

# **SENIOR VOLUNTEERS**

## **A VALUABLE ASSET IN TIMES OF ECONOMIC STRESS**

### ***SUMMARY***

Senior volunteer patrols are comprised of citizens retired from a wide range of occupations broadly representative of the County's population: civil servants, nurses and other medical practitioners, construction workers, educators, attorneys, military veterans, etc. As members of law enforcement volunteer programs, these seniors assist police agencies with such tasks as traffic control, issuing parking citations for handicapped parking violators, transportation of evidence, contacting house-bound citizens to assure that they are safe, and many other tasks which do not require a sworn officer. Senior patrol members performing these duties allow police personnel more time to deal with public safety issues.

The 2013/2014 San Diego County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) investigation determined that in the most recent calendar year, the eight San Diego County jurisdictions surveyed had 1,573 senior volunteers who served a total of 453,384 hours at a program cost of \$2,291,221. Based on information provided by the jurisdictions studied, the services of the senior volunteers represent a total cost savings of \$11,147,179 to the jurisdictions involved.

### ***INTRODUCTION***

With an eye on the recent recession and its impact on the ability of local governments to provide public services, the Grand Jury decided to revisit the senior volunteer patrol programs in the County to determine the amount of money volunteerism saves the various law enforcement agencies.

### ***PROCEDURE***

During the investigation, the Grand Jury requested and received information regarding senior volunteers from the following law enforcement agencies:

- San Diego County Sheriff's Department
- San Diego Police Department
- Carlsbad Police Department
- El Cajon Police Department
- Escondido Police Department
- La Mesa Police Department
- Oceanside Police Department
- Chula Vista Police Department

These agencies were requested to provide the following information:

- Their number of volunteers
- The cumulative hours worked by their volunteers in one year's time
- The cost of the volunteer program to the agency

- The program benefits in dollars to the agency

## ***DISCUSSION***

Ten years ago, the 2003/2004 San Diego County Grand Jury reviewed and reported on the senior volunteer programs administered by the Sheriff's Department, the San Diego Police Department, and the La Mesa Police Department. The value of the volunteer programs in just these three jurisdictions was impressive, amounting to more than \$4.5 million for the year studied.

The 2013/2014 Grand Jury expanded its investigation to include the original three jurisdictions studied earlier plus police departments operated by the Cities of Carlsbad, Chula Vista, El Cajon, Oceanside, and Escondido. Based on information provided by the responding agencies, 1,573 senior volunteer patrol members worked 453,384 hours in the year reported. The combined cost of the eight programs was \$2,291,221 and program benefit to the law enforcement jurisdictions and the community was \$11,147,179.

While the volunteer programs come at some cost to the sponsoring agencies, they save the community much more than they cost. Program costs vary from agency to agency, but typically include items such as the cost of administering the program, uniforms, training, vehicles and related costs such as fuel.

### ***Summary of the Senior Volunteer Programs in Eight San Diego County Jurisdictions, 2013<sup>1</sup>***

	Volunteers	Hours Worked	Program Cost	Program Benefit
Sheriff's Dept.	935	254,829	\$632,761	\$5,022,143
San Diego PD	372	135,000	\$1,515,975	\$3,510,000
Carlsbad PD	41	13,304	\$3,150	\$864,760
El Cajon PD	17	7,222	\$2,700	\$159,895
Escondido PD	30	7,037	\$15,845	\$174,156
La Mesa PD	46	11,780	\$49,000	\$325,000
Oceanside PD	65	20,067	\$46,190	\$667,322
Chula Vista PD	67	19,145	\$25,600	\$423,903
Total	1,573	453,384	\$2,291,221	\$11,147,179

Delegating some routine tasks not requiring a sworn officer to senior volunteer patrol members allows sworn officers to spend more time performing law enforcement tasks directly associated with public safety. In addition, senior volunteer patrol members patrolling their communities in marked law enforcement vehicles provide an additional police presence that reminds both law abiding citizens and potential criminals that public safety is a high concern in their community.

