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POLICE DISPATCHERS IN THE YEAR 2000 A.D.:
HOW WILL MEDIUM-SIZED DEPARTMENTS
MANAGE A STRESSFUL ENVIRONMENT?

A futures study of human resource issues relating to the management
of police dispatchers. The strategic plan developed in the study
addresses staffing levels, training, alternative career
paths, and environmental considerations of a law
enforcement communications center.

AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT

BY

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POLICE DISPATCHERS IN THE YEAR 2000 A.D.:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Law enforcement personnel agree that police dispatch is one of the critical functions of any police agency. They also agree that California law enforcement agencies of comparable size suffer from very similar problems with regard to their dispatch operations. However, there has been little research conducted to explore the various issues affecting police dispatchers. Mark Twain once said, "Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody ever does anything about it." Much the same could be said about police dispatchers.

This futures study examines the dispatch operation from a human resource perspective, and how that operation might be managed at the beginning of the next century. This study did not deal with the technological advances in the communications field except as they will impact the people who staff the dispatch centers. This was a people-oriented project, not a study of hardware and software.

Further, the focus of this study is on the dispatch operation of medium-sized California law enforcement agencies. This is not to say that larger or smaller jurisdictions are not worthy of study. Rather, they have problems that tend to be unique in their own way.

In the beginning, this researcher collected data from dispatchers, dispatch supervisors, and law enforcement managers regarding issues that affect dispatch operations. The issues that concern them most were:

1. How can the dispatch function be modified in the future to reduce levels of stress without impairing operational efficiency?

2. How can the physical environment of the dispatch center be changed in the future to reduce levels of stress?

3. How can managers develop future hiring practices to improve job-person match among dispatcher candidates?

A nominal group technique was employed to identify trends and events that might give law enforcement some idea which direction the dispatcher issue is headed in the future. The information gathered from this group was used to develop three scenarios of the future: a "most likely" future, a "feared but possible" future, and a "desired and attainable" future.

A strategic plan was developed designed to take advantage of strengths and opportunities, as well as mitigate weaknesses and threats. The plan has four major thrusts that respond to many of the dispatchers' and dispatch managers' concerns. First, it increases training available to dispatchers in both quantity and quality. The plan suggests a minimum of 16 hours per year of training in areas not commonly thought of as dispatch-related. These include hostage negotiations, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention. Second, the plan calls for increased emphasis on achieving authorized staffing levels. Some dispatch centers are understaffed by as much as 50%, which greatly restricts a supervisor's or manager's ability to implement new programs, or even maintain existing programs. Third, the plan develops a senior dispatcher program, which is a career path with alternatives to promotion. This program involves proficiency testing for incentive pay as well as the temporary rotation of dispatchers to other functions within the organization. Fourth, the plan addresses some environmental changes in the dipatch center, including the need for natural light and individually

adjustable workstations.

Finally, the project establishes a transition management program that will take an organization through the process of change and into the desired future state. There is a discussion of the strategy of negotiating with those people who play key roles in the implementation of required changes.

It is not the individual elements of the plan that make the results of this project so unique and innovative. It is the fact that these elements have never before been applied to the dispatch career field in such a comprehensive program.

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

Law enforcement personnel agree that police dispatch is one of the critical functions of any police agency. However, there has been shamefully little research conducted to explore the various issues affecting police dispatchers. Mark Twain once said, "Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it." Much the same could be said about law enforcement dispatchers.

This researcher maintains that California law enforcement agencies of comparable size suffer from very similar problems with regard to their dispatch operations. Whenever two or more members of law enforcement get together, either professionally or socially, the topic of dispatch problems invariably comes up. It doesn't matter if it's a group of chief executives, or middle managers, or police officers, the problems of police dispatchers are common. Specifically they center around low morale, high turnover rates, excessive sick leave absences, poor performance levels, and poor relationships with other members of the agency. A similar conversation among dispatchers might address many of the same issues from a little different perspective: high stress levels, understaffing problems, little opportunity for career advancement, and questionable hiring and training practices.

This futures study proposes to examine the dispatch operation from a human resource perspective, and how that operation might be managed at the beginning of the next century. This study did not deal with the technological advances in the communications field except as they will impact the people who staff the dispatch centers. This is a people-oriented project, not a study of hardware and software.

Further, the focus of this study is on the dispatch operation of medium-sized California law enforcement agencies. Generally, this means

examining jurisdictions with populations of 50,000-250,000. This is not to say that larger or smaller jurisdictions are not worthy of study. Rather, they have problems that tend to be unique in their own way. For example, in small agencies the dispatch center is likely to be a one-person operation that often functions as a dispatcher, records clerk, and receptionist simultaneously. Conversely, very large agencies will experience problems and possess resources not known to medium or small departments.

Law enforcement in California, as well as in most of the United States, has undergone some dramatic changes since the early 1960's. California created the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training in 1959, and a new era was launched. Social changes, as well as those brought about by the legislature and the courts, have resulted in a more professional, better educated, better trained, and higher paid peace officer. The police officer of today is much better equipped to deal with the complex problems of maintaining social order than he was in 1960. He has a higher level of self-esteem because the public perceives the police officer as more professional than the "dumb cop" of the 30's and 40's.

Unfortunately, not all areas of law enforcement have made the same progress with respect to this professional image. While the job of the police dispatcher has gotten much more complex and technical, the image of the dispatcher, both with the public and within law enforcement, has not been particularly enhanced. Dispatchers as a group suffer from low esteem for a variety of reasons which will be discussed in more detail later. Dispatchers are frustrated from lack of consistent, meaningful training; frustrated from a lack of worth by the organization they are dedicated to; frustrated by being ridiculed on the radio by police officers and harassed by the public on the telephone; and frustrated by comments from police officers and administrators

who say, "I know you have a hard job; things will get better." Things rarely do. [1]

The question for law enforcement managers has got to be, "How can we improve things for the future? How can we make the dispatch function more efficient, less stressful, and more enjoyable? How can we elevate the dispatcher's self-esteem to the point where they feel good about themselves and the contribution they make to the department? How can we hire and train candidates who will better fit into the role of dispatcher?" How do we do that?

OBJECTIVE ONE

STATEMENT

The first objective of the project was to study and analyze the general issue of managing dispatchers using futures research methodologies. The techniques of futures research are not intended to allow a manager to peer into a crystal ball and predict precisely what the future will be, but rather to examine what the future might be, or what it is likely to be, or what it should be. No one can say for sure what the future holds. The manager's job is to anticipate what impact the future may hold, and to move his organization toward that future which is most advantageous.

The major issue under consideration in this study is: Police dispatchers in the year 2000 A.D.--how will medium-sized departments manage a stressful environment? While this larger issue was being formulated, a number of past, present, and future related issues were identified.

A series of past issues were examined that have previously affected dispatchers and dispatch managers. This process got to be as basic as examining the need for dispatchers in the first place. The list of antecedent issues was eventually reduced to two which seemed to still be viable today. They are:

1. What shall be the function of the police dispatcher?

2. How should dispatchers fit into the organizational structure?

Additionally, there are several emerging issues that have some direct bearing on the subject. They are:

1. How can managers change hiring practices to improve job-person match among dispatcher candidates?

2. How can the physical environment of the dispatch center be changed to reduce levels of stress?

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3. How can the dispatch function (job) be changed to reduce levels of stress?

4. How will computer technology impact the job of the police dispatcher in the future?

5. How can managers improve morale among dispatchers?

6. What can be done to improve the opportunities for career advancement among dispatchers?

Lastly, some issues that may have to be addressed in the future were identified. They are:

1. What impact will employee memoranda of understanding (MOU's) have toward changing the job and/or relative professional position of the dispatcher?

2. What influence might P.O.S.T. have in the future regarding training and certification of law enforcement dispatchers?

3. To what extent will the dispatch function become automated or roboticized in the future?

These past, present, and future issues were subjected to a screening process as an approach to structuring the general dispatcher issue for research. The result was a list of three sub-issues that, when considered together, essentially define the parameters of the general dispatcher issue being studied. These principal issues are:

1. How can the dispatch function be modified in the future to reduce levels of stress without impairing operational efficiency?

2. How can the physical environment of the dispatch center be changed in the future to reduce levels of stress?

3. How can managers develop future hiring practices to improve job-person match among dispatchers?

All other issues have been determined to be included in or subordinate

to these three principal issues. As a portion of the futures methodology incorporated into the research, a study of certain trends and events that could have some degree of impact on the dispatcher issue(s) was conducted. A more detailed discussion of these trends and events will follow.

METHODS: IDENTIFICATION

The following methods were used to develop and evaluate information related to the general dispatch issue:

1. Personal reflection.

   The author is a police lieutenant for the City of Fairfield with sixteen years of law enforcement experience. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from California State University, Sacramento. Although he has never directly supervised the dispatch operation, he exercises functional control over dispatchers as part of his role as Patrol Watch Commander. He has also been married to a dispatcher for the past nine years.

2. Environmental scanning.

   This process involved scanning, reading, and studying news articles, publications, and professional journals that may contain information related to the dispatcher issue. A futures file was created to collect data in the areas of the social, technical, environmental, economical, and political influences on the dispatcher issue.

3. Personal interviews.

   Interviews were conducted with dispatchers, dispatch supervisors, and middle managers regarding the past, present, and possible future developments in the dispatch area.

4. Survey questionnaire.

   A survey questionnaire was developed to collect additional data
   from both dispatchers and dispatch supervisors regarding their
   personal opinions on a variety of issues affecting dispatchers.
   135 questionnaires were distributed to 12 different law
   enforcement agencies. There were a total of 64 (47%) responses
   returned.

5. Nominal Group Technique (NGT).

   An NGT was conducted in an effort to forecast trends and events
   that may have some impact on the dispatcher issue and evaluate
   what that impact might be. Nine group participants brainstormed
   a list of candidate trends and events, then narrowed that list
   to the five most significant trends and events, then evaluated
   the direction and velocity of the trends and the probability of
   the events actually occurring. The group also evaluated the
   cross-impact of events on events, and events on trends.

6. Futures Scenarios.

   Based upon all of the data collected and analysis performed up
   to this point, three possible future scenarios were created.
   The first describes a nominal future which is "most likely" if
   nothing were to change; that is, if things continue basically as
   they are now without the intervention of outside influences.
   The second scenario describes a future which is normative in the
   "feared but possible" mode; that is, this future would be
   possible if some adverse influences were to occur. The third
   scenario is also a normative future, but in the "desired and
   attainable" mode; that is, this future would be possible if law
   enforcement developed and implemented strategies that could
   favorably affect the future of the dispatch operation.

METHODS: IMPLEMENTATION

In the initial stages of the research for this project this researcher did a series of things in an attempt to collect data and sharpen the focus of the issue area. This involved drawing on his experience as a police officer and law enforcement administrator and reflecting on what had occurred in the past, what the dispatch situation is currently, and where it seems to be headed in the future. He scanned professional journals and periodicals looking for articles that might indicate what the future holds for the dispatch operation. He examined the material and categorized it into a futures file using the STEEP format (social, technical, environmental, economical, political). For example, analysis of each of these categories provided insight as to the influence of the environmental factors on dispatch. The author also conducted a number of one-on-one interviews with knowledgable people to "pick their brains." He spoke with dispatchers, supervisors, and a psychologist in an attempt to further understand the human dynamics of the dispatcher.

What was found during this process was that many initial impressions were correct. The author also found some different perspectives on problems that had previously been identified. For example, it was initially surmised that dispatch was a fast-paced, high-stress environment that had a fairly dead-end career ladder. It was also believed that dispatchers often have a role clarity problem, low self-esteem, and suffer a high frustration level. After doing some research and interviewing a number of people, the author found that a great deal of the stress involved in being a dispatcher stems from internal factors. It's not just the 911 calls that account for continuously high stress levels, it's things like being locked up in the "basement," not having a window to the outside world, understaffing, poorly functioning or malfunctioning equipment, little or no training, poor image

within the department resulting in low self-esteem levels. Then, added to all

of this are the 911 emergencies and the high level of calls for service.

Thus, the stress becomes cumulative.

Survey Questionnaire

A survey questionnaire was developed to collect data from dispatchers

and supervisors who would not be available for one-on-one interviews. The

survey was designed to obtain some very brief statistical information (sex,

age, and experience levels) to ascertain why dispatchers become dispatchers,

to identify what they consider the positives and negatives of the job, and

what they consider the most significant past and future changes in the

dispatch career field. There were a total of 135 questionnaires mailed to

twelve different departments. 64 completed responses were returned to the

author for a 47% response rate. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as

Appendix A.

In the survey, dispatchers were asked why they became dispatchers.

The most frequently received responses were: because of the variety of work

and challenge of the job (44%); to perform a public service, solve problems,

and help people (26%); and because of the pay and benefits (26%). They were

then asked what part of the job of dispatcher they liked most. This question

was designed to find out what keeps dispatchers in the career field once

they've been hired. The data revealed that dispatchers remain in the career

field because they truly enjoy doing those things they anticipated doing

before they were hired. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the responses mentioned

the interesting, challenging work; forty-six percent (46%) mentioned

performing a public service and helping people. Only eight percent (8%)

mentioned pay and benefits as a motivating factor for staying in the business.

On the other hand, when asked what they like least about being a

dispatcher, the number one response was lack of recognition or poor image with

both the public and with police officers (46%). There were also several other

responses worthy of note about how a dispatcher perceives his or her job.

Twenty-six percent (26%) said they disliked shift work; fifteen percent (15%)

said they were unhappy about a lack of training opportunities, fifteen percent

(15%) said they disliked the high stress levels associated with dispatching,

thirteen percent (13%) said they hated the confined environment of the

dispatch center, thirteen percent (13%) said the lack of career advancement

was what they disliked the most, and thirteen percent (13%) complained about

mediocre supervision.

The respondents almost unanimously felt that the dispatch job was very

compatible with their own basic personality. They were asked to rate

themselves on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being a very poor job-person match and

10 being a very good job-person match. 100% of the people responding to the

survey felt that they were at least a seven (7), and eighty-seven percent

(87%) rated themselves as eight, nine, or ten on the compatibility scale. The

interesting thing about this situation is that dispatch supervisors only rated

75% of their own dispatchers as having good job-person match, and 25% as

having poor or below average compatibility with the requirements of the job.

Dispatchers were also asked to rate their peers regarding how well

they fit into the job of dispatcher. Forty-two percent (42%) of the

dispatchers interviewed said that less than half of their peers fit well into

the job. It would appear that there are a significant number of dispatchers

who see themselves as fitting into their job very well, but whose supervisor

and peers would disagree.

When it comes to the dispatcher's perception of their own stress

levels, two out of three (66%) felt that their job was very stressful (8, 9,

or 10 on the scale), but also two out of three (67%) liked their job enough so

that they would seek a position as dispatcher if they had it to do over

again. On the down side, this means fully one third of the responding dispatchers would <u>not</u> become dispatchers again if given the choice. It also appears that the stress levels are at least as much a result of internal conflicts as they are a result of high activity levels. When asked if they would become dispatchers again, respondents made comments like, "We get no respect from anybody," "No career future or prospects," "No, I would become a police officer for the freedom and chance to advance." Even the respondents who said they would do it all over again had some reservations: "Yes, no matter how bad it gets, I still love dispatching."

When asked what they felt was the biggest change in the dispatcher's job in the last ten years, nearly three out of four (72%) of the respondents mentioned that increased technology had been the biggest change. Included in this technology category was the advent of computer-aided dispatch (CAD), mobile data terminals (MDT's), and completion of the 911 system. The only other response worthy of note came from 13% of the respondents who cited an increase in workload and levels of calls for service without a corresponding increase in law enforcement staffing levels.

The survey also asked the respondents what they felt would be the biggest changes during the next ten years for the dispatcher. The number one answer again had to do with an increase in technology. More than half (54%) said that more sophisticated computers and the widespread use of mobile data terminals will continue to revolutionize the dispatch career field. There were many comments to the effect that voice radio transmissions will become practically obsolete. It will be replaced by CAD terminals talking to MDT's.

