

## Prison/Community Relations

The Town of Enfield, Connecticut is described as a middle income, bedroom community. We have approximately 45,000 residents within our boundaries. Enfield is approximately 36 square miles; bordered by East Windsor to the south, the Connecticut River to the west, the State of Massachusetts to the north and the town of Somers to the east.

The Department of Corrections controls a multi-thousand acre parcel that straddles the Enfield/Somers town line. As of November 1993, the Department of Corrections had five operating facilities within that compound. In Enfield, there are two medium security prisons (level 3) and one minimum security prison (level 1). In Somers there is a maximum security prison (level 5) and a minimum security prison (level 2). Also under construction in Somers, scheduled to open sometime in 1995, is a state of the art "super max" prison. The combined total of inmates housed in these facilities is approximately 3800; almost one third of the entire inmate population in the State of Connecticut.

Enfield has had a prison for over forty years. In the early days, the facility was more like a working farm and housed low level classification inmates. In the early sixties the State built its then only maximum security facility in Somers. There were occasional escapes from the minimum security facility over the years with very few instances of citizen contact. There remained a casual relationship between the townspeople and the prisons until 1987. The population of Enfield had grown dramatically through the fifties and sixties and caused residential development nearby the prisons. The same residential growth in Somers also created "prison neighborhoods".

In 1987 the Enfield/Somers communities were sensitized to prison presence by a high profile escape from the maximum security prison. The townspeople were little comforted by law enforcement's overwhelming presence. Roadblocks and house to house searches were conducted for over a week. The escapee was considered armed and dangerous and attempted multiple burglaries in Enfield. Citizens lived in fear; attached to radios and televisions for sighting updates. Residents were under siege and the fear was palpable. The escapee was subsequently captured in Canada, where he still resides in prison. His lasting legacy to Enfield/Somers was delivered in a post escape interview. The escapee said he roamed the woods in Enfield/Somers until the police presence ceased, then he left town. This message was not lost on the townspeople - an escape would never again be taken lightly.

In the summer of 1990, there were six escapes in eight weeks from the Carl Robinson Correctional Institution (CRCI) in Enfield. At that time CRCI was a level 2 institution with an eight foot fence. Neighbors reactions progressed from fear to disgust to outrage. Once the anger became widespread the citizens began to coalesce. There was

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a citizen demand to state and town politicians for action. The townspeople demanded and received a "beefed up" perimeter. The fence around the subject prison was upgraded from eight feet to twelve feet, with razor wire, electronic monitoring and continual roving perimeter patrols. The enhancement of the perimeter allowed the Department of Corrections to upgrade the classification of the prison from level two to level three. This realization by the citizens caused widespread disillusionment regarding the Department of Corrections true intentions. The other result of citizen unrest was the formation of the Enfield Prison/Town Liaison Committee.

ENFIELD PRISON/TOWN LIAISON COMMITTEE  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE-Enfield

The Enfield Prison/Town Liaison Committee was created by the Enfield Town Council by resolution in July 1990. The Committee consists of thirteen citizen members and ex officio members including: the Town Manager (as representative of the Town Council), the Chief of Police, the State Representatives for Enfield (3), the State Senator for Enfield and the three Wardens of the Enfield prisons. The charge to the Committee was to increase communications with the prisons and to develop a rapid notification system for prison escapes.

In July 1993 Public Act 93-219, Section 12 was passed into law. This law mandates the Department of Corrections to form a Public Safety Committee in each municipality that hosts a penal institution. The legislation further sets out that Wardens/Superintendents of the institutions WILL attend quarterly meetings with the citizen members of the Department of Corrections Public Safety Committee. The citizen members are appointed by the highest elected official of the host municipality. In Enfield, the members of the Prison/Town Liaison Committee were appointed members of the Department of Corrections Public Safety Committee-Enfield. The charge to the committees was expanded, under the law, to include any issues relating to public safety. The law also requires the Commissioner of Corrections to report once annually to the Public Safety Committee of the State Legislature about the issues raised by the committee and the resolutions enacted or planned to mitigate the concerns.

