



LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION (LEAA)

POLICE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

SUBJECT

City/County Police Consolidation

PROJECT NUMBER

78-015-191

FOR

Gordon, Nebraska, and Sheridan County
Nebraska

Population: City-2,284
County-5,056

Police Strength:

City-(Sworn) 6; (Civilian) 2; Total 8
County-(Sworn) 9; (Civilian) 4; Total 13

Square Mile Area: City - 1.0
County-3825.0
Total -3826.0

CONTRACTOR

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CONTRACT NUMBER

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ACQUISITIONS

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- A. List of Persons Interviewed

Approving Agency:

Mr. Harris R. Owens
Executive Director
Nebraska Commission on Law
Enforcement & Criminal Justice
Lincoln, Nebraska

Mr. Robert O. Heck
Police Specialist
Enforcement Division
Office of Criminal Justice Programs
Law Enforcement Assistance
Administration
U. S. Department of Justice

Commencing July 10, 1978, the consultant spent five days on-site. The purpose of this visit was to gain a first-hand understanding of the nature and extent of law enforcement functions and services provided by the city and county; meet with the Mayor and City Council, County Board of Commissioners, Chief of Police, Sheriff, legal representatives, and other interested individuals; and collect data to support the study effort.

A list of the persons contacted and interviewed for the purposes of this study appears as Appendix A.

The services provided were supported financially by the LEAA through its Police Services Technical Assistance Contract. The conclusions and recommendations contained herein are those of the consultant assigned to the project and (unless otherwise stated) do not necessarily represent the official position of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice.

II. ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

As stated earlier, the purpose of this study is to assess the feasibility of consolidated law enforcement services in Sheridan County. Since the Sheridan County Sheriff's Department and the Gordon Police Department possess the only significant law enforcement resources in the county--excluding, of course, the various federal, state, and military law enforcement agencies operating there--this study will be confined to the administration and operation of these departments as they relate to consolidation.

Since this study is a technical assistance effort rather than a comprehensive organization and management study, it is not an exhaustive examination of all the issues, policies, procedures, and other considerations which can, and will, influence the decision-making process. Rather, this study is meant to identify the most visible or critical issues and concerns which should be addressed in determining the feasibility of consolidated law enforcement. This study is thus confined to those conclusions and recommendations which would pertain to the additional technical assistance, resources, and programs of an immediate and intermediate-term nature, should this city/county consolidation prove feasible and be adopted. In that case, the study would then serve as a preliminary program planning and strategy implementation design.

Study Methodology

In conducting this study the consultant employed a number of data collection, analytical, and developmental techniques. These included interviews which were conducted with key policy and decision-making elected the appointed officials; reports, studies, policy manuals, statutes, and other pertinent documents were examined and analyzed; police and sheriff's departments' facilities and equipment were viewed and assessed; and many of the operational and support personnel were observed while at work. Formal data collection on the administration and operations of the departments was effected through the use of a questionnaire which was completed by both departments. In addition, the consultant spent several hours with police patrols in and about Gordon and the county to gain an understanding and appreciation of the policing problems presented by the socio-economic, demographic, and topological characteristics of the area. Informational meetings were held with the Gordon City Council, County Commissioners, area police chiefs, businessmen, and residents to gain their individual and collective experiences and perspectives on the issue. These activities allowed the consultant to become sufficiently familiar with

the geographic area and departmental operations so that informed judgments could be made regarding the feasibility of consolidation and the potential for improving law enforcement services.

A number of factors have a bearing, either directly or indirectly as well as positively and negatively, upon the feasibility and possible implementation of consolidated police services. For sake of logical expression, clarity, and analysis, these factors have been classified and presented in this section as:

1. Conceptual-police consolidation.
2. Legal-constitutional, statutory, and ordinance considerations.
3. The general nature of the area--its economy and the characteristics of the service population.
4. Organizational--resources, policies, and procedures of the existing police and sheriff's departments.

Police Consolidation

The 1967 Task Force Report: Police^{1/} identified various methods of merging police agencies, activities, and functions as one of the means by which law enforcement efficiency and effectiveness could be increased, while at the same time the fragmentation and duplication that has prevailed in the American criminal justice system could be reduced. In addressing this issue, the Task Force stated, "Formal cooperation or consolidation is an essential ingredient in improving the quality of law enforcement. Crime is not confined within artificially created political boundaries but, rather, extends throughout the larger community." ^{2/}

While many organizations throughout the nation expended efforts to analyze and implement the recommendations made by the Task Force, only partial success was realized, however. With the publication of the National Advisory Commission's Standards and Goals^{3/} in 1973, a renewed interest in combined police services was generated, and many municipal, township, county, and state officials have seriously studied the feasibility of and gone on to implement combined police services.

^{1/} The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, Task Force Report: Police, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1967 (Chapter IV).

^{2/} Ibid., p. 68.

^{3/} See National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, Reports on Police, Courts, Corrections, Juvenile Delinquency, et al., U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1973.

To provide an overview of regionalized policing, the various concepts pertaining to regionalized policing and methods of implementation have been abstracted from the National Advisory Commission's Standard,^{4/} and are presented below. In analyzing this Standard, several thoughts should be kept in mind:

The most critical, and often most misunderstood consideration, is that relating to costs. In many cases, a form of regionalized policing is adopted and implemented with the explicit assumption that policing costs will be reduced. More often than not this assumption proves to be erroneous, and subsequent disappointment becomes a certainty.

Rather than seeking any reductions in cost, the advocate should be assessing the potential for increasing police efficiency--the method through which a service or activity is provided--and effectiveness--the relative impact of a service or activity in alleviating a problem, reducing crime, etc. In many cases, the monies saved through a reduction of fragmented, duplicative, or uncoordinated administrative or operational activities is required elsewhere in the organization to provide more intensive or extensive services. Thus, while expenses may be reduced through consolidation, these resources can be reapplied to the law enforcement function to provide new services and activities--if needed--or strengthen existing services and activities.

The second consideration to be addressed is one of an evaluative nature. In order to state with any certainty that consolidated law enforcement has increased efficiency and/or effectiveness, certain performance standards and measures are necessary. These standards and measures, to be most useful, should be identified and developed prior to actual consolidation. These standards will permit a rational delegation of authority, the recipient knowing exactly what is expected in terms of performance and the time-frame in which these activities are to be completed.

Combined Policy Services: National Advisory Commission, Standard 5.2

"Every . . . (jurisdiction) . . . should provide police services by the most effective and efficient organizational means available to it Each should acknowledge that the police organization . . . should be large enough to be effective but small enough to be responsive to the people."

^{4/} National Advisory Commission, Report on Police, pp. 108-115. (Standard 5.2).

In specifying the means through which this effectiveness and efficiency may become reality, the Commission recommends that:

- a. "Every state should enact legislation enabling local governments and police . . . , with the concurrence of their governing bodies, to enter in interagency agreements to permit total or partial police services"; and
- b. "Every local government should . . . take whatever actions are necessary to provide police services through mutual agreement or joint participation where such services can be provided most effectively"; and
- c. "No state or local government or police agency should enter into any agreement for or participate in any police service that would not be responsive to the needs of its jurisdiction and that does not"
 - (1) Maintain current service levels at a reduced cost;
 - (2) Improve current levels of service at the same cost or at increased cost if justified; or
 - (3) Provide additional service at least as effectively and efficiently as could be provided by the agency alone.
- d. "Every local government and every local police agency should study possibilities for combined and contract police services, and where appropriate, implement such services," including;
 - (1) Total consolidation of all police agencies in a geographic area (regional consolidation).
 - (2) Consolidation of specific functional units of several police agencies (functional consolidation).
 - (3) Centralize specific functional services on a geographic basis (functional regionalization).
 - (4) Consolidate all governments and governmental services within a metropolitan area (metropolitan policing).
 - (5) Contract for total police services from another unit of government (contractual policing).

