

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
August 5, 1992

SHERIFF'S TEAM OF ACTIVE RETIRED
SENIORS (S.T.A.R.S.) PROGRAM

CC-6
CC-24(b)

Council Member Snider asked that the City Manager pass on to the Lodi Senior Citizens Commission, information regarding the Sheriff's Team of Active Retired Seniors (S.T.A.R.S.) program.

CITY COUNCIL

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August 7, 1992

Lillian Goldsmith
Chairperson
Lodi Senior Citizens Commission
1830 S. Hutchins Street 1507
Lodi, CA 95240

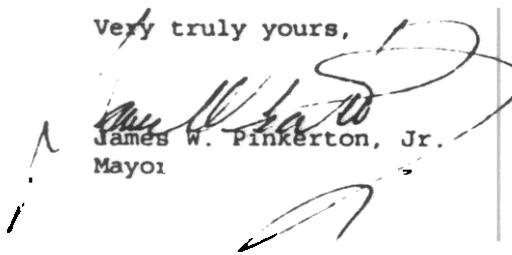
Dear Lillian:

Attached is information pertaining to the Sheriff's Team of Active Retired Seniors (S.T.A.R.S.) Program. The purpose of the program is to use volunteer senior citizens in law enforcement programs such as traffic and crowd control at special events, graffiti abatement, bicycle registration, etc. thereby freeing regular law enforcement officers for basic crime-fighting duties.

The City Council asked that this information be forwarded to the Senior Citizens Commission for review and response as to whether or not the Commission feels the Senior Citizens of this community might want to become involved in such a program.

We would appreciate receiving your insight into the matter.

Very truly yours,



James W. Pinkerton, Jr.
Mayor

JWP/AMR/jmp

bc: Charlene Lange, Community Center Director

The Stockton Record

Monday, July 27, 1992

EDITORIALS

VIPS

It's an opportunity for 'just plain folks' to become true VIPs

Manteca's program, the first in the San Joaquin County, doesn't have a clever name—and attendant acronym.

The county's does — STARS for Sheriff's Team of Active Retired Seniors.

Now Stockton will with its VIPS for Volunteers in Police Service approved by the City Council last week.

But clever acronym or just plain senior aides, the idea of using older residents as additional eyes, ears

VIP wannabe? Call the Stockton Police Department's Community Services Office at 944-3203 for information about Stockton's new Volunteers in Police Service program.

and hands for law enforcement is what's important

VIPS, like Manteca's senior aides and the sheriff's STARS, will do everything from traffic and crowd control at special events to graffiti abatement to bicycle registration, freeing regular officers for basic crime-fighting duties.

Lino Giovannetti, a retired businessman and longtime member of the Stockton Police Reserves, summed it up nicely: "It's an opportunity for just plain folks to counter our crime problems."

The cost is minimal: Start-up costs to train 50 volunteers and provide them with uniforms and vehicles during the first year will be less than \$30,000.

it is, as Deputy Police Chief Edward Chavez said, "a minor cost for a major program."

And even if the money wasn't coming from drug seizures, it would be a wise use of funds.

S.T.A.R.S. shed new light on county law enforcement

By Hugh Donnelly
Senior Spectrum

Uniform-clad senior citizens driving around in marked patrol vehicles searching out wrongdoing in the unincorporated areas of San Joaquin County?

Ridiculous!

That might have been citizen reaction to such a proposal a year ago, but the early success of the Sheriffs Team of Active Retired Seniors - S.T.A.R.S. - has put new light on the subject.

The idea formed in the mind of Sheriff Baxter Dunn while he was attending a state sheriffs' conference last fall. "Several sheriffs were discussing the idea of using seniors in different functions within their departments,"

he recalls. "I thought, if we could combine all their ideas into a comprehensive program, it would allow us to continue our patrol levels of service during deep budget cuts."



Weldon Burson, 55-year-old former farmer, San Jose police officer and Los Angeles area California Highway Patrolman, was put in charge of coordinating the new program. Burson, who holds the title of crime prevention officer, says, "I was asked to go to Southern California, where most of the similar programs are in existence, and I interviewed 14 agencies. South of the Tehachas, there are about 22,000 volunteers working in uniform.

"Following the trip, the best of all the different programs were picked to adapt to San Joaquin

County. The sheriff reviewed the information, contributed his input and designed the program to assist the sheriffs' office."

The first training class was graduated last December.

(The City of Manteca instituted a similar S.T.A.R.S. program earlier last year.)

Those wishing to join the senior program must be at least 50 years of age with no criminal history. "Being handicapped or not having a driver's license is no problem," Burson emphasizes. "Handicapped people can work in office support systems and a non-licensed driver can ride with a licensed driver."

Each training course consumes 40 hours, spread over a period of two weeks. Trainees meet weekdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the new sheriffs' department complex on Matthews Road.

"We teach 11 subjects," Burson explains. We are not training or creating police officers but emphasizing the importance of sheriffs' policies to support the deputies."

Senior volunteers do not carry weapons of any kind and always work in pairs. They are in radio contact on the same frequency as regular deputies.

"Requests for assistance by the volunteers become priority calls in the department to relieve any problems they may have or have discovered," Burson says.

The vehicles used by the seniors are second hand and pur-

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See S.T.A.R.S./page 7

For Subscript

S.T.A.R.S. shed new light on law

FROM PAGE 1

chased from the county out of the patrol budget at a cost of \$2,500 each. The department currently has a fleet of seven vehicles marked with S.T.A.R.S. insignias and sheriffs' department seals on the doors.

