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As the Chief of Police, I would like to thank each neighborhood and business group for actively working to aid in our enforcement efforts. The calendar year of 2018 ended with a modest reduction in Citywide Part 1 crime of 1.58%. This reduction could have been stronger had it not been for the theft of motor vehicles and larceny. The majority of stolen vehicles resulted from unsecured autos left running or with the keys left in them. Larceny from vehicles reveals the same trend of being unsecured with valuables in plain view, to including firearms. Over the past 12 months, 212 firearms were reported stolen from vehicles in our city—The highest number ever reported, and the majority of weapons stolen were from unlocked vehicles. The physical and physiological trauma resulting from gun violence continues to create challenges for the entire community. There were 85 injuries from improper or criminal use of firearms. As a community, we must continue to be vigilant in securing our property from those who seek opportunities to victimize others and lessening the frequency of firearm-related incidents. Please assist RPD in the collective personal responsibility to “Respect Roanoke” by making our City a safer place to live and work; our collective challenge is moving the needle toward a more substantial citywide reduction in all areas of crime.

In October, the Roanoke Police Department was recognized as one of four law enforcement agencies from across the United States to be featured at the grand opening of the National Law Enforcement Museum in Washington, D.C. The museum was established to tell the story of American law enforcement and includes a collection of artifacts along with comprehensive educational programming. RPD’s unique citizen engagement model of “citizen-centric policing” was recognized through the collaborative partnership with the Feeding America Southwest Virginia Solution Center on Melrose Avenue. Roanoke police officers are featured in the introductory film on American policing shown to visitors upon entry to the National Police Museum. I am proud of the work each officer with this agency contributes to our community efforts. In June, our agency sponsored the first “Cops Camp,” a four-day event centered on citizenship, character and personal development for rising sixth graders in Roanoke City Schools. The student participants interacted each day with agency members from Roanoke Fire/EMS, Roanoke Sheriff’s Department and RPD officers in live skill development and team-building exercises linked to the Virginia Attorney General’s “Virginia Rules” program.

The Roanoke Police Department is committed to utilizing data-driven best practices to address the issue of crime and build upon the positive relationships with our community. The continued expansion of 21st Century Policing tenants is embedded in the organizational culture. The Roanoke Police Department continues its proactive efforts to best serve all individuals who visit or live in this great “All-America City.” Our crime prevention, school safety and community engagement initiatives continue to expand even as the social landscape of our country frequently misrepresents the totality of police service to a community. As we move forward at RPD we do so with the commitment of dedicated, professional and effective police service. We will continue to need and seek the support of each of you, the collective community, in our continuous efforts to minimize the opportunities of crime in Roanoke.
Deputy Chief Monti Lee
Deputy Chief Eric Charles
Captain Arron Cook
Captain Daniel Hartman II
Captain Chester Smith, Jr.
Lieutenant Jamey Bowdel  
Serving you since: 2000  
Supervises: Planning and Analysis

Lieutenant Bill Breedlove Jr.  
Serving you since: 2006  
Supervises: Training Academy

Lieutenant Sandy Duffey  
Serving you since: 1998  
Supervises: Investigations Bureau

Lieutenant Richard Fender  
Serving you since: 1999  
Supervises: Bravo Platoon

Lieutenant Jason Holt  
Serving you since: 1996  
Supervises: Community Response Team

Lieutenant Stephen Keatts  
Serving you since: 1994  
Supervises: Professional Standards

Lieutenant Jeffrey Newman  
Serving you since: 2005  
Supervises: Support Services Bureau

Lieutenant Adam Puckett  
Serving you since: 2004  
Supervises: Delta Platoon

Lieutenant Andrew Pulley Jr.  
Serving you since: 2005  
Supervises: Patrol/CRT Executive Lieutenant

Lieutenant John Stephens  
Serving you since: 1999  
Supervises: Alpha Platoon

Lieutenant Jennings Tardy  
Serving you since: 1983  
Supervises: Community Response Support