The Committee serves as a recognized means of communication between our town officials, citizens and Department of Corrections. The nameless, faceless ugly building on the block took on the approachable name and face of the participating Warden. The Department of Corrections Public Safety Committee serves as local citizens' pipeline to the State Legislature. A citizen now knows that his concerns, as expressed to the Committee, will be reviewed by the Department of Corrections and the State Legislature. The new law has given citizens comfort that their concerns will not be ignored.

COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS

The Enfield Committee began with the dual challenges of developing an open and positive relationship with the Department of Corrections (as represented by the Wardens) and developing a rapid notification system. The first challenge would take time and the notification system had to happen as quickly as possible. The community was suffering from a siege mentality due to continued

escapes and the advent of minor and major riots in two of Enfield's facilities.

The first steps in developing a rapid notification system required ascertaining what systems were used elsewhere. The State Office of Legislative Research provided us with invaluable information. An eleven state survey was conducted with the following results.

Notification of Prison Escapes

<u>State</u>	<u>Level of Security</u>	<u>Department Notification Policy</u>
Arizona	All	Media and local law enforcement
California*	All	Local law enforcement and media (sirens in four or five prisons)
Florida	Maximum	Media, sheriff, and local law enforcement
	Minimum	Local law enforcement
Massachusetts*	Maximum	Whistle, media, and local law enforcement
	Minimum	Local law enforcement
Minnesota*	Maximum	Siren, media, and local law enforcement
	Minimum	Local law enforcement
New Jersey*	Maximum	Whistle, media, and local law enforcement
	Minimum	If inmate is in a known area, door to door
New York	Maximum	State and local law enforcement, media and sirens
	Minimum	Local law enforcement and door to door if necessary
Rhode Island	Maximum	Local law enforcement and media
	Minimum	State and local law enforcement
S. Carolina	All	Local law enforcement and media
Texas	All	Local law enforcement and media
Wisconsin*	Maximum	Local law enforcement and media

Minimum

Local community by telephone and  
local law enforcement

\*These states do not have departmental policies. Each prison has its own policy for handling emergencies.

(Source: Legislative Letter 90-R-0964, Prison Escapes, October 11, 1990; from Sandra Norman-Eady to Honorable William Kiner.)

Neighbors relate that telephone calls, in the event of escapes, had been made by prison officials to residents for at least thirty years. Our investigation revealed that the four Enfield/Somers prisons did not have identical calling lists. Our first interim step was to modify and make uniform the calling lists in all the prisons. The outgoing calls, in a crisis, reflected target areas around the prisons. Also, the initial contact citizen was required to make subsequent calls to alert neighbors. Therefore, a formalized manual telephone tree was put in place in September/October 1990 in Enfield.

### Sirens

A siren had been used for escape alerts in one neighborhood in Enfield in the past. No one really remembers when it stopped. However, one remembrance was clear; the siren used was low decibel and didn't reach past the neighborhood boundaries. Since cessation of the siren, two prisons had been built. One of those prisons, CRCI, abutted the "siren neighborhood". The Wardens were adamantly opposed to the use of any audible alert. They instructed the Committee that experience had proven two commonalities to escapees. A fleeing inmate, on foot, usually doesn't stop running for the first mile. Second, an escapee usually limits citizen contact, to zero if possible, in order to delay detection of his escape.

The Wardens noted that a wide area broadcast siren would alert the fleeing inmate that his escape had been detected. Then, the probability of citizen contact would increase dramatically as the inmate became more desperate to succeed in his escape. Also, a wide area audible alert would inform inmates in the nearby institutions that an escape or event was underway. The Wardens' concerns were that a siren alert could detrimentally affect prison stability.

Our Committee did further investigation and found that citizens had complained about Fire Department sirens intruding into their peaceful environment. The Mansfield, CT prison committee pointed out that a siren tells you nothing. Another negative to sirens was cost. It was estimated that it would take a minimum of four sirens to cover the town of Enfield. Cost per siren was represented to be between twelve and seventeen thousand dollars. Finally, as pointed out by the Cheshire, CT prison committee, sirens cause involuntary participation by citizens in an alert system.

