

NEW CASTLE COUNTY CRIME PREVENTION  
(New Castle County Police Department)

An Evaluation Report

Submitted to the Prevention Committee  
of the  
Governor's Commission on Criminal Justice

NCJRS

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ACQUISITIONS

by

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Monitoring/Evaluation Unit - GCCJ

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PROJECT INFORMATION . . . . .	iii
Section	
I. Introduction . . . . .	1
II. Project Operation . . . . .	2
A. Community Block Watch Program . . . . .	3
B. Crime Prevention Lectures . . . . .	5
C. Security Surveys . . . . .	5
D. Operation Identification . . . . .	6
E. County Crime Prevention Van . . . . .	7
F. Public Service Announcements . . . . .	7
G. Apartment Complex Crime Prevention . . . . .	7
H. Crime Prevention Training . . . . .	7
III. Impact . . . . .	8
IV. Conclusion . . . . .	11
V. Recommendation . . . . .	12

PROJECT INFORMATION

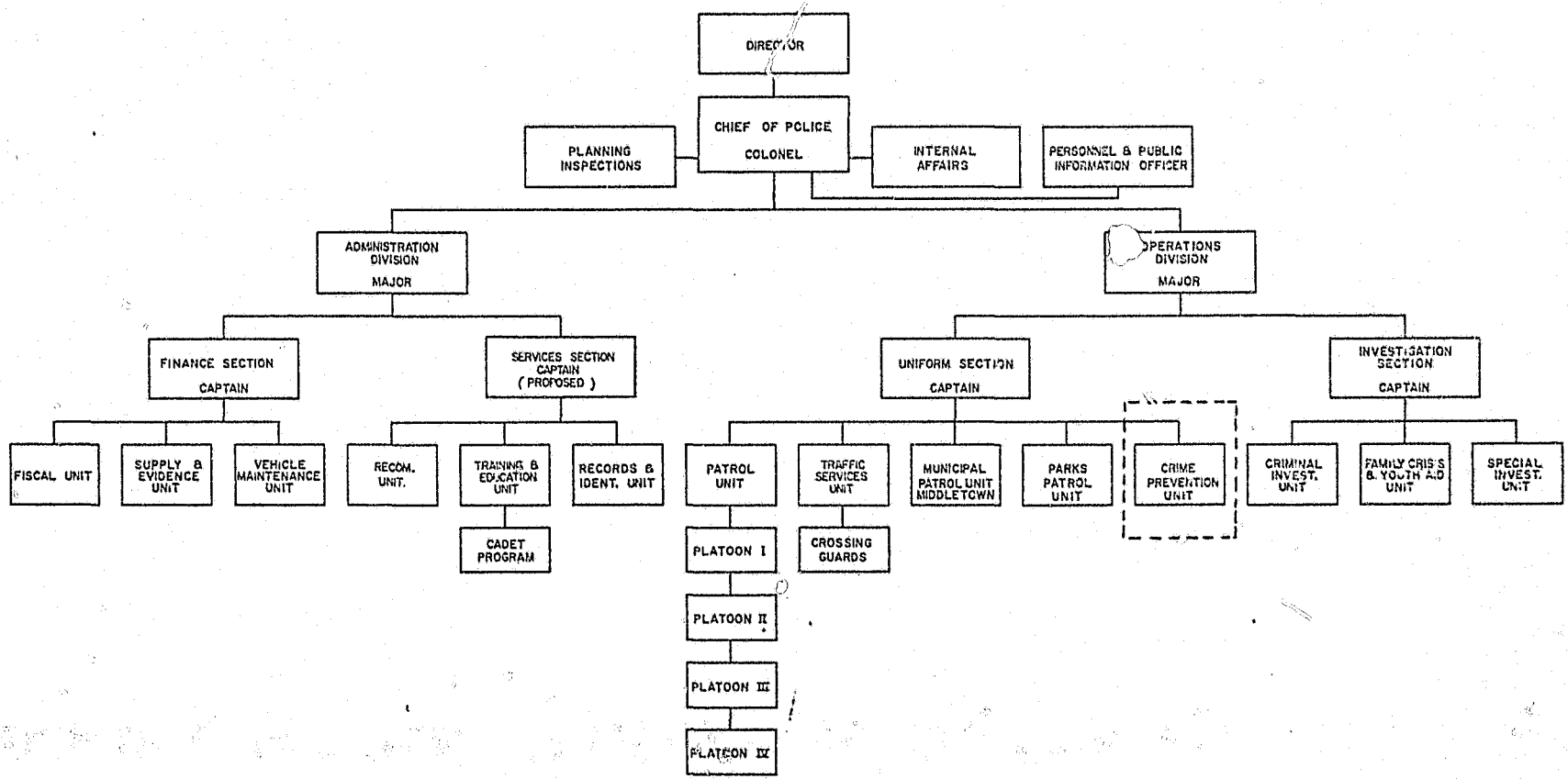
General:

Grant Numbers: FA-37-72, 75-060, 76-006, 77-051  
and 76-093  
Grant Title: New Castle County Crime Prevention  
and Unit Crime Prevention Training -  
(76-093)  
Implementing Agency: New Castle County Police Department  
Project Director: Sgt. William Honey  
Project Period: 9-1-72 to 6-30-78

Budget:

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Allocations</u>		<u>Expenditures</u>
	<u>FA-32-72, 75-060, 76-006</u>	<u>76-093</u>	
Personnel	\$ 1,258		\$ 1,258
Overtime	24,672		24,354
Consultants (National Crime Prevention Insti- tute's two week program)		\$15,100	15,000
Travel	3,055		800
Supplies	13,300		10,068
Operating Expenses	28,649		18,699
Equipment	5,390		2,538
	<u>\$76,324</u>	<u>\$15,100</u>	<u>\$72,717</u>
Total	\$91,424		
Federal	81,250		
Match	10,174		

# NEW CASTLE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE



III. Organization

IV

## I. Introduction

The New Castle County Crime Prevention Unit was developed in reaction to two factors. First, despite increases in the number of county policemen and the concurrent increase in the amount of time spent on patrol, the crime rate in the county continued to rise. Secondly, the county administration was beginning to realize that additional manpower and traditional police tactics were not curbing the crime rate and it was decided to approach the problem from a different perspective, that of preventive education and citizen action. At the same time, federal funds became available through the Governor's Commission on Criminal Justice (then the Delaware Agency to Reduce Crime) for police-community crime prevention programs.

The county first applied for such funds in 1972 and was awarded \$2,258 (FA-37-72) to send two officers to the Crime Prevention School in Louisville, Kentucky. Upon returning, these two officers initiated two crime prevention programs; Crime Prevention for Construction Sites and Crime Prevention Surveys. In 1975, the county assigned four full-time officers to the Crime Prevention Unit. A grant for \$31,500. (75-060) from GCCJ was used for overtime for eight officers enabling them to give crime prevention presentations to community groups. Crime prevention materials, e.g., films and pamphlets were also purchased. The program continued in basically the same form in 1976, with GCCJ awarding \$24,222

(76-006), again for overtime, supplies and operating expenses. Also, during 1976, the county received a grant for \$16,777 (76-093) to provide community crime prevention training for 50 to 100 police officers from six police departments throughout the state. The county has received an additional grant (77-051) for \$16,667 from GCCJ to continue the crime prevention project through June 30, 1978. These funds will be used for supplies, travel, operating expenses and equipment (no overtime). The project will operate basically as it has in the past except there will be a new emphasis on community crime prevention in apartment complexes.

To date, GCCJ has awarded a total of \$91,424 through five subgrants to the New Castle County Police Department for the support of community crime prevention programs and training. The purpose of this report was to evaluate the performance and impact of those grants. The evaluation was based on a review of archival material, interviews with project personnel and with persons who have had contact with the county crime prevention unit.

## II. Project Operation

One of the concepts behind many community crime prevention programs is that "potential victims are in the best position to diminish criminal opportunity, recognize stealth and

minimize their own vulnerability."<sup>1</sup> The New Castle County Police agreed with this philosophy and in keeping with it, implemented a project which encompassed soliciting citizen involvement in recognizing stealth through community block watch programs, and educating the public concerning ways to minimize their chances of being a victim through presenting crime prevention lectures and conducting security surveys. The unit also implemented an operation identification program, renovated a community crime prevention van, presented public service announcements on area radio stations and sponsored a crime prevention training seminar for police officers from various departments throughout the state. Each of these functions and the performance related to them will be discussed.

A. Community Block Watch Program. It has become accepted by many proponents of community crime prevention programs that there simply are not enough police to adequately patrol neighborhoods.

