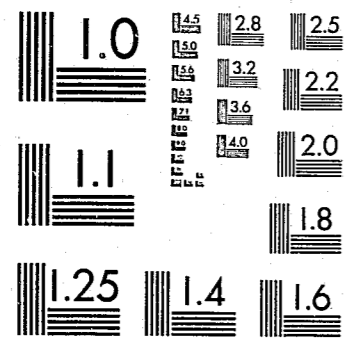


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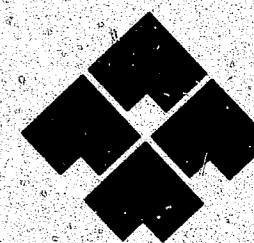
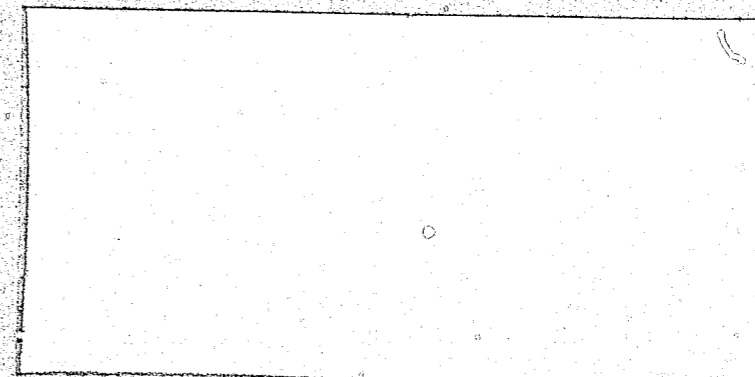
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M.  
C.  
P.  
C., Inc.

121 E. Franklin  
Minneapolis,  
Minnesota  
55404  
612/872-2300

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EVALUATION OF THE RURAL CRIME  
PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

by

Glenn Silloway  
Research Associate

Minnesota Crime Prevention Center, Inc.  
121 East Franklin Avenue  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404

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Evaluation of the Rural Crime Prevention  
Demonstration Project

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APPENDICES

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ACQUISITIONS

## I. Introduction

This evaluation of the Minnesota Rural Crime Prevention Demonstration Project is intended to give an overview and description of the project's first year, with an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the project. The major purposes of the project have been to set up demonstration programs in six Minnesota counties and to discover and develop crime prevention strategies or techniques especially suited for rural areas. In this effort, the project has necessarily had to experiment with novel organizational forms and strategies for implementation. The basic organizational approach has been to use local county residents on a very part-time basis to establish community crime prevention projects in rural counties under the joint supervision of the county sheriffs and Minnesota Crime Prevention Center. This model had never before been tried in crime prevention, and this novelty should be kept in mind as the reader goes through this evaluation. The experiences of the project will be discussed with a view toward disseminating useful information to other rural counties.

## II. Overview: The Minnesota Rural Crime Prevention Demonstration Project

The first plans for the Rural Crime Prevention Project were laid three years ago, in the summer of 1978.<sup>1</sup> At that time, the chief consideration of the planners, who were Minnesota Crime Prevention Center (MCPC) staff members, was that crime prevention had been primarily an urban phenomenon. Programs, strategies, and techniques

<sup>1</sup>"Rural Crime Prevention Project Background," Appendix A. This appendix is a time line of major events in the project's development and implementation.

had been developed in response to urban crime problems and urban geographical/social characteristics. These programs were not necessarily applicable to rural areas. The development of formal crime prevention programs in rural parts of Minnesota was quite limited, with minimal participation in the Minnesota Crime Watch program often being the only crime prevention effort undertaken by local law enforcement. And yet, during the period 1973-1981, the crime rate in many areas of rural Minnesota had been rising very rapidly, much faster than the rate for urban areas for some property crimes.<sup>1</sup> Table 1 presents some statewide data for a recent period. The crime problem was apparently causing increasing concern among rural citizens,<sup>2</sup> and this concern could translate into an increased readiness to adopt crime prevention techniques in rural towns and counties.

Table 1: Percentage Increase in Crime, 1973-1977

	<u>RURAL</u>	<u>URBAN</u>
Burglary	38%	4%
Vandalism	144%	32%
Theft	49%	20%

Source: Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension

A Task Force on Rural Crime, with representation from numerous organizations concerned with rural development, was formed at the initiative of MCPC in late 1978.<sup>3</sup> Throughout 1978, 1979, and into 1980, the Task Force and Minnesota Crime Prevention Center staff developed proposals and approaches to the rural crime prevention

<sup>1</sup>Rural Crime data from Kittson County is included in Appendix A-2.

<sup>2</sup>Rural Crime series, Minneapolis Tribune, beginning May 24, 1981.

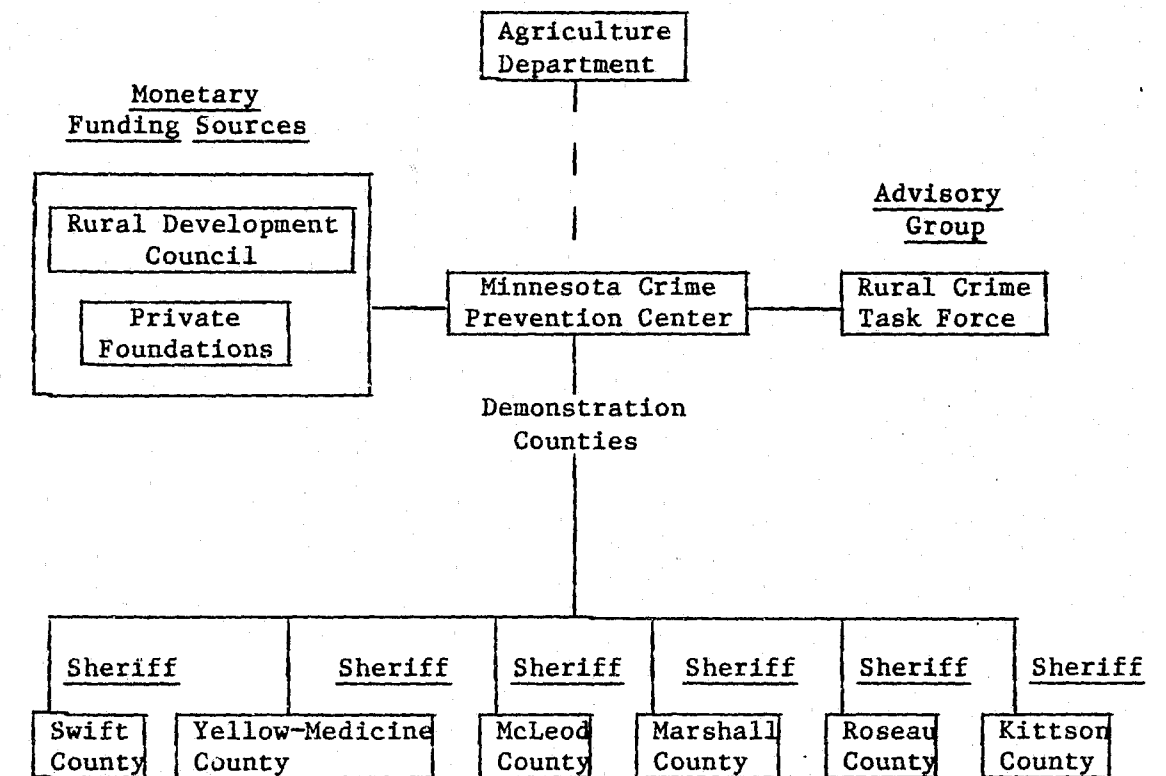
<sup>3</sup>A list of the Task Force members appears in Appendix A-3.

problem. Various funding and organizational approaches were attempted. Finally, the Task Force decided to try to continue with the project on the basis of a firm \$36,000 commitment from the Rural Development Council, plus projected funds from private sources. The fund-raising effort, which was spear-headed by MCPC, was successful enough to permit the project to start up in May 1980.

The final form of the project included six demonstration counties with 1/4-time staff, a full-time director based in Minneapolis at MCPC, a limited resource center run by the director, and a one-year budget of approximately \$81,000. In addition to the Rural Development Council's grant of \$36,000, the project was given \$19,823 by the Otto Bremer Foundation, \$12,000 by the Mardag Foundation, \$6,000 by the Green Giant Company, and approximately \$7,000 of in-kind funding by the six demonstration counties.

