

Human Resource Allocation in Florida Law Enforcement Agencies

J.D. Peacock II

Abstract

The last twenty years have seen the development of highly innovative programs in law enforcement operations. We have progressed from highly centralized traditional methods to the current model of specialization and community oriented methods of policing. This study will research and discuss the current state of specialized initiatives as well as the priorities placed on these initiatives by law enforcement managers. Among the items to be discussed are the current and near-term impacts of Florida's 2007 tax reform efforts as well as future budgetary concerns for Florida law enforcement agencies concerning innovations in human resource allocation. The current tax reform fervor is merely the latest in a trend of tax payer pressure on all levels of government to reduce waste and increase the quality of services while maintaining and/or lowering taxes. Agency leaders must find a balance between new and innovative programs, which usually require new or expanded funding sources, and the limited budgetary constraints that are the current reality in Florida. The current state of information technology has provided a wealth of information with which agencies can quickly and efficiently analyze the effectiveness of innovative approaches.

Introduction

Law enforcement has seen a period of vast innovation over the last few decades. These innovations had incredible affects on policing. We have moved from the traditional policing models which evolved with the inventions of automobiles to 911 call-for-services based policing to community and problem oriented policing. These innovations have arguably made the job of policing a more community oriented public service. In the past decade we have progressed through community based policing to New York cities Comp Stat computer analysis based approach.

Community oriented policing focuses on police/community relations. The era of community policing started in the mid 1980s and matured throughout the 1990s to become the basis for the questioning and rethought of police practices and procedures. (Oliver, 2001). The underlying community based policing concepts are nothing new. The central theme being the connection between the police officer and the community he serves. The current model of community policing is the reestablishment of that connection with the community. Most agencies implemented some type of community policing effort. Most agencies started new "Community Policing" units within the agency and added new officers as apposed to taking officers from the traditional patrol ranks to staff the new units. During the 1990s agencies used funding sources such as the federal COPS grants to provide financing for the additional man power. While the agencies saw the staffing increase with the addition of the new units, administrators felt

that the benefit to the citizens would be realized by the combination of community based policing and the traditional response patrol officers.

Another innovation in policing is the rapid evolution of computerization. Computers and statistical analysis has provided a wealth of information for administrators to utilize when making human resource assignments. Statistical analysis has been used in large complex agencies, such as the compstat system used by the New York Police Department, to the small computer aided dispatch systems designed to be used by even the smallest departments. Computer models can help departments determine the most effective deployment of personnel with respect to call-for-service workloads. (Geller, 1991)

After the terror attacks in September 2001, funding opportunities to start new programs shifted to antiterrorism. Innovations in resource allocation shifted to programs which supported homeland security efforts. There have been a few recent political "hot button" issues which have generated new emphasis in law enforcement. Issues such as school shootings generated increased funding for school resource programs and active shooter training. In Florida we have seen the creation of dedicated sexual offender monitoring units due to highly publicized child sexual molestation and abduction cases.

These units have developed out of the shifting priorities of communities rather than innovations in police organization and resource allocation. With the near future implementation of tax reform in Florida, law enforcement managers will have to come up with new and innovative methods for agencies to get the most out of the limited human resources available. With human resources being the most expensive aspect of implementation of any new program, managers must focus on that aspect when considering fiscal impact. Technology and advanced computerization can make human resources more capable but innovation is what provides better services with existing resources.

Methods

The methodology used in the preparation of this project included a review of available literature as it relates to human resources in the law enforcement field. Specifically, the information was used to gain a more in-depth understanding of the past trends and priorities in this field. There have been numerous books and studies on the evolution of the community policing units as well as "specialized enforcement units".

A survey was prepared which was used to obtain empirical data from local law enforcement agencies. Local Florida law enforcement agencies were chosen for this study. Surveys were sent to the human resource managers at all of Florida's sixty-six sheriff's offices. Surveys were also sent to sixty-six randomly selected police departments in Florida. Cities were selected from all areas in Florida and cities of varying size. The surveys were communicated to the agencies via e-mail and this method is believed to be in step with the current technology abilities of governmental agencies. The survey is structured in a simple six question format. The questions were intended to obtain selected statistical data on human resource allocations within the agency.

