SUBJECT TO DEBATE

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PERF and Target Announce Project To Promote Police Foundations

WITH SUPPORT FROM TARGET, PERF IS LAUNCHING a project that will promote the expansion of police foundations—nonprofit organizations that help raise money for police programs and equipment.

The project will include the creation of a National Police Foundation Association, which will serve as a source of information and assistance for existing and newly established police foundations, as well as for police chiefs, elected officials, business leaders and others with an interest in police foundations.

Target said its goal is to provide new resources to local communities. "This new initiative demonstrates how Target's extensive public safety partnerships are helping to strengthen neighborhoods across the country," said Brad Brekke, vice president of Assets Protection for Target.

Leading the effort will be Pam Delaney, former President of the New York City Police Foundation, which was the first organization of its kind in the United States, established in 1971. The NYC Police Foundation has become a model program that many other cities have followed. Ms. Delaney served as its top official for most of its existence and is one of the nation's top experts on police foundation leadership.

Subject to Debate interviewed Ms. Delaney about the new PERF/Target project, about her goals in taking on this new effort, and about some of the issues impacting police foundations, beginning with the current economic downturn:

Q: Pam, in the past, police foundations have been seen as a way to provide "something extra" for policing—special programs, new technology—and not as a way of funding routine items like salaries and patrol cars. With so many police agencies undergoing budget cuts, has there been a shift in thinking on this?

Ms. Delaney: Not really, as far as I can see. Most places are still looking at the "extras" rather than salaries or benefits, unless maybe it's personnel for a specially funded project. But the line may be blurring a little bit. For example, in the past, a new type of police radio might not have been considered by a police foundation because it was considered an "essential" item that should be supported by tax dollars. Today, a police foundation might consider funding radios, especially if it's the first wave of something new in the department, and the police foundation might buy them only for a certain district or a special unit. Or maybe all the officers will get the new radios, but when the radios wear out, city tax dollars will be used to replace them. So police foundations still have an interest in funding things that are new or special.

Pam Delaney

Q: Are police foundations seeing a tightening of donations from corporations and individual donors because of the economic downturn? And are donors more likely to be offering things other than cash, such as use of their facilities, equipment, and expertise?

Ms. Delaney: Yes, there has been some pulling back, because charitable dollars are being

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Lessons from Policing

In the 1980s, I was working as a young Operations Assistant to the Boston Police Commissioner. At that time, Boston was a hotbed of racial tension, stemming largely from controversies over busing school children to achieve desegregation of the city's schools. Racially-charged firebombings, assaults, shootings, and even murders were almost a daily occurrence.

One of my major responsibilities was overseeing the Community Disorders Unit (CDU), which was created to monitor the Police Department's investigations of racially motivated incidents of violence, threats, and harassment.

Boston in the 1980s was a different city from what it is now, and there were some cops who didn't like the idea of anyone from the Commissioner's Office overseeing their handling of criminal cases. And the CDU was not considered one of the Boston Police Department's "sexy" units like drugs, homicide, or robbery. Night after night, CDU officers had to convince skeptical colleagues that their work was every bit as important as the work being done in these other units.

From where I sat, the officers who worked in the CDU were some of the most inspiring people I have ever had the honor to work with.

I will never forget the day that Sgt. Billy Johnston, one of the CDU supervisors, came into my office and said he thought we should not limit our focus to victims of racial violence, but should also protect people who were victimized simply because they were gay. Billy had just come from the scene of a particularly ugly assault, in which someone who had just left a gay bar was attacked with a baseball bat. I remember sitting there looking at Billy and thinking "This is amazing. With all the pressure you guys are under, you are willing to take on the issue of crimes against gay persons too. Impressive."

Keep in mind that my meeting with Sergeant Johnston happened more than two decades ago.

