

FIREARMS INTERDICTION

technical assistance newsletter

GUNS, CRIME AND MAPS: USING CRIME MAPPING AND ANALYSIS TO SOLVE FIREARMS CASES

By John Markovic and Colin May

Maps have been used to help solve crimes since the turn of the 20th century, but it hasn't been until recently that technology has stepped up to play a significant role in helping to nab criminals. To an investigator of homicides, gang-shootings, drug trafficking and other gun crime, mapping out where the crimes occur can often assist in the successful resolution of a case.

While large departments can afford to purchase the latest technological breakthroughs, small- and medium-sized agencies still have options that aren't expensive and don't require a substantial number of personnel. It's a great time to start thinking about getting crime mapping and analysis started in your department—large or small.

Crime mapping can be a huge benefit to your agency. Because law enforcement personnel from smaller municipalities believe they have a minds-eye vision of where crime occurs in their areas of service, they sometimes dismiss the value of crime mapping as a tool suited for their jurisdictions. However, crime maps can be useful for sharing information with other less-informed stakeholders. Maps can be used, for instance, to provide community members with a clear visualization about where crime problems exist and then to elicit discussion about community based prevention efforts. In addition, maps can be shared with personnel from neighboring jurisdictions for purposes of joint problem solving.

Solving Gun Crimes with Maps

Crime maps can be used to deploy resources, present evidence in court, identify where gang turf or drug markets are, and to show where and when crimes are occurring. (Harries, 1999) They are effective tools for street officers, investigators, prosecutors and management. Unlike other tools, crime maps can be changed, expanded or contracted, to show different trends over time or over geography.

In 1998, a slew of indictments sent many top-echelon gang members to jail in Springfield, Ill. This led to fierce rivalries among the remaining factions and heavy street fighting. The Illinois State Police (ISP) and the Springfield Police Department (SPD) decided to partner together and stop the violence. The state police brought their technological resources, while the SPD brought their local experiences, knowledge of gang issues and a willingness to learn. Using data from gun- and gang-related incidents (including shootings, weapons reported stolen and recovered weapons), the police were able to map and analyze gang activity patterns. A new gang from East St. Louis (IL) had attempted to take over the drug trade from the old gang and was looking to consolidate power in the area. From this crime mapping and analysis, police were able to form targeted patrol operations and develop investigative plans that further reduced the violence. By analyzing historical patterns, they were able to project where hot spots were going to occur and used prevention strategies to stop further illegal activity. (Gardner 2002)

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) works closely with Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). PSN is a nationwide commitment to reduce gun crime in America by networking existing local programs that target gun crime and providing those programs with the resources they need to be successful. PSN helps to create safer communities through heightened coordination among federal, state and local law enforcement and the community.

The PSN initiative includes 5 comprehensive elements:

- **Partnerships**, multi-faceted crime gun task forces
- **Strategic Plans** that promote proactive approaches
- **Training**, coordinating inter-agency and cross training opportunities
- **Outreach**, aggressive public messages to would-be criminals
- **Accountability**, measuring success on “outcome” rather than “out-put”

Keeping communities safe from gun crime should be a top priority of police agencies across the country. The fact that guns, and most likely easily concealable handguns, account for over two-thirds of the nation’s homicides is staggering. Keeping police personnel educated and safe is a must. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) reports that officers feloniously killed in the line of duty are most likely to be killed by guns, particularly handguns. Almost half of the assailants that killed police officers between 1993 and 2002 had prior convictions and at least one-fifth were on probation or parole at the time of assault.

This issue of the Firearms Interdiction Technical Assistance Newsletter will focus on partnerships that will aid your agency in addressing the issues of keeping your community and personnel safe from violent offenders possessing handguns. This issue will cover information on crime gun mapping, identifying hotspots and crime gun tracing, all of which lead to proactive crime reduction approaches by law enforcement agencies.

I hope this publication proves to be an asset within your agency. If you have any comments, recommendations or contributions regarding this newsletter, please contact me at 1-800-THE-IACP, Ext. 817 or by e-mail at beam@theiacp.org.

