

Police Fitness Plan Put to the Test

Downey Chief Hopes Incentive to Exercise Will Pay Off

By RICHARD HOLGUIN, Times Staff Writer

DOWNEY—When Police Chief William Martin instituted a new fitness program that rewarded officers with as many as 10 days off a year, his idea was to reduce absenteeism and eventually entice every officer in the 107-member force into peak physical condition.

After more than two years of the program, results are mixed. Only 14 officers qualify as being in good or excellent shape. And sickness-related absenteeism actually jumped in 1985—the first full year of the program—although it dropped last year, according to police records.

Martin said he remains committed to the program. "Watching the morale of our people and noticing these sick changes [in 1986], I'm convinced it's really good," he said. With exercise, people "feel better. They look better and they're happier employees."

He said other benefits—including increased longevity of his officers—will surface in time, and he and program participants remain enthusiastic.

Martin instituted the program in May, 1984, to reduce the cholesterol levels and bulging midriffs of some of his officers, and to develop a healthier force with more strength, stamina and flexibility.

"A guy goes to prison and doesn't have anything to do and works out," Martin explained. "We're getting fat on Winchell's doughnuts and that doesn't work."

The Downey program is modeled after the fitness regime of Dr. Kenneth Cooper, who runs the Aerobics Center in Dallas and authored "The Aerobics Way," a pioneering text in the field.

Martin went to Dallas in 1984, where he learned to test the body for cardiovascular endurance, fat content, flexibility and strength, and to prescribe a diet and exercise routine. About 15 officers have since been trained as instructors.

Tucked away in a back room of the Downey police station is a collection of electronic and mechanical gadgetry, and enough good, old-fashioned iron to make Arnold Schwarzenegger smile.

Six Fitness Categories

The department spent about \$16,500 outfitting the training room, which includes free weights, weight machines, a motorized treadmill and a computerized rowing machine. Most of the money for the equipment came from training funds the state gives to the department, and the Downey Police Officers Assn. contributed about \$5,000, Martin said.

Under the program, an officer's condition is judged by measures in six areas: sit-ups, leg press, bench press, running, stretching and body fat.



RICK CORRALES / Los Angeles Times

Chief William Martin, in exercise room, says program helped him, but there's more to be done.

Please see FITNESS, Page 10

Dream Rises at Last on Site of Epic Blaze

By CARMEN VALENCIA, Times Staff Writer

SANTA FE SPRINGS—The twisted, charred remains of thousands of storage drums that exploded with fury five years ago have long since been hauled away from a triangular-shaped parcel at Imperial Highway and Marquardt Avenue.

A chain-link fence surrounding the property is gone, too, along with the sticky residue left from the spectacular 1981 fire that consumed the entire lot and lit up a midnight sky with 100-foot fireballs.

The lot is taking on a new look now, with the skeletal frame of a new warehouse under construction.

Dream Coming True

"My dream is finally coming true," said William Boyer, owner of Marathon Cartage Co., which will move to the new facility from its current site on Los Nietos Road.

Boyer purchased the three-acre parcel in 1979 to house his toiletries distribution company, but his plans were at first delayed by the discovery of the drums filled with paint and paint by-products; then the site was consumed by a disastrous chemical fire.

The blaze took almost a day to put out, and at its peak was doused with 1 million gallons of water an hour by 28 engine companies. More than 250,000 fish would die from the runoff that poured into Coyote Creek and the San Gabriel River.

But headaches concerning the property didn't stop once the fire was extinguished.

Enmeshed in Lawsuits

The city, former and current property owners, and various local, state and federal agencies became enmeshed in lawsuits and controversies that are finally nearing settlement after more than five years.

A \$1.5-million cleanup by the federal Environmental Protection Agency followed the fire, after officials found that the 12,000 55-gallon drums stored on the property before the fire contained toxic chemicals. It was the second site where federal Superfund money was used for a cleanup because of the potential contamination to nearby businesses and homes.

The federal government is now seeking

Please see EPIC, Page 10



RICK CORRALES / Los Angeles Times

Explosion of 2,000 drums of toxic chemicals sends huge fireball aloft in 1981 incident. Below, same site today. Santa Fe Springs is implementing law requiring businesses to report hazardous substances on premises.



