

To help the members of the Redlands Police Department put our *Purpose* and *Organizational Values* into practice, we developed the *Seven Guiding Principles of the RPD*, bringing focus to our “purpose-driven” orientation of service to Redlands.

In my next column I will address all of these principles. However, I'd like to focus on one of them – *Controlling Crime through Excellent Police Work and Innovative Problem Solving* – and explain why I have recently been advocating that the City acquire a plane for use by the Police Department.

Since this idea was first mentioned in the local press I have been contacted by many, many citizens either asking how they can lend their support to the project or asking what drives our interest in a plane.

Perhaps more than any time in recent history, the City's latest budgetary decisions underscore the Police Department's need to better leverage Redlands' investment in crime control. To meet certain fiscal goals the City Council has been forced to reduce the Police Department's budget by about \$1.3 million over the last two fiscal years (2005-06 and 2006-07). If we are to maintain our current level of crime suppression, while simultaneously meeting significantly challenging budgetary expectations, we must think differently about the manner in which the Police Department serves the people of Redlands. Given last year's 20 percent increase in Redlands' serious crimes it is vitally important that this issue be addressed as soon as possible.

One model for leveraging the City's investment in public safety is the military's notion of “force multipliers.” Force multipliers are those factors that dramatically increase the combat effectiveness of a military force. Policing's “force multipliers” are those factors that dramatically increase the crime control effectiveness of a police department. Technology, civilianization, forensics, the employment of retired officers, community partnerships and aviation support are some of the multipliers actively employed by the Redlands Police Department.

Any veteran RPD officer can recount incident after incident in which the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department's heroic helicopter crews (commonly referred to by their aircraft's radio call-sign “40King”) proved to be the deciding factor in the successful conclusion of a multitude of crime incidents. Daily, 40King's support spells the difference between suspects being captured or escaping, vehicular pursuits ending successfully or tragically with innocent people being injured, or officers engaged in foot pursuits avoiding injury or death when the airborne officers direct other ground officers to them. We are blessed to have benefited from their service.

Over the last three years RPD officers' need for 40King's services has been steadily increasing from an average of nine per month in 2004 to an average of 15 calls per month in 2006. In 2006, we project that 40King will actually fly over Redlands on calls a total of 40 hours. These numbers do not include the occasions when RPD officers requested 40King's assistance but the crews were busy on other calls. Nor do they reflect the times that 40King was on scene in Redlands, or enroute, but had to “break” from our calls to handle other, higher priority calls somewhere else in the San Bernardino Valley (an area of approximately 632 square miles).

The RPD is proposing the use of a high-wing plane that can be purchased for \$60,000 to \$100,000 compared to \$400,000 to \$2 million for a helicopter, and operated for \$35 to \$45 per hour compared to \$300 to \$800 per hour for a helicopter. All with non-general fund money. We propose using drug and traffic seizure/impound funds that by law cannot be used on things such as potholes, tree trimming or police cars. By using the many citizen pilots in our community who have already volunteered to fly for us, we can avoid pilot costs. We intend to use the plane (if approved by the City Council) for routine patrol, surveillances and to assist other city departments such as the Fire Department when their mutual aid air support is unavailable. We project the plane could be flying 800 to 1,000 daytime hours per year over Redlands (compared to 40King's 40 hours per year) and reduce our response times on plane-assisted calls to something like 90 seconds! The police officers of the RPD overwhelmingly support this concept and look forward to the day they have substantial air support time to make their job safer and more effective in keeping Redlands safe.

Undoubtedly, you will be hearing more about this proposal as I hope to take a formal proposal before the council next month. If you have any questions about this idea or would like to volunteer to assist the department in this, or any other, endeavor, please feel free to contact me at 909-335-4744 or via e-mail at [chief@redlandspolice.org](mailto:chief@redlandspolice.org).