Aurora Police Department

2006 Annual Public Safety Report

Daniel J. Oates, Chief of Police
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Remembering
Agent Michael D. Thomas
1953 – 2006

On September 20, 2006, an honorable man and an outstanding Aurora Police Officer was suddenly and senselessly killed. Although Agent Michael Thomas is gone, he is not forgotten. He is remembered by those whose lives he touched and inspired, especially his brothers and sisters in blue with whom he served for 24 years.

Agent Thomas served the community as a Patrol Officer, a Canine Officer, a Narcotics Officer, a Police Area Representative, or PAR Officer before promoting to the rank of Agent. As a result of his professionalism and exceptional service, he received over a dozen awards, including the Aurora Police Department’s highest award – the Medal of Honor. These awards were conferred by the Department, other law enforcement agencies and many citizens. The awards and commendations he received include:

- The Medal of Honor (1992)
- Commander’s Commendation (1999, 2001)
- Numerous Letters of Appreciation from citizens

Mike Thomas would sometimes say, “I ain’t nobody,” but to those who had the good fortune of knowing him, that statement couldn’t be further from the truth. Mike Thomas was a friend, a devoted father and husband, a son, a brother and a model police officer. A man of principle, he lived life with purpose in his step and conviction in his heart.

Division Chief Ken Murphy provided us with some personal insights into Agent Thomas when he said, “Mike loved being a police officer and truly felt honored and privileged. He was proud to wear the badge and equally proud to be an Aurora police officer. He was loyal to his convictions and applied his high moral and ethical standards in his duty. He truly was a cop’s cop, he owned his beat and was the first to offer a helping hand to anyone who needed it.”

The Aurora Police Department remembers a fellow officer and friend who left us with many warm memories, an impressionable smile and a legacy of exceptional service for us to carry on.
Section 1: Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an accurate view of the City of Aurora’s crime and traffic related issues during the reporting period. The report examines the state of crime relative to cities of similar size, as well as a review of the two year trend (2005 & 2006) in Aurora. The final sections of the report examine specific initiatives completed in 2006 and projected for 2007.

1.1 Population

Over the past 25 years the population of the city has nearly doubled, with a growth rate of approximately 5,700 additional residents per year. This statistic is important when assessing the “crime rate” for the city. Additionally, the land mass of the city has also grown from 147 square miles in 2005 to 159 square miles in 2006, impacting the department’s response times to citizen requests for service.
1.2 Aurora Police Department Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commissioned Officers (614 Authorized)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>532</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 Community Policing Philosophy

The Police Department supports the City of Aurora’s core mission of providing outstanding public safety services through the development of community partnerships, encouraging problem solving and communication as a means of identifying and addressing public safety needs.

The monthly “Crime, Quality of Life and Traffic” (CQT) meeting continues to provide a valuable communication instrument for the entire department. While the primary focus remains District operations, under the direction of Chief Oates, the program now includes representatives from each section of the department, affording greater information sharing. Sections of the department benefit from a greater understanding of the strategic planning and operations of other units, creating a more cohesive agency.

In 2006, CQT provided not only a means of communication, but also increased accountability. The forum provides command officers with the opportunity to present evidence of unit productivity and progress on specified projects. The CQT guarantees alignment of unit goals with those of the Department and City.
Section Two: Uniform Crime Reporting System

Annually, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) publishes the “Crime in the US” report. The report relies on data collected and reported by participating agencies. Additionally, the report adheres to the established Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) standards. The UCR aims to create consistency in reporting for all participating agencies, nationwide.

The Aurora Police Department voluntarily participates in the UCR system. For the purposes of this report, the focus will be on the seven major crimes reported in UCR. For reporting purposes, the seven major crimes are categorized into two groups: Violent Crime (including Murder, Forcible Sex Assault (Rape), Aggravated Assault and Robbery) and Property Crime (including Burglary, Larceny and Motor Vehicle Theft). The Total Major Crime or Index Crime is a composite statistic of the total Violent Crime and Property Crime, providing an overall view of major crime in an area.

