

**Managing Major Public Events:
A Planning Guide for Municipal Officials,
Law Enforcement, Community Leaders,
Organizers, and Promoters**

November 2000

The Community Relations Service

The Community Relations Service (CRS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, was created by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to help resolve community racial conflict through non-coercive, third party conciliation. CRS is called upon to assist communities to resolve disputes arising from alleged use of excessive force by police. CRS conciliators have extensive experience with the issues associated with racial and ethnic conflict.

CRS conducts formal mediated negotiations to help resolve differences between the police and community groups. In addition, CRS provides a wide range of informal assistance that attempts to keep communications open among affected parties and to facilitate a mutually acceptable resolution of the conflict. CRS offers its services either upon request or on its own initiative, when there is a threat of disruption to peaceful community relations.

The Community Relations Service is headquartered in Washington, D.C., and has offices in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Seattle. Assistance may be requested directly from any of these offices.

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on
Spring Break and Special Events**

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Publication Team Credits

CRS would like to thank the teams of municipal officials, law enforcement, community leaders, student organizers, and promoters from the cities of Asbury Park, New Jersey; Atlanta, Georgia; Daytona Beach, Florida; Galveston, Texas; Myrtle Beach/Atlantic Beach/North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina; Quincy/Gretna, Florida; and Virginia Beach, Virginia. They gathered in Atlanta, Georgia, on September 28-29, 1999, to share their experience and insights. A representative group of the participants helped to develop and design this publication in Washington, D.C., on December 1-2, 1999:

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Director's Foreword

I am particularly concerned about racial or ethnic confrontations that could get out of hand and result in violence and danger to communities.

This guidebook describes what is required to help ensure that major public events run smoothly and safely.

We have successfully participated in many public events from national conventions to student demonstrations. As a result, our conciliators have developed extensive experience with the planning and issues involved in those events. Lessons learned from these events, from the partnerships we have formed with communities, and from the eight community case histories are the focus of this guidebook.

We hope that you can profit from the experience of others so that when a public event comes to your city it will be as peaceful as possible.

Rose Ochi

November 2000

“Planning for major events is not optional if there is any hope or desire for a successful event. There is no substitute for a planning process which involves, in a meaningful way, all the stakeholders. This publication provides a framework for working through the process and an opportunity to learn from and take advantage of the experiences of others. How one defines “success” may vary from community to community. Planning helps define the unique elements by which your community will measure “success.” These expectations must be clearly defined and made known if you have any hope of positive response.”

C. Oral Lambert
Chief Operating Officer
City of Virginia Beach, Virginia

Introduction

Public Events and Potential Problems

This guide is the joint product of the Community Relations Service and representatives from eight cities who faced significant issues over hosting large gatherings of minority college-age youths for weekend events.

Most of these cities are beach communities where annual gatherings from 25,000 to 150,000 youths took place. The demand on community resources was significant and the prospect of increased racial tension and the possibility for disorder evident.

A review of the experience in these cities generated a list of potential community and participant concerns. For example:

Community Concerns

CRS will conduct an assessment and provide conciliation assistance to the community and law enforcement in San Antonio, Texas. Community tensions have arisen in the aftermath of racial slurs which were painted on the front doors of the Prince of Peace Baptist Church on Friday, December 1, 2000. The church has a black congregation. CRS will offer its expertise and guidance to address the racial tensions.

- Citizens complained that they were hostages in their own community.
- Traffic congestion created high community tensions.

- Emergency vehicles could not reach destinations.
- Local residents felt that event participants did not treat them with respect.
- Families and residents complained about offensive language used by event participants.
- Lewd behavior and overtly sexual and inappropriate attire was exhibited in public places.
- Large amounts of litter were left by participants.
- Public urination was observed due to shortage of bathroom facilities.
- Taxpayers complained of footing the bill for extra police/emergency/and park services, when the community businesses did not raise revenue to cover these costs.
- Some businesses claimed they lost money. Local residents feared some minority groups.
- Lack of officer training for public events was evident.
- Use of law enforcement from outside jurisdiction not familiar with area and local procedures was a problem.
- Communication between law enforcement from different jurisdictions caused confusion.
- Displacement of tourists created tension.
- Negative media coverage hurt the community's image.
- Property damage was evident and an eyesore.
- Local criminals used events as cover for crime.
- Inadequate communication of city preparation and rules frustrated visitors.

Participant Concerns

- Discrimination against minorities or selective enactment of ordinances and practices was widespread and offensive.
- More stringent enforcement of laws for minority groups was unfair.
- Participants complained they did not feel welcomed and acted out negative behavior.
- Lack of communication and coordination during the event added to crowd control problems.
- There were problems with entering and exiting the event.
- Fear of criminal activity, property damage, and exhibitionism leading to arrest was felt by participants.

Recognizing “flash points” that could ignite civil disturbances is the first step in contingency planning. Municipal officials, law enforcement, community leaders, organizers and promoters should consider all of the possible problems well in advance of a public event.

“Planning for major events is not optional if there is any hope or desire for a successful event.”

C. Oral Lambert
Chief Operating Officer
City of Virginia Beach, Virginia

Contingency Planning

The primary goal of contingency planning is to be prepared for all emergencies that might negatively impact residents in a community. Contingency plans are the specific written assignments of roles and functions during times of crises or for major community events. Each department, public and private organization should have a contingency plan. Personnel and alternates should be identified as contacts for emergency access.

A designated site for a command center should be part of any contingency plan. The command center should have representatives from the mayor’s office, law enforcement, public works, fire department, and health organizations who will communicate and coordinate emergency activities.