The organizational structure of the project is fairly complex, as seen in Figure 1, below. The state Agriculture Department is the official governmental sponsor of the project. This arrangement was made when the Crime Control Planning Board, which requires a governmental sponsor for grant recipients, was considering a grant application to fund the project. The arrangement was kept even though the Legislative Advisory Committee matching funds, required for the CCPB grant, were eventually denied. The Task Force has assisted in setting overall goals and policies for the project, but it has minimal day-to-day control over operations. It has been less active during the demonstration year than it was during the preliminary planning stages, although certain individual members have been active. The first-year project director believes the Task Force could be used more effectively

Figure 1: Operational Organization



as a formal advisory board or board of directors for the project, but it is unlikely that many members would commit themselves to an extensive role.

The six counties were chosen with the assistance of criminal justice regional planners in Region I and Region 6. The project provides the resources to support one 1/4-time staff position in each participating county. The crime prevention worker is the person with the primary responsibility for organizing and implementing a crime prevention program in his/her county. This person was hired in cooperation with the county Sheriff's Department, which participates in the program by helping to develop the crime prevention effort and

by providing office space and support to the crime prevention worker. Formally, the employer of the crime prevention worker is the Minnesota Crime Prevention Center, Inc., which performs the administrative functions of personnel and financial management, and the supervisor is the "county sheriff or his designee."<sup>1</sup> Any substantive guidance supplied by MCPC is considered "consultation and technical assistance."

In addition to its role as consultant, MCPC functions as a rural crime research center. This role was relatively independent of the counties although they were participants in parts of that research.

Grant extensions were obtained from the funding sources to permit the first year of the project to continue until June 30, 1981. At the present time, the project is in the middle of its fund-raising efforts to support the second and final year of the demonstration.

The evaluation covers the approximately 14-month period from May 1, 1980 through June 30, 1981, which includes the grant period extension. The counties in the project have only been active a portion of that period, a fact which must be considered when reviewing the efforts put out in the demonstration sites. No county project began before the middle of August 1980, one started in October, and two of them didn't get permanent workers until December, 1980. The length of the project activity in the counties ranged from a maximum of 8-1/2 months to a low of 4-1/2 months.

<sup>1</sup>"Questions/Answers for Community Crime Prevention Worker," Appendix A-4.

### III. Outline of the Evaluation

Evaluation has been a concern of the Task Force and MCPC since the beginning. In the original grant application to the RDC, an extensive evaluation was planned, along with a plan which outlined broadly the goals and objectives of the project.<sup>1</sup> The Task Force approved a set of goals and objectives for each operational component of the project on July 15, 1980, including a set of evaluation criteria for most of these goals and objectives. These goals, objectives, and evaluation criteria as proposed by the director and accepted by the Task Force are included in the appendix, along with a brief assessment of the achievement of each goal or objective.<sup>2</sup>

The original application to the Rural Development Council stated that the central problem faced by the project would be to develop some rural crime prevention models "based on careful planning . . . and which involve non-law enforcement resources as complements to rural law enforcement in reducing crime." This general problem was to be addressed in the achievement of the following results (objectives):

1. Increase the awareness of those who live in the selected sites about the extent and nature of the crime problems in those sites.
2. Improve the ability of the rural community (including rural law enforcement) in the selected sites to identify and address crime and related problems in their areas.
3. Increase the involvement and improve the quality of involvement of non-law enforcement resources in the selected sites in crime prevention programs.

<sup>1</sup>When the budget associated with the original application was cut, the funds allocated for evaluation were reduced from \$15,000 to \$3,500.

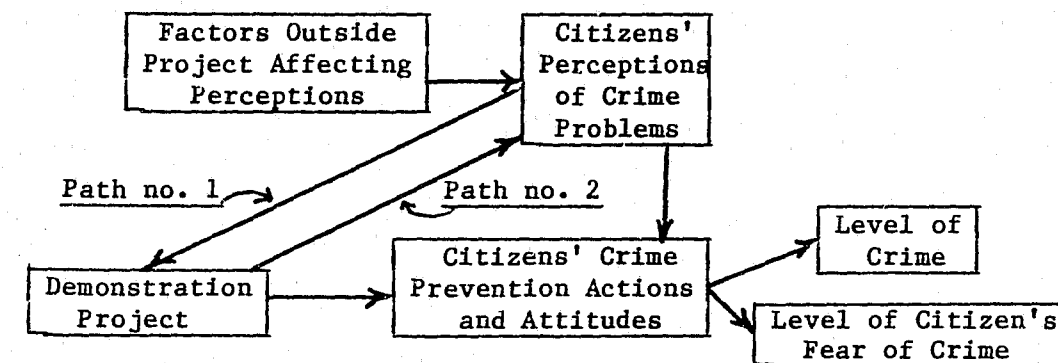
<sup>2</sup>"Minnesota Rural Crime Prevention Demonstration Project: Goals and Objectives," Appendix A-5.

4. Develop programs which are tailored to the unique characteristics, problems, and resources of the selected rural community; programs which might serve as models for other rural communities.
5. Increase the involvement of selected statewide rural organizations in crime prevention activities directed at rural areas.
6. Establish a resource capable of providing direction, information, services and coordination to those who are or might be involved in crime prevention in rural areas.

These various goals and objectives do not form the explicit basis for this evaluation for several reasons. The demonstration county component of the Task Force goals was very general, yet the bulk of the program effort in the first year was put into setting up projects in the counties. The goals outlined in the initial application to the RDC are a suitable basis for setting up the program and the evaluation in general, but they are not specific enough to inform a detailed evaluation. Finally, the actual goals of the project have changed over time in action, and these changes are taken into account in presenting the evaluation results in order to give credit for the efforts that were made. Progress towards achieving the original goals is assessed as well, and forms the basis for most of the critical aspects of this report.

Figure 2 broadly outlines the project process that the evaluation is considering. The first point to be made is that the project cannot directly achieve its desired goals, i.e., crime reduction. Instead, the project assumes that by successfully informing and motivating citizens, they will take the actions that will in turn have impacts on crime outcomes. Second, the assumption is made that citizen's attitudes and actions toward crime are conditioned by what they perceive the crime problem to be where they live. Thus, the results

Figure 2: Evaluation Conceptual Framework



of these perceptions can be shaped by the educational efforts of the project, as well as other factors outside the project such as newspaper and television or personal friends and neighbors.

Consequently, we believe that the content and organization of the project have effects on citizen's beliefs about crime problems and on their attitudes or actions of crime prevention. It is conceivable, but unlikely, that the project could have direct effects on crime prevention actions without altering citizens' perceptions of crime problems. Generally the project would have an impact on crime prevention attitudes and actions only by responding to or working through perceptions of crime problems. This is the basic justification for making educational and informational strategies as important as most county projects do.

The diagram in Figure 2 contains two paths that link citizens' perceptions of the crime problem with the demonstration project. These two paths go in opposite directions to indicate two alternative ways to look at the situation dealt with by the program. Path 1 assumes that

citizens' perceptions exist prior to the establishment of the crime prevention program. If this situation dominates project development, then the project is set up to reflect and magnify those pre-existing perceptions, using them as the basis for programs that translate the perceptions into crime prevention actions. This path requires a great deal of citizen involvement in planning the project at the community level since the project is eventually based on problems as they see them. The role of the project in this case is to help citizens define the problems that concern them, and to provide a vehicle to implement the solutions they adopt.

Path 2 assumes that the citizens' perceptions of crime problems are unformed or inadequate at the beginning, and that the role of the project is to educate the citizen first about the existing dimensions of crime and then to provide some ways to citizens to use this knowledge in crime prevention activities. The role of the citizen in this version is to learn about crime problems and solutions from project personnel -- citizens' input to program content is quite limited. Path 2 is usually associated with community crime prevention as sponsored by official agencies.

These two paths probably exist simultaneously in all community-based programs, but there is usually an empirically observable emphasis on one linkage or the other. Which path is dominant determines, in practice, how problems are defined and how people are involved in the planning process. Path 2, which begins with the project, will generally result in relatively standard strategies and attempts to educate or involve people in these approaches, such as Operation Identification. The other path (#1), which begins with citizens' perceptions of the

crime problem, often results in more unique or community-specific programs.<sup>1</sup>

As we will show below, the two paths are explicitly embodied in the major purposes of the project, and a choice was consciously made to take the path (#2) wherein the demonstration project attempts to influence/educate citizens about crime problems. The effects this has had are most directly observable in the planning process used, and indirectly in the content of the program and its outcomes.

