



Location:

McMinnville, Ore.,
Police Department

Population:

30,000 Citizens

Challenge:

- Limited community understanding of police efforts
- Budget shortfall for crime analysis
- No automated crime trend visualization

CrimeReports:

- Easy-to-use, public-facing tool
- Automated crime tracking in near real time
- Crime trend visualization clarifies raw crime data

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CrimeReports

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– Chief Ron Noble

CrimeReports Gives Meaning to Raw Data

McMinnville, Ore.

"For years people have been using maps because they recognize that the graphic representation provides something more than just looking at raw data," says Chief Ron Noble of the McMinnville, Ore., Police Department. "When I started 20-plus years ago, there were pins in maps, and everyday someone would come and update the pins in the maps to show where the burglaries or thefts were." But a pin map of burglaries posted in the squad room doesn't help much when you want to track multiple crimes in near real time. And it doesn't give local citizens and community leaders easy access to crime in their neighborhoods. The McMinnville PD wanted a way to provide the community with crime information, as well as track crime data internally, so—without the funding for a full-time crime analyst—they turned to CrimeReports.com.

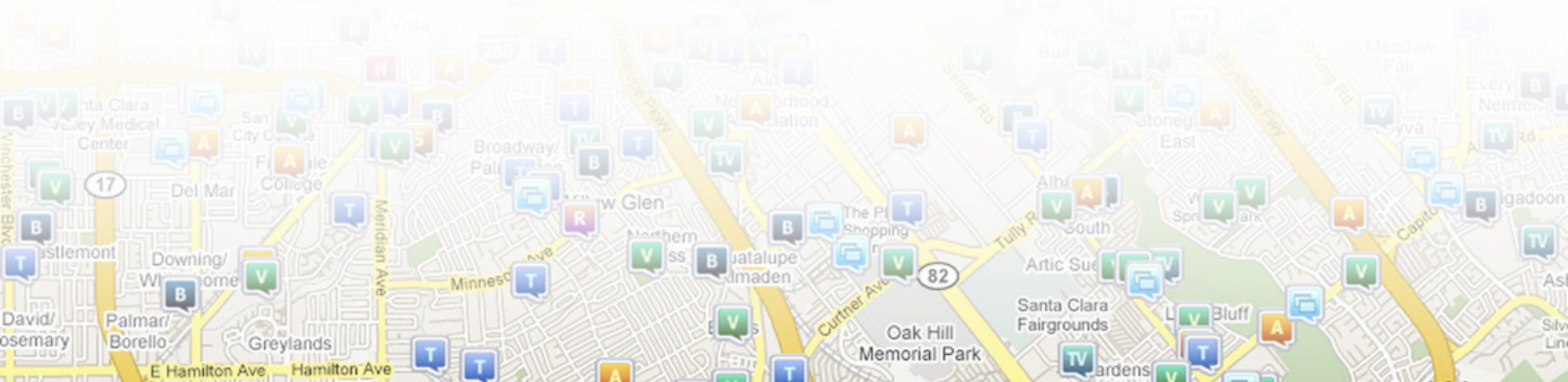
Building an Informed Community

"Half of my job is keeping the community safe, but the other half is building a *feeling* of safety in the community, so people enjoy being here, living here, and visiting here," says Noble. Community members don't really want the police around all the time, but they want to know that officers are busy keeping the community safe. "So there's a balance you need to strike," he says. CrimeReports gives him a tool to communicate incident-level crime data to the public, both so they can be vigilant and so they can feel safe in their community.

In addition, Noble feels that CrimeReports' visualizations are invaluable for communicating with community groups and local leaders. He uses the maps and graphs in community meetings to help local leaders and citizens get a firm understanding of what the police do to keep the city safe. "The community leaders need to know what type of service we provide and how busy we are without burdening them with raw statistics," he says. "For average citizens, it's hard to quantify 30,000 calls for service a year, but if you can give them a map showing 350 calls for service in 3 days, that helps make it real for them." The visualization of those numbers, through CrimeReports, allows community members to get a palpable sense of crime in the community. The result is an increased awareness of threats that may exist in their neighborhoods and lets them know that the police department is working hard for them.

Visualizations Help Catch Criminals

Perhaps most importantly, Chief Noble and the officers of the McMinnville PD get a better perspective on crime through CrimeReports. Not only do they use it in roll call meetings, but



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Noble and his command staff check it regularly to get a feel for their actual call volume and the most frequently occurring crimes. CrimeReports also allows them to see trends in the data that they may not have noticed simply by looking at the raw data.

In fact, it was CrimeReports visualizations that alerted Chief Noble to a rash of burglaries in March 2009. Looking at CrimeReports, he noticed 19 burglaries in a six-week period, compared to a regular occurrence of maybe 1-2/wk. He immediately talked to his command staff. Because they only saw crime statistics when they requested them, no one else had seen the spike. Noble decided to turn the cases over to a trained detective who was able to give in-depth instructions to patrol officers. Upon further investigation, many of the burglaries were related and McMinnville officers were able to capture and prosecute the suspects involved. “That’s one of the advantages of having a graphic representation like CrimeReports,” says Noble. “It allows us to see connections between events that may not seem related at first— from traffic issues to drug issues, theft, and burglary.”

Chief Noble has a practical attitude when it comes to sharing information with the community. “I think it’s pretty common that most people don’t understand all that police departments do,” he says. But CrimeReports is not only helping McMinnville citizens understand what the police department does, it also helps officers track crime and make connections that they couldn’t before. Overall, says Noble, CrimeReports “provides us with a tool to get us headed in the right direction.”

About CrimeReports.com

Serving more than 500 law enforcement agencies across North America, CrimeReports.com is the largest online resource for accurate, up-to-date crime information. CrimeReports offers a family of affordable, easy-to-use software tools for law enforcement agencies to understand crime trends and share up-to-date neighborhood crime data with the public. Community members can access the information for free at www.CrimeReports.com, empowering them to make informed decisions to help improve the safety of their neighborhood and community. CrimeReports services are offered by Public Engines, Inc. For more information, visit www.CrimeReports.com.

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