The volunteers, who purchase their own uniforms, patrol sections of the county from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Their duties include routine observation, school patrol, checking homes which residents are on vacation and checking establishments after business hours.

The coverage is split into five areas - Lathrop, Morada, Country Club, Northeast and Northwest - and each area has a team captain.

Dorris McLaughlin, 76, co-captain of the Country Club area, says she enjoys helping the sheriffs' department. "It's very interesting and I feel I'm doing something to help somebody."

She spent more than 20 years working in hospitals before her retirement 10 years ago. "Then I lost my husband - she says, "and I was alone. I belong to Elkhorn Country Club and did a lot of golfing but that wasn't enough." She telephoned Burson and joined the first class.

McLaughlin clearly recalls one

frightening incident - a bomb scare: "My panner and I were at a coffee shop and a man walked over to us. He had a package and said he wasn't sure what it was but someone had handed it to him. He saw our uniforms and gave it to us.

"We immediately took it outside and set it in the street, then we called a deputy sheriff, who called the bomb squad. It was a bomb. A bomb squad member told us we were very fortunate that we didn't have the bomb with us when we wed the car radow because it would have gone off."

In Morada, retired newspaperman Bob Uecker captains the pa-

trol. Uecker joined the program "because no police agency, and it doesn't matter if it's city or county, can hire enough police officers. What it takes is senior citizens like me and others, willing to volunteer their time."

Uecker, 66, adds. "I feel we can make a difference. We have no authority, but we can do a lot of things in the field of crime prevention. "The captain, who was publisher of the Stockton Record for 12 years and earlier served as controller of a newspaper in Santa Cruz, is responsible for scheduling each month's shifts. He had 60 shifts slated during June.

His roster includes Charles

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San Joaquin Edition

S.T.A.R.S. shed new light on law

FROM PAGE 7

Briggs and wife Eva: he was graduated with the second class, she with the third. The couple moved to Stockton six years ago and. notes Charles. 64, most of

their friends were in the Bay Area.

Joining the program "gave us the opportunity to meet new people and gave us social contacts," he says.

His most memorable assign-

ment was helping to control traffic for the S.W.A.T team during a crisis.

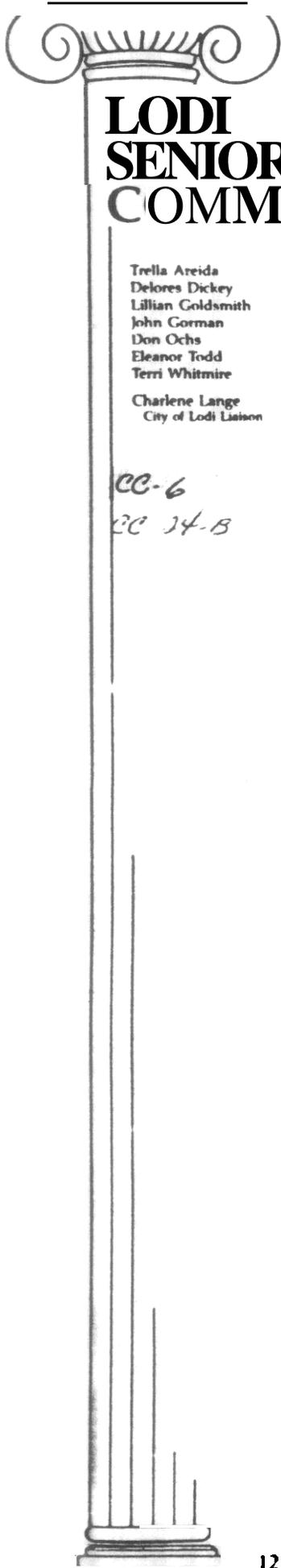
At present, 110 seniors have Completed the training and the department is aiming for a volunteer force of 200 by the end of the year.

"It has far exceeded our wildest dreams." Dunn says. "The field of talent we've discovered out there is tremendous and we're as excited with what (the volunteers) can do for us as they are to serve the program.

"I believe the patrol deputies were a little apprehensive at first and perhaps viewed the volunteers as a burden," he admits. "But now, after seeing the results, they're embracing them with open arms and I see a real bond between the patrol deputies and the senior volunteers."

Anyone interested in joining the program may contact Burson at 468-4469.

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LODI SENIOR CITIZENS COMMISSION

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September 2, 1992

Mayor James Pinkerton
221 W Pine St
Lodi, CA 95240

cc-6
cc 34-B

Dear Mayor Pinkerton,

The Senior Citizens Commission met September 1, 1992 with Mr. Weldon Burson, Coordinator for crime prevention in the San Joaquin Sheriffs Department and Mr. Floyd Williams, Lodi Police Chief.

Mr. Burson explained to us the purposes and programs of the S.T.A.R.S. program. (Sheriff's team of Active Retired Seniors) We enthusiastically endorse the program.

Mr. Williams expressed a desire to have such a program in Lodi. After considerable discussion, Ann Areida, Senior Center Director, said she could help in many ways, namely, providing a place for training of volunteers and advertising for their enrollment in the program.

We believe the next step is up to Mr. Williams and the City Council. We will wait for your input.

Sincerely,

Lodi Senior Citizens Commission