Enrollment Hike Puts School District in Vise

By RITA PYRILLIS, Times Staff Writer

BELLFLOWER—Six years after the Bellflower Unified School District closed half of its 16 schools to cope with declining enrollment, the district now faces a steady enrollment increase in its elementary schools that may prompt district officials to reorganize the schools, according to a superintendent's report.

The report shows that the school system will be unable to handle the projected growth with its existing classrooms, and outlines several options, including reopening some schools.

Although overall student growth in the district has been slow, the superintendent's report predicts that elementary school enrollment—which has increased 23% from 4,043 in 1980-81 to 4,977 in 1986-87—will continue to grow steadily in the next five years until enrollment reaches 5,800 in 1991.

"The changes in our district have not been abrupt, there have been no peaks and valleys," Supt. Kenneth L. Davis said. "But we are at the point where we are having difficulty placing elementary school youngsters, and if the projections are right, we will need to take another look at the organization of our school district."

In 1980—when the district closed seven elementary schools and one junior high school, and integrated grades seven through eight into the district's two high schools—the school board agreed to wait

five years before preparing another report or considering further changes, Davis said.

Other suggestions outlined in the report include installing more portable classrooms, converting one of the two high schools into a seventh- through eighth-grade junior high school, and reopening one of the closed schools as middle school for grades six through eight.

Davis completed the report in December after discussing options with parents from each school during the spring and early fall.

The public will have a chance to discuss the recommendations at the board's Thursday meeting and also at a series of public hearings that will be scheduled at the meeting, Davis said.

The district, which was formed in 1952 to accommodate the postwar baby boom, serves Bellflower and the northern portion of Lakewood.

The 1980 reorganization—which primarily involved expanding the two high schools to include grades 7 through 12—triggered protests from parents who were worried that sending younger children to school with high school students might create a variety of social problems.

Davis said parents were concerned about "physical and psychological intimidation of younger students by older students, sexual

Please see SCHOOLS, Page 8

South Gate Motel 'Sting' Targets Owners in Bed With Prostitution

By LEE HARRIS, Times Staff Writer

SOUTH GATE—For some time, officials in this industrial, working-class community have felt that the city was being cheated out of its fair share of taxes from motel-room rentals.

Mayor John S. Sheehy said officials also suspected that one of the reasons motels were underpaying the 8% levy was that many of their customers were prostitutes.

A "full-scale sting operation" at all 32 motels in the city, Sheehy said, showed plenty of motels were ready to rent to undercover agents who identified themselves as prostitutes and their customers.

As Sheehy put it: "Behold, we had disastrous results."

Ten people, including one juvenile, were

arrested on suspicion of keeping a disorderly house for the purpose of prostitution. Arrest warrants have been issued for two others. All those arrested were either managers or clerks at 12 motels, police said.

"We are not naive enough to believe we have found a permanent solution to the world's oldest profession, but we have got to take a whack at it every once in a while," Sheehy said.

The arrests were made just before the new year, following a 2½-month investigation, said Police Chief Norman E. Phillips.

Male undercover officers posing as customers and female undercover officers

Please see MOTEL, Page 10

Doctors, Victims Interviewed

Investigator Tracks AIDS Trail for Long Beach

By RALPH CIPRIANO, Times Staff Writer

LONG BEACH—Doctors view her with suspicion, patients have slammed doors in her face.

Marla Judd is the city's first AIDS "surveillance consultant." Her job is to confirm AIDS diagnoses with doctors and then interview the patients—if they are still alive and healthy enough to talk—asking pointed questions about their sex lives or drug habits.

Her purpose is to gather information about AIDS victims in Long Beach that might shed light on how the disease is contracted and transmitted, she said.

Her visits to doctors, Judd admitted, are "probably just the last thing they want." But, as might be expected, calling on a patient is even tougher.

"The doctors 'are already exhausted from seeing the patients. . . It's frustrating to people who like to make a sick person healthy,'" Judd said, adding that doctors are usually reticent because of concerns about patients' confidentiality.

