

Press Release

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First dedicated ‘Florida First’ day is a great success.

In September of 2011, Chief of Police Dave Brown announced his vision of ‘Florida First.’ The Chief’s vision included Problem Oriented Policing projects and direction to his officers to focus some of their enforcement efforts along the Florida Ave. corridor. This vision has led to a number of prostitution stings and an increase in traffic enforcement and quality of life projects in the heart of the city.

On Thursday, February 16, 2012, two patrol teams hit the streets to conduct high visibility, zero tolerance enforcement, primarily focused on Florida Ave. These teams were not responsible for handling calls for service and had the opportunity to focus solely on proactive enforcement. This kind of operation has not been possible for several years but funding from a state grant allowed the City of Hemet to deploy these officers at no cost to the City.

Over the course of several hours, Hemet Police Officers conducted approximately ninety self initiated contacts including: traffic stops, pedestrian checks, and business checks. In addition to being a very visual reminder to obey the law, the officers produced the following: 8 arrests, 69 citations, 3 vehicle impounds, and completed 35 field interview cards. Additionally there were two foot pursuits which resulted in felony arrests.

Although the numbers are encouraging, perhaps the greatest effect of the day was the one most difficult to track: how the operation impacted the quality of life around the Florida Ave. corridor. As the day progressed, officers and citizens alike were able to see a marked difference – people were more likely to follow the rules of the road which led to increased safety by reducing traffic collisions, and criminally minded individuals were either arrested or left the area.

This operation was just one of many projects that are planned as part of the Chief Brown’s ‘Florida First’ initiative and was a good indication of what can be achieved through cooperation between local and state governments.