Many dispatchers also see their career field as becoming the next "profession" within law enforcement. They see the next ten years as the opportunity to enhance their professional image with the advent of P.O.S.T. certification, with increased training opportunities, and with the higher

level of technology they must learn to master. Several people, during
interviews and also during the survey, mentioned that they believe dispatch is
entering an era similar to the era peace officers entered during the late 60's
and early 70's. They see a general improvement in their relative position
looming on the horizon, and most welcome the opportunities that the future
will bring.

The final area explored in the questionnaire had to do with making
future changes in either the actual function of the dispatcher or in the
dispatch environment, with an eye toward improving performance levels and
reducing stress. There were many more varied responses to this set of
questions than to any of the other questions in the survey; however, several
responses were repeated over and over again. The number one change that 77%
of the respondents would make is to get a window to the outside world in
dispatch. It appears that either for security or for convenience of
operation, virtually all dispatch operations wind up in somebody's basement.
Dispatchers say they are tired of getting weather reports from someone else
and they would like to be able to look out a window and see the weather for
themselves. Many feel it is a depressing atmosphere in the basement, no
matter how you try to dress it up. Dispatchers acknowledge the need for
security, but feel security can be accomodated without making them feel like
inmates.

The second most frequent change dispatchers would make in their own
backyard was actually a series of items all dealing with their individual work
station. Thirty-three percent (33%) mentioned individually controlled
lighting, twenty-eight percent (28%) mention a more utilitarian work station
("the things you use most should be close and convenient, not halfway across
the room"), and twenty-eight percent (28%) mentioned more comfortable chairs.
Surprisingly enough, very few people complained about eyestrain or neck
problems from spending long hours in front of a video display terminal.

Other changes that were recommended include:

     *more training (54%)

     *quieter environment (too much background noise and foot

     traffic)(28%)

     *adequate break schedule/breakroom facility (26%)

     *eliminate non-dispatch functions (records, clerical, etc)(21%)

     *eliminate unnecessary telephone calls (15%)

     *improve relationship between dispatch and patrol (13%)

     *separate "call-takers" and "dispatchers" (13%)

Nominal Group Technique

After the environmental scanning and personal reflection, and after the personal interviews, and after analyzing the results of the survey, this reasearcher digested and studied the raw data for the purpose of identifying certain trends and events that might have some effect on the dispatcher issue. Or, to put it another way, the author felt it would be beneficial to identify a set of trends and events that may give law enforcement some idea which direction the dispatcher issue is headed in the future. Given this knowledge, law enforcement administrators could better develop strategies and policies that would be designed to make sure the "good stuff" happened and the "bad stuff" didn't. The thrust of futures research involves asking questions such as:

     *What information (trends) should law enforcement monitor to

     understand how an issue might evolve over the next 10-15 years?

     *What changes (social, technological, environmental, economic, and

     political) could affect the nominal (most likely) evolution of these

     trends?

     *How probable are such changes?

     *How are they interrelated?

*What alternative futures (scenarios) could result from possible combinations of target events?

*What strategic policy issues would face law enforcement under a given scenario?

In order to help answer some of these questions, a Nominal Group was convened at the Fairfield Department of Public Safety in mid-July of 1988. The final makeup of the nine-person group was a cross-section of dispatchers, dispatch supervisors, police officers, and law enforcement administrators. An invitation was also extended to a municipal personnel officer and a clinical psychologist; however, other last minute commitments prevented their attendance. (See Appendix B)

The group was sent an informational memorandum explaining the general process and the objectives of the group. It was also sent some background material and a preliminary list of candidate trends and events, and was asked to add trends and events of it's own choosing that the group felt might significantly impact the dispatcher issue.

Trend Selection

When the Nominal Group met, the first order of business was to establish a list of candidate trends that might affect the dispatcher issue. Through a round-robin brainstorming session, a list of 35 trends was identified (See Appendix C). It was felt that each of these candidate trends may have some impact on the issue of managing dispatchers, and may shed some light on the potential future of the issue. Therefore it would be beneficial to be able to forecast the direction and velocity of the trend.

The group was tasked with distilling this list of 35 candidate trends down to those five that the group felt would have the most significant impact on the dispatcher issue. The criterion for inclusion in the list of the final five trends was simply a consensus of the group achieved by voting.

Each member of the group was first asked to screen the entire list of 35 candidate trends using a trend screening form. They were asked to make a judgement for each candidate trend regarding how valuable it would be to have a really good long-range forecast of the trend for strategic planning purposes. Each member was asked to rate each candidate trend as "priceless," "very helpful," "helpful," "not very helpful," or "worthless". The number of votes were then tallied in the "priceless" and "very helpful" columns. The candidate trends receiving the highest number of votes were retained. All other candidate trends were discarded. As luck would have it, there were only five unanimous choices by the group. This final list of trends believed by the group to be most significant when considering the future of the dispatch issue is as follows:

1. The professionalization of the dispatch career field.

2. Ongoing in-service training programs for dispatchers.

3. Adequacy of training of dispatchers for computer down time.

4. Dispatcher salary and benefit levels.

5. Programs to motivate long-term dispatchers.

Once the list of trends had been distilled to five, the next task was to determine whether each trend was increasing or decreasing, and how fast the change was occurring, that is, what is the direction and velocity of the trend. Each member of the group was asked to rate each of these five trends using a trend evaluation form. They were asked to rate the level of the trend as they perceived it 5 years ago, where they believe the level of the trend will be in 10 years if the trend continues as it has, and where the level of the trend should be if it were within their power to reasonably alter the trend to law enforcement's advantage. Later, the estimates of the group were used to prepare a series of graphs for each of the five candidate trends. The graphs serve as a visual depiction of the direction and velocity of each trend.

Trend Analysis

TREND STATEMENT	Level of the Trend (ratio: today=100)			
	5 yrs ago	today	"will be in 10 yrs	should be in 10 yrs
1. Professionalization of the dispatch career field.	60	100	150	200
2. In-service training programs for dispatchers.	50	100	150	200
3. Adequacy of training for computer down time.	40	100	140	200
4. Dispatcher salary and benefits.	60	100	125	175
5. Programs to motivate long-term dispatchers.	5	100	120	150

The first trend unanimously accepted by the group was the degree of professionalization within the dispatch career field. Group members talked of things like more stringent hiring standards, increased levels of training, certification by P.O.S.T. of dispatchers, a better understanding of the dispatch function by other members of law enforcement and the public, and recognition of the vital function dispatchers perform. In general, the group felt that the trend toward professionalization was increasing, but at a slower rate than is desirable. The group felt that in ten years, if nothing is done to accelerate the pace, the level of professionalization will be only 50% higher than it is today. The group also felt strongly that the level should be at least twice what it is today. There seemed to be a great deal of consensus within the group on this trend. This is illustrated by the fact that the range between the low and high estimates was fairly narrow. The

following graph is a visual depiction of the group forecast for the trend
toward professionalization;

Trend #1: Professionalization of the dispatch
           career field.
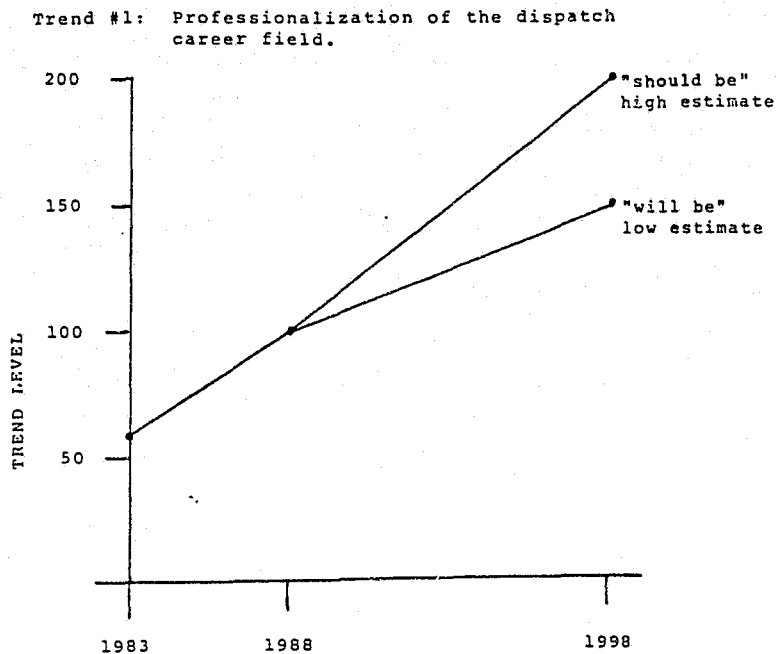
The second trend selected by the group deals with ongoing in-service
training programs for dispatchers. Again, as with the trend toward
professionalization, the group felt that training for dispatchers was a
critical trend to monitor. They felt that this would be a fair indication of
the priority that an agency administration assigns to its dispatch operation:
the greater the priority, the more training made available to dispatchers.
The group felt that, historically, dispatchers have had little in the way of
in-service training programs. Most dispatchers receive some initial training
at the time they are hired, and some training whenever operational changes are
made (as in going from a manual system to CAD), but not much else. It is rare
to find an agency that trains dispatchers regularly in such areas as crisis
intervention, suicide prevention, hostage negotiations, stress management, and
other subjects not commonly thought to pertain to dispatchers.

The group felt that some progress has been made in training programs
in the last five years, but that more is desperately needed. They also felt

that unless something is done to alter the future, by 1998 dispatchers will still be talking about the training they need but don't get. The graph for direction and velocity of the training trend is as follows:

Trend #2:   In-service training programs.

```
TREND LEVEL
200 ─┐                                              ● "should be"
     │                                                high estimate
     │
150 ─┤                                        ● "will be"
     │
100 ─┤                    ● ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ → low estimate
     │
 50 ─┤●
     │
     └──────┬────────────┬──────────────┬──────
          1983         1988           1998
```
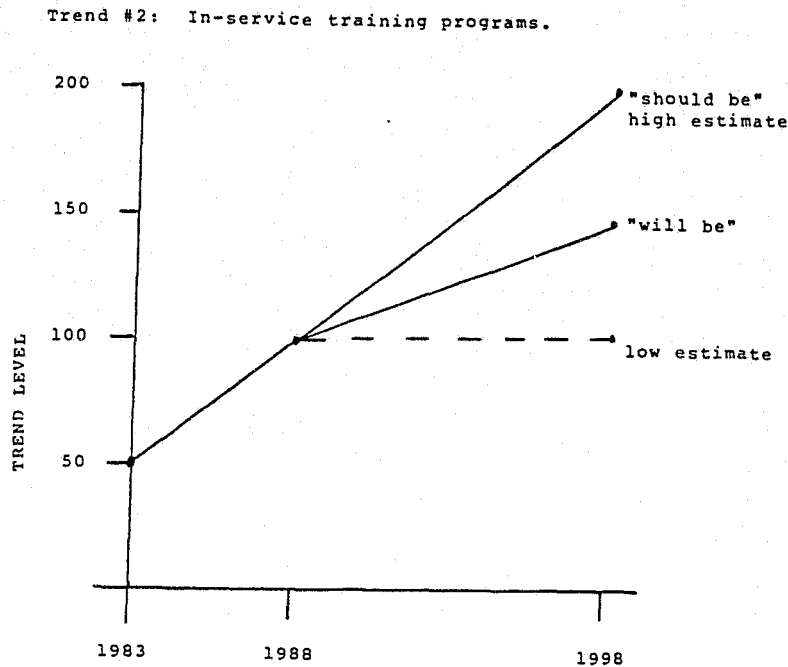
The third trend designated by the group as significant was the amount of training dispatchers receive for computer down time. They felt that the dispatch function is becoming more and more automated and sophisticated. Computers and computer-aided dispatch has been around long enough that many dispatchers began their careers using computers and have never been exposed to a manual system. This results in some significant problems when the computer goes down. Some agencies actually train their dispatchers in both a manual and an automated system just to avoid major problems when the computer crashes. Most agencies do not. Instead, they give minimal training in dealing with the temporary crisis created by computer down time, but rarely is there a true understanding of a backup manual system. For example, most CAD systems automatically assign a number for the reporting area in which a given incident occurs. When CAD goes down, the dispatcher must manually determine which

reporting area the call is in, and make the appropriate notation on a dispatch card. Many dispatchers who have never worked under a manual system don't know what a reporting area is or how to locate one.

The group felt that five years ago, training for computer down time was not as significant a problem as it is today. There simply weren't as many computers around then. Ten years from now, if something is not done to increase awareness, the problem may be horrendous. Below is the graph showing the direction and velocity of this trend.

Trend #3: Adequacy of training for computer down time.
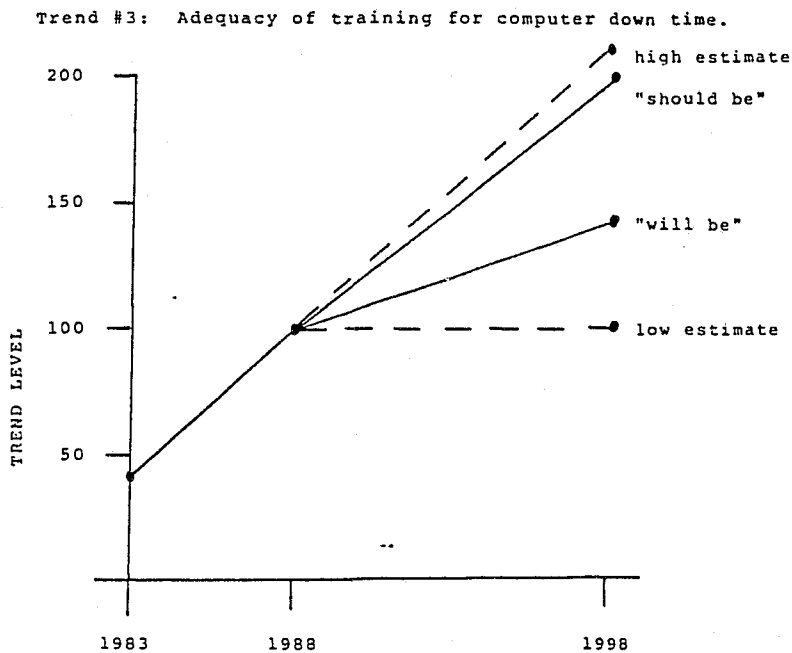
Dispatcher salary and benefit packages throughout the law enforcement industry in California was another significant trend worth monitoring. The group felt that this trend would indicate the relative worth of the dispatcher in the marketplace as well as the ease or difficulty of finding qualified candidates. "The dispatcher is paid pretty well for a woman," has been an oft-repeated comment throughout law enforcement circles. However, one needs to mention that (1) many dispatchers are not women, and (2) the ability to

impose strict hiring standards is frequently tied to relative levels of pay

and benefits when compared to other career occupations.