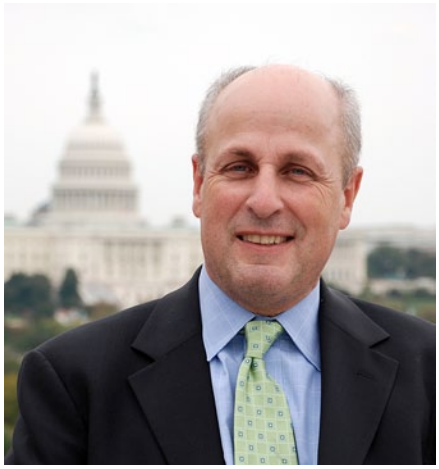
This growing awareness that human rights are for everyone resulted in a variety of changes—everything from active recruitment of gay officers to more open conversations with District Commanders overseeing neighborhoods that were predominantly gay.

When I came to Washington, I learned that Boston was not alone, that Washington's Metropolitan Police Department and many other police departments across the country were systematically changing their policies about the investigation of crimes against people because they are gay and, moreover, the acceptance of gay people in every facet of policing. In New York, the Police Department created a Bias Incident Investigation Unit similar to Boston's CDU, with a commander who reported directly to the Chief of Department to signify the importance of the unit. It had great success and brought credibility to the organization for dealing with bias based on race, creed, or sexual orientation.

A great deal of credit must also go to the officers across the country who were willing to stand up and demand equal treatment in their departments. They were the trailblazers who have made it easier for other gay officers to follow them.

This has all happened over the past 20 years—gradually, relatively quietly, and I would say largely successfully. I don't want to overstate the progress that has been made, for I know that there are still agencies that have some catching up to do in changing their attitudes and their policies. And there are agencies where officers do not step forward because they fear harassment or they just find it easier to "blend in." But I think the experience of the agencies that have changed has been unmistakably positive.

So when I look at how long it has taken Congress to change the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy in the military, I am once again proud of how policing—a field, not unlike military service, that requires teamwork and life-and-death decision making—has been on the forward edge of leadership. In policing, progress sometimes is prompted by terrible incidents or scandals, but sometimes change just happens quietly. Thankfully, police chiefs don't always ask for permission; often they just do the right thing. And while some agencies step forward or move faster than others, progress permeates the field.



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Milliken, Colorado's Police-Court-Community Building Advances Today's Style of Policing

By Chief Jim Burack
Milliken, CO Police Department

In spite of immense improvements in American policing over the last half-century, police continue to encounter violent crime and complex issues within their communities, especially in urban centers. A promising new idea is to decentralize the American justice system into neighborhood-based police stations that are integrated with local courts.

Police in American cities and suburbs are typically based in large, consolidated headquarters or district facilities that are designed to support rapid response to emergencies by officers in patrol cars. Embedded in the still-dominant professional policing model is the assumption that organizational consolidation is the most efficient and effective system. The result is that most conventional police buildings are not in the center of public activity. They are not easily accessible or inviting to pedestrians. They were conceived from the internal perspective of the police organization, not from the perspective of the external community and the public whom the buildings are intended to serve.

POLICE BUILDINGS THAT WELCOME VISITORS

A decade into the 21st Century, we have begun to acknowledge the importance of the concepts of sustainability, livability, smart growth, comprehensive community development, and renewed appreciation of the "neighborhood." All of these concepts are evident in new ideas regarding the location and design of our police stations. Similarly, local courts, as indispensable partners of the police in providing the direct delivery of justice services to communities, could be improved with new thinking about their location and architecture.

The design ideas embedded in the newly opened police station and community court in Milliken, Colorado, north of Denver, provide innovative thinking about a new integrated community justice facility model. Milliken, a mostly suburban, formerly rural town situated among a number of larger Northern Colorado cities, placed its new police station in the center of town on the main street, where it is readily accessible and central to the life of the community, and where it will create a downtown safety and security zone for decades to come. A large steel tank on the roof of the building with the town's name emblazoned on the side mimics the historic Milliken water tank that once stood on the site, and invites residents and passers-by to consider the police station a source of community identification.