Those in charge of the command center and the elected officials need to know what constitutional provisions, operating policies, and State statutes will be in effect when there is a public event or civil disorder condition. For example:

- Under what circumstances does the Governor assume partial or complete responsibility for civil emergencies in a local jurisdiction? What criteria would be used for a determination of a state of emergency? Under what conditions may the State authorities activate the National Guard or call for other external law enforcement assistance? Have personnel who may be mobilized for an emergency received appropriate training in the complexities and sensitivities of dealing with minority-centered disputes and protest issues? Do all state law enforcement agencies have policies regarding non-lethal or disabling means of apprehension? Do all agencies have the same policy?

Before State assistance is summoned, all means of using non-coercive force should be employed. Staff of the Community Relations Service, minority community leaders, clergy, human relations commission, police chaplains, volunteers from minority police organizations, and community volunteers should be called upon to conduct conciliation and peacekeeping activities.

“It is the single focus event that causes the most problems and concerns.”

Thomas E. Leath
City Manager
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Event Organizing and Planning

Who Is Involved in Event and Activity Planning?

The answer is everyone who can affect the outcome. This will include the mayor, city manager, police, and almost every municipal department. In addition, the community must be mobilized and involved. Volunteers will be required. Community organizations and business must be involved.

The unique feature of many major events, such as Spring Break and Special Events is that they bring a large number of college-age and younger people to a community for the “event.” These are usually minimal or few officially-sponsored activities. The main “event” is to be there to walk, to cruise in cars, to be seen, and to visit with other students. Thus, when the event comes to the city, everyone who works for the city – regardless of their regular duties – will be working on the event for that period. All of a city’s resources, including churches, community organizations, and volunteers will be needed. The event is not solely the responsibility of the police and fire departments.

Pre-event Activities

Pre-event activities involve planning by all city, police, business, community, student, and promoter personnel to engage the resources necessary for a successful event. At this stage potential problems should be identified and addressed. Planning should occur six to nine months in advance of large events. Even if a firm date is not known in the early planning stages, it is usually well known that the activity will occur around a particular holiday or vacation time. The exact event date can be plugged in once it is publicized. Publication of exact dates is now usually accomplished through student organization Internet web sites, which local

officials can monitor.

Public Forum. Hold public forums in the community and arrange for city officials to attend community organization meetings so that community residents are aware of the upcoming event and have their views included in the planning. Be sure to announce the traffic plan and try to involve residents in the event as volunteers. The community needs to know that there is no backdoor plan or hidden agenda. Use the public forum and any other community meeting to provide information. Be positive and upbeat. This is a time to show off your city and make people feel welcome.

Establish a budget. City and police officials will need to establish a budget and identify needed equipment. Know how much you have to spend and what can be volunteered or contributed from outside sources; then create a community task force for planning.

“The simplest thing can spark a major problem: a fight, someone blocking a driveway, or traffic. Police

have to deal with the event and keep traffic moving along.”

Lt. Edward Kirschenbaum
Monmouth County Prosecutor’s Office
Freehold, New Jersey

Establish an effective traffic plan. The first and most important planning activity is to establish a traffic plan to handle participants, affected local residents and businesses, and emergency vehicles. Have a back-up plan if bottlenecks occur and traffic ceases to flow. Because many of these events occur in beach communities where natural boundaries define the road patterns, the options may be limited. Make work what you have. Young people will want to be near the beach, along the most popular major streets, or a particular park area. Experience shows that this real estate will be small and access limited, so you will have to develop a plan that allows access to the place everyone is trying to get to and keeps them moving through.

If the traffic plan fails, major problems will arise.

Work with media to develop a positive attitude. Involve the media early in letting them know you are aware of the event and are beginning to prepare for it. Establish a positive environment for the event. As the event gets closer, press releases, briefings, and announcements can be used to prepare the community.

Training for all who will be providing services. Training is the

key for law enforcement, volunteers/task force members, internal staff, and outside agencies.

What should everybody expect? Many, including outside police help and internal staff members, may not know what they are going to face. Don't make assumptions about what you think they should know. Tell them what to expect, because this is different from most anything they have seen. Training for most of these people should take place right before the event.

What will be the role of each person? This is especially important for the volunteers. They need to know what they are expected and not expected to do.

What city information do they need? Many are coming from out of town, and even volunteers who live in the city may not know enough about the area to be helpful to a guest coming to the event. Give them maps and hotel lists of hotels, restaurants, and other sites to pass out when people start asking questions.

Recruitment and Training for Volunteers. Coordinate early all groups who will be part of the event, so that there is no need for rushed, last minute accommodation of groups seeking to join. There are several kinds of volunteers that cities can recruit for large events. Volunteers are very important, because they represent the face of the community and help to show that the community is embracing the event. This helps to create a positive feeling among the visitors to the community. Also, when local citizens are involved there will be less potential resentment and hostility from local residents to disruptions caused by the large numbers of visitors. The recruitment and training of these volunteers should be given a high priority. Start early by recruiting leaders for the volunteer groups.

The kinds of volunteers who can be recruited include "friendship

teams,” minority community or civil rights groups, police chaplains, volunteer minority police officers, and local volunteers to help with water stations, medical stations, and trash disposal. Local civic organizations can be invited to set up food and drink stands as fundraisers.

Establishment of Friendship Teams. Friendship Teams composed of local citizens can be formed to hand out welcome brochures. They can also help people find places to eat, identify local landmarks, find bathroom and medical facilities, and provide friendly faces to greet visitors. A cadre of city employees might be used as the core group of Friendship Teams.