- (6) Contract for specific police services from another unit of government (contractual policing).
- (7) Shared support services with another police agency (shared services).
- e. Staff services should be regularly evaluated to determine if they are adequate and cost effective and whether they could be more efficiently or effectively provided if combined with those of other police agencies.
- f. Line operations should be identified that might be more effective and efficient in preventing, deterring, or investigating criminal activity if combined with like operations of other agencies. ^{5/}

Based upon the various findings and conclusions of this study, a variety of methods of providing police services will be addressed and analyzed.

Legal Issues

Included within the legal factor are issues of a constitutional, statutory, and ordinance nature associated with the concept of consolidation and contractual policing. This factor must be adequately addressed and analyzed to preclude the potential of any future legal challenges to the consolidation and to surface those legal issues that are inherent in the concept, e.g., tort liability, pension and disability provisions, transfer and disposition of tangible property, etc.

Constitutional

The Constitution of the State of Nebraska empowers cities to determine their local affairs and government except when limited or prohibited by the State Legislature. A 1972 amendment^{6/} to the Constitution explicitly states that local governments may exercise or perform any of its functions, including financing the same, jointly or in cooperation with any other governmental entity. This section mitigates the generally accepted tenets of Dillon's

^{5/} Ibid.

^{6/} Nebraska Constitution of 1875 (amended). Article XV, Section 18.

Rule^{7/} and serves as a sound legal basis for development of contractual or consolidated law enforcement agreements.

Statutory

Under the aegies of this constitutional provision, the City of Gordon and Sheridan County are authorized by legislative enactment to adopt the provisions of the Nebraska Statutes which permit interlocal cooperation^{8/} and contractual policing arrangements^{9/} between cities of the first and second class and county boards.

The Interlocal Cooperation Act (Article 22) is based upon and expands the Constitutional provision previously noted. This Act encourages local governmental units to "cooperate with other localities on a basis of mutual advantage and thereby to provide services and facilities in a manner . . . that will accord best with . . . the needs and development of local communities." ^{10/} The Act requires that "Appropriate action by ordinance, resolution or

^{7/} This legal principle governing municipal government was expressed by Judge John F. Dillon some years ago:

It is a general and undisputed proposition of law that municipal corporation possesses and can exercise the following powers, and no others: First, those granted in express words; second, those necessarily or fairly implied in or incident to the powers expressly granted; third, those essential to the accomplishment of the declared objects and purposes of the corporation--not simply convenient, but indispensable. Any fair, reasonable, substantial doubt concerning the existence of power is resolved by the courts against the corporation and the power is denied.

(Commentaires on the Law of Municipal Corporations, fifth ed., Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1911), Vol. 1, Sec. 237.

^{8/} Reissue Revised Statutes of 1943 (amended), Article 22, Section 23-2201 et. seq. (hereafter referred to as RRS . . .).

^{9/} RRS, Article 38, Section 19-3801 et. seq.

^{10/} RRS, Article 22, Section 23-2201.

otherwise pursuant to law of the governing bodies of the participating public agencies before any such agreement may enter into force," and further requires specificity in terms of (a) duration of agreement, (b) the precise organization, composition, and nature of any separate entity created thereby together with its powers, (c) its purpose(s), (d) manner of financing and establishing and maintaining a budget, (e) termination of agreements and disposition of property, and (f) any other necessary and proper matters."^{11/} In addition, the contract must fully set forth the purposes, powers, rights, objectives, and responsibilities of the contracting parties. ^{12/}

Considering this Act on its face, a number of alternatives may be legally feasible for providing law enforcement services in Sheridan County. These include any of the alternative methods discussed under the Police Consolidation section of this report, including metropolitan policing.

Given the latitude that the legislature built into the various sections and paragraphs of the Interlocal Cooperation Act, it is possible to entertain and assess the full spectrum of possible alternatives. This spectrum ranges from functional consolidation as the least radical change to the establishment of a countywide metropolitan (more properly "rural") police organization. Thus, the City of Gordon could contract with the Sheriff--or vice versa--for any specific function, i.e., records, communications, detention, etc., or a more radical approach, the Sheriff's Department and Gordon Police Department could be abolished entirely and a new countywide Department of Law Enforcement instituted. Such an alternative, the Department of Law Enforcement concept, appears to be permissible under Section 23-2204 (3)(b), depending upon the statutory basis for the creation and maintenance of the office of county sheriff. In the absence of any statutory limitations, then, it is possible to establish a county Law Enforcement Department.

Beyond the concept mentioned above, there is additional statutory authority for cooperative law enforcement arrangements between units of government. Article 38, Police Services, expressly permits, "Any

^{11/} Ibid., Section 23-2204.

^{12/} Ibid., Section 23-2207.

city of the first or second class . . . , under the provisions of the Interlocal Cooperation Act, enter into (sic) a contract . . . for police services to be provided by the county sheriff^{13/} The Act also provides for the cancellation of any such contract,^{14/} and contract cost negotiations.^{15/}

General Characteristics of the Area

This section of the report presents information and analysis relative to the general economic and financial viability of the area in question. Since law enforcement services are dependent, in part, upon financial resources, a population base, and the general economic conditions of the area, an analysis, albeit cursory, and the present and future viability is essential to the development of any final conclusions regarding the strategy by which law enforcement services are to be provided.

Sheridan County

Sheridan County is located in northwest Nebraska, 19 miles south of South Dakota and 100 miles east of Wyoming. The county, which is primarily farming and grazing area (99%), covers 3,826 square miles and has approximately 3,300 residents living in unincorporated areas. The population is widely dispersed throughout the county; the average farm size is 2,350 acres, which creates the potential for sheriff's patrols having to respond at very long distances.

City of Gordon

Gordon, the largest city in the county, had a 1976 population of 2,284 (approximately 31 percent of the total county population) and encompasses one square mile.

Gordon's economy is based primarily upon the farming and ranching operations in the county. Retail and wholesale firms are the major businesses in the city. Approximately 200 acres in and around Gordon are zoned for light industry, although 175 acres are vacant.

In 1978 assessed valuation of real estate and personal property was \$5.6 million. From 1965 to 1971, the assessed valuation increased 7.1 percent (\$3.25 to \$3.48 million), while from 1971 to 1977 assessed

^{13/} RRS, Article 38, Section 19-3801, et. seq.

^{14/} Ibid., Section 19-3802.

^{15/} Ibid., Section 19-3803.

valuation rose 55.2 percent (\$3.48 to \$5.40 million). During these same periods of time the city tax rate decreased 2.90 percent (1965-1971) and increased 47.2 percent (1971-1977). ^{16/} From the preceding, it is evident that the economic growth of the city has managed to keep ahead of inflation, and taxes, as a percentage of assessed valuation, have been reduced slightly. Also, in the period 1972 to 1978 local bonded indebtedness has decreased 33.5 percent (\$334,000 to \$220,000); a portion of the 1978 indebtedness represents revenue bonds which pay themselves off through user fees and charges.