The construction of the police-court-community facility also contributed to an urban renewal project, eliminating an old gas station (and leaking underground gasoline storage tanks) previously on the site, and setting the stage for an economic revival of downtown. The facility was designed to match the scale of downtown with multiple facades that speak to Milliken's historical roots, not with the officious-looking classical Greco-Roman or colonial architectural styles that are foreign to Milliken's history but are often associated with American justice buildings. The underlying concept was to create a facility in which a community policing, service delivery model could thrive.

The Milliken facility represents the idea that the police building itself produces an element of public safety, while also demonstrating that the police are an integral part of the community. Following "crime prevention through environmental design" (CPTED) principles, windows span and protrude from the south side of the building, commanding a view over the main street, suggesting that the police are monitoring activity throughout the downtown. It simultaneously signals the openness and transparency of police operations. At night, the light from the oversized bay window, along with blue precinct-style lights, serves as a beacon of safety. Additionally the building has zones for various activities and socialization. Rocking chairs on the plaza in front of the building and a "Kids & Cops Park," complete with climbing boulders on the east end of the building, signal that the police are friendly community partners, especially to youths. The Veterans Memorial by the police station flagpoles is a venue for Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies that reinforce the building's integration into the fabric of community life.

Milliken, CO Chief Jim Burack

In short, the police station has been transformed—from a place of last resort for arrestees and desperate families into one that welcomes residents and the public in the best of times.

A SOURCE OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The service counter in the lobby has a glass divider (and invisible ballistic protection below the counter) that balances security with openness. Chairs at the customer service counter encourage visitors to sit down and talk with police staff behind the counter. A fireplace and kids' library in the lobby provide a comfortable sitting area for visitors or a venue for officers to meet informally with the public or witnesses reporting an incident or seeking help. The multi-purpose Meeting House connected to the Police Station lobby serves as the police training room and Emergency Operations Center, Town Board and Planning Commission meeting room, as well as the venue for the Community Court. With large-screen TVs and a police popcorn-maker, the Meeting House is also

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the site of free movie nights for kids. The building is a venue to forge relationships with local at-risk youth.

The lobby also hosts a social service referral area with a brochure display and a dedicated work station connected directly to United Way 211, which assists families and individuals in need of help. This shows the community that the police are much more than simply law enforcers. The police community services assistant who works at the front desk acts as a resource assistant by providing bilingual assistance with the resource center. Police officers and the court can refer victims, witnesses, and defendants to the resource center as well.

DESIGN OF NON-PUBLIC AREAS ENCOURAGES COLLABORATION AT ALL RANKS

The internal non-public side of the station features a single oversized conference table around which each officer and investigator works at an individually assigned work station. The table, without cubicle dividers, encourages communication and problem-solving. Command offices sit on the perimeter of the Great Room, separated only by floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors, in order to facilitate day-to-day conversations among the chief, the commanders, and investigators and patrol officers. There is no traditional briefing room; officers brief each other around the table. There is no report-writing room; the station is small enough that each officer has his or her own spot with a desktop computer at the conference table. It reinforces the notion that the individual officer is a community leader deserving of a desk, and that open communications and a team approach are fundamental to the work of healthy organizations.

Milliken, CO police-court-community building

The building site benefited from an existing 60-year-old metal bean-storage barn that was turned into an indoor multipurpose garage, evidence holding area, and dog kennel. With this secure area accessible only by police staff, there was no need for an outdoor chain-link fenced parking lot. Thus, the police building encourages activity all around its perimeter, including a planned path and sidewalk that will ring the downtown area.

Security cameras, which in a traditional building would have been designed mainly to ensure building security, are now used primarily to make the downtown area safe. In fact, the "pan, tilt, zoom" camera mounted on the front of the building watches both the police plaza by the front door and all vehicles passing by on the state highway or main street in front of the building. A 7-11 store, gas station, and bank across the street benefit from 24/7 surveillance by the police station cameras.

