

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS & EVENTS

### Public Safety

**Youth Gang Initiatives.** Following the gang-related stabbing death of a 16-year-old Hispanic youth on July 3, Mayor Donley and School Board Chair Claire M. Eberwein announced a series of action steps to ensure the safety of school students. The Police Department will redirect resources to establish a visible Police presence at the beginning and the end of the school day during the first month of school at each of the City's middle and secondary schools. This pilot project will be evaluated by the Police Chief and the School Superintendent to determine whether to continue it throughout the school year. In addition, City and School officials are exploring ways to introduce the Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) Program in the schools. This program teaches students about the dangers of gang involvement. Other action steps include increased training for middle and secondary school teachers and administrators on gang awareness, crime prevention, and emergency response issues. Bilingual workshops are planned for this fall for PTA leaders and parents of middle and secondary school students. Recruitment efforts to hire more Hispanics and bilingual staff at the City's recreation centers are also underway. (The full list of action steps is available on the City's Internet Home Page: [/city/current\\_docs/policy/19960723.html](http://city/current_docs/policy/19960723.html))

**Regional Jail.** Construction of the Peumansend Regional Jail in Caroline County, Va., is expected to get underway this fall. Alexandria along with the State and five other Virginia local governments are building the 336-bed facility on a 150-acre site that was formerly part of the U.S. Army's Fort A.P. Hill. Alexandria will be allocated 50 beds at the regional jail, which will house low-risk, non-violent inmates. The City's share of capital and debt service costs is about \$3.5 million, and operating costs are projected at \$2.9 million over a period of 20 years.



U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno visited Alexandria in September 1995 to praise the City's community policing and domestic violence intervention programs as National models.

**Crime Prevention.** The number of violent crimes (murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault) fell in 1995 to the lowest point in 28 years. There were two murders in 1995, down from nine in 1994, for the lowest homicide total in 34 years. Neither of the 1995 murders was domestic-related. The number of rapes, including reported rape attempts, declined 18.9%, from 37 in 1994 to 30 in 1995, the lowest total in 27 years. Robberies decreased by 8.2%, from 317 in 1994 to 291 in 1995, the lowest total in 26 years. Aggravated assaults fell by 3.2%, from 342 in 1994 to 331 in 1995. Burglaries declined by 10.4%, from 1,042 in 1994 to 934 in 1995, split almost equally between commercial (477) and residential (457). Larcenies were 1% lower in 1995 (4,647) than in 1994 (4,696). Auto theft, the only Part I crime to increase in 1995, rose by 35.4%, from 874 in 1994 to 1,183 in 1995 and contributed heavily to the overall 1.4% increase in the serious crime rate.

**Arrests.** Arrests declined 2.8%, from 8,948 in 1994 to 8,700 in 1995. This decline reflects the success of the

**Fire Fatalities and Property Losses.** Two people died in fires in Alexandria during FY 1996, one more than in the previous year. Fires caused \$3.7 million in damage, compared to \$2.2 million last year. Fire Calls. The Fire Department responded to 5,149 fire calls, compared to 4,718 in FY 1995. Four Emergency Medical Services units, which are on call 24 hours a day, handled 10,600 ambulance calls in FY 1996, up 1% from the previous year, including 27 helicopter medevacs. The Hazardous Materials Unit responded to 255 incidents in FY 1996, up 2.4% from last year.

**School Fire Safety Program.** In the wake of several major fires caused by children playing with matches and lighters, the Fire Department delivered a special fire safety message in May and June to over 4,800 school children at 12 public and 5 private elementary schools in the City. Each child was given a pledge card and a sticker saying "I promise never to play with fire," and classrooms received posters to be signed by the students to reinforce the pledge.

**New Baby Smoke Detector Program.** Twenty-one Alexandria families with newborn babies began receiving a "first of life" from the Alexandria Fire Department. Parents of children born at Alexandria Hospital take home a postcard they can mail to the Fire Department if they wish to have a smoke detector installed free in their home. Firefighters schedule a home visit to install the detector, and will install a fresh battery in the detector on the child's first birthday to help parents establish a pattern for maintaining the detector. The program is offered to City residents only. Radio Shack and W\*USA-TV donated smoke detectors for the program.

**Domestic Violence Intervention Project.** The Office on Women provided court advocacy and counseling to 1,802 victims of domestic violence in FY 1996, providing emergency shelter, crisis intervention, and counseling to 83 women and 90 children in the battered women's shelter.

Following the March 1996 murder of Alexandria elementary school teacher Karen Mitsoff by her former boyfriend, the City Manager created an Ad

Alcohol Interdiction Program, which identifies hard-core public inebriates who have caused repeated problems in City neighborhoods and prohibits them from buying or possessing alcohol. Singling out these individuals for special attention in the courts has resulted in a drastic reduction in the number of arrests for public drunkenness, and a decline in the number of calls from concerned citizens related to nuisance crimes committed by these individuals. The clearance rate for Part I crimes (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny and auto theft) was 18.6% in 1995. Of those arrested in 1995, adults totaled 7,805, down 4.3% from 8,158 in 1994. As an indicator of increased juvenile involvement in crime, juveniles accounted for 895 of all arrests, 13.3% more than in 1994. Arrests for the seven categories of Part I crime totaled 1,176 in 1995, up 2.1% from 1,152 in 1994. Juveniles continued to increase as a proportion of those arrested for Part I crimes, accounting for 325 arrests in 1995, an increase of 10.9% over 1994. Arrests for all crimes other than Part I declined 3.5% to 7,524 in 1995; however, juvenile arrests totaled 570, an increase of 14.7% over 1994.