The original survey was sent in a limited fashion to the members of the author's leadership class. This was done in an attempt to test the survey design. There were nine agencies in this group. From this test one problem was identified which was that survey question number one, What is the total number of sworn officers in your agency?, failed to take into consideration that the sheriff's offices had both law enforcement and correctional sworn officers. Because one of the purposes of the survey was to identify the priorities of law enforcement agencies and the allocation of law enforcement resources this question was found to be misleading and responding agencies were confused if they needed to report the correction officers in their answers. This problem was corrected by changing the survey to include the specific definition of the sworn portion to the question to be law enforcement. After this initial trial survey the corrected survey was sent to the remainder of the sixty six sheriff's offices and sixty six semi-randomly selected police departments in the state of Florida. All but a few were sent via e-mail to either the agency head or the human resource department head, if that information was available. There were approximately twenty agencies at which an active e-mail address could not be identified or the identified e-mail address was not valid. The survey was sent via US mail to these agencies. The addresses were located in an exhaustive search. Methods of this search were the use of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's agency 2006 Criminal Justice Agency profile report, The Florida Sheriff's Association web site and the various agency web sites. The survey gave the responding agencies three options to respond to the survey. The first, and most used, was to complete the survey and e-mail it back. The second was to return the survey by fax and the third being to return the survey by mail. The cities selected for inclusion into the survey were selected in an attempt to obtain information from varying size agencies as well as agencies spread throughout the state.

The empirical data obtained by the survey was used to understand the current state of the human resources of the surveyed agencies. The survey also provided a glimpse into the priorities of agency administrators by indicating the first positions cut or left unfilled due to current budgetary constraints.

Survey Results

A total of forty five agencies responded to the survey. The design of the survey did provide a way to identify the respondents; however this aspect was not intended. The response rate for the survey was calculated to be 34.09% with no breakdown on the category in which the respondents belonged, i.e. sheriff's officer or police department.

Appendix A is a summary of the response to the survey. Please note that the non-sworn employee information includes non-sworn support for correctional functions at some sheriff's offices.

Appendix B includes five charts derived from survey responses and is described as follows:

- Chart 1 is a breakdown of data from responding agencies relating to percentage of non-sworn vs. sworn human resources.

- Chart 2 is a further breakdown of the specific allocation of responding agencies sworn resources.
- Chart 3 demonstrates the percentage of effected agencies as related to the current (2007) tax reform initiatives in Florida.
- Chart 4 is a percentage breakdown of lost resources in sworn personnel.
- Chart 5 is a percentage comparison of lost positions vs. sworn allocation of assets.

Appendix C is a copy of the survey used for this project.

Discussion

The research for this project provided an indication of the priorities in law enforcement agencies as it relates to human resources. From the research it was found that the trend in recent years is for agencies to do a better job of utilizing the resources they are given by the various governing bodies around the state. Doing more with less is a theme that all public service agencies are reacting to.

In Florida agencies are currently reacting to the impacts of lost tourism from apprehension about terrorism, the fall out of a few years of active hurricane seasons, and the less than nominal economic conditions from the housing markets. These factors and others have created funding cutbacks at both the state and local levels. It is in the last few years that the influences of these economic conditions have put a greater degree of pressure on innovative law enforcement programs.

Innovation in government most certainly requires financial resources for any positive level of evaluation and implementation of the programs. Law enforcement programs are more costly because almost all innovative crime prevention and intervention programs require the addition of human resources. Human resources are the most costly aspect of any governmental operation or program. So when you combine the need for innovation with the current state of limited financial resources innovation loses out. Just being able to retain the current programs is a challenge.

