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2021 REPORT



Prepared by

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Relations*

&

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Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Antelope Valley Stations Community Engagement Report

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Introduction

History of the Settlement Agreement

In 2011, the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) began a two-year investigation into the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) in response to community complaints about potential violations of the Fair Housing Act in the Antelope Valley (AV), consisting of Lancaster and Palmdale Sheriff Stations. Upon completing the investigation, the DOJ alleged a pattern or practice of discriminatory policing, unlawful searches and seizures, and violations of the Fair Housing Act.

Although the LASD did not admit or agree with the DOJ's findings, the LASD was committed to ensuring the Department was functioning at an exceptional level and maintained positive relationships with all its communities. In April of 2015, the LASD entered into a Settlement Agreement with the DOJ. The goal of the Settlement Agreement was to ensure police services were delivered in compliance with the Constitution and laws of the United States.

In addition to creating an LASD AV/DOJ Compliance Unit, the Settlement Agreement listed over 100 agreed upon reforms related to training, improved community outreach efforts, and data collection/analysis. The LASD works with the DOJ and an independent monitoring team, who oversee the LASD's efforts toward satisfying the terms of the agreement.

This report covers the "Community Engagement" section of the Settlement Agreement. It serves as an assessment of police-community relations in the Antelope Valley. Additional compliance efforts regarding the remainder of the Settlement Agreement can be found in the Monitoring Team's Semi-Annual reports, which are accessible on the LASD website (www.lasd.org/antelopevalleycomplianceunit), along with a copy of the Settlement Agreement, a summary of the mandates, and additional background information.

Community Advisory Committee Overview

Lancaster and Palmdale Stations established their own Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to build trust, enhance transparency and promote dialogue between local law enforcement and the community. Both stations continued to work diligently with their respective CAC's to build trust within their communities. The CAC's consist of members who represent the diversity of our communities. Members of the CAC have a nexus to the city they represent either through living in the area or through employment.

Members from different geographic regions, ethnicities, faiths, and members of the LGBTQ+ community were all considered when selecting CAC members. We believe our CAC's are genuinely reflective of the diverse communities we serve. Some CAC

members have been members for many years, a few from the beginning. Many of these CAC members are very beneficial to the progress of the CAC. Some CAC members have built relationships with advocacy groups who bring community concerns to them. The CAC then brings the community concerns to the respective station captains or arranges meetings with the captains to address the concerns.

The CAC members meet monthly with station personnel, including the station's respective captains and designated sergeants and deputies. These meetings allow CAC members to bring the concerns and issues from the community directly to the LASD. The meetings result in a mutual benefit of providing a better understanding for both the LASD and the community as they aim to address the community's concerns efficiently.

Both CACs host quarterly Town Hall meetings to discuss various topics of concern and report on the progress and efforts made by the LASD. They also organize events involving the LASD and the community to create more opportunities for law enforcement personnel to interact with community members in a positive forum. These meetings occur in Palmdale, Lancaster, and the surrounding unincorporated areas. CAC meetings allow Lancaster and Palmdale Station deputies the opportunity to discuss various concerns with the community. Community members are invited to come and listen and ask questions of station deputies. Before and after the meetings, community members can speak directly with the station captains and deputies.

Both stations continue to work diligently with their respective CAC's to build trust within their communities.

The CAC's writes an annual report regarding their efforts for the year, including recommendations for LASD. Community members can find their published reports on Lancaster and Palmdale Sheriff's Station's websites.



Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Core Values

- **Lead with Compassion, Service with Humility and Courageously Seek Justice for All.**



Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Mission Statement

- **The Mission of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is to partner with the community to proactively prevent crime, enforce the law fairly and enhance the public's trust through transparency and accountability.**
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Lancaster Station Introduction

The City of Lancaster is a community of approximately 174,000 located approximately one hour north of Los Angeles. There is a vast selection of attainable housing and people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds calling Lancaster home. Lancaster City contracts with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) for public safety. Lancaster Sheriff's Station has the largest patrol area at over 600 square miles, covering the entire northeast portion of the Los Angeles County: deputies patrol from Neenach to the west (meeting up with Santa Clarita Station's patrol area), up to County line to the north and east (meeting up with Kern County at Avenue A and San Bernadino County out past Lake Los Angeles, respectively), and down to Palmdale Station's patrol area to the south. The communities of Antelope Acres, Hi Vista, Roosevelt, and most of Quartz Hill are included in this patrol area. Deputies utilize 12 maps to locate residences and respond to a call. Most other LASD station areas only cover a small section on one page of a map of the city and/or county.

Lancaster Station has approximately 190 sworn staff members. This sworn staff consist of sergeants, lieutenants, detectives, and patrol deputies along with one captain. Most of which live within the city areas they patrol. Lancaster Station is always looking for new deputies to work this vast area, but due to its relentless and unforgiving climate, combined with 700+ calls for service per day, many staff members often move on to other assignments and share the wealth of knowledge which they have obtained from patrolling the busy Lancaster patrol areas.

As mentioned above, many Lancaster Station deputies live within the communities they serve. These deputies have extracurricular activities outside of their employment with LASD. Some deputies are coaches for youth soccer, baseball, or football programs, as well as high school football. Other deputies are referees, spiritual leaders, and youth group leaders. Many of the deputy's children are also on the same sports teams as community members children and attend the same schools. Community members learn about the deputy's employment and engage with them in an off-duty capacity. Through these sporting events, the community members develop friendships with law enforcement staff which will last for many years, even after their kids are grown.



Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

The Lancaster CAC is comprised of seven civilian representatives who act as a liaison between the Lancaster Sheriff's Station and the communities it serves. The intent of the Lancaster CAC is to build a better understanding between the public and the Lancaster Sheriff's Station personnel, through education and communication.



The Settlement Agreement requires the Lancaster Station to support quarterly public meetings of the CAC to discuss the progress or compliance with the Agreement and receive community feedback. The CAC hosted its second quarter Town Hall Meeting on June 22, 2021. This meeting was held in-person and streamed via Facebook Live. There was an average of twenty to forty community members in attendance at each quarterly meeting. Also, these meetings offered the community members the opportunity to meet and ask the deputies in attendance questions.

The topics of discussion at these meetings included the provisions of the Settlement Agreement, Lancaster Station's Crime Prevention Strategy, domestic violence information, vehicle thefts, the rise in theft of catalytic converters, the assault of a student of the LGBTQ+ community on a school campus, school resource deputies, and the marijuana grow houses in the County areas. These concerns have been verbally raised by the community, who felt victimized by the rise in crime. The marijuana grow houses were so large that they brought attention to all of Los Angeles County. The Sheriff's Department announced to the community how they would attack this rising problem and what the community could do to remain safe.

Each year, the CAC issues its own report that updates the community regarding the ongoing efforts to meet the requirements of the settlement agreement and provides recommendations to the LASD. Lancaster Station is truly appreciative of all the efforts given by the Lancaster CAC.

The Lancaster CAC published its July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021, annual report. The report addressed some of the community concerns, such as crime and quality of life, that were discussed during the quarterly public meetings. Lancaster station deputies were present during these quarterly public meetings and addressed the community members that were present. The deputies encouraged the public to be active participants in keeping their neighborhoods safe and educated the community on ways to minimize their chances of becoming a victim of a crime.

The CAC listed recommendations for Lancaster Sheriff's Station within its annual report. Such recommendations as "recruitment of African American deputies, Coffee with a

Deputy, Community Engagement efforts, and Spanish-language at public events.” Lancaster Station provided a written response to the CAC’s recommendations, both of which reports can be found on LASD’s website¹.

In response to the recommendation for the recruitment of African American Deputies, Lancaster Station has conducted outreach to all custody deputies at LASD jail facilities to prepare them for patrol. Lancaster Station has also participated in deputy recruitment events throughout the Lancaster community, encouraging all races to apply with the LASD.

Lancaster Station addressed the CAC’s recommendation regarding the coffee with a deputy event and our community engagement efforts. Lancaster Station will make an effort to utilize safe alternative locations throughout all of Lancaster to host free coffee and dialogue.

Lancaster Station has multiple certified bilingual personnel, who will be present at LASD hosted events. Lancaster Station will ensure the announcement flyers indicate that Spanish translation will be available.

Community Engagement Events

Throughout 2021, Lancaster Station personnel continued their community engagement strategies with the ongoing development of a better relationship and partnership with the citizens they serve. The Covid-19 Pandemic continued through a significant portion of the year, impacting the station activities significantly. Many staff members were out sick with Covid-19 for lengthy periods, some with everlasting illnesses. The station did adapt to the circumstances by continuing to attend special events via “Zoom” and attending in person events when applicable.



Lancaster Station deputies remained dedicated and found creative ways to continue their community engagement efforts. Many community engagement events became virtual, such as “Coffee with a Deputy”. Lancaster Station conducted twelve Coffee with a Deputy events, which had approximately twenty to fifty attendees.

Deputies discussed topics such as bicycle safety while on the roadway. During the Halloween season, deputies educated community members on how to inspect their children’s candy to keep their children safe. During the holiday season, deputies instructed the community members on the importance of not leaving valuables and gifts

¹ lasd.org/lancaster/#community_advisory_reports

in their vehicles while shopping. The community has found these events and discussions to be helpful in preventing victimization.

Lancaster Station hosted four “Coffee with a Commuter” events during the early morning hours. This allowed deputies who work the early morning shifts to engage with the community. These social gatherings provided a casual atmosphere where we discussed such topics as parking vehicles in a well-lit area and how not to become a victim of catalytic converter thefts. Deputies provided proactive strategies while drinking a hot cup of coffee with an average of approximately 10 attendees.



During 2021, twelve “Business Before Breakfast” events were conducted. Local business owners would get together to advertise their businesses over a hot breakfast. Deputies and the community relations staff would attend these meetings and talk with business owners about safety protocols for the businesses and their staff. There was always a good turnout (approximately twenty to thirty attendees) of deputies and local business owners combined. The meetings allowed Lancaster Station to network with business owners to discover new events for deputies to attend, bond with the community, and teach proactive policing strategies to keep businesses safe.

Lancaster Station deputies partnered with “Valley Oasis” at a local church to discuss the topic of domestic violence. With approximately ten to twenty attendees, deputies discussed law enforcement’s role and options available to victims of domestic violence, such as shelters. This event showed to be extremely helpful to the community in addressing an emotional situation.

Lancaster Station continued to use social media platforms to publicize safety messages, seek the public’s assistance, and promote upcoming community events. They also announced the “Community Survey” through social media (Facebook, Instagram, Nixle) to seek more information from community members on the performance of Lancaster Station.

