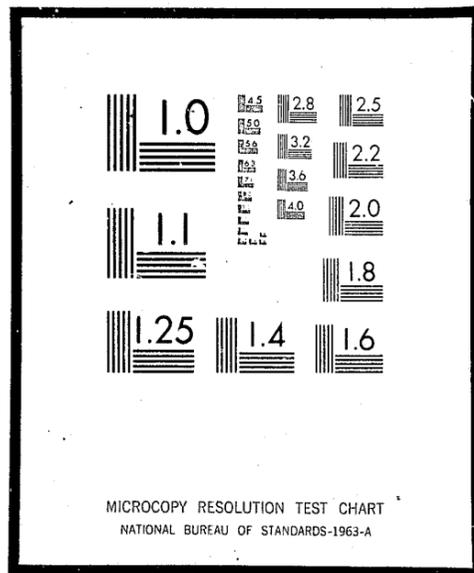


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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20531

Date filmed 4/12/76

LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION (LEAA) POLICE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

SUBJECT An Exploration of Police and Other Criminal Justice Needs in Labette County, Kansas

REPORT NUMBER 75-044-002

FOR

1. Labette County Sheriff's Department
Combined County Population: 25,779
Police Strength: (Sworn): 8
Total: 15
Square Mile Area: 650
2. City of Parsons Police Department
Population: 13,415
Police Strength: (Sworn): 24
33
Square Mile Area: 6.5
3. 11th Judicial District,
3rd Division, Labette County
4. County Probate Court,
Labette County

CONTRACTOR Public Administration Service
1776 Massachusetts Avenue Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20036

CONSULTANT David L. Norrgard

CONTRACT NUMBER J-LEAA-002-76

DATE December 11, 1975

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I. INTRODUCTION

An old railroad town that was showing its age and dependence upon a single industry, Parsons is now a city in the midst of an imaginative development program which will place it among the leading communities in southeastern Kansas. A \$16 million face-lifting effort in the downtown core has given Parsons a well-designed shopping mall free of automobile traffic with ample off-street parking and, most important, a fresh appearance. Two completed industrial parks and the beginnings of a third have shifted the city's (and area's) economic dependence away from the Missouri, Kansas, Texas Railroad (MKT) and towards small manufacturing and processing firms that find Parsons a convenient location with ready access to markets in four states.

Population totals show a slow decline since the early 1950's and the closing of the MKT division offices in Parsons. In 1950 the population total was 14,750; in 1960 it dropped to 13,929; and 1970 saw the total fall to 13,015. State Board of Agriculture population estimates for Parsons in 1973 show a total of 12,755 and 1974 saw an increase, the first in nearly 25 years, to 13,415. The county's population has followed similar trends--29,285 in 1950; 26,805 in 1960; and 25,779 in 1970. Seventy-five per cent of the county's population is urban, with more than half of those urban residents residing in Parsons.

Housing is a particular problem for the city. Thirty-four per cent of all available housing is in substandard condition, no doubt a factor of the gradual decline the city has been experiencing over the past nearly three decades. Interestingly, too, over 17 per cent of the total city population is 65 years of age or older, a ratio that is substantially higher than the state average of about 12 per cent. Of even greater importance, however, is that

only 17.5 per cent of the city's population is between the ages of 25 and 44, while statewide the total is 22.3 per cent. A similar pattern is evident in individuals of less than 24 years of age as well. In relative terms, Parsons has more senior citizens, fewer children and fewer individuals of middle ranges in age than is true for the state as a whole. A similar pattern emerges when the point of reference is Labette County in contrast to the balance of the state.

Parsons (and Labette County) has been in a gradual decline over a period of years. Energetic efforts by city officials and other community leaders in the past five years seem to have curbed this decline and perhaps will result in some modest growth back to early 1950 levels. Housing remains a significant problem and with that, an adequate tax base, particularly as nearly 20 per cent of the county's population have incomes below the established poverty level. Property values are low and residential tax effort high as a result. The large number of senior citizens and the diminished number of younger families in contrast to the balance of the state demonstrate some of the long-run economic problems of the area. The reduction in employment opportunities saw a gradual aging of the community, manifest in both the age of the citizens and in the deterioration of housing. Public facilities experienced that same decline which gives rise, in part, to this analysis.

