When we look at Community Policing efforts across the North American continent, we usually see individual officers assigned to small geographic areas, housed in a variety of foot patrol offices, storefront offices, and offices in apartment buildings, where the officers work with the residents to address the concerns of the community. Sergeant Ralph Johnston, a patrol sergeant in the west end, wondered if the same model could be applied to a massive industrial area - a thousand square blocks, where a multitude of break and enter and theft offenses had been occurring for years.

In a submission to the Divisional Superintendent, Dave Cassels, an ardent supporter of Community Policing, asked this question: Given that the area subject of this concern is a business community, can the philosophy of Community-Based Policing be applied here? The submission included an in-depth study of statistical data which showed that many of the crimes often occurred at repeat locations. The Superintendent agreed that the proposal had considerable merit, and he gave it his support, so the North West Industrial Area Patrol was born.

The next step was to select an officer to work the area. Constable Lance Lillies, who was assigned to the patrol division, volunteered to give this "new" approach a try. He had worked in the area on previous occasions and had arrested a number of criminals for crimes in progress.

When the paperwork was completed, Constable Lillies was assigned to my squad in the Neighborhood Foot Patrol. When Lance visited the Superintendent's office to inquire about his new role and shift scheduling, the superintendent replied, "Crime in the industrial area has been a problem for quite some time, and traditional methods, that is, random patrol and property checks, have done little or nothing to improve the situation. See what you can do." In essence, Lance was given total freedom to use any available tactics and resources.

For the first month, Lance worked businessmen's hours, 9 to 5, Monday through Friday. During this time, he visited hundreds of businesses, paying special attention to those that had been victimized on more than one occasion in the previous year. He persuaded many business owners to improve their security by installing improved lighting and locks. Lance also identified all the 24-hour businesses in his area.
An immediate and somewhat unexpected side-effect of Lance's visits to the business community was the increased reporting of crimes, specifically, many minor thefts and break-ins that had occurred in the preceding months. Many said that they had not filed reports because they felt that police could do little to help or that they were not interested in these petty crimes. Lance encouraged the reporting of these crimes. Those who are hung up on the numbers game may have perceived this as an increase in crime; however, Lance felt that he now had a realistic view of what was happening in his industrial area.

At the end of the first month, Lance scheduled himself to work two weeks of later shifts, from 6 p.m. to 4 a.m., followed by a week of day shifts. He still works these hours, since he feels that he can address both the concerns of the businessmen during the day and deal with the criminal element at night.

**CB radio volunteers**

Realizing that his industrial beat was more than enough work for one person, Lance began identifying additional resources available to him. He first looked to the Community Police Radio Network (CPRN), CB radio enthusiasts who volunteered to assist with a variety of jobs. These people used their own vehicles, equipped with CB’s, and they could be called out to search for missing persons, to monitor parade routes, and to patrol areas where crime was identified as a problem. This unit, which started up in the early 1980’s, is coordinated from Headquarters, but Lance took the 15 or so volunteers assigned to our division under his wing, becoming the self-appointed west-end coordinator.

Lance provided the radio group with basic training in criminal law and surveillance and scheduled them to work with him on Friday and Saturday evenings. He developed a Street Information Report (SIR) to be used exclusively by them to record information on suspicious vehicles in the area. With this system in place, he hit the streets.

In the first two weeks, the CPRN volunteers were responsible for assisting with the arrest of two males who were observed breaking into businesses. They also recorded the license numbers of numerous suspicious vehicles seen in the industrial area in the early morning hours.

**Private security**

After working several weeks in the industrial area on the evening shift, Lance saw that he was not alone out there. This is how he identified his next resource. He noted that many of the larger companies had private security companies make checks of their properties during the night. The security guards in their vehicles were constant visitors to the industrial area. Lance often spoke with these guards and discovered that they saw suspicious vehicles during their patrols, but, at this stage, there was no real system in place for them to forward this information to the police. Lance decided to create such a system.

On his next stretch of day shifts, Lance visited the district offices of each of the security companies that had contracts in the industrial area and asked for their help. Their response was very positive, so then he designed a Street Information Report for the private security companies and delivered a supply to their district offices. He now receives the completed forms from the companies every week, and many active criminals have been identified.

**Spreading the message**

Lance then delivered his first message to the criminal element in the industrial area. The local daily paper did a feature article on the North West Industrial Area Patrol. The message was clear: The property owners and police, along with civilian volunteers, are very active in this area - stay out!
His second message was delivered after arrests. Lance made it quite clear to anyone arrested that they had been under surveillance. The criminal left the police station en route to jail with the impression that the entire area was swarming with police undercover teams and that the industrial area was certainly not the place to visit again.

The third message to criminals came about directly as a result of the work of the CPRN and the security companies. Nobody anticipated that these groups would be so aggressive in identifying suspicious vehicles, and Lance found himself absolutely inundated with SIR's. From the information received, he was able to identify career criminals and other criminals active in the industrial area. The Divisional detectives were interested in the career criminals, but it seemed that there just weren't enough personnel to check out each piece of information.

After a discussion with the detectives - and a little skepticism, Lance started a phone-back policy. When an individual with a criminal record is spotted in the industrial area, he receives a phone call from Lance inquiring about his activity on the night in question. Lance advises the person that he was under surveillance and observed by a team at a given time and place. Now, many of their replies cannot be printed, but the would-be thief certainly knows the police are onto him. Interestingly, those who receive such calls are seldom noted in the area again.

To date, Lance has made 24 criminal arrests for break and enter, and he has recovered close to $60,000 worth of stolen property. Ask him if his North West Industrial Patrol is working, and he'll answer, "Yes." Ask the business community, and they will state that they like having "their cop." I cannot yet say what particular element of Lance's work is making his assignment a success, but initial indications are that the break and enters have decreased, even with the increased crime reporting.

I think Sergeant Johnston's question about whether there was something Lance could do to help has been answered.