To describe and assess the achievements of the project, two achievement areas have been defined for evaluation:

1. Organization: state and county level organizational arrangements that may have changed the project's impact are considered.
2. Outcomes: intermediate impacts, as well as activity levels (process), will be considered.

These achievement areas are explored with respect to these evaluation research questions (some of which are related to the goals outlined by the Task Force in Appendix A-5 and to the RDC application objectives stated above):

1. Have any specifically rural crime problems or solutions been discovered, and what are they?
2. Regarding local community reactions to the program: are citizens more aware of crime and/or crime prevention now than they were a year ago? Have any local organizations institutionalized crime prevention as part of their programs? Has there been an adequate level of support to sustain the project locally?

<sup>1</sup>Marlys McPherson and Glenn Silloway, Planning Community Crime Prevention Programs (MCPC, 1980). The problem discussed here is considered at length in this document.

3. Are there any variations in the organization of the project in the six demonstration counties that may account for relative success or failure?

4. Is centralized direction or assistance necessary for this sort of program?

Because the project is a demonstration program, and has been fully operational for a very short time, this evaluation does not attempt to assess any final impacts of the program on the crime rate.<sup>1</sup> Instead, evaluation efforts have been concentrated on assessing intermediate impacts, such as levels of participation in crime prevention, and on describing the process of implementation including levels of effort put forth by both state and county organizations.

Data sources generally include administrative records which detail activity levels of the project members, and information derived from interviews with various participants. These include:

1. Administrative records

- County crime prevention staff activity logs
- County workers' timesheets
- Letters, schedules, agenda, and minutes of meetings from the director's files
- Minnesota Crime Watch county-level participation data; demand for crime prevention materials
- County plans

2. Interviews

- Director
- County workers
- Key persons from each county
- Sheriffs from each county

<sup>1</sup>It should also be noted that crime series data for the period mid-1980 to mid-1981 can only be obtained piecemeal from departments. The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension report on 1980 calendar year data will not be available until fall, 1981.

The administrative records were collected from the demonstration county files (activity logs), the director's files, accounting files at Minnesota Crime Prevention Center (timesheets), and from Minnesota Crime Watch county-level participation records for brochures ordered in all counties in Region 6 and Region 1 from June 24, 1980 through June 17, 1981. These records generally cover the program year, though in some cases, the records are only appropriate reflections of program effort after site staff were hired (by August 1980).

The interviews were collected in several different ways:<sup>1</sup>

Director -- two in-person interview sessions were held, using an unstructured, open-ended question format. The total time spent in these interview sessions was about 3-1/2 hours.

Site staff -- each county worker was interviewed in fall, 1980 using a structured interview guide; and in April, 1981, each was mailed a questionnaire with a series of structured, open-ended questions, plus a request to write an essay on their individual programs' contents, problems, and solutions.

Key persons -- key persons were identified in each county by requesting the county worker to name individuals who occupied 13 different roles in the community, such as school board member, judge, and Farm Bureau representative. Each key person named was mailed a structured, open-ended questionnaire along with a cover letter and a return, pre-paid envelope (N=111). The overall response rate was 51.4% (57 out of 111 questionnaires were returned), ranging from a low of 30% return in Roseau County to a high of 73.7% return rate from Yellow Medicine County.

Sheriffs -- each of the six participating county sheriffs was contacted by telephone on April 28 or April 29, 1981. They all responded to the same structured, open-ended interview format. These interviews averaged about 35 minutes each.

The interviews were summarized, question by question, across counties and within interview groups. The key person interviews were amenable to quantitative summarization, and these results will be

<sup>1</sup>Copies of these interviews schedules can be found in Appendix B.



reported where appropriate, largely as part of the assessment of outcomes.

#### IV. Organization of the Demonstration Project

Some evaluations simply specify a set of desired outcomes and take measurements supposedly reflecting the success of the program in reaching its stated goals. However, the entire program planning effort, including the implementation process, can be examined to determine how organizational characteristics have influenced the program. Three of these characteristics are investigated here: planning at both state and local levels, the initiation of the program in the counties, and the organizational structure of the project in different counties. These issues will have some importance for similar projects in other counties.

##### A. County Project Initiation

Two steps in the project initiation process seem to have major impacts on the program: the selection of counties to participate in the program and the selection of the field staff members. The end result of these selection processes was that one individual person was selected to lead the program in each area. What those individuals are like, i.e., their personal characteristics -- roughly as we can estimate them -- are key to the counties' crime prevention efforts.

The counties were selected in a three-step procedure.

1. Regional development commissions were asked to apply.
2. Regions nominated counties.
3. The Task Force selected counties.

Only two regions applied, Region 6 and Region 1. Region 6 nominated four counties, prioritized by need, and complete with letters of support from key persons in the counties who had been notified of the program. The Region 6 counties requested to be included before any selections were made. In Region 1, the regional planner simply grouped all the counties in the region into three groups and nominated all three groups. No priorities were assigned to the groups. Hence, effectively, all of the counties in the region were nominated. Apparently, no systematic effort was made to determine whether anyone in the Region 1 counties wanted the project, and no letters of support were submitted with the application.

The Task Force decided to choose six demonstration counties, three from each Region. The three highest priority counties in Region 6 and one group of counties in Region 1 were selected.

Two of the three sheriffs in Region 1 first learned about the program and their selection into it from the project director, and the third was relatively vague about how he learned about the project. Two of the three workers in Region 1 counties expressed some doubts about the sheriff's commitment to the program. In one case, the sheriff himself stated that perhaps some other department would like to participate in the program for the second year.

Given the sheriff's position in the organizational structure, and his role as direct supervisor of the worker, his commitment to crime prevention is probably very important. Comparisons of counties' activities and outcomes will be outlined below, and it will become clear that Region 6 counties where sheriffs are generally supportive have, on the average, more active programs that have apparently had

greater impact. The one county in Region 1 with a supportive sheriff has developed an excellent program.

The selection of staff members was also critical. There were two procedures: the sheriff selected the person by himself, or the sheriff and the director together selected the person. The director helped in the selection for Swift, Yellow Medicine, Kittson, and for the replacement worker in McLeod. The two counties where workers had to be replaced were chosen initially by the sheriff alone (in McLeod and in Roseau).

The failures appear to have resulted from the sheriff's underestimation of the demands of the job, which are considerable. In one case, the sheriff gave the job to a friend who needed part-time work. In the other, the sheriff takes very little direct interest in the program. In the two counties where the worker had to be changed, the program didn't really get started until December, when the new workers were hired. These new people did not have the benefits of the early training that the other workers had, and they both expressed feelings of inadequacy vis a vis the longer-term workers. Resources invested in time and training for the unsuccessful workers were lost.

The counties with more successful workers were those where the position was openly advertised and a competitive job interview was held, with both the project director and sheriff participating in the interviews. The people selected in this way have, without exception, performed adequately or better. The job qualification criteria advertised in the job announcements included past experience working in community groups and in giving speeches, freedom to travel on an irregular basis, a desire to help the community, and some interest in

crime problems or crime prevention. Various job or schooling backgrounds were considered acceptable.

The individuals who were successful in the program were women (five out of six current site staff members are women) who had experience in community projects and/or law enforcement. They are, on the average, women in their early middle ages who have families and have worked at least part-time before. They expressed interest in the job and sought it out on the basis of the published job description. Most have been active in leadership positions in community groups before.

#### B. Planning<sup>1</sup>

Planning is a process of identifying problems to be addressed by some means, and then organizing the available means to achieve solutions. In practice, the Rural Crime Prevention Demonstration Project addressed two problems and consequently had two broad goals: to develop crime prevention knowledge and strategies applicable to rural areas, and to achieve increases in crime prevention awareness and activity in the demonstration counties. Under the best of circumstances, achieving both these goals would have been difficult in the very limited time available to the workers. None of them had had prior crime prevention experience, so a lengthy learning period was required before they could become effective. Given these constraints, the two basic goals represent competing demands on resources if approached simultaneously. They represent the two opposite paths

<sup>1</sup>This assessment of the planning process comes from an analysis of each county's plan, the fall, 1980 interviews with each field worker, which focused on how planning for the program occurred, the interviews with the project director, and state-level planning documents.

discussed in the evaluation conceptual framework, above. In practice, the program had the choice of doing an extensive planning effort to develop innovative county programs and then getting action on the objectives identified in that process, or by emphasizing action and then developing new crime prevention approaches through experimentation.

