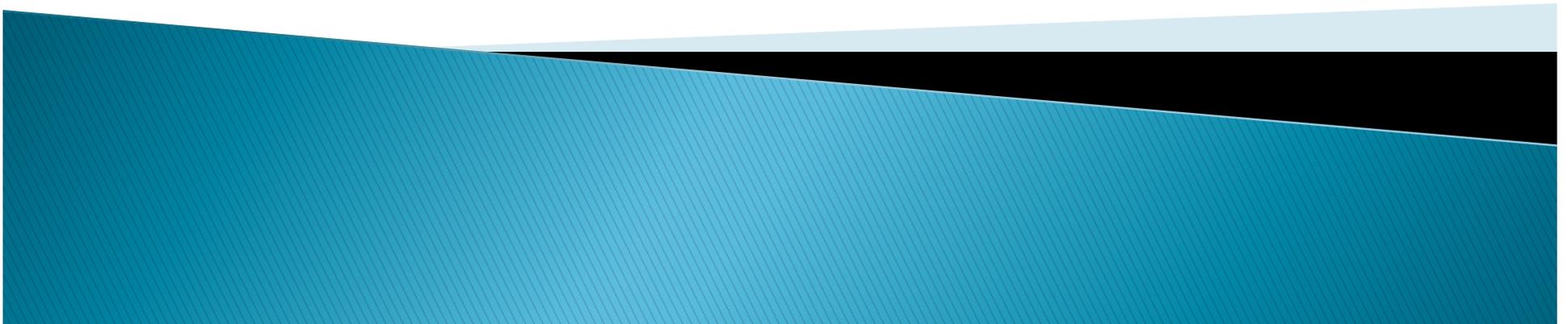


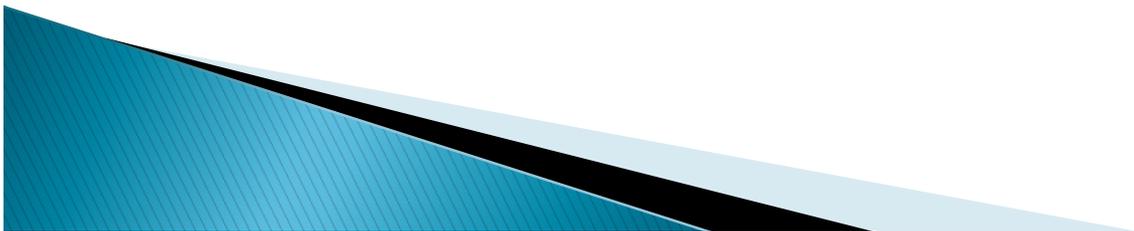
Policing in Small Town America

Dr. Shana Nicholson
Bethel University



Objectives

- ❖ Define community policing
- ❖ Policing responsibilities in small towns
- ❖ Effective communication
- ❖ Connecting to the community
- ❖ Citizen Programs
- ❖ Suggestions for improvements
- ❖ Q and A
- ❖ References



Introduction

- ▶ Police practices for small towns can fall short of meeting the needs and demands of small town residents for a variety of reasons.
- ▶ Current literature has neglected small town and rural policing by drawing comparisons from national trends.
- ▶ Studies often focus on larger cities with densely populated areas and not cozy little towns.



Purpose of Discussion

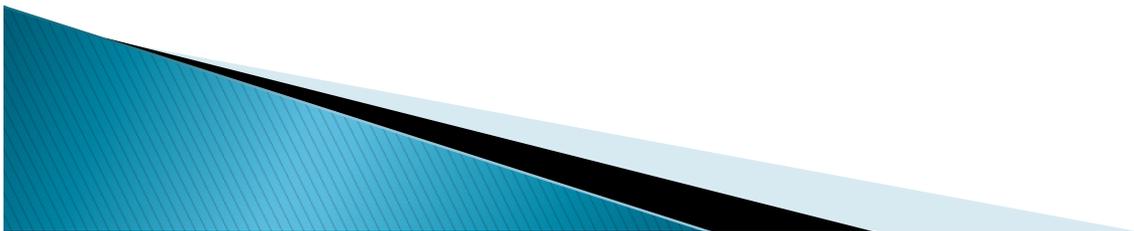
- ▶ Further discuss small town needs in order to highlight the most effective implementation needs for citizen safety.
- ▶ Understanding the needs of small town citizens may offer insight into the needs of these police departments.