While these figures and calculations do not take into account inflation or other such general economic factors, and viability of the City of Gordon, in terms of maintaining an adequate tax and population base, does not appear to be a major issue for the continued support of some level of police services. The problem that is surfacing, however, is that the city and county have narrow tax bases, both of which are primarily dependent upon ranch and farm operations; the population and, therefore, consumer product growth, is stable; the city has almost reached the legal mill-levy ceiling; and the state legislature is considering legislation which limit overall governmental budget increases to 5 percent each year.

Individually these factors are, and should be, causes for concern. Collectively, they will eventually exert significant financial pressures upon the existing and future law enforcement budgets of the city and county. In addition, the availability of grant funds to the county for the provision of contractual police services to Hay Springs and Rushville will end in June 1979. Unless the Sheridan County Board will underwrite the costs of maintaining the current level of police services to these cities, it does not appear financially feasible for the two cities to maintain this level of police services through their corporate revenues. The Sheriff estimates that \$23,000 of the grant funds are allocated to Hay Springs and \$47,560 to Rushville. This averages out to \$33.72 per capita for Hay Springs and \$41.82 per capita for Rushville. It is apparent, then, that some consideration must be given to continued police services for these two cities in the very immediate future and definitely no later than the beginning of the cities' budget preparation meetings.

In general, it is readily apparent that the provision of law enforcement services in Sheridan County has reached a point where some additional planning and forethought are necessary to prevent a situation where demands for law enforcement services exceed the financial,

^{16/} Only city tax rates were analyzed since the deletion of the State Property Tax in 1968 and the incorporation of a Hospital District Tax in 1971 would make yearly comparisons difficult and subject to significant errors.

personnel, and equipment resources necessary to meet these demands. Already, a disproportionate share of revenues are being expended on law enforcement in Sheridan County.

Population Characteristics

The combined city-county area population decreased 5.0 percent from 1950 to 1960. From 1960 to 1970, the population declined 19.4 percent and made a slight increase (.75 percent) during the period 1970 to 1976.

Table 1 illustrates the population changes for the city, the county, and their combined populations from 1950 to 1976.

Table 1

CITY/COUNTY POPULATION: 1950-1976^{17/}

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>Percent for (-)</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>Percent for (-)</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>Percent for (-)</u>
City	2,058	2,223	8.0	2,106	(5.3)	2,284	8.5
County	<u>7,462</u>	<u>6,817</u>	<u>(8.6)</u>	<u>5,179</u>	<u>(24.0)</u>	<u>5,056</u>	<u>(2.4)</u>
Total	<u>9,520</u>	<u>9,040</u>	<u>(5.0)</u>	<u>7,885</u>	<u>(19.4)</u>	<u>7,340</u>	<u>0.8</u>

From a brief review of the above table, it is readily apparent that Gordon has maintained a moderate pattern of population growth over the past 26 years (approximately 11 percent), while the county has experienced a significant decline in population (-32.2 percent).

Crime Rates and Trends

The incidence of criminal offenses in Gordon and Sheridan County, as in other communities, is strongly influenced by a number of factors which have been empirically shown to be correlated with high crime rates. These factors include:

^{17/} Nebraska Public Power District, Industrial Development Department, Industrial Facts/Gordon Nebraska. Columbus, Nebraska (1972).
1976 census data from: U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Special Census, Washington, D.C. (1976).

- o economic status of the service population
- o composition of the population with reference particularly to age, sex, and race
- o relative percentage of owner-occupied homes
- o seasonal variations in population, such as tourists, seasonal workers, etc. ^{18/}

While many, if not all, of these factors play a role in determining the crime rates in the Gordon area, several other factors peculiar to Gordon play a major role in determining not only crime rates but also, and with potentially greater financial impact, the demands for police services of a quasi-criminal nature.

While less than 10 percent of the city's population is American Indian, Indians account for approximately 91.7 percent of all arrests made by the Gordon Police Department. Put into perspective, it is noted that statewide, Indians comprise only 8.6 of the arrest population.

The fact that 93.7 percent of all persons arrested for alcohol-related offenses in Gordon are Indians, while Indian compose only 14.3 percent of the number of persons arrested for alcohol-related offenses statewide^{19/}, demonstrates the impact that such offenses, and subsequent arrests, have upon the city's law enforcement resources. The problem is a particularly difficult one for the police department in view of the fact that a substantial number of persons arrested for alcohol-related offenses are chronic offenders for whom rehabilitation offers little hope.

Table 2 illustrates comparative crime and police data for Gordon and other rural Nebraska cities of similar size. While this table is helpful in gaining a comparative perspective of the Gordon Police Department and various crime measures, caution should be exercised with regard to conclusions as to the need for a specific number of sworn officers, crime rates, crimes per sworn officer, or arrests cleared. Since each municipality is unique in its demographic and economic complexion, the various rates and measures will vary widely. In addition, police policies and practices, citizen's demands for services, etc., play a role in determining the specific level of policing necessary. This table provides the reader with a rule-of-thumb by which to compare the Gordon Police Department with other departments of a similar size.

^{18/} Federal Bureau of Investigation, Crime in the United States 1976-Uniform Crime Reports, Washington, D.C. 1976.

^{19/} Alcohol-related offenses as used here include driving under the influence, liquor law violations, drunkenness, intoxication, and disorderly conduct-disturbing the peace.

Table 2

COMPARISON OF CRIME RATES AND POLICE DATA
IN A SAMPLE OF RURAL NEBRASKA CITIES^{a/}

<u>City</u>	<u>1977 Population^{b/}</u>	<u>Sworn Officers</u>	<u>Sworn Officers Per 1,000 Population</u>	<u>Assaults on Police</u>	<u>Index Crimes^{c/} 1977/1976</u>	<u>Crime Rates^{d/} 1977/1976</u>	<u>Index Crimes Per Sworn Officer 1977/1976</u>	<u>Percent 1977 Index Offenses Cleared</u>
Sheridan County Sheriff	5,175	9	1.7	0	17/18	3.3/ 3.7	1.9/ 2	76.5 (13)
Gordon	2,500	8	3.2	4	101/110	40.4/49.5	12.6/18.3	26.7 (27)
Auburn	3,750	7	1.9	3	83/ 62	22.1/18.5	11.9/10.3	40.9 (34)
Broken Bow	4,000	7	1.8	4	116/ 72	29.0/17.0	16.6/ 8.0	39.7 (46)
Creighton	1,530	2	1.3	0	*16/ 23	10.5/15.3	8.0/11.5	18.8 (3)
Elkhorn	1,550	3	1.9	0	42/ 25	27.1/16.4	14.0/ 8.3	2.4 (1)
Genoa	1,200	2	1.7	0	1/ .1	0.8/ 0.8	.50/ 0.8	0 (0)
Hartington	1,612	1	0.6	0	34/ 36	21.1/23.5	34.0/18.0	35.3 (12)
Laurel	1,030	1	1.0	0	7/ 5	6.8/ 4.9	7.0/ 1.7	14.3 (1)
Minden	2,700	4	1.5	0	11/ 17	4.1/ 6.2	2.8/ 4.3	45.5 (5)
Ord	2,662	4]	1.5	2	55/ 56	20.7/21.4	13.8/14.0	14.5 (8)
Red Cloud	1,531]	1.3	1	8/ 10	5.2/ 6.7	4.0/ 3.3	0 (0)
Superior	2,950	5	1.7	0	31/ 36	10.5/12.0	6.2/ 9.0	0 (0)
Weeping Water	1,240	1	0.8	0	6/ 7	4.8/ 5.6	6.0/ 7.0	0 (0)
Mean Average Cities Only	2,173	3.6	1.6	1.07	39.3/37.6	17.9/17.2	10.9/ 9.6	28.4 (110.7)

Table 2 (continued)

a/ Source: Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, Offenses Known to the Police: Union Crime Report--1976 and 1977.

b/ Estimates provided by Federal Bureau of Investigation.

c/ Homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft and auto theft.

d/ Index Crimes per 1,000 population.

