

**VACO 2013 Achievement Award: Criminal Justice and Public Safety**  
**Operation Innkeeper, Henrico County (Virginia) Police Division**

**Executive Summary**

Operation Innkeeper is a cooperative investigative, enforcement, and community policing effort led by the Henrico County Police Division, with the assistance of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS), other area law enforcement agencies, and the Richmond Retail Merchants Association (RRMA). The objective of this operation is the identification of persons and organizations actively engaged in criminal activity that negatively impact area hotels.

The law enforcement community has long recognized that hotels, motels, and other similar locations of transient lodging are locations uniquely affected by criminal activity. Persons who reside in transient lodging are victimized easily, and, therefore, they are inviting targets for criminals. Criminals also can use transient lodging locations as a refuge from law enforcement and as locations from which criminal activity can be conducted.

Operation Innkeeper educates hotel owners and employees on the specific vulnerabilities of hotels and their guests to crime. Lasting relationships between the lodging community and the Henrico County Police Division were formed, resulting in the improvement of community quality of life and the lowering of overall crime.

In May of 2011, Henrico County Police Chief Douglas A. Middleton tasked his Executive Staff to use Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) methods to determine vulnerabilities about lodging-related crime in Henrico County. Chief Middleton noted that Henrico County possesses unique infrastructure: the Richmond International Airport; Amtrak's Staples Mill Train Station (one of the busiest Amtrak stations on the East Coast); three major interstates that traverse through the County; and the Richmond International Raceway (NASCAR). Travelers and businesspersons frequent Henrico County hotels and motels during their travels. In addition, tourism is an important part of the County's economy. Henrico County officials recognized their legal obligation to ensure the safety of guests and employees at hotels and motels in the County. The Executive Staff, in consultation with operational unit Commanders and intelligence officers, determined that lodging-related crime posed a threat to the health and welfare of Henrico County's citizens and tourists, and that a failure to address the issue could negatively affect Henrico County's reputation as a business, travel, and tourism center.

**VACO 2013 Achievement Award: Criminal Justice and Public Safety**  
**Operation Innkeeper, Henrico County (Virginia) Police Division**

**Problem Overview**

The Henrico County Police Division's primary objective in the implementation of Operation Innkeeper was to anticipate, prevent, and respond to lodging-related crime. This effectively would lower the lodging-related crime rate, resulting in better overall quality of life improvement for the citizens and guests of Henrico County. Police Chief Douglas A. Middleton assumed leadership of the Henrico County Police Division on April 9, 2011, and increased the staffing of the Vice Unit from two to four Detectives. Today, the Vice Unit is composed of one Sergeant, six Detectives, and two Technical Specialists. Chief Middleton's timetable for implementation was "get it done immediately." He utilized the Intelligence-Led Policing philosophy, identifying the following categories of criminal activity requiring immediate focus:

- Prostitution
- Human Trafficking
- Narcotics
- Underage parties

Sergeant Shawn F. Diasparra, the supervisor in charge of the Vice Unit, recognized the importance of establishing relationships with the lodging industry and immediately began an informal program of education and liaison with managers and employees of hotels and motels. This liaison served as a building block for a formalized education initiative, which was implemented in December of 2011.

Captain Charles "Denny" Williams, Commander of the Organized Crime Section of the Henrico County Police Division, sought partners in the law enforcement community to assist in a cooperative effort to address the burgeoning crime problem. Drawing on over thirty years of police experience, and with a particular expertise in working across jurisdictional boundaries, Captain Williams contacted the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for assistance. Captain Williams realized that combining forces with local and federal enforcement agencies would leverage assets to best address the crime problem while minimizing costs. He forged relationships with the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and DHS, resulting in the assignments of FBI and DHS Special Agents to work with the Vice Unit on a full-time basis.

Through research and analysis, the Henrico County Police Division recognized that Internet-based prostitution was likely the primary driver of

**VACO 2013 Achievement Award: Criminal Justice and Public Safety**  
**Operation Innkeeper, Henrico County (Virginia) Police Division**

most hotel related crime. The Division then developed a strategy to address the problem. This strategy rested on three key premises:

- Historians have documented prostitution occurring as early as the 2400 B.C.E, The Henrico County Police Division cannot stop all prostitution occurring in Henrico County.
- The Henrico County Police Division cannot stop the demand for prostitution services from “johns” who are either living in or visiting Henrico County.
- The Henrico County Police Division cannot stop prostitutes from advertising their services on the Internet.

The analyses of these premises led leaders to conclude that prostitution could be addressed most effectively by driving prostitutes, pimps, and “johns” from the refuge of hotels and out into the open. This was the motivation for the Vice Unit developing the Hotel Education Initiative, a program that aims to empower lodging industry employees to recognize the physical characteristics and behaviors of persons residing in, or visiting, their hotel or motel and engaging in criminal behavior.