The graph showing direction and velocity for the group forecast of the

pay/benefit trend is as follows:

Trend #4: Dispatcher salary and benefits.
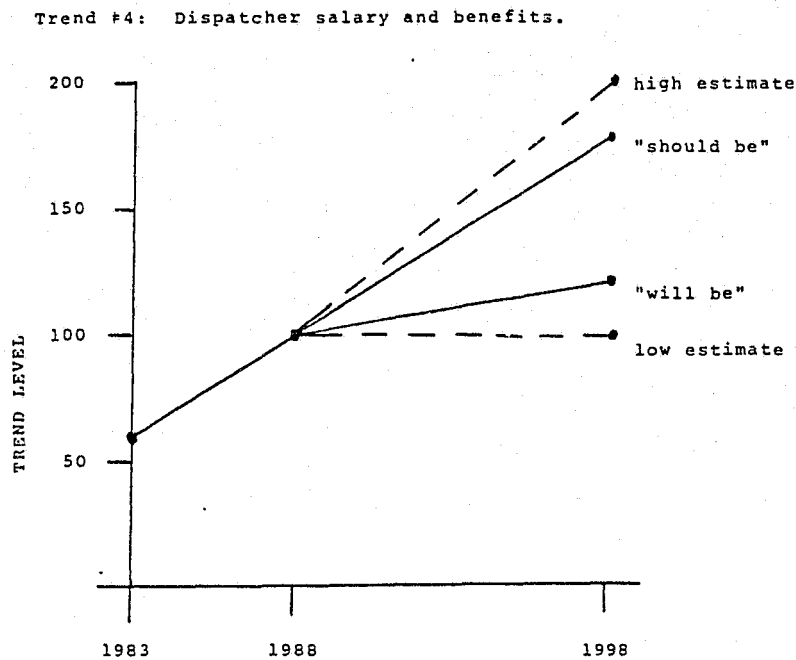
Finally, the group felt that a fifth trend worth monitoring over the

next few years would be programs (or lack of programs) designed to deal with

job burnout. The question the group posed was, "What can we do to motivate

someone who has been a dispatcher for more than ten years?" Currently, not

much is being done in this area. It has been an accepted fact of life for

most dispatchers that their career ladder is pretty short. There simply is

not much available in the way of promotional opportunities for most

dispatchers working for medium-sized law enforcement agencies. Traditional

staffing levels would mean approximately one dispatch supervisor for every

12-15 dispatchers. The dispatch supervisor is normally a non-sworn position

filled by one who was a former dispatcher. However, the first-line dispatch

supervisor usually works for a sworn commander, so the promotional ladder for

dispatch ends at the first line supervisor level. Once the typical dispatcher reaches the top of his/her pay scale, there is little to look forward to in terms of increased financial reward or increased responsibility.

The group felt that something must be done in the future to keep experienced, qualified dispatchers performing at optimum levels and avoid the burnout syndrome which accounts for so much conflict between dispatchers, and other attendant morale problems. The graph for the trend forecast is:

Trend #5: Programs to motivate long-term dispatchers.
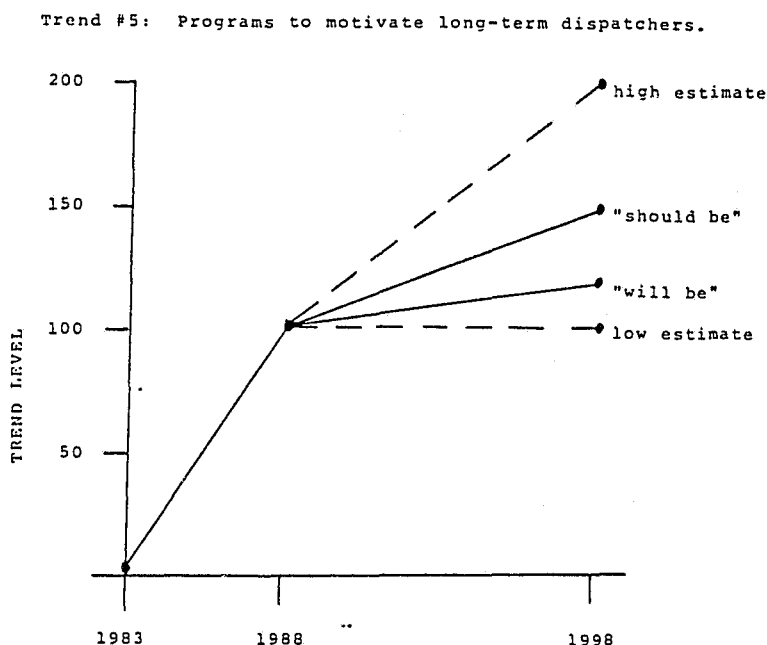
Event Analysis

After selecting the five most important trends and forecasting their direction and velocity over the next ten years, the nominal group was then tasked with identifying five events which, if they were to occur, would have a significant impact on the dispatcher issue. As with the trends, the group was given a preliminary list of candidate events. Brainstorming and round-robin discussion was used to expand the list from the initial nine events to an eventual sixteen (see Appendix E). This list of sixteen events was then narrowed to the five that the group felt would have a reasonable chance of

-21-

occurring within the next ten years, and would have significant impact on the dispatch issue. This was accomplished essentially with the same process as was used to select the five most significant trends. The group was asked to evaluate each candidate event using an event screening form, and final results were based on a polling of the group members. The five most significant events were:

1. P.O.S.T. begins certification program for dispatchers similar to certification of peace officers.

2. P.O.S.T. requires biannual advanced training for dispatchers similar to peace officer training requirements.

3. Dispatchers included in "safety" retirement category by P.E.R.S.

4. Legislature mandates dispatchers provide emergency medical information over the telephone.

5. A major disaster (earthquake, flood, fire, etc.) occurs in California.

The group was then asked to evaluate these five events and attempt to forecast what year they believed the probability that the event would actually occur would first exceed zero. To put it another way, they were asked what they saw as the first year the event had any chance of occurring at all. They were also asked their opinion about the cumulative probability that the event would occur by 1993. If the event did not occur by 1993, what would be the probability that it would occur by 1998? And finally the group was asked their opinion about the net impact the event would have on the dispatcher issue, and on law enforcement in general if it did occur.

The following chart depicts the composite response of the group for each of the five chosen events:

EVENT STATEMENT	PROBABILITY			NET IMPACT ON THE ISSUE AREA (−10 to +10)	NET IMPACT ON LAW ENFORCE-MENT (−10 to +10)
	Year that Probability First Exceeds Zero	By 1993 (0—100)	By 1998 (0—100)		
1. P.O.S.T. begins certification program for dispatchers similar to program for peace officers.	1989	100%	100%	+10	+10
2. P.O.S.T. requires biannual advanced training for dispatchers similar to requirement for peace officers.	1990	50%	80%	+9	+10
3. Dispatchers included in "safety" retirement category by P.E.R.S.	1992	10%	40%	+8	+1
4. Legislature mandates dispatchers provide medical emergency information via telephone.	1989	70%	100%	−5	−5
5. A major natural disaster occurs (flood, earthquake, fire) in California.	1988	50%	75%	−9	−9

The first event chosen by the group had to do with P.O.S.T. beginning a certification program for dispatchers similar to the existing certification program for peace officers.

Event #1: POST certification program for dispatchers.

-23-
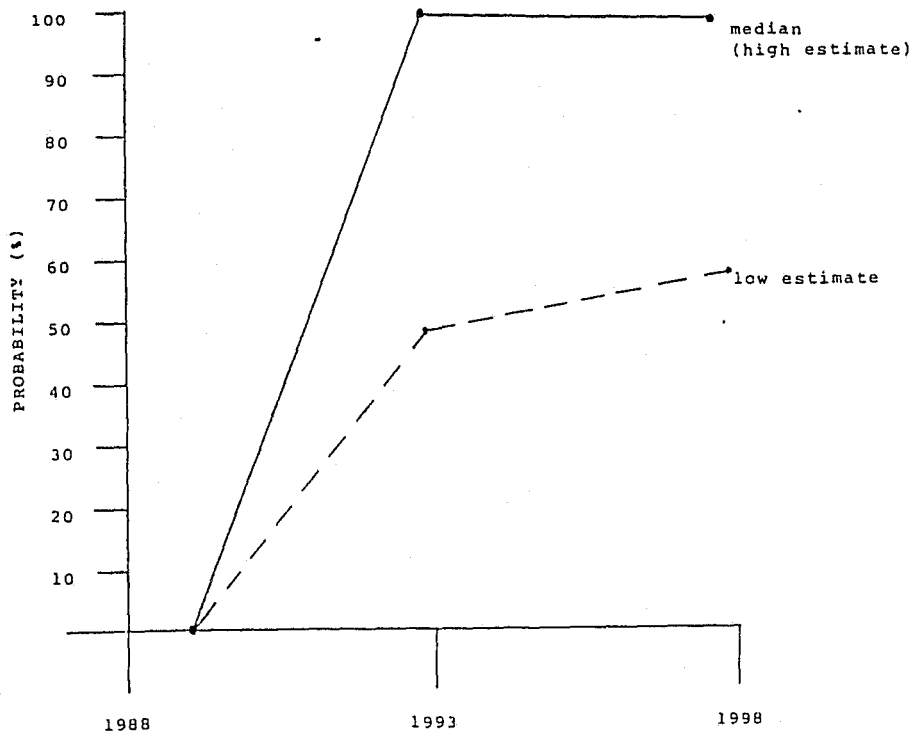
During the discussion, members of the group acknowledged that P.O.S.T.
was beginning a certification program for dispatchers beginning January 1,
1989. However, the program was pretty limited when compared with
certification of peace officers. The dispatcher program mandates certain
procedures during the hiring process (such as a background investigation),
requires that newly hired dispatchers attend a P.O.S.T.-approved 80 hour
training course, and requires that the dispatcher and employing jurisdiction
meet some other relatively simple requirements before a dispatcher is eligible
for certification. By comparison, peace officers must complete a 480 hour
training course upon being employed; must attend at least 24 hours of
certified training every 24 months; and have basic, intermediate, and advanced
levels of certification. The nominal group felt that the current
certification program for dispatchers was a good beginning, but fell far short
of being equivalent to the peace officer program. They also felt that this
event, were it to occur, would be the cornerstone for the professionalization
trend discussed earlier.

Event #2: POST requires biannual advanced training.

-24-
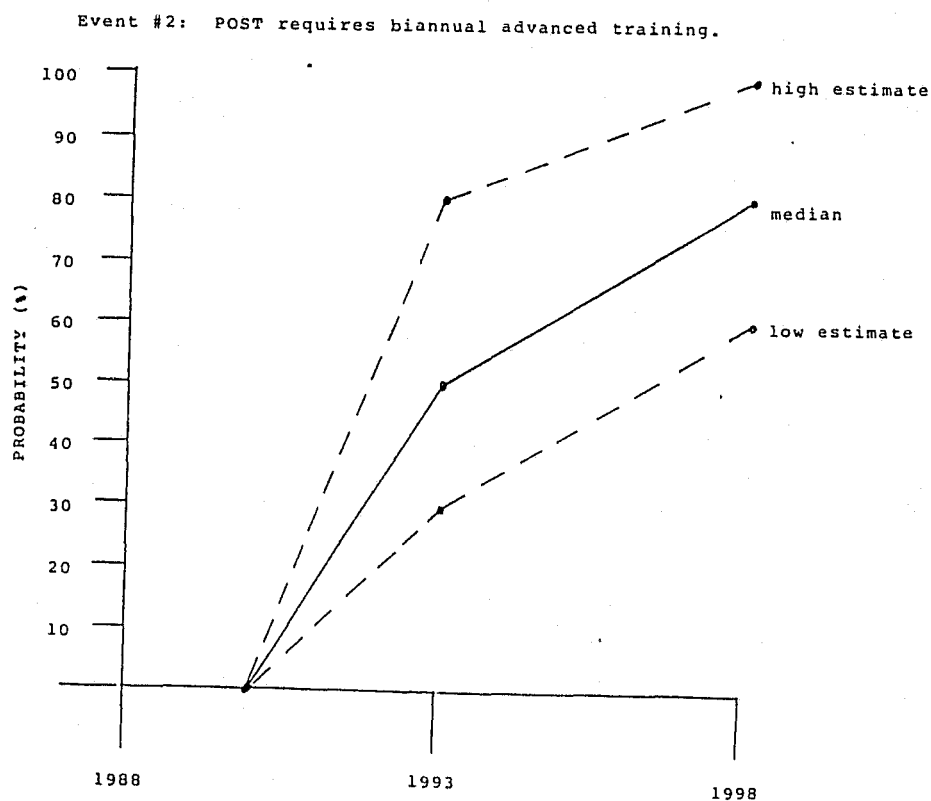
The second event was related to the first, and was based on the theory that P.O.S.T. might require 24 hours of advanced training for dispatchers every 24 months similar to the current requirement for peace officers.

Again, if this were to occur, either alone or in conjunction with event #1, it would go a long way toward professionalizing the dispatch career field. Throughout the discussion by the group there was a unanimous agreement that dispatch personnel have long been on the short end of the training budget. They also felt that in any true profession, there is the recognition that education and training must be a continual process in order to keep pace with changes within the profession. In today's world, where the half-life of knowledge is becoming shorter and shorter, there is an increasing need to keep pace with technology and human resource management.

The third event, including dispatchers within the "safety" category for P.E.R.S retirement, might have an impact on three of the trends previously identified: professionalization, pay and benefits, and programs to motivate long-term dispatchers.

Event #3: Dispatchers included in "safety" retirement.

-25-
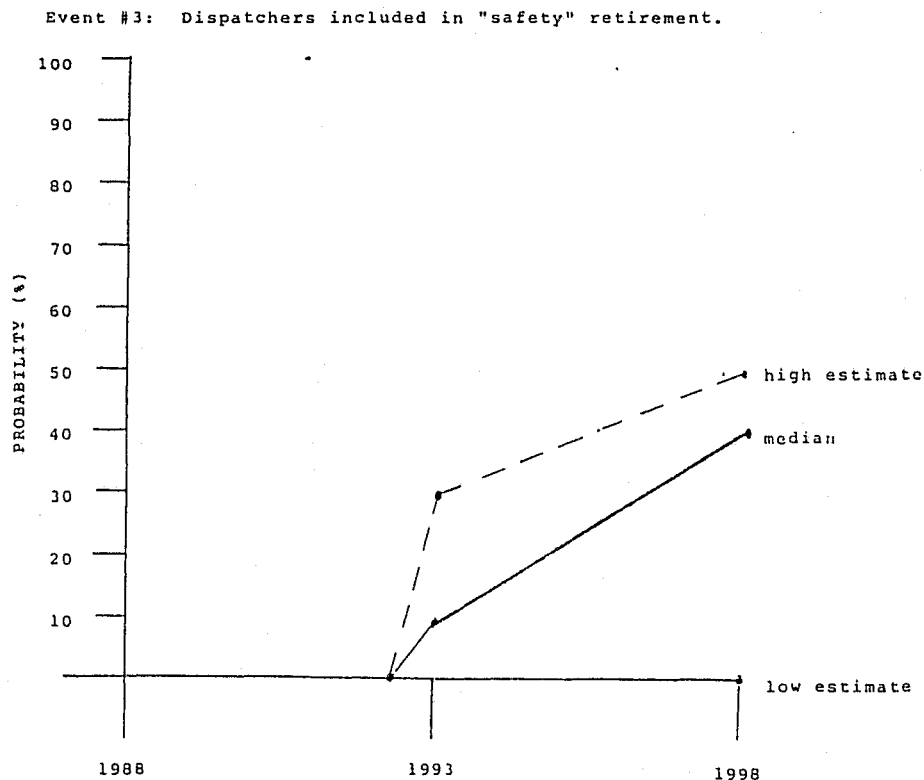
The general consensus was that, even though this would have a
beneficial effect of raising the level of dispatcher within the law
enforcement heirarchy, it was not likely to occur within the next ten years.
The panel felt that there were too many other mid-course obstacles to overcome
before employing jurisdictions and P.E.R.S. would agree to recognize
dispatchers as something more than miscellaneous employees. Even the most
optimistic in the group saw no better than a 50-50 chance that dispatchers
would be included in the safety category by 1998.

The group also discussed current pending legislation that would require
public safety dispatchers to provide emergency medical information over the
telephone whenever a life-threatening situation were to occur. This means
that dispatchers would have to instruct a caller over the telephone in
techniques such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation, clearing a blocked airway,
or stopping profuse bleeding. Currently dispatchers are not trained to a
level that makes them proficient in life-saving first aid, let alone how to
explain these procedures to panic-stricken individuals over the telephone.