They should be provided with maps of the area and thoroughly briefed on the traffic plan and event arrangements in order to guide visitors. They must be instructed that if they see a problem developing such as lewd behavior, public exhibitionism, fighting and so forth, to contact their leader, volunteer police officers, police chaplains, or a police officer. These volunteers are not police officers and should not engage in or interfere with police activity.

Training for Police. Make sure that police, both local and outside forces, know and understand the “philosophy of enforcement” used in your community. Make sure that the “philosophy of enforcement” remains the same year round. Make sure that officers know what the role of volunteers will be during the event. Police also need to know how to recognize the volunteers. Be sure to introduce the leaders of the volunteer groups and let them speak to the officers at pre-event roll calls. Some officers may not be comfortable with civilian volunteers assisting during the event.

“When a community embraces the event, the prospect of disorder is lessened.”

Major Darlene M. Neely
Special Operations Section
Atlanta Police Department
Atlanta, Georgia

Involving and Informing the Community. City leaders should start meeting with community leaders and organizations as early as possible about major events. Use the media regularly to keep the public updated on event planning. Make sure that the event is a regular agenda item on city council meetings and is reported on by the city manager and department heads. The event should not come as a surprise to anyone in the community.

Coordination of City, County, and State Law Enforcement. Develop your traffic plan early and identify all of the law enforcement jurisdictions to be involved. In some cases, your traffic plan may involve a neighboring city or county jurisdictions that will need to be made part of the planning team. This coordination will be especially important to help visitors to leave the city at the end of the event. Everyone who has come

will try to leave within a short period of time and law enforcement in all of the jurisdictions along the egress routes must be prepared for an unusually high volume of traffic. The welcome brochure should identify anticipated bottlenecks.

The host city's police department should identify their policing priorities and protocols for the event as early as possible; then brief and coordinate with other law enforcement commanders. The police department should establish a command post near the event site and have representatives of all of the jurisdictions and the volunteer organizations at the command post. The command post should be at a separate site from the police department headquarters. It will need separate telephones with well-publicized telephone numbers. Remote videos of the event area can be fed into the command center via microwave. It should also have computers, radios, and a fax machine. City or State Human Relations Commission representatives should also be used as a resource by the police department. A single command post for all law enforcement and other agencies is recommended. If another law enforcement organization establishes a separate command post, be sure that there are liaisons from each department at both command posts.

Most likely, all of the city's police officers will be needed for the event along with some from other jurisdictions. Develop a deployment plan that distributes the officers throughout the affected area, preferably in biracial or diverse teams. Encourage officers to be friendly and outgoing. Instruct officers to prevent problems from occurring by keeping animals out of the site, keeping traffic moving, and avoiding actions that would create attention and generate rumors. Tow trucks should be moving continuously through the area to tow stalled cars or illegally parked cars that block traffic. The lot to where cars are towed should be nearby so

that the tow trucks can return to the site quickly. Cars can be recovered more quickly and easily if they are towed to a close site, lessening tensions and hard feelings.

When arrests are required, those arrested should be moved out of the site quickly, quietly, and with as little force as possible. Special arrest extraction teams and SWAT teams, especially those wearing or carrying riot gear, should be kept out of sight and moved carefully to avoid creating tensions with visitors.

Total Coordination of City Services. The arrival of large numbers of visitors for a major event will require advance planning to ensure that bathroom facilities, drinking water, medical facilities, and additional trash containers are provided. This may be a heavy burden on the affected departments and require temporary use of personnel from other departments of the city. Volunteers from other departments can fill critical gaps in the schedule. Every city or county employee should be considered as a potential resource. Use the event as a team building experience that will bring employees and departments closer together. Make special T-shirts for the city employees for the event and all similar events.

Plenty of trash cans should be made available to contain and dispose of all refuse.

Develop a City Welcome Brochure. The welcome brochure should contain a greeting from the mayor, a map of the traffic plan and a description of periods when the traffic plan will be in effect, locations of water, medical, bathroom facilities, and the tow lot. Include telephone numbers for police, emergency services, and the towing services. Include information on local laws that will be enforced. An ending time for the event should be faxed and announced to allow city services to return to

order for the next workday.

Use the Internet to Keep Event Participants and Regular Tourists Informed About Event Activities. Post information about events in your city on the city web site. The welcome brochure, traffic plan, towing policy, costs of towing, and local laws should all be posted on the web site. In addition, city officials and police should monitor student organization web sites and selected chat rooms in which students exchange information about the upcoming event. This information will be useful in preparing an effective traffic plan and preparing law enforcement for the event.

“For a tourist town, it is a real problem for one crowd to dominate.”

Thomas E. Leath
City Manager
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Activities During the Event

Police Patrols and Enforcement Activity. The first major goal of all police activity will be implementing the traffic plan. The second goal will be to enforce the local laws and prevent conflicts from occurring. The policies governing these activities should be no different from those at other times of the year. Keep the snakes, dogs, and exotic animals and birds out of the event area, as they draw attention and create the potential for crowd control problems. Have ordinances in place year-round and publish them well in advance and in the welcome brochure. Post ordinance signs during the event and in hotel rooms.

Use plainclothes officers to reduce the number of uniforms among the crowd. Participants may become uneasy if they feel there is an excessive police presence. The majority of uniformed officers should be in marked cars directing traffic and on visible patrol. Use enough uniformed officers to let the crowd know that police are present to help maintain order, but not to raise crowd tensions. Be sensitive to how the crowds are responding to your officers. Use plainclothes officers and volunteers to help monitor and report on the mood and behavior of the crowd. A video surveillance system, if available, can help command officers gain an overall picture of the event and make appropriate deployment decisions.

