



Environmental factors predict crime

Kansas City Police are working with a group of criminal justice scholars to implement an objective modeling program that determines where crime is most likely to occur.

Working with Rutgers University, KCPD implemented Risk Terrain Modeling department-wide in April. The Department tried it as a pilot project in the early 2010s, but this is the first broad-based implementation of the crime reduction strategy. Violent crime fell by double-digit percentages during the pilot projects.

“RTM is a crime prevention and reduction tool looking not at where crime has occurred but features of the environment that will cause crime,” Sergeant Jonas Baughman said.

Sergeant Baughman oversaw the development and implementation of RTM at KCPD, working alongside Rutgers University, which also provided modeling software at a low price.

He said RTM focuses on places, not people. It also does not take into account historical crime data, which makes it different from previous hot spot policing efforts.

RTM overlays a number of criteria to show police where a crime problem could occur, allowing police to take preventive measures in that area. The criteria were developed through Rutgers University research. They include liquor and convenience stores, vacant properties, properties with code violations, parks, bus stops and many more. Many of those are completely innocuous on their own.

“If all ingredients are in the same general vicinity, crime increases dramatically,” Sergeant Baughman said.

RTM has proven effective in combatting crime in cities like Irvington, N.J.; Fayetteville, N.C.; and Glendale Ariz.

Most of the data for RTM is gathered through the City’s Open Data portal, Sergeant Baughman said, so it’s very transparent.

“There is no top-secret police information,” he said. “These are all things you could see on a map.”

It has proven accurate. Through June, half of the city’s 2019 homicides had occurred within two blocks of what RTM identified as the top 1% highest-risk cells.

Seeing these concentrated risk areas allows police, city government and others to marshal resources to address issues. For example, Sergeant Baughman said police can do liquor license checks at businesses selling alcohol in identified risk areas and/or advise

business owners how to reduce their risk for crime through environmental factors like better lighting. Officers also know the areas most in need of proactive patrol. City services can enforce code violations, fix things like broken streetlights and clean up areas of illegal dumping. Even the Health Department is excited about the possibilities of RTM.

“Public health ... knows that the differences in health can be striking in communities with poor social determinates of health (SDOH), including but not limited to: unstable housing, low income, less safe neighborhoods or low educational outcomes,” said Tracie McClendon-Cole,

deputy director of the Kansas City Public Health Department. “However, through analysis of the risk and protective factors of SDOH, the new risk terrain model is an evidence-based tool that not only improves individual and population health but also advances health equity. By addressing the SDOHs that create physical and social environments, RTM has the potential to promote ‘good health for all,’ which aligns with the ultimate vision of all public health and safety partners.”

Sergeant Baughman

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A Risk Terrain Modeling Map from part of East Patrol Division. The modeling looks at environmental factors to determine crime risk.

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Program offers chance to change from within

The Battle Within program is challenging department members to take a look at how they respond internally to the increasingly harsh climate of being a police officer. Their primary focus is to empower veterans and first responders to get back to their true passion for doing their job, heal broken relationships and have the tools to handle the burdens they carry.

"Relationships with loved ones are the first to be impacted because they are the ones who care the most and have been outside looking in at the change," Officer Josh Krasovec said.

Over time and through trauma of the things they witness, some officers shut down their feelings to focus on the task at hand. Once the feelings are shut-off, so begins the change and battle inside.

Krasovec, the Community Director for The Battle Within, said about 200 KCPD members have been through the program, at no cost to them.

"We have amazing donors who care about police officers and appreciate the job they do; this is a tangible way for them to help," Krasovec said.

It costs about \$2,500 per person to attend the program, but through various fundraisers and generous donors, no one

pays out of pocket to participate.

Divorce rates, suicidal thoughts, struggles with children and feelings of being static in their career are very real issues officers face. Officers are trained to move past the emotional and deal with the issue at hand to keep themselves alive. There is no time to debrief, often going

live at a local camp for a five-day intensive program. During the course of the week, members meet with many wellness experts to learn tools to use in the world awaiting them once they leave. They also utilize equine therapy because horses are intuitive animals.

"They know when we are being fake, and in our line of work we are really good at faking it to make everyone think we are ok," Krasovec says.

The therapy is one of many types the program uses to break through the exterior of the participant in order to heal on the inside.

The hardest part of attending the program, is committing to attending the program. "There are always excuses for people to not apply or to back-out once they have applied," Officer Krasovec

said. "But once they leave we often hear how this is exactly what they needed."

Many graduates come back and volunteer during the camp by cooking, cleaning and being available to talk because they see the importance of the program.

KCPD members can utilize training days, approved through their chain of command, to attend if manpower allows. More information can be found on their website MyBattleWithin.org.



from call to call and then home to be with their family. The need for help comes through thoughts of wanting to be a better spouse/partner, parent and officer. But asking for help, while often felt as a sign of weakness, will be the strongest call they answer.

One week a month, The Battle Within invites eight to 10 people, either all men or all women, depending on the month, to

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said one of the best features about RTM is how customizable it is to different areas of the city. For example, laundromats were in high proximity to violent crime in Metro Patrol Division but nowhere else in the city. It's the same with adult businesses in Central Patrol Division. RTM has shown the causes of gun violence in East Patrol are different from those in South Patrol. RTM allows each patrol division to see the biggest geospatial risk factors in their communities and police them accordingly, which can range from social service outreach to asking for a drug house to be vacated and boarded up.

