

Barbara Duncan's vision: Public safety improves, sustains quality of life in Salisbury

Written by Barbara Duncan

Mar. 25, 2014 |

delmarvanow.com

Public safety has a significant impact on positive, sustainable quality of life in our community.

The primary guiding responsibility of public safety centers around service to — and protection of — the community. The Salisbury Police Department focuses on these principals, in close partnership with Maryland State Police, Wicomico County State's Attorney's Office, Wicomico County Sheriff's Office, the Fruitland and Delmar police departments and Salisbury University Police Department.

The goal is to improve the quality of life through crime prevention and reduction in the fear of crime. Our other valuable partners include neighborhood and civic organizations, the board of education, health department, area churches, probation and parole and federal-level law enforcement representatives. Collectively, we use resources to solve problems and improve the quality of life in our region.

Quality of life — a neighborhood's sense of well-being — is our barometer for successful crime prevention, fueled by smart policing initiatives. The community policing model establishes a foundation necessary to learn about and understand the geographic and social makeup of our neighborhoods.

It creates opportunities for the development of close partnerships with key community leaders. These partnerships assist law enforcement in the intelligent application of resources and community-generated solutions tailored to meet the needs of a particular neighborhood. This supports our at-risk neighborhoods in their efforts to stabilize themselves — and by extension, supports a healthy city.

When public safety integrates the community policing model with businesses and community developers, the quality of life improves in Salisbury. We recently received funding from the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention for an application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, which integrates the expertise of veteran street officers and community developers.

This version of community policing is a perfect complement to the economic resurgence taking place in our downtown. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design looks at ways to break the "crime triangle" which the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing defines as involving a victim, an offender and the place where crime occurs. Public safety and community development groups work together to reshape the physical environment to make it less attractive to those who would commit crime.

Safe Streets funding remains key to our ability apprehend the most-violent criminals, who refuse to abide by society's laws.

We also continually work to educate our public, to reduce victimization.

The combined efforts result in improved quality of life and continued positive growth for Salisbury.

Barbara Duncan is Salisbury's chief of police.