Lieutenant Michelle Vandergrift  
Serving you since: 1996  
Supervises: Charlie Platoon
2018 PROMOTIONS & AWARDS

PROMOTIONS

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
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<td>6/23/17</td>
<td>Trista Wallace</td>
<td>Detective to Sergeant</td>
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<td>1/16/18</td>
<td>Dustin Davenport</td>
<td>Police Support Technician to</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Police Support Technician II</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/8/18</td>
<td>Chester Smith, Jr.</td>
<td>Captain to Deputy Chief</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/8/18</td>
<td>Stephen Keatts</td>
<td>Lieutenant to Captain</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/8/18</td>
<td>David Morris</td>
<td>Sergeant to Lieutenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/8/18</td>
<td>Glen Green</td>
<td>Officer to Sergeant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/31/18</td>
<td>Ryan McKinney</td>
<td>Police Technology Assistant to</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Police Technology Business Analyst</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/17/18</td>
<td>Sandy Duffey</td>
<td>Lieutenant to Captain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/17/18</td>
<td>Susanna Camp</td>
<td>Sergeant to Lieutenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/17/18</td>
<td>Ronald Robinson II</td>
<td>Officer to Sergeant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/17/18</td>
<td>William Wood II</td>
<td>Officer to Sergeant</td>
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AWARDS

Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce Officer of the Month, Year:

- Officer Lance Tate, Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce Officer of the Month, January 2018
- Officer Joseph Muha, Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce Officer of the Month, March 2018
- Sergeant Jason Hicks, Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce Officer of the Month, May 2018
- Sergeant Britt Corker, Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce Officer of the Month, July 2018
- Officer Kinga Roszak, Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce Officer of the Month, September 2018
- Officer Michael Colombini, Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce Officer of the Month, November 2018
- Officer Kinga Roszak, 2018 Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce Officer of the Year

Kiwanis Club Quarterly First Responders Awards:

- Officer Jessica Nasatka, Quarterly Law Enforcement Recognition January 2018
- Officer Nathaniel Davis, Quarterly Law Enforcement Recognition March 2018
- Officer Kelsey Trivellin, Quarterly Law Enforcement Recognition July 2018
- Officer Michael Colombini, Quarterly Law Enforcement Recognition October 2018
- Officer Gregory Benton, 2018 Mothers Against Drunk Driving Officer of the Year
- Officers Karley Goad and Richard Woodruff, 2018 Citizens Police Academy Alumni Officers of the Year
- Officer Andrew Hagy, 2018 Citizens Police Academy Alumni Rookie of the Year
- Police Support Technician II Lisa Morgan, 2018 Citizens Police Academy Alumni Civilian of the Year

COMMENDATIONS, MERIT AWARDS & CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

