

*Albuquerque
Police Department's*

SAFE STREETS

Program



**Albuquerque Police
Department's**

**SAFE STREETS
PROGRAM**

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Anacapa Sciences**

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Background	2
Call for Action	3
Safe Streets 1997	6
Saturation Patrols	7
Follow-Up Patrols	7
New Mexico Know Your Speed Program	7
Sobriety Checkpoints	8
Operation DWI	9
Safe Ride	9
Take The Pledge	9
*DWI	9
Citizen Complaint Hot Line	10
Changes in the Program	10
Results	11
Effects of the Program on Crime	11
Effects of the Program on Traffic Safety	15
Other Indicators of Program Effects	20
Citations, Arrests, Tows, and Recoveries	20
Unobtrusive Measures of Program Effects	21
Discussion	22

List of Figures

Figure 1. Part I Crimes in Albuquerque: 1989 – 1996	12
Figure 2. Crimes Against Persons in the Special Enforcement Areas	13
Figure 3. Property Crimes in the Special Enforcement Areas	14
Figure 4. All Crashes in Albuquerque: 1992 – 1997	15
Figure 5. All Crashes in Albuquerque By Month: 1996 and 1997	17
Figure 6. Injury and Fatal Crashes in Albuquerque By Month: 1996 and 1997	18
Figure 7. Injury, Property Damage Only (PDO), and DWI Crashes in	19
Albuquerque: 1992 – 1997	
Figure 8. Crashes By Type in Albuquerque: 1992 – 1997	19
Figure 9. Total Number of Arrests in Albuquerque By Month: 1989 – 1997	20

List of Tables

Table 1. Incidence of Part I and Part II Crimes Against Persons	13
in the Special Enforcement Areas: 1996 and 1997	
Table 2. Incidence of Part I and Part II Crimes Against Property	14
in the Special Enforcement Areas: 1996 and 1997	
Table 3. Crashes By Type in Albuquerque: 1992 – 1997	15
Table 4. Total Crashes By Month in Albuquerque: 1996 and 1997	16
Table 5. Citations Issued, Arrests Made, Vehicles Towed,	21
and Stolen Vehicles Recovered By Officers Participating in the Safe Streets 1997 Special Enforcement Program	



INTRODUCTION

A local high school athlete was killed over a stop sign right-of-way dispute. This well-publicized incident quickly was followed by two more fatalities attributed to “road rage.” The public demanded action.

The task of “doing something about road rage” was assigned to Officer Jay Gilhooly, the Albuquerque Police Department’s coordinator of traffic safety programs. Officer Gilhooly had been a crew chief on Air Force helicopters before joining the police department and is a captain in the National Guard; he earned a bachelor’s degree in his spare time. Jay was perfectly suited for the task he was assigned for three reasons:

- His military experience taught him how to plan a project and encourage people to work together;
- His five years with the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) taught him that traffic enforcement is the key to good police work; and,
- While in college, Jay learned that he loves research.

Research was the initial response to the public call for action. Gilhooly read all that he could find on the subjects of aggressive driving, the newly-coined “road rage,” analytical techniques, and traffic safety countermeasures. He then enlisted the help of a traffic analyst from the City Planning Department to plot the dozen or so reported incidents of road rage on a map. To their dismay, the dots representing the incidents were dispersed, with no apparent pattern.

The next step was to plot all of the high crash intersections in the city, reasoning that the relatively rare incidence of road rage might be related to the more frequent incidence of crashes. Albuquerque contains 33 of New Mexico’s top 50 intersections in number of crashes. The map showed that 27 of the 33 intersections were concentrated in four clusters, each located in a different area of the city. Gilhooly immediately recognized the clusters as high crime areas from his patrol experience. The hypothesis was confirmed by adding crime data to the map that showed the high crash intersections; the two sets of dots combined to form four colorful blobs on the map of the city.

It was (and remains) unknown whether the high incidences of crime and crashes in the four areas are causally related; that is, the overlap of high crash and high crime areas might be a coincidence, or the results of other factors. Regardless of causality, the geographic co-occurrence of crashes and crimes was interpreted as an opportunity to do something about both of the problems, and possibly about the elusive road rage problem. Further analyses found that many of the arrests that were



made in the high crime areas were of individuals who lived outside those areas. The distances were such that a motor vehicle probably was involved in nearly all of the cases. Traffic enforcement was the obvious solution.

BACKGROUND

The Albuquerque Police Department's (APD) Traffic Division was disbanded in 1994 and the officers dispersed to the five area commands as part of a shift to Community Oriented Policing. As a consequence of the policies, the only remaining centralized traffic enforcement organization in the city consisted of a lieutenant, the DWI unit, an analyst, and Gilhooly, the officer responsible for writing proposals to obtain traffic safety grants. The decentralization of traffic units also resulted in uneven enforcement effort, depending upon the emphasis of the various area commanders. The number of traffic citations issued is a useful measure of traffic enforcement effort. While officers in one command issued 300 to 400 citations per month, officers in other areas were discouraged from writing traffic citations (to avoid complaints from citizens) and issued fewer than 100 tickets all year. [The traffic units were reorganized to again form a centralized force at the conclusion of the APD's special enforcement program in December of 1997. The centralized traffic unit issued more than 32,000 citations during the first five months of 1998, compared to fewer than 28,000 by the decentralized units during all of 1996.]

Staffing level directly affects an agency's ability to implement any special program. Although Albuquerque's population continues to grow by about two percent each year, the number of officers assigned to traffic is 25 percent below the 1988 high, and roughly equal to the staffing levels in the early 1970s. There are only 25 motorcycle officers to respond to crashes and traffic complaints, and to enforce traffic laws across five large area commands. The DWI Unit fills in some of the enforcement gaps, but despite this help there is no dedicated traffic enforcement for eleven hours each day Monday through Friday, and no coverage at all on weekends. To counter this condition, the traffic unit submits many proposals for traffic safety grants to fund officer overtime, training, and equipment.

From 1990 through 1995, the incidence of crime in the City of Albuquerque had increased at a rate approximately equal to the increase in population (about two percent annually). After experiencing several years of relatively stable crime rates, law enforcement officers and the public were startled by a 16 percent increase in crime in 1996. The increase in crime was not discovered as a sterile statistic at the end of the year, but rather, it was observed in human terms, on a daily basis. Throughout 1996, the news in Albuquerque seemed filled with reports of robberies, burglaries, and murders. The year ended with the three fatal cases of road rage.