The prevalence of residential burglary in particular makes it mathematically improbable that even greatly increased police patrol would deter many crimes... Moreover, the nature of residential burglary makes it particularly elusive to traditional police methods. The crime requires only stealth and opportunity. Because the police patrol officers are, after all, non-residents in a patrol neighborhood and outnumbered by households, they are greatly hampered in their ability to recognize either stealth or opportunity.<sup>2</sup>

In order to mobilize the citizenry in the fight against crime, the New Castle County Crime Prevention Unit implemented

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Cirel et.al., An Exemplary Project Community Crime Prevention Program, Seattle, Washington, U.S. Department of Justice, September 1977, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 1 and 2.

a campaign to urge residents of neighborhoods to develop community block watch programs. The unit was both active and re-active in its efforts in that it did not merely assist neighborhoods which sought help in implementing such programs but it also identified high crime areas through crime analysis and contacted residents of those neighborhoods in an attempt to convince them to develop block watch programs.

While each block watch program was tailored to the particular needs of the neighborhood, they were all basically the same. They involved residents in patrolling their neighborhoods and reporting suspicious activity to the police. It was felt that residents have a better knowledge of such things as what cars belong in the neighborhood and what families are away on vacation. Initial training was provided by the crime prevention unit. By-laws were developed, officers chosen and schedules of patrol developed. In some neighborhoods, the civic association would assist the block watch program by providing magnetic signs which could be transferred from car to car and placing signs at the entrance of the development indicating the existence of the patrol.

Members of the patrol do not attempt to make arrests or detain persons. Primarily they report situations to police via radio and/or telephone. In many instances they may take action such as disbanding a group of youth gathered on a street corner. They are trained to notice and record details of situations such as descriptions of unfamiliar vehicles in



the neighborhood. To date, there have been no problems with false reporting of incidents or citizens involved in unauthorized actions. After implementation, the block watch program maintains at least monthly contact with the unit.

In the applications approved by GCCJ, the crime prevention unit proposed to introduce block watch programs to 75 neighborhoods. A total of 80 developments were contacted (106 percent of the goal) and introduced to the block watch concept. Of these, 42 implemented programs. Approximately 2000 citizens are involved in these programs.

B. Crime Prevention Lectures. Officers in the unit give lectures to community groups on topics such as rape, assault and burglary prevention. Lectures have also been presented in area high schools. The unit has been so successful in this area that they have been requested to make presentations out of the county's jurisdiction, i.e., in the City of Wilmington and in Pennsville and Salem, New Jersey. Somewhat related to this, the unit distributes crime prevention pamphlets.

The approved applications indicated the unit would make 465 crime prevention presentations and contact 48,000 citizens. A total of 737 presentations (333 percent of the goal) were made with federal money with approximately 30,999 residents (83 percent of the goal) attending.

C. Security Surveys. A security survey consists of examining premises and informing the occupant of steps such as installing locks or improving lighting which could be taken to reduce the likelihood of a crime occurring.

In the field of security as well as in the practice of crime prevention, the security survey is considered one of the most important single methods of recognizing, appraising, and reducing losses due to criminal victimization.<sup>3</sup>

Officers of the unit conduct both residential and commercial surveys either upon request or after victimization occurs. Upon completing an examination of the premises, a written report is delivered to the subject. These reports vary in length from two pages to over 15 pages.

The applications stated 1500 security checks would be made. A total of 554 (37 percent of the goal) were completed. Approximately six months after completion of the survey, a post card is sent to the person for whom the check was done to determine if any of the recommendations had been implemented. Approximately 75 percent of the citizens who received a security check indicated that they had implemented at least some of the recommendations. No follow-up was done to determine if these citizens had been the victim of a crime following implementation of the recommendations.

D. Operation Identification. In conjunction with its other programs, the unit implemented an operation identification program. Through this program, the unit provides engravers for citizens who wish to identify their personal property with an engraved number which hopefully can aid in identification should the property be stolen and recovered. The engravers are also loaned to civic

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<sup>3</sup>Crime Prevention Security Surveys - Phase I Summary,  
International Training, Research and Evaluation Council, January,  
1977, p. 1.

associations and block watch programs. It was not specified in the applications how many persons would use this service nor was it known how many persons had used the service. It was also not known how much property, if any, had been returned to its rightful owner because of this identification.

E. County Crime Prevention Van. With the aid of GCCJ funds, the unit has refurbished a van which displays various crime prevention paraphernalia such as alarm and lock installation. The van is made available for inspection at various places such as shopping centers. It was proposed in the applications that the van would be displayed eight times per month during the final quarter of the project. It was displayed four times per month (50 percent of the goal) with 1,800 citizens visiting it.