NAME & DISTINCTION

- Officer K.R. Adams, Commendation
- Officer N.J. Bell, Commendation
- Officer A.M. Beyer, Commendation
- Officer D.D. Brink, Jr., Commendation
- Detective C.L. Burchett, Commendation (2)
- Sergeant J.A. Camp, Commendation (2)
- Officer J.F. Cobb, Commendation
- Officer S.J. Cochran, Merit
- Officer M.J. Colombini, Merit
- Officer J.F. Cobb, Commendation
- Officer S.J. Cochran, Merit
- Officer M.J. Colombini, Merit
- Detective K.W. Custer, Commendation
- Officer B.A. Daniels, Commendation
- Officer N.M. Davis, Merit
- Officer S.M. Davis, Commendation
- Officer D.A. Dennis, Commendation
- Detective B.R. Dickerson, Commendation (2)
- Officer J.D. Dickinson, Commendation
- Detective C.R. Dillon, Commendation
- Officer T.M. Donathan, Commendation (2)
- Sergeant W.D. Drake, Commendation
- Detective W.A. Engel, Commendation
- Officer C.T. Fike, Commendation
- Officer S.D. Foster, Commendation
- Detective J.L. Haley, Commendation
- Animal Warden E.S. Hanes, Merit
- Officer C.J. Hinchey, Commendation
- Officer R.A. Hodges, Commendation
- Detective T.L. Hoke, Commendation
- Officer R.A. Howell, Medal of Valor and Commendation
- Detective A. Huynh, Commendation
- Officer K.W. Johnson, Commendation
- Sergeant R.H. McNiff, Commendation
- Officer J.M. McGuire, Commendation
- Sergeant D.E. Morris, Commendation
- Officer J.D. Muha, Commendation
- Officer C.L. Mullins, Merit
- Officer K.A. Nagy, Commendation
- Detective T.J. Nash, Commendation
- Officer K.A. Roszak, Medal of Valor
- Officer B.J. Smith, Commendation
- Officer J.L. Smith, Merit
- Officer L.C. Tate, Medal of Valor and Commendation
- Sergeant M.E. Thompson, Commendation
- Officer C.B. Tinsley, Commendation
- Officer K.L. Trivellin, Merit (2)
- Officer W.D. Wood, Commendation
On November 8, 2017, Officer R. Andrew Howell responded to the call of an armed subject in the 2600 block of Fairfield Drive NE. This is a call that can have numerous outcomes, and thanks to Officer Howell's training and experience, it did not result in total tragedy.

Officer Howell was in the area on an unrelated call, so he began walking to the residence. As he got closer to the home, he heard a man and woman arguing. He then observed a woman in the front lawn of the home; she seemed to be in distress. The man was on the porch of the house armed with a handgun.

As Officer Howell approached, the man pointed the handgun at the woman on the lawn and shot at her—fortunately, he missed. At that time, Officer Howell began giving him verbal commands to drop the weapon and put up his hands. The man did not comply with Howell's commands and kept pointing the firearm at the woman. Officer Howell fired his service weapon, hitting the man.

Officer Howell's actions and his quick decision making skills saved the life of this woman. For that reason, he was awarded a Medal of Valor in 2018.

On January 23, 2018 at 7:48 p.m., Roanoke Police responded to a robbery in progress call in the 4400 block of Melrose Avenue NW, the Starlite Motel. E-911 dispatchers relayed to responding officers that the caller was in the motel's office. Dispatchers told officers they could hear a loud, violent disorder in the background. The female caller had stopped talking to the dispatchers on the phone but left the line open.

Officer Lance Tate was first on the scene, and he saw through a window that a man was holding a baseball bat and standing over two women who were huddled together. One of the women had serious visible injuries, and the other was also found to be injured. Officer Tate went to a side door and could see an adult man, another victim, on the floor who was not moving and had obvious signs of critical injury. Officers tried to get in the office through an exterior door, but that door was locked.

As Officer Tate tried to open another door, one of the women ran toward it to try and let him in, but the suspect grabbed her and stopped her from doing so. Simultaneously, Officer Tate began kicking the door in an attempt to gain access to the office. The door broke in several places, and Officer Tate began to pull portions of the door away in order to gain entry. The suspect began physically trying to stop him from pushing the door open, but Officer Tate tore apart a portion of the door to allow him, and other officers, inside.

The suspect dropped the baseball bat and ran back through the business, dove through a glass window to the exterior of the building and then ran on foot. Officers took the suspect into custody after a foot pursuit that ended at the intersection of Pilot Street and Melrose Avenue.

While one of the victims, the adult male, did pass away as a result of the attack, Officer Tate's brave, quick-thinking actions might very well have saved the lives of the two other victims, the two women he saw huddled together as the suspect was standing over them with a baseball bat. Both women suffered serious injuries but survived. Officer Tate demonstrated incredible bravery and decisiveness, and proved his dedication to protecting life in the City of Roanoke. He was awarded a Medal of Valor in 2018.