Community Relations Events

Lancaster Station's Community Relations staff has largely relied on business donations, the City of Lancaster resources, and local non-profit organizations to help organize and host large community events. These events in addition to the many annual city events, (Boulevard Farmer's Markets, Field of Drafts, Haunt at the Hanger, Christmas Holiday Parade and National Night Out) provided the community with direct deputy interaction, allowing proactive community policing strategies and information, such as food/shelter resources and crime prevention safety plans.



Lancaster Station deputies attended several virtual student workshops which were hosted by one of our CAC members, Cynthia Lehman (Professor at Antelope Valley College). The deputies were able to address any concerns impacting the youth. The deputies were asked questions related to traffic stops, career advice, Sheriff's Department procedures and why they chose the profession. The deputies reviewed common violations of the vehicle code, such as tinted windows, no front plate and driver's view obstructions. Shunnon Thomas, also a CAC member, held a virtual Black History Workshop where he invited several Black deputies who are currently assigned to Antelope Valley Stations as guest speakers. This workshop helped provide those who attended a better understanding of law enforcement procedures as well as introduced them to some of the deputies who patrol their neighborhoods.

In October, the Lancaster Station deputies attended "Trunk or Treat" events where they discussed Halloween safety protocols, passed out candy to the youth, took pictures with several kids who were wearing Halloween costumes and talked to the families in attendance about law enforcement roles.



Several deputies also attended an event hosted by the City of Lancaster at Jethawks Stadium called "Haunt at the Hanger." Deputies walked amongst the crowd while interacting with the community. We also had a booth set up where deputies and the community relations staff handed out candy to children and took pictures with the kids next to our Sheriff's Humvee. This event brought out nearly three-thousand community members who were all decked out in their best Halloween costumes.

In December, Lancaster Station's annual "Stuff a Humvee" event with Target had the most considerable success in gathering toys for the less fortunate during the holiday season. The community helped Lancaster Station collect a record-breaking thirty-six large bags of toys, which were all distributed to local Lancaster area children. The look on the children's faces was priceless when they received their new toy. Families from all over the city and county areas participated. The children could take one toy of their choice until nothing was left. Every year it is always a fantastic sight to see.



These interactions revealed to the community members that some deputies assigned to Lancaster Station are members of their own neighborhoods and are genuinely invested in providing the best possible service to the community.

Community Engagement Successes

Lancaster Station has succeeded in overcoming our 2020 obstacles in various ways. The first success was managing our 2020 staffing shortages by allocating two-person cars to patrol the city areas. Although a two-person car reduces the number of vehicles within the city, it makes up for the extended response times to specific calls for service where two deputies are required to handle. This results in getting reports completed faster and responding to a priority incident without waiting for an additional one-person unit for backup, since there are already two deputies in the vehicle.

In our 2020 Community Engagement report, LASD mentioned interactions with local advocacy groups and the challenges in setting up meetings to discuss goals. In September of 2021, Lancaster Station Captain John Lecrivain held a meeting with the president of Cancel the Contract (CTC), at which time they discussed the CTC's concerns. The CTC explained to the captain they wanted the deputies removed from the schools; however, they also wanted the funding from their removal to be redirected to other school resources such as psychiatrists and counseling for mental health and drug rehabilitation.

The Lancaster Station Captain and the CTC member had a productive discussion on whether law enforcement should or should not be present on school grounds. This interaction demonstrated that Lancaster Station must continue to have these effective conversations with activists to hear their side and gain a better understanding of their views. After the discussion, phone numbers were exchanged to encourage future open dialogue between both parties. As a result of this open conversation, Lancaster Station has gained a better understanding of what the CTC is trying to achieve and how we can work together toward a positive goal and outcome for our community. Although

Lancaster Station had only one meeting with the CTC during the 2021 year, we look forward to future discussions and how we can work together in the future.

As the Antelope Valley's homeless population continues to rise, community-based organizations provide numerous resources as well as support several homeless shelters. Every effort is made to help all of those in need. Lancaster Station worked with the Volunteers of America (VOA) homeless shelter with the goal to provide housing for the homeless. The VOA has given the authorization to allow LASD deputies first access to four beds (2 males, 2 females) daily if the deputy escorts the homeless person into the shelter. This collaboration allows field deputies to speed up the process of getting the homeless housed allowing them an opportunity to restart their life.

In January 2021, Lancaster Station Community Relations staff met with a company called "ALTO," which provides legal services and a fine-tuned method of information gathering to support law enforcement. To clarify, Alto teaches the businesses they contract with what to expect when deputies arrive to take a police report. Recent meetings with Alto suggested the store employees were unfamiliar with what type of information was needed to file a crime report. The community relations deputies held meetings between the Alto staff and the field deputies to discuss the pertinent information needed. This resulted in a smoother process and less anxiety for the staff managing the store when interacting with field deputies. The Alto staff attended shift briefings to reach out to the field deputies assigned to all three shifts. This exchange has proven to be very successful with engaging the local businesses.

The City of Lancaster was hit hard with catalytic converter thefts. This concern was brought to Lancaster Station's attention due to a significant increase in theft reports. As an alternative to combat such theft, Lancaster Station hosted two "Etch and Catch Events." During these events, Lancaster Station collaborated with the local Ram Truck Center and a local church in setting up multiple bays to etch the license plate number into the actual catalytic converter. The purpose of this is in the event we find the stolen catalytic converter, it can be traced back to a victim, which will, in turn, allow for a higher prosecution rate. The catalytic converter "Etch and Catch Event" was such a huge success for Lancaster Station that it resulted in over 120 cars showing up to be etched.