The dramatic increase in crime during 1996 was accompanied by a 13 percent jump in crashes and a noticeable increase in aggressive driving. These changes appeared to some observers to coincide with a general shift in the public's attitudes away from civility and respect for other citizens and the law.

CALL FOR ACTION

Having discovered a geographic link between traffic collisions and criminal activity, Officer Gilhooly approached Lieutenant Rob DeBuck, who had a similar mandate from the Chief to “do something about crime.” The lieutenant had been studying the “broken windows” approach to deterrence.

Political scientist James Q. Wilson and criminologist George Kelling co-authored the cover story in the March, 1982, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*. The article, titled “Broken Windows,” explained how neighborhoods might decay—both physically and culturally—if no one attends to their maintenance. The authors argued that the best way to fight crime was to fight the disorder that precedes it. Plagued by graffiti, panhandling, farebeating, and other problems, the New York City Transit Authority used the ideas contained in “Broken Windows” as a guide to restoring order to the subway. The New York City Police Department soon followed with a community-policing strategy focusing on order maintenance. Despite initial skepticism, the strategy caught on in both organizations and resulted in significant reductions in disorder and crime.

Kelling and his wife, Catherine Coles—a lawyer and anthropologist specializing in urban issues and criminal prosecution—published *Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in Our Communities* (Free Press, 1996); the book expands substantially on the 1982 article. In *Fixing Broken Windows*, Kelling and Coles examine the competing claims of individual liberty and community in determining to what extent public spaces should be protected. They emphasize that the “crime problem” is a combination of disorder, fear, serious crime, and urban decay; and, they contend that the current model of the criminal-justice system has failed by not recognizing the links between these elements and by ignoring the role citizens can play in crime prevention.

There are many elements in the approach to crime reduction advocated by Kelling, Wilson, and Coles. Some of the elements, such as foot patrols and citizen involvement, form the core of what now is known as Community Oriented Policing. The theory on which this approach is based is that disorder and crime are inextricably linked, as described by Wilson and Kelling (1982) in their original article.



Social psychologists and police officers tend to agree that if a window in a building is broken and is left unrepaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken. This is as true in nice neighborhoods as in rundown ones. Window-breaking does not necessarily occur on a large scale because some areas are inhabited by determined window-breakers whereas others are populated by window-lovers; rather, one unrepaired broken window is a signal that no one cares, and so breaking more windows costs nothing. (It always has been fun.)





From “Broken Windows”

Philip Zimbardo, a Stanford psychologist, reported in 1969 on some experiments testing the broken-window theory. He arranged to have an automobile without license plates parked with its hood up on a street in the Bronx and a comparable automobile on a street in Palo Alto, California. The car in the Bronx was attacked by “vandals” within ten minutes of its “abandonment.” The first to arrive were a family—father, mother, and young son—who removed the radiator and battery. Within twenty-four hours, virtually everything of value had been removed. Then random destruction began—windows were smashed, parts torn off, the upholstery ripped. Children began to use the car as a playground. Most of the adult “vandals” were well-dressed, apparently clean-cut whites. The car in Palo Alto sat untouched for more than a week. Then Zimbardo smashed part of it with a sledgehammer. Soon, passersby were joining in. Within a few hours, the car had been turned upside down and utterly destroyed. Again, the “vandals” appeared to be primarily respectable whites.

Officer Gilhooly, Lieutenant DeBuck, and APD traffic lieutenant, Paul Heatley, saw merit in the “broken windows” theory. They reasoned that if untended property eventually becomes fair game, untended behavior eventually leads to a breakdown of community control. The officers theorized that streets and roads are to the residents of cities, such as Albuquerque, what the subways are to New Yorkers. If the New York Transit Authority can restore order to their subways by faithful maintenance and law enforcement, perhaps civility could be restored to Albuquerque streets by focusing special traffic enforcement effort on the most visible indicators that “no one cares.” The APD officers identified aggressive driving, graffiti, and open-air drug sales as major targets.

The officers approached the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department and found both assistance and creativity in the Traffic Safety Bureau. The Bureau’s Chief Planner, Virginia Jaramillo, and Police Traffic Services Program Manager, Michael Quintana, were committed to “Looking Beyond the Ticket,” a concept that links traffic enforcement to the overall mission of a law enforcement agency. Bureau staff helped the officers tap into existing traffic safety programs and create new ones, forming a partnership that included traditional and non-traditional members. The resulting special enforcement program, called Safe Streets 1997, is summarized in the following paragraphs.



Traditional Partners

- State, City, and County Law Enforcement and Motor Transportation Officers
- Neighborhood Associations
- State Traffic Safety Bureau
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Non-Traditional Partners

- State Highway and Transportation Department Commissioners, Construction and Engineering
- Albuquerque City Department of Planning and Engineering
- Albuquerque Mayor's Office
- Television, radio, and print news reporters and media marketing departments
- Metro Court Staff and Judges
- Road construction contractors
- Federal Highway Administration

SAFE STREETS 1997

Safe Streets 1997 was composed of several related elements, including saturation patrols, follow-up patrols, freeway speed enforcement, and sobriety checkpoints. These traffic enforcement tactics were supported by several programmatic elements, including Know Your Speed, Operation Buckle Down, Community DWI, the Traffic Safety Education and Enforcement Program, Operation DWI, Safe Ride, Take the Pledge, *DWI, and the Citizen Complaint Hot Line.



SATURATION PATROLS

The main strategy of Safe Streets 1997 was to saturate one of the four high-crime/high-crash areas at a time with law enforcement officers. These special patrols consisted of 12 motorcycle officers, supported by members of the DWI team and officers drawn from the local area command. The primary tactic used during the initial phase of the program was to deploy in the gateways used by non-residents to enter an area to purchase illegal drugs and commit other crimes, and to write as many traffic citations as possible. During these saturation patrols, motorists were stopped and cited for all infractions, however minor they might be.

FOLLOW-UP PATROLS

The saturation patrols continued in the same area for one month, then shifted to the next area on the list. Twice each week during the second month of the program, officers returned to the first area; the schedule was reduced to one day per week during the third month of the program, as the main focus shifted to the third, and then a month later, to the fourth high-crime/high-crash area. The pattern was continued for the duration of the program. The focus returned to the first area that was targeted during the fifth month of the program. Bicycle and mounted patrols were integrated in this schedule of "focus and follow-through." Deploying officers in an area on a reduced schedule after the main special enforcement effort had shifted to another area is one of the features that distinguishes Safe Streets 1997 from other similar special enforcement programs. The reduced presence after the main focus had moved on was intended to convey both the reality and perception of all areas as special enforcement zones.