"Notable legal scholars endorse this approach because it strips away potential bias," Sergeant Baughman said. "We're policing places, not people."

Patrol division leaders meet with Chief Richard Smith monthly

to report progress in the areas identified as high-risk through RTM.

"Overall things are moving in the right direction, especially in the inner city," Sergeant Baughman said.

City department heads and managers also have agreed to prioritize resolving issues in RTM areas. RTM also involves mitigating factors like neighborhood organizations, community centers and other things that deter crime.

Sergeant Baughman likened risk areas identified through RTM to a park. If a park has lots of fun playground equipment and amenities, children and families will want to go there. If you start taking the equipment and amenities away, it becomes less popular.

"Just as fewer kids will want to go play there, fewer criminals will want to go exploit weaknesses and victimize people."

Camp interests girls in public safety

Kansas City Police are leading an effort to draw more women to careers in public safety.

Captain Marisa Barnes worked with Girl Scouts of NE Kansas and NW Missouri to gather female police officers, firefighters and paramedics from across the metro area to show teenage girls the possibilities that await them in a career as a first responder.

“It’s about empowering young ladies who don’t even really think about law enforcement, fire-fighting or EMS as careers, especially when they don’t see a lot of females in those jobs,” Captain Barnes said.

Deputy Chief Bob Kuehl asked Captain Barnes if she would be interested in implementing the Camp Fury program in Kansas City. Developed by an Arizona fire chief 11 years ago, Camp Fury is a one-week resident camp in which Girl Scouts going into grades 10 through 12 train alongside female firefighters and law enforcement personnel to learn fire-fighting and EMS skills, practice defensive tactics, perform physical fitness drills and develop investigative abilities.

“They are overseen by remarkable women who are breaking down barriers and stereotypes in what have traditionally been male-dominated fields,” according to Girl Scouts literature.

The core partners are KCPD, the Kansas City Missouri and Kansas City Kansas Fire Departments, and Girl Scouts of NE Kansas and NW Missouri.

“The first part of the Girl Scout Mission is, ‘To build girls of courage, confidence and character,’ so that fits right in with our values,” Captain Barnes said.

In this first year, Captain Barnes and numerous partners from police and fire departments on both sides of the state line are starting small. They put on two “Catching Fury” day camps on June 22 and 29. This one-day experience is for younger girls going into 8th and 9th grades. Girl Scouts helped recruit the girls, focusing especially on those in under-served areas.

Captain Barnes used the Women’s Public Safety Network to recruit female police officers, firefighters and EMTs to help lead Catching



Top: KCPD Captain Marisa Barnes and Officer Angeleic Huth taught Camp Fury participants defensive tactics.

Below: Campers learned hose work from female firefighters.



Fury. They taught everything from hose work to CPR to hand-cuffing and enjoyed a meal donated by Fire House Subs. But it was just as beneficial for the professionals as it was the girls.

“A big part of it was getting the camaraderie for us,” Captain Barnes said. “Getting together with other strong women who go through the same things we go through in a male-dominated field. It was fun training together and learning from each other. It was a great bonding experience.”

The core Camp Fury leaders attended the week-long St. Louis Camp Fury in late June to see how they do it. The Kansas City version will launch June 7-12, 2020.

Autumn Hughey, 16, is a Girl Scout who saved her money for a long time to attend Camp Fury in Tucson, Arizona. The upcoming Olathe West High School junior said she’s always been interested in a career in public safety, particularly EMS and firefighting. She helped mentor the 8th and 9th grade girls at one of the Kansas City Catching Fury day camps.

“The amount of female first responders I met that day was actually quite surprising to me,” Hughey said. “That that many of them banded together to share their passion was really cool for me.”

Hughey said being a female pursuing a career in a male-dominated field is intimidating, but she said if she has confidence and respect in herself, future colleagues will have confidence in and respect for her, too.

The women behind Catching and Camp Fury hope to build that self-respect and confidence in future generations of first responders. Of the young women who attended St. Louis’ Camp Fury, three are already enrolled in their

EMS training program.

Catching Fury and Camp Fury can’t happen without donations. If you’d like encourage women to pursue careers in public safety, you can donate at <https://www.gksmo.org/en/events/CampFury.html>.

Upcoming Events

July 18
Headquarters Blood Drive

July 20
South Patrol Movie Night

July 24
South Patrol Blood Drive

July 27
Public Safety and Health Fair at Gillham Park

August 20
Board of Police Commissioners Meeting

Officially Speaking

Awards

Life-Saving Awards

Officers Edwin Gordillo, John Shipman and Robert VanLanker

Meritorious Service Awards

Officer Larry Dunaway
Master Detective Brent Taney

Distinguished Service Medal

Officer Jordan Clark

Retirements

Inventory Specialist Stephen Barnett
Civilian Tracye Bolton
Captain Joe Crayon
Communications Specialist
Kimberly Hueser

Obituary

Civilian Marcell Taylor

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