



Successful Practices & Strategies

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Redlands Police Department

Redlands, California

www.cityofredlands.org/police

Community policing element

Problem solving

Problem/issue

Motor vehicle theft / other theft

Problem description

At the end of 2010, the City of Redlands was experiencing a rash of vehicle burglaries especially at the LA Fitness parking lot. The Redlands Police Department (RPD) was taking vehicle burglary reports at the location on a weekly basis. During that time, the RPD was experiencing massive budget cuts, which drove our agency from 98 sworn officers down to 76 sworn officers. The overtime budget was taken down to zero. Basically, the RPD did not have the funds to address crime using more traditional methods, such as police surveillance.

Community policing strategies implemented

RPD spoke with the Law Enforcement Division of 3SI security system and inquired as to why the RPD could not deploy the same technology to address vehicle burglary at the LA Fitness parking lot. The company agreed to loan the RPD an ESO (Electronic StakeOut) tracker, and during the first day of deployment, the RPD had an activation that resulted in the apprehension of two career vehicle burglars that had been hitting the parking lot several times.

Once the RPD saw firsthand how the trackers could help the department to apprehend career criminals with little overhead, the RPD began expanding their use to address problems such as armed robbery, Oxycontin thefts, wire theft, metal theft, tractor truck tire theft, bike theft, laptop theft, and even fire hydrant theft. Basically, whatever crime trend pops up, the RPD figures out a way to address it via the use of the trackers. The device activates upon motion and sends an alert to both the RPD's dispatch center and various officer cell phones within 20 seconds of movement.

The cost of the trackers is \$450 per device with a \$30 per month cell service fee per device. The RPD looks at it as providing a 24/7 surveillance at a cost of only \$2 per day the first year and \$1 per day every year after. The RPD made its initial purchase of 20 devices using asset forfeiture money.



Change and/or impact as a result of these community policing efforts

The RPD has now made 76 arrests since January 2011 as a result of using the trackers. The trackers have more than paid for themselves. Out of the 76 arrests, 75 of those people have been career criminals. Many of the arrests have been found with other stolen property on the thieves.

The arrests have seemed to have an effect on the crime rate too. A comparative analysis indicated a 14% decrease in the number of reported vehicle burglaries in 2011 as compared to 2010 in the City of Redlands, with an additional 5% decrease from 2011 to 2012. The city is on par for another 10% decrease this year. Vehicle burglary also experienced an overall 18.4% decrease from 2010 to 2012.

These numbers are more impressive when one considers that the national property crime rate, which includes vehicle burglary and thefts from vehicles, increased 11% between 2010 and 2011. Although it is sometimes difficult to identify reasons for the increases and decreases in the crime rate, the deployment of the ESO tracking devices in Redlands was the singular substantive change in the target locations and in police efforts to combat these crimes.

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