NEW MEXICO KNOW YOUR SPEED PROGRAM

In response to changes in national maximum speed limits, the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department conducted a statewide engineering analysis to define safe speed limits for all roads and highways. The Know Your Speed program was implemented to remind motorists that speed limits vary throughout the state. This program was incorporated as a key element of the APD's Safe Streets 1997.

The New Mexico State Traffic Safety Bureau helped organize and equip a special freeway unit as part of the statewide Know Your Speed program. The special unit patrolled the two major highways that intersect in the heart of Albuquerque, a total of 30 miles of urban Interstate within the APD's jurisdiction. Officers of the Freeway Unit used four unmarked vehicles in their efforts to identify the aggressive driving



behavior that motorists see every day, but which is attenuated by the presence of a marked patrol vehicle; State Police, the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department, and the Motor Transportation Division also participated in the special freeway patrols.

Persistent speeding in highway construction zones motivated the State Highway Department's Public Affairs and Traffic Safety Bureaus, and the APD to develop an innovative countermeasure to supplement the daily patrols in unmarked police vehicles. Special "cherry-picker" operations were conducted several times during the special enforcement program. In these high-visibility operations, a hydraulically-operated lift (borrowed from the State Highway and Transportation Department) was used to position an officer, equipped with a radio and a laser speed gun, high above the lanes of a freeway. Between five and ten additional officers were deployed at roadside on motorcycles and in patrol cars over a distance of two miles downstream from the "cherry picker." The vehicles of speeding and otherwise aggressive drivers were identified by the officer above the freeway and described over the radio; the waiting officers made the enforcement stops. Operations had to be temporarily suspended when all officers were engaged with violators. These special operations usually were conducted for two hours each day (08:00–10:00 or 15:00–17:00 hours) for a period of five consecutive days at different locations. Three cherry-picker operations were conducted that involved four hours each day for two weeks at a time.

The "cherry-picker" operations generated large volumes of traffic citations, primarily for speeding. As many as 1,400 citations were issued during one five-day week while operating only two hours each day (an average of 140 tickets per hour!). The operations also generated much free publicity for Safe Streets 1997, the statewide Know Your Speed program, and the State Highway and Transportation Department. The media found the "cherry-picker" operations to be particularly newsworthy and invited officers and State Highway and Transportation Department staff to appear on television and radio to discuss the special enforcement effort. The public responded with considerable support for the program and highway construction workers greatly appreciated the program's effects.

SOBRIETY CHECKPOINTS

Driving while impaired (DWI) is a serious problem in New Mexico. For this reason, the Albuquerque Police Department was among the first law enforcement agencies in the U.S. to recognize the potential for sobriety checkpoints to deter motorists from DWI. The APD favors large-scale checkpoints, involving 30 or more uniformed personnel. Officers from the New Mexico State Police and Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department also usually participate in APD checkpoints. The large numbers



of officers are necessary because many arrests are made at every checkpoint. The APD has conducted 25 to 30 sobriety checkpoints each year for many years and at least two checkpoints were conducted during each month of the Safe Streets 1997 program. APD checkpoints continue to result in at least 25 DWI arrests each time one is conducted.

OPERATION DWI

Among the programs that supported Safe Streets 1997 was Operation DWI, a statewide effort to target high alcohol-involved crash locations. The program combined a media campaign with high visibility enforcement activities such as checkpoints and saturation patrols, to deter motorists from driving while impaired.

SAFE RIDE

The Bernalillo County DWI Planning Council sponsors the Safe Ride Program, which ensures that there is an alternative to drinking and driving by offering free cab rides home from any bar in Albuquerque. The same organization sponsors the Topsy Tow Program, which provides a tow home for motorists' vehicles on major holiday weekends.

TAKE THE PLEDGE

Take the Pledge was part of the APD's effort to involve citizens in the Safe Streets 1997 program. In cooperation with the mayor's office and the Office of Community Affairs, police personnel attended meetings of neighborhood associations to describe the Safe Streets program and enlist citizen support and participation by pledging to drive safely. This element of the program was accompanied by an extensive media campaign that included radio announcements, display ads on buses, and bumper stickers.

***DWI**

Motorists in Albuquerque can enter "*DWI" on their cellular telephones to report impaired drivers. Citizens use this toll-free service to report several DWIs each day.



CITIZEN COMPLAINT HOT LINE

A Citizen Complaint Hot Line was established to encourage the residents of Albuquerque to report traffic problems. Calls to the hot line were returned promptly by a traffic officer who then met with the citizen, evaluated the complaint, and recommended action. More than 100 tactical plans were implemented in response to citizen complaints. Some of the reported problems were found to require engineering, rather than enforcement, solutions, so the officers recruited city and state traffic engineers to the program. The citizens, law enforcement officers, and traffic engineers then worked together to make changes, where appropriate, such as constructing speed humps and turn lanes, installing traffic signs, and adjusting signal phases.

CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM

Improving traffic safety and deterring crime in the four target areas were the objectives of Safe Streets 1997. It was hoped that the high-visibility police presence and special enforcement effort would deter both unsafe driving and the incidence of crime in the vicinity of the enforcement. The special enforcement effort began in January 1997; the tactics were developed and refined the first month in preparation for the formal program kickoff in February. All elements of the program were in effect for the first five months of Safe Streets 1997. However, a major change occurred five months into the program, about the time the main focus of special enforcement was returning to the first target area.

The APD's crime deterrence grant ended in May 1997, which resulted in the withdrawal of beat officers from the saturation patrols. Improving traffic safety was the primary objective throughout the Safe Streets 1997 program and the ending of the crime deterrence grant permitted the officers to focus exclusively on the reduction of aggressive driving and fatal collisions. This traffic safety emphasis was maintained throughout the second half of Safe Streets 1997. The schedule of special enforcement established early in the program was continued, but responsibility for developing and implementing tactical plans was shifted from the central planning staff to the area commands. Officers were encouraged to use their understanding of local conditions and available crime and crash data to develop innovative approaches to their special enforcement efforts. The officers responded enthusiastically because they were committed to improving traffic safety and they felt a sense of ownership of the program that can be lacking when plans are developed and imposed by others.