Following is a list of persons contacted during the conduct of this study:

Robert Bartelli, Member
City Commission, Parsons

Marion L. Bartlett
Chief of Police, Parsons

Perl Bass, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners
Labette County

Daniel Brewster
County Attorney
Labette County

Carl D. Cloke, Sheriff
Labette County

Dick Dearth, Member
Chamber of Commerce 1980 Committee
(former County Attorney)

Judge Hal Hyler
District Court Judge

Larry J. Kenneth
Executive Director
Parsons Chamber of Commerce

John Lutzer, Member
Chamber of Commerce 1980 Committee

Stan Mason, Chairman
Chamber of Commerce 1980 Committee

Kenneth Peak
Criminal Justice Planner
Southeast Kansas Regional
Planning Commission

Clyde M. Reed, Publisher
Parsons Sun

Wiley Risley, Sergeant
Parsons Police Department

Judge Charles Sell
County Probate Court
Labette County

Dick Williams
City Manager
Parsons

Cyril Willy
Assistant Chief of Police
Parsons Police Department

Survey Method

The local information which serves as the basis of this report was gathered by the consultant through on-site conversations with the individuals identified above. Interviews were confidential. No individual is quoted or otherwise identified in this report.

The report itself is in four parts--an overview of the existing police agencies found in Labette County; an overview of the Labette County court system with emphasis upon its facilities; a recommendation for a possible approach to unified police services within the county; and, finally, a recommendation for improving police and court physical facilities.

Survey Purpose

Parsons and Labette County jointly requested that an appraisal be made of current physical facilities available to police and court personnel in Labette County and that recommendations be submitted for their improvement or replacement. As an integral aspect of that analysis, police services were reviewed from the perspective of whether a unified police services program could be developed. Financial support for this brief survey was made available by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U. S. Department of Justice.

Summary of Principal Recommendations

It is the recommendation of this study that a joint police-court facility be developed to serve the Labette County Sheriff's Department, the Parsons Police Department, and the Labette County District and Probate Courts. This facility should be located in Parsons. Further, investigative, training, and records and communications services of the Parsons Police Department and the Labette County Sheriff's Department should be unified.

II. LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

Two police agencies serve as the principal law enforcement units in Labette County, the Parsons Police Department, and the Sheriff's Department. The activities and scope of each will be briefly highlighted.

Parsons Police Department

Twenty-four sworn police officers supported by a civilian staff of nine provide police protection to the residents of Parsons. Departmental personnel are distributed among the following ranks: one chief, one assistant chief, three sergeants, two investigators, three corporals, and 14 police officers. Civilian personnel include two dispatcher/secretaries, one municipal court clerk, one animal control officer, three part-time crossing guards, one parking control officer, and one parking meter repairman.

Patrol units operate from three shifts, 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. Six officers serve on the first shift--one sergeant, one corporal, and four police officers--while the second and third shifts each operate with seven officers--one sergeant, one corporal, and five police officers. Because there is no swing shift, vacation and other authorized leaves reduce the total manpower available on a given shift. One-person patrol cars are used, with six vehicles available for departmental activities, four marked and two unmarked. The city, about 6.5 square miles, is divided into four natural beats due to artificial barriers (e.g., railroad tracks), but movement in and out of assigned areas is common due to reduced manpower during authorized leaves. The sergeant and corporal assigned to each shift seldom are on duty together.

Two investigators are responsible for all the day-to-day continuing investigative work of the department. Their attention is focused principally upon burglary, bicycle thefts, and similar crimes. The office work areas assigned to the investigators is small and crowded. It also serves as the evidence storage area, but preservation of a chain of evidence is difficult because of the inadequate facilities. Indeed, some evidence pertinent to a current case was observed in an open area, apparently because no secure facility was available. Another shortcoming is the absence of an interview area in which witnesses or suspects may be questioned under controlled conditions. The only space now available is subject to frequent (and unintended) intrusions by others, as it also serves as the squad room. This, of course, limits the effectiveness of any interviews conducted there. The quarters assigned to the investigators are not suitable for the work which needs to be performed.

