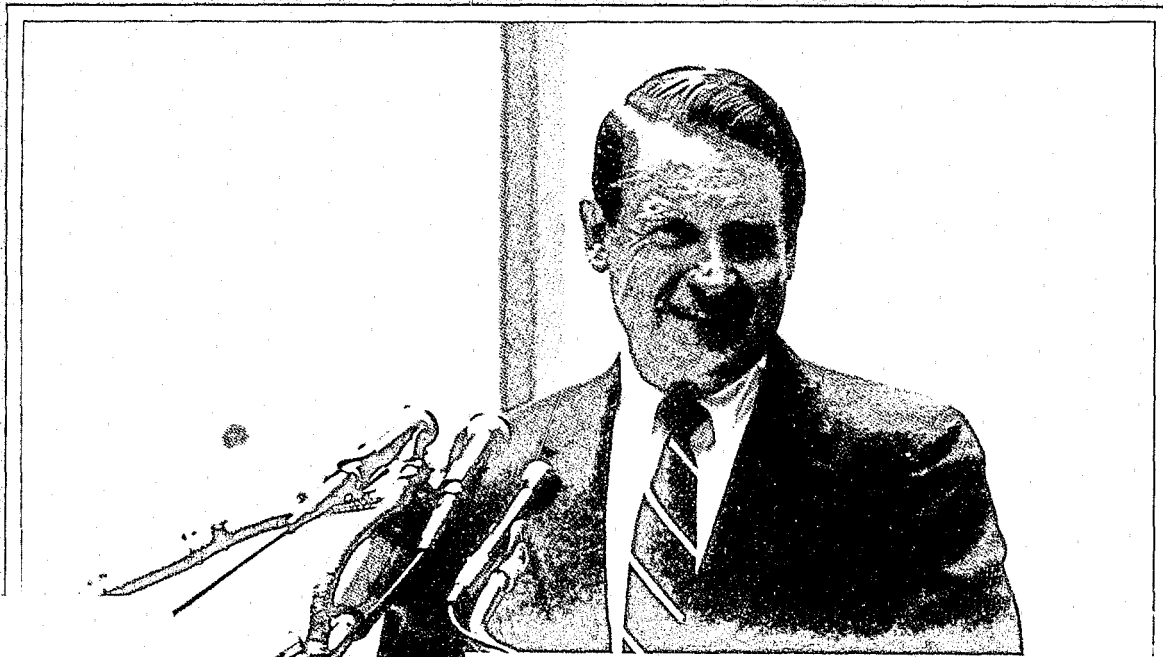
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Director Webster's Impact Enforcement

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Director Webster bid farewell to FBI employees on May 27th in the courtyard of FBI Headquarters. His impact on law enforcement is assessed in an article, p.1. Photograph by Mark Allen.

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Detroit's Proactive Approach to Law Enforcement

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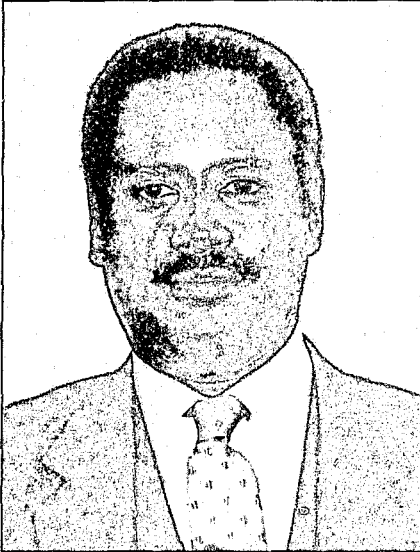


In 1975, the City of Detroit, MI, like many other U.S. cities, was hard hit by the economic recession. Besides the massive layoffs of city employees, including police personnel, the city was also troubled by an increase in crime.

The combination of these problems on the surface appeared to be an

insurmountable task for local law enforcement personnel. However, with the support of the mayor of the city, the chief of police chose to deal with the problems by creating what was to become one of the largest crime prevention programs in the world. Starting with two officers in its infancy stage, the

"Since 1975, crime prevention officers have been directing a myriad of programs and performing assorted community services..."



Inspector Topp



Chief Hart

Central Crime Prevention Section has grown to its present size of 34 officers, though this number is far below the total number of officers committed to the city's crime prevention program.

Each of the 13 precinct stations in the city has at least 1 officer whose primary responsibility is crime prevention. Also, the 57 officers assigned to mini-stations have crime prevention as their primary responsibility in areas surrounding the ministration.¹

Since 1975, crime prevention officers have been directing a myriad of programs and performing assorted community services; over 12,000 programs have been introduced with attendance exceeding 1 million persons. This has resulted in the incorporation of nearly 5,000 Neighborhood Watch organizations, 150 Business Watch organizations, and 54 citizen band (CB) radio patrols. In addition, 4,500 residential and business security surveys have been conducted.

The foundation of the entire effort has been the Neighborhood Watch Program. At least one-half of the residents on each block meet twice to receive training in burglary prevention, self-protection, Operation Identification, and crime reporting. All of the 5,000 organized Neighborhood Watch groups in the city have met the basic requirements.

Even though the Crime Prevention Program has been very successful, there was a time when many citizens and some police officials doubted its worth. As a result, in 1977, the Crime Prevention Section initiated a project which endeavored to "prove or disprove the idea that a comprehensive crime prevention program would reduce crime."

To do so, two neighborhoods were selected; one was designated to be the target area, while the other was the control area. In the target area, an extensive crime prevention program was implemented, whereas no crime prevention programs were implemented in the control area. All other police services in the two areas remained the same.