The ending of the crime deterrence grant was accompanied by a shift in tactics. The officers focused their attention for the remainder of the Safe Streets program on the three violations they believed to be most responsible for fatal crashes: unsafe speed, failure to use safety restraints, and DWI. Officers saturated the high-crime/high-crash areas as before, but the focus of their effort shifted from the side streets to the main arterials and most dangerous intersections. Officers strictly enforced speed limits and adult and child safety restraint requirements, and as always, they paid particularly close attention to the signs of impaired driving. Specialists from the DWI unit could be called for assistance with a suspected impaired driver, which would permit the special patrol to continue. During periods of heavy traffic, officers frequently would stand at roadside or in the median to observe the drivers of vehicles that were stopped in traffic. This high-visibility tactic contributed to public awareness of the special enforcement program and resulted in many arrests for open containers of alcoholic beverages and DWI, and many citations for speed and safety restraint violations.

Officers were encouraged to write tickets as part of the special enforcement program, although there was no formal incentive, aside from that provided by a sense of professionalism and duty (and for some, a little friendly competition). Some traffic officers were especially perceptive, skillful, and motivated in their work, writing as many as 50 citations during a five-hour period. Even patrol officers, who were not a part of the special enforcement program, were encouraged to write at least two traffic citations per day. Many patrol officers resented this policy at first. However, soon after it was implemented, two patrol officers stopped a vehicle for speeding (in an attempt to satisfy their supervisor) and while writing the ticket they received a bulletin about an armed robbery-committed by the driver they had just stopped. They, and many of their skeptical colleagues, instantly became firm believers in the merits of traffic enforcement and "Looking Beyond the Ticket."

RESULTS

The results of the Albuquerque Police Department's Safe Streets 1997 program are reported in this section in three categories: Effects of the program on crime, Effects of the program on traffic safety, and Other indicators of program effects.

EFFECTS OF THE PROGRAM ON CRIME

The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program of the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, promotes the use of standard terminology and definitions of crimes among law enforcement agencies to facilitate the collection,



reporting, and analysis of crime data for the United States. Local and state definitions might vary, but the FBI's two-part taxonomy of standard categories is used when reporting crimes to the Department of Justice. The more serious, or Part I crimes, are defined by the UCR guidelines to include criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny/theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. Part II crimes included in this analysis are simple assault, sex offenses, kidnapping, intimidation, stolen property, fraud, embezzlement, destruction of property/vandalism, counterfeiting/forgery, bribery, bad checks, and arson. Part I and Part II crimes also can be categorized as either crimes against persons or crimes against property. Figure 1 illustrates the trend of increasing frequency of crimes in Albuquerque from 1989 through 1996. It was the alarming 16 percent increase in crime from 1995 to 1996 that precipitated the initial emphasis of the Safe Streets program on crime deterrence.

Figure 1.
Part 1
Crimes in
Albuquerque
1989 – 1996

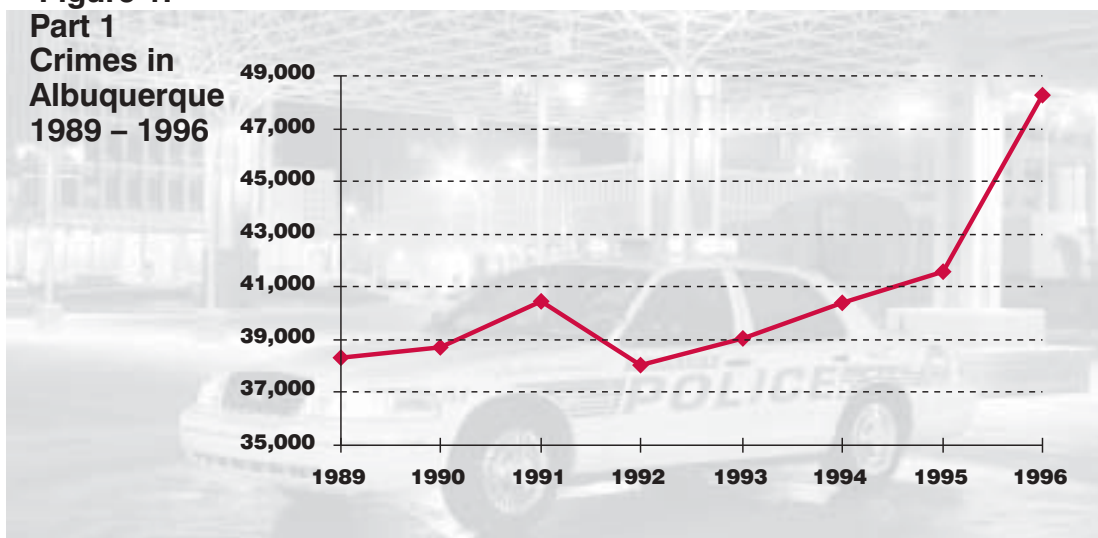




Table 1 presents the numbers of Part I and Part II crimes against persons reported in the four special enforcement areas, by month, during 1996 and 1997; Figure 2 illustrates the data presented in the table. The data clearly show the effects of the Safe Streets program during the period when the special traffic enforcement was coordinated with the crime deterrence effort and focused on reducing crashes and deterring the target crimes in the high crime neighborhoods. The four special enforcement areas together experienced a 9.5 percent decrease in Part I and Part II crimes against persons during the first six months of the program, compared to the same months one year earlier. However, the incidence of these crimes began to increase above the previous year's rate at about the time the traffic enforcement shifted from the neighborhoods to the arterials. The incidence of crimes against persons remained two percent below the previous year's rates during the second half of the program, despite the shift in traffic enforcement effort away from the high crime neighborhoods. Overall, crimes against persons in 1997 were five percent below the 1996 tallies in the four special enforcement areas. The overall decline includes a 29 percent decline in homicide, a 17 percent decline in kidnapping, and a ten percent decline in assault.

Table 1. Incidence of Part I and Part II Crimes Against Persons in the Special Enforcement Areas: 1996 and 1997

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1996	538	507	549	582	628	526	649	591	493	514	507	501	6635
1997	525	419	444	556	547	599	563	631	547	503	471	484	6289
Change	-2%	-17%	-19%	-5%	-13%	4%	-13%	7%	11%	-2%	-7%	-3%	-5%