What is Community Policing?

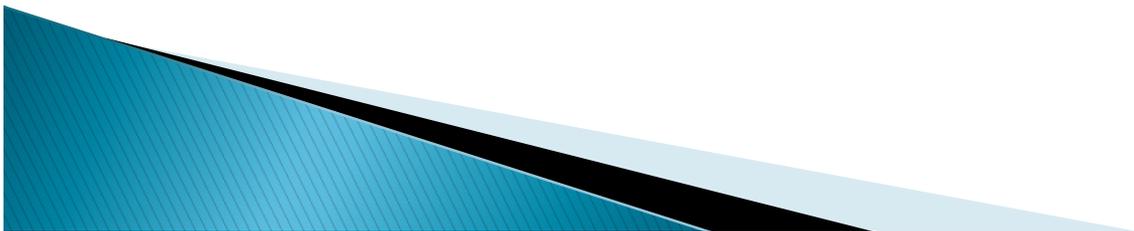
Community policing is a focused partnership and connection between law enforcement and the community.

This partnership enhances the relationship between law enforcement and the citizens in order to detect or prevent criminal activity.



Community Policing is NOT:

- ▶ School Resource Officers
- ▶ Grants
- ▶ Substations
- ▶ Patrol Cars
- ▶ Citizen Police Academy
- ▶ Foot Patrols
- ▶ Council Meetings



The Difference?

Community policing is a shift from crime control and catching the bad guy, to “a style of policing which emphasizes citizen interaction and participation in problem solving (Cassady, 2010).”

It simply does not happen overnight.



Value of Community Policing

- ▶ Improved rapport with community citizens
- ▶ Community connection and interactions
- ▶ Better understanding of actions within the community.
- ▶ Enhanced feeling of well-being and safety within the community



Value of Community Policing in Small Towns

Community policing in small towns allows officers and citizens to get to know each other and to build a stronger trust bond.

Citizens know officers as members of their community with a vested interest in their safety.



Small Town Policing Issues

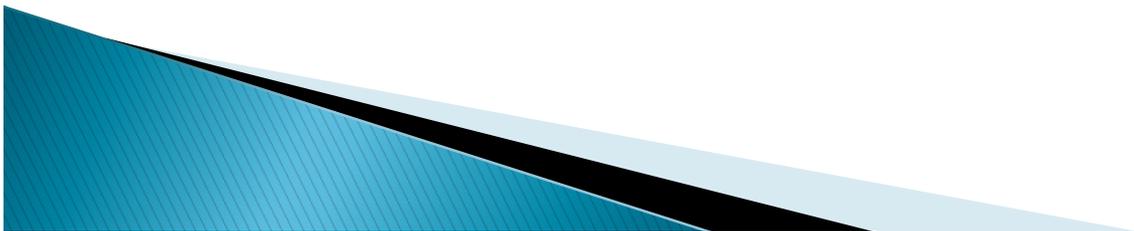
- ▶ Understaffed
- ▶ High Turnover rate
- ▶ Poor Pay
- ▶ Lack of continuing education
- ▶ Lack of financing
- ▶ Lack of support
- ▶ Interagency communication breakdown



Addressing Issues

In order to address the issues small town law enforcement face, we must address the needs of their communities through policing strategies.

Effective policing strategies will help officers gain community support.