## ***FACTS AND FINDINGS***

**Fact:** More than 1,500 senior patrol volunteers serve in eight law enforcement jurisdictions in San Diego County.

<sup>1</sup> As provided by the law enforcement jurisdictions queried.

**Fact:** Senior volunteer patrol members served more than 450,000 hours during the period studied.

**Fact:** Senior volunteer patrol members perform community service tasks not requiring a sworn officer.

**Finding 01:** Use of senior volunteer patrol personnel allows sworn officers to spend more time performing public safety-related tasks.

**Fact:** The value of the services provided by senior volunteer patrols is estimated by the law enforcement agencies administering them to be \$11,147,179 during the period studied.

**Fact:** The cost of providing senior volunteer patrol services is estimated by the law enforcement agencies involved to be \$2,291,221 during the period studied.

**Finding 02:** Senior volunteer patrol programs are a valuable asset to the community.

### ***COMMENDATION***

The citizens who volunteer through the senior volunteer patrol programs are dedicated, civic-minded people who have the time and the desire to make their communities better places. The Grand Jury commends them for their hard work and contributions to their communities.

In addition, the law enforcement agencies that organize and administer these programs are also to be congratulated for having the foresight to recognize the value senior volunteers add to the law enforcement equation.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

**The 2013-2014 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, San Diego Police Department, Carlsbad Police Department, Chula Vista Police Department, El Cajon Police Department, Escondido Police Department, La Mesa Police Department and the Oceanside Police Department:**

**14-37: Continue senior volunteer programs already in place, expanding them whenever practical.**

**The 2013-2014 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the National City Police Department:**

**14-38: Consider instituting a senior volunteer program in its jurisdiction.**

### ***REQUIREMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS***

The California Penal Code §933(c) requires any public agency which the Grand Jury has reviewed, and about which it has issued a final report, to comment to the Presiding Judge of the

Superior Court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the agency. Such comment shall be made *no later than 90 days* after the Grand Jury publishes its report (filed with the Clerk of the Court); except that in the case of a report containing findings and recommendations pertaining to a department or agency headed by an elected County official (e.g. District Attorney, Sheriff, etc.), such comment shall be made *within 60 days* to the Presiding Judge with an information copy sent to the Board of Supervisors.

Furthermore, California Penal Code §933.05(a), (b), (c), details, as follows, the manner in which such comment(s) are to be made:

- (a) As to each grand jury finding, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:
  - (1) The respondent agrees with the finding
  - (2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefor.
- (b) As to each grand jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:
  - (1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
  - (2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a time frame for implementation.
  - (3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This time frame shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.
  - (4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.
- (c) If a finding or recommendation of the grand jury addresses budgetary or personnel matters of a county agency or department headed by an elected officer, both the agency or department head and the Board of Supervisors shall respond if requested by the grand jury, but the response of the Board of Supervisors shall address only those budgetary or personnel matters over which it has some decision making authority. The response of the elected agency or department head shall address all aspects of the findings or recommendations affecting his or her agency or department.

Comments to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in compliance with the Penal Code §933.05 are required from the:

<u>Responding Agency</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>Date</u>
<b>San Diego County Sheriff's Department</b>	<b>14-37</b>	<b>07/29/14</b>

<b>San Diego Police Department</b>	<b>14-37</b>	<b>07/29/14</b>
<b>Carlsbad Police Department</b>	<b>14-37</b>	<b>07/29/14</b>
<b>Chula Vista Police Department</b>	<b>14-37</b>	<b>07/29/14</b>
<b>El Cajon Police Department</b>	<b>14-37</b>	<b>07/29/14</b>
<b>Escondido Police Department</b>	<b>14-37</b>	<b>07/29/14</b>
<b>La Mesa Police Department</b>	<b>14-37</b>	<b>07/29/14</b>
<b>National City Police Department</b>	<b>14-38</b>	<b>07/29/14</b>
<b>Oceanside Police Department</b>	<b>14-37</b>	<b>07/29/14</b>

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