**Figure 2.
Crimes Against
Persons in the
Special
Enforcement
Areas**

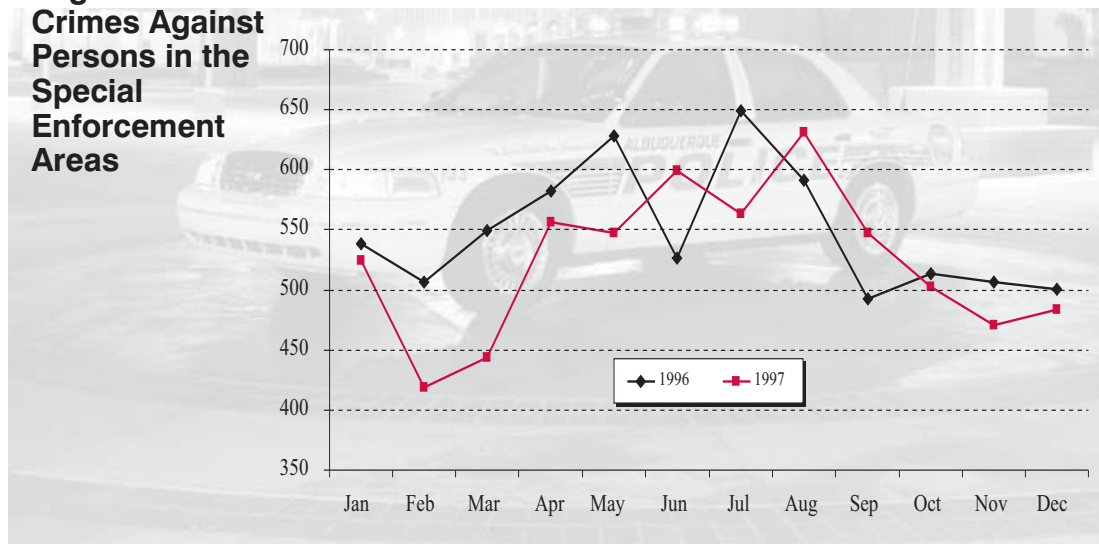


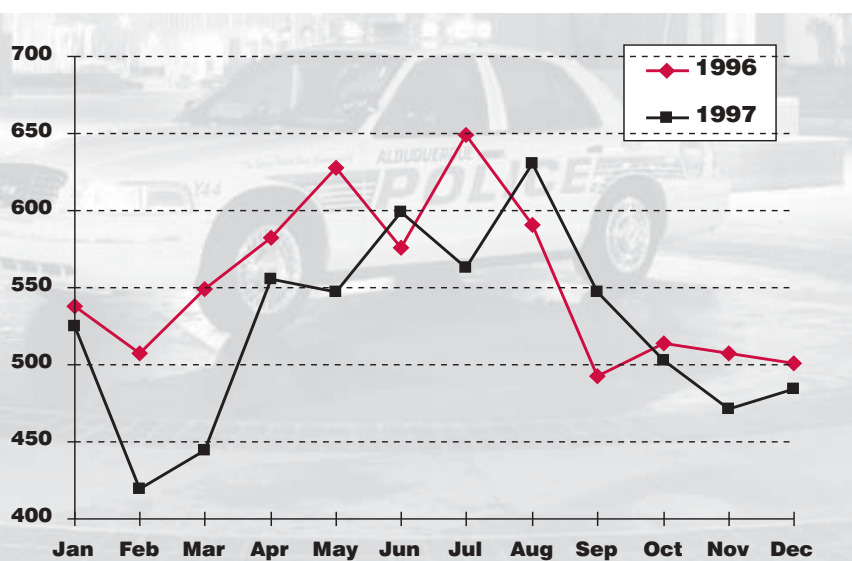


Table 2 presents the numbers of Part I and Part II property crimes reported in the four special enforcement areas, by month, during 1996 and 1997; Figure 3 illustrates the data presented in the table, and shows a pattern that is very similar to that of crimes against persons. The property crime data show the effects of the special enforcement effort during the period when traffic enforcement in the high crime neighborhoods was the focus. The four special enforcement areas together experienced a 12 percent decrease in Part I and Part II property crimes during the first six months of the program, compared to the same months one year earlier. However, the incidence of property crimes began to increase above the previous year's rates when the special traffic enforcement shifted from high crime neighborhoods to the arterials at about the mid-point of the program. The incidence of property crimes increased six percent above the previous year's rates during the second half of the program. Overall, property crimes in 1997 were three percent below the 1996 tallies in the four special enforcement areas. The overall decline includes a 36 percent decline in arson, a ten percent decline in fraud, and nine percent declines in both robbery and burglary.

Table 2. Incidence of Part I and Part II Crimes Against Property in the Special Enforcement Areas: 1996 and 1997

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1996	538	507	549	582	628	526	649	591	493	514	507	501	6,635
1997	525	419	444	556	547	599	563	631	547	503	471	484	6,289
Change	-2%	-17%	-19%	-5%	-13%	4%	-13%	7%	11%	-2%	-7%	-3%	-5%

**Figure 3.
Property
Crimes in the
Special
Enforcement
Areas**





EFFECTS OF THE PROGRAM ON TRAFFIC SAFETY

Traffic collisions increased by 51 percent in Albuquerque during the five years prior to implementing Safe Streets 1997. The 13 percent increase in all collisions from 1995 to 1996 was accompanied by an increase in aggressive driving and the road rage incidents that precipitated the special enforcement effort. Table 3 presents the numbers of motor vehicle crashes in Albuquerque, by crash type, for the years 1992 through 1997, the year of the Safe Streets program. Figure 4 illustrates the trend of increasing numbers of crashes in Albuquerque during the five years prior to 1997.

Table 3. Crashes By Type in Albuquerque: 1992 – 1997

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Injury	5,075	5,528	5,960	6,211	6,134	5,004
PDO	10,184	13,065	14,711	14,357	17,006	15,464
Fatal	53	43	43	50	50	33
Total	15,312	18,636	20,714	20,618	23,190	20,501
Change	n/a	22%	8%	-1%	13%	-12%