A roll-call training program is being implemented by the Chief of Police, the first such venture for Parsons. Some occasional use is made of seminars of a skill nature, but otherwise training is limited to the state's mandatory training program for new recruits.

The department provides 24-hour dispatching service for its own vehicles and, until several months ago, provided similar service to the Sheriff's Department. Civilian dispatchers serve on some shifts and sworn police officers on others. The quarters assigned to this function are not well designed. There is a high outside noise level, and records and teletype machinery is not easily accessible to the communication facilities. Indeed, to run a simple license check requires that the dispatcher leave the console, go to another room, and make a manual records search or use the teletype while attempting to maintain a watchful eye for visitors or other communication needs. Moreover, some departmental personnel working in the records/communications area did not appear fully

capable of operating the equipment quickly and effectively. Speed and accuracy are critical in most records/communications center tasks, attributes not likely to be present in a physical facility which places numerous artificial barriers in the way of effective performance.

The city operates a small jail with four cell blocks (two-bunk capacity in each) accessible off a small assembly room near the communications center. Two other four-person cell blocks are no longer usable. The jail is both poorly maintained and equipped and has no effective arrangement for prisoner segregation. A small two-person elevator serves the jail but gives the appearance of poor maintenance as well as being slow in movement. Also control of a prisoner in and out of the building is difficult because of the location of the facilities. Recently the Kansas Department of Corrections conducted an inspection of the Parsons jail and found numerous deficiencies in its condition, some quite serious. Use of this jail should be discontinued.

Municipal court facilities are located within the Police Department quarters. The assistant chief of police's office is located within the courtroom, which requires his relocation when court is in session. Similarly, departmental and municipal court clerical operations are located in the courtroom. When court is in session these activities have to be shifted to other, and even less desirable, locations.

One major difficulty presented by the current physical facilities of the Parsons department is its second floor location atop the main fire station. Visitors to the department must climb a narrow stairway and proceed down a long corridor to reach the communications center area of the department, the first visible sign of the Police Department. Once reaching that location, it is possible that the on-duty police officer or dispatcher will not be evident; the dispatcher could be in the adjacent room conducting a

records search or using the ancillary communications equipment. In short, the location and setting of the Police Department is unattractive and much of it unsuited to sound police work.

Sheriff's Department

The Labette County Sheriff's Department is a small agency concentrating on providing police services to a 650-square-mile area but particularly to the rural portions of the county. Providing prisoner transportation services is an important duty as well. Seven sworn personnel serve in the department, one sheriff and six deputy sheriffs. Additionally there are three civilian dispatchers, two clerks, one cook, and one jailer. The jailer is a sworn deputy but is seldom used in duties not connected with jail management.

The Sheriff has six vehicles at his disposal, five marked and one unmarked. Deputies working on the 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. shift normally take a vehicle home for their personal use in off-duty hours but are subject to recall during evening hours. The unmarked automobile is used by the Sheriff.

Three of the regular patrol deputy sheriffs are not funded through the county's budget. Rather, funding for these positions come through a state highway safety program and, as a condition of the grant, at least 90 per cent of the assigned deputies' time must be spent in traffic enforcement duties on state and county roads. Two deputies serve communities on a contract law enforcement program. Both Mound Valley and Edin, small incorporated cities, contract for patrol services from the Sheriff in evening hours in exchange for a modest fee, a fee which likely does not pay the full cost for the services received. Sheriff's personnel pass through these communities on routine patrol in daylight hours.

Within the past few months the Sheriff acquired and has begun to use his own communications facilities through federal grant funds. Previously the Parsons Police Department provided full dispatch services to the county in a semblance of a unified communications program. Clerical personnel assigned to the Sheriff's Oswego office operate the communications equipment during regular office hours with other dispatch personnel filling in on week nights and weekends. There are some problems in maintaining 24-hour dispatching service due to scheduling difficulties. More serious, however, are the conditions under which dispatching must occur, at least during the day shift.