Event #4:   Emergency medical information via telephone.
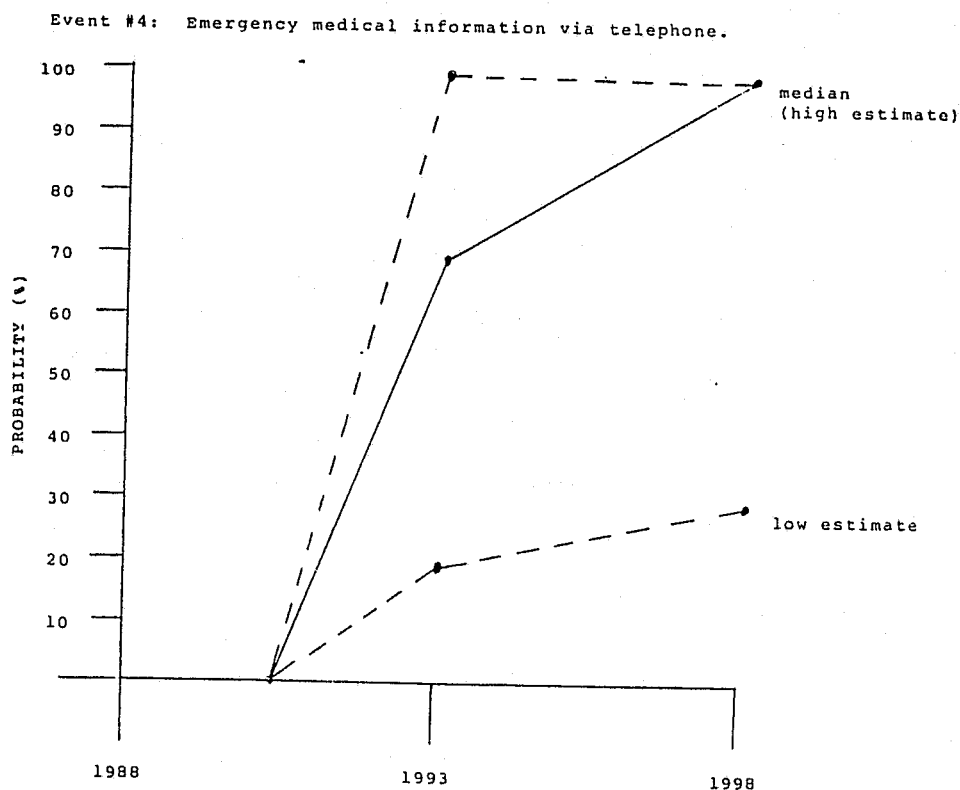
The group felt that the liklihood of this or similar legislation being passed sometime during the next ten years was very good, but that the overall impact on the dispatcher issue and law enforcement may very well be negative. Their primary concern was for civil liability that may result from such encounters, and the ripple effect that may have within the dispatch community.

Finally, the group felt that if an event such as a major disaster were to occur sometime during the next ten years, it may have a significant impact on some of the programs being discussed to improve the dispatch operation. Their definition of a major disaster was something that would have widespread influence over a significant portion of California, such as an earthquake or flood. Although there was agreement that such an occurrence would have a significant impact, there was some disagreement as to whether that impact would be positive or negative.

Event #5: Major disaster occurs in California.
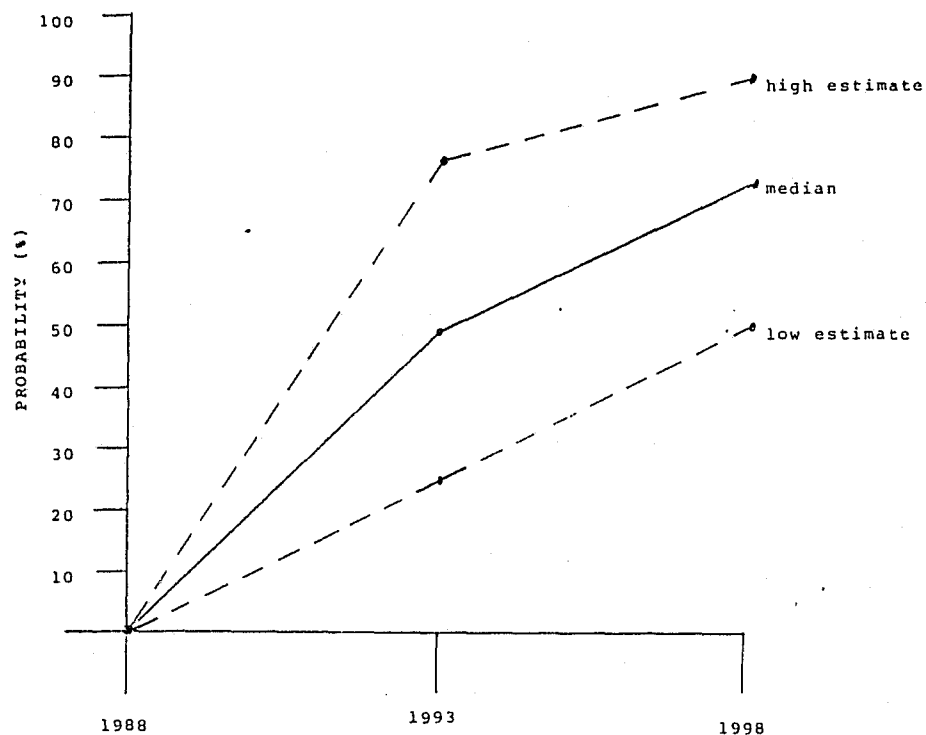
The overall consensus was that the impact would be bad. Those arguing this viewpoint suggested that such an occurrence would inevitably result in mass confusion and widespread calamity, with the loss of human lives expected

to be very high. This would result in the public viewing public safety operations in general, and communications in particular, as being largely ineffective. It would also result in a significant drain on financial resources that might otherwise be used to improve those very same public safety operations. Opponents of this philosophy argued that such a calamity would only heighten an already obvious need to improve dispatch operations, and there may be new opportunities created from the wreckage.

Cross-Impact Analysis

After the discussion and final selection of the five trends and five events, the nominal group was tasked with one final requirement. They were asked to examine each of the five events previously discussed and estimate what the impact of each event would be, if that event were to actually occur, on each of the other events and trends. This is referred to as cross-impact analysis, and the benefit of such an exercise is to determine which of the events is an "actor," and which is a "reactor." In other words, which of the events would have the greatest ripple effect if they were to occur, and which of the events would probably be affected most by the occurrence of other events.

...CROSS IMPACT EVALUATION FORM

SUPPOSE THIS EVENT
WITH THIS PROBABILITY
ACTUALLY OCCURRED...HOW WOULD THIS IMPACT THESE EVENTS AND TRENDS?

		EVENTS					TRENDS				
		CERTIFICATION	TRAINING	PERS SAFETY	TELEPHONE EMS	MAJOR DISASTER	PROFESSIONALISM	IN-SERVICE TRAINING	COMPUTER DOWNTIME	SALARY/BENEFITS	PROGRAMS TO MOTIVATE
		E-1	E-2	E-3	E-4	E-5	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4	T-5
E-1	100%		+10	+25	0	0	+50	+25	0	+25	+20
E-2	80%	+5		+35	0	0	+25	+25	+20	+10	+20
E-3	40%	0	0		0	0	+10	0	0	+30	+10
E-4	100%	0	+10	0		0	+25	+25	0	+25	0
E-5	75%	0	+5	0	0		0	0	0	0	0

The accompanying graph displays the final result of the group analysis. There were two events that could be classified as actors, meaning that if they were to occur, they would also affect the likelihood that other events might occur. The group felt that if P.O.S.T. were to institute a strict certification program, and also require regular advanced training for dispatchers, the ripple effect would touch almost every other event and trend in a positive manner. In contrast, the group saw the "major disaster" event as being almost uncoupled with any other event or trend. The strongest reactor event was #2 (P.O.S.T.-required training). The group felt that if three out of four other events were to occur, this would have a positive effect on motivating P.O.S.T. to require regular training. What this means from a management point of view is that if P.O.S.T. could be convinced to implement a certification program for dispatchers equivalent to that of peace officers, and if P.O.S.T. were to require regular biannual training of dispatchers, lots of other "good stuff" would begin to fall into place.

Scenarios

From all of this accumulated data, one can now peer into the future and begin to see some scenarios develop. Some foreseeable futures are good, some aren't. The following pages contain three such scenarios, all of which are consistent with real-world possibilities. The job of the law enforcement administrator is to use his or her influence to move the organization toward an advantageous future and guide it away from a future of disadvantage. Decisions must be made and plans developed to insure, as much as possible, that the "good stuff" happens and the "bad stuff" doesn't.

Scenario #1: Nominal (most likely) Future

The time is December 2, 1998. The place is the lunch room of any

medium-sized law enforcement agency in California. Two public safety
dispatchers are engaged in small talk over coffee before their regular shift
begins.

"Say, Jan, why don't you and the family come on over for a little
Christmas get-together next weekend. We're having a few friends drop
by Saturday night and I haven't met your husband yet," said Terry, the
senior dispatcher.

"Boy, I can't believe it's Christmas time already," replied Jan.
"I've been with the department nine months and I still feel like I'm
learning a new job. Time goes by so quickly, and there's so much to
learn. Then, just when I think I've got it down, stuff changes. New
procedures, new laws, new equipment. We're already into a new CAD
system and I hadn't got the old one figured out yet."

Terry quips, "Yeah. And to think back in 1979, when I first
started, we were still using the old manual card system. Not many of
us even remember those days now. My kids want to know if I rode a
stagecoach to school or if they had school busses in those days! Makes
me feel kind of old sometimes."

"Thank goodness I don't have problems like that yet," said Jan.
"Having been around as long as you have, I'll bet you've seen your
share of changes around this place."

"Well, yes and no," replied Terry. "Some things change quite a
bit. Other stuff doesn't change much at all. Take hardware, for
example. I'll bet we've changed computer terminals around here ten
times in the last ten years. You just get used to one system and they
find a 'better' one to mess with. I'd like to have a chunk of that
money they spend on new toys every year. And they say each new one is
going to make my job easier. Hah! My job was easier when I

answered a telephone with a receiver in my hand and wrote stuff down with a pencil! The new computers may make somebody's job easier, but not ours. On the other hand, there's other things around here that haven't changed since Christ was a corporal. Are we still stuck in the basement? Do we still have to call outside for a weather report? Do patrol officers still think we're stupid? Does management still dump on us like we're a necessary evil? You bet! Yeah, some things change and some things will be the same forever."

"Surely you're better off now than you were in the old days?" asked Jan.

"Oh, yeah. I don't mean to imply that nothing has changed except computers. The pay and benefits are a little better, but not a lot. And the new certification program by P.O.S.T. has turned things around some. But not much. It's still all pretty new, and I think the administration is dragging their feet trying to keep from spending any money. We're still sort of considered outcasts by most of the rest of the Department. We don't ever see anybody while they have us locked in 'the hole.' And whenever we ask for some new training program they tell us there is no money, and we should stop our whining and snivelling. It just seems like communications doesn't have a real high priority around here. As long as the hardware and software is up and running, the human beings can fetch for themselves, I guess."

"Well, what about the association? I heard they were going to push for some additional training in the next MOU. And there was talk about asking for a senior dispatcher program for you old farts who've been around forever. What about all that?"

"Oh, I have no doubt we can ask for it. Just like we've asked for it every year for the last four years. But it isn't going to happen

until somebody in management wants it to happen. There's a lot of stuff management could do that wouldn't really cost much money. They could make us feel good about ourselves instead of feeling like somebody's stepchild. Don't get me wrong, kid. It ain't a bad job, except for the shift work, and the stress, and the dumb cops you have to deal with, and the public who thinks we're as stupid as the cops. Once it gets into your blood you're just hooked, I guess. But it could be a lot better with just a little effort."

"Well, maybe someday it'll change," said Jan.

"Yeah, maybe someday. But not in my lifetime, and maybe not in yours. C'mon. Let's go to work and save some poor cop. Say, don't forget about Saturday night."

Scenario #2: Normative (feared but possible) Future

The time is August 1, 1998. It's 10:00 pm in the office of the sheriff, who is tired after a long day and is reflecting on the events of the past few months.

"Who would have thought the entire communications staff would have actually walked off the job? I can't believe it! I mean, we've had labor disputes before. God knows, the county's had some tough times. Financing being what it is, we haven't had enough money to do anything except just "get by" since before I ran for sheriff. But now...today was the first day of the strike, and we did OK, I guess. But managers and supervisors can't do the job forever. And forever is about how long it will take to negotiate an agreement with the dispatchers. I mean, we've only been at it now for seven months! And progress has been a little slow."

The sheriff had to admit to himself that he was sympathetic toward many of the dispatcher's demands. He recognized that his communications

operation was an indispensible part of the organization. He even acknowledged that he, personally, might have done more to avert the crisis he now confronted. He reviewed in his mind the sequence of events since his election in 1992.

"When I inherited this job, I said to myself there was a lot of work to be done to get this Department ready for the 21st Century. Jails were overcrowded, deputies were leaving for higher paying jobs with other agencies, patrol staff was seriously depleted. On top of all that, dispatchers were complaining about things that seemed fairly trivial. They wanted a new communications facility. They wanted higher staffing levels to avoid mandatory overtime. They wanted more frequent and more meaningful training opportunities. But all that costs money, and I had higher priorities in mind."

"I guess I must admit that some of what they were asking could have been accomplished without spending a lot of money. Their self-esteem has always been pretty low, and we could have done some things to enhance their image. Many of them suffered from chronic internal conflicts with the requirements of the job, and we didn't really do much to help match the people we hired with the job they were to perform. There were some role clarity problems between the dispatch supervisors and the patrol supervisors and managers, and I suppose I should have addressed them earlier. And we probably should have involved the dispatch people more when we were talking about purchasing the computer hardware and software, because there's been some incredible problems getting the stuff to do what we wanted it to do in the first place."

"At some point, the dispatchers decided their best course of action was to incorporate some of their demands into the collective bargaining process, and that's when my problems really started. For the last few

years, now things have been getting tougher and tougher at contract time. Up to now, my position has been that decisions on those issues should be reserved to management. But some of my managers haven't been the most competent, either. Now I'm faced with a situation where the machine appears to have broken down, and it'll take a major effort to repair it."

"The sheriff's and chief's I've talked to are having many of the same problems, and many of them are prepared to lobby P.O.S.T. for programs to assist on the dispatcher issue. Things like a new certification program, and the advanced training requirement would help. I can't really do much about pay and benefits, what with the budget restrictions I've got, but I can probably find a new environment to put that hell-hole of a dispatch center in without too much trouble. After all, they've been in one temporary location after another for years now. And it might be prudent to talk to my patrol commander and see what we can do to improve the relationship between dispatch and patrol. There have been constant complaints that dispatchers and deputies are at each other's throats for too long."

"Yeah, this is a fine mess you've gotten yourself into. A dispatcher strike. Damn! Looks like it's going to be a deep hole to climb out of."

Scenario #3: Normative (desired and attainable) Future

The time is December 31, 1999. The place is the office of the chief of police. He is meeting with his command staff in a combination New Years Eve party and informal staff meeting. The discussion turns toward expectations for the 21st Century, now less than 24 hours away.

Chief: "Now, before we break this little social hour up, I'd like to say a few words of appreciation to those who worked so hard to insure

that the 20th Century did not die in vain. First, to my commander of Admin Services. It's not the high-profile, glamourous assignment like patrol or investigations, but it's probably been the toughest assignment over the last five years. We set quite a few goals for records management and communications. Some of them seemed unreachable at the time. But I am very proud to say that we face the new century in better shape than I had any right to expect."

"Under your leadership the department has broken new ground. Your active participation in CLEARS and APCO has resulted in an enrichment of those organizations as well as substantial benefit to our own. I feel very good about your being the first civilian division commander to attend the P.O.S.T. Command College, and the vision that was developed and refined there has resulted in many new programs here. When we built the new public safety building a few years ago, your insistance on putting the communications center on the top floor rather than the basement turned out very well. Security is still maintained, but the dispatchers feel much better about their work environment. Your new senior dispatcher program is working much better than I expected. I've seen some enthusiam in our older dispatchers that's been missing for some time. They especially like the ability to rotate periodically to other functions within the department.