* Estimate for agency which did not report for full 12 months.

As illustrated in the table, Gordon has a police-per-1,000-population ratio double that of the mean average for all sample cities (including the Sheridan County Sheriff's Department). However, as was pointed out above, the city has a crime rate which is significantly higher than the mean average (approximately 250 per cent) and almost one and one-half times the next highest rate (29.0/1000).

One basic unit of workload measure is the number of Index Crimes Per Sworn Officer. Gordon is slightly above the mean average but is in the top third, using a median average (number 5 out of 15).

A unit of measurement for work output--again basic--is the percentage of Index Offenses Cleared. From the table it can be seen that Gordon is about equal to the mean average in this respect and is at the very low end of the top third using a median average.

Thus, analyzing the personnel resources, as measured by officers per 1,000 population, the police department has available to address Index Crimes (i.e., prevention, suppression, and investigation) with the Volume of Offenses per Officer, the Gordon Police Department is demonstrating an above average capability in clearing Index Offenses in relationship to sample cities of similar size. When the clearance rates statewide are considered, Gordon's rate is 17 percent higher (26.7 to 22.9 percent).

A similar analysis to that above is included below for the Sheridan County Sheriff's Department. It should be kept in mind that many, if not all, of the caveats mentioned above with respect to comparative judgments also apply to any comparison of Sheriff's departments.

The population figures used in Table 3 are for total county population. This figure is used rather than unincorporated area population since Sheriff's offices provide jail services for the benefit of their entire county as well as process services, i.e.; warrants, subpoenas, eviction notices, etc., and in some cases supply bailiffs and court security. Officers (deputy sheriffs) per thousand population have been calculated using total county population whereas the Index Crime Rates are based upon residents in unincorporated areas only.

As reflected in Table 3, the Sheridan County Sheriff's Department has the highest per capita sworn force among the sample and is two and one-half times the size of the mean average department size. While six of these deputies were added as a result of the contractual services agreements with Hay Springs and Rushville, this per capita analysis is still reliable, since all sheriff's departments' sworn personnel ratios are based upon total county population. The number of reported Index

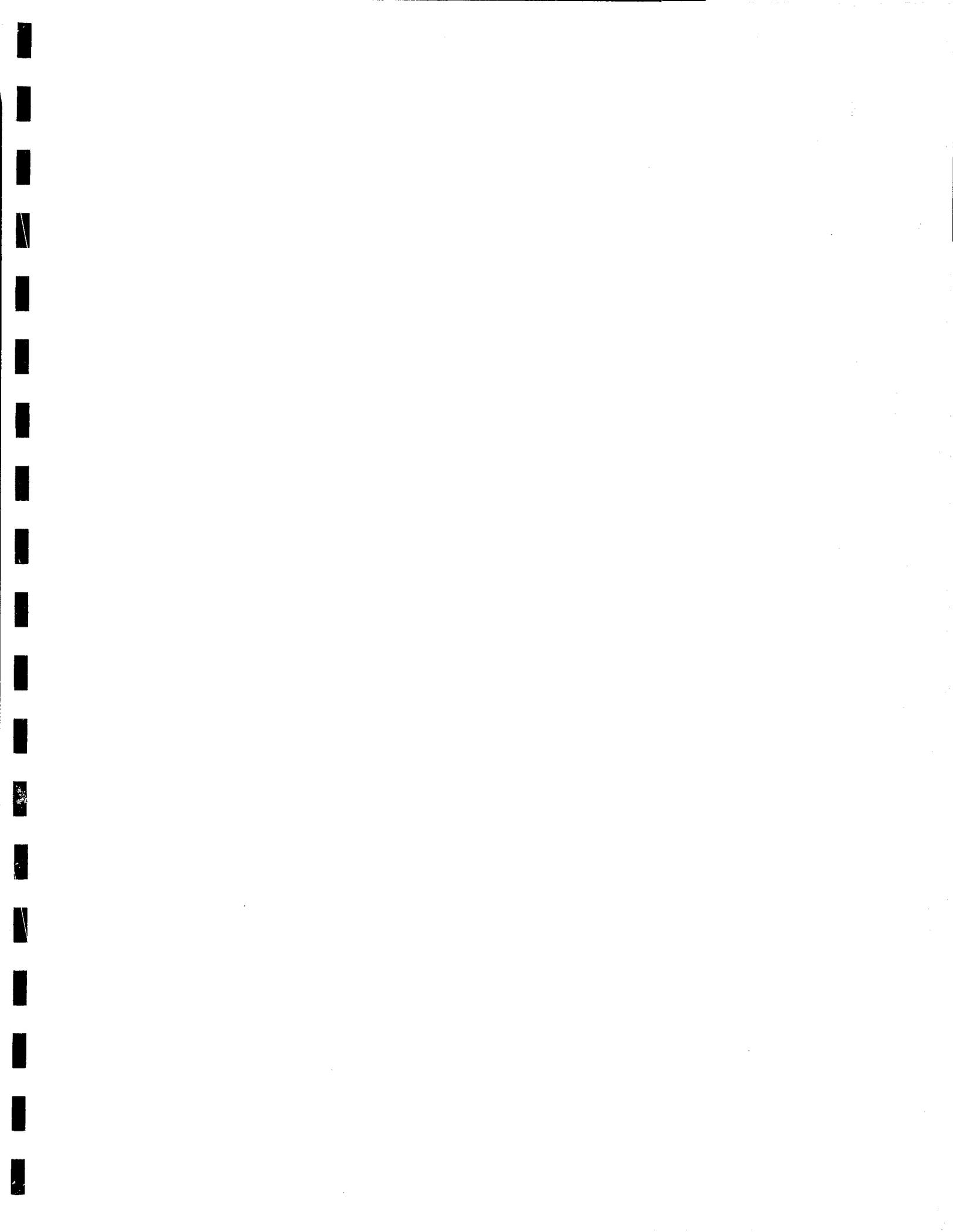


Table 3
COMPARISON OF CRIME RATES AND SHERIFFS DATA
IN A SAMPLE OF RURAL NEBRASKA COUNTIES a/

<u>Sheriff's Department (S.D.)</u>	<u>1977 Population^{b/}</u>	<u>Sworn Officers</u>	<u>Officers Per 1,000 Population</u>	<u>Index Crimes^{c/}</u>	<u>Crime Rate^{d/}</u>	<u>Index Crimes Per Sworn Officer</u>	<u>Percent 1977 Index Offenses Cleared</u>	<u>Total Arrests in County- 1977^{e/} Percent S.O.</u>
Sheridan	7,675	9	1.2	17	3.3	1.9	76.5 (13)	895/ 46.5
Burt	9,000			86	19.3		11.6 (10)	19/ 89.5
Boone	7,879	3	.4	47	8.6	15.7	4.3 (2)	204/ 63.7
Clay	8,289	7	.8	117	21.7	16.7	18.8 (22)	228/ 72.8
Cheney	6,900	6	.9	74	10.7	12.3	13.5 (10)	287/ 59.2
Dixon	7,000	2	.3	94	13.4	47.0	13.8 (13)	76/100
Fillmore	8,240	3	.4	55	6.7	18.3	12.7 (7)	137/ 79.6
Johnson	5,700	2	.4	32	8.8	16.0	15.6 (5)	115/ 63.5
Kearney	6,959	4	.6	54	12.7	13.5	12.9 (7)	183/ 87.9
Kimball	5,322	2	.4	35	21.3	17.5	17.1 (6)	153/ 3.9
Nuckolls	7,164	2	.3	41	9.7	20.5	12.2 (5)	41/100
Stranton	6,857	1	.1	47	8.8	47.0	8.5 (4)	43/ 41.9
Mean Average	7,249	3.4	.5	50.4	6.9	14.8	17.3 (8.7)	198.4/ 58.1

a/ Source: Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, Offenses Known to the Police: Uniform Crime Report--1977.

b/ Estimates provided by Federal Bureau of Investigation (total County population).

c/ Homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft and auto theft.

d/ Index Crimes per 1,000 population.

e/ Does not include traffic offenses except DUI.