Strategies of Community Policing in Small Towns

- ▶ Community oriented policing solving problems (COPPS)
- ▶ Problem oriented policing (POP)
- ▶ SARA method
- ▶ Situational Crime Prevention



Community Oriented Policing Problem Solving (COPPS)

COPPS is the partnership between the community and officers in order to enhance the citizens' feelings of safety and in order to help solve community based problems.

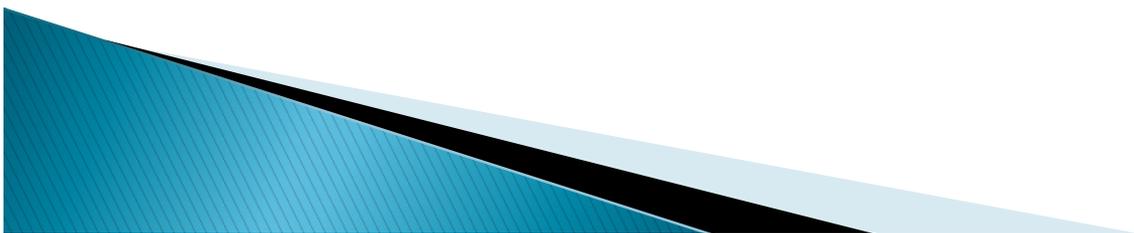
COPPS encourages a team work mentality with citizenry and officers to solve problems and enhance safety.



Problem Oriented Policing (POP)

Problem oriented policing approaches a reoccurring problem within the community in an attempt to address the issue.

This strategy of community policing allows the community and law enforcement to focus on the underlying problems that effect the community. This allows law enforcement to fix the problem once and for all.



SARA Method

The SARA method is how law enforcement officers approach and address a problem.

- ▶ S–Scanning
- ▶ A–Analysis
- ▶ R–Response
- ▶ A–Assessment

How do we connect this approach to the community? How do we encourage community action in the problem solving phase?



Situational Crime Prevention

Situational Crime Prevention is implemented when law enforcement works with the community to solve problems by changing the environment.

This concept attempts to remove or neutralize 'easy' targets by changing the environment.

For example: Clearing unsightly brush and trees, fixing windows, removing abandoned debris such as automobiles, furniture, and ect.



Effective communication

For community policing to be successful law enforcement must implement programs to keep the community involved and aware of what is being done and what needs to be done in order to protect the community.

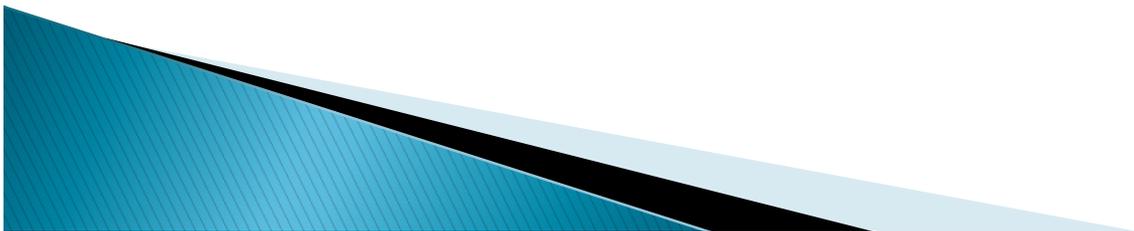
Community involvement starts with knowledge and an open door policy.



Patrol Approaches in Small Towns

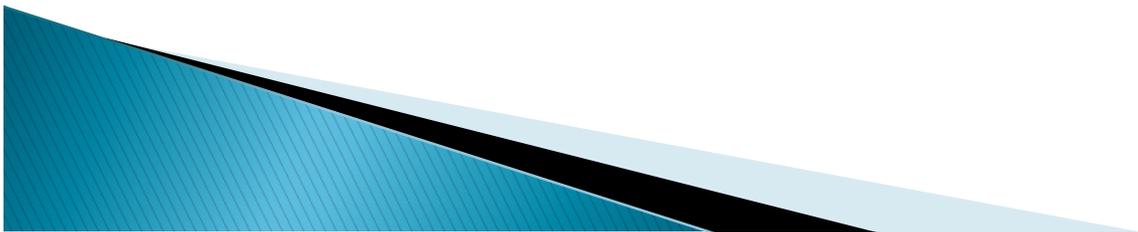
When we discuss community policing for small towns, there are several ways to connect officers to the community.