On July 13, 2018, Officer Kinga Roszak responded to a structure fire in the 1100 block of Murray Avenue SE. Roanoke Police normally respond to structure fires for the sole purpose of traffic control, which allows Roanoke Fire-EMS to perform their duties. Officer Roszak’s response on this day, however, was nothing short of crucial.

As Officer Roszak arrived on scene, she observed dark smoke coming from the front door and windows of the home. E-911 advised the caller said she was still in the home that was actively on fire, and could not get out. Officer Roszak, knowing what was beyond the threshold, ran into the home without hesitation to assist the woman inside.

Officer Roszak immediately met thick, heavy smoke as she entered the house. Her visibility and breathing were limited as she attempted to locate the woman. Officer Roszak moved into the kitchen of the home, noticing flames on the counter and stove areas. There she found the female, lying on the floor with flames moving around her legs. Without hesitation, Officer Roszak grabbed the female and began dragging her to safety. In the short time it took her to move the disabled woman to the front door, several rooms adjacent to the kitchen were engulfed with flames.

As the two were at the front of the home, other units were at the scene and began assisting Officer Roszak with the rescue. She was checked out and found to be covered in soot, had minor discomfort from smoke inhalation, and her hair was burnt due to being in close proximity to the fire. The resident of the home sustained 1st-degree burns on most of her body, with 2nd-degree burns to the areas that were closest to the flames.

Without the quick, selfless actions of Officer Roszak, this citizen would have suffered catastrophic injuries, or possibly perished in her home. Officer Kinga Roszak’s actions that day go far beyond her training as a police officer, and reflect her commitment to the city and community she serves. For this reason, she was awarded a Medal of Valor in 2018.
In November 2017, the department received its Certificate of Advanced Meritorious Accreditation with Gold Standard Excellence from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, or CALEA. It’s the eighth CALEA award for the department since its initial accreditation back in 1994. The Roanoke Police Training Academy also received Advanced Meritorious Accreditation for the first time.

The Roanoke Police Department and Training Academy now move into CALEA’s four-year Accreditation cycle that includes four annual remote, web-based file reviews and a site-based assessment in the fourth year. Each year approximately 25% of the standards are selected for review. This equates to approximately 90 files for the Advanced Law Enforcement Accreditation process and 40 files for the Public Safety Training Academy Accreditation process being reviewed each year. The agency is contractually obligated to maintain each file for each year. The accreditation status is good for four years, meaning the department and the academy will be up for the reaccreditation process again in the summer of 2021.

2018 VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE CONFERENCE HELD IN ROANOKE

The Roanoke Police Department was the host agency of the 2018 Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police Conference. More than 200 representatives from law enforcement agencies across the state came to the City of Roanoke to attend the conference, held in the Hotel Roanoke. The host agency traditionally holds a host dinner and provides a gift to travelers attending the conference. Chief Tim Jones is also a member of the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police Executive Board. The conference rotates among three sites and will be in Roanoke again in 2021.

ON THE BIG SCREEN

In October 2018, we were recognized as one of four law enforcement agencies from across the United States to be featured at the grand opening of the National Law Enforcement Museum in Washington, D.C. The museum was established to tell the story of American law enforcement, and includes a collection of artifacts along with comprehensive educational programming. RPD’s unique citizen engagement model of “citizen centric policing” was recognized through the collaborative partnership with the Feeding America Southwest Virginia Solution Center on Melrose Avenue. Roanoke police officers are featured in the introductory film on American policing shown to visitors upon entry to the National Police Museum.
Roanoke Police joined a nationwide effort to prevent crime and protect your property. It is called the 9PM Routine—all you have to do is add a few simple steps to your evening routine to make your vehicle and home safer.