Community Engagement Obstacles


In 2021, Lancaster Station continues to press forward in our efforts to improve our relationship with our community, however, we still have encountered several obstacles. An obstacle from 2020 that still presents as an obstacle in 2021 are national incidents involving other law enforcement agencies across the nation. The result of such incidents continues to degrade the public's trust in law enforcement. Similarly, to 2020, Lancaster Station had some noteworthy incidents that received nationwide attention through social media

The LASD understands that the community has requested to quickly release information surrounding force incidents. During any ongoing investigations, LASD works towards ways to find a balance between being transparent and providing accurate information to the public, while maintaining the investigation's integrity. Often, the latter is viewed as being secretive or deceitful by the public. Law enforcement can only remedy negative views toward transparency by engaging with community members in meaningful discussions and dialogue that fosters understanding. We must build the foundation of the community's confidence so that our relationships and the trust already established continue and endure during trying situations.

The LASD will facilitate open dialog with our community, allowing them to express their concern, listen with empathy, and strive for understanding. The LASD has made strides toward evolving and meeting the expectations of the community by utilizing the ideals of Restorative Justice. We are continuing to encourage the deputies to broaden their view of "engagement" to extend beyond the planned community engagement events. Meeting citizens on traffic stops, calls for service, or running into them at a coffee shop can all be opportunities to make a positive impact and influence on our community. For example, our deputies are working toward consistency regarding their professional demeanor on traffic stops including introducing themselves upon making contact and telling the citizen why they were stopped. These changes can result in a positive community engagement experience and build trust with the citizens.

As stated in our 2020 report, Lancaster Station remains one of the busiest stations within LASD. Although station deputies attend community events throughout their patrol shift, at times they may be required to leave in order to respond to calls for service. This can make it challenging to have a meaningful community engagement between the deputies and the community members attending the event; however, the deputies have and will continue to make every effort possible to ensure the time they do spend with our community is an everlasting connection. Also, an obstacle for our deputies is the lack of community engagement events we can host during the early morning hours when much of the community is asleep.

In August 2021, Lancaster Station's Community Advisory Committee needed to be restructured due to the loss of long-time members and new community outreach strategies. Lancaster Station was in the process of finding new members to fill the



vacancies on the committee and to broaden the scope of outreach to the community. This has created an obstacle for Lancaster Station as we continue to lose members and attempt to recruit new members. The remaining members face taking on extra projects and added stress. Although Lancaster Station still utilizes social media and word of mouth to share information with the community, the lack of committee members' consistency has negatively impacted the amount of information being gathered and given from the public and to Lancaster Station.

Recommendations For Future Improvement

Lancaster Station is always evolving and committed to improving our relationship with the public we serve.

Lancaster Station has added the Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) Program at our station jail. ATI is a new program that allows adults to take drug and alcohol rehabilitation in place of incarceration. The new program allowed two Tarzana Treatment Center employees to be physically stationed at the Lancaster Sheriff's Station jail. Unfortunately, the employees of the center lacked knowledge of law enforcement procedures, which resulted in miscommunication on the objective of getting help for the arrestees.

Lancaster Station personnel also did not fully understand how the ATI program functioned or the actual goal. Once these concerns were identified, they were corrected through shift briefings and informational emails. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a zero bail emergency release order was established. Throughout 2021, The ATI program was halted due to narcotic violations being cited out in the field. Arrestees were no longer at the time given the opportunity to benefit from such a life-altering program. Entering into 2022, the program is still in place and offered to the arrestees who qualify. We will continue to work alongside ATI, with the goal of having an alternative to jail. As the COVID-19 restrictions begin to lift, Lancaster Station will further improve its outreach of the ATI program, by addressing arrestees in the field regarding the program. This program has shown to be a means of improving community engagement as a discussion topic to show our community that Lancaster Station will be utilizing other alternatives than just incarceration.

In discussion, it was brought to our attention by one of our CAC members, the LBGTQ+ Community requested we attend their events in plain clothes due to the uniform being a little intimidating. Most deputies who attend such events are on active patrol, which means they must respond to calls for service in full uniform while working a patrol assignment. Lancaster Station looks forward to building a positive relationship with the LBGTQ+ community and will look for opportunities to send plain clothes deputies to future events, with a goal to build trust and comfort to all who see a deputy in uniform.

Lancaster Station will also seek out LGBTQ+ workshops, training and/or community events that will provide law enforcement with the knowledge to help our community.


Lancaster Station's CAC and clergy positions are in need of additional members. The community relations team has reached out to the community through social media and advertised openings for the CAC and clergy. As a result of having the CAC and the clergy reach out to the community and their congregations, we have received several applications in an attempt to reach full staffing. Lancaster Station will strive to improve the CAC by increasing staffing and expanding diversity to reach out to an ever-changing community and their concerns. We believe by expanding the CAC, it will allow for a more streamlined approach to reach our goal to include unity and addressing the concerns between law enforcement and the community.



Body-Worn Cameras (BWC) were introduced to Lancaster Station deputies in 2020, which all deputies are required to wear during public contact. The LASD's desired outcome for the use of BWC is to give the community the opportunity to view the situation through the eyes of the deputy who was faced with a challenging, fast-evolving situation. The BWC footage provides the scene and surrounding atmosphere which shows the community a better view of how the incident unfolded and what possibly contributed to the outcome.

