

Without going into a lot of great detail the City of New Orleans is one-hundred eighty-one (181) square miles. After the levees broke, On August 29, 2005 it took less than thirty (30) minutes for a large part of the City to be covered in water as deep as twenty (20) feet as storm surge roll in from the lakes, breeched levees, and overflowing canals. In the end nearly 80 percent of the City would be flooded for an extended period of time. It would be twenty-one (21) days before all standing water was finally drained from the city. It would be eighteen (18) day before power was restored.

The City of New Orleans is not alone with regards to the problem of Recruitment and Retention; this is a problem that is facing every major law enforcement organization in this country. What made New Orleans unique was the sudden and crippling effect of hurricane Katrina.

Following Hurricane Katrina, the majority of the New Orleans Police Department was homeless, families were displaced, and in some cases the loss of loved ones had to be dealt with.

The media coverage following the storm was extensive and often not very positive when it came to the Police Department, it made NOPD appear to be a losing team.

While much was said about officers abandoning their positions, and allegations of misconduct, what failed to be reported were the hundreds of officers that needed to be rescued and the hundreds that were heroic in many ways.

Officers were stranded in flooded police stations, trapped in attics, and in some cases, on roof tops. While it is true that some officers did leave their post, the vast majority stayed. Those that left are no longer a part of the New Orleans Police Department. Many were terminated or resigned before their Hearings took place.

We sometimes forget it was also NOPD officers who were the rescuers and protectors of those citizens, visitors and property of our great city.

When Hurricane Katrina made landfall, the New Orleans Police Department had a force of 1,668 sworn officers. After August of 2005 and before year's end, there would be a total of 165 separations or 9% of the commissioned force. This figure does

not include the fifty-seven (57) officers that separated before August 29th.

Of the 165 separations after August 29th there were 147 directly related to their actions or lack of performance following the storm. I would be remiss if I did not point out that before August 29th, 2005, one-hundred four (104) individuals were hired to NOPD.

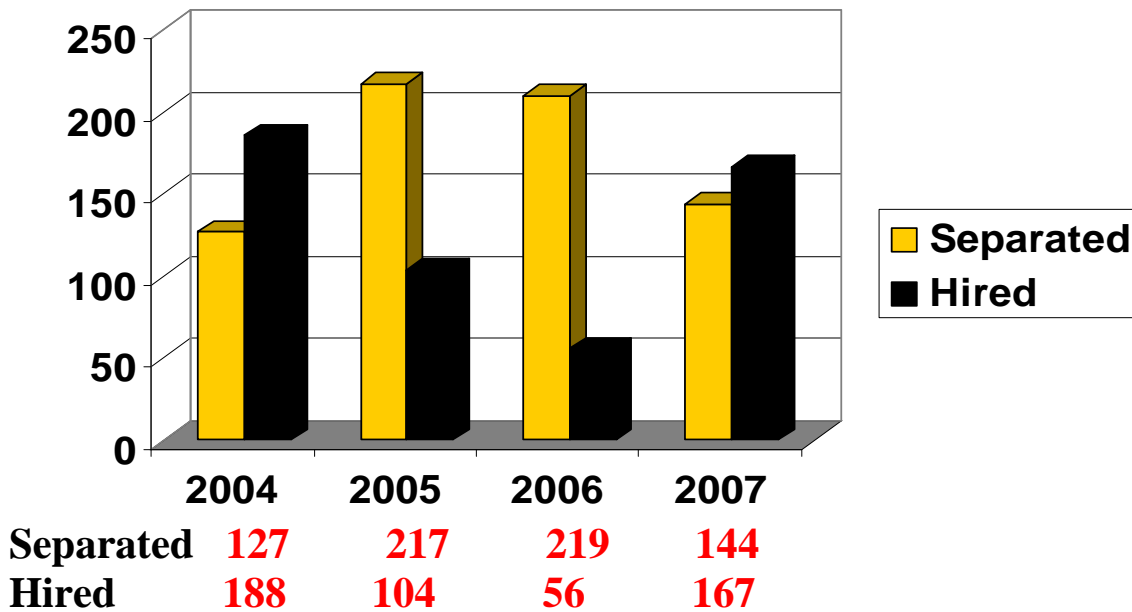
In 2006 there would be an additional 210 separations. Combined with the post storm figures (165+210=375) the total represents 22.5% of the pre-storm commissioned work force.

