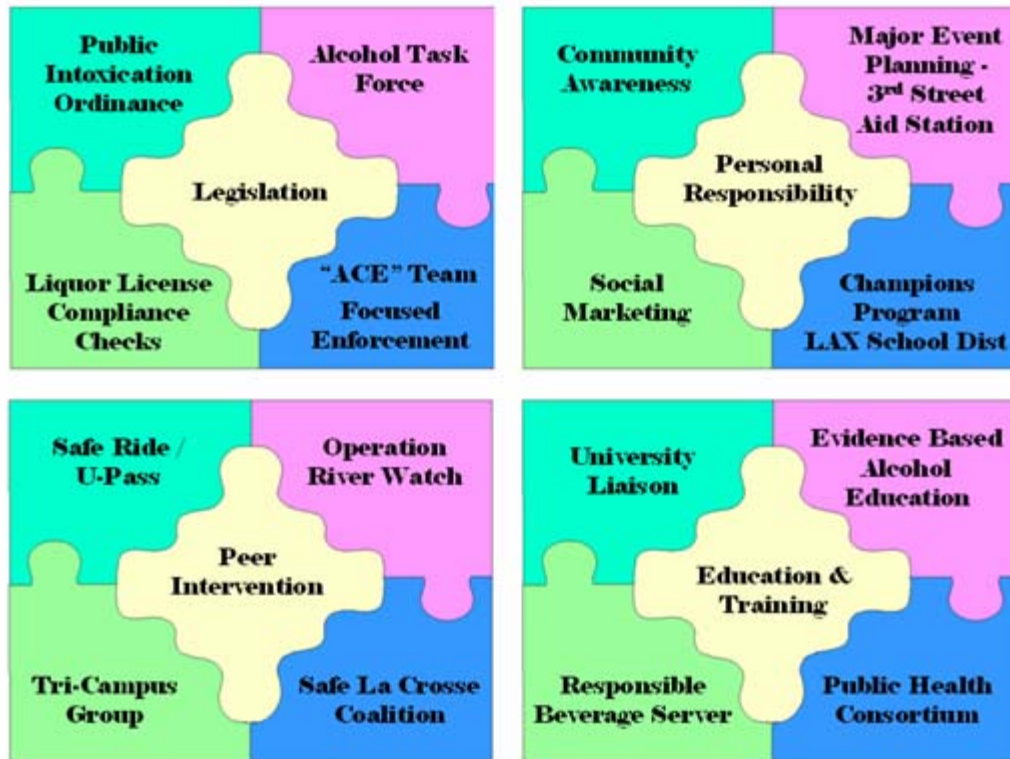


2008 Herman Goldstein Award Submission

“BEYOND THE BINGE”



La Crosse Police Department

Chief Edward N. Kondracki

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Department of Police



EDWARD N. KONDRACKI, CHIEF
LA CROSSE WI 54601-3396

May 30, 2008

Rob T Guerrette PhD
School of Criminal Justice
Florida International University
University Park, PCA 366B
11200 8th Street SW
Miami FL 33199

Dear Dr. Guerrette:

It is indeed my honor to submit this letter nominating the City of La Crosse Police Department's Problem Solving Team for consideration in the 2008 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem Oriented Policing Submissions.

The attached submission represents a comprehensive community organizing and problem solving effort "Beyond the Binge" which confronts binge drinking and a community drinking problem. Binge drinking is a phenomenon confronting university communities across the nation. Binge drinking became the topic of extreme focus when between 1997 and 2005 six intoxicated college aged males drowned in the Mississippi River only blocks from the University of Wisconsin campus.

The La Crosse Police Department's POP effort is both a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis of both the scope and seriousness of binge drinking in La Crosse and across the nation. The response to the police department's community mobilization efforts have resulted in a comprehensive community plan. This problem solving effort has resulted in well over twenty separate community supported strategies designed to address nearly every aspect of binge drinking. The comprehensive solutions being applied in the City of La Crosse are self sustaining and can be utilized as a blueprint for any community choosing to address this serious problem.

Please do not hesitate to call me at 608-789-7201 if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Edward Kondracki
Chief of Police

EK:aw

Summary

SCANNING

In 2004, after the seventh alcohol related drowning death of a college student in eight years, the La Crosse Police Department took a hard look at its response to alcohol related incidents. These tragedies, set in a deeply entrenched drinking culture, forced the police department to seek alternatives to traditional enforcement responses to alcohol problems.

ANALYSIS

In the spring of 2004, the police department hosted a town hall meeting to determine the scope of the problem. The community's perceptions of the problem and how it was being handled varied. Some attendees believed the drowning deaths were the work of a serial killer.

Police Chief Edward Kondracki presented his department's conclusion: excessive alcohol consumption was the major contributing factor in each of the drowning deaths. The town hall meeting helped bring public focus to the harm caused by binge drinking, and drinking that went beyond binge drinking -- aggressive drinking.

Their analysis identified a number of factors contributing to the problem: La Crosse has the second highest bar density in the country; this ease of access, coupled with low prices and a disproportionately large alcohol-prone age demographic, create a volatile alcohol consumption environment.

RESPONSE

A team, the Alcohol Compliance and Education (A.C.E.) team, was established to coordinate department efforts. The A.C.E. team worked with a variety of community stakeholders, including a group appointed by the mayor, the Alcohol Task Force to address the problem. They engaged staff and students from three institutions of higher learning, business owners, alcohol treatment specialists, and concerned citizens in this comprehensive project.

The A.C.E. Team worked with the Alcohol Task Force in four main action areas:

1. Excessive alcohol use/abuse & binge drinking
2. Ordinances that address safety & alcohol
3. The infrastructure & safety of Riverside Park
4. Community readiness for cultural change

ASSESSMENT

The collaboration that resulted led to: decreases in large alcohol parties; increases in compliance by retail alcohol outlets; development and delivery of effective prevention education; enhanced safety in waterfront areas; improved community awareness of the problem; and institutionalization of procedures and relationships established to offer long-term solutions to problems related to binge and aggressive drinking.

The project, and the positive results from it, validated the effectiveness and efficiency of police collaboration with diverse stakeholders in the community, especially when addressing a problem that requires resources and expertise not possessed by any one organization.

Beyond Binging: A Community Confronts Its Drinking Problem

In April of 2004, La Crosse Police Department problem-solving team members used their standard problem solving process, the S.A.R.A. (**S**canning, **A**nalysis, **R**esponse and **A**ssessment) model, to initiate a community-based project to address growing public concern over seven drowning deaths and other problems, e.g. injuries, disturbances, and property damage associated with binge and aggressive drinking.

La Crosse is a scenic, college community on the Mississippi River. However, despite its charms, La Crosse has a reputation as a college party town. Visitor guides proudly feature tours of the local brewery that include the “Worlds Largest Six Pack.” Annually, on the last weekend in September, nearly 100,000 beer-drinking revelers visit La Crosse to participate in Oktoberfest USA. Fifty bars are located downtown within a three-block radius (see *Figure 1*). Most of those bars are two blocks from the Mississippi River. In 2004, following the seventh accidental river drowning of an intoxicated college-age man within the past eight years, the community faced a crisis.

SCANNING

“Colleges cannot tackle this problem alone... Only with community support can real progress be achieved.”

Henry Wechsler, Ph.D
Harvard School of Public Health
College Alcohol Study

On April 22, 2004, the La Crosse Police Department hosted a Town Hall Meeting to obtain community input on the scope of the alcohol problem and the factors contributing to alcohol-related problems in the area. Dozens of community members representing a variety of constituencies spoke to the nearly 500 people in attendance. The attendees included representatives from each of the three institutions of higher learning and both major health care organizations located in La Crosse. The area’s CBS network

television affiliate broadcast the event live. The other area print, radio, and television media outlets also reported on the meeting.

The Town Hall meeting was the police department's opportunity to gather information about the problem facing the community. Meeting facilitators wanted to identify the real problem, its underlying causes, and distinguish the problem from its symptoms.

Early on, some participants expressed opinions that seemed to indicate they did not support the La Crosse Police Department, especially its conclusions on the latest drowning deaths. A number of citizens feared that a serial killer was preying on young men in La Crosse. According to them, the La Crosse Police Department and other official agencies were ignoring the "facts" and passing the deaths off as accidents.

For the La Crosse Police Department, the Town Hall meeting was a watershed event.

The majority of public and expert opinion pointed to a community problem: *the high level of binge drinking, and the associated harm caused by binge drinking, that negatively affected the well-being of the community and its citizens.*

Following the meeting, the police department created an internal action team to address the problem. This team included both line and staff officers from each of the major bureaus in the department.

Although the community had identified a problem, the goals related to that problem were not entirely clear. After much consideration, the internal team selected two goals for immediate action:

- Engage and mobilize community resources;

- Enhance community safety and reduce harm linked to acute alcohol abuse.

Community Mobilization

The team recognized that community mobilization was necessary because no one stakeholder had the resources to affect or sustain changes in La Crosse's deeply rooted alcohol traditions. Public institutions, citizens, students, tavern owners, and alcohol experts would have to work together for lasting positive changes to endure.

Community Safety

The tragic drowning deaths negatively influenced citizens' feelings of community safety, and increased community fear. The team knew that the key to reducing fear, which was a symptom of alcohol-related deaths and injuries, lay with reducing binge drinking. The team would have to retrace the path taken by seven young men, prior to their deaths; to find out how they, and hundreds like them on any given weekend in La Crosse, were ending up too drunk to care for themselves.

The police department took immediate interim action by increasing patrol and enforcement within the downtown entertainment district. The team assigned three officers to work during peak times for alcohol-related incidents, based on an analysis of police department data (*Figure 6*), on Tuesday through Saturday nights, from 3:00PM until 2:30AM. This group of officers evolved into a dedicated unit: the Alcohol Compliance and Education (A.C.E.) unit.

Chief Edward Kondracki asked the city's mayor to appoint a task force representing diverse community perspectives. Subsequently, the Mayor created the Alcohol Task Force. Task force membership included:

- The La Crosse Police Department
- The La Crosse Community Foundation
- All three institutions of higher learning in La Crosse
- The United Way
- The City Council
- The Tavern League
- The Coulee Council on Addiction
- The State Assembly
- Private citizens appointed to the task force

The Alcohol Task Force, with input from the police department's A.C.E. team, established four primary objectives with a timeline (see C 1-3) to achieve these objectives by 2010:

1. Increase awareness of the dangers of excessive alcohol use and binge drinking;
2. Establish ordinances that address public safety and alcohol-related issues;
3. Assess and improve infrastructure and safety in the downtown and riverfront areas;
4. Assess community readiness for cultural change.

From the onset, it was clear that the Alcohol Task Force would focus on three distinct action areas: data collection, public and physical safety, and extreme abuse of alcohol, including binge drinking.

Analysis

The police department's team took two paths: first through membership on an Alcohol Task Force and second by conducting analysis to identify opportunities for immediate action. The police team conducted a review of the literature on binge drinking and

efforts underway in other communities to reduce the harm caused by excessive drinking. (See *References, B 2-5*) The information and data examined included:

- police statistics and the efficacy of past responses by the police department;
- national and local alcohol trends, especially among college age adults;
- hospital data related to drinking;
- an environmental scan of the affected area;
- best practices for reducing binge drinking and high-risk behaviors associated with aggressive drinking, local and national data on the impact of alcohol on accidental deaths and injuries;
- durable options in enforcement, intervention, and prevention.

In addition to reviewing scientific literature and data, the team also analyzed the relationships between offenders, victims, and location, derived from routine activity theory, and illustrated these relationships using a crime triangle (See *figure 2*).

Police Response History

During the previous two decades, alcohol consumption by college students and other young adults in La Crosse had been a significant problem, one that the police department addressed in a traditional, reactive way.

In the bar district, police officers would respond to calls that usually concerned one of three problems: fights, extremely intoxicated persons, and underage drinkers. In each case, officers typically responded by arresting or issuing tickets to offenders and returning to patrol duty.

In off-campus areas, the police sometimes proactively warned prospective “hosts” of planned parties of the legal penalties they might face. Usually, however, the response

was reactive. Police officers would respond to a complaint about a loud party, break it up, and take enforcement action against the host.

In 1993, Chief Kondracki established the innovative University Liaison Officer (U.L.O.) program to improve relations between the police department and staff and students at area colleges. The U.L.O. provides prevention education designed to reduce risky or illegal alcohol use by students. The U.L.O. works on a flexible part-time schedule to present on alcohol issues to incoming freshmen and to students before spring break.

The department's normal response to binge drinking and high-risk behaviors by young adults was flawed. The time and effort devoted to reducing alcohol-related problems was almost exclusively incident-driven and symptom-focused. Without operational changes, officers continued to face these same problems repeatedly.

National and Local Trends

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (Higson et al, 2005), alcohol has been a major contributing factor in 1,700 deaths and nearly 700,000 assaults involving U.S. college students annually (Figure 3). Each year, police arrest approximately 110,000 college students for alcohol-related offenses (Higson et al, 2002).