The communications console sits on a clerk-typist's desk in the center of the reception area of the Sheriff's small, second floor county office in Oswego. This office seems to be a convenient assembly point for courthouse staff members, police personnel from other jurisdictions, prisoners, and the like. No communications secrecy is possible, nor is it even likely under such conditions to have routine transmissions without undue background noise. Quarters for communications facilities and records are poor at best.

The Sheriff's Department has no specialized police personnel. If an investigation is too complex or requires an extended period of attention, agents of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) are called upon for assistance. Indeed, the KBI, the state police, and the enforcement unit of the Alcoholic Beverage Commission all maintain resident agents in Labette County and are located in a small county-owned building in Parsons which the Sheriff uses as a substation. (It is also the site of the County Probate Court when that court sits in Parsons.) Cooperation between these agencies appears sound. When crime laboratory work is needed, the Sheriff's Department frequently takes its material to Joplin, Missouri, for that state's laboratory to do the work. The City of Parsons does likewise. Training, for the most part, is ignored, other than the mandatory basic course required by the state.

Labette County's jail is located on the third floor of the Oswego courthouse. Its condition is as poor as that found in the Parsons city jail. Total prisoner capacity is 301 while the average daily prisoner population over the past several years has been between 12 and 15. Segregated facilities are inadequate here, too. Living quarters are provided for the jailer and his family, a questionable practice according to most contemporary correctional authorities. Also a departure from customary practice is the presence of a large weapons collection in the jailer's quarters, apparently because some departmental personnel are engaged in a retail weapons business from that location. This, too, is a very questionable practice. The jail was censured by the Kansas Department of Corrections for its general condition.

The particular duty which occupies a significant portion of the Labette County Sheriff's Department is that of prisoner transportation. The county jail is located in Oswego, the county seat, which is some 20 miles from the county's largest city, Parsons. About 90 per cent of the trials and court-related criminal activity occurs in Parsons. Hence, prisoners continually must be transported for arraignments, pretrial hearings, trials, sentencing, and so forth. This responsibility places a considerable burden upon the Sheriff's Department. Prisoner security is also a problem with the high degree of prisoner movement.

Other Police Agencies

The small cities, Oswego (population 2,266) and Chetopa (population 1,603) also provide police protection to their residents, both through four-person departments. Altamont (population 941) has one person on full-time police duty. As noted earlier, Edin (population 363) and Mound Valley (population 477) receive police services through a

contractual arrangement with the Labette County Sheriff. Activities of these agencies tend to be concerned with traffic enforcement, animal control, and family disturbances.

General Comments on Police Services

When reviewing police services it is appropriate to divide the overall work of the police agencies into two parts--those duties which could be called "crime-fighting" and those which might be called "peacekeeping." What is meant by "crime-fighting" is obvious, but the concept of "peacekeeping" is more elusive. Simply put, it is the day-in, day-out routine of quelling a family disturbance or a neighborhood argument. It is assisting someone who is locked out of a home or business to gain access. It is finding a lost child, unsnarling a traffic jam, investigating an automobile accident, and so forth.

The predominant Part I offenses, both in Labette County and Parsons, are burglary and larceny, with few reported crimes against persons. Incident reports for April and September, 1975, for Parsons were examined to gain a perspective as to typical activities. Arrests were made in each month for several assault and battery offenses; there was one armed robbery arrest, one arrest for aggravated assault, and several for rape in the two months examined. The remainder of arrests made during the two particular months cited were for incidents such as disorderly conduct, public drunkenness, transportation of open alcoholic beverage containers, curfew violations, and the like. In April, 207 requests for police assistance were received resulting in 54 arrests. In September, 219 service requests were received and a total of 46 arrests resulted. Sixty-one of the total complaints were made regarding dogs in April and another 51 in September. Records over a three-year period were reviewed for Parsons and the resulting impression as to typical incidents is consistent with the picture emerging from the

detailed examination of April and September. Similar data are not available in detail for Labette County, although the pattern likely is about the same.