### Flags

The close proximity of one neighborhood and the availability of a flagpole caused the initiation of flag raising for escapes. The flagpole is visible from the main road and to all passing from or through the prison complex. It is a passive signal to all passing by

that an escape has occurred. Therefore, if you weren't home to receive your notification call, we had initiated a second mass notification system. The prison personnel raise the flag in the event of an escape and let it fly for forty eight hours or until recapture, whichever occurs first.

### Telephone Trees/Autodialers

Enfield had a standardized manual telephone tree in place in the fall of 1990. A correctional officer would call nineteen predetermined phone numbers in Enfield and deliver the agreed upon escape/event message. (The recipient of the alert call was required to make subsequent calls.) This process was considered slow and therefore never considered as a permanent choice.

Our Committee considered a computerized autodialer system. We found the minimally acceptable system (# of calls/hour) was not affordable. (We also considered that if we offered autodialer service townwide, the response would be overwhelming. Therefore we only considered large capacity autodialers.) Our further concerns rested on the timeliness of a large autodialer system and the responsibility for maintenance of the data base. The Mansfield, CT Prison Committee chose an autodialer and it is currently in use. We refer all questions about satisfaction with an autodialer system to the Mansfield, CT Prison Committee.

The Enfield Committee was offered autodialer service by a private company that specializes in community notification. The minimum fee for the minimum number of calls we required would have been twelve thousand dollars per year (1990 dollars). There was never any consideration of a system that would require a line on an annual budget.

### Television

We were looking for a system that could accomplish simultaneous mass notification. Cable television was a first thought, however, FCC regulations prohibit a cable company from abrogating an original signal as received. While our local cable company wanted to help, they couldn't. Also, not every household receives cable service. Our Legislative Research Office informed us that the State could not require a television station to broadcast a message without invoking serious First Amendment issues. ((Source: Legislative Letter 90-R-0780, Communications Regarding Prison Escapes, September 28, 1990; from Kevin E. McCarthy to Honorable William Kiner.)

We discussed the use of the Emergency Broadcast System with the State Office of Emergency Management. We were told that a local use (prison escape/event notification) was not permissible under Federal guidelines for the regional Emergency Broadcast System.

### Radio

We investigated radio because of its widespread reach. We were immediately aware that the first alert couldn't be over a regular AM/FM frequency because of prisoner access. We received a proposal for using a low range FM frequency. The proposal required a signal

carrier. A local radio station volunteered the companion use of their FM subcarrier signal. However, we found out that such a low power frequency would have problems with reliability over the distance desired. For example, the receiver might not pick up the signal inside the local shopping mall.

Also presented to us was a system using the National Weather Service signal. This method is used in some areas for notification of nuclear power plant emergencies. The state Office of Emergency Management met with our local National Weather Service officials. Our local station didn't have the toning capabilities available in some other locations. Therefore the radio receiver would have to monitor National Weather Service broadcasts continuously in order to receive the prison escape alert message. Further, the official notification procedure to the National Weather Service would require a daisy chain of phone calls, including two separate barracks of the Connecticut State Police. We realized that any daisy chain, particularly a lengthy one, would only beg to be broken in time of a crisis. Also, some AM/FM radios receive weather band broadcasts. Prisoners are allowed radios in our prisons. Therefore, again we couldn't consider a system that would alert the prisoners as well as the public.

Due to overwhelming pressure from the advocate of the National Weather Service System, we ultimately put the receivers for the system out to bid. We found that the bids for the receivers were thirty to fifty dollars more per unit than pagers/beepers.

#### Prison Frequency

We considered using the Department of Corrections' operating frequency. There was again concern about reliability of the signal over the range desired. Further, there was serious concern about the safety of correctional officers should that frequency be used for prison escape alert broadcast. Correctional officers are frequently in situations where there are outnumbered by inmates. Correctional officers carry radios. It was felt that it could be very unsafe if a correctional officer were in that situation when an escape/event notice was broadcast. Also, there was concern about interrupting the working frequency during a time of crisis.

#### Beepers/Pagers

Our first competitive bid elicited a pager/beeper proposal. The per unit cost for the pager was thirty to fifty dollars lower than any competing receiver. The cost of the unit included signal carrier use and alphanate keyboards for each prison. This proposal would cost a one time purchase fee only for the receiver units. The flexibility and affordability of the pager system exceeded anyone's greatest hopes for a notification system.