The 9PM Routine started in Pasco County, Florida around August of 2016, and the plan quickly spread to neighboring counties and cities in Florida. Now the 9PM Routine is helping combat car larcenies across the nation—and all you have to do is add these three steps to your evening routine:

1. Remove all valuables from your vehicles
2. Make sure your vehicle doors are locked
3. Turn on exterior lights

Those three extra steps helped the Pasco County Sheriff’s Office lower their car larceny numbers by 43%. We are hoping to bring that success to Roanoke.

We started using our social media pages to push the 9PM Routine out to city residents. By sharing videos, pictures, and advice, we hope to drop the number of car larcenies and other crimes in the city. We are also using the hashtag “#9PMroutine” so our efforts can be tracked and others can interact with our posts.

We asked everyone to share our posts on social media and follow the 9PM Routine steps. Please, help us keep Roanoke safe.

Between a scaly rescue and a song and dance that put the Roanoke Police Department at the top of the charts, we were popular around the globe in 2018.

Animal Wardens responded to a call about a reptile in the road in June. They found a rattlesnake, later identified as an endangered Timber Rattlesnake, in the middle of a busy intersection. Patrol officers stopped cars from running over the snake while Animal Wardens picked it up and moved it to a safer location. The scenario was caught on video and posted to Facebook, garnering hundreds of thousands of views. Media from around the world reached out to RPD for comments on the Reptile Rescue, and our Animal Wardens were featured in the Washington Post, United Press International and several other national news outlets.

The Department’s lip sync skills were debuted in a video that quickly went viral. Our response to the “Law Enforcement Lip Sync Challenge” videos that were coming out of departments nationwide features Justin Timberlake’s hit “Can't Stop the Feeling” and highlights our involvement with the community. Some scenes spotlight our Lea Youth Outdoor Basketball team, while other clips emphasize our community partners, such as Mission BBQ. We also had cameos of our K9 partners, Tactical Response Team members, Police Academy Recruits and Roanoke’s E-911 Center. The video reached more than 4.3 million people around the world and had more than 2.14 million views.
The BLUF: A statistically significant reduction of Part 1 Plus violent crime was effected in the city’s persistent hot spots between 2017 and 2018. For this analysis, citywide Part 1 Plus crime for the calendar year 2017 was compared to calendar year 2018. Part 1 Plus crime includes the serious Part 1 violent crimes of murder, robbery, and aggravated assault. This is exclusive of rape and felony domestic violence. In addition, Part 1 Plus crime includes the precursor crimes of simple assault (no domestic violence), intimidation, weapons offenses, disorderly conduct, and gang related activity.

The Persistent Hot Spots were determined by analyzing eleven years of violent crime data using kernel density interpolation to identify statistically significant clustering of those crimes. Three areas were identified in the city as having the greatest concentration of violent crime: Lansdowne Area, the Melrose-Orange Target Area, and the Belmont neighborhood. These three areas constitute just less than two square miles, or 4.6% of the total city area. (See Figure 1)

The persistent hot spot areas were a target of focused police activity during 2018. The use of Part 1 Plus violent crime as the focal concern was developed in late 2017 (November) and implemented throughout 2018. Components of the focused police activity included directed patrol operations, citizen engagement, bike patrol, enhanced traffic enforcement, and the deployment of the Community Response Team and the Violence Suppression Team. Every two weeks new, smaller hot spot concentrations were developed and patrol lieutenants had the individual initiative to develop operational plans to address the Part 1 Plus violent crime in the persistent hot spots. Although establishing causality is complex, one explanation for any reductions in Part 1 Plus violent crime in the city or the persistent hot spots is the police operations conducted over the past year.

There were 2,611 Part 1 Plus violent crimes recorded in the city for 2017 and 2,375 in 2018. This resulted in a 9.04% reduction in citywide violent crime between 2017 and 2018 which was statistically significant, using a Poisson Means test, at the p<0.001 level (or these results are unlikely to occur by chance alone 99.99% of the time). (See Figure 2)

The reduction in the persistent hot spots was 16.7% and was also statistically significant. Part 1 Plus violent crime actually increased slightly in the Lansdowne area, but this was not significant (within limits of normal variation). Although the percent decrease in the MOTA was substantial (16.8%) it was nonsignificant (p=0.087). The 23.5% decrease in the Belmont neighborhood was statistically significant and represents the greatest proportional decrease.