Despite the continued struggles brought on by the lack of infrastructure, the loss of the Police Academy and a serious shortage of needed supplies and equipment, fifty-six (56) individuals were hired for the Academy. The class began in mid 2006 and in November a class of thirty-seven (37) graduated the Academy.

By the end of 2007 still another 144 members had separated from the Department (375+144=519) or a total of 33.2 % of the pre-storm work force.

In 2007, Recruiters and Applicant Investigators, working tirelessly from temporary trailers were successful in processing numerous applications resulting in the hiring of one-hundred sixty-seven (167), a combination of recruits, lateral transfers and re-instatements.

Even more important was that during 2007 the Department started and completed two (2) recruit classes. Of the ninety-nine (99) recruits hired, eighty-two (82) graduated. The bleeding had finally begun to slow.



In order to provide you with an example of pre-storm figures, in 2004 the New Orleans Police Department hired one-hundred eighty-eight (188) individuals and only one-hundred twenty-seven (127) separated. Of

the 188 a total of one-hundred seventy-three (173) recruits graduated.

How many Departments can survive the loss of one third of its personnel?

In 2006 the New Orleans Police Department invited the RAND Corporation to address the concerns of Recruitment and Retention. First RAND would meet with members of the Department, the Mayor and members of the City Council to assess the situation. Then, while incorporating their arsenal of vast and extensive research, RAND prepared detailed recommendations. Using many recommendations made by the RAND Corporation, the New Orleans Police Department embarked on an aggressive recruitment and retention effort. It was imperative to stop the hemorrhage of officers leaving the force.

While it is true the Department had experienced what can be described as the greatest natural disaster of this country, there was before Katrina, a storm brewing about the salary and compensation of the New Orleans Police Department, which was well below the Southern average.

The Mayor understands the need for retention and has always been supportive of pay increases for law enforcement. As a result 2004 Police salaries increased 10%. This was a significant accomplishment considering the fiscal concerns of the City.

Recruitment and retention can only be achieved with the active support of both the Mayor and City Council. While in the case of New Orleans, recruitment would at first glance appear to be the key to success, it was imperative to address the retention of highly trained and experienced officers. Law Enforcement must be viewed as a career and not a job. It's not just about a job or pay but an interest in public service and the city.

After the storm, families of many of our officers were relocated to other states and it was during that time when officers were quickly introduced to the higher salaries and better opportunities of those areas for both themselves and their families. To make matters worse, recruiters from major city police departments made their way to New Orleans trying to lure highly trained and tested officers to new locations.

The needs of experienced officers must be met. Often salaries are the focus of the administration but it is the benefits, promotional opportunities and educational incentives that are often the key to a resilient, committed and dedicated work force.

The alarm was sounded and for the first time in many years the City administration and Council were acutely aware that action had to be taken. In a city where tourism is the major industry, the Administration, Council, and business leaders rallied to support the now critical needs of the police. Meetings were conducted by city officials and community leaders to discuss how salary increases and proposals that were a part of the RAND recommendations could be achieved. The City and the community were now working hand in hand to bring about change.

In 2006, members of the Department received a 10% pay increase. In 2007 following the extensive study into the Police Department workforce released by the RAND Corporation, the City began to implement recommendations that would impact both current and future Officers.

As a result of those recommendations and with the continued support of the Administration, the Department received still another 10% pay increase in 2007.

Salaries had now gone from a pre-storm recruit salary of \$30,732 to the current \$34,797 in 2008. One year after completing the Academy an Officer could expect to receive as much as \$43,999. There were of course, pay increases for more experienced officers so there will be no gap between the pay afforded to recruits as opposed to those with more longevity and experience.