La Crosse has a college student population of 15,000 – a significant number given Wisconsin's rank near the top of college binge-drinking statistics. Wisconsin also has the highest incidence of adult binge drinking in the United States (CDC, 2006). This high rate of alcohol consumption is the inevitable result of regional social traditions, low

prices for alcohol, a large number of bars per capita, and relentless advertising targeting young adults (Weitzman, 2003).

According to Dr. Brenda Rooney, principal alcohol researcher and epidemiologist for the Gundersen Lutheran Medical Foundation, La Crosse has the second highest bar density in the country (Rooney, 2006). This ease of access, coupled with low prices and a disproportionately large alcohol-prone age group, creates a volatile alcohol-rich environment that contributes directly to crime, deaths, and injuries (N.I.A.A.A., 2007).

An internal study of alcohol consumption by the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse (UW-L) revealed that 32% of male students had six or more drinks the last time they “partied”. Based on UW-L enrollment, that means 1,140 young men at one of La Crosse’s three post-secondary institutions had passed the “binge” threshold of five drinks at one sitting within the previous month.

Best Practices

The A.C.E. team consulted with experts and reviewed research on effective, evidence-based strategies for reducing binge and aggressive drinking. The team wanted to identify validated, effective solutions proven by either research or use in other communities.

According to the N.I.A.A.A., effective solutions include: enforcement of drinking age laws; restrictions on alcohol retail outlet density; mandatory beverage server training; compliance checks on retail outlets; and beer keg registration requirements (N.I.A.A.A., 2007)

Community Resources

As major participants in the community's Alcohol Task Force, police team members built relationships with other task force member organizations. University alcohol experts and medical alcohol-abuse centers provided a wealth of background information that helped the team identify effective, efficient, and enduring solutions. The team augmented this direct information with data and graphs depicting college alcohol trends from national and local sources.

Benchmarking during this phase consisted of interviews with representatives from Winona, Minnesota, a small college city that resembles La Crosse in many ways, and Madison, Wisconsin. Madison is much larger than La Crosse but faces similar challenges: a college age population that is disproportionately large; a defined area of high bar density; and a significant problem with alcohol-related arrests and injuries.

RESPONSE

Based on information compiled during the analytical phase, the team and task force defined two key terms: binge drinking and aggressive drinking.

The task force and team adopted the N.I.A.A.A. definition of *binge drinking*:

A "binge" is a pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration (B.A.C.) to 0.08 percent or above. For the typical adult, this pattern corresponds to consuming 5 or more drinks for males, or 4 or more drinks for females, in about 2 hours.

(N.I.A.A.A., 2007)

The analysis process identified another concern: the incidents affecting public safety most frequently in La Crosse involved drunken people whose alcohol consumption far exceeded the definition of binge drinking. Their drinking went beyond binging. The term *aggressive drinking* refers to this extreme form of alcohol abuse.

The Alcohol Task Force focused on four alcohol-related objectives. The goal of the La Crosse Police Department's A.C.E. team was to develop an action plan designed to support task force objectives. Solutions considered by the team included:

- Implementation of Social Detox: a non-medical alternative to involuntary hospitalization;
- Increased patrols in trouble "hot spots";
- Strict enforcement of laws, e.g. overconsumption and underage drinking laws;
- Implementation of Responsible Beverage Server training;
- Participation in all relevant committees formed to address alcohol issues.

The A.C.E. Team identified and considered solutions in addition to those proposed by the Alcohol Task Force including:

- Promotion of a new Public Intoxication Ordinance;
- Remedial education for individuals charged with public intoxication;
- Increased activity U.L.O. to facilitate collaboration between all three colleges;
- More frequent tasked patrols of the riverfront area adjoining the downtown;
- Compliance checks on bars and beverage servers;
- Improved service and increased ridership on Safe Ride buses.

The A.C.E. team also recognized that mobilizing the community to address the issue of aggressive drinking was a top priority. The team agreed that the total number of new programs involving community partners would be one benchmark of success.

Accordingly, the team focused its efforts on implementing the proposed solutions.

By this time, police department command had reassigned the A.C.E. team. Their primary responsibilities were to focus on alcohol related compliance and educational efforts. A.C.E. officers had the flexibility to work any hours between 3:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m. This flexible schedule freed them to participate in community meetings, to conduct enforcement, and to provide education.

University Liaison Officer – Tri Campus Group

The U.L.O. had extensive experience with each of the three institutions of higher learning in La Crosse by virtue of his position. He served as a catalyst for the creation of the Tri-Campus group. The Tri-campus Group convened as a coalition to help change the culture of high-risk drinking, especially among college students. Student and administrator representatives from all three local colleges meet monthly to address issues affecting students and the community.

Safe Ride

The Safe Ride program is a transportation initiative intended to provide students a safe alternative to driving or walking from the downtown area back to campus housing areas. Although Safe Ride had been operating for a few years prior to the A.C.E. team's formation, the team recommended relocating pickup and drop-off points to increase ridership and to reduce vandalism along pedestrian routes (Hingson, 2005).

Operation River Watch

Operation River Watch began as an initiative staffed by La Crosse Police Department personnel to patrol areas along the Mississippi River on weekends during late tavern hours in order to prevent injuries and drowning. The U.L.O. expanded Operation River Watch by including volunteers from student and other civic organizations. The police department provides equipment such as flashlights, reflective vests, and cell phones for volunteers, as well as police department personnel for support.

New Ordinances

According to research (Hingson, 2002, Wagenaar, 1993), keg registration and responsible server ordinances have been effective in reducing the frequency and size of large parties in many communities.

Beer Keg Registration Ordinance

The team proposed and helped gain city council support for an ordinance requiring retail outlets to maintain a registry of beer kegs sold. Retailers record the unique serial numbers from each keg and verify the names and ages of purchasers. Monitoring beer keg sales makes it easier to prosecute those who sell or provide beer at large private parties -- especially those serving underage drinkers.

Responsible Server Training

The A.C.E. team developed and delivered a curriculum for beverage-server training designed to enhance bar compliance with mandated sober-server rules, improved detection of underage persons, and prevention of service to visibly intoxicated persons.

Public Intoxication Ordinance

The team proposed a new ordinance targeting individuals who were extremely intoxicated and behaving contrary to public safety and order. The team recognized that successful passage of the ordinance required community support from students, tavern owners, and the public at large. Many citizens were concerned that the police would use the Public Intoxication Ordinance indiscriminately to target anyone who had been drinking.

To alleviate these concerns, A.C.E. officers received specialized training from Dr. Debra Murray of Viterbo University on evidence-based education and motivational interviewing techniques. Ultimately, the team developed a two-hour class for violators as an option to paying fines. This remedial option became crucial during the ensuing public debate about the proposed ordinance. Having a non-punitive, educational option for offenders validated the police department's philosophy, which was *to prevent the next offense from occurring*.

Retail Outlet Compliance Checks

In accordance with best practice (McKnight, 1994), A.C.E. officers tested compliance by sending civilian volunteers and plainclothes officers into bars to observe door identification checks and server practices. The compliance team included one person under the legal drinking age. Compliance inspectors conducted checks during various times of the year, at bars throughout the city.

ASSESSMENT

The results of this collaborative community effort far exceeded initial expectations.

These success stories include improvements in legislation, peer intervention, personal responsibility, and community outreach and education (Table 1).

Tri Campus Collaboration

Students and staff at the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, Viterbo University, and Western Technical College united to form a group to address their common concerns with alcohol issues. The group is permanent, with ongoing support from students, the police department, and school administrations. The group administers the Safe Ride program.

In most cases, students have come up with innovative ideas for reducing aggressive alcohol consumption. For example, a group of university marketing students developed the “Safe La Crosse” campaign that raised awareness about alcohol’s harmful impact on student safety. The class followed the campaign with research showing the intended audience, college students, recalled campaign messages. This impact exceeded national averages when compared with other awareness campaigns.

Safe Ride

The Safe Ride/U-Pass is a partnership between La Crosse Mass Transit Utility (MTU) and local universities to provide bus service free of charge on weekends until bars close. The program continues to evolve based on students’ needs. The U.L.O. has been actively involved with the program since its inception. He continues to provide

advice to the Tri Campus group on ways of improving ridership. Since 2004, ridership increased 16% to more than 50,000 students each year. La Crosse Police Department statistics show a 31% decrease in vandalism complaints (2003-2007) along the route served by the Safe Ride program.

Operation River Watch

Operation River Watch is a partnership between the police department, college student organizations, and other civic groups that patrol along the Mississippi River on weekends. Since 2006, Operation River Watch has intercepted 42 extremely intoxicated individuals who were walking toward the nearby Mississippi River. An analysis of La Crosse's river drowning problem by the FBI Behavioral Sciences Unit concluded that, "without the presence of the patrol, several of these individuals may have ended up in the Mississippi River."

The transition from relying solely on departmental resources to volunteer staffing saved money and staff time for the police department, while maintaining a high level of service to the community.

Beer Keg Registration Ordinance

Since the inception of the Beer Keg Registration Ordinance in 2006, the number of beer kegs purchased decreased by 48%. Police department statistics show 39% decrease in large parties (i.e. 10 or more citations are issued at a single location) and a 12% decrease in underage drinking violations. With the decrease, the police department gained time to focus enforcement resources on the remaining parties. According to enforcement teams in the campus periphery, the average number of attendees at parties has also decreased as a result.

Sober Server Ordinance

Improved bar compliance through mandating sober-server rules, improving detection of underage persons, and preventing service to visibly intoxicated persons has also been successful.

The training curriculum developed by the A.C.E. team receives high marks from servers in post-class evaluations. Additionally, servers report a much higher degree of confidence in their abilities to identify underage and intoxicated individuals and to respond appropriately.

Public Intoxication Ordinance

The La Crosse Police Department took a holistic approach in its response to the Public Intoxication Ordinance by including education and prevention training. Enforcement of the ordinance has led to more opportunities to educate offenders and members of the public about the effects of public intoxication on the community. Consequently, the police department has earned widespread public support for its enforcement of the Public Intoxication Ordinance.

One of the best examples of this support comes from persons charged under the ordinance who have subsequently attended Alcohol Education classes. In anonymous evaluations, attendees overwhelmingly praise the course and A.C.E. instructors, while reporting improved awareness and skills to change their alcohol consumption habits.

During the first year of ordinance enforcement, 171 violators attended Alcohol Education class. Of these, only one has reoffended. Meanwhile, 22 of 78 violators who

did not attend Alcohol Education reoffended. Without Alcohol Education, offenders were 47 times more likely to repeat their offenses.

A recent survey conducted on campus showed that 90% of respondents support the ordinance. The La Crosse Common Council voted unanimously to continue the Public Intoxication Ordinance after its initial one-year trial period.

Compliance Checks

During the first three years of compliance checks, inspectors found that most licensed alcohol outlets were in compliance, i.e. most bars check patrons' ages, have trained door and server staff, and are careful about serving visibly intoxicated patrons. A police department study shows an improvement, from 54% to 94%, in compliance over the four years following implementation of A.C.E. inspections (Figure 4). The ultimate goal is to improve compliance to 100%, i.e. to have all retail outlets doing their utmost to support alcohol laws.

Community Collaboration

In the past, community reaction to alcohol problems resulted in a series of ad hoc groups responding to the "crisis of the moment." La Crosse and the La Crosse Police Department now benefit from a comprehensive array of efficient and effective partnerships that are committed to working strategically to implement lasting solutions to alcohol-related problems (Figure 5).

In many cases, private businesses joined forces with official agencies to help. For example, during Oktoberfest 2007, a local business donated office space in the downtown bar district to accommodate an aid station for revelers who were sick, injured,

or lost. Alcohol abuse specialists, EMS, fire department First Responders, and police officers worked together on site. During the busy weekend hours of the festival 81 individuals received help at the aid station.

Challenges

Despite the many achievements discussed above, some problems remained, either because solutions were not feasible or because they lacked sufficient support from lead agencies. For example, Social Detox, an alternative to formal medical intervention, has support from alcohol treatment organizations, but lacks funding. Infrastructure changes have been delayed by a lack of consensus among public works planners, the Alcohol Task Force, and citizens.

Bar density concerns have not been addressed. Although cooperation between A.C.E., the Alcohol Task Force, and the Tavern League (bar owners) has been largely positive, the Tavern League members are reluctant to accept zoning restrictions on their businesses.

These few ongoing challenges aside, the A.C.E. team and its community partners have accomplished every task and objective undertaken by the La Crosse Police Department.

Summary

The department's comprehensive response brought the problem of aggressive drinking to the forefront, raising awareness and ultimately creating community-based response. Public agencies, non-governmental organizations, private entities, and volunteers have joined in to find and to deliver durable solutions to La Crosse's drinking problem.

The city of La Crosse has benefitted from these ongoing, permanent relationships, including better working relationships between police and media organizations. The public now receives timely and accurate information on alcohol related incidents, and ongoing prevention efforts.