The director explicitly chose the action-oriented approach based on his own experiences with the site projects and consultations with other state-level project members. He believed that the field staff already knew what problems existed in their communities, and that action was necessary first. This choice has had several important consequences. The county programs have, in general, done only minimal planning, but they have been quite successful in generating activity. At the state level, research and other planning support efforts were downgraded. A look at some descriptive evidence supports these generalizations, some of which follow here, with the remainder below in the discussion of outcomes.

At the state level, early planning was adequate and relatively systematic since grant applications required self-conscious definition of the project's means and ends. During this pre-operational phase, the Task Force was fairly active in reviewing proposals and making recommendations for changes in the project. It met at least eleven times between September, 1978 and May, 1980 to consider options for the program. Eight of these meetings (between October, 1978 and July, 1979) were concerned with setting up a Rural Crime Prevention Program and obtaining funding. During this early planning phase, the innovative organizational form of the project began to take shape. This

planning effort more or less collapsed after July 1979, but the basic objectives and form of the project were fairly well defined. Detailed operational plans, with concrete organizational procedures and measurable objectives, were never considered prior to hiring a director. That portion of the task fell to him.

At the end of the pre-program phase (July, 1980), the Task Force approved a set of goals and objectives for the project (see Appendix A-5) which were written by the project director. The director reported that this goal statement was intended to involve the Task Force in planning, and to reactivate it after a long period of inactivity. However, this initial step toward planning was simply approved and Task Force involvement returned to a low level.

The goals and objectives approved by the Task Force were quite general, but the document does form the basis for an "operations and products plan" from the point of view of the state-level organization. No problem statements or justifications are attached to this document. The absence of county-level objectives and evaluation points may be excused if the document was intended to give the counties the widest possible latitude in developing unique programs. However, the lack of clear objectives at the state level for the county programs posed several problems for inexperienced county workers, and may have contributed to their reliance on standard crime prevention approaches.

Subsequent to July, 1980, planning at the state level received much less formal commitment. The director of the project felt that planning was limited in effectiveness by the political realities of the situation. As noted above, he chose to get action in the counties rather than engage in extensive planning. At the state level itself,

no further planning documents were produced, with the exception of budgets and short-range operational schedules. As Appendix A-5 shows, the July, 1980 planning document was more or less adhered to, although several major products are sketchy or missing.

The lack of clear objectives at the state level for the county programs was partially offset by planning at the local level, yet the county plans on the whole are brief, action-oriented documents which reveal little original research or innovation in program development. County workers were introduced to some basic concepts of planning and directed to develop a plan in the August, 1980 training session. Each worker was subsequently interviewed during October, 1980 and again in May, 1981 to determine their methods and progress in developing a plan. The results of these interviews and the actual plans show that there was considerable variation between the counties in the results of the planning process.

In Chart 1, some comparisons of the planning process in the counties are made. The data presented here is taken from both the interviews and from the plans themselves. The May, 1981 interview included a written essay by the county worker in which he/she described the project's objectives and achievements in retrospect.

Since one of the tasks the director first suggested to the workers in August, 1980 was to develop a written plan of their crime prevention program, using the standard formal planning format of problems, goals, and objectives statements, most programs do have a written plan. In the two counties where the workers were not the same for the whole demonstration period, there is no plan. As Chart 1 shows, the major area of differences between these plans was in problem definition,

Chart 1: Planning Crime Prevention in the Counties

	County					
	Yellow Medicine	Swift	McLeod	Kittson	Roseau	Marshall
Did the county have a written plan?	Yes	Yes	No*	Yes	No*	Yes
Was the plan completed before the October training session?	Yes	No	N.A.	Yes	N.A.	No
Did the plan show evidence of research?	No	No	N.A.	Yes	N.A.	No
Does the plan contain a description of problems addressed?	No	Partial	N.A.	Yes	N.A.	Partial
Does the plan include measurable objectives?	Yes	Yes	N.A.	Yes	N.A.	Yes

\*McLeod and Roseau had to replace the county worker half-way through the demonstration, in December, 1980, and no plans could be developed.

including the use of systematic research to help define problems. Only in Kittson County was there evidence of an effort to use a variety of information sources to develop a problem definition.

Kittson and Swift were different from other counties in that several individuals outside the project were consulted during planning to help narrow problems and solutions, according to the interviews. Yet, when asked about the main source of ideas for the program, five out of six county workers responded that the director and/or the crime prevention materials he sent them were their inspiration, aside from themselves.

Most of the workers consulted the sheriff about the program, and in one county he was cited as the dominant influence.

The influence of the director, combined with the tendency for planning with little effort put into problem development, led to the adoption of quite uniform and traditional crime prevention strategies in each county. Part of this uniformity apparently comes from the director's efforts to provide examples and guidance to the workers during the difficult training period. He suggested a series of "potential" activities to several counties which subsequently became parts of their plans.<sup>1</sup> Crime Watch and other prepared crime prevention materials were also provided to the workers and were mentioned as sources of program ideas.

Each of the plans submitted was action-oriented, with informing or educating the population being the most common elements in the plans, along with more specifically crime reduction programs. Four out of six workers mentioned education or raising awareness as the most important thing they would like to have accomplished, and a fifth mentioned participation. Four out of six workers said the most effective actions they took were simply talking to people. Formal strategies were usually standard crime prevention packages like Operation Identification, which was highly prominent in all counties.

As will be seen below, the novel organizational approach taken in the counties produced action, but fewer innovative rural crime prevention strategies than was hoped. The one-year program length is

<sup>1</sup>For example, see "Roseau County: Potential Activities for Community Crime Prevention," Appendix A-6. This is the only planning document found for Roseau. Similar statements were found for two other counties.

probably unrealistic in a demonstration project of this sort, especially when the staff are only working an average of 10 hours per week. To upgrade the planning process, however, qualitative changes in the training workers receive would be needed. Planning was mentioned in only two of 13 items on the agenda for the first training session held in August, 1980. A higher investment in training at the outset should be made in new county programs.

### C. Organization

The basic organizational model is the same in each county: the crime prevention worker is responsible for program development, and works for MCPC under the supervision of the county sheriff. There are minor variations in the counties that appear to have had some impact on the development of the project. The fundamental question to ask about the organizational model is whether it is an effective way to institutionalize community crime prevention in rural counties. Secondly, the minor variations between counties can be examined to determine which arrangements have been associated with more successful projects. In this section, descriptions of the county organizations and the state-level organization are provided, relying heavily on the comments of participants for measures. Below, in the discussion of outcomes, some of the effects of the organizational model on institutionalizing the project will be discussed, along with an assessment of the outcomes in counties in a comparative framework.

The state-level organization consists of the Agriculture Department as sponsor, the Task Force as an advisory board, both public and private foundation funding sources, and the Minnesota Crime Prevention Center

as the operational leader and coordinator of the project. Neither the Agriculture Department nor the funding agencies have had much impact on the operation of the project, although the grantors obviously controlled the content and format of the project to some extent. The role of the Task Force has been briefly described above. Only MCPC will be considered here in any detail.

The central issue for the Minnesota Crime Prevention Center is how important a state-level organization is to a county-based rural crime prevention program and whether MCPC has played the role adequately. The purposes of MCPC, as formally stated in the goals and objectives of the program are: to act as a resource center; to provide training, technical assistance and consultation to county projects, and to coordinate their efforts; and to design and conduct research at the state or overall project level to improve our knowledge of rural crime, crime policy, and rural crime prevention.

The technical assistance and consultation goals have apparently been met quite well. In addition to completing a series of tasks on these goals (see Appendix A-5), the comments of the sheriffs and county workers are generally supportive of MCPC. They do, however, suggest other dimensions of activity which are not formally incorporated in the goal statements, but which were important in the project.

The charts below lay out summaries of the ways the county workers and sheriffs perceived MCPC. The dimensions used to describe the MCPC role are those suggested by the county people in response to open-ended questions.

The most salient feature of Chart 2, constructed from sheriff's responses to interview questions, is that MCPC was perceived as a

Chart 2: Sheriff's Views of MCPC

MCPC's role is:	County					
	Yellow Medicine	Swift	McLeod	Kittson	Roseau	Marshall
To provide program resources (brochures, etc.)	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
To provide money, time, administration	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
To provide ideas	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes
To motivate	no	yes	no	no	no	yes
Still necessary after 1st year?	no	un- sure	yes	yes	un- sure	no
Personal involvement of sheriff with MCPC	yes	some	no	no	no	no

resource provider (primarily paying for additional staff time) to the small sheriff's departments in these rural counties. This role was certainly important: without MCPC's fund raising, the project could not have existed at all. Yet the roles that might be more associated with the innovative aspects of the project -- providing ideas or motivating local efforts -- were not as frequently offered as descriptions of MCPC's role. The need for the central organization to continue the project got mixed reviews.