Special pay for special assignments was also a concern. Special rates of pay were put in place for special assignments, such as SWAT, K-9 and others that are considered hazardous. Officers in selected categories, including FTO's now receive an additional \$1500.

Police Officer II, III, and IV promotions had been available for many years. Officers were eligible for promotions as Police Officer II, III, and IV after 2, 4, and 6 years of service respectively. Following a series of special classes and the successful completion of the promotional exams, Officers were to be promoted.

With each promotion, Officers would receive an additional 5% pay raise. Including the 2.5 % pay increase for longevity after five years of service, this would result in a 17.5 percent overall pay increase after six (6) years. The result would be an Officer with six (6) years would now make \$51,698.82.

The problem with the Police Officer II, III, and IV program was no one was being promoted. The Police Department with the administration's support was able to move forward. Today officers are being promoted every six (6) months. In most cases, officers were being promoted and receiving pay increases within (90) days of testing.

The Department had long sought to provide educational incentives. This long discussed plan faced numerous obstacles for years but finally a plan was developed that addressed past concerns and led to educational incentives being put in place. The Department now offers \$1000 annually for an Associates degree, \$2000 for a Bachelors, and \$3000 for Masters and above on a continuing basis.

In order for educational incentives to be of value Officers must be able to afford an education. Several local Universities offer tuition assistance for Officers. Tulane University allows a 25% tuition discount,

Loyola University allows a 60%, University of New Orleans allows a 75% discount and Delgado Community College is free.

It should be noted, the New Orleans Police and Justice Foundation also offers financial assistance in a variety of ways for Officers attending college and maintaining exceptional grades.

So far in 2008, twenty-six (26) members have separated from the Department while sixty-nine (69) new members have been hired and begun training. (58 recruits, 4 laterals, 7 reinstatements).

In the last eighteen (18) months a total of one-hundred thirteen (113) recruits have graduated and hit the street and more are in the Academy. It is our goal to have at least two (2) additional recruit classes begin before years end.

Before Hurricane Katrina the attrition rate averaged eleven (11) per month. After the storm that number reached a high of twenty-two (22) per month, today, that number has dropped to under six (6) per month.

In 2008 the Department embarked on a one million dollar ad campaign. I would like to take a moment to share with you a major part of the campaign.

Pause for commercials.....

In addition to the three (3) minutes of TV commercials you just watched, radio commercials featuring the voice of John Goodman and Wendell Pierce are currently airing on a regional basis in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas.

Billboards dot the State and a web site, www.joinnopd.com, has been developed to address questions about the Department and provide a means of application. We are also advertising in Military Magazines.

You may have noticed our commercials slogan is “Get behind the badge” and it appears many have. Within the first eight (8) hours after the commercials began over 200 calls were received and within days over a thousand. The tide has turned and men and women from throughout this country are now moving to New Orleans to become part of the best trained, best equipped, and most highly-paid police force in Louisiana.

New Orleans is often recognized as the Special Event capital of America. Already this year we have hosted the Sugar Bowl, BCS, NBA All Stars, NAFTA, and Mardi Gras without incident.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak here today and share with you our challenges and successes.

Major points:

- 1 RAND- getting the City leadership to hear our concerns for experts.
- 2 P/O II, II, and IV training and promotions up to date
- 3 Salaries raised to Regional averages, consistency in promotions, raise the ceiling with more pay on the front end
- 4 Best Equipment
- 5 More Training
- 6 More communications (advisory committees) Chiefs attending roll calls
- 7 TV show-allows each unit to be highlighted
- 8 Laterals coming over in less time
- 9 Focus on National Guard and military
- 10 Elimination of residency rule
- 11 Maintaining strong relationship with Police Foundation
- 12 Educational incentives
- 13 Focus on Vietnamese and Hispanic community
- 14 Contract Employees
- 15 Internet Web redesign