Patients can be even tougher to interview, Judd said. Some patients are hostile, others are in shock or deny that they have the disease. Some patients are so bitter about having acquired immune deficiency syndrome

that they say they plan to continue unsafe sex and drug practices, regardless of the risk to others, Judd said.

She said she understands the hostility. "They are angry, they're scared, they're going to die soon," she said. "My personal feeling is back off and give them a break."

Judd said that, without making any judgments, she attempts to provide information on safe sex and drug practices or recommend counseling services provided through The Center/Long Beach, one of the first AIDS screening facilities in the nation.

Also Judd tries to determine how someone may have contracted AIDS, and who may have been exposed to the virus. When that can be determined, she follows the trail.

"We cannot be policemen, we cannot force people to change their personal habits. We can only hope that they would do that out of love for mankind," she said.

Judd was hired last month by the City Council as part of the city's mushrooming AIDS program. The effort, which began with a \$15,000 state grant for AIDS education in 1983, has grown to a program that will

spend \$875,000 in the 1986-87 fiscal year for free AIDS testing, education, seminars, support groups and counseling, said Ray Kincaide, a registered nurse who coordinates the Center's testing program with the city Health Department.

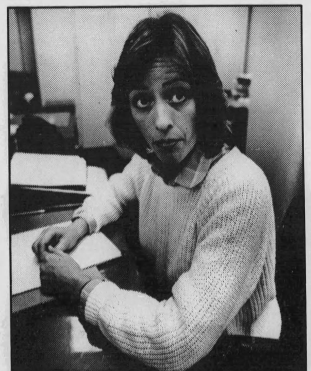
About \$600,000 of this year's funds come from the federal government, with the balance coming from the state.

Long Beach is one of two cities in the state that administers public health services through its own municipal health department, instead of relying on county health officials, Kincaide said. The city historically has provided its own health services because of its dense population and distance from the city of Los Angeles, Kincaide said. Pasadena is the other city that provides its own health services, Kincaide said.

Under her contract with the city, Judd will earn \$20,400 for a six-month period that ends June 30.

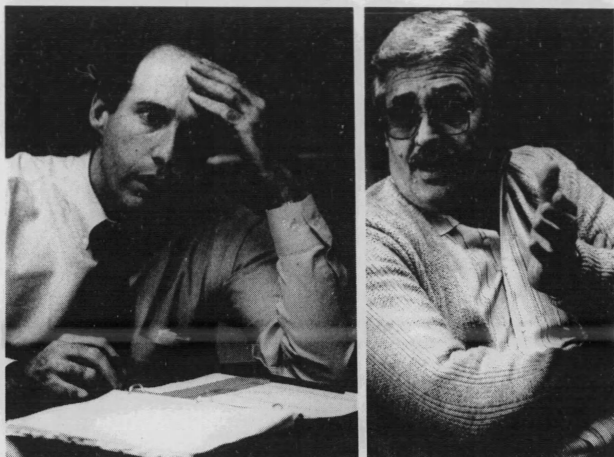
One of Judd's grim tasks is to count the number of AIDS cases in Long Beach. According to figures she

Please see AIDS, Page 8



RICK CORRALES / Los Angeles Times

Marla Judd, Long Beach AIDS consultant.



South Gate City Atty. Bruce M. Boogaard, left, denies charges sting targeted East Indians. At right is Police Chief Norman E. Phillips, who said arrests ended 2½-month investigation.

MOTEL: Prostitution 'Sting' Snares 10

Continued from Page 1
posing as prostitutes visited each of the motels at least six times and made it clear that they wanted to engage in illicit sex at the motel, said Lt. Mike Blaska, operations lieutenant. The undercover officers even found that they qualified for discount rates, Blaska said.
Although the Police Department said it received approval from the Los Angeles County district attorney's office that the planned sting was legally correct, an attorney for Sumitre Patel, one of those arrested, said that there may have been discrimination against motels owned or operated by Indians.
Nine of the 12 arrested were of Indian ancestry and the \$10,000 bail, was much too high for the misdemeanor charge, said Los Angeles attorney Frank A. Weiser (C).
"It is very, very clear in my mind