The LASD strives for the use of BWC's to provide the community a sense of reassurance that law enforcement can and will be held accountable for their actions, which the LASD believes will help increase the public's trust. BWC's has been a successful tool for the LASD, but as technology and laws continue to evolve the LASD will push toward future improvement by reviewing policies related to BWC and implementing any necessary technology updates.

In 2020, the public verbally demanded the LASD provide more information related to critical incidents and increase our transparency with the public. Lancaster Station has diligently worked with investigators to provide Critical Incident Briefings to the public for noteworthy incidents. Moving in the direction of future improvement, Lancaster Station will seek additional methods for quickly releasing critical information to our community, such as utilizing the CAC and social media. Lancaster Station recognizes the need to increase awareness of our events and policies throughout the community. Lancaster Station will continue to reach out to available community resources, such as the community's religious leaders, local schools, and business owners, to generate more participation in local events and active participation within our CAC.



The Settlement Agreement² stated how the LASD needs to enhance its relationship with the youth and communities of color. Lancaster Station strives to continue its outreach to both youth and communities of color. Our future improvement goals to accomplish such outreach would be by reaching out to organizations that center on youth development, such as Project Joy, S.P.O.T., and the YMCA. and minorities for guidance and support.

An issue in 2020 was maintaining records from attended events to be utilized in our Community Engagement Reports. Our goal for future improvement, Lancaster Station personnel attending community events will start documenting how many were in attendance, what concerns were brought up by the public, and what the LASD's response to those concerns. For future events, personnel attending community events will have a form to complete and submit, this will allow for better future reporting.

² ¶ 88: All sworn personnel at the Antelope Valley stations shall actively attend community meetings and events. LASD agrees to develop a plan for such attendance based on the results of annual community satisfaction surveys and feedback from the civilian panel, discussed below. The plan shall indicate the number and types of events to be attended on a regular basis and take into account the need to **enhance relationships with particular groups within the community, including, but not limited to, youth, and communities of color.**

Palmdale Station Introduction

Palmdale Station patrols an area of 770 square miles with a population just under 200,000 people of varied backgrounds. Within this area is the most diverse topography in all of Los Angeles County. It can be snowing at Mountain High Ski Resort in Wrightwood, and at the same time, it can be 90 degrees on the valley floor.

Temperatures in the summer can reach as high as 110 degrees in the summer and as low as 20 degrees in the winter, with a chilling wind factor as high winds typically whip through the valley at 15 to 30 mph and has experienced even higher wind gusts.

Looking at Palmdale Station's area on a map of Los Angeles County gives you an idea of how large our area really is compared to the rest of the County. The area includes the incorporated City of Palmdale. Along with the City of Palmdale, our service area reaches far west to the communities of Elizabeth Lake, Green Valley and Leona Valley; east out to the San Bernardino County Line and the communities of Littlerock, Pearblossom, Llano, Crystalair, Wrightwood and Big Pines; and south into the communities of Acton, Agua Dulce and Vazquez Rocks. Along with the previously mentioned communities, Palmdale Station also patrols along the Angeles Crest Highway.

Palmdale Station has approximately 200 sworn staff members. This sworn staff consists of sergeants, lieutenants, detectives, and patrol deputies along with one captain. Many of our dedicated members live within the city areas they patrol. They have a vested interest in their community and are frequently involved in many extracurricular activities.



Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

On March 4, 2021, the first quarter town hall meeting was held via Zoom due to the pandemic. The CAC members fielded questions from approximately twenty-five community members with deputies. Some of the discussions centered around the George Floyd incident, use of force, relations between law enforcement and the community. Community members asked questions regarding LASD's use of force and bias free/constitutional policing training.



The third quarter town hall meeting occurred on July 1, 2021, at the Larry Chimbole Cultural Center. The meeting was broadcasted live on the CAC's Facebook and Instagram pages and reached approximately 1900 people. There also were many in attendance, with around 100 attendees between citizens, CAC members, and Sheriff's Department personnel, including Sheriff Alex Villanueva.



Since Sheriff Villanueva took office two years ago, he reminded citizens that transparency and accountability are at the top of his agenda. He explained the Sheriff's Department has many challenges, several of which were affecting Antelope Valley residents like illegal marijuana grows, homelessness, and a rise in violent crimes. Sheriff Villanueva disclosed the increase of homicides in the first six months of the year and a surge in the illegal use of firearms. The Sheriff indicated the Department is concentrating its efforts on illegal marijuana growers until every criminal cartel-sponsored grow operation is

eradicated. These efforts are collaborative between the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, San Bernardino Sheriff's Department, the District Attorney's Office, and the Drug Enforcement Agency.

Community members were given the opportunity to ask the Sheriff questions. A community member asked the Sheriff how he will address the lack of trust between Black and Hispanic community members and the Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff reflected upon the town hall, indicating that community gatherings such as town hall meetings will help improve the relationship with open discussion. The Sheriff was asked, what the community could do to stop abuse by deputies towards Black and Hispanic community members. For instance, a simple traffic stop could end in a death of an individual stopped, especially when deputies falsify the police report. The Sheriff stated falsifying a report would result in the termination of that deputy. He also

indicated that the Department collects data regarding all deputy contacts to ensure there is no abuse.