In addition to evaluating the raw counts of Part 1 Plus violent crime, crime concentrations indices (CCIs) were prepared for the persistent hot spots. A crime concentration index compares the concentration of crime in a localized area (such as the persistent hot spots) to the jurisdiction-wide concentration of that crime. In effect, CCIs standardize the crime per unit of area allowing direct comparison of dissimilarly sized areas. If the crime in a persistent hot spot is concentrated the same as the entire city the CCI would be 1.0. Values greater than 1.0 indicate a greater concentration of crime than would be expected and values less than 1.0 indicate that crime is less concentrated than expected.

In 2017, Part 1 Plus violent crime was concentrated in the persistent hot spot 3.8 times greater than would be expected (377% greater); in 2018 it was 3.4 times greater (337%) for a reduction of 8.4%. Lansdowne actually had a slight increase in crime concentration from 2017 to 2018, with the CCI going from 1.5 to 1.8 (a 22.5% increase). MOTA actually had lower than expected crime concentrations for both 2017 and 2018 and it fell 18% from 2017 to 2018. Belmont showed an 8% decrease in the CCI from 2017 to 2018, reducing from 28% more than expected to 18% more than expected in 2018.

Starting in June of 2018, the department implemented a harm reduction model for operational planning. Using the same Part 1 Plus violent crimes, harm values were assigned to all recorded violent crimes and then the determination of hot spots was based on using these weighted values. Harm values represent the harm done to the citizens of the city and were derived as a function of the sentencing guidelines for each crime (greater midpoint sentences result in higher harm values). By examining harm values for 2017 compared to 2018 an estimate of the reduction (or increase) in harm as a result of police operations can be arrived at. (See Figure 2)
A word about the data used in this analysis and traditional Part 1 crimes is warranted. On 02 January 2018, ISTAR published preliminary Part 1 comparisons. This data indicated a 12.54% increase in Part 1 Violent crime and a 2.63% decrease in a Part 1 Property crime for a total crime decrease of 1.58%. This analysis is different in two important ways. First, it examines an expanded violent crime metric which includes felony violent crime as well as precursor misdemeanor violent crime. Second, it focuses on specific areas of the city where prior analysis has demonstrated are most likely to be the locus of violent crime. It is reasonable to conclude from this analysis that there was a reduction in Part 1 Plus violent crime between 2017 and 2018 and that this can, at least in part, be attributed to effective police operations. This reduction was both citywide and in the persistent hot spots areas which were a focus for operations. The midyear introduction of harm focused police operations shows promise with reductions across all areas analyzed.

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Criminology is the study of the causes of crime and criminal behavior. It is primarily an academic discipline and most criminologists work in an academic setting. However, a more applied variation of that is the role of an embedded criminologist. Professor Anthony Braga of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, defined this as, "Embedded criminologists enhance the capacity of police departments to understand the nature of recurring crime problems through their knowledge of criminological research and high-powered analytical models and methods."

In the summer of 2013, the Roanoke Police Department brought Professor Isaac Van Patten on board as an embedded criminologist. At that time the department was anticipating a major reorganization and pivoting towards a more citizen-centric policing model. Among the changes anticipated were a major expansion of the crime analysis unit from one fulltime and one part time crime analysts to four full time crime analysts. The embedded criminologist first duty was to assist in the development and operational direction of this new expanded unit.

The department’s new policing philosophy necessitated some changes in means and methods of accomplishing the mission of crime control and reduction. The new crime analysts assumed responsibility for day-to-day tactical analysis of crime by identifying emerging patterns and trends. The tactical analysts provide active support for current field operations and are responsive to the needs of patrol officers, the community response team, and investigators.