**Drug and Alcohol Enforcement.** Police made fewer drug arrests in 1995. Arrests for drug distribution or possession totaled 485, down 10.7% from 1994 and a decline of 47% from the high point of 915 arrests in 1989. In part, this trend may reflect the success of City efforts in drug prevention and drug treatment. Adult drug arrests declined 12% to 433 in 1995; juvenile drug arrests increased 2% to 52 in 1995. Arrests for Driving While Intoxicated declined 13.7% to 528 in 1995, with juveniles representing only two of the total DWI arrests each year. In January, The Parent's Network, a parent group, requested that steps be taken to make more frequent use of the State's "Use and Lose" law. This law mandates the suspension of driver's licenses of juveniles who are convicted of alcohol or drug-related crimes. Statistics showed that there were only 10 arrests of juveniles for alcohol-related offenses in 1994. Implementation of a zero-tolerance policy and the cooperation of the Juvenile Court resulted in 88 arrests of juveniles for alcohol offenses and the suspension of 39 of the offenders' driver's licenses in 1995.

Hoc Task Force to review the case and determine if changes were needed in the way City and State agencies respond to domestic violence in the City, and what, if any, new legislation was necessary. The Task Force presented its report to City Council in June, recommending a series of procedural and legislative changes that, if adopted, would provide additional protection and assistance to victims of domestic violence. The report recommended the expanded use of computers to speed the transfer of information between Police, the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, and the Office on Women, and changes in State law to provide greater protection against stalkers. City Council requested that legislative proposals be readied for the 1997 General Assembly. To implement many of the report's recommendations, the Police Department secured a \$197,000 federal grant. It will fund a domestic violence coordinator and a field investigator, plus related equipment and training for Police Department and other City personnel on improved methods of domestic violence intervention. The Police Department has designated a full-time Domestic Violence Coordinator who works closely with the Office on Women, the Juvenile and Domestic Relations, District and Circuit Courts, Adult Probation and Parole, and the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office to provide assistance and protection to victims of domestic violence. In May 1996, Cellular One donated eight cellular phones to the Police Department, which offers them to high-risk domestic violence victims, allowing them 24-hour access to 911 assistance.

**Police Calls for Service.** Calls for police service decreased 2.7%, from 80,380 in 1994 to 78,209 in 1995. The decrease can be attributed primarily to fewer citizen complaints of drunk and disorderly persons, a result of the Police Department's Alcohol Interdiction Program.

**Alcohol Interdiction.** Since this program began in November 1994, 21 persons have been interdicted by order of the Circuit Court, which prohibits public inebriates with multiple convictions for alcohol-related offenses from buying or possessing alcohol. The program is credited by neighborhood groups and businesses with reducing nuisance crimes. The

**Community Policing.** Community Policing has grown to 18 officers working in 12 communities. Within the past year, the effort has added a sergeant and one officer to Landmark Mall, which is a newly assigned community. These officers work the mall area providing assistance and security to the shoppers and businesses. Community police officers continue to focus on crime prevention in their assigned communities, including businesses along the King Street corridor and in the neighborhoods near lower King Street and in Parkfairfax, Mt. Jefferson, Hunter's Run, Inner City, Lynhaven, and Arlandria. The Residential Police Officer (RPO) Program, now in its fifth year, includes four police officers. Residing in housing provided by the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority, these officers work within their communities to solve neighborhood problems, develop mentor programs for children, and promote crime prevention. The Department also assigned community and residential officers to work in nine elementary schools, spending an hour each week working with school children.

**Auxiliary Police.** The first group of six Auxiliary Police Officers graduated from the Fairfax County Police Academy in December after receiving 275 hours of training. These officers also completed 32 hours of local training and are now undergoing field training. The Auxiliary Police Officers are volunteers who supplement and assist full-time Police personnel, both sworn and civilian.

**Citizens' Police Academy.** In its first year, the Citizens' Police Academy graduated 25 adult volunteers from community and civic associations and human rights groups. The nine-week course is intended to educate the public about the role and responsibilities of the Police Department. Graduates do not carry firearms and have no law enforcement powers.

**Handgun Permits.** A 1995 State law makes it easier for Virginia residents to carry a concealed handgun. The Police Department's Identification Section conducted background checks and handled 1,668 requests to purchase firearms from City vendors. They also processed requests for concealed handgun permits from 299 City residents, approving 99% of those

Virginia General Assembly strengthened the program in 1996 by redefining possession to include the internal possession of alcohol and by raising the penalty for interdicted persons found in possession of an alcoholic beverage.

requests. In 1994, the Department processed 55 concealed handgun permits, approving 93%.



In January, Alexandria experienced the third largest snowfall in the history of the region, and the second largest of this century. For ten days the city was blanketed with more than two feet of snow. City crews and private contractors worked twelve-hour shifts during the ten-day period.