A several police agencies in Wisconsin have contacted A.C.E. team members for information on lessons learned and insights gained during the project. Wisconsin college communities are especially eager to consult with the La Crosse Police Department, including Racine, Eau Claire, Milwaukee, and Madison, one of the La Crosse project's original benchmark cities.

In 2007, the La Crosse Police Department received a "Success Story Recognition Award" from the U.S. Department of Justice. Project team member Drew Gavrilos accepted the award for the La Crosse Police Department at the Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center's National Conference.

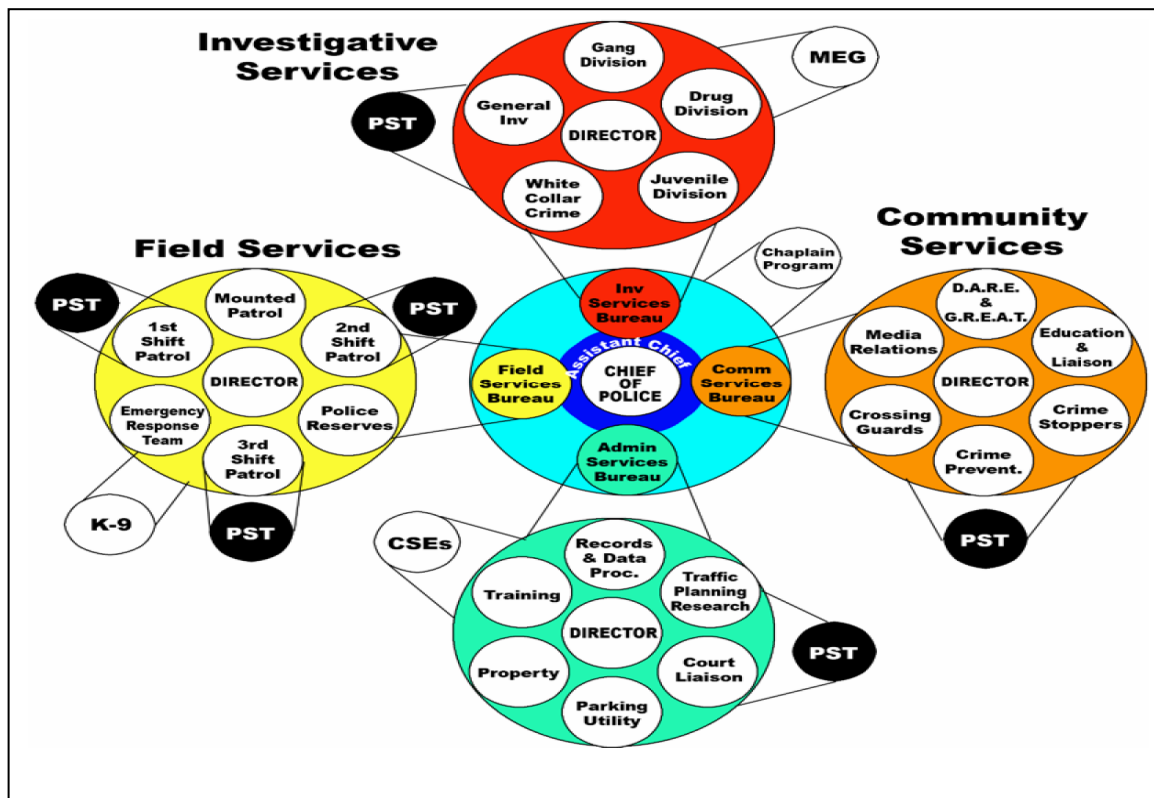
The La Crosse Police Department has permanently changed its operating procedures: the A.C.E. Team is a fixed, funded unit within the agency. As such, the team will continue to expand its knowledge and apply lessons learned in ongoing efforts to reduce the harm caused by aggressive alcohol consumption.

Based on the number of requests from other communities and police agencies, La Crosse has become a benchmark of success in the area of community response to alcohol problems.

Agency and Officer Information

The City of La Crosse Police Department has found benefit in developing a conceptual organizational structure that demonstrates leadership at the heart of the organization. The traditional police organization structure, as represented in a line chart, sends the signal of top down control. Such organizational charts have looked the same since the industrial revolution.

The City of La Crosse Police Department is committed to Community Problem Oriented Policing (C.P.O.P.) and participatory management. A visual of this commitment is our circle organization chart which reflects institutionalized problem solving teams.



The department's four major bureaus: Field Services, Investigative Services, Community Services and Administrative Services are shown as interlinked circles with problem solving teams (PST) assigned to each. The problem solving teams are made up of volunteers and meet periodically or as needed to address problems of their choosing. The success of line problem solving teams has resulted in less dependence on senior command staff and serves to empower line personnel.

Every member of the City of La Crosse Police Department received training in problem oriented policing and problem solving as part of the department's transition to community oriented policing in the mid 1990's. The department has since intergraded POP training and the SARA Model as a regular component of field training along with

periodic updates for line personnel. The field training component includes a comprehensive training in

Scanning:

- define the problem
- learn more about the problem
- verify the problem
- and taking immediate action.

Analysis:

- determine the root cause of problems,
- data oriented
- examine the problem from the perspective of actors, actions, and reactions.

Response:

- eliminate
- reduce the frequency
- reduce the severity
- improve the processing
- clarify responsibility for the problem

Assessment:

- evaluate the solution
- identify criteria for success and failure
- evaluate methodology,

The field training course includes the philosophy and history of community oriented policing including the importance of developing community partnerships.

Officers utilized the Community Oriented Policing COPS “Problem Oriented Guides for Police Problem Solving Tools” to help manage and direct this problem solving initiative. The team identified the success of training the community in the use of the SARA Model as an important issue in the process. The team found that community leaders were willing to utilize the SARA Model and readily accepted the process.

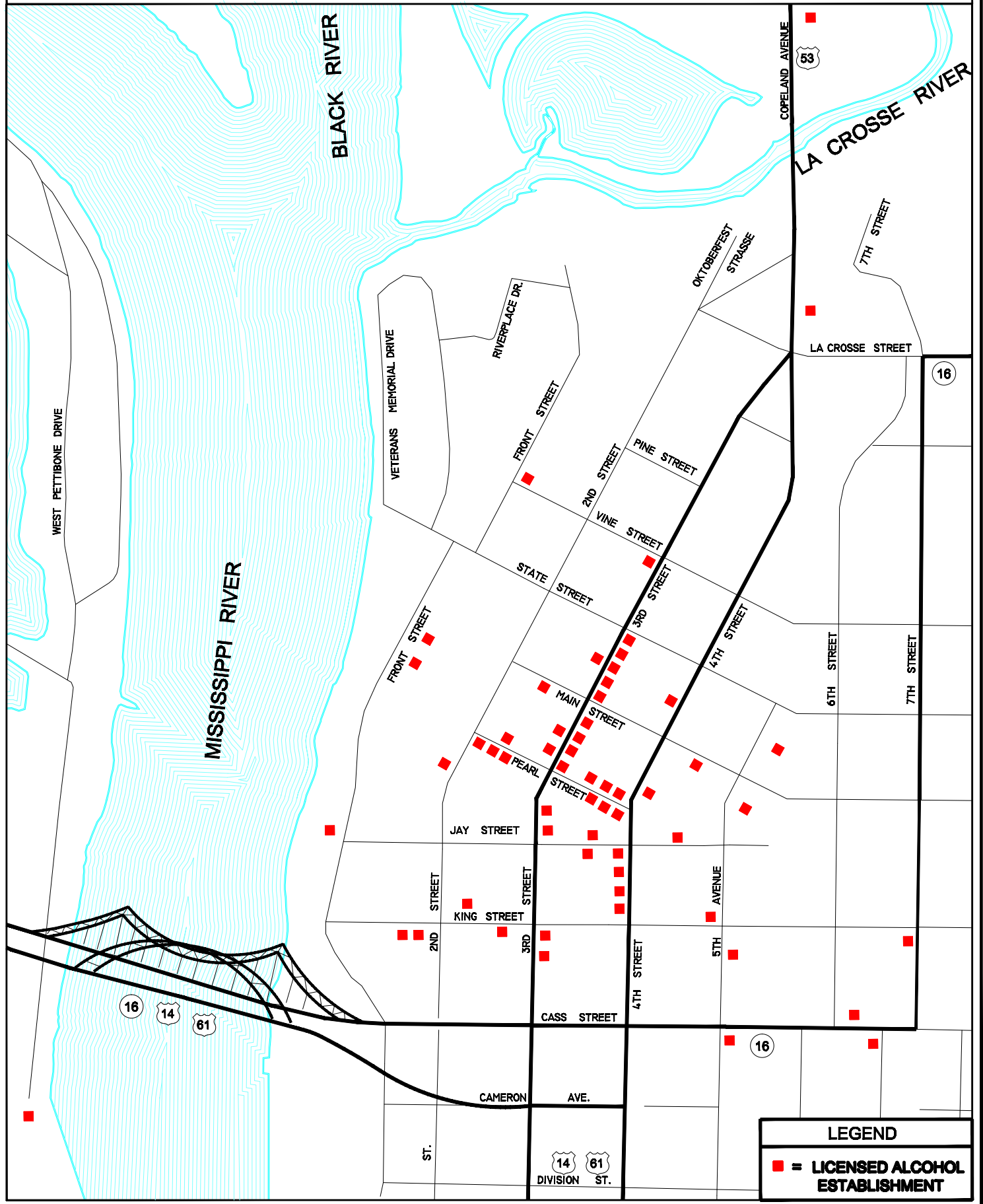
The police department team found that new resources beyond the existing department budget became available in the form of the community and other agencies both public and private. The combined resources committed to this community wide effort is self sustaining and consistent with the goals and roles of a wide variety of community based organizations.

Contact person:

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Figure 1

DOWNTOWN LA CROSSE

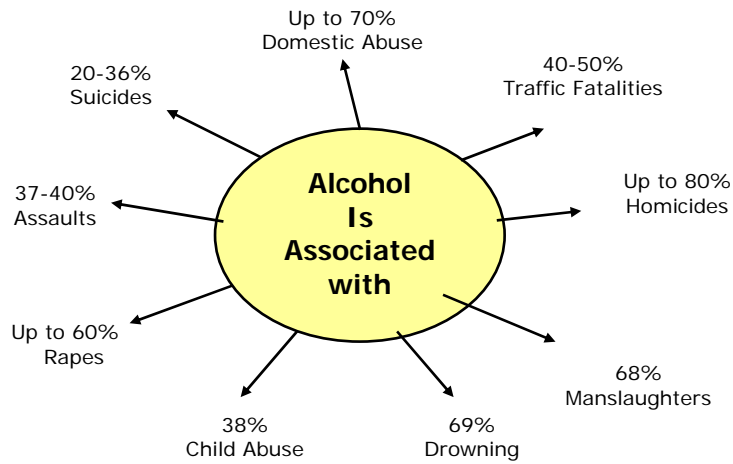


Crime Triangle



Felson & Clarke 1998

Figure 3



Source: Public Health Strategies to Reduce Alcohol-Related Illness, Injury and Death in Wisconsin, Milwaukee Academy of Medicine, 1998