F. Public Service Announcements. The unit also prepared public service announcements which were aired on area radio stations with tips on how to prevent crimes.

G. Apartment Complex Crime Prevention. In the final grant application (77-501) it was proposed that community watch programs would be established in eight apartment complexes. The first half of the grant period was devoted to conducting crime analyses to determine the most appropriate apartment complexes for such a program. As of December 31, 1977, programs had been implemented in two apartment complexes.

H. Crime Prevention Training. The county sponsored a seminar in September 1976 for police officers throughout the state on community crime prevention techniques in which the National

Crime Prevention Institute presented its two week training program. It was proposed that training would be provided to 50 to 100 police officers from various departments throughout the state. A total of 51 officers from the following departments attended the session: County Police (19); Delaware State Police (10); Wilmington Police (15); Newark (3); Dover Police (2); Milford Police (1); and Smyrna (1). The overwhelming majority of participants (80%) who evaluated the training found it well done and worthwhile.

### III. Impact

The obvious goal of a community crime prevention program is to prevent crime from occurring. Of course, it is almost impossible to prove any particular crime was prevented. However, a measure of a crime prevention program's success could be the reported crime rate. Supposedly, if crimes were being prevented, the rate of increase or actual crime rate would decrease.<sup>4</sup> Based on this assumption, one measure of the impact of a crime prevention program would be to compare the crime rates in the jurisdiction before and after project implementation. Unfortunately, such data was not available for all of New Castle County. This data was available for selected

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<sup>4</sup>There are a number of problems with this measure. First, a community crime prevention program may change the citizen's view of the police department and lead to more crimes being reported than previously, which show up as an increased crime rate. Secondly, a decline in the crime rate may be due to factors other than the crime prevention project, such as increased patrol or different deployment of personnel.

Exhibit I

Number of Reported Crime in Selected Communities with Block Watch Programs

	<u>Robbery</u>	<u>Burglary</u>	<u>Theft</u>	<u>Criminal Mischief</u>
<u>SCOTTFIELD</u> (Started 9/76)*				
Jan - May, 1975	0	4	6	2
Jan - May, 1976	0	1	9	7
Jan - May, 1977	0	4	12	6
<u>"RICHARDSON PARK-ELMHURST"</u> (Started 10/76)				
Jan - May, 1976	0	15	26	30
Jan - May, 1977	0	4	13	11
<u>CHESTNUT HILL ESTATES</u> (Started 6/76)				
Jan - May, 1975	0	4	12	17
Jan - May, 1976	0	6	29	9
Jan - May, 1977	0	0	21	12
<u>BROOKMONT FARMS</u> (Started 8/76)				
Jan - May, 1976	4	31	23	19
Jan - May, 1977	0	8	19	12
<u>PENN ACRES</u> (Started 10/76)				
Jan - May, 1976	0	5	22	13
Jan - May, 1977	0	9	10	6
<u>JEFFERSON FARMS</u> (Started 9/75)				
Jan - May, 1975	0	44	25	26
Jan - May, 1976	0	3	15	24
Jan - May, 1977	0	11	12	24
<u>RADNOR GREEN</u> (Started 6/76)				
Jan - May, 1975	0	5	8	9
Jan - May, 1976	0	7	11	14
Jan - May, 1977	0	2	5	4
<u>GREEN ACRES</u> (Started 1/76)				
Jan - May, 1975	0	6	16	8
Jan - May, 1976	1	3	9	9
Jan - May, 1977	0	0	7	1

\*Indicates date Block Watch programs started.

neighborhoods which participated in the block watch program and is presented in Exhibit A. This exhibit shows that in almost all instances in these communities, the crimes of robbery, burglary and theft are down when compared with the time before the block watch programs were initiated.

It must be noted that these communities represent only a sample and such reductions may not be occurring in other communities. Furthermore, controls were not established to permit any reduction in crime to unquestionably be attributed to the crime prevention unit rather than some other factor such as a change in population, or increased police patrol. Also, what may be occurring is that crime is being displaced from neighborhoods which have crime prevention programs to those which do not.