On the basis of this review of police incident records, it is clear that the principal role of the Parsons Police Department is that of a "peacekeeper" and the criminal incident behavior largely is confined to crimes against property. Only occasionally is there a problem with crimes against persons. The pattern for the Labette County Sheriff's Department appears to be quite similar, based upon the limited data available.

In no area of police management is the word "standard" more commonly used than in reference to manpower, and perhaps nowhere so inappropriately. Average ratios of police personnel to units of population have become the standard to those areas where the standard is not met. Obviously, if this year departments with below average ratios for their population groups raised their staff levels to match these ratios, next year there would be a higher ratio and, therefore, a higher standard.

Precise standards or formulas for determining the optimum police staff needs for a given county or city are not available. Variables which affect the size of a police department includes the community tolerance level for problems of crime and peacekeeping; the willingness and ability of the community to provide financial support; the persuasiveness of the police department in seeking financial and community support; whether the community is horizontal, vertical, heavily populated, or sparsely populated; the background and status of the population; general economic conditions of the community; and so forth. All these variables equal reasons why a particular police department is organized the way it is.

Within this context, then, the standard most commonly used in projecting police agency manpower needs is 1.5 police officers per thousand population for communities in the population range found in this study. Parsons with its 24 sworn officers and 13,000 residents stands very close to having two officers per thousand population, about 25 per cent greater strength than typically is found in communities the size of Parsons. Labette County Sheriff's Department, on the other hand, shows a police officer per thousand ratio of nearly one if only the non-urban areas of the county not maintaining their own police service are included in the calculation.

The value placed upon police services by a governmental unit can be measured in terms of cost per capita as well. Using this criterion, Parsons, which commits about 25 per cent of its general budget, spends about \$15.10 per capita through local tax effort with additional funds through revenue sharing. Approximately 11 mills of the total 56-mill levy is for police protection with three mill equivalent from revenue sharing. Similar analysis of the Sheriff's Department is not possible because of the absence of comparable budget data.

Parsons, by both its staffing pattern and its budget commitment, suggests a stronger orientation to the "crime-fighter" role than a brief look at crime incident records would suggest. This commitment should be re-examined in light of other community priorities.

III. COURT FACILITIES

The District Court meets both in Oswego, the county seat, and in Parsons, as does the County Court which also serves as the juvenile court and the probate court. The County Court handles civil matters up to \$1,000, misdemeanors, and holds preliminary hearings on felony trials. Probate and juvenile court matters are heard through original jurisdictions with de novo appeal to the District Court. The District Court is a court of record with full jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters. Most court action is centered in Parsons. The County Court sits in Oswego about 20 per cent of the time with the remainder spent in Parsons. The District Court sits twice monthly in Oswego and otherwise holds sessions in Parsons. Unfortunately the more adequate (in relative terms) court facilities are found in Oswego.

The District Courtroom in Parsons is located on the second floor of the municipal building. It is a large room with turn-of-the-century furnishings highlighted by several long-pole ceiling fans. A large skylight in the courtroom provides more than its intended vista--because of disrepair it is not infrequently a door for unexpected winged visitors. Air conditioning is a problem, too. There is no central air, so two large room air conditioners must be used--but not while court is in session because the room units are too noisy and when in operation court personnel, juries, and others cannot hear the proceedings. With temperatures in the high 90's and low 100's not unusual during summer in this part of Kansas, the absence of air conditioning is a problem.

Ninety per cent of the District Court's workload is in Parsons. In 1974 the court heard 320 civil cases and 97 criminal. Of the latter, 33 were dismissed, 59 saw guilty pleas entered, and five required full trials. One major problem is scheduling. With the

prisoners being detained in Oswego, some 20 miles distant, there are long periods of delay while prisoners are being transported. The distance also poses a problem in providing public defender counsel to those requiring such assistance. Most attorneys practice law in Parsons, and not infrequently the 40-mile round trip to Oswego is found to be an obstacle in case preparation.