A community member asked what they should do if they experience a bad encounter with a deputy in the field. The Sheriff responded by saying anytime you have a bad encounter with a deputy, you should call the station and file a complaint. They can rewind the bodycam video and see what happened. The station keeps a log of all calls generated to the station, including hang-ups. He encouraged residents to call and complain, indicating that if no call is placed, there is nothing the Department can do about something if it is not reported.³

A question was directed to the Sheriff related to transparency between the Sheriff's Department, the community, and the Community Advisory Committee. The Sheriff said he is a huge advocate of transparency. He has ensured "LASD.ORG" provides information that can be legally listed on the website to make it available to the community, which was not a service available by the previous Sheriff.

Community Engagement Events

In the first half of 2021, community engagement was affected tremendously at Palmdale Station due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. A few of the reoccurring events hosted by Palmdale Sheriff's Station during 2021 were "Coffee with a Cop," which was at various local businesses. These scheduled events began in June and continued monthly through the end of the year. At these events, citizens, deputies, and detectives attended and discussed crime trends and addressed community concerns.

It's challenging for deputies who work the early morning hours to attend these events and engage with the community. Knowing this, many of these events were conducted with the commuting public. Deputies focused on high traffic areas, such as popular gas stations, donut shops, and the train/bus depot. During these events, Deputies engaged commuters as they were grabbing their morning cup of coffee. A popular topic among commuters was traffic-related issues. Deputies often listened to stories regarding experiences the commuters had on the road with other drivers.

³ **How to make a complaint or commendation** - You may make a complaint/commendation in person, or by calling or writing to any Sheriff's station, jail or facility. If you write, your complaint or commendation does not have to be on any special form. When you make your complaint or commendation in person, ask for the Watch Commander or person in charge. The Watch Commander will listen to your matter and fill out what we call a Service Comment Report. For additional information on filing a complaint call 800-698-TALK.



Palmdale Station participated in seventeen “Coffee with a Cop” events. The average attendance was thirty people, with the lowest event having seven people and the highest having approximately fifty people. It is a reasonable estimate that Deputies engaged with about 500 community members at these “Coffee with a Cop” events.

One of the locations which hosted the event was the Antelope Valley Transit Authority Bus/Train

Depot in cooperation with “Starbucks” and “Yum Yum Donuts.” At this event, deputies provided donated coffee and donuts to commuters. The conversation centered on topics related to vehicle theft from warming up unattended vehicles, parking safety and vehicle security due to recent thefts of catalytic converters. They also discussed the reliability and safety of public transportation on the Metrolink trains.

Palmdale Station Captain Shaffer hosted two “Coffee with a Captain” events broadcasted on the Palmdale Sheriff’s Station’s Facebook page. During this event, community members were given the opportunity to express any comments or concerns within the comment section of the live chat, however, no comments or concerns were presented. The first event was held on February 8, 2021 and was viewed by over 4000 people. Captain Shaffer talked about crime stats and crime trends from 2020. He also spoke on national demonstrations, which resulted in several non-violent protests in Palmdale.

He discussed the two large wildfires that affected the Palmdale area, “The Lake Fire” and “The Bobcat Fire.” He briefly talked about the Settlement Agreement, advising how the Antelope Valley deputies attend Bias-Free and Constitutional Policing training. He reported that the Sheriff’s Department has changed many policies and systems to comply with the AV Settlement Agreement. The Sheriff’s Department is committed in its efforts to obtain complete compliance.

On April 7th, 2021, Palmdale Station Captain Shaffer hosted the second “Coffee with a Captain” live-stream event on Facebook. The topic of this event was “Mental Health,” which was viewed by over 1000 people. There were two guest speakers: Judy Coopersburg from Mental Health American and Sergeant Barclay from the Sheriff’s Department’s Mental Evaluation Team. They talked about the mental



health services offered and how the Sheriff's Department responds to these calls.



Palmdale Station participated in two "Business Watch" events. They conducted one event at Home Suites Hotel, where approximately twenty-five people attended. Deputies discussed staff safety, fraud, and counterfeit money during the event. Another Business Watch event was at "Pedros Mexican & Sea Food," where approximately twenty-five community members attended. At this meeting, State Assemblyman Tom Lackey attended, in addition to the City of Palmdale Officials. Several concerns were raised about the frequency of thefts and how to report crimes.

Many businesses had decided not to call the station to report the thefts, believing nothing could be done. The businesses were encouraged to call and file reports. They were advised that this information could be used by the station detectives to conduct follow up investigations, help identify suspects, and obtain warrants for their arrest. The businesses managers and employees were pleased to hear this information. As a result, calls to the station increased and station detectives were able to develop more leads in identifying the people committing these thefts in both the local area and other Sheriff's jurisdictions. Palmdale deputies have followed up with local businesses throughout their shifts to spread the word regarding the benefits of filing a police report.

Palmdale Station deputies attended monthly Community Town Hall / Council meetings in the unincorporated areas of Agua Dulce, Green Valley, Acton, Juniper Hills, Littlerock, Elizabeth Lake, and Lake Hughes with an average attendance of between 10-20 community members. These monthly meetings allowed deputies to hear the residents' concerns. The deputies were available to provide feedback to the residents. These meetings started on Zoom and transitioned to in-person at the beginning of the year. Concerns brought forth by citizens during these meetings included: increased traffic on snow days, commuting public, speeding and rolling through stop signs, illegal events including weddings, illegal marijuana grows, illegal dumping, off-road vehicle riders trespassing, and illegal hunting on local lakes.