In addition to reviewing data such as reported crime rates, subjective measures of the project's impact were sought. Discussions with persons such as organizers of block watch programs, other police officers and citizens who had had contact with the crime prevention unit revealed support for the project. The fact that the unit presently has far more requests for services than it can promptly respond to, is some indication of the community's support. Equally as important as community support has been the support the unit has received from the county government. The director of public safety for the county indicated he was very pleased with the unit. The county is already providing the majority of funding. Approximately

\$104,500 in county funds was allocated to the crime prevention unit for FY 1978 for the existing four persons and there is hope that it can be expanded in the future. GCCJ funding for the project terminates June 30, 1978.

#### IV. Conclusion

Although this project did not achieve all of the stated performance objectives, it was the opinion of the evaluator that this was due to an unrealistic projection of the need and capabilities in terms of time available of the unit. Furthermore, it was the opinion of the evaluator that the New Castle County Crime Prevention Unit appears to be a good example of how the LEAA program was intended to work. Initial seed money was provided by LEAA through GCCJ which enabled the county to "try out" the concept at little cost to itself. Although available data did not unquestionably attribute impact in preventing crime to the unit, there was sufficient support in the county administration and in the community that the county began to contribute more than the required 10 percent matching funds. GCCJ's contribution to the project has diminished over the final two years, and when its funding is exhausted in June, 1978, the project will continue and may even expand solely through county efforts. In addition to county support, personnel from other police jurisdictions (Springfield, Pennsylvania for example) have visited the unit and returned to their jurisdictions with the intent of implementing a similar project.

## V. Recommendation

Based on the findings in this report, the following recommendation was made:

1. The record keeping of the unit concerning its own activities was adequate for evaluating its performance but not its impact. Data should be maintained which will permit more intensive evaluation of the program. At a minimum, this should include (1) county crime rates for those crimes which the project is intended to have the greatest impact such as robbery, burglary, theft and malicious mischief; (2) crime rates for these same crimes for all neighborhoods which implement block watch programs; (3) amount, type and value of stolen property recovered and returned as a result of being engraved; and (4) number of persons victimized after completion of a security survey, and how many of the recommendations were implemented prior to their being victimized.



FA-37-72        New Castle County Crime Prevention Unit,  
75-060         and Crime Prevention Training (76-093)  
76-006         New Castle County Police Department  
77-051         9-1-72 to 6-30-78  
and             January 1978  
76-093  
(\$81,250)

A. Purposes:

1. To introduce the concept of community block watch programs to 75 neighborhoods.
2. To give 465 crime prevention lectures and contact 48,000 citizens.
3. To conduct 1500 security surveys.
4. To implement an operation identification program in which engravers are made available to members of the community.
5. To refurbish and display a crime prevention van.
6. To provide community crime prevention training to 50 to 100 police officers from various police departments in the state.
7. To develop eight community crime prevention programs in apartment complexes.

B. Findings:

1. The block watch concept was introduced to 80 neighborhoods (106 percent of the goal). Of these, 42 implemented such programs. Over 2000 citizens were involved in these programs.
2. A total of 737 crime prevention presentations (333 percent of the goal) were made with approximately 30,999 citizens (83 percent of the goal) attending. The Crime Prevention Unit was so successful in this endeavor that it was requested to make presentations outside of its jurisdiction.
3. A total of 554 (37 percent of the goal) security surveys, ranging from two to over 15 pages, were completed.
4. An Operation Identification program was implemented.
5. A van was refurbished to display various crime prevention paraphernalia such as locks and alarm systems. The van was displayed approximately four times per month.

6. Public service announcements with tips on how to prevent crime were aired on area radio stations.

7. The County Police sponsored a two week training session on community crime prevention in which 51 officers from seven different departments participated.

8. Community Crime Prevention programs were established in two apartment complexes.

9. A non-randomly selected sample of neighborhoods participating in the community block watch program showed that in almost all instances the crimes of robbery, burglary and theft were down when compared with the time before the block watch programs were initiated.