"I must also commend you for lobbying so effectively with P.O.S.T. to increase the certification standards and training requirements for dispatchers. In fact, right off-hand, the only disappointment I can think of was your inability to convince P.E.R.S. that dispatchers should be included in the 'safety' retirement category."

"Your internship program with the local college has developed some tremendous prospects for new dispatchers, many of whom seem to have

better job-person match than candidates we've previously hired."

"Not that we're without problems, of course. Who among us is? But your leadership and problem-solving skills have earned my respect and admiration. Now, for the rest of you yahoos..."

OBJECTIVE TWO

STATEMENT

The second objective of the project was to develop a strategic planning and management process to deal with the information developed in objective one. Again, the function of management is to attempt to peer into the future and identify trends and events that might impact the issue of managing dispatchers. Having identified some of those trends and events, it is now our responsibility to make some strategic decisions and develop plans that insure the "good stuff" happens and the "bad stuff" doesn't. For the purpose of this paper, the Fairfield Department of Public Safety will be used as a model organization to demonstrate the planning and implementation process.

METHODS: IDENTIFICATION

The following methods were used to facilitate the process of strategic decision making and strategic planning:

1. SMEAC was used as a model format (situation, mission, and execution will be outlined in objective two; administration and control will be involved in objective three, transition management).

2. A WOTS UP analysis (weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and strengths) was conducted to analyze the environmental conditions present and the organization's capabilities.

3. Strategic assumption and surfacing technique (S.A.S.T.) was used in an attempt to identify stakeholders involved in the dispatcher issue and identify some assumptions that might be made about how these stakeholders perceive the issue.

4. A modified policy delphi was conducted to generate and evaluate policy options.

5. From this process a strategic plan was developed and will be
   discussed at some length.

METHODS: IMPLEMENTATION

SMEAC is the model used as a format for the strategic planning and
transition management portions (objectives two and three) of this project.
SMEAC stands for situation, mission, execution, administration, and control.
It is an outline model originally developed by the military for an operations
order, and has been used extensively by civilian law enforcement for planning
purposes during tactical operations.

Situation

The City of Fairfield is the county seat of Solano County and is
located on the I-80 corridor about halfway between San Francisco and
Sacramento. Fairfield has a population of approximately 75,000, covers 36
square miles, and is the home of Travis Air Force Base. In addition to the
air base, the city has attracted several other major businesses including
Anheuser Busch, Ball Metal Container Group, National Can Company,
Owens-Illinois, Clorox, and the Herman Goelitz Candy Company (makers of
President Reagan's favorite Jelly Belly jellybeans).

The city has a reputation as a forward-looking organization which
places high values on efficiency, quality, and innovation. The former city
manager, B. Gale Wilson, is known for his entrepreneurial approach toward
public management and is a past chairman of the P.O.S.T. Commission.

In 1979 the city reorganized its police and fire services into a
department of public safety. Firefighters and police officers do not
cross-train. That is, firefighters do not perform law enforcement functions
and police officers do not fight fires. But many other functions (such as
training, prevention, community relations, records, and dispatch) have been
consolidated. Currently there are 81 sworn police officers, 44 firefighters,

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and 92 non-sworn personnel within the department. There are 14 dispatchers, a civilian dispatch supervisor, and a civilian division manager who also is responsible for the records section, a clerical pool, and computer systems. The department switched from a manual dispatch operation to a computer-assisted dispatch operation in mid-1986, and is planning on full implementation of mobile data terminals in patrol vehicles by mid-1989.

"WOTS UP" Analysis

In order to more fully understand the situation it is necessary to examine environmental influences from outside the organization as well as internal influences and capabilities within the organization. To accomplish this task, a WOTS UP (weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and strengths) analysis was conducted. The environmental factors were identified and sorted into two categories, those that presented opportunities for the department and those that presented threats. The internal capabilities were evaluated for strengths and weaknesses. The WOTS UP analysis is designed to assist a manager in finding the best match between environmental trends and internal capabilities so that the strategic plan takes advantage of both.

Opportunities and Threats

There are several environmental factors that can be counted as opportunities. First among these is community support. Traditionally, the general public tends to be very supportive of public safety activities and programs, and this is particularly true in Fairfield. The department of public safety enjoys a very good relationship with the community at the present time. Another opportunity exists with the technological advances in the communications field. It seems that with each passing year, some new development or electronic gadget allows agencies to expand their capabilities by making records and communications more efficient. P.O.S.T.'s apparent willingness to get more involved in the dispatch career field is also viewed

as an opportunity toward professionalism. A new dispatcher certification
program scheduled for implementation in 1989 is the first of what many hope
will be a long list of accreditations for dispatchers. The general trend of
dispatchers hoping to move their career field toward a profession is very
encouraging. And lastly, the trend for many law enforcement agencies toward
developing programs for long-term employees who have not moved up the
promotion ladder is very encouraging. At this point in time, the alternative
career paths that are developing within law enforcement are pretty much
restricted to sworn personnel, but many see them expanding in the future to
include dispatchers and other civilian employees.

Some of these opportunities, when viewed from a different perspective,
can also become a threat to the organization. For example, while technology
will allow us to do many more things now than in the past, it can also take
its toll on human resource management. Each technological advancement brings
with it greater complexity of operation and understanding. In her article
regarding common misconceptions associated with computer-aided dispatching,
Sheila Tarvin, a supervisor for the Carlsbad Police Department, states:

"Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) brings many valuable benefits

to the law enforcement application. However, as more and

more law enforcement agencies make the move to modern

technology, it is time to clear away the lingering myths

that seem to cloud CAD issues. Whether these myths were

the product of overzealous sales personnel or the clouded

enthusiam of managers without full understanding of the

operational realities, they persist and persist." [2]

Another of these opportunities that may also be viewed as a threat is
community support. While it is certainly true that the Fairfield Department
of Public Safety has enjoyed very good community support in the past, that

same community has been showing an increased hostility toward other city government activities over the past several years. The council and city management have both come under fire from a wide variety of civic groups opposed to various city policies. For example, city management recently decided to develop an auto mall. Property was purchased and development agreements signed without much input from local auto dealers. When the plan was finally presented to local businessmen and the public, a backlash of resentment surfaced at the way the city appeared to have unilaterally made the final decision. Care must be taken to insure continued public support of the public safety function.

Lastly, the taxpayers revolt is no surprise to anyone in public service. The passage of Proposition 103 in November of 1988 was only the most recent shot fired in the tax war. While this skirmish involved private insurance companies and not state and local government, it still sends a message for public administrators everywhere: spend money judiciously because those who giveth can also taketh away. This philosophy must clearly be viewed as a threat because of the unwillingness of the taxpaying public to foot the bill for what they perceive as unnecessary programs.

Strengths and Weaknesses

A survey was conducted within the Department of Public Safety to assess internal strengths and weaknesses. Two rating forms were distributed to twelve employees representing all divisions and ranks (see Appendices G and H). The employees were asked first to rate strengths and/or weaknesses in each of twenty-four areas of operation. The same employees were then asked to rate the organization's adaptability to change in each of thirteen categories. Their composite scores were used to identify those areas where the department is exceptionally strong or particularly weak.

There were several areas identified as organizational strengths. The survey responses indicated that support from the city manager's office, as well as wage/benefit packages, and the public safety facilities and equipment were all very good. Conversely, the weaknesses identified included manpower staffing levels, levels of calls for service, training deficiencies, and the skills of some line employees (police officers and dispatchers).

With respect to staffing levels and levels of calls for service, the survey appears to say that there is too much activity for the number of people available to do the job. Patrol staff, for example, has been trying unsuccessfully for several years to achieve authorized strength. Each time the division commander gets close to the magic number, something happens to deplete the staff. Either patrol officers get siphoned off to staff other divisions, or officers leave for other departments, or get promoted. As with many other law enforcement agencies, hiring and training new employees seems to be a painfully slow process, so the process of adding new police officers takes time. Thankfully, the turnover rate is not excessive or the problem would be worse.

Similarly, the skills of line employees was addressed as a perceived weakness within the department. Again using patrol as an example, twenty-four of the forty officers have fewer than five years experience. There has been an extraordinary growth rate for virtually every division within the department, and as a result the line employees are very inexperienced at what they do. In-service training has, in many cases, simply not filled the void left by inexperience.

This same group of twelve employees was also asked to evaluate the organization's adaptability regarding change. Top level managers got some high marks, especially with respect to their skills, talents, knowledge and education. The organizational culture and values also received high scores,

as most employees seem to believe that the atmosphere in which they work is fair, honest, and equitable. The chief has consistently adhered to his philosophy requiring honesty and integrity above all other virtues, and most employees feel that philosophy has paid dividends. Several years ago the City of Fairfield published a list of city values, indicating to all employees and the public what city management felt were important norms. These values included such things as trust, honesty, and integrity; quality, excellence, and professionalism; innovation; the worth of the individual; effective community service; future orientation and decisions that will stand the test of time. These values were viewed with some skepticism in the beginning. Employees initially felt that management might simply be paying lip service to some lofty ideals. However, the values have slowly taken root when employees discovered that managers were serious about them.

The downside of the survey indicated that frequently the middle managers and line employees are not nearly so adaptable to change as top level managers. Line employees tend to view change suspiciously, and this is particularly true if they have not had a hand in developing the change. If the change is viewed as being imposed from above, resistance is almost a certainty. Middle managers are not quite so resistant as are line employees, but they also seem to have their own personal stake in the outcome of change. As is so often the case, it appears that it is not so much the end result of change, but the process of arriving at the decision to change which generates so much resistance. If people have no "buy-in," obtaining a commitment to change can be a very difficult process. As someone once said, the definition of leadership is getting others to do what you want them to do because they want to do it.

The WOTS UP analysis, then, indicates that if we were to select a strategic plan that takes advantage of strengths and opportunities, while

minimizing threats and weaknesses, then that plan should contain the following elements:

1. Exploit the positive aspects of technological developments in the communications industry, but also keep a wary eye on their impact on human resource management.

2. Expand upon the general trend in many departments of developing programs for long-term employees who have not been promoted. Up to now, this trend has been confined to police officers, but it could also be expanded to include any class of employee, including dispatchers.

3. Encourage, through whatever means available, P.O.S.T. involvement in dispatcher-related issues. P.O.S.T. is viewed as playing a critical role in the development and professionalization of the police officer, and dispatchers covet a similar opportunity.

4. Continue to seek out the support of the community. The idea is not necessarily to attempt to sell the community on the idea of new projects; it would be more to avoid the dangers of allowing the relationship to degenerate toward antagonism.

5. The strategic plan should be developed and implemented in such a manner as to minimize resistance at the middle manager and line employee level.

Strategic Assumption and Surfacing Technique

The next step in developing a long-range strategic plan for dispatchers is to identify those people who might be affected by the plan, or those people who might exert influence over the plan. It would also be beneficial if it were possible to predict how these same people would react to the dispatcher issue in general, and a strategic plan in particular. For the remainder of this paper, these people who might be influenced by, or exert influence over the plan will be referred to as stakeholders.

To assist in identifying these stakeholders and learning more about them, a strategic assumption and surfacing technique (S.A.S.T.) was used. The principle intent of S.A.S.T. is to emphasize the concept that the organization does not operate in a vacuum. Its policies have implications both inside and outside the organization, and that outsiders can, and frequently do impact policy selection and implementation.

A list of 21 stakeholders was generated. These are people or groups who might conceivably have some impact upon, or be impacted by, a strategic plan (see Appendix I). This extensive list was reduced to a list of eight key stakeholders. These eight would, theoretically, have the most significant impact on the dispatcher issue. There were also two stakeholder groups identified as "snaildarters." A snaildarter is a seemingly insignificant player who has the ability to drastically impact the organization's policy and action. In this case, the snaildarters are the Fairfield-Suisun Taxpayer's Association and the local media representatives. Taken together, these ten elements make up the list of key stakeholders.

After establishing this list of ten key stakeholders, a discussion about their points of view regarding the dispatcher issue generated a list of assumptions about them; that is, given the issue of managing dispatchers through the end of this century, what does each stakeholder care about or want.

1. Dispatchers: This has pretty much been researched earlier in the project and the dispatcher's position is pretty much understood. We need only to recall that they would like more recognition, greater esteem, better training, a more aesthetic and functional workplace, and programs for career dispatchers who cannot look forward to promotion. They understand budget restrictions, but generally feel they are on the bottom of the priority list of expenditures.

2. <u>Dispatch supervisor</u>: A civilian position that has just been filled
by a dispatcher from another law enforcement agency upon the retirement
of the old dispatch supervisor. He appears to be energetic, competent
with both equipment and people, and concerned about issues affecting
dispatchers. He wants many of the same things as the dispatcher group
wants with respect to training and esteem, and a general uplifting of
the dispatcher's relative position within the department. He is also
aware of the problem created by inexperience at the dispatch level.

3. <u>Administrative Systems Division Manager</u>: A civilian command rank
manager, she oversees dispatch, records, a clerical pool of eight
secretaries, and the department's computer systems. Dispatch is but
one of her concerns, however she has been sympathetic toward their
general vision of an increased level of professionalism. She is more
aware of budget constraints than the dispatchers or their supervisor.
She wants a more efficient dispatch operation and a general improvement
in morale among the entire division.

4. <u>Chief of Public Safety</u>: Under the city's expenditure control
budget (ECB) the chief has a great deal of latitude in how money is
spent within the department. Each fiscal year he is alotted a lump sum
of money equivalent to last years budget, with increases based on a
formula combining the consumer price index and new housing starts.
Within that framework, how the money gets spent is pretty much up to
the chief. Funding for new programs is prioritized within the
department. If a new program is authorized, there is no "new" money
provided in the department budget; something else must be cut out. The
chief is not opposed to new programs, but he must be convinced of the
need for, and the viability of, such programs. It appears that the
chief has no preconceived notions either for or against the dispatch
operation.

5. Fairfield Employees Association: The bargaining unit representing dispatchers as well as other miscellaneous city employees not belonging to the Police Officer's Association or the Professional Firefighter's Association. Fourteen public safety dispatchers make up only a small percentage of the association membership, and consequently the association has not felt a strong desire to push dispatcher issues with management. They want to feel responsible for any improvement in the dispatcher career field, but they really don't want to upset the applecart too much. The danger here involves making unilateral decisions without letting the association feel involved.

6. Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.): This group seems to be more willing to get involved in dispatcher issues than it has in the past. P.O.S.T. is generally the "good guy" when it comes to law enforcement standards and training. They enjoy the support of most of the state's politicians and law enforcement administrators. P.O.S.T.'s tremendous leverage is a result of the funds it makes available to reimburse local agencies for participating in certified training programs, including dispatchers. P.O.S.T. tends to be fairly conservative in it's approach toward changing training or certification standards, primarily because once the standards are adopted, every agency in the state must comply, even the ones who lack sufficient resources. If direct efforts to get P.O.S.T. to adopt stricter standards fail, they might be susceptible to influence indirectly. This could involve lobbying legislators who could, in turn, argue for stricter standards in hiring and training.

7. Psychological Services: The department contracts with an outside vendor for various psychological services and organizational management services. For example, at different times the psych services

consultant has provided psychological screening tests for pre-employment candidates, in-service screening for assignment to the canine unit and/or special weapons and tactics unit, and developed a management model called Management By Resource (MBR). At one time there was talk of doing some work on a vehicle to improve job-person match among dispatcher candidates, but it apparently died from lack of interest. The best guess is the psych services consulting group would be very supportive of a plan tackling the dispatch issue as long as they were a part of the plan.

8. <u>California Law Enforcement Association of Records Supervisors (CLEARS)</u>: A professional association of records supervisors who are active regarding issues of concern to records and communications supervisors. They could be very active in lobbying for P.O.S.T. reforms, or in influencing legislators to introduce new legislation regarding the dispatcher issue. They would generally be supportive of programs intended to improve the professional status of the dispatcher.