The target area, located in the northwest side of the city, is densely populated, consisting of 155 blocks with approximately 14,000 residents of which 60 percent are black, 40 percent are white, and about 20 percent are senior citizens. The control area is located in the same section of the city and is similar in demographics and crime statistics.

In 1979, the results of the projects were released. Overall, Part I crime was reduced 40 percent, while residential burglaries decreased by 60 percent.

As a result of the apparent success of this project, and in order to gauge the effectiveness of its ongoing programs, the Crime Prevention Section presently operates three target areas, each consisting of approximately 160 blocks. Designated as the "West Side," "East Side I," and "East Side II," the target areas and their demographically matching control areas are strategically located throughout the city. Each office is staffed with a racially balanced team of officers who are responsible for organizing Neighborhood Watch, Business Watch, and Apartment Watch groups in the target areas. Besides organizing new groups, each target area is responsible for recertifying existing Neighborhood Watch groups annually and maintaining all other existing programs.

Even though each target area is unique, the services and programs they offer are similar. For example, all target

areas provide senior citizen transportation and senior citizen lock installation programs. The transportation program makes available free transportation service to over 4,500 seniors who live in the target areas. Volunteer drivers transport seniors to doctor appointments, beauty parlors, and shopping malls. The lock installation program provides free security hardware and installation to seniors living in the target areas.

Target area officers also organize CB radio patrols in their areas. In fact, all three target area offices provide space for the CB radio base stations.

The West Side target area, the original target area, is 95 percent organized and has shown a continual reduction in crime. In the 3 years since the initiation of the East Side I target area, 66 percent of the blocks have been organized, resulting in a 22-percent reduction in crime. The East Side II target area, which has been in existence for 9 months, has been welcomed

by existing block clubs and community organizations, with over 30 percent of the blocks organized.

Even though the Detroit Police Department has had a great deal of success with its target areas and Neighborhood Watch programs, it continues to develop and implement unique and innovative proactive programs. One such program, known as "Eyes and Ears," uses utility company employees in radio-equipped company vehicles who watch and report any suspicious activity they observe during their daily activities.

Employees from Detroit Edison, Michigan Consolidated Gas Company, Detroit Water and Sewerage, and Michigan Bell Telephone receive special training from crime prevention officers in crime reporting and suspect identification. In the event that an employee observes any suspicious activity, the employee will report his observations to his dispatcher, who in turn notifies the police.

Utility company vehicles used in this program display, on each side, a highly visible 8" x 11" black on orange sign exhibiting an eye and ear. Citizens in need of assistance who observe these specially marked vehicles may request aid from the utility company employee.

Another program, aimed at discouraging auto theft, is known as the Vehicle Identification Program (VIP). The Crime Prevention Section, in conjunction with AAA, Michigan's largest vehicle insurance company, initiated the program. VIP discourages auto theft by etching the vehicle identification number (VIN) into the vehicle glass with acid. Since 1985, the year the program was initiated, Detroit has experienced a total reduction of 36 percent in auto thefts.

In addition, the Crime Prevention Section has paid close attention to the problems confronting the youth in the city. During the 1985-1986 school year, crime prevention officers conducted

Detroit police officers talk with an area resident during their door-to-door canvassing of the East Side target area.



“... the police department and the citizenry must continue to work together as a cohesive team in order to reduce crime and the fear of crime.”



Officers with a civilian volunteer.

over 590 youth safety programs, reaching in excess of 67,000 youth. These programs included presentations on molestation, sexual assault, substance abuse, vandalism, and the juvenile justice program.

Another program that is intended to introduce crime prevention to the youth in the metropolitan Detroit area is known as the Crime Prevention Football Card Project. The Crime Prevention Section and the Detroit Lions of the National Football League together distributed in excess of 2.8 million football cards to the youth in the Detroit area. Each week of the NFL season, 16 weeks total, a new football card displaying an action photo of a Lions' player on the front and the player's information and a crime prevention safety tip on the back was distributed. Besides promoting crime prevention, this program also allowed officers an opportunity to have direct contact with kids who would normally never speak to a police officer.

The Detroit Police Department's Crime Prevention Section continues to develop and implement proactive crime

prevention programs. As a result, the Crime Prevention Section was cited for having the "Best Crime Prevention Program in the World" in 1986 by the International Society of Crime Prevention Practitioners, Inc. It is interesting to note that this is the same award bestowed upon the Crime Prevention Section in 1982, showing that the program has not become complacent or dormant.

However, the Crime Prevention Section is not the only group dedicated or committed to crime prevention in the City of Detroit. As mentioned earlier, the Ministation Section has prioritized crime prevention. The primary responsibility of the officers assigned to the 57 ministations is crime prevention.

For their efforts, the Ministation Section was cited in 1985 by the International Society of Crime Prevention Practitioners as having the "Best Crime Prevention Program in the World." In addition, the inspector in charge of the Ministation Section was cited by this international organization as the "Practitioner of the Year."

Because of the immense magnitude of the crime prevention efforts in the City of Detroit, the Crime Prevention Section, the Ministation Section, and all police-related community service programs now fall under the control of the Community Services Division. This division is also in charge of the Police Athletic League, Junior Police Cadets, and the Crime Analysis Section.

The Detroit Police Department is extremely proud of its Crime Prevention Program and will continue to support, as well as prioritize, programs that focus on citizen involvement and citizen education. We firmly believe that the police department and the citizenry must continue to work together as a cohesive team in order to reduce crime and the fear of crime.

FBI

Footnote

Insp. Lawrence H. Holland, "Police and the Community—The Detroit Ministation Experience," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, vol. 54, No. 2, February 1985, pp. 1-6.