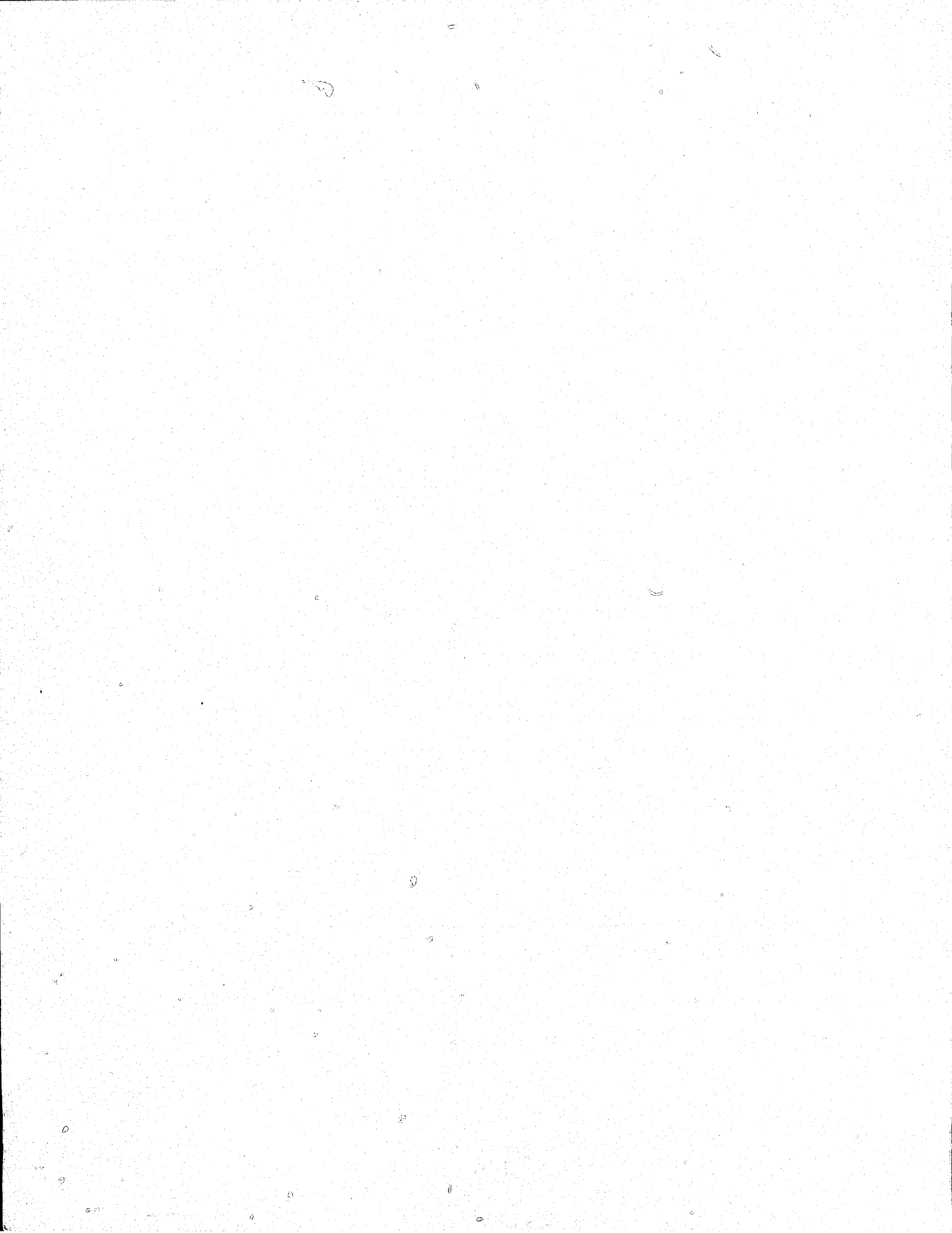
10. Subjective measures of the project's impact revealed support for the project from organizers of block watch programs, other police officers and other citizens.

11. The New Castle County Crime Prevention Unit has received a great deal of support from the county government. Approximately \$104,500 in county funds were allocated to the unit for FY 1978.

12. It was the opinion of the author that the project was well run, and represented a good example of how the LEAA program was intended to operate. Initial "seed" money was provided through GCCJ to enable the county to try out this concept. The concept proved valuable, and the county began to contribute more than the required ten percent. By the time GCCJ funding terminates in June 1978, the project will continue, at least at its present level, supported solely by county funds.

#### C. Recommendation:

The record keeping of the unit concerning its own activities was adequate for evaluating its performance, but not its impact. Data should be maintained which will permit more intensive evaluation of the program. At a minimum, this should include (1) county crime rates for those crimes which the project is intended to have the greatest impact on such as robbery, burglary, theft and malicious mischief; (2) crime rates for these same crimes for all neighborhoods which implement block watch programs; (3) amount, type and value of stolen property recovered and returned as a result of being engraved; (4) number of persons victimized after completion of a security survey, and how many of the recommendations were implemented prior to their being victimized.



**END**