Figure 4.
All Crashes in Albuquerque:
1992 – 1997

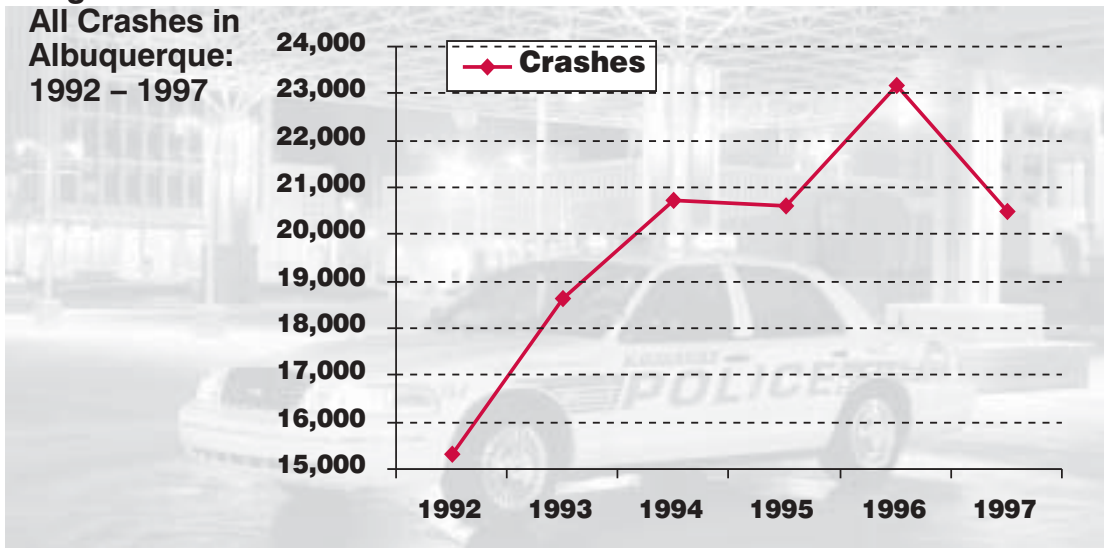




Table 3 and Figure 4 also show the effects of the Safe Streets program. The decline in total crashes from 1996 to 1997 was composed of a nine percent decline in property damage only (PDO) crashes, an 18 percent decline in injury crashes, a 20 percent decline in DWI crashes, and a 34 percent decline in fatal crashes. While Albuquerque experienced 18 percent fewer crashes resulting in serious injury in 1997, compared to 1996, the remainder of New Mexico's urban areas declined by only three percent. Similarly, the sum of all crashes declined in Albuquerque by 12 percent during Safe Streets 1997, while total crashes increased by four percent in the state's other urban areas. James Davis, of the University of New Mexico, found the differences between Albuquerque and the other urban areas of the state to be statistically significant (Chi square, $p < .002$).

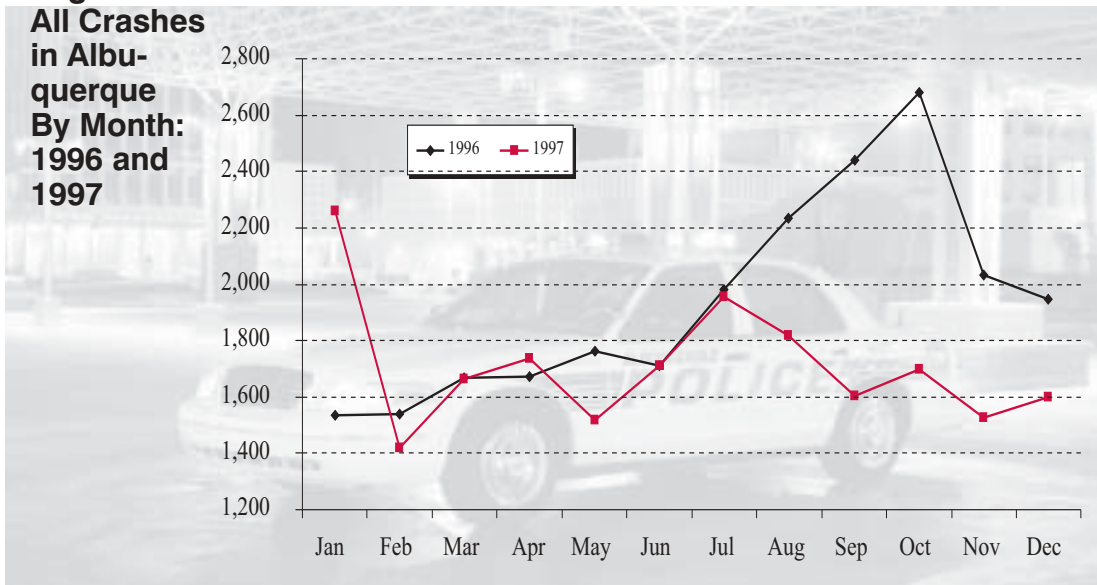
Table 4 presents the numbers of all crashes in Albuquerque, by month, for the years 1996 and 1997. The table also includes the difference in the number of crashes, expressed as the percent change, from each month in 1996 to the corresponding month in 1997. Table 4 shows that fewer crashes occurred in nine of the 12 months of 1997 than during the corresponding month of the previous year. Albuquerque experienced a four percent increase in total crashes during the first six months of 1997, compared to the same period of 1996. However, nearly all of the increase is attributable to the substantially greater number of property damage only crashes that occurred in January of 1997, a month of particularly severe winter weather and the period during which Safe Streets tactics were being developed prior to the formal kickoff of the program. Albuquerque experienced a 23 percent decline in total crashes during the second half of Safe Streets 1997, compared to the same months of 1996. Figure 5 illustrates the crash data presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Total Crashes by Month in Albuquerque: 1996 and 1997

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1996	1,533	1,538	1,668	1,670	1,761	1,709	1,979	2,233	2,441	2,680	2,031	1,947	23,190
1997	2,258	1,419	1,665	1,735	1,519	1,710	1,955	1,817	1,603	1,698	1,524	1,598	20,501
Change	47%	-8%	0%	4%	-14%	0%	-1%	-19%	-34%	-37%	-25%	-18%	-12%



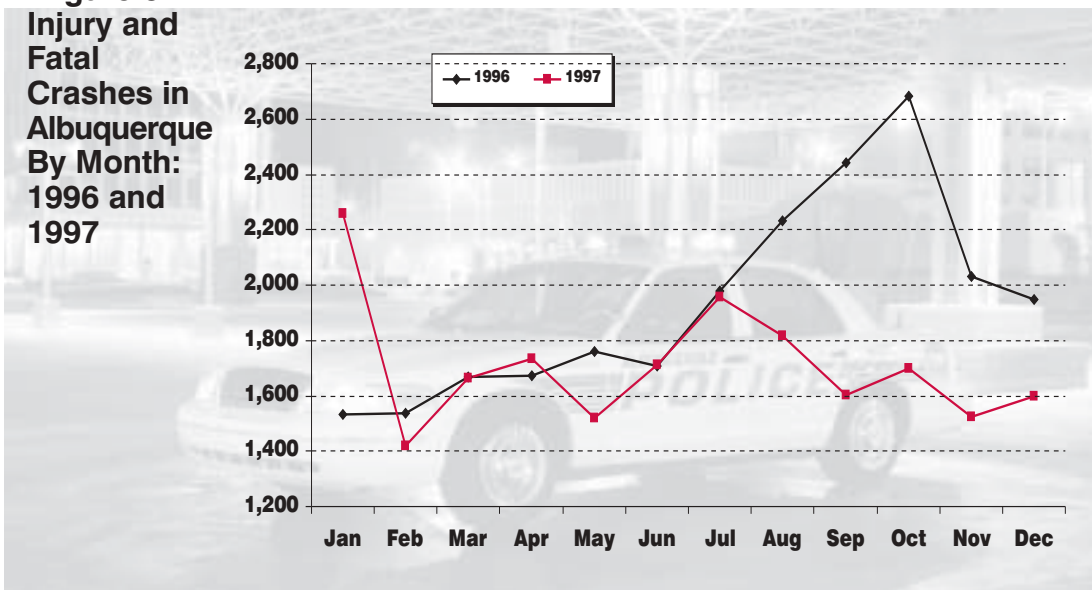
Figure 5.
All Crashes
in Albuquerque
By Month:
1996 and
1997