The most widely implemented innovative program in the last twenty years is community policing. The concepts of these programs involve a change from a traditional random patrol concept to community policing as an outreach by the police to the community. The purpose of this outreach is to promote a partnership with the community to enhance public safety, reduce the fear of crime, and to improve the quality of life. (Stevens, 2000) Agencies retained the random patrol function but implemented community policing as an additional or augmentation to the overall service to the community. By combining the concepts agencies were able to capitalize on the abilities of random patrol for quick response and visibility with the community policing concepts of indentifying community problems before they generate criminal behavior. In short the traditional policing model reacts to crime while community policing is designed to prevent crime.

The traditional model of random patrol was seen by administrators as the best use of limited resources. This model would be seen as the most cost effective and

preferential if financial aspects were the only concern. When compared from a pure financial view, the community policing model would be seen as much more resource intensive. What is defined as effective law enforcement is much harder to relate to costs with the community policing model. Relative ease in relating what your agency gets for a set budget amount is the key to doing more with less. The problem is quality. It would be obvious to anybody that having an officer make personal relationships with the community would be better to that of the officer only driving through the community occasionally. From a fiscal management standpoint community policing officers spend a great deal of their time doing non police functions to include working on environmental factors in the community which would provide greater criminal opportunities. The community police officer acts as a facilitator between several governmental functions to provide services to that community. The quality of the law enforcement service is better however, the cost is much higher.

The trend of agencies to start the community policing units was caused by the emphasis of agencies to judge what they do by a quality standard rather than a fiscal standard. Public calls for less government and more cost effective programs in the past decade have created a financial crunch on law enforcement agencies. This has caused managers to move back to a more fiscal standard thus inherently lowering the quality of services. A strong Florida economy during the past five years has allowed agencies to be able to keep the quality of community policing programs while providing additional traditional human assets.

We now find ourselves in a situation that the economy will not support the various community (quality) based programs while maintaining the same level of traditional forces. Many agencies have already started to combine some of the qualities of community with the traditional policing methods. Several responses to the survey indicated that agencies did not have designated community policing units because the patrol sections were the community police officers.

The survey provides an indication of the current resource allocation within the responding agencies. Chart 2 indicates that approximately 42% of the responding agencies' sworn assets are assigned to patrol functions. The patrol function in most agencies is the traditional response random patrol type method. Responding agencies reported community policing assets at about 4% with other innovative programs having less than 1% of the agencies assets. These innovative programs include problem oriented and or high intensity units, sex offender monitoring units.

The 2007-2008 fiscal year in Florida has given rise to many challenges for local and state law enforcement agencies. This research does not delve into the causes of the budgetary problems but does attempt to get a glimpse into the human recourse implications of a downsizing of funding for innovative programs. Of the forty-five agencies responding to the survey 12, or 27%, were affected by the current year's tax reforms at the local level. Close to 60% of those agencies reported that sworn positions would be affected. Some agencies reported that their agencies were not impacted this year however managers are reluctant to fill current openings due to the possibility of cut backs in the near future. 75% of responding agencies reported that non-sworn support positions would be cut.

When compared to actual staffing numbers (Patrol 42%) the greater impact of the tax reforms was in the patrol unit with responding agencies reporting the lost patrol

positions accounted for 50% of all lost sworn positions. The comparison indicated that specialized unit (12%) cut made up 10% of all lost sworn positions. This would indicate that when cuts have to be made that the traditional patrol section takes a bigger hit than established specialized programs.

The survey appears to demonstrate that agency executives have chosen to cut more traditional police recourses first when cuts had to be made. Seventy-five percent of responding agencies reported that they were not affected by the first round of tax reform. Even with this these agencies still must heed the call of the populace to manage their fiscal responsibilities in the best way they can. The answer to this trend would appear to best be served with a way to better measure the effectiveness of innovative programs.