Crimes and Crime Rate are the lowest of all the sampled departments. In fact, disparity between the 17 Index Offenses reported by the Sheridan County Sheriff's Department, the 32 offenses reported by the Johnson County Sheriff's Department--which has 26 percent less population--and the 101 Index Offenses reported by Gordon lend themselves to the conclusion that these offenses may be understated.

Applying the same workload and output measures used in the Gordon analysis to the Sheridan County Sheriff's Department produces the following results. The ratio of Index Crimes to Sworn Officers is 1.9. Thus, on a yearly basis each deputy handles an average of 1.9 criminal offense investigations. The mean average of 14.8 investigations for the sample of sheriff's departments in approximately eight and one-half times the workload experienced by Sheridan County. A comparison with the median average (17.1 Crimes/Sworn Officer) shows that Sheridan County is handling less than 11 percent of the median investigative workload experienced by other sheriff's departments included in the sample.

In terms of Index Offenses cleared, the Sheriff's Department has over four times the success of the mean average sheriff's department, and the Clay County Sheriff's Department, which had the second highest clearance rate during 1977, was 22.9 percent.

It should be noted that 21 Index Offense arrests were reported during 1977 by the Sheriff's Department. However, even if the statistical analysis were based upon 21 Index Offenses arrests rather than the 17 reported offenses, the disparate differences still could not be explained.

Analyzing the personnel resources, officers per 1,000 population with the volume of offenses per officer, it can be concluded that the Sheridan County Sheriffs Department should be clearing, in a statistical sense, 100 percent of Index Offenses. While such a conclusion denies the practical realities of criminal investigations and case clearances, it does suggest that the numbering of offenses actually occurring may be underreported.

Existing Law Enforcement Resources and Practices

In addition to describing the existing personnel, equipment, facilities, and other resources available to the law enforcement agencies in the county, a brief overview of current administrative and operations policies and procedures is also included for the purpose of identifying those areas where modifications may be necessary should consolidated law enforcement be implemented.

Gordon Police Department

The Gordon Police Department is staffed by a chief of police, a sergeant/assistant chief, and four patrolmen, all full-time. In addition, the department has eight part-time patrol-persons. It has no full-time juvenile officer or investigator. Civilian personnel include two full-time and one part-time dispatcher/records clerks.

In fiscal year 1979, the department received an appropriation of \$126,297, representing a per capita expenditure of \$55.29. Of this amount, \$96,787 (76.6%) was appropriated for personnel.

The department is located at the rear of the municipal building, which also houses the city administrative offices, public meeting facilities, and the city dog pound. The police department has been allocated approximately 1,012 square feet, which encompasses a reception/records/communications area, squad room, chief's office, one detention cell, property/evidence storage room, and storage space. The detention cell does not meet state standards at the present time; however, there are plans to improve it to meet these standards. While the facility is small, it does meet the basic space requirements of the department, with the exception of a lockerroom for patrol officers.

The department provides 24-hour, 7-day-a-week police services, including (in order of department-stated priority): preventive patrol, non-criminal service calls, initial investigations, traffic collision investigation, and traffic control. Other functions performed include animal control and vacation watch.

The relatively small size of the department precludes the establishment of specialists. Instead, each officer functions as a generalist conducting crime scene search/evidence collection and general investigations. Assistance is available from the Nebraska State Patrol and Sheridan County Sheriff's Department for general manpower and investigative assistance.

The department has two patrol cars--in addition to the chief's personal auto, which is fully equipped--which appear to be in reasonably good condition. Vehicles are replaced every two years on 65,000 miles. Specialized equipment includes: a breathalyzer, two radar units, a field narcotics test kit, and two latent fingerprint kits. In addition, the chief has his own polygraph and ident a kit, which are available for departmental use.

General field support equipment, i.e., heavy weapons, body armor, gas masks, and helmets, appear to be sufficient in numbers to effectively handle most situations. It is suggested, however, that a strait-jacket or similar restraining device be acquired. Due to the high incidence of alcoholism in the area, it would seem prudent to have this equipment readily available should it be needed.

Communications equipment include: one base station (39,900 Mgh), two mobile, and one personal portable radio. In addition, there are three citizens band monitors and a state patrol monitor. Statewide communications are through the primary police frequency (39.900 Mgh), which is a statewide radio system. Several problems were noted by the consultant with respect to the radio system and radio procedure.

Because of the wave propagation characteristics of the frequency used there is a great deal of frequency "skip" which interferes with signal transmission and reception. Also, because this is a statewide system, there are periods of heavy radio traffic. This problem is compounded by the fact that various communications dispatchers and field units do not respond immediately when called. This procedure--or lack thereof--creates repetitious radio calls and further adds to the radio traffic. In addition, all "wants and warrants" and license checks must be made via radio to Scottsbluff, where there is a telecommunications terminal link to NCIC and NLETS.

Administrative Policies and Practices-The department has a very comprehensive and well-documented policies and procedures manual which covers departmental organization, salaries and benefits, rules and regulations, patrol procedures, internal investigations, disciplinary procedures, and the use of deadly force. This could well serve as a model manual to be adopted by all small police departments.

A system of General and Special Orders has been adopted to periodically revise the manual as need arises and to issue short-term on personnel-related directives. This includes a sign-off by each officer attesting that he or she has read this order. Copies of such orders are readily available on a clip-board in the records area.

While the size of the department precludes any full-time planning or crime analysis activity, spot maps and analytical reports on traffic and criminal-related activities are currently being implemented. This is being accomplished through the development of geographic reporting areas and the analysis of crime and service call reports by type, time, and location. This system is supported by field interview (FI) reports which are filed by name and location.

The records system has recently been completely revised and is now based upon a Master Name Indexing system which records and stores the names and other descriptive data of all arrestees, victims, suspects, and complainants.

The department has conducted several "in-house" studies, including record system review, training program analysis, and a salary survey. Planned improvements include: improvement and development of "in-house" training programs, increased participation in in-service training,

improved resource utilization, and community relations programs.

A property inventory system has been established, and an inventory is taken annually.

Intercity/Governmental Cooperation-The police department has mutual aid and cooperative agreements with several law enforcement agencies. Routine backup support for patrol and investigative operations is provided by the Sheridan County Sheriff's Department and the Nebraska State Patrol, Criminal Investigative Division. A tornado recently struck Gordon, and several agencies offered and provided assistance in establishing perimeter and internal security; these included the Sheriff's Department and the Chadron and Alliance Police Departments.