The data reflect the shift in traffic enforcement emphasis from high crime neighborhoods to arterials at the mid-point of the program. The shift in traffic enforcement emphasis from improving traffic safety and deterring crime on side streets to focusing exclusively on improving traffic safety on major thoroughfares is evident in the large differences between the numbers of crashes that occurred during the last six months of 1997 and the corresponding months of 1996. The total number of crashes in Albuquerque increased slightly during the six months when the emphasis was on neighborhoods, but declined by 23 percent during the second half of Safe Streets 1997, when the traffic enforcement effort was focused on arterials and dangerous intersections. Figure 6 illustrates the numbers of injury and fatal crashes, combined, by month during 1996 and 1997. The figure shows that Albuquerque experienced fewer serious crashes during each month of Safe Streets 1997, compared to the corresponding month one year earlier; there were 13 percent fewer serious crashes during the first half of the program and 24 percent fewer serious crashes during the second half. Overall, Albuquerque experienced 18 percent fewer injury crashes and 34 percent fewer fatal crashes during 1997 than 1996.



**Figure 6.
Injury and
Fatal
Crashes in
Albuquerque
By Month:
1996 and
1997**



Figures 7 and 8 use different methods to illustrate the frequencies of three categories of crashes in Albuquerque from 1992 through 1997. The right-hand scale in Figure 7 refers to the numbers of Injury and DWI crashes; the left-hand scale refers to the numbers of PDO crashes. The figures show the trend of declining numbers of DWI crashes that was interrupted by an increase in 1996. The figures also show the sharp declines in all three crash categories in response to Safe Streets 1997. The University of New Mexico's Division of Government Research's Figures 7 and 8 use different methods to illustrate the frequencies of three categories of crashes in Albuquerque from 1992 through 1997. The figures show the trends of increasing incidence of Injury and PDO crashes during the five years prior to 1997, and estimated the saving to society from the "prevented" crashes to be more than 34 million dollars.



Figure 7.
Injury, Property
Damage Only
(PDO), and DWI
Crashes in
Albuquerque:
1992 – 1997

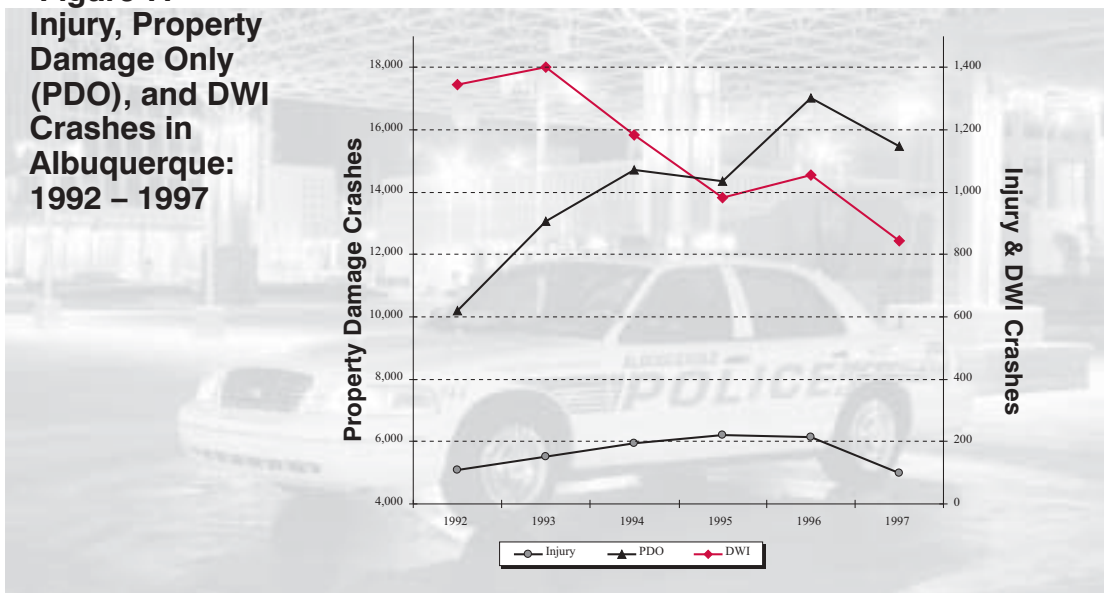
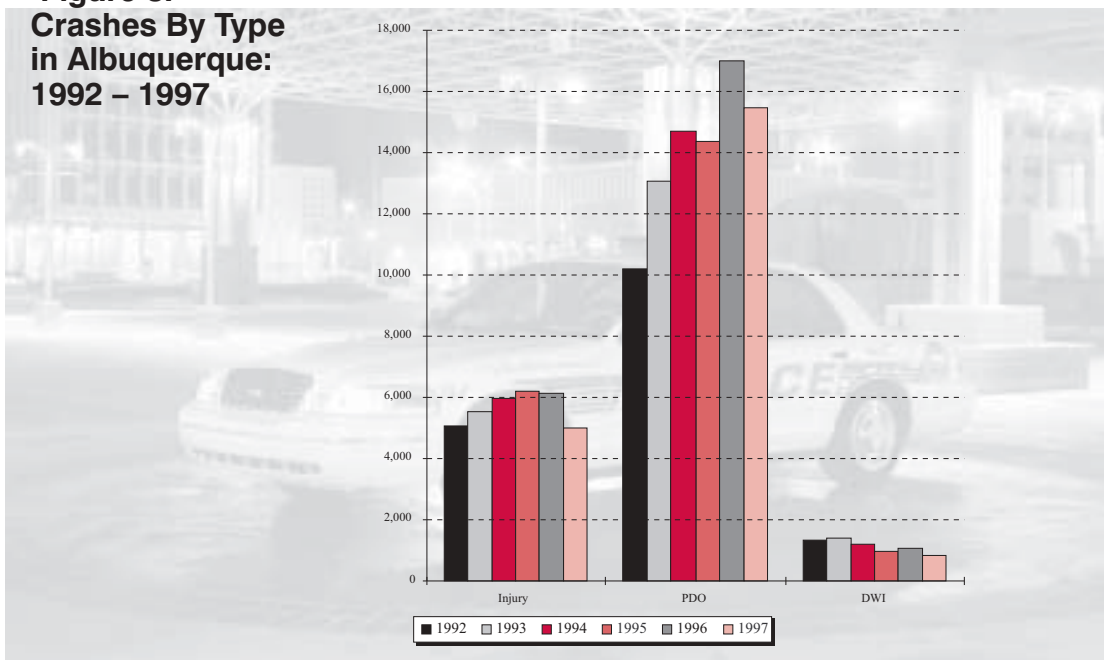