It is telling that the sheriffs behaved much as may be expected from the general organizational chart: all but one of them had very little personal contact with MCPC. This probably enhanced the role of

the county worker in some ways since the worker alone had direct contact with the source of the money and materials desired by the sheriffs. But it raises a more important question about the willingness of the sheriff to support the innovations of the project. The worker was the source of ideas from the central organization, but these were not generally recognized as part of the MCPC role by the sheriff. His tendency to view MCPC's role as a resource provider suggests that he undervalues the demonstration aspect of the program, and views it as another source of action programs. His isolation from direct contact with MCPC may have unnecessarily contributed to this perception.

In Chart 3, the county workers' views of MCPC, using the same descriptive dimensions, shows that the site workers' views of MCPC

Chart 3: Site Workers' Views of MCPC

MCPC's role is:	County					
	Yellow Medicine	Swift	McLeod	Kittson	Roseau	Marshall
To provide program resources (brochures, etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
To provide money, time, administration	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
To provide ideas	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
To motivate	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Still necessary after 1st year?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Supervisory	Unsure	Unsure	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

were somewhat different than the sheriffs. As with the sheriffs' views, Chart 3 reports responses that were volunteered by workers, "off the tops of their heads." Presumably, these responses reflect the aspects of MCPC that were most salient to them, and were not necessarily the only roles they perceived. One worker, however, did emphasize the importance of funds to permit the programs to exist. Somewhat surprisingly, only two of the workers volunteered that MCPC acted as a motivator. This response is qualified when the point is amplified by using questions about the director's personal impact. Given that added dimension, MCPC did play a motivating role through the director's personal contacts with site staff. However, these encouragements appear to have been personal and affective as well as programmatic and directive. Staff complimented the director on his personal support and technical assistance, but several of them suggested that a more directive, firm hand in policy and planning would have been preferred. This is another bit of evidence that the role of planning and programming needs to be enhanced and sharpened.

Most of the site staff believe that the program should continue with a central support organization working as a resource center, and to help disseminate information. Most county staff workers mentioned that this role could be improved by providing a way to have more regularized contacts among the workers themselves. Several of them cited such contacts as being among the most useful they had in discussing programs and problems.

The ex-director stated in his interview that the central organization's role could be institutionalized by shifting it to another state-level organization, probably one involved in some aspect of law

enforcement. Examples he gave included Crime Watch and the Sheriffs' Association. However, there are advantages to the current model that cannot be duplicated readily in official agencies or in law enforcement associations. In particular, the model now provides the site workers with some independence in forming a working relationship with the sheriff, and permits the sheriff to view the worker differently than he does regular law enforcement personnel. A central organization more oriented toward a traditional law enforcement role would require a more direct chain-of-command structure to include the sheriff. It is desirable to have contact between the sheriff and the program, but it is not recommended to have the actual control over program policy to pass through the sheriffs. They all, without exception, specify inadequate resources and too much work in too big an area as problems faced by rural sheriffs. There is reason to believe that the project would be diverted from its quest for community-oriented crime prevention strategies toward a straight-forward support system for the sheriffs' traditional law enforcement activities. The sheriffs typically saw program benefits in increasing participation in Operation Identification (to help catch burglars) and increased visibility of and support for the sheriff (to increase the reporting rate). These are admirable benefits in themselves, but experience in community crime prevention in other places suggests that this sort of program will not interest or motivate people on a sustained basis.

Some data obtained from site workers and sheriffs pertaining to their relationships in the different counties is relevant here. Chart 4 summarizes five dimensions that describe the relationship between the sheriff and the county worker. These relationships should be kept in mind during the discussion of outcomes, below.

Chart 4: Sheriff/Site Staff Relationships

Relationship Descriptions	County					
	Yellow Medicine	Swift	McLeod	Kittson	Roseau	Marshall
In worker civilian or sheriff's employee?	civilian	civ.	civ.	civ.	em- ployee	Deputy Sheriff
Does worker have office space in sheriff's office for CP?	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Where does worker get most program ideas? (other than self)	MCPC/ Sheriff	MCPC/ Sher.	MCPC	MCPC	MCPC	Sheriff
Who controls the workers, in their views?	shared	shared	MCPC	MCPC	unsure	Sheriff
Does sheriff support the crime prevention program? How?	yes	yes	yes	yes	unsure; dele- gates it	marginal

The most important dimension in Chart 4 is whether the worker is a civilian or a sheriff's employee. Most sheriffs saw advantages to either status, but the sheriffs from Roseau and Marshall Counties emphasized the value of the informed law enforcement perspective in doing crime prevention. The Marshall sheriff in particular stated he would not have the project if he couldn't hire a deputy. These



projects emphasize crime prevention activities which support the sheriffs' law enforcement role without extensive community involvement or changes in attitudes. This is especially true in Marshall County. Sheriffs' support for the crime prevention program in these cases appears marginal because it occupies a lower priority than regular law enforcement duties. Interestingly, only the Marshall County deputy made the point that he got very little cooperation from citizens in his efforts.

Several sheriffs made the point that they had difficulty sustaining crime prevention work prior to the Rural Crime Prevention Project because they had to preempt crime prevention work if some other law enforcement duties called. In addition, several of them noted that a civilian -- especially a female civilian -- made crime prevention look easy and eliminated the hesitations citizens might have if a law officer ran the program. These civilians had an easier time talking with people.

#### V. Project Outcomes in a Comparative Perspective

Several types of comparisons can be made in order to attribute observed outcomes to the project. Changes in the levels of certain variables since the start of the project -- the before-after comparison -- are one kind of evidence. Comparisons between counties within the project based on the variations in organization or program are possible. Finally, some evidence is available to compare the crime prevention levels of effort in the demonstration counties with other non-participating counties in their regions during the project year.

Overall the project had six major objectives that can be identified from records or interviews:

1. To increase the activity level of the crime prevention efforts in the counties.
2. To raise the awareness of county residents about crime and crime prevention, and to improve their attitudes toward an active, participatory role in crime prevention.
3. To increase participation in crime prevention programs.
4. To institutionalize crime prevention programs in local community groups or organizations, utilizing local resources.
5. To develop and test new strategies for crime prevention that are particularly designed for rural areas.
6. To produce documents, research, and memoranda that define and analyze the rural crime problem, propose policies or methods to promote rural crime prevention, or disseminate such information.

These objectives are generally stated, both here and in any documents produced by the project. In practice, the role of the Minnesota Crime Prevention Center emphasized technical assistance and consultation over research and evaluation. Thus, the general thrust of the project was to begin and maintain programmatic activity in the demonstration counties, relegating the research, product-oriented aspect of the project to a second priority level. This shapes the information that can be presented in this evaluation as well. Therefore, the information about MCPC's role will be confined to a general description of its activity and products, plus the formal statement of goals and objectives found in Appendix A-5.

A. MCPC: The State-Level Coordinator

MCPC performed activities in three areas, including a research and analysis area aimed at generating certain products.

Administratively, MCPC:

- Maintained personnel records and payroll.
- Coordinated various parts of the project organization to maintain communication links, transfer information.
- Provided general budgetary and other management functions.
- Provided support staff and other overhead functions for the director and other members of the organization on demand.
- Continued searching for funding for second year.

Programmatically, MCPC, through the project director:

- Helped select several of the site staff members.
- Provided orientation and training to site staff members in three sessions - August 1980, October 1980, and January 1981. Each session was two days long, with presentations, discussions, speeches, and evaluation of the project's efforts. These training sessions were generally given high marks by the site staff, especially since they provided an opportunity for them to speak to each other and compare experiences.<sup>1</sup> Only Deputy Maurstad of Marshall County was unable to attend these meetings because of his duties as a regular law enforcement officer.
- Wrote and distributed 15 articles on crime prevention for insertion in the local newspapers. These articles were used with some modifications by all site staff. The county newspapers were found to be effective ways to communicate crime prevention because they have good saturation of the county residents and relatively little competition from other media in their own counties.

<sup>1</sup>The two site staff members who joined the project in December received only one training session, on January 28 and 29, 1981. They both expressed some doubts about what they were supposed to do, and desired more pragmatic and clearly directive suggestions about how to proceed in setting up a local program. It is likely that the training session provided cumulative information. However, one member who had experienced all sessions also expressed a desire for more specific, directive information. Those sessions are where planning should be taught.