Lewd behavior and other acts of public exhibitionism may occur. People will try to videotape this behavior and crowds will be drawn to the area. Disrobing women are vulnerable to theft of clothes, purses, money, and sexual attacks. Officers can prevent this by maintaining regular patrols of diverse teams of officers throughout the area who take action immediately. Plainclothes officers should be firm and fair. Make arrests only when absolutely necessary and use extraction teams to remove those arrested quickly out of the area. The volunteer police, police chaplains, and community teams will be very helpful in encouraging youth to behave

appropriately. They can say and do a lot to ease tensions in these situations.

If stage performers engage in lewd behavior, expect it to be mimicked throughout the crowd. The situation may deteriorate into an uncontrollable situation, if you attempt to make arrests in the crowd. Instead, inform the performers in advance that any disrobing or lewd behavior will result in their removal and arrest. Enforce this strictly.

The biggest challenge will come from local people who use the event as cover for criminal activities. The large number of people allows criminals to mix in while the police are busy with crowd and traffic control.

Keep Traffic Moving. Typically between 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. the police need to control cruising. There are minimal arrests during this period. When traffic stops moving, crowd control issues arise; tempers can flare and fights start, and pedestrian traffic can swell beyond capacity. Crime tends to increase during these situations. Remove parked cars that block traffic immediately. Do not allow double parking. Do not allow cars traveling in opposite directions to stop so occupants can talk with one another. Students will cruise, but keep them moving. Instruct your officers to be firm, but remain pleasant in their demeanor. When cars are towed, ensure that all officers and volunteers know where towed cars are taken and give them clear instructions to hand out to dispossessed motorists.

Employee and Volunteer Schedules. Keep the volunteer schedule reasonable. Do not underestimate the wear and tear of such events on volunteers. Shifts of 10-12 hours may be routine for employees during these events, but a 4-hour shift for volunteers is more reasonable.

Be sure that employees and volunteers are well fed. Arrange for a

central food station (sandwiches, chips, cookies, and sodas or juice may be all that is needed). If possible, arrange for hot meals; but at least have the basics available. Rotate staff from their stations to get rest, go to the bathroom, and get something to eat and drink. During the summer it is especially important to ensure that staff has enough fluids. Hotel and motel associations or other community organizations may offer welcome hospitality rooms.

Trash. Ensure that sufficient trash cans and temporary receptacles are placed throughout the event area and that extra receptacles are placed in the heaviest visitor traffic areas. Check the trash cans regularly. Remove and tie-off full bags and place them nearby for later pickup. Replace with fresh bags. This will help keep your event area clean and encourage the visitors to be neat and clean. Arrange for trash to be picked up a couple of times during the event during periods when the fewest number of people will be present. Between 6:00 and 9:00 a.m. and mid-afternoon before car and pedestrian traffic gets heavy, will probably be the best times for trash pickup.

City street sweepers and trash trucks can be posted at key locations clearly visible from the event site near the ending time of the event. This will signal the conclusion of the event and the start of the clean up and unblocking of roads to get the city back into shape for the next work day.

Use of the Community Relations Service, U.S. Department of Justice. CRS deploy biracial teams to event sites to assist in identifying potential conflict situations and to facilitate communication between event organizers, visitors and law enforcement. CRS can provide guidance on preventing conflict and restoring calm, and facilitating communication among the community, visitors, and officials.

After-Event Activities

Get the City Back in Order as Soon as Possible. By the end of a special events activity, the community will be ready to take a breather and recover. Return to normal traffic patterns as soon as possible. Have street sweepers and sanitation workers clean streets and remove trash as soon as possible, beginning immediately after the event.

Ensure that city employees and police get rest. All of those who helped with your event, from volunteers to police, will be tired. Set a schedule that will bring fresh officers and employees to work when the normal routine returns and allow the others to get rest. You will need many of these same people next year. Be sure to take care of them so that they will be ready to join the team for the next event.

Survey Opinions of Workers and Volunteers. Immediately after the event ask everyone to record their thoughts and recommendations. Arrange for each department head and other leaders to fully debrief the experience. Report findings to the city manager, mayor and other officials.

Be Sure to Thank Everyone. City officials and the Chief of Police should thank all leaders, volunteers, organizations, and outside departments who contributed to the success of the event. Do this as soon as possible after the event.

“It was amazing how many of the problems were identical between all of the cities despite their differences . . .”

Roger “Bo” Quiroga
Mayor
Galveston, Texas

Communities with Experience in Major Event Planning

Asbury Park and Belmar, New Jersey. For more than 25 years, Greekfest Weekend has been an unsponsored annual week-long event in which 30,000 to 70,000 members of African American and Latino fraternities and sororities from across the country come together for a celebration at the Monmouth County, New Jersey, shores. The main event attended by approximately 100,000 members starts in the Fairmont park area of Philadelphia (see description of the Philadelphia event below) as an officially sponsored event. It usually ends on Saturday night in early June, and many members want then to spend a relaxing weekend at the shore.

For the first 25 years this gathering was held in the Belmar area of New Jersey. After a concerted effort, it was moved in 1997 from Belmar to Asbury Park, where it was welcomed enthusiastically. The Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office and the Monmouth County Human Relations Commission of New Jersey have worked proactively with the attendees and law enforcement.

Lessons Learned

- Law Enforcement
Police should have available a large number of officers ready to report within minutes if an emergency develops. Put plainclothes officers in the crowd to handle assaults and to catch more criminals. This also cuts down the number of visible uniforms in the crowd. Use shift schedules for police officers to lessen fatigue on hot afternoons and late at night. A helicopter can be used to videotape the event for review and planning purposes. Avoid

having too many officers in riot gear appearing in the area, because it creates crowd tension.