Sheridan County Sheriff's Department ..

The Sheriff's Department is staffed by the Sheriff, a Chief Deputy, and six deputy sheriffs, all full-time (The department has authorization for seven deputies). Six of the deputies are paid from grant funds received under the Safe Streets Act (LEAA) for the purpose of providing contractual law enforcement services to the towns of Rushville and Hay Springs.

Civilian personnel include four full-time and one part-time dispatcher/jailer. Three reserve deputies are available for various shift assignments.

In fiscal year 1979, the Sheriff's Department appropriated \$149,760.^{20/} A per capita expenditure of \$29.62 of this appropriation, approximately \$101,760 (67.9%), was budgeted for personnel.^{21/}

The department is located in a modern building, approximately five years old, which houses the county jail, county court and Sheriff's living quarters. Although of modern design, the operations/administrative area is architecturally deficient in terms of space, layout, and security. Due to these layout and space limitations, there are no provisions for an enclosed administrative area or offices. A total of 1,200 square feet within the building is allocated to the jail, administration, and operations areas. No provision has been made for investigative/interview rooms, training area, locker rooms, or a records section.

^{20/} Does not include \$67,412 appropriated for jail operation and administration.

^{21/} Fringe benefits and other employer contributions are not specified in the Sheriff's budget. Therefore, the amount shown is less than actual.

The department provides 24-hour, seven-day-a-week police services including (in order of department-stated priority): patrol, initial investigations (criminal), traffic accident investigation, investigative services, service calls (non-criminal), and traffic control.

Other functions performed include vacation watch and detention services for municipal prisoners.

As with Gordon, the size of the Sheriff's Department precludes the establishment of specialist positions, and each officer functions as a generalist for crime scene search/evidence collection and general investigations. The four dispatchers and chief deputy are licensed breathalyzer operators.

While the department stated it did not have mutual aid agreements the Nebraska State Patrol and Gordon Police Department have and do provide field back-up and other specialized assistance.

The Sheriff's Department has eight patrol cars and one four-wheel-drive Blazer, all of which appear to be in reasonably good condition. Vehicles are replaced after approximately 80,000 miles. Specialized equipment includes a breathalyzer, a mobile radar unit, and a field narcotic test kit.

General field support equipment such as shotguns, gas masks, and photographic equipment appear to be available in sufficient numbers. The department is aware of its deficiency in the number of automatic and high powered rifles, body armor, and strait-jackets. No batons or other types of similar equipment are available. With proper training and use, the baton is an essential tool to the field officer for both defensive and offensive purposes. Therefore, it is high recommended that the department acquire and train its officers in the purpose and uses of the baton.

Communications equipment includes a base station (39.880, 39.900, 39.980 and 42.46 MgH) for local law communications, Nebraska law channel, fire departments, and Nebraska State Patrol (receive only) respectively. NCIC and NLETS are accessed via radio to Scottsbluff in the same manner previously stated for Gordon.

Administrative Policies and Procedures

The department states that it has a written policy and standards manual, although the consultant did not review it. The manual, according to the department, is not classified by subject matter nor does a General Order system exist for periodic review, cancellation, or modification of policies and standards.

As with the Gordon Police Department, the Sheriff's Department is too small to have a full-time planning unit. However, unlike Gordon, there does not appear to be any uniform effort directed toward the planned management, allocation, or distribution of personnel and other resources. Patrol distribution is based upon the number of calls and the experience of officers; spot maps and/or activity analysis reports are not maintained; there are no procedures for maintaining patrol supervision; and, there is no formal line and staff inspection program.

No system for patrol activity reports, field interviews, or briefing bulletins ("hot sheet") have been developed.

The records system is oriented toward arrestees versus victims, complainants, witnesses or suspects and primarily serves the jail function, i.e., individuals who were arrested and detained in or sentenced to the County Jail. It should be pointed out that the records kept are very comprehensive, filed by name, and easily accessed. In some cases, however, the records date back 20 to 30 years ago and contain the names of individuals known to be deceased. It is recommended that the record system be purged of outdated arrests and deceased arrestees, which would reduce the number of active files and provide more filing space. Those records which are purged should be placed into storage.

Future improvements planned include an enlargement of the jail and office facilities.

Intergovernmental Cooperation-At the present time the Sheriff's Department has a contract patrol agreement with the cities of Rushville and Hay Springs. The contract, financed by a federal grant, requires a payment of \$9,000 per person by each city. Rushville, population 1,137, and Hay Springs, population 682, pay \$10,233 and \$6,138, respectively to the County Treasurer each year.

The contract requires the cities to relinquish all law enforcement equipment, materials, and supplies to the county. The county, through the Sheriff's Department, has sole supervision and control over the law enforcement employees, officers, and personnel used in the implementation of (the) program. . . ." and "all decisions covering the amount of coverage, patrolling routes, times of patro, and other administrative decisions shall be made by the . . . Sheriff." 22/

While this contractual arrangement undoubtedly provides greater law enforcement resources to the cities than they could otherwise

22/ "Agreement for Consolidated Law Enforcement; between Sheridan County and the Cities of Rushville and Hay Springs," February 26, 1976.

afford, an analysis of the contract reflects a lack of performance measures. The contract, written in generalities, does not specify the number of patrol personnel assigned to the cities, the hours of patrol, and whether city ordinances are to be enforced. In addition, no provisions are made for periodic reports to the cities regarding the attainment or maintenance of any performance measures, miles patrolled, man-hours expended, number of calls for service or criminal offenses, arrests, judicial dispositions, significant problems, etc. The present contractual agreement is outdated, since it had a term of one year after the date the county received grant funds to implement the program.^{23/}

Consolidated Resources--An Analysis

In the following discussion of the various resources, policies, and procedures available to and used by the city police and the Sheriff's Departments, their resources and administrative practices will be dealt with in both a comparative and unified sense in order to provide a better perspective of the feasibility of consolidated policing, identify issues and areas which would have to be addressed in any planned program development, and identify those functional areas, not previously addressed, where equipment, procedures, policies, and systems may require revision or modification.

Staff Resources

Combining the existing staffs of the two organizations would create a force of 13 full-time sworn officers, 6 civilian personnel, and 11 part-time/auxiliary sworn personnel. The rate of full-time sworn personnel per 1,000 residents would be approximately 1.7. This is contrasted to the national average rate of 1.6 per 1,000 for cities under 10,000 population in the West North Central region of the U.S. The rate of full-time police employees (including civilians) would be 2.5, which is contrasted with an average of 1.9 police employees per 1,000 in the same geographic area. In the context of county sheriff's departments, the national average is 1.5 sworn officers per 1,000; the average for all police employees is 1.9 per 1,000.^{24/}

^{23/} Grant funds were received about June 10, 1976.

^{24/} U. S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Crime in the United States--1976, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1976. Note that the rates for police department sworn officers and police employees ranged from 0.2 to 5.6 and 1.5 to 2.3 respectively in the West North Central Area. The rates for sheriffs' sworn officers and police employees ranged from 0.1 to 10.8 and 0.7 to 1.7 respectively throughout the United States.

These average rates are not to be considered standards for police/population ratios but rather guidelines upon which to base management decisions regarding the number of personnel required. The allocation and distribution of these personnel should be based upon some "hazard" or "service" related criteria which would permit the most effective use of this resource. Civilian personnel assignments and tasks should be analyzed in conjunction with any implementation planning and positions reclassified or restructured to take these various factors into account.