- Wrote and distributed monthly memos for site staff and sheriffs, updating the progress of the project in each county.
- Provided general assistance to site staff upon request. Assistance included phone calls, visits, or letters to transmit requested information, review plans or programs, and to make suggestions. The lists of memos to county staff or phone calls from MCPC to county staff are long. For example, the director made 42 telephone calls to site staff in November, 14 in December, and 31 in January.
- Coordinated and scheduled four Task Force meetings during the program year.
- Made presentations and speeches to various organizations, including the statewide Sheriff's Association and Minnesota Public Radio, on the topic of rural crime or rural crime prevention. Contacted various persons to discuss rural crime prevention or related issues on a sporadic basis.

Research and policy documents produced by MCPC include:

- A handbook for training county crime prevention workers in rough draft form. It consists largely of materials used in the training sessions, and would require extensive work to complete.
- A resource center is maintained by MCPC that includes various agency's program descriptions and contacts; materials on established crime prevention strategies; audio-visual resource guides and other materials useful in training or education on crime prevention; research on rural crime; and selected publications. This resource center, though useful, is small and needs to be expanded if possible. There are limits to its size simply because the topic of rural crime is relatively unstudied.
- A brief memorandum to the Crime Control Planning Board to recommend legislative actions in the area of rural crime prevention, jointly produced with the Task Force. This memo is a result of deliberations by members of the Task Force, and does not reflect any research specifically undertaken to provide new policy options for rural crime. The memo includes some recommendations for institutionalizing the rural crime prevention project either in some state agency or the Minnesota State Sheriff's Association.
- A youth survey for administration in tenth-grade classes in the county high schools was developed, based on a similar study done by Howard Phillips in Ohio. This survey was intended to study vandalism and attitudes toward crime among juveniles. This major research effort is being pursued, and will be finished by mid-September, 1981.

- A sixth-month report containing a very brief narrative describing the project's purposes as seen by the director, plus a description of activities. Includes a sixth-month budget summary.
- A final report presented to the Rural Development Council.

MCPC apparently accomplished more with respect to the technical assistance and consultation goal than it did with respect to the research goals. This is compatible with the director's statement that he considered action, and the organization of county projects, to be the top priority for the demonstration in the first year. However, it is not clear that this strategy is best suited to producing the most innovative program.

#### B. Outcomes in the Counties

##### Changes in level of crime prevention activities

To begin, Chart 5 lists a series of activities and assigns a rating to each county for each activity. These ratings are all self-explanatory except the ones for "program presentation activity" and "columns/radio" (referring to use of local media). Each of these variables are ranked "high," "moderate," or "low." Program presentations are taken from activity logs filled out by the county workers detailing the number of groups and/or persons they had contacted to discuss the project in the previous month. These ratings are simply rough comparisons based on the evaluator's interpretation of these reports. Newscolumns/radio spots refer to the number and originality of the media spots placed by the county according to the activity logs and the copies of the media materials. Again, these measures are taken from evidence supplied by the county workers.

Chart 5: Activity Levels in the Counties

<u>Activities</u>	<u>County</u>					
	Yellow Medicine	Swift	McLeod	Kittson	Roseau	Marshall
Activity logs: number of reports filed <sup>1</sup>	3 of 6	6 of 6	3 of 3	3 of 6	1 of 3	4 of 6
Planning document accomplished	partial plan	complete plan	no plan	complete plan	no plan	partial plan
Research accomplished	none	partial	partial	extensive	none	none
Program presentation activity	moderate	high	high	high	mod.	low
Newscolumn/ radio spots	moderate	high	high	mod.	mod.	(unknown)
Hours worked/wk (average for weeks employed)	7.0	10.9	10.9	13.8	8.8	7.6
Youth survey participant?	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no

Taken as a whole, Chart 5 is an indicator of reported activity levels -- measures of program effort -- in the six counties. The between-county comparison is the most relevant since the six counties, almost by definition, had more activity after the start of the program than before. This presumption of increased activity due to the project is confirmed by sheriffs' statements.

<sup>1</sup>Logs are not meaningful activity in themselves, but they do somewhat reflect the effort put out by the site staff. It also shows the base from which other activity level judgments are made.

Between counties, some variations in activity levels occurred. The most objective indicator of activity level in Chart 5 is the weekly average number of hours worked. Each county staff person was instructed to average ten hours per week or less, which may well have created a tendency for some members to limit their hours more than they wished. Still, in the three counties where the worker was over ten hours per week, they also report more overall activity in terms of presentations, research, planning, and submission of activity logs.<sup>1</sup> These activity levels are broadly supported by sheriff and site staff interview comments. For example, the sheriffs from Roseau and Yellow Medicine are quite confident that ten hours per week is enough to do a credible crime prevention program.

The most important activity, according to most of the site staff, was simply talking to people about crime prevention, either one-to-one or in groups. This view is compatible with the project's emphases on action and education.

These different activity levels among the counties may reflect numerous factors, including the motivational state or other personal qualities of the worker, the sheriff's attitude toward crime prevention, or the worker's relationships to the sheriff and to the program as a whole. Recalling the description of the organizational variations in the counties, we note that the counties with the lowest activity levels are those which had sheriffs' employees as the crime prevention worker.

The activity levels of the demonstration counties can be compared

<sup>1</sup>These individuals asked for and were given permission to work hours in excess of 10 per week.

to surrounding counties in the same region by using data on requests for crime prevention brochures from Minnesota Crime Watch. Chart 6 shows that the demonstration counties average a much higher request rate than surrounding counties in the same region. There is nothing obvious to distinguish the demonstration counties from the other counties except the program, so it is reasonable to assume that this systematic difference in level-of-effort measurement is due to the program. Roseau and Yellow Medicine Counties have especially high brochures request rates, which reflects the strong emphasis these two counties have placed on contacting residents about the Operation Identification program.

Chart 6: Requests for Crime Watch Brochures by Region 1 and Region 6 Counties (June 24, 1980 through June 17, 1981)

<u>Region 6</u>			<u>Region 1</u>		
		<u>Number Requested</u>			<u>Number Requested</u>
<u>Demonstration Counties</u>	Yellow Medicine	7200	<u>Demonstration Counties</u>	Kittson	1400
	Swift	1400		Roseau	5400
	McLeod	1900		Marshall	0
	<u>Average</u>	<u>3500</u>		<u>Average</u>	<u>2267</u>
<u>Other Counties in Region</u>	Lac Qui Parle	0	<u>Other Counties in Region</u>	Polk	0
	Lincoln	100		Norman	100
	Lyon	0		Pennington	100
	Redwood	0		Red Lake	500
	Rock	100		<u>Average</u>	<u>175</u>
	Nobles	100			
	Jackson	500			
	Big Stone	0			
	Chippewa	0			
	Meeker	0			
	Renville	0			
	Kandiyohi	1000			
	Cottonwood	0			
	Murray	0			
	Pipestone	200			
<u>Average</u>	<u>133</u>				

Changes in levels of awareness and community attitudes<sup>1</sup>

One of the objectives of the project in the counties was to raise the awareness of residents about crime and crime prevention, and to change their attitudes toward crime prevention activities. According to all county workers and sheriffs, these results have been obtained in good measure. The sheriffs mentioned the increased willingness of people to support law enforcement activities and, frequently, that people "like" the program and seeing law enforcement reaching out more to citizens. The site staff have similar views of the matter, emphasizing that the people they've contacted are spontaneously asking about the project and what they can do to help. Several workers believe the project is just beginning to gain momentum.

A more objective look at attitudes in the community is provided by the key person interviews. Neither the original sample nor the self-selected part of the sample that returned the questionnaires can be considered representative of the communities as wholes, but these key people are probably opinion leaders in their rural communities. Two sets of community perceptions can be inspected: awareness of various aspects of the demonstration program and attitudes toward crime prevention.

The data in Chart 7 provide information about key-persons' knowledge of the program and its purpose. For these respondents as a whole, the program's purpose seems to be fairly clear, and they are aware of its existence.

<sup>1</sup>The information available to assess the impacts of these activity levels is largely based on the reports of observers and participants in the program.