Kristen J. Beam

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Training Coordinator



**IACP is a Project Safe
Neighborhoods
Partner with:**



NATIONAL CRIME
PREVENTION COUNCIL



NDAA



Project Safe Neighborhoods Enforcement Training

An innovative and unique training that is actually 3 trainings in one, providing a totally integrated package from arrest to courtroom, from patrol officers to agency heads. This course can be brought to you by the IACP in partnership with the **Department of Justice**, the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives**, the **National District Attorneys Association** and the **National Crime Prevention Council**. For more information please e-mail Firearms@theiacp.org

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ENHANCING FIREARM INTERDICTION STRATEGIES: WORKING WITH PROBATION AND PAROLE

By: Cathy Bowman

Law enforcement has been well aware that where there are gangs and drugs there are also guns. It is highly likely that where this gang-drug-gun triad exists there are offenders on past or present probation/parole supervision and chances are quite good that major “impact players” in street gangs are on some type of supervision, either probation or parole.

The last edition of this newsletter discussed the connection of gangs-drugs-guns and the continuing problem of urban gang firearm crime. The American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) believes that probation/parole officers can help local, state and federal police make a lasting impact on their firearm interdiction strategies.

APPA has received a grant from the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance to assist local Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) task forces integrate probation and parole agencies across the country into local programs. PSN is the President’s initiative to reduce gun crime, which is based upon the success of Boston’s Operation Ceasefire and other accomplished programs like it.

In Boston, in the mid 1990s, homicide was becoming quite prevalent among youth gang members. Shockingly, researchers on the Boston Ceasefire project found that of the 125 offenders involved in the 155 homicides in the city, 80% were on probation or parole at the time the offense occurred and 56% of those homicide victims were also probationers or parolees. These “impact players” are certainly high-risk encounters for police officers on the street and are most likely to re-offend.

Boston forged a police/probation partnership to proactively search for individuals considered at high risk to illegally possess and use firearms. Probation and parole officers were key players in this endeavor and targeted “impact players.” Police and probation and parole officers jointly conducted home visits at night, and gathered and shared intelligence to actively and vigorously enforce the conditions of probation to ensure compliance by the offender.

“Partnering with probation and parole gives police vital information that can possibly help interdict guns in the community.”

Probation and parole officers contribute to the safety of the community by investigating allegations of illegal activity by offenders and have the ability to take action quickly and informally. Many probation/parole jurisdictions conduct searches of the offender’s residence based upon a supervision condition, which allows a probation/parole officer to search the offender or his/her residence at any time without a warrant.

In 2001, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in **US v. Knights** that “warrantless” searches of probationers/parolee homes based upon “reasonable suspicion” or “reasonable grounds” by either probation/parole officers or the police do not violate an offender’s Fourth Amendment rights.

The “reasonable grounds” standard to justify a search is much less stringent than the “probable cause” standard imposed on ordinary citizens. The Supreme Court noted that the probation and parole mission is not only to try to rehabilitate offenders but also to “protect society from future criminal violations.”

As noted in the book, *When Prisoners Come Home: Parole and Prisoner Reentry*, more than 4 million adults are under community supervision. 90% of the 1.4 million incarcerated adults will eventually be released. Nearly 600,000 adults return to their communities each year after being incarcerated.

Probation and parole officers are tasked with the duty of protecting the public by monitoring these offenders. Not all offenders will meet the criteria of “impact players,” but those who do should be considered for increased levels of supervision by probation/parole authorities. Many offenders are known to come back to the community and obtain a firearm.

Within a probation or parole caseload, the majority of offenders are felons or other “prohibited persons,” such as drug addicts and domestic violence offenders, who are prohibited from legally possessing firearms. While many offenders know they are prohibited from possessing a gun, they may not realize the stringent federal penalties they could face if they are prosecuted in federal court as a felon in possession of a firearm or as a person prohibited from possessing a firearm.

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GUNS, CRIME AND MAPS: *cont. from pg1*

When Resources are limited

In these times of budget crunches and other financial difficulties for local police agencies, police executives and managers can “stretch” their dollar by using volunteer resources, grants, and other creative ways to maximize their investment in a crime analysis project. For example, software is often available at minimal cost or at no charge from the Federal government.