9. <u>The Fairfield-Suisun Taxpayers Association</u>: The first of the two snaildarters mentioned previously. Although not directly involved in operational kinds of issues within the city, they are generally the watchdog agency that keeps a wary eye on expenditure of public monies. If they felt that the city, or the department, was mismanaging money they would be very vocal in their condemnation. This would include the scenario where money was being spent in a foolhardy manner on programs they deem unworthy, or the scenario where funds were not made available for a program even though there was an obvious need. In the most recent past, this association has gotten a reputation for being anti-everything that city management thinks is a good idea. This would be a difficult stakeholder to predict because of the diverse nature of

the group. Care must be exercised to obtain their support, or at least avoid their wrath,without appearing to try to manipulate the association. This group, along with a few other citizen's coalitions, have been successful in backing city hall down on several important issues.

10. Local media representatives: This is the second snaildarter. Along with the taxpayer's association, the two local newspapers have engaged in some extensive "city hall bashing" over the past three years. Like most newspapers, their primary goal is to sell news. On some occasions, hard as it is to believe, there has been speculation that reporters have actually fueled the fires of discontent in order to report the conflict as "news." There has been much recent debate between members of the city council as to opposing philosophies on some heated issues. Local reporters have provided extensive coverage of the council's internal conflicts. Similarly, the newspapers have not been reluctant to give extensive coverage to anyone in town who wants to pick a fight with city hall. The message here seems to be to try and avoid managing the dispatch issue in the newspaper. The newspaper appears to have an avowed interest in promoting conflict, and that can only be disruptive to personnel issues.

The graph on the following page depicts these various stakeholders, and their relative importance to the dispatcher issue. The graph also indicates the relative certainty about those assumptions assigned to each stakeholder. The dispatcher, for example, is shown on the graph in a relatively high point on the certainty scale. That means that the degree of certainty surrounding those assumptions assigned to the dispatcher is very high. The relative importance assigned to the dispatcher is not quite so high. Certainly the dispatcher must be an integral part of the plan if it is to succeed, but there are other stakeholders who are more important; the chief, for example. His

relative degree of importance is very high, but the certainty about the assumptions assigned to him is rather low.

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Certainty and Importance Estimates