One basic premise of consolidation that should be kept in mind is the additional flexibility in manpower allocation created by combining personnel resources. In part, this flexibility is created through the elimination of duplicative services and functions when two organizations are performing the same or similar functions.

Through consolidation, and the elimination of one administrator's position, an additional patrol position would be created at no additional cost. Using the existing part-time/auxiliary personnel on a regular basis during the evening hours would create the potential of having three officers on duty 7 day a week, 24 hours a day. Additional use of reserves on a scheduled basis could possibly allow for four officers on weekend evenings, other high activity times, and during special events. Criminal investigation activities would also be enhanced, since patrol areas would be more adequately covered.

Examples of observed overlap and duplication were in patrol and investigations. In the case of patrol, the Gordon Police Department may well be patrolling beats adjoining unincorporated areas which could be merged, in whole or in part, with the adjoining Sheriff's patrol beat. Criminal investigations being conducted by both departments could be conducted with fewer personnel and other resources, if consolidated. Present policies require that all city prisoners must be fingerprinted, photographed, personal property inventoried, and arrest and lock-up forms completed before they are transferred to the County Jail, where an identical process is completed.

In the case of records and communications, the Gordon police and the Sheriff's Department are operating systems that require expenditures in terms of personnel costs, equipment, time, crime reporting, etc.

Administrative functions are duplicative in that two budgets must be prepared annually, two sets of rules and regulations, policies, and procedures are required, all of which must be updated and revised.

In general, a degree of administrative and operational flexibility may be realized, and duplicated costs in time and personnel, equipment, and processes reduced or eliminated through organizational consolidation.

The issue that must be first resolved, however, is the observed differences in administrative and operational practices employed by the two departments.

Communications/Records

At the present time, both the police and sheriff's departments are operating communications and records systems. Both are receiving calls for service and complaints via telephone, dispatching patrol and investigative units, and utilizing "person-oriented" records systems (as distinguished from incident- or location-oriented systems).

The existing radio communications system provides a common frequency for all law enforcement agencies, although the Sheriff's Department had additional communications capabilities. The present radio system, while basic, is adequate for the present and near future. The major problem observed was a people problem rather than an equipment problem.

This problem is not unique to the two departments under study but extends to all police departments the consultant has observed using the radio communications system. It appears that a very casual attitude prevails regarding the use of "air-time" and the prompt answering of directed radio communications, both base station to mobile and base to base. It was observed, on numerous occasions, that the base station had to call a mobile unit repeatedly before a response was given. This situation was more pronounced when local base station to Scottsbluff communications were attempted. Since Scottsbluff serves as the tele-type center for the local police and is their link to NCIC, NLETS, and the state drivers licensing and criminal history files, this radio link is vital to the efficiency and safety of field officers. While this issue is properly beyond the scope of this study, the local departments should take some measures to rectify the problem as it exists within their own organization. Specifically, radio procedures training should be implemented at the local level and supervisory controls established or upgraded to alleviate this situation.

Since the city and Sheriff's Departments currently operate on the same frequency, no significant expenditures or systems design changes would be required as a result of any consolidation.

The records systems of the two departments are significantly different in terms of filing procedures, access, and emphasis. The Gordon Police Department's records system, which has recently undergone extensive analysis and revision, is based upon professionally accepted, and recommended standards for police records systems. This system, as mentioned earlier in this report, identifies and catalogues

offenders, victims, witnesses and arrestees. In addition, Field Interview cards are filed by subject, name and location of interview for ease of access should they be needed in the investigation of an offense.

The Sheriff's Department's record system is oriented toward individuals incarcerated in the County Jail. While this system allows ease of access to prisoner records, it does not provide other pertinent information to the patrol and investigative processes. Investigative reports are initially filed by month of occurrences and later filed by complaint number. Since no master name index card is filled out for each report and filed alphabetically, this system does not provide ease of access to all past calls for service or criminal investigations, does not support any planning or crime analysis efforts, and relies heavily upon the memory of department personnel as to when an offense or call for service occurred in order to retrieve a particular report.

Should a consolidation take place the most feasible alternative would be to integrate--over time--the Sheriff's Department record system into the Gordon Police Department's system.

Implementation of consolidated law enforcement would reduce the present number of dispatcher/clerks required. Personnel surpluses created by a consolidation could be addressed in several ways. First, any sworn personnel currently performing communications/records functions could be transferred to other duties requiring sworn status, and, secondly, surplus civilian personnel could be used for purging old records, creating new filing systems and other tasks and, if need be, staff reductions later made through normal attrition. With the present complement of civilian personnel, a consolidated approach would provide sufficient personnel to have a full-time dispatcher/records clerk 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, a service that is not now practically feasible, since neither department, individually, has five full-time civilian personnel (the minimum number required for full-time operation).

While specific cost savings cannot now be accurately determined, a reasonable estimate, based upon current budgets, indicates that a savings in the range of \$8,500-\$9,000 per year could be realized by consolidating the records and communications functions. By consolidating telephone service, the basic monthly line costs would be reduced as well as some telephone calls that are either duplicative or between the two departments. Radio maintenance costs could be reduced through consolidation, and elimination of duplicative base station equipment. Office supplies and miscellaneous expenditures costs would also be reduced and consolidated purchases made which potentially could lower "per unit cost." The elimination of one civilian position, through the natural attrition process, would save approximately \$6,500 in salaries and fringe benefits.

The consolidation solely of the records and communications functions should not be based upon the preceding analysis, however. Consideration must first be given to the feasibility of closing down the Gordon Police Department office during those times when no departmental personnel were present. This would necessitate the closing of the office frequently during the day and almost exclusively during the evenings hours. Two major issues would be involved if the policy were adopted.

First, it must be determined if the present services provided to Gordon citizens coming to the police facility could be transferred to another city department. This would include obtaining copies of police reports, retrieving stray animals picked up by police, claiming property found by police, general information and assistance, etc. In addition, it is necessary that police reports and other official paperwork be filed, letters and correspondence typed, etc. These activities are currently performed by the radio dispatcher and therefore would be eliminated if the dispatcher position were eliminated. In addition, since most, if not all, of the dispatchers are women, they can also serve as matrons and conduct thorough search of women prisoners. This would prevent a situation where a police officer would be transporting a woman prisoner to Rushville without her being thoroughly searched.

It is recommended that these issues be carefully studied in light of present department policies and practices and the needs of Gordon citizens before final action is taken.

Financial Resources

Consolidating the fiscal year 1979 budgets of the two existing departments would create a single budget of approximately \$276,057^{25/} for a per capita allocation of \$35.96. This consolidated allocation would be higher than the current per capita expense of the Sheriff's Department (\$29.62) and considerably lower than the Gordon per capita expense (\$55.29). It should be pointed out that this consolidated per capita police expenditure does not mean that the county residents would be paying more for police protection or that the city would be paying less. What it does mean, however, is that financial resources, as represented by property tax revenues, revenue sharing, federal grants, etc., can be applied in much more flexible manner, thereby increasing the basic organizational capabilities of and services provided by the combined police agencies. As mentioned earlier, the elimination of duplicative and overlapping functions, in addition to a unified administrative and management structure, could reduce costs as measured by dollars and time and improve efficiency of

^{25/} Does not include \$67,412 budgeted for the County Jail.

operations. With the adoption of new policies and procedures and the maintenance or upgrading of existing systems, e.g., records, budgeting, planning, increased training efforts, and improved supervision of personnel, the concept of a single law enforcement agency in Sheridan County has the potential of increasing police effectiveness in dealing with the variety of problems facing the community and the demand for general law enforcement services.