Facilities for juries are particularly severe in Parsons. It is not possible to sequester a jury during a court recess. The jury, witnesses, courtroom visitors, and others all must commingle to use restroom and related facilities or services. The jury room itself is located on the third floor of the municipal building in a remote location. It is dank, unairconditioned, and not at all conducive to stimulating reasoned judgment by the juries. The courtroom in Oswego, largely unused, is a pleasant appearing facility, but it too is unairconditioned. There is no separate facility for segregating the jury during a recess, and the jury room, while better than the one in Parsons, is still inadequate. One can only speculate that the physical condition of the District Court facilities have a negative impact upon the judicial process in Labette County.

Court facilities available to the County Court are not of any better quality. Indeed, the County Court does not even have a courtroom. Rather, the court must use a series of three interconnected rooms on the first floor of the small county office building located in Parsons. The judge's chamber, courtroom, and clerical area essentially occupy the same small space. And the space available to the County Court in Oswego is not much better. Between 3,000 and 4,000 cases typically are heard by this court, the bulk of them related to traffic matters. Criminal matters are confined to preliminary hearings, while jury trials are rare, even in civil matters. The district courtroom in Oswego, largely unused, is not available for use by the County Court, apparently because of jurisdictional differences.

IV. UNIFIED SERVICES THROUGH FUNCTIONAL CONSOLIDATION

The simplest and least disruptive approach to strengthening police services within Labette County would be to combine certain elements of the Parsons Police Department and the Sheriff's Department into one. The focus would be on unifying services which are supportive to the basic police mission, prevention and patrol, and which could be combined while preserving the identity of each individual police agency. Records and communications services, investigations, and training programs are all strong candidates for joint efforts. Each will be noted briefly below.

Records and Communications

Development of an area-wide records and communications center is essential as the current random, haphazard approaches of both agencies do not serve either well. Dispatching facilities are not well designed for their purposes and neither agency presently handles the task well. Records are virtually non-existent in immediate, usable form. Records are, however, the natural by-product of a request for assistance or other police action. If calls for assistance come to a central place, it makes sense to have that same place serve as the depository for all records as well as the maintenance center for master control records. This is appropriate, as the dispatcher is in a position to generate master records indicating each call for assistance and the names and department of any police officers responding. At a later point the officer's incident report can be linked with the dispatcher's report for close coordination. Importantly, too, a police officer often needs access to certain records quickly and accurately when involved in an incident. A records system should be companion to a central communications system. New facilities clearly are needed here.

Investigations

An investigative unit is another element of a police agency which lends itself to a unified approach. Investigations, like records and communications, serve a supportive role to the basic police activity of prevention and patrol, especially if one views an investigation in its two aspects, preliminary and continuing.

A preliminary investigation normally is handled by the officer responding to a request for assistance. The officer must quickly check out the crime scene, ascertain what occurred, preserve evidence, and note any potential witnesses. In some instances these tasks are not performed adequately now by the agencies, particularly because of the lack of training which is noted below. Once these initial tasks are completed, the investigation should be turned over to a full-time investigator for follow-through unless, of course, a solution is readily apparent. A continuing investigation may require a few hours, a few days, or an indefinite period of time, but the commitment is more than a police officer on patrol could reasonably be expected to meet. An investigative team serving county-wide could follow a case conveniently wherever it might lead. It would need, however, adequate facilities to carry out its assigned tasks.

Training

Training is another activity which can be conducted through a joint venture. All new police officers must attend the Kansas Law Enforcement Academy for a recruit training program in the first year following employment. There appears to be a renewed interest in training by the Parsons agency as evidenced by the initiation of roll-call programs on a regular basis. No programs are available to the Sheriff's personnel.

Attention should be given to the development of a single, integrated training program which focuses upon traditional things such as skill training (conducting preliminary investigations, weapons use, drug control, fingerprinting, etc.) with perhaps some background work in supervisory and management training for police and perhaps other governmental personnel. No facilities are available now, however, to effectively carry out a unified training program.

General Comments

Two key factors must be weighed by the potential participants in any coordinated police service program in Labette County, i.e., the "degree of autonomy" lost to another agency and the "degree of responsiveness" to citizen concerns. In measuring the amount of local control or autonomy lost by one unit of government to another, the functional approach poses fewer problems than would the establishment of, for example, a single police agency. Only certain specialized functions would be shared, not an entirely new concept.