Figure 4

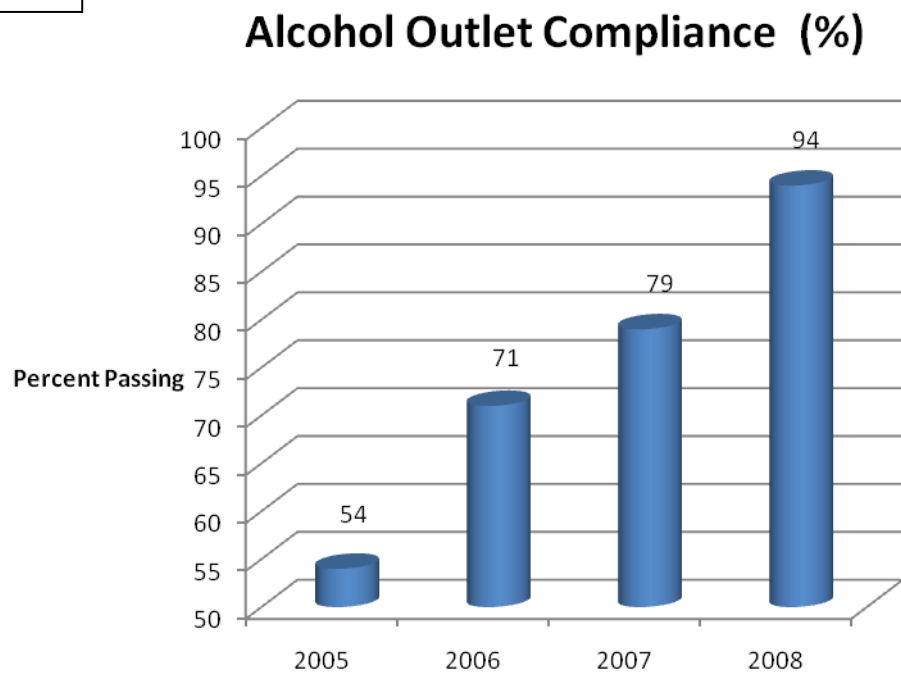


Figure 5

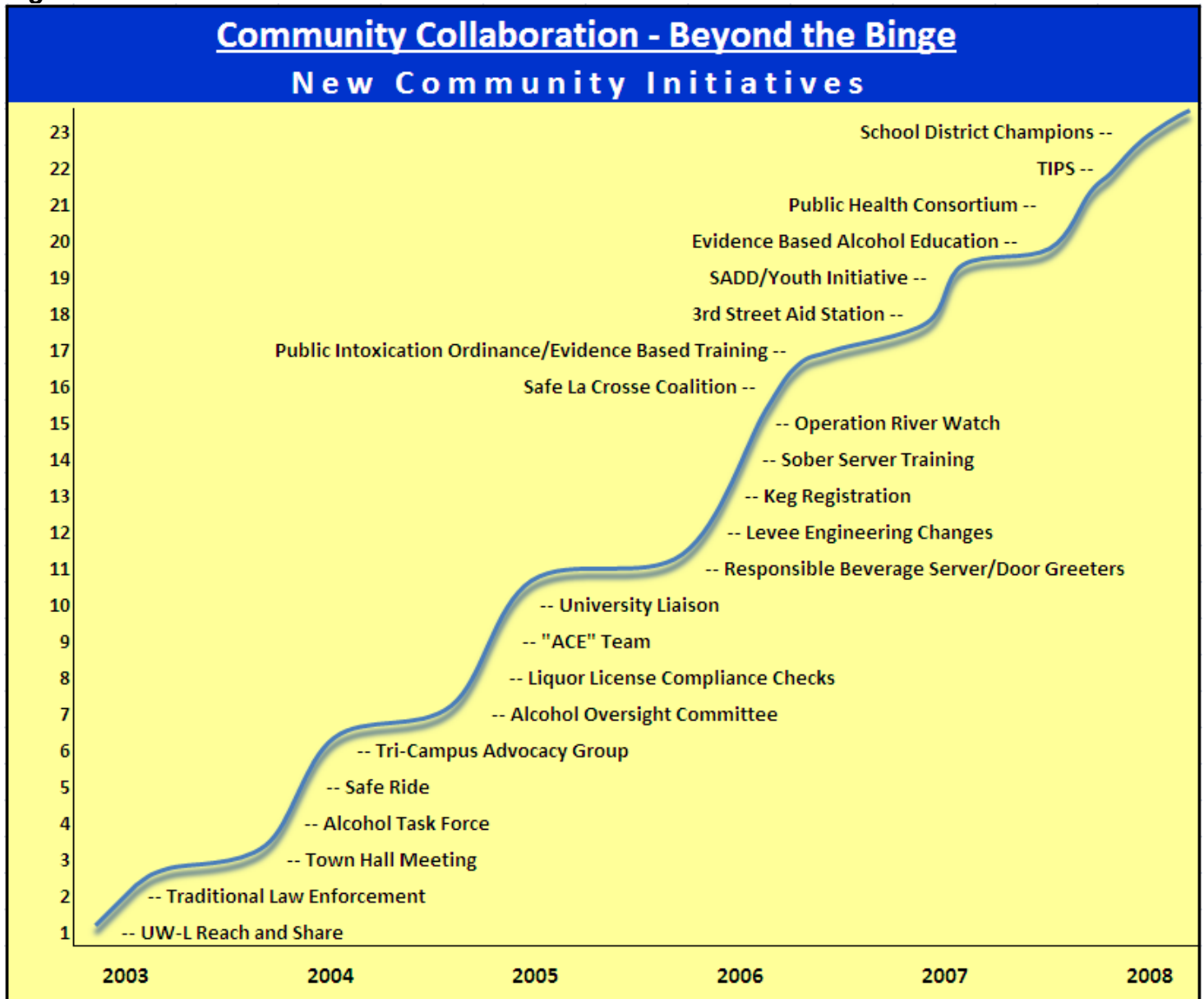


TABLE 1

Alcohol Problem-Solving Project

Response	Source (Efficacy)	Project Goal	Assessment
University Liaison Officer	La Crosse Police Department	Establish coordination of efforts by three higher education institutions.	A permanent Tri-Campus Coalition formed in 2005.
Safe Ride	UW-La Crosse, La Crosse Police Department, Higson et al, 2005.	Increased ridership to reduce noise and vandalism along pedestrian routes.	Ridership increased 16% to 50,000 riders each year. Vandalism on route decreased 31%. (2003-2007)
Operation River Watch	La Crosse Police Department	Prevent accidental drowning in Riverside area.	Police and volunteers partnered to prevent 42 intoxicated individuals from entering high-risk areas.
Keg Registration	Wagenaar et al, 1993	New Keg Registration law to reduce large parties and underage drinking.	Police department data shows a 39% decrease in large parties and 12% decrease in underage violations from 2005-2007
Public Intoxication Laws	N.I.A.A.A. 1999	New ordinance and education program for offenders.	New ordinance enacted 2006, with a 97% reduction in reoffending following educational intervention.
Beverage Server Training	N.I.A.A.A. 1999	New ordinance and training course for retail alcohol servers.	Doubled voluntary compliance. Training evaluations show improved competence by servers.
Retail Compliance Checks	Lewis et al, 1996	100% compliance to prevent serving to underage or visibly intoxicated persons.	Compliance by retail outlets increased from 54% to 94% (2005-2008).

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Hingson RW, Howland J. (2002) Comprehensive community interventions to promote health: Implications for college-age drinking problems. Journal of Studies on Alcohol Supplement 14:226-240.

McKnight, A., and Streff, F. (1994) The effect of enforcement upon service of alcohol to intoxicated patrons of bars and restaurants. Accidental Analysis and Prevention 26 (1): 79-88.

Nelson, D, Maimi T, Brewer R, Bolen J, Wells H. (2004) Metropolitan-Area Estimates of Binge Drinking in the United States. American Journal of Public Health 94. 663-671

N.I.A.A.A. (2007) College Drinking Prevention Task Force. National Institutes of Health. http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/NIAAACollegeMaterials/TaskForce/References_00.

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Wagenaar et al (1993): Where and how adolescents obtain alcoholic beverages. Public Health Reports: v108 n4: 459-464

Wechsler H, Lee JE, Kuo M, Seibring M, Nelson TF, Lee HP. (2002) Trends in college binge drinking during a period of increased prevention efforts: Findings from four Harvard School of Public Health study surveys, 1993-2001. Journal of American College Health 50(5):203-217.

Weitzman ER, Folkman A, Folkman KL, Wechsler H. (2003) The relationship of alcohol outlet density to heavy and frequent drinking and drinking-related problems among college students at eight universities ; *Health and Place* ; 9(1):1-6.

Literature Review: Binge Drinking

High density of alcohol outlets around campuses correlates with higher levels of frequent and heavy drinking and drinking-related problems including among women, underage students and those who report they were not binge-drinkers in high school but picked up the behavior in college.

- Weitzman ER (2004) [Social Developmental Overview of Heavy Episodic or Binge Drinking Among U.S. College Students](#) *Psychiatric Times.*; (21): 2.

Almost one in four victims of violent crime report that the perpetrator had been drinking prior to committing the violence. Alcohol was involved in 32 to 50 percent of homicides (Spunt, et al., 1995; Goldstein, et al., 1992; Greenfeld, 1998)

- Spunt, B., Brownstein, H., Goldstein, P., Fendrich, M., and Liberty, J. (1995) Drug use by homicide offenders. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 27(2): 125-134.
- Greenfeld, L. (1998) Alcohol and Crime: An analysis of national data on the prevalence of alcohol involvement in crime. Prepared for the Assistant Attorney General's National Symposium on Alcohol Abuse and Crime, Washington DC.
- Goldstein, P., Brownstein, H., and Ryan, P. (1992) Drug related homicide in New York: 1984 and 1988. *Crime Delinquency* 38:459-476.

Roughly one in 20 (4.7%) women reported being raped. Nearly three quarters (72%) of the victims experienced rape while intoxicated. Women who were under 21, were white, resided in sorority houses, used illicit drugs, drank heavily in high school and attended colleges with high rates of heavy episodic drinking were at higher risk of rape while intoxicated.

- Mohler-Kuo M, Dowdall GW, Koss M, Wechsler H. (2004) [Correlates of Rape while Intoxicated in a National Sample of College Women](#) *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*; 65(1): 37-45.

New findings from the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study (CAS) confirm a strong correlation between frequent and risky drinking behavior among students and a high saturation of alcohol outlets—bars and liquor stores—within two miles of their campuses.

- Weitzman ER, Folkman A, Folkman KL, Wechsler H. (2003) The relationship of alcohol outlet density to heavy and frequent drinking and drinking-related problems among college students at eight universities ; *Health and Place.* ; 9(1):1-6.

Neighbors living near college campuses were more likely to report a lowered quality of neighborhood life through such secondhand effects of heavy alcohol use as noise and disturbances, vandalism, drunkenness, vomiting and urination. A path analysis indicated that the number of nearby alcohol outlets was an important factor mediating the relationship between colleges, especially those with high rates of binge drinking, and such secondhand effects. The results suggest that neighborhood disruptions around colleges due to heavy alcohol use may be reduced by limiting the presence of alcohol outlets in those areas, and the marketing practices that this engenders.

- Wechsler H, Lee JE, Hall J, Wagenaar AC, Lee H. (2002) Secondhand Effects of Student Alcohol Use Reported by Neighbors of Colleges: The Role of Alcohol Outlets

Social Science & Medicine; 55(3): 425-435.

We estimate over 1,400 students 18 through 24 in two and four-year colleges died in 1998 from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, including motor vehicle crashes. According to surveys conducted in 1999, in the preceding year over two million of the eight million college students in the United States drove under the influence of alcohol and over three million rode with a drinking driver. Over 500,000 full-time four-year college students were unintentionally injured under the influence of alcohol, and over 600,000 were hit or assaulted by another student who has been drinking.

- Hingson R, Heeren T, Zakocs RC, Kopstein A, Wechsler H. (2002) Magnitude of Alcohol-Related Mortality and Morbidity Among U.S. College Students Ages 18-24 *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*; 63(2): 136-144.

--1 in 5 men reported drinking 10 or more drinks on at least one day (double men's binge-drinking threshold).

--1 in 10 women reported drinking 8 or more drinks on at least one day (double women's binge-drinking threshold).

--Nearly 8 percent of men reported drinking 15 or more drinks on at least one day (triple men's binge-drinking threshold).

--Nearly 2 percent of women reported drinking 12 or more drinks on at least one day (triple women's binge-drinking threshold).

"In my opinion, we could make additional progress toward reducing the harm that alcohol brings to our campuses by shifting some of our focus away from students drinking at or near the binge threshold, and toward the significant number of students that drink at levels well beyond the binge threshold," said White.

- White, A. (2006); Many College Freshmen Drink at Levels Far Beyond the Binge Threshold, *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*; vol 30: pp 1-5.

The results with regard to modifying server behavior are positive and indicate that server interventions shown to be efficacious should be implemented.

- Stephen L. Buka, Isolde J. Birdthistle (1999); Long-Term Effects of a Community-Wide Alcohol Server Training Intervention *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, Vol. 60

"Compliance with the law was measured before and during the enforcement program by the rate at which patrons simulating intoxication were refused service. Refusals of service rose from 17.5 percent before the enforcement program to a peak of 54.3 percent after the first three months of the enforcement intervention. Significantly, the percentage of impaired drivers arrested after leaving bars and restaurants declined from 31.7 percent to 23.3 percent during the same period."

- McKnight, A., and Streff, F. (1994) The effect of enforcement upon service of alcohol to intoxicated patrons of bars and restaurants. *Accidental Analysis and Prevention* 26 (1): 79-88.

“Kegs have been shown to be a major source of alcohol for underage drinkers. The same report indicates that the major factors in underage attendance at keg parties are low price of alcohol and the lack of adult monitoring.”

- Wagenaar et al (1993): Where and how adolescents obtain alcoholic beverages. *Public Health Reports*: v108 n4: 459-464

“Two studies from the mid-1990s found that after compliance checks were conducted, sales to underage patrons reduced from 60-80% to 25-30%.”

- Lewis RK, Paine-Andrews A, Fawcett SB, Francisco VT, Richter KP, Copple B, et al (1996). Evaluating the effects of a community coalition's efforts to reduce illegal sales of alcohol and tobacco products to minors. *Journal of Community Health*, 21(6):429-36
- Preusser DF, Williams AF, Weinstein HB (1994). Policing underage alcohol sales. *Journal of Safety Research*, 25(3):127-33.

“It is important to note here that restrictions on availability of alcohol that are *not* aimed at youth may also be successful in reducing youth access. For example, several studies have found a close link between the density of alcohol outlets and the incidence of violence, including youth violence (Alaniz, Cartmill, & Parker, 1998; Parker & Rebhun, 1995). Alcohol-related problem rates are also associated with alcohol prices (lower prices are associated with more problems), the hours and days of the week that alcohol sales are permitted (more liberal hours and days of sale are associated with an increase in problems), and liquor-by-the-drink regulations (permitting liquor by the drink is associated with increased problems). (See Edwards et al., 1994; Wagenaar & Toomey, 1998.)”