Conclusion

Various agencies around the country are implementing computer and statistical based systems to measure what they do.(Mark, 1981) Crime reporting statistics have long been used by agencies to determine their communities' criminal activity but the use of computers to actively manage what the officers do on a daily basis is a relatively new idea. In 2007 almost all agencies have some type of computer based activity tracking system in place. The private sector has developed methods to use measurement of their core processes to enhance quality of their products and services. (Richard, 2006) These quality initiatives have been the trend in private business for many years. The public sector needs to take these ideas and apply the quality thinking to what we do. In the law enforcement field the desire of executives to provide the best possible service to the community is restricted by budgetary limitations. Computer based activity analysis would benefit both the traditional policing methods as well as the community based models by focusing better on problems in order to use the limited recourses available. The future funding resources will limit innovations which require the addition of human assets. The trend for innovation will be focusing the human resources we have for better quality and quantity of service.

Lieutenant J.D. Peacock has been with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office since 1989. He has served in many varied positions to include Patrol, Marine Unit, County Drug Task Force, Court Security Chief, Traffic Supervisor and Field Training Officer. J.D. currently is a Patrol Shift Commander. J.D. has an AS degree in Criminal Justice Technology from Okaloosa Walton College and is pursuing his bachelor's degree in Public Service Management from Okaloosa Walton College.

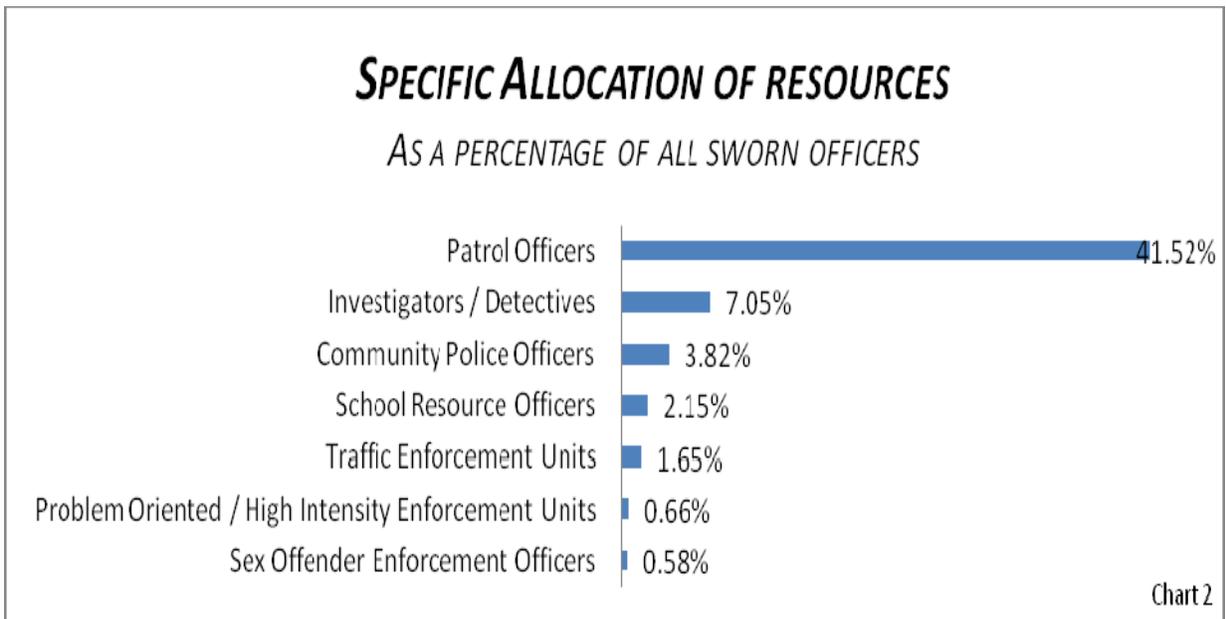
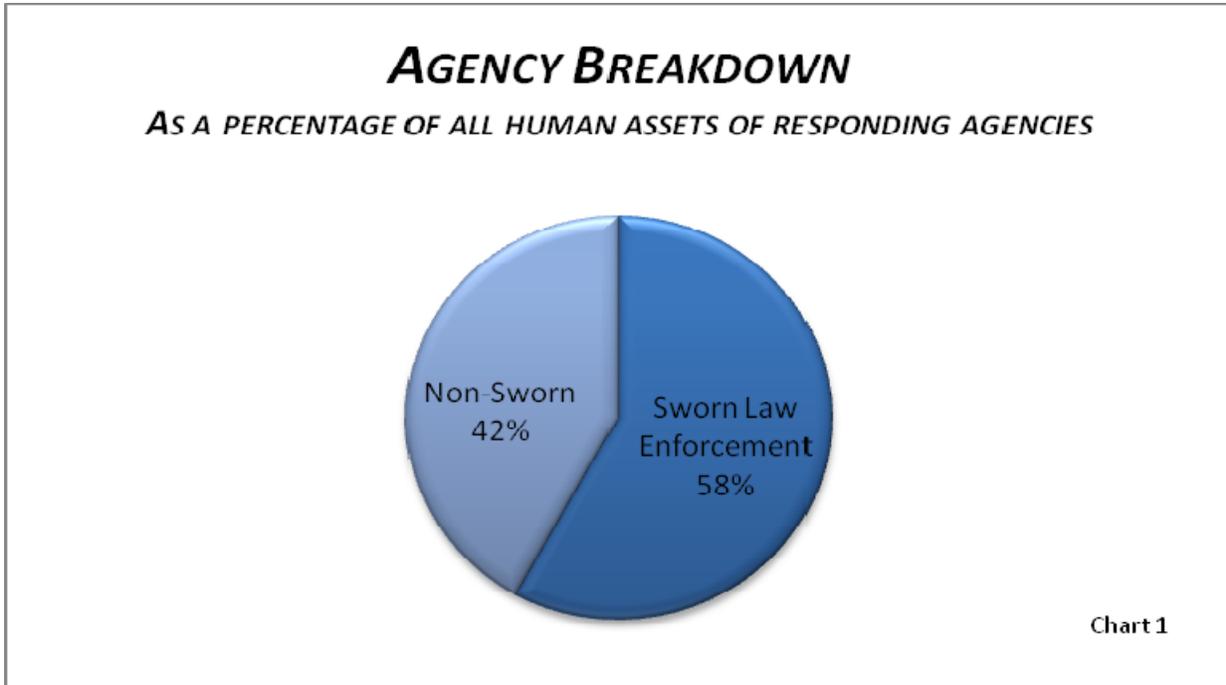
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Appendix - A

