

Positive Policing in Missouri Municipalities

Municipalities throughout Missouri are working to strengthen their community and their policing efforts. Cities, towns and villages are improving their policing efforts through outreach, partnerships and policies. Municipalities have recently shared some of their initiatives with the Missouri Municipal League to highlight examples of positive policing.

Outreach

Columbia – Columbia Police Community Outreach Unit

This police department implemented an innovative approach to community policing that has yielded significant results. The Community Outreach Unit, consisting of six officers assigned to three strategic neighborhoods and one sergeant overseeing operations, had a mission to open lines of communication with the community while rebuilding community partnerships. The Unit worked through the following three phases to obtain results: (1) increase positive contacts and build relationships with residents in the neighborhoods; (2) listen to the residents and identify issues impacting the neighborhoods; and (3) responsibly enforce the law. This approach to community policing was innovative because it gave the Unit officers the authority and resources to work on and address social issues that do not usually fall within the scope of work for law enforcement officers (i.e. unemployment, food insecurity, etc.).

Florissant – Community Service Dog Program

Since the inception of the Community Service Dog Program, Officer Lori Mahn and Eddie, the service dog, have proven to be very successful and an asset to the community. It has helped bring a closer bond between the citizens of the community and the police department. The unique style of utilizing a dog's unconditional affection and enthusiasm for people to bring happiness to the community is like no other. With the help of Eddie, Officer Mahn is bridging any gap between the Florissant Police Department and the community that is served.



Vinita Park – 21st Century Community Policing Program

The North County Cooperative Police have an objective to focus on people first. They serve multiple municipalities in North St. Louis County District 1. Their project, called “21st Century Community Policing,” focuses on working together in diverse neighborhoods and communities. The belief is that community partnership and outreach is the driving force behind a successful coalition with municipalities. The program currently serves six municipalities; Wellston, Pine Lawn, Beverly Hills, Velda Village Hills, Charlack; and the home city of Vinita Park. Each community has a dedicated precinct office operating at all levels of police services, while responding to the unique needs of the different communities. The officers are coaching youth athletic teams, helping seniors, hosting a movie night with citizens, or just getting out of the car and shaking hands during normal patrol. The mission is to serve and protect while actively engaging the people.



// To protect and serve are not just mere words, they are actions of the officers. We don't give up; we get out of the vehicle; we build some bridges; and we work until we make change. //

~Building Commissioner Debra Irvin, Vinita Park, Missouri

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Willard – D.A.R.E./PAL Camping Character

The city of Willard has committed to repurposing land through an intentional process that intertwines activity between the schools, businesses and local government. Beginning in 2012, the Willard Police Department, the Police Athletic League (PAL) program, and volunteers envisioned using overgrown and unutilized city property to provide a place where youth could interact with police officers beyond their participation in the schools Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program. By accomplishing this outcome, an excellent outdoor environment for the youth to be strengthened in the areas of responsibility, honor, self-control and discernment has been realized. Today, youth can center on those competencies with police instructors while learning boxing, tactical jiu-jitsu, and camping through the new DARE/PAL Outdoor Character Camp.



Partnerships

Kirkwood – Kirkwood Safety Town

The city of Kirkwood, including the police and fire departments, teamed up with The Magic House, St. Louis Children's Museum, to educate the region's youngest residents about safety with Safety Town, an interactive exhibit designed for children ages three through 10. This project has two major objectives: 1) to educate children of Kirkwood and the St. Louis region about essential safety lessons through a fun, unique learning environment; and 2) to provide an opportunity for a private-public partnership with community collaboration. The project successfully brought together the city of Kirkwood and the Magic House for a mutually



beneficial, synergistic relationship, creating additional opportunities for future public service and community outreach. Various community leaders, organizations and businesses were

instrumental in project oversight and fundraising that provided funding for half of the project expenditures.

Policies

Maryland Heights – Police Department Policy Initiative

The Maryland Heights City Council authorized operational and staffing assessments of all departments beginning in 2016. The goal was twofold: to ensure resources met or exceeded the service expectation of residents, businesses and visitors; and, to evaluate internal departmental policy and procedures to ensure compliance with best practices. As a result of the assessment, the City, specifically the police chief, mayor, city administrator and members of the City Council Committee on Public Safety, identified initiatives and developed solutions. These included: implementation of secondary employment contracts; revisions to the recruitment, hiring and promotion processes; creation of new positions in jail operations and dispatch; and revisions to policies and procedures to address internal matters. Finding consensus and developing meaningful solutions was critical to the department’s long-term efficiency and effectiveness.

Rockaway Beach/Merriam Woods – Multijurisdictional Agreement

The Keeping Our Communities Safe program joins together the law enforcement agencies of two adjacent municipalities, the city of Merriam Wood and city of Rockaway Beach. The goal is to assist each other in routine law enforcement operations that cross jurisdictional boundaries, to ensure public safety of citizens by providing adequate levels of police services to address any foreseeable routine or emergency situation. Learn more about this program, a recent MML Innovations Award winner, on page 26 of this issue!



Arnold – Expands Patrols And Training

The Arnold Police Department is expanding training for its 49 officers and increasing firearms practice for every officer while boosting patrols in residential and retail areas. “Crime is constantly changing, and our department is changing to help keep crime under control, no matter what the incident,” says Police Chief Robert Shockey, Jr. The police department is becoming more proactive and less reactive.

The Police department implemented a new patrol schedule by enhancing its current 12-hour shifts. Some patrol shifts will overlap to address what Chief Shockey calls “prime time for crime – 10 a.m. to about 2 a.m.”

The Arnold Police Department’s Business Resource Program, in which patrol officers visit retail businesses to consult with managers, in-house security officials, loss prevention employees and to talk with customers, has been expanded from two to four armed police officers.

In late 2016 two, new highly-trained police dogs joined the Arnold Police Department’s award-winning K-9 Unit to replace two older dogs.

In 2017, the department introduced a more realistic training designed to address crisis situations at schools, theatres, retail stores and businesses.

Two of the officers will be trained to operate drones for collecting evidence, for officer safety for search warrants, and to help locate missing persons that may have gotten lost in wooded areas.

“Crime constantly changes, and we change with it.”

~ Police Chief Robert Shockey, Arnold, Missouri