The UCR system counts each victim of murder, sex assault and aggravated assault as an individual crime occurrence, whereas only incidents of robbery, burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft are counted. The FBI collects data continuously, but publishes its final report on crime for a given year in the fall of the succeeding year.

2.1 Reporting Methodology

Two reporting methods are utilized in this report: volume and rate. Volume represents the actual number of crime incidents reported in accordance with the UCR. While the volume of crime in a specific area is critical to strategic planning and identifying trends, this statistic does not provide a comparative measure.

The rate of crime interprets the volume in terms of population. A rate provides a method for comparison of data between different agencies. For the purposes of this report, rates will be stated as volume (or UCR incidents) per 1,000 citizens in the population.
Section Three: Crime in Comparative Cities

The City of Aurora compares to 35 similar sized municipalities that participate in the UCR system. The city is grouped with jurisdictions servicing a population between 250,000 and 499,999. Because city growth dictates who is included in the group, the composition of the group can change each year. As a result, our comparisons are restricted to a one year view.

Within this section, the report analyzes rates of crime in accordance with UCR rules.

3.1 35-City Population Comparison

![35 Comparable City Population Chart](chart.png)
3.2 One Year View (2005)

3.2.1 Violent Crime Rate

2005 - 35 City Comparison
Violent Crime Rate

City of Aurora: 6.21 / Average: 10.14

3.2.2 Property Crime Rate

2005 - 35 City Comparison
Property Crime Rates

City of Aurora: 49.7 / Average: 55.84

HIGHLIGHTS

35 CITIES
Average Crime Rates
Violent Crime: 10.14
Property Crime: 55.84
Total Major Crime: 65.97

CITY OF AURORA
Average Crime Rates
Violent Crime: 6.21
Property Crime: 49.70
Total Major Crime: 55.95
3.2.3 Total Major (Index) Crime Rate

In the category of Violent Crime, the City of Aurora ranked 10th lowest of the 35 cities. With a rate of 6.21 UCR incidents per 1,000 in population, Aurora was well below the 35 city average rate of 10.14.

In the category of Property Crime, the City of Aurora ranked 12th lowest of the 35 cities. With a rate of 49.70 UCR incidents per 1,000 in population, Aurora was below the 35 city average rate of 55.84.

The overall view of crime in Aurora places the city in the 10th lowest position of the 35 cities. With a rate of 55.95 UCR incidents for total major crime per 1,000 in population, Aurora was below the 35 city average rate of 65.97.

3.3 Comparative Summary

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In the category of Property Crime, the City of Aurora ranked 12th lowest of the 35 cities. With a rate of 49.70 UCR incidents per 1,000 in population, Aurora was below the 35 city average rate of 55.84.

The overall view of crime in Aurora places the city in the 10th lowest position of the 35 cities. With a rate of 55.95 UCR incidents for total major crime per 1,000 in population, Aurora was below the 35 city average rate of 65.97.
Section Four: City of Aurora Summary 2005 – 2006

This section of the report compares the compiled crime data reported to the FBI for 2005 to the finalized data for 2006 submitted to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The intent is to provide an overview of the crime reduction efforts of the Police Department during the last calendar year. In addition to the seven major crimes, statistical reporting of traffic enforcement is included.

4.1 Reporting Methodology

This section of the report focuses on the actual volume of UCR crime incidents that occurred in Aurora during 2005 as compared to 2006, rather than rates per population.

4.2 Calls for Service

In 2006, the Public Safety Communications Department (PSCD) received 587,471 telephone calls from citizens requesting police assistance. From those calls, the PSCD dispatched calls for service to police officers 150,393 times (26% of citizen calls). The remaining calls were determined to be non-police related.

In addition, officers implemented self-initiated action on 150,560 occasions to provide service to citizens. In total, the Department handled 300,953 service calls in 2006, an increase of 4.25% in the number of calls from 2005.