Survey Questions			Totals	Overall Averages	
			45	Return Rate:	34.09%
Question 1	Total Employees	a. Sworn (Law Enforcement)	17614.5	% of all:	58.38%
		b. Non-Sworn	12558.6	% of all:	41.62%
Question 2	Approximate number of patrol officers		7313	% of Sworn:	41.52%
Question 3	Approximate number of specialized officers	a. Community Police	673	% of Sworn:	3.82%
		b. School Recourse Officers	378	% of Sworn:	2.15%
		c. Traffic/DUI enforcement	290	% of Sworn:	1.65%
		d. Sex Offender enforcement	103	% of Sworn:	0.58%
		e. Problem Oriented/High Intensity	117	% of Sworn:	0.66%
		f. Other uniformed	431	% of Sworn:	2.45%
Question 4	Non-uniformed Investigative/Detective		1241	% of Sworn:	7.05%
Question 5	Traditional sworn by non-sworn		326	% of all:	1.08%
Question 6	Number of agencies impacted by Tax Reform		12	% of Respondents:	26.67%
	a. Agencies impacted by tax reforms on sworn resources		7	% of Impacted:	58.33%
	Specific cuts:				
	i. Patrol		36	% of Impacted:	50.35%
	ii. Specialized		7	% of Impacted:	9.79%
	iii. Inv./Detective		6	% of Impacted:	8.39%
	iv. Command		5	% of Impacted:	6.99%
	b. agencies Impacted on non-sworn resources		9	% of Impacted:	75.00%
	Lost positions		17.5	% of Impacted:	24.48%

