



ARC NEWS

Small Police Department Gets Big Results

Redlands, California, Police Use CrimeView to Predict Trouble Spots

By Milan Muller, The Omega Group, San Diego, California

The City of Redlands Police Department is among the growing number of smaller public safety departments using mapping and analysis to track gangs, predict trouble spots, and quickly warn personnel of potentially dangerous situations.

A grant from the State of California's Office of Criminal Justice helped launch the Department into its initial GIS three years ago. The grant helped pay for software, computers, plotters, technical support and ArcView GIS training for the Department's new crime analyst.

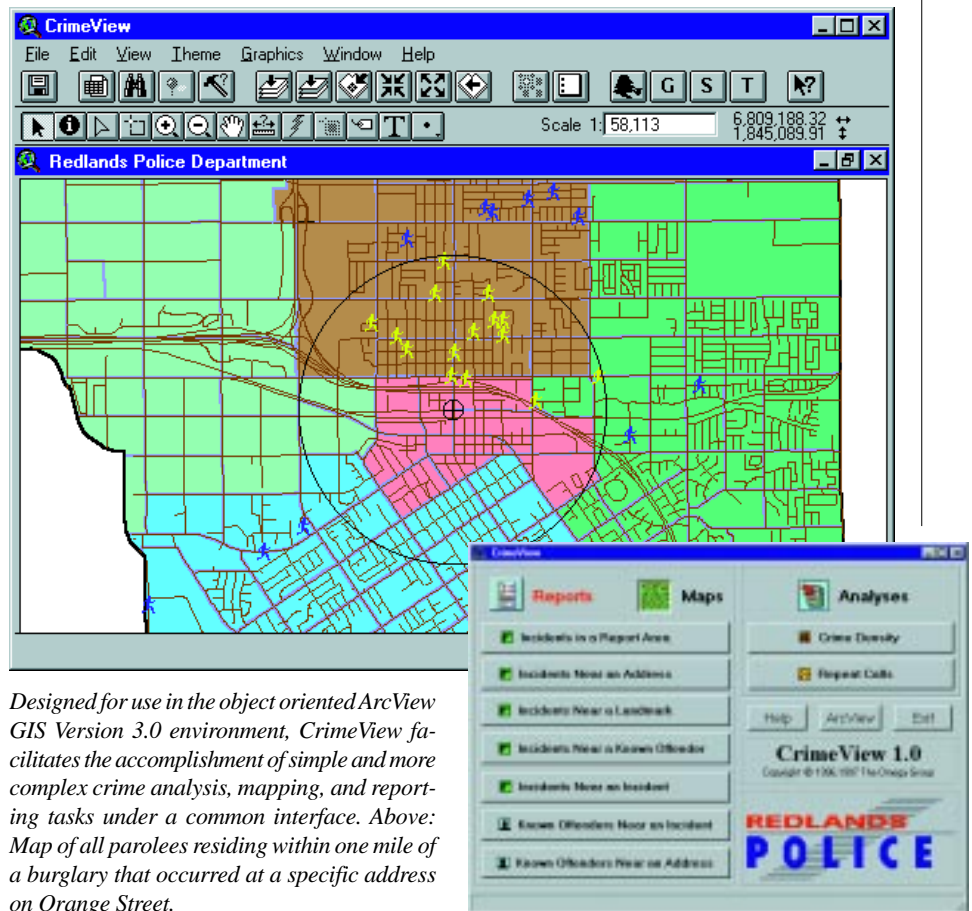
According to Redlands Police Captain Jim Bueermann, the Department was justifiably proud of the excellent results produced by its fully functioning crime analysis unit. Everything proceeded well until just last October. That's when the Department's crime analyst resigned, and budget constraints unexpectedly placed the future funding of the position in jeopardy.

Determined not to lose the Department's crime analysis capabilities, Bueermann turned to ESRI for advice. ESRI suggested he contact The Omega Group, which has extensive experience helping public safety organizations set up GIS departments.