These figures only represent those incidents where street officers were either dispatched to a call or the officers notified the PSCD of observed activity and does not include incidents reported in other manners, such as desk reports.
4.3 Assessment of Crime in Aurora

In this section of the report the volume, or actual UCR crime incidents for 2005 and 2006, are compared. Additionally, this section of the report will review the Police Department’s traffic enforcement efforts.

4.3.1 Violent Crime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violent Crime</th>
<th>2006 CBI</th>
<th>2005 UCR</th>
<th>% Chg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>(39.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Assault (Rape)</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>(3.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>(6.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agg Assault</td>
<td>1,022</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Crime Totals</td>
<td>1,862</td>
<td>1,851</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2006, the Aurora Police Department made significant progress in reducing crime in 3 of the 4 Violent Crime areas, showing only an increase of .6% overall (representing an increase of 11 total incidents for the year). The 7.6% increase in assault represents a total increase of 72 victims related to 60 incidents (some incidents reported multiple victims). Of the 1,022 incidents of assault, 243 incidents involved a weapon, where no injuries were sustained.
During 2006, the incidents of aggravated assault attributed to non-fatal shootings decreased **25.53%**, representing a decrease of 12 incidents from the previous year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Fatal Shootings</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>% Chg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shooting Incidents</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>(25.53%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting Victims</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>(30.19%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3.2 Property Crime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Crime</th>
<th>2006 CBI</th>
<th>2005 UCR</th>
<th>% Chg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>2,492</td>
<td>2,495</td>
<td>(0.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny</td>
<td>8,448</td>
<td>9,655</td>
<td>(12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle Thefts</td>
<td>2,070</td>
<td>2,775</td>
<td>(25.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime Totals</td>
<td>13,010</td>
<td>14,925</td>
<td>(12.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3.3 Total Major Crime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Major Crime</th>
<th>2006 CBI</th>
<th>2005 UCR</th>
<th>% Chg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Index Crime Total</td>
<td>14,872</td>
<td>16,776</td>
<td>(11.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**PERF NOTES**

Police Executive Research Forum

**Violent Crime Study:**

**End of a Trend**

2005 TO 2006

- Murder: Up 2.9%
- Robbery: Up 6.5%
- Assaults: Down 2.2%

**ACROSS THE NATION**

2005 MARKED THE 1ST INCREASE IN VIOLENT CRIME IN 13 YEARS

(Based on statistical report compiled by PERF on data collected from 56 agencies)
4.4 Assessment of Traffic Enforcement Efforts

The police department continued a focused emphasis on traffic enforcement in an effort to increase safety on Aurora’s roadways. The department’s ten (10) Selected Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) officers concentrated on speed enforcement efforts in high violation areas. The department also took advantage of federal funding opportunities to conduct six DUI checkpoints, as well as participate in a seat belt enforcement campaign. During the course of 2006, traffic officers along with other members of the department participated in five VIP escorts. Three were for President Bush, one for Vice President Cheney, and one for First Lady Laura Bush.

4.4.1 Top 5 Accident Locations

The Department continues to focus efforts on reducing the number of injury causing accidents on Aurora’s roadways. Primary attention is given to those intersections with the highest volume of accidents.
4.4.2 Traffic Accidents

In 2006, fatalities associated with traffic accidents were below the five-year city average of 21. Injury accidents were significantly down 32.6% with an overall reduction in all accident categories of 2.4%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accident Category</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>%Chg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non Injury</td>
<td>9,017</td>
<td>8,603</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury (non-fatal)</td>
<td>1,372</td>
<td>2,036</td>
<td>(32.6)%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatal</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>(25.9)%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10,409</td>
<td>10,666</td>
<td>(2.4)%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.3 On-Line Non-injury Accident Reporting

Citizen use of on-line (kiosk) reporting for non-injury accidents increased 6.9% in 2006.