- **Traffic Plans**
Police set up temporary digital road signs alongside the road several days before the event to alert drivers of road changes during the upcoming event. Municipal planners alerted mass transportation authorities of the event so that they had enough cars on the nearby light rail system and buses on routes to the event site.
- **Literature**
Municipal planners developed a welcome brochure with maps and a copy of local laws that would be enforced.
- **Public Works**
A specific ending time on Sunday afternoon was set. Street sweepers and garbage trucks were parked in conspicuous visible spots about half hour before ending time to signal to visitors that it was time to leave and to take advantage of the special traffic plans.

Atlanta, Georgia. Black College Spring Break began in 1982 when eight college students from Washington, D.C., organized a picnic in John A. White Park, a small park in Southwest Atlanta. In 1983 the “the D.C. Metro Club,” consisting of 50-60 students, held activities on the Atlanta University Campus and named the Spring Break Weekend “Freaknik.” By 1988 it had grown to fill Piedmont Park and downtown Atlanta streets, impacting traffic and emergency responses by police, fire and rescue personnel. It became a car cruising event drawing students from

many States resulting in traffic gridlock, destruction of hotel rooms, lewd behavior, and crime. In 1993, the mayor of Atlanta, rejected the event and many hotels did not accept reservations from Black youth. The youths came nevertheless, and the city has worked hard to create a positive environment renaming it “Black College Weekend,” and introducing the Sweet Auburn Festival. A local Black college has sponsored a job fair, which has drawn up to 70,000 serious youths. The city has enacted special traffic plans and patrols to address traffic congestion and “Freaknik” behavior, improving both the reception and outcome of the event.

Lessons Learned

- Law Enforcement
At the beginning of each year police commanders must block off the third weekend in April and advise officers that they should expect to be working during that time.

The Police Department should have a statistician on-duty during the event to document all arrests and citations, so that the department can identify specific patterns of criminal activity. Most of those arrested were local. However, some gangs came from as far away as California. Statistics were faxed into headquarters every two hours. They were compiled to show resident, non-resident, juvenile, adult, felony, and misdemeanor arrests. When there were mass arrests, processing was done away from the event area. When cars were impounded and towed or when people were arrested, an information sheet on recovering their cars or their court dates was

provided. The municipal courts were open on Saturday and Sunday during the event to accommodate visitors.

- **Traffic Plan**
After precinct commanders met and developed the traffic plan, they presented the plan to the mayor's staff and city council members. Once approved, it was presented to other law enforcement agencies, media, clergy, and neighborhood and community groups. The plan was modified again after consulting with other law enforcement agencies and the community. A hotline was established to help local residents get to other important events such as weddings and funerals. The hotline was also used to dispel rumors.
- **Volunteers**
The Mayor's Office of Community Affairs and the Atlanta Police Department Chaplaincy created a "Friendship Team" to act as goodwill ambassadors for Black College Spring Break. The Team served as the official welcome committee for college students. The Team maintained a presence throughout event venues and other sites in the city, local malls, Underground Atlanta, parks, and main traffic corridors. The Team also acted as additional eyes and ears throughout the city, reporting suspicious activity and behavior to police immediately. Friendship Teams came from all areas of Atlanta, and were divided into venue teams. Bright-colored T-shirts and caps identified team members. The Team's shirt and cap were shown to all police officers at a police roll call on the day of the event to ensure that the team was recognized by all police

officers. Team members were required to attend an orientation session. Orientation included a discussion of the mission and duties of the Team, role of team leaders, information on venues, interpersonal skills, and safety. A Friendship Team Command Center was established for registration, daily briefings throughout the event, and communication from venues. Communication from each venue was reported hourly or as needed. Reports included: crowd information, incidents, city service needs, and meals for team members.

- **Event Planning**
A Special Events Committee was established to plan for this and similar events. The committee was composed of representatives of the police department, MARTA transit police and operations personnel, city services departments (public works, sanitation, parks and recreation, traffic, and transportation), Emergency Medical Service, fire department, and the representatives and sponsors of the event. The chief of police advised the command staff of the city administration's position on policing the event. From this the traffic plan was developed for cruising and non-cruising routes during the event.
- **Media**
One person should brief media on the event and that person needs to be kept informed throughout the event.

Daytona Beach, Florida. Black College Reunion (BCR) has

been held for more than 20 years. Started by students from the Bethune Cookman College in Daytona Beach, it now attracts students from colleges other than traditional Black Schools. This event also attracts non-students, who come for the three-day event, held the last week of March or the first week of April. This event attracts from 100,000 to 200,000 participants each year. What was once a Black event, is now an event which draws more diverse participation.

Lessons Learned

- **Law Enforcement**
The Chief of Police has applied the principles of community-policing and problem-solving policing to guide the response to this event. He stresses tolerance as a way of dealing with event-goers.
- **Volunteers and Community Participation**
The use of volunteers is a major asset. They are called the AMBASSADORS and the GOD SQUAD. The police department's chaplain actively involved local clergy as police chaplains and recruited involvement of police chaplains from cities where many of the visiting youths resided.
- **Event Planning**
The event in 2000 was planned for and organized by the coordinated efforts from the City of Daytona Beach, the Police Department, the Sheriff's Department, the Motel/Hotel Association, Visitor's Bureau, Bethune-Cookman College, promoters, and the

community. The successful result of this planning created a "welcome atmosphere" for visitors and an invitation to return.