most certain

```
                          8                    1


                             7                    2


              6                                        3


least important ——————————————————+—————————————————— most important


                                      5              4


                                      9      10




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least certain
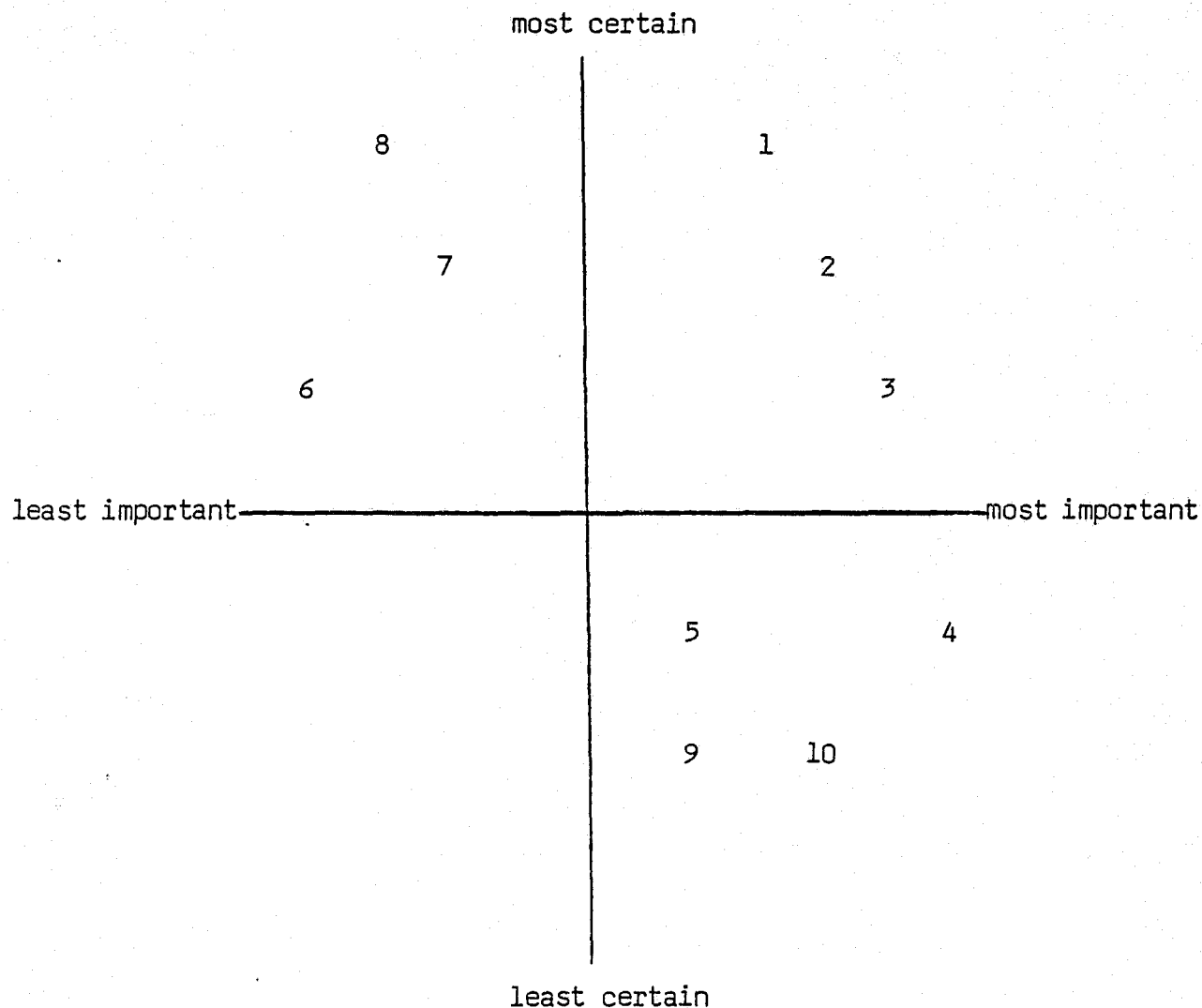
1. Dispatchers   6. P.O.S.T.

2. Dispatch supervisor   7. Psychological consultant

3. Admin Systems Manager   8. C.L.E.A.R.S.

4. Chief of Public Safety   9. Taxpayer's Association

5. Employee's Association   10. Local media

From a planning standpoint, those people who lie within the lower right quadrant of the graph are of some concern. These are the people who are important to the success of any plan, but about whom our assumptions are not very certain. It would be a distinct advantage, therefore, if additional information could be obtained about these people which would allow the planners to be more definite in their assumptions. These stakeholders about whom more information is desired are: the chief of public safety, the Fairfield-Suisun Taxpayer's Association, and the representatives of the local media.

Mission Statement

The mission of law enforcement is to protect life and property, to enforce laws, to identify and apprehend criminals, and to maintain a safe environment in which society can function in an orderly manner.

Consistent with the values of a free society, the mission of the Fairfield Department of Public Safety is:

1. To have Fairfield relatively free from fire, crime, and disorder;

2. To provide efficient, quality service within the scope of public safety responsibility; and

3. To have mutual understanding and support within our organization and the community.

Additionally, the administrative systems division (which includes dispatch) has established the following objectives in support of the department mission statement:

1. To actively recruit, hire, and train additional full-time and part-time communication personnel so that the communications center staff can be self-relieving, eliminating the use of sworn personnel and reducing the reliance on other civilian classifications for staffing.

2. To develop a training manual for each position in the division and a guide for the trainer. This will also include a testing process.

3. To provide all division supervisors and key personnel with a working knowledge of the basic computer hardware, software and peripheral devices used by public safety in order to establish first-line troubleshooting for users.

4. To utilize staff meetings as an educational and communicative tool, emphasizing the effectiveness of team achievement.

5. To implement a cross-training program for records and communications personnel that will include training the public safety clerks as relief dispatchers, and allow dispatchers to do non-communication functions.

Execution

The first step in the execution phase was to develop a set of possible alternative strategies designed to deal with the dispatcher issue. The list of seventeen alternatives was generated by personal interviews with twelve department employees. Included in this group were dispatchers, dispatch supervisors, other civilian employees, a division commander, police officers, and police supervisors. The alternative strategies developed were:

1. Lobby P.O.S.T. to make dispatcher certification program more restrictive.

2. Lobby P.O.S.T. to increase dispatcher training requirements.

3. Increase the level of dispatcher training without P.O.S.T.

4. Lobby P.E.R.S. to include dispatchers in "safety" retirement category.

5. Develop a career path for dispatchers with alternatives to promotion.

6. Build a new communications center/public safety building.

7. Redesign existing dispatch room to provide outside lighting and view.

8. Redesign dispatch workstations for utility and ease of operation.

9. Provide for individually adjustable workstations (lighting, chair support, headsets, etc.)

10. Reduce background noise levels in dispatch.

11. Rotate dispatchers to other temporary assignments within other divisions of the department.

12. Develop a proficiency pay program for senior dispatchers.

13. Use pre-employment psychological evaluations to improve job-person match.

14. Staff a supervisor position for each dispatch shift.

15. Move the dispatch function into the Patrol Division.

16. Place a higher priority on recruiting and hiring dispatchers, so that authorized staffing levels can be achieved.

17. Increase the use of part time dispatchers.

Modified Policy Delphi

This same group was called together to participate in a modified policy delphi. The purpose of the meeting was to examine the alternative strategies to insure that none were overlooked, and to decide as a group which strategies were desireable and feasible, and which were not. Before any voting was done, the group discussed each strategy and collectively decided that several could be combined. For example, strategy #5 (alternative career path for dispatchers) could logically include at least two other listed alternatives (incentive pay and rotating assignments). The list of seventeen shrank to a list of twelve. The members were given a rating form (see Appendix J) and asked to rate each of the twelve alternatives on a scale from 0-3 as to its feasibility and desirability.

The group selected four strategies as being substantially preferable to the rest. These were:

1. Place a higher priority on recruiting and hiring qualified dispatchers.

    a. It is already a stated division objective to achieve authorized staffing levels.

    b. Full staffing would allow dispatch supervisor many options not available at depleted staffing levels.

    c. Use of pre-employment psychological evaluations to improve job-person match.

2. Increase the amount of training made available to dispatchers.

    a. Dispatchers are eligible for training reimbursement under existing P.O.S.T. guidelines, so getting P.O.S.T. to change standards is not absolutely necessary (but desireable).

    b. Will result in higher levels of performance and greater esteem.

3. Develop career path for dispatchers with alternatives to promotion.

    a. Some form of proficiency pay for superior performance.

    b. Rotation of assignments from dispatch to other divisions for specified periods of time (3 months, 6 months, etc.)

4. Environmental changes in the communications center.

    a. If new public safety building is built, dispatch center will attempt to balance security and environmental considerations.

    b. Existing facility can be made more aesthetically pleasing.

    c. Individually adjustable work stations.

    d. Break and bathroom facilities closer to dispatch.

Just as a point of information, the proposed strategy which most polarized the group involved moving the dispatch function into the Patrol Division. Those who felt it should be moved were adamant in their

convictions. Those who felt it should remain in Admin Systems were just as adamant it should not be moved. It led to some interesting discussions and disclosures.

Proposed Strategic Plan

Based upon the research up to this point, the strategic plan that has been developed merits some discussion and clarification. The first element of the plan involves placing a higher priority on achieving full staffing levels within dispatch. The department is authorized fourteen dispatch positions. There are currently three unfilled positions, which restricts to some degree the supervisor's and division manager's ability to implement other portions of the plan. It's much more difficult to schedule training, for example, when staffing levels are already at minimum. Likewise, it would be difficult to talk about rotating a dispatcher into another division for three months when there are barely enough dispatchers to cover three shifts each day. A second component of this increased priority on hiring dispatchers involves achieving a better job-person match. Many law enforcement agencies, including Fairfield, use a pre-employment psychological evaluation as a screening mechanism to weed out undesireable candidates. However, not many agencies make a distinct effort to match the requirements of the job with the psychological makeup of the candidate. Job-person match is an emerging trend in some career fields in both public and private industry. There are consultants and testing devices available to determine a person's psychological wants and needs. There are not many devices in the marketplace that can identify the psychological requirements of a successful dispatcher. It would not be impossible to develop such a vehicle. The idea is to match the person to the job, so that internal conflict and frustration do not later develop.

The second portion of the strategic plan involves a significant increase in the amount of training dispatchers receive. This plan would

require that each dispatcher receive a minimum of 16 hours of advanced training per year. Currently there are no P.O.S.T. requirements for advanced training, and even after January of 1989, the mandatory training requirement will only be an initial eighty hours. The California Department of Justice has minimum training requirements, but these only involve performance standards for use of the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (C.L.E.T.S.). One suggested policy was to lobby P.O.S.T. for more stringent training standards for dispatchers, and that certainly would be a good idea. But simply asking someone else for help is not really much of a strategic plan. It was recognized that within current P.O.S.T. reimbursement guidelines, dispatchers are eligible for a great deal of training already. The reason dispatchers do not often get training is twofold; most agencies are understaffed and training is difficult to schedule without significant overtime expenditures, and most administrators who make decisions about training are sworn officers who do not realize the need for dispatchers to attend schools traditionally reserved for police officers.

Administrators need to recognize that the requirements of a dispatcher are different now than they were even five years ago. A dispatcher is no longer simply a secretary who types, files, and talks on the radio once in awhile. Dispatch has evolved into a very highly structured technical position. It is not at all uncommon now for a law enforcement dispatcher to also dispatch fire and emergency medical services. Five years ago that was the exception rather than the rule. The use of computers in the workplace is very common today, and dispatch is no exception. Computer-aided dispatch (CAD) and mobile data terminals (MDT's) are becoming more and more common, even in departments that couldn't afford a computer five years ago. Where it was previously possible to hire and train a dispatcher within a matter of a few weeks or months, it now takes up to a year for a dispatcher to reach a

reasonable level of proficiency. It is no longer possible in most agencies to take a police officer off the street and put him or her in dispatch for desk relief or to fill a vacancy created by sick leave or vacation. The job has become too specialized, too complex. Training is needed just to keep pace with the technology of dispatch.

Non-traditional training for dispatchers is an emerging trend that seems to be gaining momentum as more administrators recognize the need to keep dispatchers abreast on people issues as well as technological issues. During an interview with this researcher, one dispatch supervisor said that the most beneficial training course he ever attended was hostage negotiations. In addition to being the first public safety employee commonly involved in a crisis like a hostage-taking, the dispatcher frequently uses the techniques of negotiation during day-to-day operations. Other non-traditional training might involve suicide prevention, crisis intervention, first aid/CPR, the Incident Command System (as used in the fire service), stress management, and domestic violence.

The third element of the strategic plan was the development of a career path for dispatchers with alternatives to promotion. Currently, in the department a dispatcher will reach the top end of the pay scale in six years. Beyond that, there is little opportunity for enrichment for the dispatcher who either fails to get promoted or does not seek upward mobility. This plan will provide for a senior dispatcher position. It will be compensated at a rate five percent (5%) above the current top step for dispatchers. It will also be a position awarded by competitive testing. There will be four senior dispatcher positions available. The testing process will involve a written proficiency test, a supervisor's evaluation, a peer evaluation, and an evaluation by police officers and patrol supervisors. The four candidates

with the highest scores will qualify as senior dispatchers for a period of twenty four months.

The senior dispatcher position will also be eligible for a rotation of assignments for a period of time not to exceed six months. This rotation could be to another temporary position within administrative systems division (which would include records, clerical pool, or computer systems), or to a temporary position within one of the other divisions. The department of public safety has been studying this concept on a limited basis since early 1988. A portion of the records staff has received enough training in dispatch to be able to fill in for short periods of time during the absence of a dispatcher, and dispatchers have been given other temporary assignments as an opportunity for change. Another example can be found within the Walnut Creek Police Department. They have had a police assistant position for a number of years in which employees are rotated through various assignments, including dispatch, parking enforcement, records, etc. Other agencies have found, however, that the more varied the number of assignments and the longer the employee is absent from dispatch, the poorer the quality of work upon their return. It is for that reason this program is designed to promote relatively short assignments away from dispatch.

Lastly, the strategic plan addresses some of the environmental concerns dispatchers have been expressing for a long time. In the survey conducted during the research portion of this project some of these environmental concerns were:

1. Get a window to the outside world.

2. The need for a more flexible and utilitarian workstation.

3. Elimination of background noise and distractions.

4. A lack of convenient bathroom and breakroom facilities.

The department of public safety and the City of Fairfield are

discussing the feasibility of a new public safety building. Certainly if the
decision is made to build a new facility, many of these environmental concerns
can be addressed. However, even if the new facility is not an option, some of
the dispatcher's complaints can be mitigated.

Psychologists have long debated the effects of the absence of sunlight
on humans. It has been consistently shown that people who are deprived of
sunlight are more depressed, more unhappy, and suffer higher suicide rates
than people who are regularly exposed to the sun. It is a distinct
possibility that "being buried in the basement" under artificial light for
long periods of time can have an effect on dispatcher morale. Certainly
security dictates some restrictions as to where one could logically locate a
communications center, and in many cases it simply is not feasible to move the
dispatchers to a location where natural light is available. But whenever it
is possible, managers should seek the opportunity to give dispatchers their
window.

In the case of the department of public safety, a window on the
exterior of the building is not feasible for security reasons. However a
skylight could provide many of the same opportunities. The current facility
also has an atrium in the center of the building with trees and natural
light. The possibility exists that communications could locate there. At any
rate, managers should not discount the very real possibility that this window
might be more than just a personal preference of dispatchers. There may be
some real benefit in morale and performance.

Another concern that has seemed fairly trivial until recently has been
the aesthetics of the communications center. Not too many years ago, the
average dispatch operation was pretty spartan. The trend has been toward a
more comfortable environment. The Vacaville Police Department allows
dispatchers to have a television set in their communications room, so long as

it does not interfere with operations. Fairfield has some nice paintings and a fish tank to improve the decor, and has only recently allowed dispatchers to dress the place up for various holidays. There are many variations on this theme, but the dispatch center of the future appears to be a much less austere place to work.

This plan also involves restructuring the old dispatch console into more flexible individual workstations. The City of San Jose is one of a handful of agencies experimenting with the individual workstation concept, and they appear to be quite happy with the arrangement. Communications operations manager Nancy Jackson states:

"Because dispatchers are living, breathing human beings, they come in all shapes, sizes, and temperments. It's impossible to 'build' a console to fit the dispatcher (or vice versa)... What we came up with was a station that includes:

  individual lighting controls

  individual air circulation system

  four-way adjustable keyboard

  dual freestanding, adjustable CRT screens

  frestanding telephone system

  moveable, desk top radio console

  individual silent printers

  ergonomically designed chairs

We'll probably even go all out and offer a variety of headsets."[3]

This arrangement appears to be state-of-the-art today. With the technological advances of the next few years, it certainly will be a feasible alternative to the console for even small and medium-sized agencies.

Lastly, the bathroom and breakroom facilities in many police departments seem to be a source of irritation to dispatchers. When a clerk-typist gets up, leaves her workstation, and has to walk to the other end of the building to relieve herself or have a cigarette it's, no big crisis. In most medium-sized departments, when a dispatcher wants to take care of the same functions, it can cut available staff by 25-50%. Certainly it's no secret that the farther away the bathroom and break facilities, the longer the dispatcher absence. In the public safety building, the bathroom facilities are reasonably close, but if a dispatcher wants a quick cigarette or a soda she must walk some 122 steps to the breakroom at the opposite end of the building.

Fortunately, there is a small computer and storage room immediately adjacent to the communications center that can be converted into a break room with the addition of a small refrigerator, a table, and some chairs.

Summary

This, in general terms, is the plan. Some of it is relatively new in concept. Some of it is new only in the sense that it has not yet been applied to dispatchers. It will call for some restructuring of the thought processes of some people who continue to think of dispatchers as relatively unskilled employees.

OBJECTIVE THREE

STATEMENT

Once the strategic plan has been developed, the next step in the process is to find out how to get from here to there. "Here" is where the organization is at the present time; it is the current state of affairs regarding the dispatch issue. "There" is where we want to be; it is the dispatch situation we would like to see in 2000 A.D. The process of moving the organization from here to there without losing anybody is called transition management.

This seems like an appropriate place to observe some basic principles regarding change. First, human beings tend to resist change, even when the need for change is obvious. Any transition plan, then, must anticipate a certain amount of resistance to the proposed change.

Second, the person ultimately responsible for implementing change generally cannot do so alone. There must be some involvement by others. In some cases the entire organization must be involved. For example, when one presidential administration is preparing to leave office and another administration is preparing to take over, a major transition management posture is involved. In other cases where the change is on a much smaller scale, managing the transition can involve considerably fewer people. Such is the case with the dispatch issue. Even in a medium-sized department of 200 employees, changing dispatch operations can involve surprisingly few people.

METHODS: IDENTIFICATION

The methods that were involved in developing this transition management plan are:

1. Identification of the critical mass.

2. Commitment planning.

3. Negotiation strategies.

4. Establishment of management structure.

5. Responsibility charting.

6. Feedback and evaluation process.

METHODS: IMPLEMENTATION

Administration

To achieve successful implementation of any new program, the people

affected by the change must accept the new change. There are some things that

can be done in order to mitigate resistance to the change. The ability to

negotiate with the involved parties is one of these things.

Identification of Critical Mass

The "critical mass" can be defined as the minimum number of people

whose support will insure the success of the program, or whose opposition will

result in the failure of the program.

In this instance, the critical mass for the dispatch plan is:

1. The chief of public safety.

2. The administrative systems division manager.

3. The dispatch supervisor.

4. Dispatcher Smith.

5. Dispatcher Jones.

The following chart assesses the current level of commitment each of

these critical mass players currently have toward the dispatch plan. The

chart also indicates the desired commitment level for each player in order to

allow the plan to flow smoothly.

Players in Critical Mass	Block Change	Let Change Happen	Help Change Happen	Make Change Happen
Chief		XO		
Admin Sys Mgr			X------------------>0	
Dispatch Super				XO
Dispatcher Smith		X----------->0		
Dispatcher Jones		0<-----------X		

O=where they need to be for a successful transition
X=where the current level of commitment is
=change in needed level of commitment

The chief's current level of commitment is rated at adequate. He appears to at least have an open and receptive mind toward the dispatch issue. The chief's primary concern is to insure an efficient dispatch operation and not simply to make the dispatchers happy (although if both can be accomplished, so much the better). This is precisely the level of commitment needed by the chief. Less involvement would not allow the project to happen at all. Greater commitment might be perceived by those at the line level of the department as intimidating. Line employees normally show greater resistance to a change if they view change as being imposed from above. The best plan allows for the chief to consent to necessary changes, but for the dispatchers to claim some ownership for the plan itself.

On the other hand, the administrative systems division manager has to be one of the individuals who plays a leading role in the transition phase. Her current level of commitment appears be more of a "helping" role. Therefore she should be encouraged to take the lead and demonstrate greater commitment to line employees.

The dispatch supervisor appears to be precisely where he should be for this plan to work. He will truely need to be one of the motivating forces required to insure the success of the plan. In any organization the first-line supervisor bears the greatest responsibility for translating policy into action. The dispatch supervisor must be attuned to both the needs of the individual dispatchers and the needs of the organization.

Dispatcher Smith has the greatest of respect from virtually all other dispatchers. She has been with the department for seventeen years and is an exceptionally competent dispatcher. In addition, she is admired for her ability to function with the variety of personalities common in the dispatch center. She is a quiet, unassuming leader. If her support for the plan could be obtained, she could bring quite a constituency along with her.

Conversely, Dispatcher Jones will likely want to run the entire operation once implementation of the plan actually begins. She will attempt to exert a great deal of influence over how the transition is accomplished. She may even desire to go back and change some of the policies to something she considers more advantageous. If she were to be given a leadership role in the transition phase, most of the other dispatchers would rebel against the new planned change, even if the change was beneficial.

Negotiation Strategies

Certain strategies and tactics have been developed to negotiate acceptance and subsequent implementation of the chosen policy. During this process of negotiation, we will be looking for different types of leverage that can be applied. The object here will be to overcome resistance to the plan and modify someone else's conduct rather than have them modify our conduct and thereby change the proposed policy. When dealing with these important people, there are two axioms (developed from hostage negotiations) that must be remembered: never give up something without getting something in

return, and never tell a lie because you will be dealing with the same people in the future and integrity is a cornerstone of trust.

Ideally, of course, the proposed policy will be accepted without modification. Realistically, one could anticipate a certain amount of give-and-take (compromise, if you will). At the very least, these compromises should lead to resolution of conflict through mutual gain: a true win-win situation.

The overall strategy will involve bringing the administrative systems division manager into the fold first. After her support is obtained, the dispatch supervisor will be sold on the plan. Once these two individuals are solidly behind the proposed policy, their assistance will be valuable in selling the program to the chief. The chief must be considered, at least potentially, as the greatest barrier to implementation of the plan. If he can be won over, then approval from the city manager is very likely. While the CM is not directly involved in the plan implementation, he would certainly have veto power if he felt the expenditure of funds were improper.