4.4.4 Traffic Summons Productivity

Traffic summons productivity showed a decline in both moving and parking violation categories. The issuance of moving traffic citations dropped 3.8%, a decrease of 1,686 summonses. Parking citations showed a similar decline of 5.9% or a decrease of 465 summonses.
Section Five: Department Significant Accomplishments

Fugitive Apprehension and Surveillance Team (FAST)

The FAST team was formed in April 2006. The team’s mission is “to coordinate law enforce-
ment and community resources to apprehend wanted parties, with an emphasis on violent of-
fenders.” This mission supports a larger goal of making Aurora safer for its citizens, and pursu-
ing a reduction in crime.” In the team’s first eight months of operation, members have arrested
275 wanted parties – 240 of those were for felonies.

District 3 Fully Operational

In March 2006, the Police Department made the operational and resource commitment to open
District 3 as a fully operational 24-hour facility, with the full staffing of the graveyard shift. The
police department now operates three fully staffed District facilities with each providing patrol,
investigative, and police specialty services to Aurora citizens.

Homicide/Shooting Investigations Consolidation

With the decentralization of detectives in 2002, some efficiency was lost in the investigation of
aggravated assaults involving firearms. A more efficient use of resources involved the combina-
tion of investigative responsibilities for murder and aggravated assault involving firearms within
the same unit – the Major Crime Unit. Having completed the transition, more investigative re-
sources are now deployed on aggravated assaults involving a firearm, which will almost certainly
bring more of those investigations to a successful conclusion.

24-Hour Duty Lieutenant

The Department embraced the concept of a full-time, 24-hour “Duty Lieutenant” in March
2006. This senior officer’s purpose is to ensure command officer continuity and availability on a
24-hour, seven-day-a-week basis. To ensure coverage, lieutenants who work in special (non-
patrol) assignments are now required to supplement coverage for the Duty Lieutenant. Addition-
ally, this change emphasizes the primacy of the patrol function within the organization.
Consolidation of Sex Crimes Investigative Function

In an attempt to improve the level of investigative collaboration and communication involving specific sex crimes, the Sex Crimes Unit was formed on March 17th, 2006, operating out of a centralized location at District 2. The Unit consists of six detectives who investigate sex assaults involving victims 15 years of age or older, and two additional detectives who are responsible for managing the mandated Sex Offender Registration Program.

Monthly Robbery and Weekly Crime Analysis Meetings

In an effort to improve crime-related communications between elements of the police department, weekly crime statistics and bi-weekly robbery meetings were initiated. The Chief of Police chairs these meetings. Command officers and crime analysts share detailed crime information in an effort to identify patterns, suspects, etc.; leading to strategies that solve cases and reduce crime.

Reduction in Fleet Costs

In response to inquiries from Council about the size and configuration of the department fleet resources, the department initiated a detailed review of its fleet needs and resources to determine if options existed to reduce fleet costs. As a result of the review, the department concluded that nine fully-equipped patrol vehicles could be removed from the 2007 budget. This action saved capital and operating costs totaling $348,000 in 2007 and an additional $203,000 through 2011, for a total savings of $551,000.

Commander Rank

The commissioned rank of Commander was implemented within the department. This new rank falls between that of Captain and Division Chief. The Chief of Police appoints a candidate to this position from those commissioned personnel holding the permanent rank of lieutenant or captain. Commanders serve at the pleasure of the Chief. The use of this rank will afford the Chief and city management more opportunity for more policy level accountability within the organization.
Incident Review Board (IRB)

The Incident Review Board (IRB) was created this year. The purpose of the IRB is to conduct timely inquiries into incidents where serious bodily injury or death results from officer involved use-of-force incidents, including all firearms discharges by active members of the department where the weapon was discharged with the intent to cause serious bodily injury or death in order to incapacitate the threat, any police in-custody death, and such incidents as directed by the Chief of Police. The IRB examines all related support documentation surrounding the aforementioned incidents to determine if the incident in question was consistent with established Departmental policy and training. The review by the IRB (composed of both citizens and police personnel) is intended to address community interests regarding the actions and consequences of involved officers in use of force situations, and to help maintain community confidence in the Department.