“First, conduct an internal survey of what resources you already have in place,” says Lt. Alan Lee, Director of the Prince George’s County Maryland Police Department’s Technology Integration Section. “Then look to outside resources, such as volunteers, local colleges and universities and other local agencies. Often, partnering between several small agencies can save money and capitalize on talent.” Consider such programs as the IACP’s Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS), which helps local agencies start and run a volunteer program.

Conclusion

Computerized crime mapping has proven to be an invaluable tool in many facets of law enforcement, and has quickly become a core component of many agencies’ tactical and strategic analysis. In the case of gun crime, these techniques have proven useful for visualizing the distribution of related “layers” of data (e.g., armed robbery incidents, gang territories, and residences of probationers convicted of weapons offenses). Crime maps can provide investigative leads or help determine where targeted gun enforcement should be directed. More sophisticated crime mapping techniques, like those deployed in Springfield, IL, can even predict where future hotspots will occur.

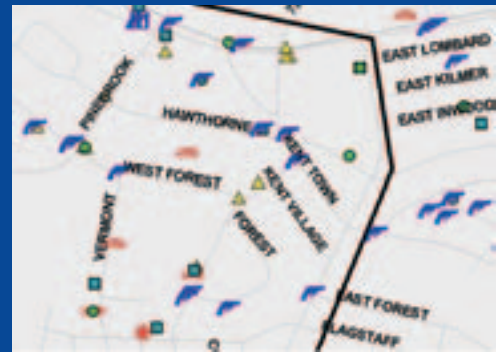
Training, software, and data processing costs are associated, but can be minimized through a variety of techniques. These initial

costs should be weighed against potential long-term benefits and savings that could be associated with prevention efforts. It’s another tool for law enforcement to use in fighting drug-related crimes, homicides, gang-shootings, firearms trafficking and other offenses. Used effectively, it can solve a crime just by connecting the dots of several previous incidents—and increase the public’s confidence in law enforcement efforts to keep their neighborhoods drug-free, gang-less and safe. ♦

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Graphic courtesy of Lt. Alan Lee, Prince George’s County, MD

An example of crime mapping helped to solve a series of crimes in suburban Maryland. The shots fired (the guns on the map) were eventually linked to several suspects

Other crime mapping/analysis resources for Law Enforcement Agencies

National Institute of Justice, Mapping and Analysis for Public Safety, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/maps/>

National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center, <http://www.nlectc.org/cmap/>

The Police Foundation’s Crime Mapping and Problem Analysis Laboratory, www.policefoundation.org

Law Enforcement Analyst Mailing List Subscription Page, <http://lists.leanalyst.info/mailman/listinfo/leanalyst>

Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS), www.policevolunteers.org

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

By Jennifer Boyter, IACP

State legislatures across the country have completed action on their 2004 legislative sessions. Last year, 44 states held regular sessions. Six states meet only every other year: **Arkansas, Montana, North Dakota, Nevada, Oregon, and Texas.** This column will focus on actions taken on some of the major firearms issues of interest to law enforcement.*

Several states have legislation pending to increase penalties for criminals who use firearms. For example, a **Mississippi** bill (**SB 2579**) adds an additional five years of imprisonment to the sentence of a person who possesses a firearm during the commission of a felony. Similarly, a **Utah** bill (**SB 84**) provides for a criminal penalty enhancement for certain felonies when a firearm is used in the commission of a crime. The bill provides for enhanced criminal penalties for a defendant who is a party to a felony offense in which a dangerous weapon was used in the commission or furtherance of the felony, and provides that the prosecutors must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant knew that the dangerous weapon was present.

A new **Virginia** law (**SB 320**) targets people who illegally traffic in guns. The law creates a state Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) Act, under which various violations of criminal statutes, including illegal gun trafficking, become racketeering crimes. Racketeering is punished as a felony with confinement of 5-40 years and a fine of not more than \$1 million. A second or subsequent offense is a Class 2 felony and a fine of not more than \$2 million. This will allow the state to

target the assets and illegal profits of gun dealers and traffickers who conspire to illegally sell guns.

Other bills passed this year make it harder for certain individuals to purchase or possess guns. For example, both **Virginia** and **Arizona** passed laws that prohibit illegal immigrants from possessing firearms and other weapons. The **Virginia** bill (**HB 79**) makes it a felony for anyone not lawfully present in the country to possess a firearm. The **Arizona** bill (**SB 1345**) adds a person who is an undocumented alien or non-immigrant alien to the list of persons prohibited from possessing deadly weapons. Violations are a felony.