The Hotel Education Initiative began with a concerted effort to educate all Henrico County Police Division officers in recognizing indications of lodging related crime. The education efforts directed at Patrol significantly enhanced the ability of street level officers to prevent, detect, and combat criminal activity. Further, the initiative reinforced specific measures to be taken by patrol officers when dispatched to a call for service at a hotel or motel. The training was delivered in a PowerPoint and lecture format by detectives assigned to the Vice Unit, as well as an FBI Special Agent, and provided many opportunities for officers to engage in discourse with instructors.

The second step of the Hotel Education Initiative was coordination with the Richmond Retail Merchants Association (RRMA). The RRMA’s mission is providing resources in advocacy, networking, and information to enhance the image and profitability of member companies. The RRMA coordinates initiatives for members, including initiatives for the lodging industry. In December of 2012, the Henrico Police Division and the FBI presented the Hotel Education Initiative and Operation Innkeeper to the RRMA and gained their support in the mission to provide safer lodging to the community. The RRMA hosted additional meetings where the Henrico Police Division presented training to numerous hotel owners, managers, and employees, effectively increasing the number of “eyes and ears” trained to detect lodging-related crime.

**VACO 2013 Achievement Award: Criminal Justice and Public Safety**  
**Operation Innkeeper, Henrico County (Virginia) Police Division**

Finally, in June of 2012, representatives of the Henrico Police Division personally visited every hotel and motel in Henrico County, offering training, points of contact, and assurance that the Henrico County Police Division places great value on the lodging industry. This strategy allowed officers to communicate effectively their knowledge with hotel owners, managers, and employees, enhancing the Division's "See something, Say something" initiative.

**VACO 2013 Achievement Award: Criminal Justice and Public Safety**  
**Operation Innkeeper, Henrico County (Virginia) Police Division**

**Innovation**

The Henrico County Police Division uses a number of technological platforms to enhance Operation Innkeeper. These technologies range from advanced FM digital radio systems – allowing communication between officers – to concealed camera systems – providing real-time images over the Internet to Detectives. The Division makes use of law enforcement databases, including the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), the FBI’s Innocence Lost Database (helps to identify child prostitutes), and LInX (used to access police reports from departments around the country). The Henrico County Police Division’s effective liaison with Federal agencies has allowed the Division to use Federal technologies, including the FBI’s Quick Capture Platform fingerprint identification system. Liaison with DHS has allowed the use of helicopter support for surveillance, as well as access to technologies used to identify and track illegal aliens.

Operation Innkeeper is innovative; it does not rely on the application of techniques or procedures that are common practice in most counties of similar population size. Operation Innkeeper and the methodologies employed by the Henrico County Police Division were recognized by the US Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. Division officers have instructed police departments in Virginia and North Carolina regarding lodging-related crime.

**VACO 2013 Achievement Award: Criminal Justice and Public Safety**  
**Operation Innkeeper, Henrico County (Virginia) Police Division**

**Significance**

The development and implementation of Operation Innkeeper resulted in no additional costs to Henrico County, nor required additional staff. The technologies used were those currently in use by the Division.

The strategy as implemented by the Division has proved effective. During the last period of increased enforcement, the Division participated in over 30 operations, served 20 search warrants, and arrested dozens of prostitutes, "johns," and pimps. The Division removed nine firearms from the streets, confiscated over \$80,000 in currency, and seized illegal narcotics during almost all of the operations. Operation Innkeeper led to the strengthening of trust between the Division and the lodging industry, as the Division documented 163 contacts between the Division and hotel management representatives. These contacts resulted in hotel managers and employees providing information to the Division, enhancing intelligence collection and enforcement efforts.

The most important examples of the program's effectiveness relate to the identification and rescue of juvenile victims of prostitution. In January 2012, the Vice Unit was notified by the management of a Henrico County hotel regarding suspected prostitutes operating in two rooms. The Vice Unit had previously taught the hotel management the methodologies used to detect and identify prostitutes. The Vice Unit and the FBI responded to the hotel and rescued a 15-year-old female victim of prostitution. The juvenile was from Cleveland, OH, and had been transported to Richmond by Calvin Winbush and Sonora Armstrong. Winbush and Armstrong were prosecuted in Federal Court. Winbush received a 14-year sentence; Armstrong, 11-year.

In May of 2012, a similar investigation resulted in the rescue of a missing 13-year-old victim of prostitution from Miami, FL. Again, hotel employees trained by the Henrico County Police Division recognized indications of prostitution and contacted the Vice Unit. Three members of the Korey Reynolds prostitution syndicate were convicted in Federal Court. Reynolds received a 11-year prison sentence; co-conspirator Whitney Hayes, five-year sentence; and Rachel Massingene, three-year sentence.

These statistics serve as a stark reminder that criminal activity at area hotels and motels continues to be a threat to the safety and security of employees and guests. The operations also confirmed that persons perpetrating crimes at area lodging facilities are both local citizens and out-of-state persons. The continued joint operations and intelligence sharing are necessary to continue.