there is a concentrated effort to shut down these motels," said Weiser, who is also legal counsel for Southern California IHM Motel, Hotel Inc., an organization of Indian motel and hotel owners. The organization helped arrange bail for the Indians, Weiser said.
South Gate City Atty. Bruce M. Boogaard called Weiser's allegations absurd.
"We approached all 32 motels in the city to prevent such a charge. We had one person of Chinese ancestry, one of Anglo-Saxon ancestry" under arrest, he said. "I can't explain why most were of Indian ancestry. That's the way the cards fell."
As far as the high bail is concerned, Boogaard said the city does not set bail. "The court sets bail," he said.
Other city officials also deny any

discrimination. "We're not picking on anyone. We are attacking an evil that brings in drugs and crime," said Vice Mayor Henry C. Gonzalez.
Nine of the 12 defendants are to be arraigned in South Gate Municipal Court Jan. 21. The 17-year-old juvenile was released in her parents' custody and her case will be handled in juvenile court.
Those arrested on the prostitution-related charges were Sumitre Patel, 23; Parul Patel, 24; Pravinkumar Desai, 34; Anthony Parmar, 49; Kankuben Patel, 34; Champa Patel, 37; Rachel Marin, 60; William Woodford, 47, and Ramchandra Bhagat, 44.
Police said arrest warrants are outstanding for Vih Chh Nhan and Bhikju Patel, both 30. Sgt. Russell Beecher said both men were believed to be out of the city.

FITNESS: Police Exercise Plan

Continued from Page 1
To qualify in excellent condition, for example, a male officer who is 20 to 29 years old and weighs between 150 and 174 pounds must be able to perform at least 51 sit-ups in a minute and run 1.5 miles in less than 10 minutes, 45 seconds.
The officer must be able to bench press at least 222 pounds and leg press at least 357 pounds, be able to reach at least nine inches past his toes while sitting with straight legs and have body fat of less than 8.7% of his weight.
The standards vary for female officers, and depend on age and weight.
As an incentive to get into shape, an officer who scores excellent in all areas receives two "wellness days" off a quarter, while an officer in good shape receives one day per quarter.
"Don't Have to Be the Hulk"
"You don't have to be the Hulk, but you do have to be fairly strong," said Lt. Dennis Chelstrom, a fitness instructor. "It's an all-around type program."
At the start of the program, Martin said, he wanted all of his officers to eventually test in good to excellent condition. He now said that may not have been a realistic goal.
During testing in December, eight officers qualified in excellent condition and six were in good condition.
"I'd like to see a lot more people" qualify in good or excellent condition, said Martin, who noted that some officers take advantage of the training facilities but don't care to test. "It's slow in coming, but it's going to make it."
From 30 to 50 officers use the training room and participate in a club the Police Department set up to encourage officers to run, walk, bicycle, swim and row, Chelstrom said.
Martin said he has personally benefited from the program, but his body fat and lack of flexibility have prevented him from qualifying in good condition. The chief said he weighed 246 pounds when the program started; he got down to 225 pounds before picking up five pounds during the holidays.

"My body fat is going to get there," he said. "That's what I'm working on."
Other officers have not qualified in good or excellent condition because of a weakness in one or two areas.
Officer Paul Koppes, 28, twice tested in good condition since coming to the Downey Police Department eight months ago. He scored excellent in every category except body fat, where he tested in good shape.
"One of these days I'll lose a little extra weight and get two days off," he said.
Injuries have prevented other officers from qualifying.
Motorcycle Officer Steve Guthrie, for example, is a fitness instructor but can't qualify for days off because he injured his back in an accident and can't meet the stretching requirement, Chelstrom said.
Officers earned about 75 wellness days off in 1986, Chelstrom said.
Meanwhile, sickness-related absenteeism has fluctuated since 1980. In 1984, officers took 6,427 hours of sick leave, compared to 7,684 hours in 1985 and 6,744 hours last year. The first full year of the fitness program was 1985.
"The difference in sick leave hours between between 1985 and 1986—about 117 days—represents a savings of \$15,799 at a police officer's basic salary, Martin said.