Alabama passed a bill (**SB 169**) that will prohibit some former mental patients from buying guns. The bill will require some involuntary commitments to be reported to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), the national database that is used to screen gun buyers. The bill was introduced following the shooting deaths of two police officers by a man with a history of involuntary mental commitments. Under the bill, a judge who orders a person involuntarily committed to a mental hospital would report the case to Alabama's Criminal Justice Information Center if there were evidence the person had a history of gun misuse or threats of gun violence. That information would be forwarded to the national background database. A person could petition the judge after being released from the mental hospital to have his or her name removed.

The **South Carolina** House passed a bill

(**HB 3130**) that would have established firearms restrictions for criminal domestic violence offenders. The bill would have allowed judges to seize guns from people against whom they issue protective or restraining orders and to make surrendering guns a condition of bail for people facing domestic violence charges. In addition, it would have made it illegal to knowingly sell or give a firearm to a person convicted of criminal domestic violence of a high and aggravated nature. The bill was amended in the Senate to give judges more discretion, and the bill died at the end of the session. As originally proposed, the bill also would have prohibited people convicted of any domestic violence charges from possessing firearms. However, the House Judiciary Committee stripped out that provision, retaining the current law that prohibits gun ownership only by those convicted of the most serious domestic violence offenses, as well as other felonies. The Senate did not consider the bill.

The **Utah** House defeated a bill (**HB 36**) that would have required gun and pawn shop owners to check with the National Crime Information Center to see if a weapon offered for purchase has been stolen.

The **Virginia** Senate defeated a bill (**SB 48**) that would have required unlicensed gun sellers to perform background checks at gun shows. The bill would have required hobbyists and any other unlicensed gun dealers to receive clearance from the Virginia State Police that a potential buyer is not barred from owning a firearm. Current law requires all licensed dealers to

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES CONTINUED

conduct background checks on interested buyers but does not apply to transactions between private individuals. The bill had been passed by two Senate committees.

Other Firearms-Related Legislation:

Both **Virginia** and **South Carolina** ended their state's ban on purchasing more than one handgun a month. The **South Carolina** bill (**HB 3442**) applies to all purchasers, while **Virginia's** bill (**HB 404**) is limited to people with concealed weapons permits or collectors who are improving their collections.

Under a new **Florida** law (**HB 155**), police and government agencies are prohibited from creating or maintaining any list, record or registry of any privately owned firearms. This includes electronic databases kept by law enforcement agencies that track gun sales through pawnshops. The measure does not apply to lists created as part of a criminal investigation, and

despite the prohibition, existing lists cannot be suppressed if they could be used against a criminal suspect in court. The bill stipulates up to a \$5 million fine if the prohibited record was compiled or maintained with the "knowledge or complicity of the management of the governmental agency."

The bill's stated intent is to prevent government gun records from being used to "profile" or "harass" law-abiding citizens. On a practical level, it is aimed at curtailing an emerging computer database compiled by local sheriffs and police departments of guns that pass through pawnshops. Pawnbrokers are required to keep records of gun transactions, and in the last few years, law enforcement agencies have been logging the records into computers.

Opponents of the bill argued that the bill hampers law enforcement's ability to use information from pawnshop transaction

records to arrest and convict criminals. The bill does exempt records of firearms used in a crime, persons convicted of a crime of violence, or records of a stolen firearm. However, those records, which consist of information about the individual, the pawnshop and the pawned item, including a detailed description and serial number of a firearm, must be destroyed within 30 days after the stolen firearm is recovered. Any agency that violates the bill faces hefty fines, between \$250,000 and \$5 million.

** Regardless of state law, federal law prohibits certain persons from possessing firearms. These persons include: illegal drug users; those subject to a "no contact" order; those who have been convicted of domestic violence; those convicted of a felony; fugitives from justice; illegal aliens; non-immigrant aliens without a valid hunting license.*

For more information, please contact Jennifer Boyter at boyterj@theiacp.org ♦

ENHANCING FIREARM INTERDICTION STRATEGIES: *cont. from pg3*

Probation and parole can make an impact in the prevalence of gun crime committed by probationers and parolees if the offenders are informed of the potential consequences of firearm possession. Hopefully, offenders who are prone to pick up a gun will think twice about it after being warned about severe federal penalties for an illegal gun possessor.