Community Relations Events

Palmdale Station deputies continue to partner with community-based organizations such as South Antelope Valley Emergency Services (SAVES) and Victory Outreach to assist with passing out food to those in need while engaging with citizens and volunteers. Palmdale Station deputies participated in distributing food from the Los Angeles County Regional Food Bank to thousands of community members at Domenic Massari Park.



At the beginning of the year, Palmdale Station deputies took donated toys to children in an RV park in the unincorporated area of Agua Dulce. The deputies handed out the toys to approximately twenty young children, while speaking with them and their parents about several concerns that were specific to their community. The community has long struggled with many residents with methamphetamine addiction. Deputies provided resources to help the community assist others in need of recovery.



Palmdale Station deputies participated in the national “Read Across America” program with local elementary school students in the spring. The primary goal of the National Read Across America Program is to promote reading to children. Seven Palmdale Station deputies participated in these five events. Due to the pandemic, students were not in the classroom. Deputies read to students via “Zoom” in cooperation with local schools. The average number of students in attendance was approximately thirty students per

classroom.

During the Summer, Palmdale Sheriff’s Station hosted “Love My Ride” car and motorcycle show in cooperation with Palmdale Auto Mall. The event showcased one hundred sixty cars and thirty motorcycles. Show entries included low riders, hot rods, and even bicycles. Those attending the event enjoyed food trucks, music, and art. This event was open to everyone in the community, including children. Deputies interacted with attendees, showing what law enforcement was about.





Additionally, twenty-five deputies participated in the “National Night Out” at Domenic Massari Park, where there were well over a thousand citizens in attendance. The city of Palmdale promoted this National Event for the community. The purpose of National Night Out is a crime and drug prevention awareness designed to generate support for participation in local anti-crime efforts. This event strengthens the partnership of the community with law enforcement while deterring crime.

Deputies provided proactive solutions to the community related to theft prevention and resources available for drug prevention.



Palmdale deputies participated in several Halloween “Trunk or Treat” events throughout the city and its unincorporated area geared toward the youth in the community. One event was held at Los Amigos Elementary School. Deputies handed out treats to approximately three hundred children in a drive thru. Deputies were also at Quail Valley Elementary School, where they handed out treats

to around one hundred students.

Deputies attended the LASD VIDA youth program graduation and shared stories with youth in the program. One deputy shared his struggles while growing up in the local community. He spoke about changing his ways by surrounding himself with positive friends and role models. Making better choices earned him an athletic scholarship to a local private high school.



Several Palmdale Station deputies participated in a youth “ALL Stars” basketball game. Deputies played a competitive basketball game at this event against the local youth “All-Stars” basketball team. Approximately one hundred community members came out to watch this fun event.

Community Engagement Successes

The American Islamic Institute of the Antelope Valley hosted a breakfast celebrating Ramadan, with over one hundred community members in attendance. Deputies attended and learned about the Muslim community in Palmdale. This event provided the deputies an opportunity to expand their understanding of other cultures and strengthened their partnership with this community.

In August, twenty-one deputies attended the American Islamic Institute of Antelope Valley “Family Fun Day” at Marie Kerr Park. Deputies spoke with Muslim community members while having a casual lunch at the park. These conversations bettered the deputies understanding of their culture and religious practices. Additionally, those in attendance were able to create bonds and network with the community to enhance future contacts. There were over one hundred community members in attendance.

In the months of March and August, Palmdale Station deputies and the City of Palmdale held a Catalytic Converter Theft Prevention event at Camacho Mitsubishi Auto dealership. At these events, deputies provided information regarding why these catalytic converter thefts were occurring and how to prevent them. Residents brought their vehicles to the event and had their vehicle license plate numbers engraved on their catalytic converters by deputies free of charge. Both events had a combined total of approximately one hundred participants. This engagement with the community proved successful in educating the public on how not to keep their property safe.



In 2020, an assessment of Palmdale Station’s community engagement efforts revealed that although public feedback through a community survey, emails, and calls are used to prepare an Annual Crime Prevention Plan, input received through individual contacts between deputies and residents should be improved. In 2021, Palmdale Station had taken that assessment to heart by reaching out to residents for input related to crime that has impacted them, which helped make the Catalytic Converter program a success.

As a result of the feedback gained from the community members at the town hall discussions regarding traffic related concerns, the deputies increased their patrols in the unincorporated area. The community also raised concerns regarding illegal hunting and how to recognize signs of marijuana grows. Lancaster Station contacted Department of Fish and Game to inquire about getting no hunting signs posted. Deputies contacted a few hunters; their hunting licenses and lead-free ammunition were inspected. The community members in the area were informed on how to report marijuana grows and informed about marijuana laws. Many of the tips from the public resulted in search warrant operations at illegal marijuana grow houses.

Community Engagement Obstacles

During the beginning of the year, Palmdale Station was faced with a staffing shortage related to an increase in Covid-19 cases. It's estimated at one point, that nearly half of Palmdale Station personnel were out with Covid-19 or quarantined due to exposures.




This caused deputies to work longer hours and days in order to provide sufficient patrol coverage for the community, which directly affected deputies attending community events early in the year. With the Covid-19 guidelines, businesses were not allowed to have customers meeting inside, which directly affected Palmdale's Community outreach efforts. Palmdale Station had to come up with unconventional ways to reach out to the community to stay engaged.