- Alaniz, M., Cartmill, R., & Parker, R. (1998). Immigrants and violence: The importance of neighborhood context. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 20, 155–174.
- Parker, R., & Rebhun, L. (1995). *Alcohol and homicide: A deadly combination of two American traditions*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Edwards, G., Anderson, P., Babor, T. F., Casswell, S., Ferrence, R., Giesbrecht, N., Godfrey, C., Holder, H. D., Lemmens, P., Makela, K., Midanik, L. T., Norstrom, T., Osterberg, E., Romelsjo, A., Room, R., Simpura, J., & Skog, O-J. (1994). *Alcohol policy and the public good*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Toomey, T., Kilian, G., Gehan, J., Perry, C., Jones-Webb, R., & Wagenaar, A. C. (1998). Qualitative assessment of training programs for alcohol servers and establishment managers. *Public Health Reports*, 113, 62–69.

According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics, an examination of bar concentration within the problem area revealed that La Crosse has the highest bar density (number of bars per capita) of any city in the country.

- Rooney, B. (2006) *Evidence-based Strategies to Reduce Alcohol-related Injuries A REVIEW OF THE SCIENCE*. Gundersen Lutheran Medical Foundation. Unpublished.

Recommendations:	Recommended Responsibility:	Timeline:	Metrics:	Cost/Funding:
1. The Taskforce recommends implementing recommendations made in a future commissioned engineering study of the levee and the Pearl Street Walkway. To be considered are signage, lighting, railing, gates, etc. (The Taskforce recognizes that its members do not have the knowledge or expertise of an engineering expert to make recommendations on safety at Riverside Park Levee.)	La Crosse City Council Public Works Engineering Dept Downtown Mainstreet Inc. (DMI) City Vision 2020 Action Committee (CVAC)	Upon completion of the study	Study recommendations	Unknown at this time.
2. Develop a Social Detox (non-medical) Facility that will serve as a resource for law enforcement when working with intoxicated individuals.	Medical Facilities Law Enforcement Health & Human Services Coulee Council on Addictions(harm reduction model)	Fall, 2005	Facility and staffing to provide harm reduction for up to 10 people	TBD Funded by fees charged to individual housed. Start-up grants
3. Increase police patrols in identified "hot spots" and suspected house parties (party patrols).	Law Enforcement	Spring, 2005	Number of patrols Increased enforcement	Reallocation or reassignment CARD Grant
4. Continued enforcement of existing ordinances that minimize high risk drinking, such as: a. Strict enforcement of the legal drinking age. b. Strict enforcement of state laws that prohibit the sale of alcohol to intoxicated persons. c. Issue citations to bars that allow over-consumption. d. Strict enforcement of building codes and connect to license renewal e. Strict enforcement of the posted Riverside Park closing time. f. Enforce building codes on "notorious" house party sites where alcohol is being served. g. Closely monitor the purchase of alcohol for persons under 21.	Law Enforcement La Crosse City Council Inspection Department City Attorney La Crosse County Health Dept.	Immediately	Number of citations Compliance checks	Enforcement costs Funding through fines CARD Grant
5. Establish and/or strengthen ordinances that minimize high risk drinking, such as: a. Increasing fines for underage drinking, house parties and providing alcohol to underage persons. b. Limiting bar density in a geographic area. c. Consistency in assessing fines/sanctions between city and county courts d. Holding both tenants and landlords responsible for disruptive behavior, underage drinking and selling w/o license at house parties. e. Requiring bar owners, sellers and all servers go through Responsible Beverage Server training f. Eliminating alcohol consumption by those serving drinks in licensed facilities. g. Limiting purchase of 2 half barrels (31/27 gallons of beer) per address and approximately 10 gallons or 17.5 liters of liquor or wine. h. Uphold limit of 125 Class B and Class A liquor licenses. (Currently 195 Class A+B licenses in city)	La Crosse City Council La Crosse County City Attorney Planning Dept. Courts	Fall, 2005	Passage of ordinances	Enforcement costs Funding through fines
i. Segregating all liquor sales areas for fermented liquor and spirits to designated check-out area. (One clerk check out for all sales)				
6. Reduce the total number of tavern facilities in the city through renewal process, density standards and attrition. a. Reduce the density/number of bars in any single district. b. Create a moratorium on bars in the central business district now.	Law enforcement City Attorney, Planning Dept. Neighbors	Fall, 2005	Oversight Committee or Tri Campus is invited to provide annual input during the license renewal process and that input is part of the record regardless of renewal/non-renewal of license	
7. Expand the Responsible Beverage Server Training curriculum.	State Legislature Western Wisconsin Technical College	Fall, 2005	Enhanced curriculum	

	Responsibility:			
<p>8. Recognize bar owners and outlets (Class A & B) that operate at a higher standard to discourage high risk drinking by creating a Gold Star Server/Seller Recognition program.</p> <p>Gold Star Servers/Seller may:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Require all servers/sellers go through an expanded Responsible Server training. Check for false ID's using scanner technology. Standardize drink servings. Limit sales of discounted pitchers. Provide food in order to slow the absorption of alcohol into the bloodstream. 	<p>La Crosse City Council DMF City Attorney Tri-Campus Advocacy Group</p>	Fall 2005	<p>Number of Gold Star Award bars/outlets Decrease in alcohol related incidents</p>	<p>Costs of plaques/certificates</p> <p>Pursue grants to fund ID scanner technology.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Regulate keg sales. Require a manager be on premises at all times. Eliminate promotions, contests, and games that reward patrons with cheap alcohol. Promote games that offer food as a reward. Eliminate alcohol consumption by those serving drinks in licensed facilities. Do not offer drink specials that encourage irresponsible drinking. 				
<p>9. Standardize a parental/legal guardian notification process of underage individuals cited in alcohol and other drug (AODA) related offenses. This will ensure that all agencies providing assessments are consistent in performing parental notification.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Notification is to be used in a developmental manner and part of a comprehensive educational process. 	<p>Coulee Council on Addictions Courts Law Enforcement Other agencies or individuals providing underage drinking assessments</p>	Fall 2005	<p>Decrease in underage drinking offenses.</p>	None
<p>10. Request higher education institutions to review their alcohol policies and work to develop consistent enforcement and intervention.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot a reporting mechanism between the police department and colleges for arrests/citations. Conduct parental notification in a developmental manner as part of a comprehensive education process in conjunction with assessment referrals cited in 9. 	Viterbo, UWL, WWTC	Fall 2005	<p>Decrease in alcohol related disciplinary issues.</p>	
<p>11. Keg Registration in City of La Crosse Keg registration would track the number and location of large quantities of beer.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend to La Crosse County Health & Human Services Bd. Further recommendations to State of Wisconsin 	<p>La Crosse City Council County Board City Attorney</p> <p>Eventually throughout the State of Wisconsin Area legislators, senators, boards of health and city councils secure state leadership for enactment.</p> <p>On a local level, the registration log is maintained by Public Health.</p>	<p>City of La Crosse – July, 2005 La Crosse County July, 2005</p> <p>Legislation preliminary analysis in 2005 with enactment in 2006</p>	<p>Passage of legislation and implementation as a pilot project by 2006.</p>	<p>TBD Deposit per keg/could be self funded/as a statewide demonstration project. Grant funding</p>
<p>12. Enforce Class A and Class B liquor licensing. Maximum fines for those:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Failing to meet building codes for health and safety. Operating with no licensed bartenders on premises. Serving to intoxicated individuals. Selling to minors. Selling without a license. 	<p>Law enforcement Building inspection & Licensing entities Vendors City Attorney</p>	December, 2005	<p>Increase fine revenue and decrease underage drinking and selling alcohol to minors. Compliance checks</p>	<p>Funded by increased fine revenue and reallocation of law enforcement personnel</p>
<p>13. Develop an ordinance or request voluntary compliance to eliminate all late night (after 10 PM) drink specials. Examples include: "two for ones", "fish bowls", midnight madness, all you care to drink specials, free drinks for birthday guests.</p>	<p>Tavern Owners City Attorney</p>	Fall, 2005	<p>Provide notice to all Class B licensed facilities and monitor the number of offenses. Interview and follow up on</p>	<p>Reallocate law enforcement as needed</p>
			<p>offenses as reported Collect consistent data for public reporting</p>	
<p>14. Assess the attitudes and perceptions of the community concerning alcohol</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the readiness for change and education of the community. Integrate readiness assessment into a comprehensive education plan. 	<p>United Way COMPASS Group</p>	Spring 2006	<p>Survey completed and results promulgated widely to the community.</p>	<p>Grant funding Corporate support</p>

Recommendations:	Recommended Responsibility:	Timeline:	Metrics:	Cost/Funding:
<p>15. Develop and implement a comprehensive Community Education Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Direct educational efforts to address the culture and attitudes of alcohol abuse of the entire community. b. Coordinate with existing educational programs in the community, i.e. the colleges, K-12, Coulee Council on Addictions, etc. c. Develop PSAs & feature stories on prevention. 	<p>United Way Coulee Council on Addictions Area K-12 Schools Tri-Campus Advocacy Group Viterbo, UWL, WWTC Media</p>	<p>Winter 2005</p>	<p>Increased awareness and knowledge of alcohol and alcohol-related issues</p>	<p>Grant funding Donations</p>
<p>16. Develop and implement environmental strategies to support long term cultural change. These strategies include the development of other forms of entertainment and social activity that do not focus on alcohol.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Address "mixed messages" through education, public policy and practice changes. b. Limit Oktoberfest to one weekend or have the second weekend alcohol free. 	<p>Mayor La Crosse City Council Business community Tri-Campus Advocacy Group</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Decreased incidents of alcohol abuse and related negative consequences. The perception of a city that is not rooted in alcohol or its abuse—Party Town</p>	<p>Support of local businesses and economic development.</p>
<p>17. Develop PSAs on Cold Water Drowning and an implementation plan to distribute them.</p>	<p>Police & Fire Depts. Local Media Coulee Council on Alcohol K-12</p>	<p>Fall, 2005</p>	<p>Increased awareness and decrease in river incidents.</p>	<p>In kind public service of local media outlets</p>
<p>18. Recommend the formation of an oversight group or coalition charged by the City Council to ensure that recommendations of the task force are carried out and that a community wide plan to address the harmful use and abuse of alcohol in the City of La Crosse is put into place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. This would include involvement and partnering in the area of health, education, economic development, Class A & B license granting/ renewal review, and policy & ordinance development/review. b. The "Coalition" could include representatives of law enforcement, city and county leadership, local taverns, campus leadership, landlords, advocacy groups, neighborhood associations, AODA Services, health care providers, municipal courts and business leaders. c. Establish a city liaison position to work with all constituencies and ensure that recommendations of the Task Force and the Tri-Campus Advocacy Group are implemented and coordinated. (i.e. Madison model) 	<p>Mayor La Crosse City Council Tri-Campus Advocacy Group La Crosse County Public Health</p> <p>Mayor La Crosse City Council Business Community Advocacy Groups United Way COMPASS</p>	<p>Fall 2005</p> <p>Fall 2006</p>	<p>Active and viable group is formed with semi-annual reports to city leadership</p> <p>Recommendations are reviewed, considered and enacted. Increased communications and education of the community.</p>	<p>Contributions of stakeholders and possible grant funding</p> <p>Reallocation or reassignment of a position or part of a position</p>
<p>19. Develop consistent reporting criteria and tools to aid in the collection and display of high risk alcohol consumption related data. Use this data to monitor the cost to the community of high risk drinking, to identify additional community needs, and the effectiveness of initiatives recommended in this document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Add coding to police reports that indicate when an incident is alcohol related, i.e. domestic abuse, assault, injury, drowning, etc. b. Track number and costs of alcohol related treatment by healthcare providers. c. Establish baseline data from which to measure effectiveness of initiatives. Such as: existing bar density, underage drinking citations, alcohol related injury/arrests/assault, etc. d. Display data using charts, graphs and GIS mapping to illustrate baseline data and trends during implementation of these recommendations. 	<p>City Liaison position Law Enforcement Healthcare providers United Way COMPASS</p>	<p>Immediately</p>	<p>Semi-Annual Reports to the public and where requested.</p>	

Chief sets meeting on river deaths

By DAN SPRINGER
La Crosse Tribune

City officials hope a special "town hall" meeting Thursday evening will help calm fears and end rumors that a serial killer is drowning college-aged men in the Mississippi River.

La Crosse Police Chief Ed Kondracki set the open meeting for 7 p.m. Thursday in the Central High School auditorium.

Kondracki said he called the meeting to discuss circumstances surrounding the death of University of Wisconsin-La Crosse student Jared Dion, whose body was pulled from the Mississippi near Riverside Park on Thursday, and the six other young men who have died in the river since 1997.