While some monies can potentially be saved through a consolidated approach, it is incumbent upon the elected and appointed officials to program these funds for improved law enforcement services. Consolidation should not be looked upon merely as a means of saving money but as a means of using existing financial resources in a more efficient manner and using any savings to upgrade existing services and, if possible, to implement new services that are necessary for the provision of the full-range of services associated with professional law enforcement.

With respect to any cost savings realized through consolidation, certain minimal, one-time expenditures would be necessary to implement consolidated law enforcement. To create uniformity in department image and recognition, consideration should be given to standardizing uniform clothing, stars and shields, automobile and equipment markings, and stationery and report forms. Since uniforms would represent a major expenditure of funds, costs would be reduced significantly if the police department's existing uniform was adopted by the consolidated department. It is estimated that a one-time cost of approximately \$1,500 would be required.

Other costs to be considered are salary and benefit increases in those cases where the salary and benefit schedules are not comparable between existing departments.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing data analysis, review of the various characteristics of the Gordon/Sheridan County area, assessments of the city police and Sheriff's departments, and related constitutional and statutory considerations, it is apparent that countywide organizational consolidation is both feasible and practical. The legislative intent embodied in the applicable statutes reviewed and analyzed in this study clearly support the general concept of consolidation of the police and Sheriff's departments through contractual arrangement.

However, due to the number of residents, businessmen, and elected and appointed officials who voiced their concerns over the structure, control, and operations of contractual law enforcement services, it does not appear that such an arrangement would be practically feasible. Specific issues raised included the political aspect of the Sheriff, whose post is an elective one. Many individuals stated that while they are supportive of the present Sheriff, they would remain cautious of the future and who will be elected Sheriff. Others were concerned with the fact that, while some controls are possible through a contractual arrangement, the individual holding the office of Sheriff has, in reality, the final decision regarding the method and nature of services to be provided.

To overcome these concerns and the sensitive nature of organizational consolidation, it is recommended that both the Sheriff's Department and the Gordon Police Department, as they presently exist, be abolished by local legislative act or through referendum, and a new organizational entity, the "Sheridan County Regional Law Enforcement Agency," be created.

This new organization should be governed by a board of representatives composed of city and county elected officials, residents, and the city or county attorney. This board would act in a manner similar to, and perform much of the same functions as the Gordon City Council and Sheridan County Board presently do with respect to general policy formation and review of their respective law enforcement agencies.

The agency should be responsible for providing law enforcement and police protection throughout the county and be authorized to:

- a. Appoint and establish the salary and compensation of a law enforcement director for the county.
- b. Authorize and provide for the appointment of law enforcement officers and other personnel.
- c. Establish a job classification and merit rating system for law enforcement officers and provide for the

administration thereof by county or city personnel.

- d. Establish a schedule of salaries for law enforcement officers and other personnel.
- e. Hear and affirm or revoke orders of the director providing for the suspension or dismissal of law enforcement officers.
- f. Authorize the acquisition and disposition of equipment and supplies necessary for the operation of the agency and department.
- g. Require the keeping of proper law enforcement records and files by the department.
- h. Adopt and certify to the Board of County Commissioners and the city a budget for the operation of the agency and department.
- i. Enter into contracts for and receive monies from any private organization or agency, the Federal Government or the state, or any political or taxing subdivision thereof, on behalf of the city and the county for the use of the agency and department.
- j. Receive vehicles, equipment and supplies from the Sheridan County Sheriff's Department and the Gordon Police Department for the use of the law enforcement department.
- k. Enter into contracts with any political or taxing subdivisions located within the county for providing special police protection within the boundaries of such political or taxing subdivisions.
- l. Enter into contracts with cities located within the county for the enforcement of specified ordinances.
- m. Adopt rules and regulations necessary for the organization and operation of the agency and department.

In addition to the above recommendation it is also recommended that:

1. Should the consolidation recommendation be found legally permissible after additional study by appropriate legal counsel and receive approval by the affected units of government, a formal organization and management study should be conducted prior to consolidation. This study should address the initial planning, organization, implementation, operation and administration, and evaluation of such a consolidation to promote an orderly transition to a consolidated department. This study should include:

- a. the development of an organizational design for more efficient and effective utilization of existing resources;
 - b. the development of performance standards and measures;
 - c. the resolution of issues relating to liability insurance;
 - d. the potential and feasibility for the establishment of a police retirement system;
 - e. a study of city ordinances directed toward identifying those not currently defined as criminal acts under the Nebraska Criminal Code and which would have to be specified for enforcement in a written agreement.
 - f. an analysis of personnel classifications and salary schedules;
 - g. the feasibility of integrating existing records and files and;
 - h. the development of written policies and procedures, rules, regulations, and other supportive documentation.
2. A program for the cross-training of present city and county police personnel should be developed and implemented to familiarize them with the duties, responsibilities, and problems of the other department.
 3. A citizen awareness program should be implemented with the objective of informing the citizenry of the consolidation, what functions the consolidated department will undertake, and how they can obtain police services.
 4. Consideration should be given to the planning and development of a crime analysis/operations planning unit within the regional law enforcement agency (on a part-time basis).
 5. All existing contracts and mutual aid agreements with surrounding police agencies should be renegotiated after consolidation to maintain the availability of these additional resources.
 6. Consideration should be given to the establishment of an investigative case management system (case priorities) in the consolidated department.

7. The consolidated department should be located in the present county sheriff's facility. While serious space deficiencies currently exist, the agencies operations could be expanded into the space presently used as the sheriff's living quarters. In addition, parking space is more readily available at this location, and the opportunity for improved perimeter and internal security exists at this facility.

Appendix A-List of Persons Interviewed

City of Gordon

Mrs. Jane Morgan
Mayor

Mr. Ralph Kilcoin
Councilman

Mr. Marv Butler
Councilman

Mr. Fred Hlava, Jr.
Councilman

Mr. Win Saults
Councilman

Mr. Wolfgang Bauer
City Manager

Mr. Donald Lane
Chief of Police

Mr. John Gaspers
Police Officer
Police Department

Mr. Michael Varn
City Attorney

Reverend Ross Craig
Church of God

Mr. Michael Shaid
Hacienda Motel

Mr. Ward Forester
Chairman, Police Review Board

Mrs. Midge Morgan
Member Police Review Board

Mrs. Vida Ford
Member Police Review Board

Mr. Marv Bussinger
Member Police Review Board

Mrs. Maxine Prescorn
Member Police Review Board

Mrs. Linda Del Gado
Police Records Consultant
Clifton, Arizona Police Department

Mr. Monte Morrison
Police Sergeant
Police Department

Mr. Delbert Case
Police Officer
Police Department

Mr. Freeman Petersen
Citizen

Mr. Jiggs McKinnen
Citizen

Mr. Rex Strong
Strong Insurance Agency

Sheridan County

Mr. Tom Annette
County Commissioner

Mr. Frank Croats
County Commissioner

Mr. Marvin Jacobson
Chairman, County Board

Mr. Tony LaDue
Deputy Sheriff

Mr. Marvie Talbott
County Sheriff

Mr. Larry McKinnen
Chief Deputy Sheriff

Mr. Rudy Kelly
Deputy Sheriff

Others

Mr. Ted Vastine
Chief of Police
Chadron, Nebraska

Mr. Robert Mizel
Chief of Police
Alliance, Nebraska



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