Galveston, Texas. The Galveston Beach Party was first celebrated in 1985 by a small number of mostly African American college students from the South East Texas region. Originally named KAPPA weekend and KAPPA beach party. The event grew as did the problems and challenges. During the 1992 event a Galveston police officer shot and killed a man. Racial tensions rose when the media and victims family charged that the officer used unnecessary lethal force. Public awareness of the event grew as did negative attitudes toward many of the partying visitors who were not even KAPPAS or college students. With major increases in law enforcement and city resources for the event, violence was reduced in 1999 with no shootings or stabbings reported among the 160,000 visitors. There was more interest shown in attending organized events. Also, the police use of non-confrontational techniques reduced the possibility of conflict with all participants.

Lessons Learned

- Law Enforcement
The police department deployed a traveling jail bus that moved where it was needed to pick up persons arrested. Officers did not have to leave the beach where they were needed. This maintained an adequate ratio of officers to visitors.

- **Traffic Plan**
The city developed a comprehensive traffic plan to accommodate residents who lived near the beach and emergency vehicles. This kept the traffic moving and prevented congestion. The city also provided shuttle service into the entertainment district to reduce traffic congestion.
- **Entertainment District**
In 1999, the city of Galveston applied to the State of Texas Land Office to form an entertainment district on its seawall. They planned to use a promoter to defray the taxpayer costs which had been a major complaint in the past. In 2000, the city charged \$20.00 per car to drive through the entertainment district on the event weekend. There was no charge for pedestrians entering the district.

Grand Strand, South Carolina (Atlantic, Myrtle, and North Myrtle Beach). For many years on Memorial Weekend the City of Atlantic Beach has hosted a Bikefest which attracts large numbers of motorcycle enthusiasts. Between 1994 and 1999, the event grew significantly, and 100,000 attended in 1999. Along with the small area within the boundaries of Atlantic Beach, the participants of Bikefest began using other areas of the Grand Strand, particularly North Myrtle Beach and South Myrtle Beach. This resulted in severe traffic congestion on the only highway running along the beach.

In 1992, traffic problems in the North Myrtle Beach area became so severe that law enforcement developed a plan to stage officers within Atlantic Beach in an attempt to control traffic and encroaching crowds of

pedestrians. In 1997, the traffic problems and reports of unlawful conduct continued to be serious. In 1998, the cities of Myrtle Beach and North Myrtle Beach requested State law enforcement assistance.

Lessons Learned

- **Law Enforcement**
Visiting officers were given a package of information about the city and the Chief of Police personally briefed every officer on what to expect. They were told to enforce laws fairly and evenly. Officers were told that the event was not a normal summer night. Outside officers were paired with local officers. Businesses and hotels were asked to police their own sites and to help make people feel welcomed.

The Chiefs of Police of Myrtle Beach, Atlantic Beach, and North Myrtle Beach embraced the concept of community-policing to guide their response to the event. They issued directives and guidance in their contingency plans, which were distributed to all law enforcement agencies working the event. CRS provided training on community relations, police-community relationships, and working events with large numbers of participants.
- **Traffic Plan**
A new traffic plan with reserved lanes for emergency vehicles seemed to break up the crowd and had a calming effect. It allowed full emergency vehicle access throughout the beach area.

- **Volunteers and Community Participation**
A Friendship Team was patterned after the one used in Atlanta, Georgia. Membership in the Friendship Team increased from eight people the first year to 130 in 1999. The goal for 2000 was 500 volunteers. The formation of the volunteer group called THE FRIENDSHIP TEAM was a major "calming effect" for the event when it was established in 1999. CRS assisted in the field and classroom training of the volunteers.
- **Event Planning**
All local governments and law enforcement agencies are part of a Memorial Day Task Force, which includes the Hotel/Motel Association, the Chamber of Commerce organizations, and other business organizations. The Task Force starts planning for the next event as soon as the current one ends. The Task Force also includes community people, which adds other perspectives to the planning process. Community participation was essential because of racial tensions over allegations of excessive police responses to a "Black event".

The State of South Carolina's law enforcement response for this event is coordinated on the local, State, and Federal levels through the command center. The Community Relations Service provided contingency planning assistance to all of the public and private groups in organizing and preparing for handling the large numbers of people.

- **Entertainment**
City sponsored entertainment on the beachfront was effective, but off-site entertainment presented problems. City and business organizations are learning how to target items for sale to the large youth market that exists each year.
- **Businesses and Hotels**
Myrtle Beach merchants and hoteliers in 1999 accepted the event and presented a "welcome" attitude for visitors, creating a positive climate.

Quincy and Gretna, Florida. The music festival began as a small party sponsored by a college Greek organization in Quincy near Tallahassee. In five years it grew into an event drawing 25,000 people to a rural farm with a large stage for music group performances. Participants have parked for miles along rural roads near the event. The event had been conducted without a traffic plan and with minimal need for law enforcement to direct traffic. Law enforcement activity had centered on security for performers and the stage, underage drinking, driving while intoxicated, and public lewdness. The event will be moving to a large site in Gretna in 2000.

Lessons Learned

- **Law Enforcement**
Law enforcement learned that lewd behavior by participants was directly associated with the behavior of stage performers. If performers behaved lewdly or removed their clothes, some

participants would mimic the behavior creating crowd control problems. To control the situation, law enforcement immediately removed performers from the stage who included lewd behavior or public nudity in their performance. Advising performers of the policy of removing lewd performers is now standard policy.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1974, a small group of African American college students and fraternity and sorority members decided to have an annual picnic in a small park in the Germantown section of Philadelphia. Today it has become one of the largest college fetes in the Nation. The most recent event brought as many as 100,000 participants to Fairmount Park's Belmont Plateau for the culmination of a series of week-long events.

During the last several years, however, despite the planned events in Fairmount Park, other more spontaneous weekend celebrations drew significant numbers of young adults to cruise streets and flock to the South Street area.