The pager system chosen was offered by a local telephone company. The signal would be carried at no charge over their equipment. The message would originate from each individual prison. There was no daisy chain to send the message. The prison would therefore become fully accountable for the timeliness and content of the alert message. The receiver would receive a written, easily understandable message. The pager was capable of receiving the message throughout the state and in fringe areas of bordering states. There was no concern that

topography or commercial structures would interfere with the message.

The Town of Enfield purchased eighty pager receivers with money from a state grant. The pagers were loaned, at no charge to citizens, with one encumbrance. To acquire a pager, a citizen had to fill out an application form with a list of five names and numbers of people who would receive subsequent calls. The Committee reserved the right to add names to the calling list if demand exceeded supply. Distribution was done on a first come basis. A post distribution study shows the majority of pagers were loaned to residences within a one mile radius of the prison. The pagers are on loan to citizens in the same manner that the town loans library books. If a pager is damaged or destroyed, the citizen is liable for the expense of repair. The citizen is also responsible for the expense of batteries necessary to operate the pager. If messages are cleared promptly from the pager a battery lasts on average four to eight weeks.

Pagers are also available for private purchase by citizens or businesses. The privately purchased pager has dual address capability. The pager owner can receive personal as well as prison paging. Personal paging is charged directly to the pager owner. To purchase a pager an application is filled out at our Town Hall. The distributor is then notified and contact begins directly between the two parties. Application is made through our Town Hall in order to insure purchase price is the same as the Town's competitive bid price. To date approximately thirty personal pagers have been purchased.

Operating the notification system has revealed the necessity for regular testing of the system. An alphamate keyboard in one prison was discovered to be disabled during an escape alert. The escape message was "tripped" by a sister facility, highlighting the necessity for back up systems. The equipment supplier noted that the unique environment of a prison included electronic perimeters and other equipment and a vast amount of metal. It was therefore unpredictable when a small adjustment to equipment somewhere in the prison could cause interference with the alphamate. The "fix" was to ground the alphamate keyboards in a permanent location. The system has been operational since 1992 and there have been no other significant problems noted. There is an occasional "false trip". This occurs when someone misdials a pager telephone number. However, the resulting message is clearly not a prison alert message and therefore is ignored. The only significance to a "false trip" is that a purely numeric pager would not have allowed such ready distinction.

Neither the State or the Town of Enfield has assumed any liability for personal safety because of the installation and operation of the prison notification system. It is obviously recognized that neither the State or the Town can control a citizen's actions subsequent to receiving an alert message. This is considered purely an information system with no representations about personal safety. This is after all a pager, not a gun. The Committee has engaged in public education to enhance personal safety. (A discussion of public safety messages follows under the heading 'Conclusions'.)

#### NOTIFICATION SYSTEM CRITERIA

The criteria we developed for a notification system evolved over the period of our research. The list is as follows:

1. Meaningful message: The selected pager holds up to a 120 character alpha numeric message. This allows for a clear description of an escapee or an event.
2. Retention of message: The beeper holds the message until cleared. Radio, television or radio receivers do not have retention capability. If you are outdoors or in the shower the message is not missed.
3. Range and Reliability of Signal: The pagers receive the message throughout the State of Connecticut, and in parts of western Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New York. The signal is not obstructed by commercial structures or topography.
4. Portability: The power source for a pager is battery. Therefore the pager is not necessarily home based like a phone or some radio receiver systems. Independent power source and the size of the pager make it fully and easily portable.
5. Security of System: This system is fully encapsulated. The system is inaudible to prisons, fleeing inmates or the community at large. The telephone number of our pagers is secured within the telephone company. The alphas are located in secure areas within the prisons.
6. Accountability: Each prison originates and sends an escape/event alert. Therefore each prison is fully accountable for timeliness and content of the escape/event notice.
7. Cost: There was only the one time charge for pagers purchase.

