



## **Scottsdale Police Department Bike Unit Has Local Impact**

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*Ed.'s Note: This article was posted on the IPMBA member listserv in response to a query about best practices in deploying police bicycles in downtown/entertainment districts.*

I was on our bike unit for more than ten years, and as many people saw during the 2005 IPMBA Conference, we have quite the busy nightlife and downtown. On any given weekend, 15-20,000 people frequent the many bars and restaurants. At one point, there were more than 150 liquor licenses in the downtown area alone. This included everything from bars and clubs to the baseball stadium and restaurants. Needless to say, bikes were the best patrol method for the area because of the pedestrian and vehicular traffic and for several other reasons.

The downtown was basically enforced with two squads of bikes. When fully staffed, each squad had five officers and one sergeant. One squad would work Tuesday through Friday and the other Wednesday through Saturday. The first couple of days would be day shifts, depending on the season or event, and the weekends (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday) were nights. We would work about 1-1.5 hours past bar closing time to deal with the fights and other issues. Bars close at 0200 hours, so for us, the shift was 1700-0300 hours. The day shifts keep the merchants happy because they would see us downtown, and because we would swing by to discuss any issues they were having. The day shifts also allowed us to patrol the bike paths and the parks, and provided time for administrative and maintenance duties. This shift would be in effect for a month and then the squads would switch. This gave everyone weekends off every other month but still provided full coverage. This schedule also helped keep senior bike officers, like Ron Gorski, around for a long time without getting burned out.

That said, the schedule wasn't necessarily always set in stone. Our city has many special events where bikes are needed. The FBR Open is one such event; so are smaller events like Cinco de Mayo. Throughout the year, the bars hold events during which they close off streets for parties, like Halloween, New Years, St. Paddy's Day, or whatever "holidays" they invented, like Pimp and Ho Night, Adam and Eve, etc. You get the picture. Good times too. We would flex our schedule during the week or work some OT to accommodate these events. We also had a reserve bike officer list from which we could pull more bodies. These officers were all IPMBA-trained and had to complete an annual refresher, basically a one-day condensed version of the IPMBA course.

In addition to daily patrol, our squad was involved with local issues, like reviewing/approving liquor licenses, valets, taxi cabs, bike taxis, and towing. Each officer had a good working knowledge of these issues, but one officer would be the main contact and be responsible for his area of enforcement. Eventually, because of all the follow-up, the bike unit created its own liquor detective position, which also has a different schedule. Basically, we took responsibility for everything related to the bars and downtown. The bike team developed positive relationships



with state agencies such as the Arizona Department of Liquor Licenses and Control (ADLLC) and the Arizona Department of Public Safety Gang Immigration Intelligence Team Enforcement Mission (GIITEM).

The bike unit also created a bicycle registration program. People could register their bikes through the city via a contact on the bike unit. Their bike information would get entered into a secure data base and the citizen would be sent a letter and registration sticker to be placed on the bike. Finally, our bike unit was also in charge of all bike education including rodeos, citizen and teen academies, and presentations.

*The Scottsdale Bike Unit was created in 1991. It's reputation as an IPMBA training center has been firmly established by IPMBA Instructors throughout the years, including Ron Gorski, James Taylor, Patrick Connor, Craig Malley, John Miller, Jason Kibsey, and Mark Johnson. Many Scottsdale PD Bike School students have gone on to become instructors for other agencies. The SPD hosted the IPMBA Conference in 2005. Craig can be reached at [cmalley@scottsdaleaz.gov](mailto:cmalley@scottsdaleaz.gov).*

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