While the Fairmount Park provided a large and expansive venue for the Greeks, the South Street business corridor and Center City Philadelphia was not conducive for such an influx of people and had the potential for public safety problems. The number of arrests for serious incidents increased significantly over the last few years bringing along a new phenomena called "whirling." Whirling incidents occur when a female is surrounded by a group and sexually assaulted, groped, or stripped of clothing. In most cases these incidents occur within a public area and sometimes within a few feet of the police, who, because of the large crowds, are unable to affect an arrest or prevent such an occurrence.

Planning begins in the Spring. Based upon previous years' events, police commanders are in almost daily contact with community and business leaders to discuss traffic related detours, street closures, security, and crowd control measures. Public service announcements as well as traffic service reports are broadcast in the days leading up to the weekend and on the day of the event. Police focus on ensuring access to all events and providing safety and protection to the Greeks and their guests.

More than 1,200 uniformed and plainclothes officers were deployed throughout the event sites. The heavy vehicular traffic downtown virtually shut down traffic and by 1 a.m. there were 15,000 pedestrians in a seven-block area. As a result, there were several unfortunate "whirling" incidents reported.

There have been no legal challenges or prohibitions to the Philadelphia events. Experience has shown that generally "Greeks" were not involved in criminal activity and that of those arrested most were local youths and had not attended college; about half were juveniles. In 2000 the Greeks plan to scale back and offer only private events to members.

Lessons Learned

- Law Enforcement
The city deployed a combination of volunteers and police in monitoring potential problem areas. In recent years, police began videotaping the event site by helicopter at different times during the event to use as training for police and volunteers the following year. This was used to show typical crowds at different points and specific times for appropriate deployment of police and volunteers. Videotaping at the site itself has helped to reduce crime, because

those who have potentially come to commit crime or engage in wild behavior realize that they are being taped and that the existence of the tapes will help in their identifications and arrests.

Disruptive behavior occurred despite plans by the City of Philadelphia and event organizers to stage events at several venues in order to spread the crowds out and avoid traffic gridlock. The Greek picnic brings about \$8.5 million into the local economy and costs about \$900,000 for police overtime over the three-day weekend.

The Philadelphia Municipal Court has established a highly successful Nuisance Court at the Third Police District, which covers the South Street Corridor. It addresses unruly behavior.

- Official Welcome for Visitors
Elected officials accepted the event and welcomed attendees. This created a positive atmosphere.

Virginia Beach, Virginia. As early as 1980, groups of predominantly Black students gathered at Croatan Beach, in a residential area, for a traditional beach party. The event started by word of mouth by students from various universities. In 1985, the event began to take a more organized appearance and promoters of individual events became involved. Local residents expressed concern that Croatan lacked public facilities, was too confined, and was not an adequate place for the event. In 1986, problems increased because of the lack of facilities and an increase in

attendance to about 8,000 people. In 1987, the event moved to the resort area and the large city-owned Pavilion was used for 7,500 people without incident. In 1988, the 7,500 person capacity of the Pavilion was reached and there was still more than 3,000 people pressing to get in. The 1988 crowd, estimated at 40,000, filled local venues to capacity and caused damage to city property. During September in 1988, the city began planning for the 1989 event, communicating with Pan Hellenic Councils and local universities and researching how other cities were handling similar events. The city created the Beachfront Events Committee, which developed plans for handling large oceanfront crowds and recommended to promoters of Greekfest that the event move to a large regional facility; but this did not occur. Police officers received additional human relations and stress management training and extra officers were assigned to the resort area. Visitors were informed of local public safety ordinances. During Labor Day weekend in 1989, as more than 100,000 people crowded the streets, traffic became gridlocked and behavior problems flared. As tensions mounted late-night rioting occurred, resulting in violence and looting. Damages were estimated at \$1.9 million. The city, and especially the police department, was criticized by both participants and citizens for its handling of the situation.

The city appointed an independent Labor Day Review commission to investigate the problems and recommended a strategy for future events. Public hearings allowed the community to express concerns and share suggestions. A Labor Day Community Coordination Committee and a Labor Day Task Force Office was created to lead the planning and implementation. Members of the police department visited campuses of historically black universities and student leaders participated in a three-day planning summit. Information about "Laborfest '90" was distributed to

student organizations. The National Black Police Officers Association and local clergy provided voluntary assistance to Virginia Beach Police. Crowd sizes were similar to those of 1989, but pre-planning resulted in a weekend free of major incidents.

Cooperative planning and improvements have continued since 1990. The City Council appointed a Human Rights Commission in 1991. Several other special teams and programs such as a community/visitor relations team related to the event have been created. Improvements to city property to improve the situation during Labor Day weekend have been accomplished.

Lessons Learned

- Law Enforcement
The police department simplified and began publishing the procedure for filing complaints against police officers. Now, a citizen panel reviews internal investigations when a citizen is not satisfied with the police department's findings. The pamphlets are distributed at all police department facilities and through the public libraries, including a braille version for the visually impaired. In the future, the pamphlets may be made available through the city visitor center.

The Police Department has made numerous significant changes including rewriting the Civil Disturbance Mobilization Plan; redesigning the Mobile Tactics approach to handle a problem while it is still small and confined; and implementing specialized training in crowd management, cultural diversity, and stress management.

Equipment improvements include a sophisticated video system that serves as a crime deterrent, to monitor traffic, to find lost children, and to apprehend criminals.