#### NOTIFICATION SYSTEM MESSAGES

In Enfield our Committee has reached an agreement with the Department of Corrections upon instances when a message is to be transmitted. The first instance is clear, when an escape is detected. In the initial operation of the system an escape message was broadcast upon the verification of an escape. In the case of some of the facilities, a head count could take up to one hour. A broadcast of an inmate's name without verification of the escape could prompt legal concerns if the message was in error. Therefore the compromise reached is to broadcast a "suspected escape" message. All pertinent data about the suspected escapee is put out over the pagers, except the inmate's name. Once the head count is completed there is a confirmation rebroadcast including the inmate's name. Subsequent telephone trees are given the message once the "suspected escape" broadcast occurs. Telephone tree members will only be recontacted if the information is in error.

We also have an agreement regarding event notification. It was recognized early on by our Committee and the community that riots are as disturbing as escapes. There is a prevalent fear of a mass escape. Therefore, when there is an event that threatens the perimeter (possible in campus type institutions); or significantly disrupts an institution to cause public concern (smoke rising from a facility, influx of emergency vehicles, hovering helicopters for construction

projects); or impedes the free flow of civilian traffic around the facilities (State Police roadblocks, fire trucks, ambulances) there will be an event broadcast describing the event. It is obvious that the paging system has allowed great flexibility in community notification.

The media is also a participant in our system by covering the event or escape. Television and radio are received within the institutions, however, the media broadcast is usually approximately fifteen minutes from the initiation of the escape/event and alert broadcast. While this isn't a lengthy period, it is sufficient to get the staff on emergency footing before the inmates are aware of the event.

### SUMMARY OF NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

Enfield has a three part notification system including pagers, scanners and FM radio. Pagers have been described above. Scanners are possessed by a vast number of citizens who regularly monitor police broadcasts. The Enfield Police Chief has put into effect a "clear broadcast" policy. Once the Enfield Police are notified of a prison escape/event they broadcast to the patrol cars. Previously the broadcast was done encoded on a secondary channel. Now the broadcast is done in clear language on the primary channel. Neither the pagers or the police broadcast has elicited the feared response of vigilantism or curiosity seekers. There has been no noticeable increase in civilian traffic around the prisons in response to an escape/event notification. Also, our local radio station has agreed to a broadcast schedule and message content. That local radio station has been designated the official notification radio station.

In addition, the Department of Corrections has been very cooperative in providing television and print media a clear picture of the escapee for broadcast and publication. It has been proven time and again that notified residents provide leads that cause quicker recapture of escapees.

### CONCLUSIONS

The notification system provides peace of mind to a "prison community". It is unnerving, at the least, to know an inmate has escaped into your community. Instead of suffering anxiety and paranoia in Enfield, the residents are informed. The Committee has been very interested in educating the public. We have adopted a "Lock it down, Light it up" slogan. We also promote an "enhanced" Neighborhood Watch philosophy.

"Lock it down, Light it up": When you are first notified of an escape the Committee has recommended the following actions:

1. Retrieve children/adults from remote area.
2. Lock vehicles, garages, doors and windows.
3. Turn on all exterior lighting.
  - a. Exterior lighting is a known deterrent to crime.
  - b. Exterior lighting gives law enforcement a gauge of public awareness of the escape.
  - c. Exterior lighting aids law enforcement in detecting

prowlers/escapees.

4. Be alert when entering vacant homes or buildings. If anything is suspicious or amiss, leave and call the Police from a safe location.

"Enhanced" Neighborhood Watch: Neighborhood Watch is a recognized community based law enforcement program. It is a powerful psychological tool because it involves the citizen in their personal protection. There is a recommended general level of awareness of your neighbors and neighborhood. Neighborhood Watch recommends that suspicious people or vehicles be called into the local Police. Our "Enhanced" Neighborhood Watch theory promotes "stranger savvy". We want you to be aware that there is one particular "stranger" (escapee) about whom you should immediately contact the Police. The local Police are very sensitive to community fears immediately after an escape. They recommend that if in doubt, call them. The Police are aware that an alert and informed community has provided sighting reports that have caused rapid recapture of escapees.

In Enfield, when there is an escape or riot at the prison, we don't panic we react. Instead of being paralyzed by adrenalin and fear we enact our "Enhanced" Neighborhood Watch plan and follow the media closely for updates. Our early warning pager system is the first part of a well thought out plan for promoting personal safety and community peace of mind.