Figure 8.
Crashes By Type
in Albuquerque:
1992 – 1997





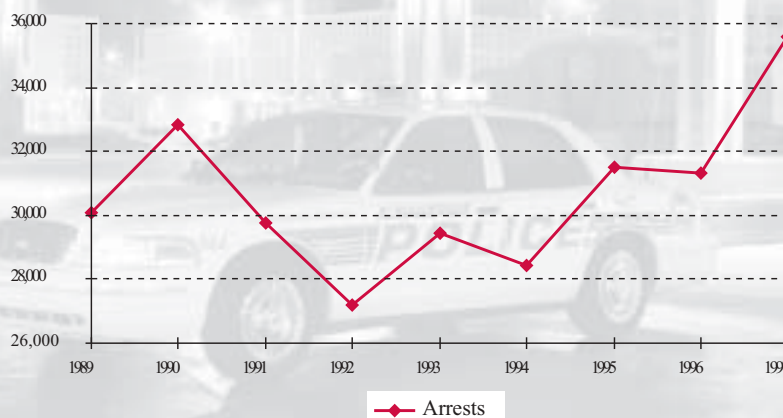
OTHER INDICATORS OF PROGRAM EFFECTS

The previous paragraphs, devoted to crime and traffic safety, have described the primary measures of program effects. Sometimes, however, it is subjective indicators, or objective measures obtained unobtrusively, that more convincingly explain the full impact of a special enforcement program. The following items are presented in this category of “other” indicators of program effects.

CITATIONS, ARRESTS, TOWS, AND RECOVERIES

One of the objectives during the initial phase of Safe Streets 1997 was to deter criminal activity in the four high-crime/high-crash areas by saturating one area at a time with highly visible patrols. The incidence of crime declined in response to the saturation patrols, as reported previously, and many arrests also were made as a consequence of the special enforcement effort and the increased emphasis on traffic safety and traffic enforcement throughout the Albuquerque Police Department (i.e., by “Looking Beyond the Ticket”). Figure 9 illustrates the numbers of total arrests made by the APD each year from 1989 through 1997. The figure clearly shows the 14 percent increase from the previous year in the number of arrests made in 1997. Table 5 presents the numbers of citations issued, arrests made, vehicles towed for lack of insurance, and stolen vehicles recovered by the officers who participated in the special enforcement effort of Safe Streets 1997. The citations issued generated more than four million dollars in revenue for the state’s education fund.

Figure 9.
Total Number
of Arrests in
Albuquerque:
1989 – 1997





**Table 5.
Citations Issued, Arrests
Made, Vehicles Towed,
and Stolen Vehicles
Recovered By Officers
Participating in the Safe
Streets 1997 Special
Enforcement Program**

Action	Number
Citations	85,231
Vehicles Towed	5,703
Misdemeanor Arrests	1,981
Misdemeanor Warrants	1,290
DWI Arrests	987
Felony Arrests	417
Felony Warrants	132
Stolen Vehicles Recovered	112
DRE Arrests	55

UNOBTRUSIVE MEASURES OF PROGRAM EFFECTS

- Officers reported in personal interviews that it became increasingly difficult during the Safe Streets program to find traffic violations. Locations in the city that easily generated ten traffic citations during a normal shift at the beginning of the program were producing only one or two citations near the end of the year. It was reported that officers would deploy to a favored location, sometimes called a “fishing hole,” only to find officers from a different patrol area “working the spot” because violators could not be found in their area. This practice, to which officers referred as “poaching,” was treated with good natured humor, but all participants recognized it as evidence that the special enforcement program was positively affecting the driving behavior of motorists throughout the city.
- Crowding became a serious problem at the Albuquerque Municipal Court because of the large numbers of people attempting to pay their traffic fines. The condition became so severe that the Fire Marshall required the court to open a walk-up window outside to relieve the crowding in the building. The lines remained long throughout the Safe Streets program, which resulted in people bringing lawn chairs, umbrellas, coolers, and books to help pass the time while waiting for their turn.
- The presiding judge of the Municipal Court called the Chief of Police to advise that the judges were overburdened as a consequence of the large numbers of citations that officers were issuing. On the same day, the court administrator called to inform



the Chief that the volume of citations was helping the court financially, and provided encouragement to the special enforcement effort, assuring that, if necessary, the court would increase the number of days for traffic court to accommodate the increase in citations.

- The Chief of Police also received a call from the director of the local ambulance company. The director asked about the duration of the special enforcement program. Because there were fewer-than-expected calls for service since Safe Streets began, he might need to lay off paramedics.
- The public's response to Safe Streets 1997 surprised many of the officers. Residents came out of their homes and cheered as officers made enforcement stops in their neighborhoods. In business districts, passing motorists honked their horns and gestured their support of the special enforcement effort. Officers were invited to appear on television to discuss Safe Streets 1997, newspapers published favorable articles, and citizens wrote letters to the editor expressing sincere appreciation for the special enforcement program.
- The Albuquerque Police Department's Safe Streets 1997 program received a Special Achievement Award from the National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives and the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

DISCUSSION

The results of the Albuquerque Police Department's Safe Streets 1997 strongly suggest that a special traffic enforcement program can deter criminal activity, improve traffic safety, and contribute substantial economic savings to society.

Albuquerque's Safe Streets program also demonstrates what can be accomplished when a community works together to identify and solve social problems. There were fewer crimes and fewer crashes in Albuquerque during 1997 than in the previous year, and these reductions, most likely, occurred in response to the special traffic enforcement and other elements of the Safe Streets program. Perhaps most important, there have been substantial improvements in civility on the streets of Albuquerque, and according to the Albuquerque Police Department, no further cases of serious road rage have been reported.

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