A panel will give an overview of



Kondracki

Examiner John Steers, the state Division of Criminal Investigation, Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center and representatives from the UW-L, Viterbo University and Western Wisconsin Technical College.

Kondracki said he knows some people will remain convinced the men were victims of a serial killer

the cases, then take questions from the public, Kondracki said.

The panel will include members of the La Crosse Police Department, La Crosse County Medical

See MEETING, A-2

Kondracki suggests barrier, cameras

By DAN SPRINGER
La Crosse Tribune

With seven young men drowning in the Mississippi River in the past seven years, La Crosse Police Chief Ed Kondracki said now is the time for the city to take steps to make sure no more lives are lost in the river.

In a letter Monday to La Crosse Mayor John Medinger, Kondracki renewed his concerns about the drinking culture in downtown La Crosse and suggested ways the city could reduce intoxication and make the riverfront safer.

Among his suggestions were installing a

See SUGGESTIONS, A-2

An open, town hall-type meeting to address concerns about Mississippi River deaths is scheduled for 7 p.m. Thursday in the Central High School auditorium.

MEETING WILL ADDRESS FEARS

From A-1

still on the loose. But he hopes the session will calm most people's fears about the deaths.

"What is troublesome is that the public doesn't always understand what goes into our investigations," Kondracki said. "There are many people who think a couple of hours go into an investigation, not knowing the hundreds of people who are interviewed and the days and weeks that go into an investigation."

Even though the initial investigation found Dion was highly intoxicated when he drowned and foul play was not suspected, Kondracki said the case remains open.

"The investigation is not over; it continues well beyond that. That is simply an initial finding based on the obvious evidence," Kondracki said. "In no way does that mean the investigation is over."

City hall officials have been flooded with phone calls, e-mails and letters in the past week, from people complaining police were too quick to rule out a serial killer, Mayor John Medinger said.

"I'm 99 percent sure the police department is correct, which is a pretty high percentage. But, since no one was there when (Dion) went into the river, there is no way to know for sure," Medinger said Monday.

"Do I think there's a serial killer out there? No. Am I

absolutely sure? No. Who can be?"

In a story in the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel this weekend, Medinger was quoted as saying: "Most people here do believe that there is something going on," then added, "My wife thinks it's a serial killer. She's totally convinced."

Medinger also said the disagreement has caused a "disconnect" between the community and the police, and the city needs to find a way to help the public understand the evidence in the cases.

Kondracki called Medinger's comments disappointing and said some members of his staff were offended by the mayor's suggestion the department is disconnected from the community.

"Our officers consider themselves part of the community, not removed from the community they serve," Kondracki said.

He questioned why Medinger's wife is certain a killer is running free.

"He says she is totally convinced, yet she has never asked to see the police reports. She has never talked to me. She has never talked to Captain (Mitch) Brohmer. And, she has never talked to the DCI (Division of Criminal Investigation)."

"It makes me wonder what she bases her conclusions on."

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"La Crosse's drinking culture is 150 years old. It didn't come up overnight, and we shouldn't expect that we can solve it in two weeks. We are not going to do knee-jerk reactions."

JOHN MEDINGER, La Crosse mayor

Mayor to request alcohol task force

By JOAN KENT
La Crosse Tribune

Mayor John Medinger said Monday he will ask the La Crosse Common Council to create a task force to look at ways to minimize the effects of excessive alcohol consumption in La Crosse.

Police Chief Ed Kondracki asked for the task force after University of Wisconsin-La Crosse student Jared Dion drowned in the Mississippi

River off Riverside Park earlier this month.

He is suggesting the task force have up to 15 people, five of whom could be nonresidents. Students probably would be included as well, he said. The task force would report back to the council in 120 days.

"La Crosse's drinking culture is 150 years old," Medinger said. "It didn't come up overnight, and we shouldn't expect that we can solve it in

two weeks. We are not going to do knee-jerk reactions."

He said he will suggest that all ideas from the council, such as 1st District council member Andrea Richmond's call for a railing along the river, go to the task force first rather than piecemeal to the council.

The task force's mission will be open-ended — to look at ideas already raised, such as surveillance cameras and fencing, and consider new options, Medinger said.

City engineers show levee barrier

By JOAN KENT
La Crosse Tribune

City engineers Thursday presented several proposals for new barriers at the Riverside Park levee to the La Crosse Park Board.

After the Sept. 30 death of University of Wisconsin-La Crosse student Lucas Homan in the Mississippi River near the park levee, the Common Council asked the Engineering Department to prepare possible plans and estimates to increase safety at the levee. Homan was the eighth college-age man to drown in La Crosse since 1997.

The plans address the

north, central and south entries to the levee, and contain measures such as ornamental railings, gates and new posts and chains.

Most create a maze effect for pedestrians so people would be more aware they are entering a different section of the park, said City Engineer Randy Turtenwald.

In keeping with the council's directive, he and engineer Greg Pederson also suggested options for barriers on the lower portion of the levee.

Those place a railing back from the levee so people could still enter to walk or fish. But Turtenwald said, "I do not know if you want a railing on

the lower levee if you have the ones above."

The Park Board accepted the report but made no recommendation.

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College substance abuse becoming more extreme

By JUSTIN POPE
The Associated Press

University, argues substance abuse isn't an inevitable rite of passage for young adults. Rather, it argues a particular culture of excessive consumption has flourished on college campuses, and calls on educators to take bolder stands against students and alumni to combat it.

Substance abuse on college campuses is nothing new, but it is taking a more extreme and dangerous form, with higher rates of frequent binge drinking and prescription drug abuse, and more negative consequences for students such as arrests and risky sexual behavior.

"If they make this a priority, they can do something about it," said Joseph Califano, chairman and president of the center, who among other steps called on colleges and the NCAA to stop allowing alcohol advertising during high-profile events such as the NCAA men's basketball tournament.

That's the portrait painted by a new, comprehensive report tying together a range of recent research on college substance abuse, supplemented with some of its own new survey data.

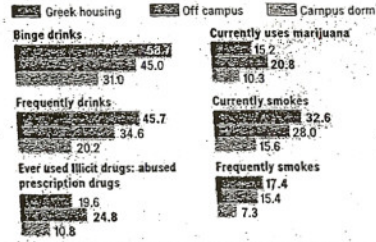
The report by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia

See ABUSE, A-2.

Binge drinking a chronic problem

In most cases, the percentage of college students reporting substance abuse is higher in Greek and off-campus housing.

Percentage of students reporting substance use, by housing type



SOURCE: The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University

ABUSE

From A-1

The report, being released today, relies largely on research that has already appeared in various forms but assembles it to emphasize findings particular to college students.

Among the highlights:

■ The proportion of students who drink (about 68 percent) and binge drink (40 percent) has changed little since 1993. But there have been substantial increases in the number of students who binge drink frequently (take five drinks at a time, three or more times in two weeks), who drink 10 or more times a month, and who get drunk three or more times in a month.

■ Though still used by far fewer students than alcohol, hundreds of thousands more students are abusing prescription drugs, including Ritalin, Adderall and OxyContin, than during the early 1990s. The proportion of students using marijuana daily has doubled to about 4 percent.

■ Analyzing outside survey data, the center calculated 23 percent of college students meet the medical criteria for substance abuse or dependence. That's about triple the proportion in the general population.

Young adults in general have higher abuse rates, so a higher rate for college students is to be expected. But other research indicates that college students drink more than high school peers who don't go to college, said Henry Wechsler, of the Harvard School of Public Health, who published similar findings in 2002.

The New York Times

"Hard-drinking college town struggles to curb drownings"

Changing the binge drinking culture

By ANASTASIA MERCER
La Crosse Tribune

If a community wants to reduce the problems associated with binge drinking, its city leaders, campus officials and tavern owners have to stop finger-pointing and come to a consensus on what the problem is, an expert on college alcohol abuse prevention said Wednesday.



Crowley

Susan Crowley, director of an alcohol abuse prevention program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said even though the Madison campus has not solved all its alcohol-related problems, it has reduced the rate of binge drinking on campus from 67

See DRINKING, A-2.

DRINKING CULTURE DISCUSSED

From A-1

percent in 1999 to 59 percent this year.

The national rate is 44 percent this year, so there is still work to be done, she said.

UW-Madison is one of 10 U.S. campuses that received a 10-year grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to change the campus and community culture and reduce the consequences of high-risk drinking.

The grant is now in its eighth year, and Crowley admits the coalition has had its share of successes and failures.

"We're all looking for solutions and strategies," she said. "There isn't one, but there are some that are promising."

Crowley said the first step was to get stakeholders to define the problem. The group decided to prevent the negative consequences of binge drinking (like sexual assault and property damage) instead of addressing other issues like underage drinking.

One mistake the campus made initially was depending on the community to provide social alternatives to drinking, she said. That has since changed, although the degree of success is varied: keeping campus recreational facilities

Crowley said it's important stakeholders are true to their message and are consistent. If only taverns are targeted for change, the students have more house parties. If residence halls ignore rules, the drinking moves there.

open late didn't interest students, but subsidizing live music at bars that agreed to go alcohol-free for the night did.

Crowley said it's important stakeholders are true to their message and are consistent. If only taverns are targeted for change, the students have more house parties. If residence halls ignore rules, the drinking moves there.

Crowley said the city of Madison has passed a keg registration ordinance as a result of the coalition, and is discussing whether to allow late night drink specials in bars. The campus has since tightened its alcohol policies, and students have written and distributed a guide on safe house parties.

She said balancing enforcement, education and policy is the key to success.

"It wasn't real easy, but I would say eight years later, we do have a really strong campus/community coalition," she said.

Lora Gofus, a University of Wisconsin-La Crosse student who was one of about 150 people who attended Crowley's morning presentation on campus, said she agrees college campuses need to have a consistent message.

Gofus attended a university in Minnesota last year, and said drinking was "very prevalent" in her residence hall even though it was supposed to be alcohol free. Gofus said she suspects some of the same things happen at UW-L.

Gofus said there is no shortage of La Crosse taverns offering specials to get students to drink downtown. She said she would support a university effort to distribute information about house parties.

"I think the idea of the safe party guide is a good idea," she said. "It would give people information, and educate them on how to keep it safe."

Anastasia Mercer can be reached at (608) 791-8256 or mercer@lacrossetribune.com.



"WI Town struggles to prevent students from getting drunk, drowning in rivers"

The Washington Post



"Series of Deaths rattles a city"

La Crosse police share safety tips

Speaker travels country giving advice on curbing city drinking problems

By Tara Bannow
Bannowl@uwec.edu

After eight instances of alcohol-related drowning in the Mississippi River, the community in La Crosse developed new initiatives to crack down on underage drinking. Drew Gavrilos of the La Crosse Police Department has been speaking around the country about the city's ideas, and will head to Eau Claire next.

"We're not keeping any secrets here," Gavrilos said.

He is scheduled to present his speech, "United We Stand," at 3 p.m. Friday in the Hibbard Penthouse. It is open to the public

and outlines La Crosse's campaign against underage drinking.

Eau Claire is very similar to La Crosse, Gavrilos said, and if La Crosse can be a model for success, then that is what this visit is about.

While La Crosse students have played a major role in response to the problem, people in the community took leadership roles in addressing the problem, Gavrilos said, adding involvement came from private citizens, businesses, local groups and police.

"For a while, the community didn't want to take responsibility for the problem, they just wanted to blame college students," Gavrilos said. "The reality is it's the culture

here in western Wisconsin. The community was contributing to the problem."

A Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration study found Western Wisconsin has the highest rates of underage drinking in the nation.

Among the changes in La Crosse is a public intoxication ordinance put into place last March. According to the ordinance, at first offense, the individual receives a warning and has the choice of attending a two-hour class at the police department or pay a fine. Gavrilos said most people choose the class.

In addition, the city has established a keg

See La Crosse, page 2A

The La Crosse Police Department also implemented non-traditional enforcement techniques, Gavrilos said. In January 2005, the Alcohol Compliance and Education program was created to develop creative enforcement techniques like party patrol, plain clothes officers and monitoring establishments selling alcohol, Gavrilos said.

"We've had a significant increase in trust among students and the police department," Gavrilos said. "This is the first time I've seen students, the university and the police department working together."

The Tri-campus Advocacy Group, composed of students from La Crosse, Viterbo University and Western Technical College, has been meeting on a regular basis to aid in the reduction of alcohol-related injury in the area. Recently, Gavrilos said, the group developed a river-watch program.

Jennifer Lee, director of the Center for Alcohol Studies and Education at UW-Eau Claire, said some of the policies in La Crosse could be applicable to Eau Claire.

"We were looking at their partnerships to see what we can learn from steps they've taken," Lee said. "We want to know the message to how they've gotten to what works for them."

Junior Alex Peasley said Eau Claire has some similarities to La Crosse.

"It seems with the student deaths that La Crosse is a little out of control," he said, adding he thinks underage drinking is problem in Eau Claire as well. "I think we're getting better but obviously we still need some improvement."

Freshman Amy Shelton said if students took the time to listen, they would benefit from hearing Gavrilos' speech.