Timing was just right. The Omega Group was looking for beta sites to test CrimeView, a new set of easy-to-use crime reporting, mapping, and analysis tools being developed for small- and medium-sized public safety departments.

An Opportune Transition

Because CrimeView software is easier to learn than traditional GIS, Bueermann



Designed for use in the object oriented ArcView GIS Version 3.0 environment, CrimeView facilitates the accomplishment of simple and more complex crime analysis, mapping, and reporting tasks under a common interface. Above: Map of all parolees residing within one mile of a burglary that occurred at a specific address on Orange Street.

proposed a transition experiment. He suggested training the crime analysis unit's departmental records clerk to run the new program. Omega did the training, and the results have been excellent.

"Our transition to CrimeView was very opportune," says Bueermann. "It helped us keep our program going without having to hire and train someone in advanced GIS. The new software is much easier to use. Omega has written routines that boil everything down to two or three steps

instead of 12 or 13. Anyone in the Department can do crime analysis now."

The three-button simplicity of CrimeView's interface make it easy for the Department clerk to produce sophisticated reports and forecasts. She can create crime incident reports, access known offender files, and combine these with City geographic databases through CrimeView. The system also helps police establish incident patterns; locate parolees and other registrants; map drug

arrests in relationship to schools, liquor stores, or landmarks; target accident-prone intersections; and much more.

Watch commanders use maps and reports to target hot spots and prepare officers and citizen patrol volunteers on each new shift. They're able to easily adjust beat boundaries and staffing to cover areas with the highest levels of activities. "It's like calling in an air strike," says Bueermann. "You're directing your limited resources to a targeted area."

Room To Grow

Although CrimeView has a simple user interface, that doesn't mean it is a lightweight solution. With its built-in report writer and its inherent access to ArcView GIS, more accomplished users with high-end GIS and analysis capabilities can take full advantage of CrimeView's power and flexibility.

Omega will continue to add functionality to CrimeView in coming months and years. Version 2.0, which is currently under development, will include accepted trend analysis and crime forecasting methodologies.

Omega is working closely with experts in the field, including crime analyst Steve Gottlieb, executive director of the Alpha Group Center for Crime and Intelligence Analysis Training and the author of *Crime Analysis: From First Report to Final Arrest*. "Adding GIS to the tools of the crime analyst will greatly enhance our capabilities," says Gottlieb. "As we reference in our crime analysis training courses, CrimeView better enables us to forecast when and where criminals are likely to strike again."

Chance Meeting Inspires Police Officer

Redlands Police Captain Jim Bueermann found out about mapping and crime analysis by accident one Sunday afternoon in the late 1980s when, as a patrol officer, he responded to a silent alarm at ESRI. A tall man with glasses met him at the entrance and walked around the campus with Bueermann while he checked building security.

Along the way, the ESRI employee enthusiastically explained some of the ideas behind mapping analysis to the officer and showed him a new crime analysis demo the company was working on.

The tall man with glasses, was, of course, ESRI President Jack Dangermond. And that experience inspired Bueermann to continue investigating how maps could help police fight crime. He has since then signed up for ArcView GIS training and helped his department successfully apply for grants to set up a GIS for crime analysis.

Today, Bueermann is just one of several progressive law enforcement personnel in the Redlands Police Department who have become self-described advocates of how new methodologies and advanced technologies can be used to create a safer community.

It also allows police agencies to deploy officers with much greater precision and thus heightens their officers' apprehension and suppression efforts, says Gottlieb. "By combining sophisticated technology within an easy-to-use program, CrimeView brings a new dimension of effectiveness and efficiency to both patrol and investigative operations," he adds.

Another advantage of CrimeView is cost. Most small- and medium-sized departments (cities of 50,000 to 100,000) can implement CrimeView for between \$10,000 and \$20,000. That includes CrimeView and ArcView GIS software, application setup, training, and technical support.

CrimeView is fast becoming the choice for GIS access to crime data. Nearly a dozen police departments in California

and others across the country are finding that the new geographic visualization and hands-on access that CrimeView provides is a great way to relate data sets that were previously not readily linked.

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