

Cop staffing levels vary by city

■ Urbana number is less than half of Illinois average

By STEVE BAUER

News-Gazette Staff Writer

About 11:20 p.m. May 9 — just after the third shift came on duty at the Urbana Police Department — a man with a gun entered the Pizza Hut by County Market on Philo Road. Fifteen minutes later, two men with guns held up the Dairy Queen at 911 W. University Avenue.

There were four patrol officers on the street — including a sergeant and one person held over from the previous shift on mandatory overtime.

It took all of them to secure the areas, check the crime scenes, take information from witnesses and back up officers in two potentially dangerous sit-

Area municipal police manpower

Area cities and villages - 10,000 and over				
City	Population	Full time sworn and (part-time)	Rate*	Crime rate for serious crimes per 1,000 residents
Bloomington	57,700	94	1.6	50.7
Champaign	66,800	115	1.7	84.6
Charleston	20,000	30	1.5	35.6
Danville	33,200	67	2.0	101.2
Decatur	83,100	147	1.8	78.7
Kankakee	29,800	68	2.3	78.7
Mattoon	18,400	40	2.2	18.9
Normal	42,700	58	1.4	38.2
Springfield	105,900	258	2.4	94.5
Urbana	37,500	47	1.25	54.8

*Rate only for full-time officers per 1,000 residents

uations.

Urbana has 1.25 officers per 1,000 residents — the fewest sworn officers per capita in the area.

"The prevailing opinion of all the supervisors is we don't have

enough people," said Mike Miller, president of Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 70.

Officers are being required to work a lot of mandatory overtime just to cover the minimum staffing on each shift, Miller

said. That's what happened that Friday night, with an officer from the second shift being held over on overtime.

Incidents far less dramatic than a pair of armed robberies can have similar results. An accident with injuries or any major incident will take all the staff available.

With one officer on vacation and one on administrative leave, the first shift briefing the morning of May 16 had only three patrol officers, a sergeant and a front desk support staff member on duty.

Street officers say the lack of manpower, aggravated by staff vacancies, is draining, both physically and emotionally.

"We are in a defensive posture and forced to go into situations with minimal resources," Miller said.

See POLICE, A-6

Area municipal police manpower

Cities/villages under 10,000

City	Population	Full-time sworn and (part-time)	Rate*	City	Population	Full-time sworn and (part-time)	Rate*
Arcola	2,600	5(3)	1.9	Mansfield	1,000	0(3)	0
Arthur	2,100	4	1.9	Milford	1,400	1	0.7
Atwood	1,200	3(6)	2.5	Monticello	4,600	7(2)	1.5
Bement	1,600	0(3)	0	Newman	900	1(7)	1.1
Catlin	2,100	1(4)	0.5	Oakland	900	1(1)	1.1
Cerro Gordo	1,500	1(3)	0.7	Oakwood	1,700	0(7)	0
Chrisman	1,100	0(5)	0	Ogden	700	1	1.4
Cissna Park	800	1(1)	1.25	Onarga	1,200	2(6)	1.7
Clinton	7,800	12	1.5	Paris	8,900	13(1)	1.5
Farmer City	2,100	4(3)	1.9	Paxton	4,100	6	1.5
Fisher	1,500	3	2.0	Piper City	700	1	1.4
Georgetown	3,600	5	1.4	Potomac	700	1(2)	1.4
Gibson City	3,300	7(4)	2.1	Rankin	600	0(1)	0
Gifford	900	1	1.1	Rantoul	7,600	31	4.1
Gilman	1,700	2	1.2	Ridge Farm	1,000	2(8)	2.0
Homer	1,300	1(2)	0.8	Sidell	600	0(5)	0
Hoopeston	5,900	9	1.5	Sullivan	4,400	7(2)	1.6
LeRoy	2,900	4(5)	1.4	Thomasboro	1,200	2(2)	1.7
Lovington	1,100	1(2)	0.9	Tolono	2,600	2(3)	0.8
Mahomet	3,800	6(3)	1.6	Tuscola	4,200	7(2)	1.7
				Villa Grove	2,800	4(2)	1.4
				Watseka	5,500	11(1)	2.0

*Rate only for full-time officers per 1,000 residents

Number of cops needed is not just simple math

Dr. Sheldon Greenberg, professor and director of the police executive leadership program at Johns Hopkins University, said the number of officers per 1,000 residents is often reported in the media, but that it is not a good measure of whether any specific department has sufficient manpower.

"It was never intended to be a method to determine the number of officers," Greenberg said.

"Every community is different," Greenberg said. "Even in twin cities, like Champaign-Urbana, the needs for officers would vary and the priorities would vary as well."

Greenberg, a former police officer and supervisor in Howard County, Md., has worked with departments around the country to analyze the workloads and determine how many officers are needed and why.

"Determining how many officers you need is resource allocation that looks at the num-

ber and kinds of calls for service, placing them in priority and looking how long they take," Greenberg said.

A study must also factor in the hours for officers to write reports, appear in court, get required training and education, vacation, holidays and other leave.

"That gives a target, based on the average man-hours it takes to respond to the kinds of calls for service and the way that each department handles those kinds of calls, he said.

One city, with an intense patrol program, where they crack down on every kind of violation, is using officers one way, Greenberg said. Another city with a traditional method of dispatching officers from one call for service to another and then referring cases to investigators will have different uses of officer time. Another city that does more problem solving, will have still different needs.

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Urbana's authorized strength of 47 sworn officers includes administrators like Adair, plus investigators and a drug education officer. Counting sergeants, lieutenants, K-9 officer and community policing officer, Urbana has about 36 officers available for patrol dispatches, Adair said.

"I feel 47 is adequate if you've got all 47 working," Adair said. "The problem is, there is a constant revolving door of hiring and losing officers."