"It's a problem at any college."

CASE sees possibility of using strategies

La Crosse from page 1A

registration ordinance requiring any retailer in the city of La Crosse force customers to register before being issued a keg. They must provide their name, date of birth and location of where the keg will be consumed, Gavrilos said. He added if the police bust a party with underage drinkers, they can easily track who provided the keg.

"It kind of puts a license plate on every keg," he said.

Gavrilos said because the ordinance has not been passed throughout La Crosse County, it only applies to the city of La Crosse.

"It's hard to enforce it when they can go outside the city and not register the keg," he said.

There is also an ordinance requiring servers to be completely sober while on the job, Gavrilos said, adding since fall of 2005, the city requires anyone serving alcohol to take a responsibility class. The class covers false identification, signs of impairment and license requirements.

GUEST VIEW

Program aims to fight irresponsible drinking

By FRED LUDWIG, ROSS LA ROCCO and KARTICK PATEL
La Crosse

The consumption of alcohol has been a controversial topic among the college population and the La Crosse community since the unfortunate loss of University of Wisconsin-La Crosse student Luke Homan last October, and the other drownings that preceded it.

These tragic incidences have brought the La Crosse community, which includes students, residents, higher-education institutions and city officials, together to solve one central cause of the problem — irresponsible alcohol drinking habits.

Great initiatives such as Operation: River Watch promote a positive and safe environment by guarding the riverfront. We, the students from all three institutions of higher learning, want to continue this trend of advocating safe drinking habits by providing other programs and continuing initiatives already in place so as to avoid such catastrophic events from occurring again.

The Safe La Crosse campaign is a community initiative designed to promote responsible drinking among students and community members alike.

While it may seem like we are beating a dead horse with yet another initiative to combat irresponsible drinking, we find this campaign to be unique in the fact that campus leaders from the UW-L, Viterbo University and Western Technical College are collaborating along with the community to manifest a very straightforward message: You wouldn't

leave your cell phone, why would you leave your friend?

We are not sending a message that preaches abstinence. Instead, we ask that you be responsible when having a few beers with friends. We hope this message will make people of all ages think before they drink too much and to simply watch out for their friends.

An outdoor concert has been organized to kick off the Safe La Crosse Campaign called Concert for Safe La Crosse from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 14, in Viterbo University's Assisi Courtyard. In the event of rain, the location will be the Amie L. Mathy Center.

The concert is free and open to the public. Donations will be accepted, and concessions will be available for purchase, with all proceeds going to Operation: River Watch and Safe La Crosse. Rob Gonzalez, the acclaimed La Crosse pianist and singer/songwriter, will perform pop music. He will be joined by opening performer April MacLean of Nashville, Tenn., a singer/songwriter and pianist whose lyrics have a theme of empowerment and healing.

The purpose of the concert and the Safe La Crosse Campaign is to promote a message of safe and responsible consumption. The students at Viterbo, UW-L and Western are excited about starting the school year on a positive note. We think it is one thing to sit back and talk about problems, it is another to be proactive, which is what we want to do.

However, this initiative cannot be done by students single-handedly. We need community support to make La Crosse a safer community.

Fred Ludwig is president of the UW-L Student Association. Ross LaRocco is student government public relations officer at Western Technical College, and Kartick Patel is president of the Student Government Association at Viterbo

La Crosse Police Officer to Speak on Efforts to Stop Binge Drinking

RELEASED: Feb. 29, 2008

EAU CLAIRE — The Bridge Campus Community Coalition on Alcohol Issues in Eau Claire and the Center for Alcohol Studies and Education at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire will present "United We Stand" at 3 p.m. Friday, March 7, in the Hibbard Hall Penthouse at UW-Eau Claire.

The event is an opportunity for the Eau Claire community to learn from La Crosse, Wis., about an aggressive public information campaign that community waged against binge drinking.

After the 10th alcohol-related death of a college-aged person in 10 years in La Crosse, the community came together to take a stand. "United We Stand," presented by Drew Gavrilos of the La Crosse Police Department, will describe how La Crosse utilized new legislation, non-traditional enforcement techniques, alcohol education and an aggressive public information campaign to raise awareness and gain community support. Student-driven initiatives played a major role in gaining support from the city's college community, and new legislation focused on keg registration and public intoxication were enacted with unprecedented public support.

Gavrilos has been in law enforcement for 11 years, serving La Crosse as a patrol officer, school resource officer, investigator and, most recently, in community services. He is a tactical operator and crisis negotiator with the department's emergency response team, a defensive tactics instructor and an original member of the alcohol compliance and education team. Gavrilos spent two years as a special agent for the U.S. Secret Service. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and marketing and is a graduate of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glyncro, Ga., and the James J. Rowley Training Center in Beltsville, Md.



Officer Drew Gavrilos

Student is river watchin'

McManus is co-founder of River Watch and serves on three city committees

BY ANNE JUNGEN
La Crosse Tribune

Aron McManus will leave a legacy in La Crosse.

It could be for co-founding Operation: River Watch and spreading the message of practicing safety after alcohol consumption.

Or maybe it will be serving on three city committees while simultaneously acting as a liaison between the student body and the city.

But it will definitely be for the dedication and drive of

this University of Wisconsin-La Crosse senior.

"He's one of those that would go out and do what he said he would right away," said Ryan VanLoo, 24, a UW-L alumnus and co-founder of River Watch. "We're all better off because of him. He's played such an active role in getting the student voice out there and giving local government a reminder that we're here."

McManus, 28, was raised by his mother in Barron, a north-

See MCMANUS, A-3

MCMANUS FILE

WHO: Aron McManus, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse student and Operation: River Watch director
AGE: 28

HOMETOWN: Barron, Wis.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS: UW-L Student Association, Sigma Tau Gamma fraternity, Greek Council, Golden Key International Honour Society and Order of Omega

CITY COMMITTEES: Alcohol Oversight Committee, Municipal Transit Utility Board and Multi-Family Housing Committee

FAVORITE LA CROSSE RESTAURANT: The Goal Post on Campbell Road

FAVORITE MOVIE: "Braveheart"

WHERE HE SEES HIMSELF IN 10 YEARS: "I don't look that far ahead, but hopefully married with kids," McManus said.

From A-1

west Wisconsin town of about 3,000 people. At 18, he lived with his father and two half-brothers, 14 and 17, for about 18 months.

A self-described "loud, obnoxious" student-athlete, McManus graduated high school in 1997 and studied at Barron Community College for the next year before taking an academic hiatus for factory work.

He was a student at Western Technical College from 2001 to 2004 until transferring to UW-L in Spring 2005.

The history major and anthropology minor expects to graduate in summer 2008, but doesn't plan to pursue a career in either of those fields.

"It's what I enjoy, but outside of the classroom all the other stuff I do led more toward pursuing a field in anywhere from marketing to expansion to recruitment, and I've even thought about public administration," he said.

McManus is perhaps best known as a co-founder and current director of Operation: River Watch.

The student-driven effort of foot patrols along the Mississippi River in Riverside Park formed last year in the immediate wake of the drowning death of UW-L student Lucas Homan, the eighth college-aged male to drown in an area river in the past decade.

Designed to prevent future drownings, the concept was discussed briefly the summer before Homan's drowning, but shelved for liability reasons. McManus met with La Crosse police officer Drew Gavrilos to revisit the river watch idea hours after Homan's body was found Oct. 2, 2006, in the Mississippi River off the Riverside Park levee.

Volunteers began patrolling three nights later.

"I get stuff done. It's not just stuff I talk about. I'm pretty

"I really credit him for pretty much all of the positive progress we're made over the last year.

He's out there and working hard. He's an amazing kid, he really is. He's remarkable."

DREW GAVRILOS, La Crosse police officer

good at following through with stuff I start," McManus said. "It was really important to a lot of people to get out there. I like to think as far as all the types of programs that do things, we do the most direct intervention."

Gavrilos called McManus one of the most driven and passionate people he knows.

"I really credit him for pretty much all of the positive progress we've made over the last year," Gavrilos said. "He's out there and working hard. He's an amazing kid, he really is. He's remarkable."

The River Watch volunteers, McManus said, have saved lives. They have found more than 40 intoxicated people in Riverside Park at night since the program began.

"Every time we encounter somebody intoxicated walking through the park toward the river is potentially somebody we saved," he said. "And every year that something doesn't happen is another strong reason why we need to do it the following year."

The River Watch committee expanded its mission and is collaborating with the Safe La Crosse initiative. River Watch members speak at area high schools and aim to spread an overall "protect yourself and your friends" message.

McManus has gotten involved in the community in other ways as well. He was appointed director of city affairs for the UW-L Student Association in May 2006 to act as a liaison between the university and city. As part of the university position, McManus also began serving as the student representative on the city's Municipal Transit Utility Board.

About two months later, La Crosse Mayor Mark Johnsrud appointed McManus to the Alcohol Oversight Committee. Serving on the committee meshed with his city affairs position and McManus felt he could bring a student voice — one that understands the college culture — to the committee.

"I thought the Alcohol Oversight Committee definitely needs a student voice on there. It would be a very empty committee if it didn't," McManus said.

McManus is also a brother in Sigma Tau Gamma, UW-L's largest fraternity with 20 members, and is vice-president of membership.

The brothers volunteered tirelessly in River Watch's infancy and currently contribute at least 80 hours collectively each semester patrolling, McManus said.

"River Watch never would have gotten off the ground without my fraternity," he said. "We are the backbone to this very responsible safety organization."

UW-L Dean of Students Paula Knudson called McManus "an incredibly put together young man" conscientious of university and city issues.

"If students knew how active he is in trying to represent his peer population and make sure there's a voice and make sure his age population is heard and engaged, I think they owe him a lot," she said. "He's a tireless advocate. He rolls up his sleeves and gives his all."

Anne Jungens can be reached at (608) 791-8224.

Students ready to help patrol park

By KATE SCHOTT
and ANNE JUNGEN
La Crosse Tribune

Area college students and police plan to patrol Riverside Park together in hopes of preventing further Mississippi River drownings like the weekend death of University of Wisconsin-La Crosse student Lucas Homan.

Dubbed "Operation River Watch," student volunteers

While students will work two-hour shifts in the park from 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday, permanent shift times and days have yet to be determined.

from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, Viterbo University and Western Technical College would patrol Riverside Park on weekends, watching for intoxicated or suspicious people.

civilian service employee would be nearby to assist students when needed.

Students would not physically engage or detain a subject but call for help, said La Crosse police officer and university liaison Drew Gavrilos.

"The more sets of eyes, the better," said Gavrilos, who outlined the river watch idea about 30 UW-L student

See WATCH, A-2

WATCH

From A-1

senators Wednesday night.

The idea was raised this summer by Gavrilos and two UW-L Student Association officers, President Ryan VanLoo and Student Affairs Director Aron McManus.

It was shelved because of liability questions. But the death of Homan renewed interest in the idea, VanLoo said.

McManus and Gavrilos said La Crosse Police Chief Ed Kondracki gave them the go-ahead to get started.

Volunteers would be covered under city insurance for liability purposes only, Gavrilos said. They would have to sign a waiver absolving the city of liability if they injure themselves.

While students will work two-hour shifts in the park from 9 p.m.

to 3 a.m. this Thursday, Friday and Saturday, permanent shift times and days have yet to be determined. And students from Viterbo and Western have to be brought into the fold, VanLoo said.

Gavrilos hopes to have two teams of two students patrolling the park, with one group working from the eagle statue north to the "Hiawatha" statue and the other from the eagle statue south to the Logistics Health building.

Permanent times being discussed for patrols include 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. Fridays and Saturdays, and possibly Thursdays, McManus said.

A committee of student representatives from all three colleges, along with a police officer and campus student life administrators, will be formed soon, McManus said.

"Students need to get involved in this situation," VanLoo said. "We can't let this happen again."

D-2 Saturday, April 7, 2007

Police get grants for alcohol enforcement

A pair of recent grants will help boost attempts by the La Crosse Police Department to reduce drunken driving and underage consumption, La Crosse Police Chief Ed Kondracki said Friday.

The department has been awarded a \$25,000 Alcohol Enforcement Grant and a \$12,000 Comprehensive Alcohol Risk Reduction, or CARD, grant from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

"With April being Alcohol Awareness Month and the recent 'Call to Action' to fight underage consumption by the U.S. Surgeon General's Office, it is only fitting that these grants are announced at this time," Kondracki said in a release.

The Alcohol Enforcement Grant will be used to provide extra patrols for targeting intoxicated drivers and underage drinking parties.

The goal is to reduce alcohol-related traffic crashes, injuries and deaths.

The CARD grant is for youth alcohol prevention. This grant will fund compliance investigation checks at local taverns and retail establishments that sell alcohol, provide public information and education activities, and provide undercover and uniformed patrols for underage alcohol party enforcement.

As part of this grant, an advisory panel of law enforcement, local youth and local adults, including a local tavern representative, will help design a plan aimed at reducing underage alcohol consumption.

Kondracki said the police department has submitted these grants to the Common Council for acceptance in the April meeting cycle.