On the other hand, the embedded criminologist conducts more strategic analysis looking at long-term trends. These analyses are then used by command staff to plan for future resource deployment and allocation. One of the early projects was to analyze calls for service to determine the days and times of peak workload demand for the department. The result of this analysis was used to assist in determining staffing levels during Geo 3.0.

In addition, the embedded criminologists prepares quarterly trend analysis and forecast reports. These products review the long term trends of crime in the city. Crime forecasts are also prepared for the next quarter, six months, and the next 12 months. Command staff use the trends and forecasts to make decisions about future operational emphasis.

A major advancement in evidence-based policing is the use of “hot spots” policing. Crime tends to congregate in time and space, which leads to concentrations in certain locations at certain times of the day. These are crime hot spots. What the research has demonstrated is that when patrol resources are concentrated in these hot spots, it reduces and prevents crime. An added benefit is that this effect disperses into the surrounding neighborhoods, reducing crime there as well.

One task of the embedded criminologist is to develop and refine crime hot spotting methods through the use of predictive analytics. Crime hot spots come in two flavors: persistent hot spots and emerging hot spots. Persistent hot spots represent an area of chronically stable high concentrations of crime. These hot spots are generally larger in size and are also well known by both the police department and the citizens.

More challenging are emerging hot spots. Emerging hot spots tend to bloom in an area for a while and then dissipate or move. The hot spot may be in effect for a few days or a few months. Regardless, it is an area in need of police attention. The job of the embedded criminologist is to predict where these crime hot spots are most likely to occur based on past events and direct resources to those locations to suppress and prevent future crime. In effect, the job is to predict where we need to extinguish a bloom of crime as it is first occurring.

Using a continuous process improvement approach, the specific methodology for developing predicted hot spots has evolved over the last five years. The current method relies on a harm reductions philosophy. The harm reduction approach to policing is focused on reducing the amount of harm crime does to the citizens in any neighborhood. Different crimes are assigned different “weights” based on the severity of the crime. For example, an aggravated assault (a felony crime) is assigned a “harm value” approximately three times greater than simple assault (a misdemeanor crime). Harm values were derived from sentencing guidelines. Sentencing guidelines were chosen because they represent the collective public view of the severity of different crimes.

Crime, and therefore harm, are not evenly or randomly distributed about the city. Using a computer algorithm, the embedded criminologist identifies those areas where harm concentrates in the form of a hot spot. A harm value is then calculated for each hot spot. These hot spots are used by the operational lieutenants (patrol, community response, and investigations) to set a policing plan for the next two weeks.

Command and operational staff gather every two weeks in a Geo Meeting to make decisions about operations for the next two weeks. The results of the embedded criminologist predictive analysis is presented and decisions are made about deployments based on the available resources and priorities of the department. In this Geo Meeting the embedded criminologist evaluates the results of past operational deployments and presents the selected hot spots for directed patrol operations for the next two weeks.
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The Roanoke Valley HOPE Initiative reached more than 150 participants by the end of 2017, an outstanding achievement since the project is still less than 18 months old.

Started in early 2016 as a consortium of agencies, non-profits, and treatment providers to fight the growing opioid epidemic, the HOPE Initiative formally launched in August 2016 and is administered out of the Bradley Free Clinic. The initiative’s aim is to help those suffering from the disease of substance use disorder find pathways to treatment and recovery. Entirely volunteer driven, the initiative’s operating hours are Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. The initiative also offers a “Drop-In Monday” at the clinic, which is the second Monday of every month between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. The advantage of the Drop-In Mondays is that all volunteer “angels” and other key members of the program are on-site at the Bradley Free Clinic, eliminating any potential wait that might come with a visit during regular operating hours.

The “angels” are specially trained volunteers who walk, hand in hand, with each participant through the process. Volunteers known as “triage specialists” also assist during the process. They are trained to give participants specific