Chart 7: Key Persons' Awareness of the County Project, and Crime Prevention

County	% who believe awareness of crime prevention has increased in past year	% aware of county program	% who can name the county worker
Yellow Medicine (n=14 of 19)	79%	79%	64%
Swift (n=10 of 27)	80%	90%	90%
McLeod (n=11 of 20)	73%	82%	82%
Kittson (n=11 of 21)	74%	82%	82%
Roseau (n=3 of 10)	100%	100%	100%
Marshall (n=8 of 14)	75%	50%	0%

The correspondence between the individuals who know about the program and those who can name the field worker suggests that the program effort is identified with the county worker personally in most counties. Only Marshall County seems to be an exception to this rule. In Marshall the respondents tended to associate the program with the sheriff rather than with a distinct organizational effort.<sup>1</sup> This was also true to a great extent in Roseau County where respondents knew who the county worker was and named her and yet associated the program with the sheriff, and to a lesser degree in Yellow Medicine where respondents associated the worker with her husband, the sheriff. In each of these counties,

<sup>1</sup>One respondent noted that the county worker, a deputy sheriff, had asked if his name could be submitted for the key person interview and the respondent still associated the program with the sheriff.

the worker was an employee of the sheriff or closely related to him. In the remaining counties, there was only a slight tendency to associate the program with the sheriff.

Many of the respondents believe crime prevention awareness has increased in the past year. Three reasons for increased awareness were volunteered with about equal frequency: the increased crime rate, the demonstration program, and increased public information in the media (much of which was due to the project).

Key person respondents' attitudes toward crime prevention are summarized in Chart 8.<sup>1</sup> A clear majority of respondents see crime prevention as a joint effort between law enforcement and citizens, and a sizable proportion of them believe that citizens should take the lead in crime prevention. Only a very small proportion believe it is

Chart 8: Key Persons' Attitudes toward Crime Prevention

<u>Whose responsibility is crime prevention?</u>				
	<u>Law enforcement only</u>	<u>Citizens lead</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Total Sample (N=57)	5.3%	24.6%	54.5%	15.8%

<u>What crime prevention activities have you participated in?</u>				
	<u>Organized a presentation</u>	<u>Read in newspaper</u>	<u>Talked about it</u>	<u>Took steps in own home</u>
Total Sample (N=57)	24.6%	54.4%	43.8%	40.4%

<sup>1</sup>The categories for crime prevention responsibility were developed from an open-ended question. Crime prevention activities reported are based on a forced choice question (selected responses reported).

the job of law enforcement alone. Taken together, these responses describe a sample that is amenable to community-based crime prevention of the sort the project sponsors.

A fairly large proportion of the respondents engaged in some crime prevention activities. The high percentage who read about it in the newspaper is a reasonable measure of program impact since these media efforts were definitely due to the programs. Swift and McLeod Counties had 70% and 64% ratings on reading about crime prevention in the newspapers. Only Marshall was low on this measure, where one out of eight respondents claimed to have read about it. The Swift and McLeod programs had used a great deal of media coverage.

In a separate tabulation, 30 of 42 key persons who responded to the question about whether they would attribute some or all their crime prevention activities to the program said yes (71.4%). The proportions were similar in all counties except Marshall, where 5 out of 5 who answered said no.

Finally, it should be noted that numerous respondents volunteered that they participated in Operation Identification. This was especially true in Yellow Medicine County, where the Operation ID Program was strongly pushed. Most programs report an increase in participation in Operation Identification. Specific figures are available for Yellow Medicine (an increase from 200 registrants to 500), Kittson (355 to 412), and Swift (367 to 568).

Another purpose of the project has been to try to get crime prevention programs institutionalized in local communities using local resources if possible. The results are not all in on this point, but some evidence is available.

The county workers report that some organizations will probably continue crime prevention programs. Three of the six have very high confidence that schools will continue some crime prevention work. In Kittson, the project has promoted a diverse crime prevention curriculum with topics and materials chosen for appropriate grade levels. It is very well organized and will probably become a routine part of school activities with a small input of outside resources in the future. The McLeod schools also have a variety of efforts, including a court visiting program that will continue in the future. The generic program for schools, Operation Aware, is consciously being promoted in Swift and Roseau as well.

Aside from schools, 4-H clubs are the most frequently mentioned possibilities for incorporating crime prevention into on-going activities, with insurance agencies third. The 4-H and insurance programs are both concerned with promoting Operation Identification through education and monetary incentives (policy discounts), respectively. (The use of discounts on policies, however, is not widespread at this time.)

Sheriffs give a different picture because they are further from the organizing activity that goes on in the projects. Four of the six mentioned that they would try to continue an expanded Operation Identification program, although they noted that reduced funds due to the end of the demonstration project would necessarily reduce their activity. Two sheriffs, from Roseau and Marshall, gave no indication of intentions to continue any specific efforts. The sheriff of Swift County also mentioned that he would continue the media portions of the project. He noted that he would like to train township boards in crime

prevention techniques to have them help disseminate the program, but this is "down the road a ways." He also stated that he was trying to get the county to provide some funds for the project, as did the sheriff in McLeod County.

#### C. Identification of Rural Crime Problems and Solutions

Finally, one of the most important purposes of this demonstration program was to discover and develop new crime prevention strategies especially appropriate to rural communities. The inadequate planning process in most counties, and the failure to involve significant numbers of people in that process in all counties, have led to fewer insightful or innovative approaches than was hoped. However, the comments of staff and sheriffs in written and oral reports provide some listings of uniquely rural crime problems and some possible programmatic solutions.

The list of problems that follows is divided into seven major divisions that reflect the comments of the participants. Some of the problems, like county-sized areas and small police forces, were commonly mentioned by all respondents, while others were mentioned only by one or two. It is likely that a more systematic attempt to elicit rural crime problems, such as in a thorough planning process, could elaborate this list. The important things to notice here are how extensive the list is even though it was not developed in a systematic way, and that most of the ideas come from rural dwellers out of their experience, not out of crime data. These points mean that a citizen-based, planned community crime prevention program would have a good chance to identify the problems that concern rural residents and build a local program on that basis.

### Problems for Rural Crime Prevention

#### 1. The county is a geographically large area:

- Surveillance is difficult between homesteads.
- Police patrol cannot cover all territory: low manpower/area ratio.
- Equipment left in fields is out of sight.
- A homestead near a county line may be nearer to law enforcement in the next county, but out of their jurisdiction.
- Officers' response time may be slow.
- Common road names and numbering systems are missing in some locations.
- Crime problems in such large areas vary from location to location in county.

#### 2. Attitudes of rural dwellers inhibit crime prevention:

- Many rural dwellers have been trusting for years, leaving doors unlocked and unguarded.
- Many rural dwellers still believe that crime is an urban phenomenon.
- Few rural dwellers know or understand that citizens can help promote crime prevention.
- Much "suspicious" behavior goes unreported because people don't want to appear to be nosy.
- There is a misconception that drugs are the cause of many crime problems, when alcohol is actually the more prevalent factor.

#### 3. Socioeconomic cycles in farming communities are different than those in urban areas:

- Many farmers are "snowbirds" who leave the farms unattended during the winter.
- During the growing season, social and organizational activities decline, making active participation in crime prevention difficult.

#### 4. Law enforcement agencies are usually very small, with inadequate size to provide much division of labor:

- Crime prevention has tended to take second place to regular law enforcement activities, and few departments can afford to assign anyone to crime prevention on a regular basis.
- Crime prevention produces few "tangible" results that will impress county boards enough to earmark funds to support it.
- Some departments are too small to have someone on duty at all times to receive calls reporting crimes.
- Cost of unionized deputy is prohibitively high to use them for crime prevention.
- Local law enforcement officers are often hostile or skeptical about crime prevention in the beginning.

#### 5. Changes in the rural social structure and economy have changed the nature of the crime problem:

- Farms are getting larger and homesteads are getting even farther apart due to consolidation and agribusiness. This results in more targets for crime due to vacated buildings which may still be used for storage, and even lower surveillance potential.
- Some farm products or input factors have increased in value dramatically in recent years. Any petroleum-based materials, such as gasoline and many fertilizers, have become extremely valuable in small quantities that can be easily removed.
- Farm machinery has become very expensive, but often it is either unregistered and/or untraceable when stolen.
- In rural areas near cities, an increasing number of scattered non-farm homesites bring new non-farm households into the rural community.
- Rural residents no longer know all their neighbors.

#### 6. Crime-specific problems are increasing, especially for property crimes like bad checks, burglary, and vandalism.

#### 7. Crime prevention strategies and materials have not been developed for rural areas in the past, and inadequate funds exist to do so now:

- Slide shows that do exist for rural areas focus on town problems rather than farm problems.



- Little existing research or other materials document the rural crime problem.