"We will continue to promote safe roadways and a safe community through continued enforcement and public education regarding underage drinking and intoxicated driv-



Success Stories

Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program

NEWS FROM THE FIELD
www.udetc.org

July 2007

Consistent Enforcement Produces Positive Results for La Crosse, Wisconsin

In 2005, the La Crosse Police Department in Wisconsin began conducting compliance checks aimed at reducing the availability of alcohol to underage youth. During the checks, if the minor successfully purchased alcohol, the officers immediately issued citations to both the seller and the establishment's owner (i.e., the alcohol license holder). If the minor was denied the sale, the officers informed the seller and the owner that they successfully passed the compliance check. To show its appreciation, a follow-up letter was also mailed to the business owner from the Chief of Police praising the sales clerk and the business for not selling alcohol to an underage person.

Wanting to improve compliance rates and understanding the need for regular enforcement, the department continued performing compliance checks in 2006. During the first round of checks, officers visited 56 establishments and issued 36 citations, yielding a 64 percent compliance rate. During the second round of compliance checks, officers completed 139 compliance checks, and the compliance rate increased to 72 percent.

Although there was some initial resistance from The Tavern League (an association of bar and restaurant owners), much of the community supported the compliance checks. In fact, the Mayor's Alcohol Task Force recommended that the police department conduct the checks as part of a broader enforcement approach.

Another strategy they employed was developing and implementing a hands-on training program for servers and sellers of alcohol. This training helps

servers identify fake, altered, or borrowed identification. The training also provides tips on how to prevent underage people from entering taverns. Within four months, the department provided this new training free of charge to more than 200 servers and retail employees.

The implementation of complementary strategies and regular compliance checks has been effective for La Crosse. The most recent round of compliance checks in 2007 produced a 79 percent compliance rate.

Conducting retail compliance checks on a regular basis when they have not previously been conducted often will meet resistance, and initial findings may not be good. Fortunately, when the La Crosse Police Department encountered these realities, it did not retreat. Rather, it enhanced its work and persevered. This perseverance is now beginning to pay off, and with a similar attitude in the future, things will only continue to improve.

For further information contact:
Captain Robert Abraham
Director – Community Services Bureau
La Crosse, WI Police Department
608-789-7240
abrahamr@cityoflacrosse.org

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the views of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) or the Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center (UDET) and are solely of the author/source.

Gerald R. Kember, Superintendent
gkember@sdla.k12.wi.us
807 East Avenue South, La Crosse, WI 54601
608.789.7628 • Fax: 608.789.7960

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
LA CROSSE



March 19, 2008

Police Chief Ed Kondracki
City of La Crosse Police Department
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Dear Chief Kondracki:

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the City of La Crosse Police Department as it seeks recognition through the Webber Seavey and Herman Goldstein awards for innovative policing programs.

I am personally aware of the many efforts that are currently underway in the greater La Crosse community to address the underlying causes of binge and underage drinking. The many efforts currently in place or being developed were the direct result of the police department initiating a town hall meeting in April of 2004 and subsequently calling for an Alcohol Task Force charged with making recommendations and examining community readiness for cultural change. This "call to action" initiated by our police department has resulted in a comprehensive community collaboration that's making a difference. This city-wide effort including community groups, hospitals, universities, schools, students, elected officials and community members is seeing results.

Our school district has become an important partner working directly with the police department and other community groups to address underage drinking. The City of La Crosse Police has been a tremendous resource to us in our efforts to educate students and their families about this challenging issue. I am particularly pleased with the proactive and preventive approach that has been adopted by our police. I credit you, Chief Kondracki, and your dedicated staff for addressing this community issue in such a positive and forthright manner.

I highly recommend that the La Crosse Police Department receive recognition for innovation in policing. The police department has played a critical role in mobilizing our community in this important effort and has demonstrated that they are true community problem solvers. These innovative programs can serve as a blueprint to help others develop and strengthen their agencies and to make their communities and schools safer.

Sincerely,

Gerald R. Kember
Superintendent

gk/bac

Western Technical College

Lee Raich, Ed.D., President

March 20, 2008

Ed Kondracki
Chief of Police
La Crosse Police Department
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Dear Chief Kondracki:

I am pleased to be writing this letter of support for the City of La Crosse Police Department as it seeks recognition through the Webber Seavey and Herman Goldstein awards for innovative policing.

As president of Western Technical College, I am keenly aware of the serious issues in our community related to high-risk drinking. The City of La Crosse has received notoriety from recent drownings due to the overconsumption of alcohol. The April 2004 drowning raised considerable concern as rumors of a serial killer circulated throughout the community. The City of La Crosse Police Department initiated a town hall meeting resulting in the formation of the Alcohol Task Force. As a result of persistent work with the task force and community leaders, the community perception has clearly shifted from the rumor-based thinking toward a realization that La Crosse has been too tolerant of high-risk drinking. This shift in perception could not have been possible without the innovative leadership of the Police Department of La Crosse.

Western Technical College, along with the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and Viterbo University has formed the Tri-campus Community Advocacy Group ... a coalition designed to help change the culture of high-risk drinking in our community. The Tri-campus Group has found the Police Department of La Crosse to be an important ally in this effort. In fall 2007, we jointly sponsored an initiative called Safe La Crosse. The effort was aimed at increasing the awareness of the dangers of high-risk drinking. A follow up survey among students at the three campuses showed a significant increased awareness as a result of the campaign. These results could not be possible without this important alliance with the Police Department.

I wholeheartedly endorse consideration for the Police Department of the City of La Crosse for this important recognition. Meanwhile, please do not hesitate to contact me if additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
LA CROSSE

March 21, 2008


To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the City of La Crosse Police Department as it seeks recognition through the Webber Seavey and Hermann Goldstein awards for innovative policing programs.

I am personally aware of the many efforts that are currently underway in the greater La Crosse community to address the underlying causes of binge drinking, underage drinking, and the harmful and deadly consequences of this risky behavior. The many efforts currently in place or being developed were the direct result of the police department initiating a town hall meeting in April of 2004, and subsequently calling for an Alcohol Task Force charged with making recommendations and examining community readiness for cultural change. The efforts by our police department have resulted in one of the most comprehensive community collaborations that I have ever seen. This comprehensive effort, including community groups, hospitals, universities, K-12 schools, students, elected officials and community members, is having positive change. The road has not been an easy one but the police department has remained steadfast and continues to be an integral part of this important effort.

I do not hesitate to attest to or recommend that the La Crosse Police Department receive recognition for innovation in policing and for improving the quality of life in our community. The police department has played a critical role in mobilizing our community in this important effort and has demonstrated that they are true community problem solvers. These collaborative and innovative programs through legislation, personal responsibility, peer intervention, and education and training can serve as a blueprint to help others develop and strengthen their agencies and make their communities safer.

Sincerely,



Joe Gow
UW-La Crosse Chancellor

Office of the Chancellor

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, 135 Graff Main Hall, 1725 State Street, La Crosse, WI 54601
Phone: (608)785-8004, Fax: (608)785-6907, <http://www.uwlax.edu>
An affirmative action/legal opportunity employer



Richard B. Artman, Ph.D.
President
900 Viterbo Drive
La Crosse, WI 54601

March 24, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

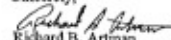
It is with great pride and deep appreciation that I submit this letter of support for the La Crosse Police Department as it applies for the Webber Seavey and Herman Goldstein awards. The leadership of chief Ed Kondracki has been instrumental in developing and sustaining a strong partnership with the local institutions of higher education toward our mutual goal of reducing alcohol abuse and binge drinking in our community. Through this community collaboration, I can proudly say we have made extraordinary progress.

For the past four years, Viterbo University, the University of La Crosse-Wisconsin, and Western Technical College have collaborated with civic, government and community leaders on multi-level projects to address the drinking behaviors of our college students. This Tri-College Advocacy Group, as we call ourselves, formed because of the disappearance and deaths in the Mississippi River of college students from our institutions. Though the impetus for change was tragic, these events provided the momentum and sustenance for our continuous advocacy to change the social norms on our campuses as well as to support legal and policy changes at the city government level.

Often through his initiative, and always with the full cooperation Chief Kondracki and the police department, we have made steady progress on legislative changes. We have improved communication with the Taverns League, increased information and awareness programs during student orientation, implemented a safe ride system for students, and our respective student governments formed a student-run, volunteer River Watch program. Our accomplishments to date would not have been possible without the positive relationships between college officials, college students and our police department. A new level of trust has been developed between our student government leaders and police on the beat. We have more work ahead to change the drinking culture, but we are buoyed by the progress made and we are committed to a safe La Crosse.

I trust the application materials for the award describe in sufficient detail many of our mutual accomplishments. I extend my enthusiastic support and my highest recommendation for recognition to the La Crosse Police Department for their innovation in policing strategies. Our successes in La Crosse can be duplicated in other college communities facing similar problems with alcohol abuse and binge drinking. Success in this area requires a significant commitment of time and resources from college presidents and their community police departments. I am truly proud to endorse the La Crosse Police department and Chief Kondracki for this award. It is an honor and privilege to work with them in our efforts to better our community.

Sincerely,



Richard B. Artman
President

tel: 608-796-3001 • fax: 608-796-3004 • rbartman@viterbo.edu

March 17, 2008

Edward N. Kondracki
Chief of Police
City of La Crosse

Chief Kondracki:

It is a pleasure to write a letter of support for the Webber Seavey and Herman Goldstein awards to recognize your department's impressive efforts to provide leadership, education and enforcement to reduce underage and binge drinking in our community.

Being a college town has its challenges - especially when a river runs through our beautiful community. The deaths of eight young men - all highly intoxicated, all found in the river - has led to a variety of conspiracy theories. Chief, as you have pointed out on many occasions, we do have a serial killer in our midst: It's called alcohol.

Of course, with our city's heritage of brewing, it's not easy to convince folks that their own behavior is a contributing factor.

The La Crosse Police Department has played a key role in leading the discussion, supporting new legislation and developing collaborative efforts that have paid real dividends for the health and safety of our community.

- > You and your department helped pulled together a town-hall forum in April 2004 that provided an opportunity for more than 500 people to hear from experts in law enforcement, health care and higher education. Possibly more important, the forum gave a lot of people to vent their frustration. As the recipient of a lot of that frustration, I can say it wasn't an enjoyable experience. But, hopefully, it was useful and productive.
- > Your department has helped push legislation aimed at making our community safer. We now city ordinances requiring keg registration and sober servers, and the year-old public-intoxication law helps authorities prevent highly intoxicated individuals from harming themselves and others.
- > La Crosse police also have been a key participant in the Tri-Campus/Community alcohol initiative, which has brought together administrative and student leadership from our three campuses, in addition to leaders in business, health care, downtown development, media and government.

It has been most impressive to watch members of your department educating community leaders on the problems that you face with people who are intoxicated. And, as we've stressed many times, this is not simply a problem of college students going through a rite of passage. Problems with public intoxication involve many age groups and walks of life. It is far too easy to blame this on young people. With that said, one of the best things to come from these discussions is the collaboration by the leadership of the three student governments. As you know, these students - with encouragement from La Crosse Police - developed the Operation: River Watch program while facilitating the discussion for the public-intoxication law, which had its share of opponents on campus.

As a parent of a student at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, which is 75 miles to our north, I was also encouraged to see that one of your officers, Drew Gavrilos, recently spoke about community solutions to binge drinking on that campus. Again, this isn't simply a La Crosse issue or a Wisconsin issue. It's refreshing to see your staff willing to share the challenges and successes it has achieved.

Chief, our community is better for the leadership, communication, collaboration and innovation that you and your department have provided. I believe you are richly deserving of the Webber Seavey and Herman Goldstein awards, and I would welcome the opportunity that with the awarding agencies and answer any questions they may have.

Thanks again for your excellent work for the good of our community.

Sincerely,



Franciscan Skemp

Mayo Health System

March 25, 2008

Edward N. Kondracki, Chief of Police
La Crosse Police Department
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Dear Chief Kondracki:

It is my pleasure to write a letter of support for the La Crosse Police Department's application for the Webber Seavey and Herman Goldstein awards.

Over the past few years many issues have challenged our city. However, we have had national attention and many members of our community have been affected by the problem of excessive alcohol consumption and "binge drinking". In our emergency room the effects of this problem are seen on a weekly basis and the personal and societal costs of binge drinking are immediately apparent.

The engagement of the La Crosse Police Department in finding solutions and your participation in the alcohol task force have led to a unified community response and protected our citizens. Your enforcement of current law has been vigorous and fair. Just as important, your support for bartender training, safe ride transportation, and your river watch public private partnership has prevented problems.

Franciscan Skemp Healthcare is proud to be a part of the solution to the issues that challenge our region. We are very proud and supportive of the work of our police department and pleased that you take such a proactive and progressive approach to help improve our community.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Nesse, MD
President/CEO
Franciscan Skemp Healthcare

700 West Avenue South, La Crosse, WI 54601-4796
Phone 608-791-9710 Fax 608-791-9429

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