"If this fitness program hadn't come around, I probably would have listened to the doctors and done the conservative," he said.
Koppes said he worked out regularly before, but the fitness program required him to work more on cardiovascular conditioning and the wellness days provided a little extra incentive.
The added conditioning helps on the job, he said.
"If you're out in the field and have to deal with someone you have more confidence," Koppes said. "You don't have to resort to your stick or gun."

Children's Museum Benefit Concert Tickets Available

LONG BEACH—Tickets are continuing on sale for a benefit concert for the Long Beach Children's Museum at 2 p.m. Jan. 18 at the Pan American Community Center, 302 West 7th St.
A performance by the International Children's Choir, which will present a musical tour around the world, will highlight the concert. In addition, the Long Beach Ballet will perform excerpts from Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker."
Tickets are on sale for \$5 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday through Sunday at the museum in the Marina Pacific Mall, 6336 E. Pacific Coast Highway, and will also be available at the door.

Volunteer Center Seeking Recruits

WHITTIER—The Rio Hondo Area Volunteer Center, 7702 S. Washington Ave., serves the community by recruiting volunteers to meet the needs of more than 150 nonprofit agencies in the area. The center services hospitals, schools, libraries, health care agencies, as well as many other types of nonprofit agencies.
Those interested in volunteering may call (213) 693-4023.

SOUTHEAST GUIDE TO Real Estate

November resales cool from hot October pace but stay ahead of '85

November sales of existing single-family homes retreated from their super-heated pace of October, but the resale rate still exceeded the November 1985 rate by 30%, the California Assn. of Realtors has reported.
Sales declined 15% from October to a seasonally-adjusted annualized rate of 498,261 units in November, compared to 582,983 units sold in November of 1985.
"It would appear that mortgage lenders have now eliminated the massive backlog of loan applications that clogged the system over the past several months, so we're returning to a more normal processing curve," said Richard J. Rosenthal, president of the 105,000-member California Assn. of Realtors.
Because of the continued availability of affordable financing, the resale housing market was still very strong as 1986 ended, Rosenthal said.
According to the latest figures from the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, interest rates remained stable in November at 9.9% for fixed-rate mortgages, with adjustable-rate home loans requiring initial rates of 8.3%.
The statewide median price of an existing California single-family home increased 1.9% in November

to \$129,767, compared with October's \$127,387, and was up 7.9% over November a year ago when the median-priced home registered \$120,231.
"Prices have eased somewhat compared to the hectic summer selling season, which means affordability has improved," Rosenthal said. "This is reflected in comparably high traffic levels of home shoppers."
Joel Singer, the group's chief economist and vice president in charge of research, planning and economics, said "November's increase in home prices was the first month-to-month rise since June."
"With demand running high and continued low inventories," Singer said, "we expect prices will continue to run in excess of the rate of inflation."
The unsold inventory index, which is the length of time it would take for all currently listed homes to sell, improved slightly over October, jumping to 8.2 months from 7.1 in November of 1985, the inventory index registered a 10-month supply; while in November of 1984, a 12-month inventory was on hand.
According to Singer, "The rise in the state's inventory index is in line with seasonal factors, but housing supplies are still scarce in many

areas." The median time on the market for existing single-family homes was 64 days in November, compared to 58 in October.
The median price for a Los Angeles home declined to \$128,855 and the resale rate also fell 19.5% in November, but jumped 27.7% over a year ago.
Orange County's median-priced

home also declined to \$150,581, down 1.5% from October, but was up 9.8% over last November.
The San Francisco Bay Area median-priced home remained fairly stable at \$163,563. The resale rate in the Bay Area declined 14.5% since October but sales are still strong, at 24.9% over last November.

Median prices fell in six of the 14 regions surveyed by the C.A.R., and sales activity declined in all regions statewide during November. However, marked improvement was shown in 10 of the regions over November 1985 while two areas showed no change.
The California condominium market showed improvement during November with a higher median price of \$116,355, up 4.6% from \$111,216 in October and 9.2% over November 1985 when the median price registered \$106,510.
The unsold inventory index also looked more promising for condominiums, but still lagged far behind the single-family sector with an 18.6 month supply of listings. However, this was considerably below the nearly two-year supply reported in November of last year.
The median time on the market for condominiums was 86 days compared to 92 in October with approximately 34% of the listings selling in 60 days or less.

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