Many jurisdictions are putting offenders on "notice" of firearm penalties during reentry programs and through intake procedures at probation and parole offices. Felons and other prohibited persons are warned about "hard time for gun crime" and given a form to sign acknowledging that they may face stiff federal penalties if they are caught with a firearm. Prosecutors also find the signed acknowledgment form very handy, as exhibit number one, in a prosecution of a violator for illegal possession of a firearm.

Police and probation partnerships may also include the sharing of probation/parole data with police for inclusion in GIS or comstat databases. Vital probation and parole information could help investigators build strong criminal cases that effectively target serious offenders. Often there is a high correlation between the offender's residence and violent gun crime areas. The police need to know who the offenders are, where they live, and their conditions of release. Partnering with probation and parole gives police vital information that can possibly help interdict guns in the community.

Probation and parole staff hold resourceful and valuable community information and contacts. They are aware of crime "hot spots" and issues, and many have frequently scheduled an unannounced visit with their probationers and parolees.

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Upcoming Events

April 2005

- April 25-26 – Advanced Crisis Negotiations - Las Cruces, NM - IACP
- April 26-28 – Hitting the Mark: Implementing and Maintaining Community Gun Violence - Austin, TX - NDAA

May 2005

- May 02-04 – Conducting Homicide Investigations - Collierville, TN - IACP
- May 09-13 – Less Lethal Weapons Instructor Certification - Greenwood, IN - IACP
- May 17-19 – Denver, Colorado and Cheyenne, Wyoming - PSNET

June 2005

- June 19-24 – Serial Number Restoration Training - Indianapolis, IN - ATF

July 2005

- July 18-20 – Annual Conference on Criminal Justice and Research - Washington, D.C. - NIJ
- July 19-21 – Chicago, Illinois - PSNET

ENHANCING FIREARM INTERDICTION STRATEGIES: *cont. from pg6*

Probation and parole staff can assist in identifying the clients most likely to possess firearms illegally. All parties can benefit from the close working relationships with judges, prosecutors and other law enforcement personnel that may develop as a result of Project Safe Neighborhoods. ♦

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ATF NATIONAL FIREARMS TRACING CENTER NEWS, HIGHLIGHTS AND SERVICES

A picture is worth a thousand words.

-Napoleon Bonaparte

By Charles Houser

A picture is worth a thousand words, or so said Napoleon. Such is certainly the case for crime mapping. Not only does crime gun mapping present a picture of historical data in a readily understandable format, it also allows analysts to provide decision-makers an efficient means to comprehend an immense amount of information in order to draw informed conclusions. Further, analysts are able to use crime mapping to layer information, allowing for visualization of new relationships between events and activities that might not otherwise be recognized.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' (ATF) National Tracing Center (NTC) uses crime gun mapping to display a host of facts related to firearms trace data and to develop investigative leads in the fight against violent gun crime. This tool has been so useful that NTC is currently developing a means to provide this capability to all law enforcement agencies through the new *eTrace* system.

The *eTrace* system enables law enforcement agencies to send firearms trace requests to NTC, receive the trace results back and conduct analysis using all trace data submitted by that

agency, all securely via the Internet. Trace results can be downloaded in several industry standard formats. No special equipment is needed and there is no cost to law enforcement other than a computer with access to the Internet.

Law enforcement agencies generally trace crime guns to link a suspect to a firearm for purposes of a single specific criminal investigation. However, to fully realize the potential of firearms trace data, investigators who comprehensively trace all crime guns produce a large enough data set to allow analysts to develop statistically accurate conclusions relative to the illegal movement and types of crime guns within a given community. Graphical display of that data is invaluable for tactical and strategic purposes such as manpower allocation, patrol concentrations, and time, space and distance correlations.

ATF is firmly committed to working with law enforcement to develop new ways to attack violent gun crime and encourages your agency to take a look at the new *eTrace* system. Additional information about *eTrace* is available online at: <https://www.atfonline.gov/etrace/>◆

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