Miller, the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 70 president, said that the number of people available for patrol duty — after taking out administrators, investigators, sergeants, lieutenants and the DARE officer — is 22. One of those has a duty injury, and one is on administrative leave.

Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 70 Vice President Troy Phillips said Urbana citizens have enjoyed low crime rates with an understaffed department for many years.

"We are the victims of our own success," Phillips said. "We do more with less, but it can't continue. This low manpower has hurt morale."

All departments face staffing woes due to turnover, disability, vacations, holidays, sick leave and compensatory time off, Adair said.

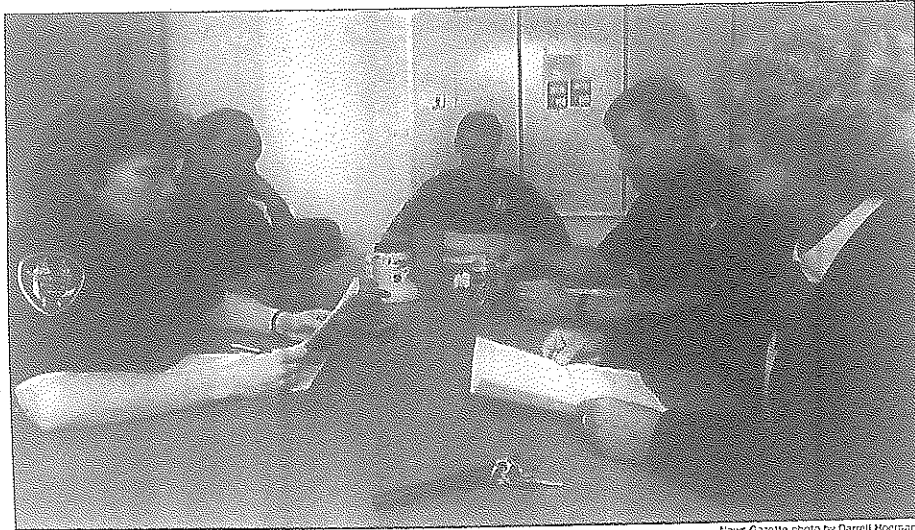
"Everybody has attrition, but the problem is that in a smaller department, it takes fewer people leaving in order to have a negative impact," Adair said.

He added that filling police vacancies is not like other jobs, with 12 weeks of basic training and three months of on-the-job field training required before an officer is ready to be alone on patrol.

Urbana has one recruit at the Police Training Institute.

Half of the officer's salary for the next three years will be paid through a federal grant. The city then is required to cover the officer's salary. It takes about \$52,000 for salary and benefits for one officer, Adair said.

The goal will be to continue to add officers, to give them the necessary training to be on the street by the time new develop-



News-Gazette photo by Darrell Hoernann

Lorie Phillips, Joe Tharp, Sgt. Larry Jacobson, Kurt Hjort and Jo Knudsen gather for the day shift meeting on a recent Thursday at Urbana police

headquarters. Urbana's level of 1.25 sworn police officers per 1,000 population is less than half the state average.

ments, like the McIrose Apartments on Lincoln Avenue, open and start increasing the demand for services, Adair said.

Champaign Police Chief Don Carter said a policy approved by the Champaign City Council gives his department a cushion to allow for turnover and the training lag.

Champaign has an authorized strength of 112 sworn officers. In addition, Carter is allowed to have six other officers as a contingency to maintain the street level manpower at the total staffing cap.

"It's our experience that we constantly have six people in the pipeline as replacements," Carter said.

Champaign's staffing has grown about 33 percent in eight years — from 89 authorized officers in 1989 to 118 with the contingencies.

Champaign has a large number of officers on special assignment, such as the Gang-Tactical Unit, investigations, foot patrol, field training and administration.

"I'm comfortable that we have

sufficient staffing to respond to emergencies and do a fair amount of proactive problem-solving with our beat officers," Carter said.

Champaign also needs to look to future growth, particularly due to the retail boom in northwest Champaign, Carter said. His five-year plan calls for 15 to 16 additional officers.

Carter, Adair and other local police officials agree that cooperation and mutual support among the local agencies is a big help.

"We work well together," said Champaign County Sheriff Dave

Madigan.

Sheriff's departments typically have fewer officers per capita than municipal departments.

Champaign County has 51 officers, including one deputy added through a federal grant.

The Champaign County Board rejected grant opportunities for three other deputies because of the local share of costs.

Taking out administration, investigators, subpoena and warrant servers, Madigan said there are 36 deputies on patrol, including sergeants and lieutenants.

"That's thin — real thin," Madigan said.

Number of cops in nation, state

Nationwide, a total of 13,124 city, county and state police agencies reported having 561,543 officers and 220,567 civilians in 1994. The national average in 1994 and 1993 was 2.3 full-time officers for every 1,000 citizens, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

Statewide, 1996 employment rate for sworn employees was 3.2 per 1,000 residents, according to the Illinois State Police report, "Crime in Illinois 1996."

— The state listed 28,565 total sworn officers in cities, villages and towns and a total population of 9.5 million.

— The 1996 employment rate for total sworn employees was 3.0 per 1,000. The statewide rate for those cities and villages for just full-time sworn officers was 2.7 per 1,000 residents.

— For sheriff's departments, the 1996 employment rate for sworn employees was 1.7 per 1,000.

— Chicago, with 2,731,743 people, had 13,032 sworn officers, or 4.8 officers per 1,000 residents.

— In Illinois municipal departments outside Chicago, there were 15,533 total sworn officers (13,012 full time). That's about 2.3 total officers per 1,000 residents; the rate for just full-time officers outside Chicago was about 1.9 per 1,000.

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