- **Traffic Plan**
Traffic management plans included satellite parking, free public trolley transportation, and other initiatives to reduce traffic congestion. The city instituted a Youth Intervention Team, made up of young adults, which served as a role model and provided youth with information on events and activities. This helped to reduce tension between youths.
- **Volunteers**
City officials reached out to Greek organizations and college campuses for assistance, developed a volunteer program, solicited help from the Black Police Officers Association, City Human Rights Commission, and formed a Citizens Advisory Committee.
- **Training of City Employees included law enforcement personnel.**
The city conducts on-going training across all departments with special programs for police officers, which include cultural diversity awareness, crowd management, mob psychology, stress management, and crisis and critical incident management. The police department no longer uses outside police departments to assist them, and only assigns additional police officers and police chaplains from their own department.
- **Entertainment and Business Policies**

Organized special events, improved parking, consistent hotel registration and guest policies, and other pro-active initiatives have improved the situation.

Spring Break/Special Events Conference Participants

Atlanta, Georgia – September 28-29, 1999

Community Relations Service Staff

Thomas Battles, Senior Conciliation Specialist, Miami, Florida
Daryl Borgquist, Media Affairs Officer, Washington, D.C.
Abigail Brown, Conciliation Specialist, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Jonathan Chace, Associate Director, Washington, D.C.
Robert Ensley, Contract Conciliation Specialist, Macon, Georgia
Gustavo Gaynett, Field Office Director, Detroit, Michigan
Patricia Glenn, Northeast Regional Director, New York, New York
Moses Jones, Senior Conciliation Specialist, New York, New York
Efrain Martinez, Senior Conciliation Specialist, Houston, Texas
Henry Mitchum, Acting Mid-Atlantic Regional Director, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Richard Sambrano, Acting Southwest Regional Director, Dallas, Texas
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Asbury Park/Belmar, New Jersey Team

Lieutenant Edward Kirschenbaum, Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office, Freehold,
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Sargent Louis Jordan, Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office, Freehold, New Jersey
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Wilbert Russell, City Manager, Asbury Park, New Jersey

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Michael Langford, Director, Mayor's Office of Community Affairs, Atlanta, Georgia
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Rev. Aron Wheeler, Executive Assistant, Department of Public Safety, Columbus, Ohio

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Greg Austin, Charlotte, North Carolina

Thomas Copeland, Daytona Beach, Florida

Edward Dixon, Florida Commission on Human Relations, Tallahassee, Florida

Greg Durden, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Larry Edwards, Chaplain, Daytona Beach Police Department, Daytona, Florida

Veronica Harrell James, Chief, Civil Rights, Civil Enforcement Section, Office of the
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Curtis Lee, Civil Rights Unit, Attorney General's Office, Tampa, Florida

Dr. Claudette McFadden, Bethune Cookman College, Daytona Beach, Florida

Awen Ra, Student, Daytona Beach, Florida

Michael Rutledge, Assistant Chief, Community Affairs Unit, Jacksonville Sheriff's
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Cynthia Slatten, First Vice President, NAACP, Daytona Beach, Florida

Kenneth Small, Chief of Police, Daytona Beach, Florida

Galveston, Texas, Team

Recy Dunn, President, African-American Chamber of Commerce, Galveston, Texas

Steve LeBlanc, City Manager, Galveston, Texas

Roger "Bo" Quiroga, Mayor, Galveston, Texas

Kim Schoolcraft, Chief of Police, Galveston, Texas

Grand Strand, South Carolina Teams

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Joshua Edwards, Ph.D., Chair, Virginia Beach Human Rights Commission

James Ricketts, Director, Convention and Visitor Development, Virginia Beach,
Virginia

Ronald Hampton, National Black Police Assn., Washington, D.C.

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Cassandra Black, President Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc., Dallas, Texas

Richard Snow, Director, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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CRS Website: *<http://www.usdoj.gov/crs>*

CRS Customer Service Standards

- Our goal is to provide sensitive and effective conflict prevention and resolution services. You can expect us to meet the following standards when we work with you:
- We will clearly explain the process that CRS uses to address racial and ethnic conflicts and our role in that process.
- We will provide opportunities for all parties involved to contribute to and work toward a solution to the racial or ethnic conflict.
- If you are a participant in a CRS training session or conference, you will receive timely and useful information and materials that will assist you in preventing or minimizing racial and ethnic tensions. If you would like more information, we will work with you to identify additional materials and resources to meet your needs within three weeks of learning your need.
- We will be prepared to provide on-site services in major racial or ethnic crisis situations within 24 hours from the time when your community notifies CRS or CRS becomes aware of the crisis.
- In non-crisis situations, we will contact you within three days of when your community notifies CRS or CRS becomes aware of the situation to discuss your request for CRS services.

*“If a non-sanctioned event is coming to your town, you
have to be prepared for it.”*

Thomas E. Leath
City Manager
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

CRS Website: www.usdoj.gov/crs

Spring Break/Special Event Checklist

[Instructions: Using this publication you can prepare your own checklist of activities to do before, during, and after the event that will be held in your community.]

Pre-Event Activities

- 9 Establish a budget
- 9 Hold a public forum
- 9 Establish a traffic plan
- 9 Work in advance with media
- 9 Training for all event service providers
- 9 Recruit and train volunteers
- 9 Establish friendship teams
- 9 Community involvement
- 9 Training for Police
- 9 Command post and coordination of all services
- 9 Other _____

Activities During the Event

- 9 _____
- 9 _____
- 9 _____
- 9 _____
- 9 _____
- 9 _____
- 9 _____
- 9 _____
- 9 _____

After-Event Activities

- 9 _____
- 9 _____
- 9 _____
- 9 _____
- 9 _____
- 9 _____
- 9 _____
- 9 _____
- 9 _____

Additional Notes

Useful Community Relations Service Publications can be found at:
www.usdoj.gov/crs