Appendix - B



TAX REFORM IMPACT

12 OF THE 45 RESPONDING AGENCIES REPORTED SOME INFLUENCE FROM FLORIDA'S 2007 TAX REFORMS

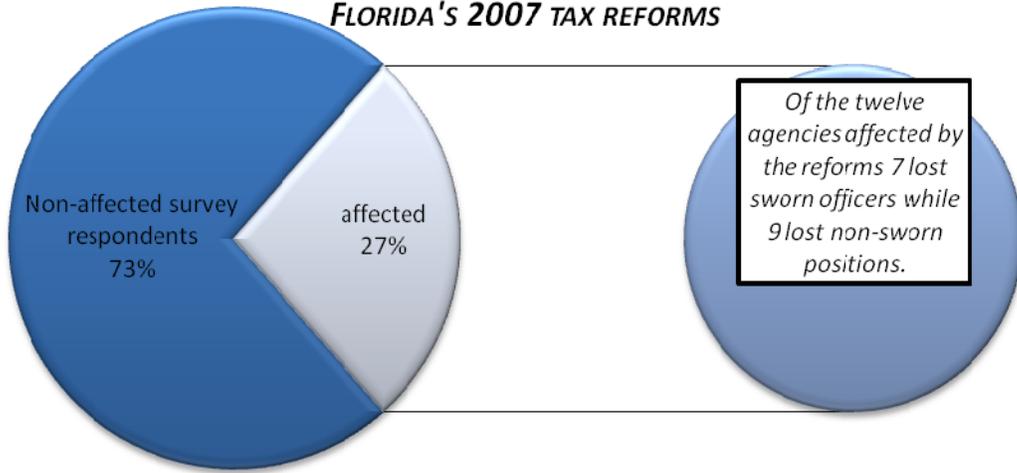


Chart 3

PERCENTAGE OF SWORN POSITIONS LOST AS REPORTED BY RESPONDING AGENCIES

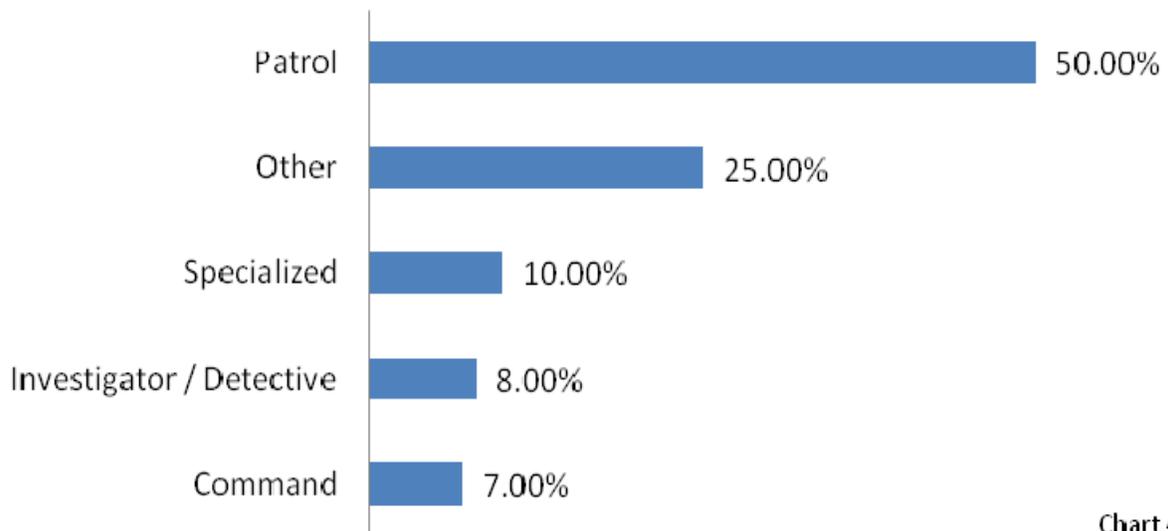


Chart 4

HUMAN ASSETS LOST COMPARISON

LOST ASSETS VS. CURRENT ALLOCATION

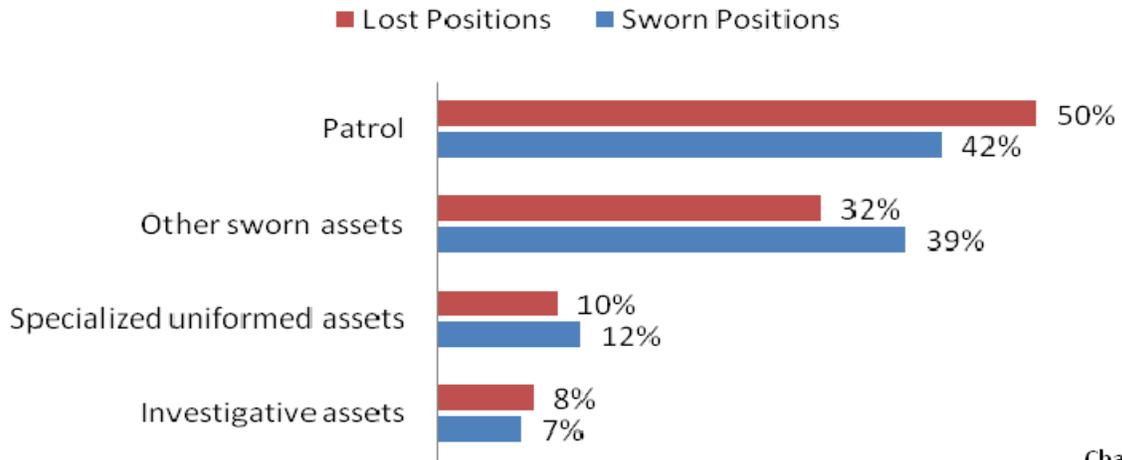


Chart 5

Appendix C

Human Resource Allocation Survey

J.D. Peacock II

Senior Leadership Program (Class 12)

1. What is the total number of employees of your agency?
 - a. Sworn (Law Enforcement): _____
 - b. Non-Sworn: _____
2. What is the approximate number of full time **patrol** officers/deputies, including supervisors? _____
3. What are the approximate numbers of dedicated full time specialized enforcement officers/deputies, including supervisors?
 - a. Community policing units: _____
 - b. School resource officers: _____
 - c. Traffic/DUI enforcement units: _____
 - d. Sexual offender units: _____
 - e. High intensity/problem oriented policing units (Uniformed): _____
 - f. Other uniformed specialized units (Gang, environmental enforcement, K-9, ect):

4. What is the approximate number of non-uniformed sworn detectives/investigators, including supervisors? _____
5. What is the approximate number of non-sworn employees whose duties were traditionally done by sworn officers (crime scene techs, crime prevention, and public information)? _____
6. Has the tax reform initiatives in Florida this past year, and forecasted for the next few years, specifically affected your agencies human resource allocations? YES / NO

If your answer was yes please answer the following:

a. Has your agency cut, or stopped hiring for open positions, sworn personnel? If the answer is yes please indicate the approximate number effected of:

i. Patrol: _____

ii. Specialized Units: _____

iii. Investigative/Detective Units: _____

iv. Command/Managerial Staff: _____

b. Has your agency cut, or stopped hiring for open positions, non-sworn personnel? If the answer is yes please indicate the effected services and number of positions:

Thank you for your time.

This survey can be returned by e-mail to jdpeacock@sheriff-okaloosa.org

or by fax @ 850-609-3058

or by mail to Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office

Attention Lt. J.D. Peacock

1250 N. Eglin Parkway

Shalimar, FL 32579