After support of these three key players is assured, the next step will be to involve the dispatch group in the transition plan. The objective will be to elicit the support of the dispatcher group as a whole. This will likely boil down to maximizing the involvement of Dispatcher Smith and minimizing the involvement of Dispatcher Jones.

The Administrative Systems Division Manager: At least initially she must be considered an ally, for the proposed policy would be to her advantage. The plan would make the dispatch operation more efficient, and it would bolster the morale of the dispatchers, which has been a chronic problem for as long as anyone can remember. The deciding factor necessary for her support will be the ability to demonstrate that the commitment of resources will be justified by the final product. As is the case with the chief, the

admin systems manager is given wide latitude in managing her division within the framework of budget considerations. For additional funding over and above current budget constraints, she must convince the chief that her need has a higher priority than the needs of other division managers. Leverage with the admin systems division manager should be exercised by presenting a clear, factual picture of the dispatch situation as it currently exists and the various alternative solutions previously examined. The proposed solution should be recommended for acceptance and the merits of the plan discussed. The major emphasis here should be on finding a long term solution to a chronic dispatch problem. This would be consistent with both the department's mission statement and the city's values statement, which emphasizes quality, the worth of the individual, and finding solutions to problems that will withstand the test of time.

The Dispatch Supervisor: A major portion of the proposed strategic plan is the brainchild of the dispatch supervisor, so he would logically be a major supporter of the policy. Negotiation with this individual would very likely involve just standing back and letting him do his job. Once the administrative systems manager and dispatch supervisor were solidly behind the proposal, their combined influence could be brought to bear on the chief to elicit his support.

The Chief of Public Safety: The chief certainly could kill this program if he chose to do so. A big portion of the proposed policy involves spending a sizeable amount of cash in relocating and modifying the dispatch facility. While the possiblity exists of building an entirely new public safety building, that decision obviously does not rest with the chief alone, and it would be a dangerous basket to carry all one's eggs in. More realistically, the policy would involve a modification of the existing facility or relocating the communications center within the existing

building. As with the administrative systems manager, negotiating leverage
here should be applied with a clear, rational discussion of the problem, other
alternative solutions, and the proposed strategic plan. Once again, the
emphasis should be on finding a long-term solution to a chronic problem.
Negotiations with the chief must have the atmosphere of cooperativeness, but
there must also be a degree of assertiveness to avoid total accomodation. If
the program is emasculated to the point that its eventual success cannot be
assured, then it is probably better to bury it early.

Dispatcher Smith: She is the quiet leader among the dispatch group.
She is a dedicated, dyed-in-the-wool dispatcher who is quite concerned with
the development of the dispatch career field. Many features of the proposed
plan are consistent with her own views. Her enlistment in the ranks of
supporters would undoubtedly bring a sizeable number of other dispatchers
along. She would certainly be one of the most obvious members of the group to
qualify for the senior dispatcher program. Her support for the proposed plan
is expected from both an altruistic point of view and a strictly personal
point of view.

Dispatcher Jones: This is the only member of the critical mass that
must be "manipulated" in the true sense of the word. Most employees consider
her to be a very strong personality, albeit a disruptive one. The trick here
is to allow her sufficient involvement in implementation of the plan to elicit
her support, but not so much involvement that others view her as a dominant
figure. Negotiating leverage here would obviously involve psychological
influence backed up by rational argument and (if need be) power exercised by
the administrative systems division manager and dispatch supervisor.

The four phases of negotiation would be followed in each instance of
dealing with the critical mass people: that is, in each case there would be
some extensive preparation, some discussion, proposals and counterproposals,

and bargaining. Specific techniques would vary depending on the circumstances. Once each of the stakeholders is sold on the program, that person can also be used to make the next sales pitch even stronger. The administrative systems manager can be used to help sell the dispatch supervisor, and the two of them can attempt to persuade the chief, and so on.

Transition Management Structure

With a strategic plan as broad as the one suggested, no one can expect that all the objectives can be implemented instantaneously. A timetable for implementation must be developed. It seems logical to do those things most easily accomplished first, and those things that require some study or the expenditure of significant amounts of money at a later time. The timetable proposed for this plan spans a four year implementation period:

Year 1:

> **Increase the level of training provided to dispatchers to eight hours per year, covering a variety of topics intended to improve their technical skills (computer systems, operational changes).

> **Develop the senior dispatcher program. Identify various functions within the department that dispatchers could perform on rotating basis. Develop proficiency pay criteria.

> **Develop with psych services a vehicle for psychological screening of dispatcher candidates intended to improve job-person match.

Year 2:

> **Implement hiring/training plan intended to achieve full staffing levels.

> **Implement senior dispatcher program.

> *Study environmental improvements within the communications center. Budget money for construction/remodelling phase.

Year 3:

    **Increase training levels for dispatchers to sixteen hours per year, covering a broader range of topics (crisis intervention, suicide prevention, first aid, etc.).

    **Begin construction/remodelling of communications center.

    **Study individual workstation requirements.

Year 4:

    **Complete construction/remodelling of communications center.

    **Implement individual workstation concept.

The management structure for the proposed changes would be relatively simple. The administrative systems division manager would function as the program manager. Her responsibility would be to oversee the implementation of the entire four-year program. The dispatch supervisor would work closely with the division manager. His initial responsibility would be development of a training program for dispatchers. The dispatch supervisor would also assist the division manager in working with psych services to develop a vehicle for the psychological screening of dispatcher candidates in order to improve job-person match.

A core group of dispatchers, including Dispatchers Smith and Jones, would be responsible for assisting the dispatch supervisor in development of the senior dispatch program. This core group could function in an advisory capacity as a sort of "quality circle." Their involvement would also serve to increase their commitment to the final product.

During the second, third, and fourth years of the program, the division manager, the dispatch supervisor, and the core group of dispatchers would shift their attention to the goals established for that particular year.

Responsibility Charting

The chart that follows is a visual aid in tracking responsibility for

making decisions regarding the implementation of the strategic plan. Because an individual or group is charged with the responsibility for making a recommendation on a phase of the plan does not necessarily mean they have final authority over the decision. It simply means they have been charged with coordinating that particular function.

RESPONSIBILITY CHART

Actor	Area of Reponsibility							
	Training Programs	Senior Dispatch Program	Proficiency Pay	Psych Testing	Hiring/ Training	Environ Changes	Workstation Changes	Feedback/ Evaluation
Chief	V	V	A	A	A	A	V	R
Admin Sys Mgr	A	R	R	C	A	A	A	C
Dispatch Super	C	A	C	R	C	R	R	R
Core Group	R	C	R	R	R	C	C	R
Psych Services	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R

C=coordinator   R=resource   V=veto   A=approval authority

Control

Feedback and Evaluation

Any process of decisions and implementation requires a feedback and evaluation loop. Someone needs to decide if the ship is still headed in the right direction, or if a mid-course correction is necessary. The feedback process here will consist of quarterly meetings between the administrative systems manager, the dispatch supervisor, and the core group of dispatchers. Together they will examine the annual goals that have been established and the progress toward achieving those goals. They will also review portions of the program already implemented to determine if they are functioning as desired. If problems are encountered, they will brainstorm solutions. Ultimate responsibility for the program rests with the program manager; however, input from all levels is absolutely necessary. The program manager will also conduct regular briefings for the chief on progress of the plan.

CONCLUSION

In the beginning, this research project addressed three areas of concern to law enforcement dispatchers and administrators:

1. How can the dispatch function be modified in the future to reduce levels of stress without impairing operational efficiency?

2. How can the physical environment of the dispatch center be changed in the future to reduce levels of stress?

3. How can managers develop future hiring practices to improve job-person match among dispatchers?

The first two questions have been extensively explored and a viable program has been developed. The program is unusual for a futures study in that it contains relatively little in the way of "futuristic innovations." Little of the material contained here is novel, or unique, or untested. The information in this study has been gathered from many different sources. The proposed strategic plan contains bits and pieces of programs already in place elsewhere.

What is unusual about this research is that virtually none of the information has been applied to the dispatch career field. Much of it was gleaned from programs offered for other job classifications. From the standpoint that no law enforcement agency in California has put into place such a comprehensive program for dispatchers, the plan is unique. That tends to be surprising considering the fact that law enforcement in California tends to lead the rest of the nation in so many different areas.

The plan consists of four major points of emphasis. First, there is a high priority given toward achieving full staffing levels for the dispatch operation. That is not to say the plan is asking for additional personnel. There is no request for more bodies than are authorized by the current

budget. It was not unusual for this researcher to find during interviews with dispatch supervisors that dispatch operations were staffed well below authorized strength. Whether this is an intentional situation or simply a matter of not being able to hire competent dispatchers quickly enough is really an academic question. The results are the same: the supervisor is extremely limited in the number of options available to solve long term problems. In order for the remainder of the plan to succeed, staffing must be at or near authorized strength.

The second portion of the plan calls for an increase in the amount and type of training provided to dispatchers. Sixteen hours per year would be a minimum, more would be desireable. In addition to the "traditional" types of training, it is recommended that dispatchers also receive training in such areas as hostage negotiations, crisis intervention, suicide prevention, first aid and CPR, stress management, and others that might have application to the actual function performed by the dispatcher.

The third piece of the plan involved the development of a senior dispatcher program. It answers the question of how to prevent "burnout" among career dispatchers who have not been promoted. This program has proficiency pay for superior performance, and the capability of senior dispatchers rotating assignments temporarily to other functions within the department.

Finally, the last piece of the plan is to address the issue of changing the environment of the dispatch center. It recommends a maximum effort toward giving dispatchers their window to the outside world. The plan also addresses the issue of a dispatch workstation that can be custom-fitted to the individual for utility and comfort.

The single concern that was, unfortunately, not explored in sufficient detail in this study was that of improving job-person match for dispatch candidates. In doing research for the project, the author found that the

availability of testing devices for improving this job-person match was virtually nil. There are many devices for determining the personality traits of any given individual, or their preferred management style, or their ability to perform under a given set of circumstances. There is, for example, the Strength Deployment Inventory developed by Elias H. Porter, Ph.D., designed to assess the strengths used in relating to other people or situations. But there are virtually no devices that have established the requirements for a good dispatcher, so we have nothing currently to "match" the person with. This appears to be an excellent area for further research.

This project contains no "quick-fix" for a law enforcement agency's dispatch problems. Portions of the plan could be implemented independently, without using the entire comprehensive program. However, quick-fix solutions to dispatch problems have been law enforcement's traditional response, and there is no reason to believe they would be any more successful today than they have been in the past.

Dispatch problems are universal. Even a rudimentary examination of any law enforcement agency in the state will reveal very similar complaints from dispatchers, police officers, supervisors, and administrators. These problems can be corrected in the future, not by inventing a lot of new "stuff," but by applying principles and techniques already learned in other facets of human resource management. Solutions are not easy, but neither are they as impossible some folks believe. All it takes is a commitment by someone who has the authority to make the changes.

ENDNOTES

[1] Robert Blankenship, "Dispatchers and the Police Mentality", <u>California Police Recorder</u>, April 1986.

[2] Sheila Tarvin, "De-Mything Computer Aided Dispatch", <u>The Journal of California Law Enforcement</u>, Volume 21, Number 4, 1987.

[3] Nancy Jackson, "Communications Workstations: Will They Replace the Console?", <u>California Police Recorder</u>, January 1988, p.21.

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APPENDIX A

DISPATCHER SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Sex: M____   Age: ____   Total years dispatch
     F____   experience _____

Have you held other law enforcement related jobs? If so, what?

_____

Why did you choose to become a dispatcher? _____

_____

What do you like most about being a dispatcher? _____

_____

What do you like least about being a dispatcher? _____

_____

On a scale of 1-10, how compatible is the dispatch job with your basic
personality? In other words, how well to you feel you fit into the role of
dispatcher?
          Not Compatible 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Compatible

On a scale of 1-10, how stressful would you rate the job of dispatcher?
      Not Very Stressful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Stressful

If you had it to do over again, would you seek a position as dispatcher? Why?

_____

What proportion of your fellow dispatchers do you feel fit well into the job
of dispatcher and seem to enjoy their job?
          _____ most seem to fit well
          _____ more than half fit well
          _____ less than half fit well
          _____ not many

What is the biggest change in the job of the dispatcher during the last 10
years?

_____

What do you anticipate will be the biggest change in the job of the dispatcher
during the next 10 years?

_____

If you could change 3 things about the dispatch function to make the job more
efficient, what 3 changes would you make?

_____

_____

_____

If you could change 3 things about the physical environment of your
communications center (room, furnishings, lighting, equipment, etc.) to make
it more efficient or less stressful, what 3 changes would you make?

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

NOMINAL GROUP

Diane Frega
Fairfield Department of Public Safety
Commander, Administrative Systems Division

Greg Miraglia
Fairfield Department of Public Safety
Dispatch Supervisor

Kim Hammond
Fairfield Department of Public Safety
Dispatcher

John Wise
Fairfield Department of Public Safety
Police Training Officer

Carol Milender
Solano Sheriff's Department
Dispatcher

Karen Gunther
Vallejo Police Department
Dispatch Supervisor

Pat Hunter
Vacaville Police Department
Dispatch Supervisor

Callie Dorsey
Vacaville Police Department
Dispatcher

Sherry Ennis
Vacaville Police Department
Dispatcher

APPENDIX C

CANDIDATE TRENDS

1. Immigrant (non-English speaking) population in California.
2. Numbers of 18-year-olds entering the work force.
3. Numbers of "older" (50 yrs +) applicants hired as dispatchers.
4. Use of volunteers in dispatch-related functions.
5. Dispatcher turnover rate.
6. Substance abuse (alcohol, drugs) by dispatchers.
7. Dispatcher use/abuse of sick leave.
8. Numbers of stress-related worker's compensation claims.
9. Numbers of "per diem" dispatchers.
10. Use of pre-employment tests to improve job-person match.
11. "Professionalization" of the dispatch career field.
12. Computerization of the dispatch function.
13. Use of mobile data terminals (MDT) by local law enforcement agencies.
14. Ongoing in-service training programs for dispatchers.
15. Rotation of dispatchers to other job assignments for limited time periods.
16. Environmental considerations of the dispatch center.
17. Numbers of bilingual dispatchers.
18. Centralization of the dispatch function.
19. Privatization of the dispatch function.
20. Creation of separate department within local government for dispatch.
21. Work periods/dispatch scheduling change.
22. Separation of various dispatch responsibilities.
23. Dispatcher staffing levels.
24. Use of remote workstations (at home?) for dispatchers.
25. Adequacy of dispatcher training for computer down time.
26. Dispatcher salary and benefits.
27. Civilianization of law enforcement agencies.
28. Employer-provided child care.
29. Employee assistance programs.
30. Programs to motivate long-term dispatchers.
31. New employee career orientation programs.
32. Marketing of dispatch function to public.
33. Educational institutions offering civilian law enforcement programs.
34. Centralization of dispatch recruiting functions.
35. Job sharing by dispatchers.

APPENDIX D

5 MOST SIGNIFICANT TRENDS

1. "Professionalization" of the dispatch career field.

2. Ongoing in-service training programs.

3. Adequacy of training for computer down time.

4. Dispatcher salary and benefits.

5. Programs to motivate long-term dispatchers.

APPENDIX E

CANDIDATE EVENTS

1. P.O.S.T. begins certification program for dispatchers similar to certification of peace officers.

2. P.O.S.T. begins reimbursement of training expenses similar to that of peace officers.

3. P.O.S.T. requires biannual advanced training of dispatchers similar to peace officer requirements.

4. Dispatcher job classification is included in "safety" retirement category by P.E.R.S.

5. Employing jurisdictions require mandatory random drug testing of law enforcement dispatchers.

6. City/county loses major law suit ($10 million +).

7. Minority population (non-white) exceeds 50% of total population in California.

8. National economy suffers severe recession; unemployment rate exceeds 12%.

9. City/county reach Prop 4 spending limits.

10. Legislature mandates public safety dispatchers provide emergency medical information over the telephone.

11. Shorter work week mandated by employee MOU.

12. Major disaster (earthquake, flood, etc.) occurs in California.

13. Civilian department head (chief of police or equivalent) appointed.

14. Work action (strike, slowdown, sickout, etc.) by dispatchers.

15. Minimum training standards mandated by employee MOU.

16. New dispatch facility created.

APPENDIX F

5 MOST SIGNIFICANT TRENDS

1. P.O.S.T. begins certification program for dispatchers similar to certification of peace officers.

2. P.O.S.T. requires biannual advanced training for dispatchers similar to peace officer requirements.

3. Dispatchers included in "safety" retirement category by P.E.R.S.

4. Legislature mandates dispatchers provide emergency medical information over the telephone.

5. A major disaster (earthquake, flood, etc.) occurs in California.

APPENDIX G
ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Evaluate each item, as appropriate, on the basis of the following criteria:

- I   Superior. Better than anyone else. Beyond present need.
- II   Better than average. Suitable performance. No problems.
- III Average. Acceptable. Equal to competition. Not good, not bad.
- IV   Problems here. Not as good as it should be. Deteriorating. Must be improved.
- V   Real cause for concern. Situation bad. Crisis. Must take action.

Category:	I	II	III	IV	V	Avg Score
Manpower				X		3.42
Technology			X			2.58
Equipment		X				1.83
Facility			X			2.08
Money			X			2.16
Calls for Service				X		3.25
On-View Activity			X			2.66
Management Skills			X			3.00
P.O. Skills			X			3.08
Supervisory Skills			X			2.33
Training			X			3.16
Dispatcher Skills			X			3.00
Morale			X			2.83
Problem Solving		X				2.08
Council Support			X			2.42
City Mgr. Support		X				2.08
Community Support			X			2.42
Mgt. Flexibility			X			3.00
Pay Scale		X				2.08
Benefits		X				2.08
Retention Rate		X				2.33
Complaints Received			X			2.66
Enforcement Index		X				2.33
Traffic Index			X			3.08

APPENDIX H
ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Evaluate each item for your agency as to what type of activity it encourages:

I	Custodial	Rejects Change
II	Production	Adapts to Minor Changes
III	Marketing	Seeks Familiar Change
IV	Strategic	Seeks Related Change
V	Flexible	Seeks Innovative Change

Category:	I	II	III	IV	V	Avg Score
TOP MANAGERS						
Mentality Personality				X		3.50
Skills/Talents				X		3.75
Knowledge/Education				X		3.66
Subordinate Support			X			3.333
ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE						
Culture/Norms				X		4.08
Rewards/Incentives		X				2.42
Power Structure			X			3.08
Decision Processes			X			3.42
ORGANIZATION COMPETENCE						
Structure			X			3.33
Resources				X		4.00
Middle Management			X			3.08
Line Personnel			X			2.92
Innovation/Risk Taking				X		3.58

Candidate List of Stakeholders

1. Dispatchers

2. Dispatch Supervisor

3. Administrative Systems Division Manager

4. Chief of Public Safety

5. Fairfield Employees Association

6. Fairfield-Suisun Taxpayers Association

7. City Manager

8. City Council

9. Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.)

10. California Law Enforcement Association
    of Records Supervisors (C.L.E.A.R.S.)

11. Associated Public Safety Communications Officers, Inc. (A.P.C.O.)

12. Fairfield Police Officers Association

13. Fairfield Professional Firefighters Association

14. Psychological Services Consultant

15. Other non-sworn employees

16. Other Solano County law enforcement agencies

17. Ambulance Services

18. Napa College

19. Solano College

20. Public Employees Retirement System (P.E.R.S.)

21. Local media representatives

MODIFIED POLICY DELPHI RATING SHEET

Policy: Lobby P.O.S.T. to make dispatcher certification more restrictive.

Feasibility	DF	PF	PI	DI	SCORE
	3	2	1	0	*60*

Desirability	VD	D	U	VU	
	3	2	1	0	

Policy: Lobby P.O.S.T. to increase dispatcher training requirements.

Feasibility	DF	PF	PI	DI	SCORE
	3	2	1	0	*45*

Desirability	VD	D	U	VU	
	3	2	1	0	

Policy: Increase level of dispatcher training without P.O.S.T.

Feasibility	DF	PF	PI	DI	SCORE
	3	2	1	0	*63*

Desirability	VD	D	U	VU	
	3	2	1	0	

Policy: Develop career path for dispatchers with alternatives to promotion.
(including proficiency pay, rotating assignments)

Feasibility	DF	PF	PI	DI	SCORE
	3	2	1	0	*52*

Desirability	VD	D	U	VU	
	3	2	1	0	

Policy: Build a new communications center/public safety building.

Feasibility	DF	PF	PI	DI	SCORE
	3	2	1	0	*42*

Desirability	VD	D	U	VU	
	3	2	1	0	

Policy: Redesign existing dispatch room to provide outside lighting & view.

Feasibility	DF	PF	PI	DI	SCORE
	3	2	1	0	*49*

Desirability	VD	D	U	VU	
	3	2	1	0	

Policy: Redesign dispatch workstations for utility and ease of operation.
(including individually adjustable lighting, etc.; reduce noise)

Feasibility	DF	PF	PI	DI	SCORE
	3	2	1	0	*53*

Desirability	VD	D	U	VU	
	3	2	1	0	

Policy: Place high priority on hiring dispatchers to achieve authorized
staffing levels (psychological screening for job/person match).

Feasibility	DF	PF	PI	DI	SCORE
	3	2	1	0	57

Desirability	VD	D	U	VU
	3	2	1	0

Policy: Staff a supervisor position for each dispatch shift.

Feasibility	DF	PF	PI	DI	SCORE
	3	2	1	0	31

Desirability	VD	D	U	VU
	3	2	1	0

Policy: Move the dispatch function into the Patrol Division.

Feasibility	DF	PF	PI	DI	SCORE
	3	2	1	0	26

Desirability	VD	D	U	VU
	3	2	1	0

Policy: Increase the use of part time dispatchers.

Feasibility	DF	PF	PI	DI	SCORE
	3	2	1	0	34

Desirability	VD	D	U	VU
	3	2	1	0

Policy: Lobby P.E.R.S. to include dispatchers in "safety" retirement.

Feasibility	DF	PF	PI	DI	SCORE
	3	2	1	0	32

Desirability	VD	D	U	VU
	3	2	1	0

DF=definately feasible
PF=possibly feasible
PI=possibly infeasible
DI=definately infeasible

VD=very desirable
D=desirable
U=undesirable
VU=very undesirable