The "degree of responsiveness" criterion paints a similar picture. What is meant here is responsiveness to citizen inputs on policy and related questions. Little change likely would be noticed by most citizens through a well-defined functional consolidation approach because areas recommended for incorporation in such a system--communications and records, training, and investigative functions--are supportive to patrol activities, and it is this latter service which is seen and used by the vast number of residents. Patrol activities would remain independent of the unified system and thus familiar citizen access points to most police activities would remain largely unaltered.

Quite the opposite pattern would emerge through the creation of a new agency because of existing channels of communication and response not being continued--an entirely new approach would need to develop with no firm assessment possible as to how long this might take, if it could be accomplished at all.

The chief advantage of this recommended approach to unified police services is that certain vital elements of the two main agencies would be unified but their overall separate identities preserved. This approach poses few legal and political obstacles in contrast to establishing a single police entity because no new enabling legislation would be required. It has the drawback of being a pioneer effort at intergovernmental cooperation in Labette County, because there has been a surprising lack of cooperation between the city and county in other program areas.

V. IMPROVED PHYSICAL FACILITIES

It is the principal recommendation of this study that physical facilities be acquired or constructed in Parsons to house the district, county and municipal courts, the Parsons Police Department, and a substation of the Labette County Sheriff's Department. A modern jail facility should also be provided in the same facility, one without living quarters for the jailer. Space is now provided by the county in its Parsons Office for the agents of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, the Alcoholic Beverage Commission, and the State Police. This arrangement is desirable and a similar one should be continued in any new building.

Deficiencies identified in this brief survey supporting the need for a new joint facility are as follows:

1. Juries cannot be sequestered during and prior to trials nor are there adequate facilities in which juries may deliberate;
2. Due to disrepair and the lack of central air conditioning; District Court proceedings often are interrupted or re-scheduled because of weather or other outside interferences;
3. Interviewing of witnesses and suspects cannot be accomplished readily because of the lack of proper interview rooms in Parsons;
4. There are no secure areas in which evidence may be stored in order to preserve the required "chain of evidence" by either the city or county agencies;
5. The County Court judge does not have private chambers in which to meet and confer with attorneys and others involved in litigation on a confidential basis;
6. Clerical and other offices located within the municipal court must be relocated or work discontinued while court is in session;

7. Jails operated by both Parsons and Labette County have been censured by the State of Kansas for extensive physical deficiencies and, moreover, there is little need to maintain two separate jails when one would be sufficient;
8. Communications facilities for the city and county agencies are of inadequate design, have extensive outside noise interference, and lack internal security;
9. Records operations of both the city and county agencies are in inconvenient locations and are neither well designed nor maintained;
10. No training facilities are available to either the Parsons or Labette County departments;
11. Excessive time and money is spent in prisoner transportation between Parsons and Oswego and, moreover, it is difficult for individuals represented by public defenders to meet with counsel.

The need for improved physical facilities to meet the criminal justice needs of Labette County is clear. Whether there should be a new building or one that is renovated is a local question, but the facility itself should be located in Parsons. Two adjacent courtrooms, one large and the other small, would be adequate. A jury room located conveniently to the larger room with proper furnishings and equipment would be sufficient. The smaller courtroom could be used by both the County and Municipal Courts, reserving the larger room for the District Court, where jury trials are more likely. Exclusive use, however, should not be observed. Indeed, a well designed courtroom could also function as a meeting place for the Parsons City Commission as well.

The Sheriff's Department and the Parsons Police Department easily can share common space on the street level of a new facility. A well designed communications-records center serving both agencies through a unified services program is essential.

Similarly, an investigation area with locked spaced for evidence and one interview room would serve the needs of any unified investigative unit. A squad room shared by both departments could also double as a classroom for training programs on a unified basis. The jail, perhaps monitored in part through electronic surveillance equipment in the communications center, should be on a separate level from the police and court facilities.



END