- Urban settings in crime prevention materials only reinforce the notion that crime is an urban phenomenon.

The solutions proposed are somewhat less extensive. Most county projects, most of the time, viewed their goals as trying to educate the community about available crime prevention options, which tended to narrow the consideration of possible innovations in strategies designed to deliver crime prevention benefits. Again, the solutions presented here are taken from the comments and documents of participants in the program. Solutions -- strategies -- have been divided into one organizational strategies category, and three program strategies categories.

#### Solutions for Rural Crime Prevention Programs

##### 1. Organizing crime prevention in rural communities requires different methods than in the urban setting:

- Involving key people is especially important: they'll get others to fall in line.

- Face-to-face contact with program workers is important for recruiting people into the program.

- Use local people to give advice on problems in their areas of expertise, e.g., fund-raising on the local scene.

- Existing organizations that reach a large proportion of the population are relatively few in number, and they can be used to help the program:

(a) They can begin to take over many of the tasks of the project, like going door to door recruiting or explaining the programs.

(b) These organizations can institutionalize the programs on a local basis, using local resources, leaving the crime prevention worker free to do basic research and development on rural crime prevention.

(c) Organizations provide a way to reach certain target groups very effectively, e.g., schools and 4-H reach young people.

- More organized basis for sharing ideas between counties is useful and necessary, and does not happen as spontaneously as it does in more compact urban areas.

- In general, organizing techniques in rural areas should stress collaboration rather than conflict.

##### 2. Target hardening and surveillance strategies need to be modified for rural conditions:

- Operation Identification registration and training need to be decentralized in rural areas in order to permit residents to sign up at a nearby location. Retail outlets are possible registration locations.

- A farm check for vacationing farmers can be arranged by making sheriff patrol patterns include vacant farms in their patterns.

- Grain confetti can mark small grains effectively to permit tracing stolen crops back to their owners.

- Farm premise security surveys can help make target hardening suggestions.

- Machinery needs to be registered to make recovery easier if stolen.

- A collect WATS line to the local sheriff's office may encourage people to report suspicious behavior or minor incidents.

- Some agencies will offer incentives on insurance premiums for evidence of target hardening.

- Stock branding should be made mandatory and uniform.

##### 3. Information about crime prevention must be diffused in different ways in rural areas:

- County fairs bring many of the people of the county together: a booth can spread a lot of information.

- Local utility billings may be used to mail crime prevention materials to most local households.

- Media, such as local newspapers, are effective ways to reach people.

- Large numbers of people can be contacted in groups through presentations at regular meetings or in classes.

4. The crime problem in rural areas can be better defined by doing some research:

- Crime incidence and location needs to be examined to get one objective view of the crime problem.

- Participation in crime prevention programs can be charted to keep track of where efforts need to be made to involve more people.

- Other programs or information may be available from the Highway Patrol library, the Department of Public Safety, the University, Extension Agents, and other sources.

Most of the solutions listed here are amenable to local action, although a few may require legislation. Many of the solutions are related to ways to get information about crime prevention to local citizens. While these are important, there is a relative lack of attention paid to the content of those messages which reflects the project's reliance on conventional strategies.

It is interesting to note that the problems mentioned by the participants do not always have a corresponding solution. The reason for this isn't clear, but it suggests that gains from more systematic planning can be achieved.

VI. Summary and Recommendations

A number of important things have been learned from the demonstration project. The most salient points are:

1. The planning process was subordinated to community action, which reduced formal research and problem identification at both state and county levels.

A choice to emphasize action was made, which tended to shorten and standardize the planning process. One important consequence was that successful activity levels were achieved, in part at the expense of involving many citizens in the planning process. For long-term self-sustaining programs, the latter is desirable.

2. The one-year demonstration period was inadequate to do both extensive planning and get high levels of activity.

Projects of this sort should be at least two years long, which provides adequate time for planning and implementation. Shorter periods tend to focus efforts on activity in order to provide visible achievements.

3. The activity levels generated in the demonstration counties were good.

Demonstration county projects turned in impressive records for action in organizing the crime prevention effort, especially considering the 1/4-time limitation and the fact that most of the workers were new to crime prevention. Non-demonstration counties in the same regions did not show nearly as high levels of effort to spread the crime prevention programs among residents.

4. The 10 hour per week limit on site staff is generally thought to be too low, and the better projects' workers put in slightly more time than that.

Ten hours is too short a time for the county staff, especially if they have to learn about crime prevention, then make plans for it, and

then implement the program. Either the learning and planning process must be improved, or resources found to pay for more time, or both.

5. The demonstration project shows that highly motivated and able people who are willing to work part-time can be found in rural communities.

These people are not volunteers, and doing crime prevention for pay is probably at least part of their motivation. However, most of the workers do fit the usual portrait of the average volunteer worker: white, well-educated and/or experienced, female. The fact that several of them said they would not be able to continue doing crime prevention organizing without continued compensation, while several said they would try to continue on some basis, indicates that pay for services is marginally important. Other motives, like obligation to community, doing something useful for the community, and the intrinsic challenge of the task, also appear to be present. Nevertheless, compensation is an important part of the recognition of service, and can serve to emphasize responsibility.

6. Civilian crime prevention workers perform more effectively than law enforcement ones.

Even though the sample was small, the evidence unmistakably suggests that civilian workers have a number of advantages over law enforcement personnel in crime prevention. They are more ready to seek community involvement, they have fewer conflicting demands on their time, and they are not as likely to have to defer to the sheriff in all matters out of any habits of subordination.

7. Awareness of crime and crime prevention has probably increased in the demonstration counties due to the program.

Key persons responding to a mailed questionnaire believed that the general awareness of crime and crime prevention had increased in the past year, and many attributed that to the project.

8. Tentative results suggest that some crime prevention programs can be successfully institutionalized in local organizations.

Schools are especially receptive to educational anti-crime programs. Many of these programs can be fit into the existing curricula for various grade levels. Other organizations are more difficult, probably because their memberships participate on a more voluntary basis and crime prevention may not be motivating to them.

9. County sheriffs uniformly saw the project primarily as a source of additional funds, even when they fully supported its goals.

Money limitations are a primary barrier to the expansion and continuation of the project. County boards are at least as hard pressed for money as other governmental units, and crime prevention has few tangible results when compared to new blacktop. Sheriffs' departments have small staffs and small budgets which do not allow them to assign staff to crime prevention on an uninterrupted basis. Stable funding sources within governmental budgets should be sought at both county and state levels. A minimal project in each county, sharing a central resource center, can be quite small.

10. Sheriffs and county workers both report popular acceptance and enthusiasm for the project.

11. The research and information dissemination of MCPC has been reduced to low priority.

Several major products remain unfinished or very sketchy. Some of these, like the training handbook and the youth survey study, are important for project activities in the second year and should be completed.

12. County workers found contacts among themselves to be very useful and these should be promoted on some regular basis.

13. The selection of counties and the selection of site staff are both important processes that seem to affect the quality of the projects.

In both selection procedures, two steps should be followed:

(1) county sheriffs or site staff applicants should go through a competitive interview in response to advertisements offering openings, and (2) MCPC should share in recruitment decisions.

14. The Rural Crime Prevention Project should not be institutionalized as part of an existing agency within the criminal justice system.

Contrary to some opinion, institutionalizing the rural crime prevention project within the criminal justice system would not have desirable consequences. The major reason is that the project would tend to become subordinated to more traditional law enforcement objectives, priorities, and methods. While these traditional traits are worthwhile for the usual law enforcement mission, they do not easily encompass an expanded, autonomous role for citizens. Still, both citizens' opinions and logic suggest the need for cooperation between

law enforcement and crime prevention. The present model, with its dual supervisory roles, seems well suited for generating the kind of cooperation-within-autonomy the project needs, at least in its initial phases. Over time, developing self-reliance in county projects may permit them to stand alone. In the meantime, permanent state-level operations of the project may be successfully transferred to some non-law enforcement agency, possibly the existing quasi-public extension service. We should continue to carefully monitor organizational developments.

15. The current roles of the state-level organizational parts need to be clarified.

The governmental "sponsor," the Agriculture Department, is not active in the project, though it might be able to be more active. The Task Force role during the operational phase of the project has been minimal and represents a waste of resources. Neither the Agriculture Department nor the Task Force occupy directive roles in the current project. MCPC has always taken responsibility for day-to-day management, planning, and operations. For maximum impact on criminal justice and rural policy institutions, the Rural Crime Project needs to clarify and improve the analysis and transfer of information within the state-level organizations.

**END**