- ▶ foot patrol
- ▶ vehicle patrol
- ▶ school officers and patrol
- ▶ k9 units
- ▶ Checkpoints
- ▶ Community meetings



Connecting to the community

According to the NIJ, 99% percent of policing agencies poled reported improved cooperation between citizens and police, 80% reported reduced citizens' fear of crime, and 62% reported fewer crimes against persons following a year long implementation of active community policing strategies and programs.



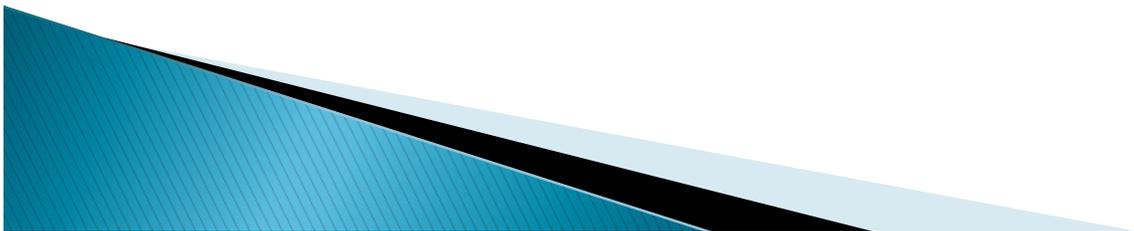
More Benefits for Small Towns

- ▶ Fewer problems on issues of concern to citizens.
- ▶ Improved physical environment in neighborhoods.
- ▶ More positive public attitudes toward law enforcement agencies.
- ▶ Decreased potential for conflict between citizens and police.
- ▶ Increased officer job satisfaction.
- ▶ Reduced crime rates.



Small Town Issues

At the beginning of 2012, Small Town X in Harrison County, WV had a growing drug problem. Community members bombarded Town Council meetings voicing concerns and fears. There was a lack of faith and trust in the police department.



Basic Information

All calls for 2012 were evaluated from Harrison County, WV dispatch for one rural town, population 1,584.

Police force: 5 officers 1 chief

Patrol: 24 hours a day 6 days a week
12 hours on Sunday



Utilizing Community Policing Techniques

The Police Department began implementing community policing techniques.

Officers were asked to do overtime patrols. Their presence was to be increased both on foot patrol and vehicle patrol.

The police officers were instructed to speak to EVERY citizen they saw. Officer became acquainted with as many residents as possible.



Continued Implementation

Officers acted as school crossing guards and greeted parents and students both in the morning and the evening.

Community meetings and involvement were implemented.

Officers encouraged community members to stop by the department and visit with their concerns.



Increased Community Involvement

As the community involvement increased, criminal activity was easier to identify and eliminate.

A 'well-known' drug house was closed down and members of the drug distribution problem were arrested.

The community atmosphere improved substantially.



Comparison and Findings

The second half of 2012 call volume and crime rates shows substantial decrease in criminal activity.

Council meetings have citizens praising the efforts of the officers.

Community participation in clean-up events and neighborhood watch meetings has increased.



Suggestions for improvements

Implementing community programs to engage the community can certainly improve law enforcement efforts.

- ❖ Neighborhood Watch
- ❖ Volunteer police patrol
- ❖ DARE
- ❖ Junior Police Academies
- ❖ Public Safety Events



Follow-Up

As the community policing efforts continue, connection to the community has become common place as opposed to previous years of simple vehicle patrol.

Continued reevaluation of efforts and improved approaches should be implemented.

Training and interagency communication should also improve.



Q&A