During the summer of 2021, Palmdale Station's Community Advisory Committee lost a few long-term members and had to look for new members. By losing these members, the new CAC Chairman took on new responsibilities, including the annual CAC report. Palmdale Station was fortunate that former CAC members assisted with locating new CAC members. Unfortunately, two of the new CAC members we were so thankful to gain, had to leave the CAC just after a short time. These members lost their nexus to the city of Palmdale and resigned on their own. These changes impacted the CAC by adding more responsibilities and stress on the remaining active members. Since Palmdale Station relies on the input of a fully functioning CAC to assist with mending the communities trust, we saw this as an obstacle.

Palmdale Station deputies attended the community's "Juneteenth Celebration" at Domenic Massari Park. At the event, deputies discussed crime trends and ways the community can assist LASD with solving crimes. Deputies spoke with local vendors at the event and played football with the children. There were approximately fifty members of the Black community at this event. During this event, Palmdale Station recognizes that members of the Black community don't attend many of LASD's hosted public events. Several individuals in the Black community still struggle with trusting the Department, which was also an issue in 2020. We are continually looking for ways to improve our relationship with all community members and will continue to offer events for all to enjoy.

Lastly, 2021 started with "Neighborhood Watch" meetings conducted via Zoom due to the pandemic. Attendance by the community was not as great as we desired. Access to Zoom was limited by the technology needed to access the program. Additionally, the events were not advertised as well and limited the number of attendees. Many of these Zoom meetings had less than ten people in attendance. For those in the community unable to access the Zoom meetings, the City of Palmdale received emails from the



public. The city answered the questions they could and forwarded the rest to the station to allow the Department an opportunity to respond to the community's concerns. We are anxious to get back to face-to-face meetings for a more personable experience.

Recommendations For Future Improvement

The Neighborhood Watch meetings re-convened in person in April, 2021. One specific meeting was separated into two meetings, English and Spanish, where the main concerns were speeding and the zoning of livestock animals. Palmdale Station had fifteen neighborhood watch meetings with attendance between nine and as high as thirty people.

Some of the concerns at these meetings were vacant homes, abandoned or inoperable recreational vehicles, speeders, and loud parties. Deputies discussed crime trends, crime prevention, crime reporting, and how calls for service were dispatched. They answered questions, including information on obtaining restraining orders and reporting violations. They also provided information on how the community can protect themselves against recent scams. A few responses from the citizens indicated a desire for more regularly scheduled Neighborhood Watch meetings and time for more questions and solutions at these meetings.

In the later part of June, four deputies participated in the "AV Pride Walk" from one coffee shop to another to raise awareness of the LGTBQ+ community. The deputies had the opportunity to discuss law enforcement goals and protecting the community. Palmdale Station noted the LGTBQ+ community as one in need of more interaction and is always looking for ways to improve this relationship. Palmdale Station will make future efforts to engage with LGTBQ+ organizations and together, identify ways to provide support, safety and positively interreact with the community. Palmdale Station will seek training related to LGTBQ+ awareness for all assigned personnel. Becoming more educated would better help Palmdale Station reach out to the LGTBQ+ community.

Palmdale Station relies greatly on the CAC to assist with being the conduit between the community and the station, to present concerns the public would rather not tell the LASD directly, for whatever reason. Palmdale Station is working towards building a strong connection with our community, with the CAC as a tool to increase those efforts. Palmdale Station's goal is to bring the CAC to its true operating compacity, by utilizing social media, local businesses, and churches to advertise open positions within the CAC.

An obstacle from 2020 that has continued into 2021, was youth and Black community members continue to struggle with trusting the LASD. Palmdale Station will continue to

offer outreach programs to all in our community to attend. Palmdale Station plans to speak with minority advocacy groups that are devoted to bringing positive change to our community. This open communication will help not only Palmdale Station but the LASD as a whole to bring new innovative ways of learning and trust.

An issue in 2020 was maintaining records from attended events to be utilized in our Community Engagement Reports. Our goal for future improvement, Palmdale Station personnel attending community events will start documenting how many were in attendance, what concerns were brought up by the public, and what the LASD's response to those concerns. For future events, personnel attending community events will have a form to complete and submit, this will allow for better future reporting.

Antelope Valley Community Partnership Events/Efforts

Lancaster / Palmdale Sheriff Explorers

The Deputy Explorer Program has created a volunteer partnership between youths in our community and law enforcement. Youth community members between 16 and 20 years of age, receive extensive training in an academy setting. They then participate in community affairs and non-hazardous law enforcement activities. Unfortunately, this program was also significantly impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic safety measures. Enrollment in the program dropped for Palmdale and Lancaster Station. Participation in community events and volunteer work was also halted or limited for the first half of the year. As the Covid-19 restrictions were lifted, the program was able to resume to normal levels and focus on providing the training and experiences to assist the youth on becoming more responsible, compassionate, independent, and self-confident young adults.



The explorers serve as ambassadors to their peers and offer another way for us to connect with each other to better understand one another. Recruitment for the program consists of current members spreading the word, school career centers and on social media sites. All youth between the ages of 16 and 20, who want to see what the law enforcement profession has to offer are welcome and encouraged to join.

Lancaster and Palmdale Stations have noticed significant growth in the relationship with the community we serve. LASD looks forward in its efforts to continue to put forth transparency and establish an everlasting bond with community engagements.