Tactical Review Board (TRB)

A Tactical Review Board (TRB) was established to provide an internal administrative examination of those incidents and tactical situations where there is a possible deviation from Department training, policy and procedure. The TRB will determine compliance with accepted practices; the need for modification or revision to policy, procedure and training; proper management of the situation by supervision and command; and commendatory actions.

Accreditation

In March 2006, the police department was awarded re-accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). To achieve accredited status, the department had to undergo a grueling four-day inspection to document compliance with over 400 mandatory professional standards involving every aspect of police operations and administration. This was the culmination of three years of on-going work to increase professionalism within the department. Only 3% of law enforcement agencies in the nation have achieved accredited status.
Scheduling System Technology Innovation

The Department is near implementation of the TeleStaff scheduling system. This investment is a significant example of the Department’s efforts to use available technology to enhance productivity and efficiency throughout the Department. TeleStaff will be used by all employees to request schedule events such as time off and overtime. It will help supervisors know their employee’s schedules, approve or disapprove time off with more complete information about the bigger picture, manage duty shifts, plan special events, schedule training, post court appearances, and administer secondary employment.

Organizational Review

An organizational review revealed opportunities for immediately improving police-community relations through alliances with varied community-ministerial groups. Additionally, with a focus on Department liability, more restrictive policies were adopted in the areas of police pursuits and the use of force, specifically in the deployment of less lethal devices such as the TASER. The International Association of Chief’s of Police (IACP) and the Police executive Research Forum (PERF) provided invaluable input in the form of best practices and model policy. The new TASER policy was presented to the KCRT prior to implementation.
Section Six: Future Efforts

6.1 Gang Initiative

The consolidation of the Gang Intervention Unit (GIU) and the Intel Unit represents an effort to more efficiently track gang activity and provide directed enforcement, thereby creating a safer community. (Implementation: January 2007)

6.2 Organizational Study

An outside consultant will be invited to evaluate and suggest ideas to improve efficiency effectiveness within the police department. (Implementation Goal: Spring 2007)

6.3 In-car video

The Police Department has initiated a project to place digital audio and video equipment in selected police vehicles, enhancing the traffic enforcement practices of the department, potentially reducing the number of traffic tickets contested in the municipal courts, and creating an audio-visual record of police-citizen encounters available for review when complaints are filed against officers. (Implementation Goal: Summer 2007)

6.4 E-Ticketing

Electronic ticketing represents another step towards that goal of becoming a “paperless” agency, while improving efficiencies. E-ticketing will enable officers to issue a summons on the street and transmit the ticket data from directly to the Records Management System and eventually, directly to the courts. (Implementation Goal: Fall 2007)

6.5 Interoperability

The Police Department is seeking partnerships with law enforcement agencies in an effort to create protocols for the sharing of information. Efforts are underway to create interoperability solutions for both voice communications and data sharing between all agencies within the metropolitan area. (Implementation Goal: 2008)
Section Seven: Conclusion

7.1 General Crime Trend Summary

Overall, the city showed decreases from 2005 to 2006 in the Major Crime Totals. When compared to the other 35 comparable cities, Aurora’s statistics continue to remain below the averages established for those cities.

7.2 Strategic Plan

In 2006, senior Department command staff members established a three year plan aimed at improving the quality of services provided by the Police Department and at reducing crime in the City. Five primary goals were established:

Goal 1: Leadership: Expand programs and opportunities that develop skills and build leaders.

Goal 2: Accountability: Promote, build and consistently demonstrate a culture of accountability at the individual, organizational and community levels.

Goal 3: Diversity: Achieve diversity in all ranks that reflects the community we serve.

Goal 4: Efficiency: Operate efficiently and effectively with every resource entrusted to our stewardship.

Goal 5: Crime Reduction: Improve community participation in our efforts to reduce crime and traffic hazards.

A senior command staff members chairs a committee responsible for the implementation of each goal. Quarterly planning days provide a reporting mechanism to ensure the command staff and the larger organization remain on track to achieve goal fulfillment. Significant progress has been realized in this, the first year of the Strategic Plan.
The Aurora Police Department also recognized 11 officers with the presentation of the Meritorious Service Ribbon.