A COMMUNITY COURT, WORKING WITH THE POLICE

A community court is an integral component of community justice and therefore a logical extension of a police department that operates on community policing principles. The traditional municipal court has focused largely on traffic offenses, and its dispositions have been conventional: fines and some community service. Milliken's new neighborhood community court located in the attached Meeting House will work cooperatively with the police with a range of innovative, even experimental, proactive problem-solving interventions and responses, to include restorative justice. A community justice advisory group provides input to the judge, town attorney and police to help suggest court priorities and community standards. A case manager will work together with the police department to more effectively manage and hold offenders accountable. In a small community, supervision and accountability of low-level offenders are frequently more effective because families, neighbors, school staff and police officers tend to communicate more and be more familiar with the offenders. Of particular promise is the opportunity to intervene early and effectively in the criminal life cycle of juveniles. If the court, with police assistance, can craft responses that hold first-time, low-level juvenile offenders accountable, show them that the community will not tolerate bad behavior, and use their first brush with the justice system as a teachable moment, there may be an opportunity to prevent youths from committing more serious offenses that could bring them to the county court, where the risks and punishments are far higher.

NEIGHBORHOODS ARE KEY

Neighborhoods are the building blocks of healthy urban societies, and metropolitan areas are simply an amalgamation of neighborhoods. Police must be part of that neighborhood fabric, especially in the most crime-challenged neighborhoods. While changing technology and new ways to communicate surely affect how we deliver police services, humans continue to be committed to the urban experience and social contact. Neighborhoods will endure, and modern police organizations can enhance neighborhood safety and livability by designing police facilities that complement and support individual neighborhoods.

The Japanese "koban," or local police office, is instructive. These are highly decentralized neighborhood police stations that provide retail safety and security services at the street level. Approachable and unintimidating, kobans provide visibility over the neighborhood, while also encouraging visitors to go there for directions or to report incidents or crime. A related idea is that neighborhood-focused police buildings should be scaled to the communities they support, not to the police organization they

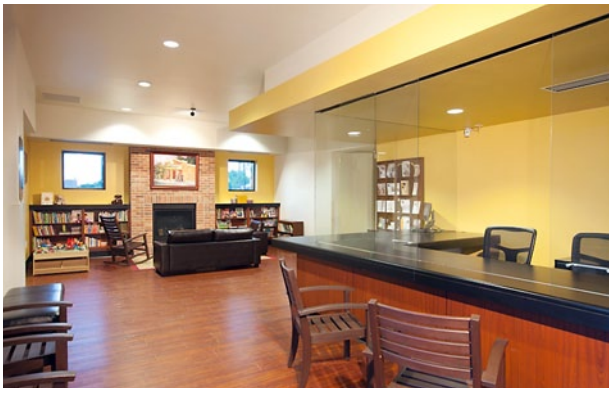
PHOTOS BY ROTH+SHEPPARD ARCHITECTS AND PAUL BROKERING INC. PHOTOGRAPHY

represent. Police facility planning should start with a study of the neighborhood and that should be the determinant of the eventual size and structure of the facility footprint.

RETHINKING THE SECURITY ISSUE

The discussion about police facility design has been dominated by one obvious issue: the tension between assumed force protection requirements that compel construction of a fortress-like environment, and the transparency, approachability, and accessibility suggested by today's community policing culture. The understandable but not thoroughly analyzed preoccupation with officer safety issues continues to drive the police culture. Unfortunately, the conversation about facility design may not align with data about actual documented risks to police staff.

What we have learned recently in some hostile environments, such as the insurgency in Iraq, is that it may be safer and more effective to be aggressive and decentralize the security presence so it is more widespread, rather than focus military power in consolidated bases "behind the wire." We have seen the apparent success of dispersed forward-operating bases as part of a counter-insurgency strategy that projects sustained power and control into Iraqi neighborhoods. That presence typically includes "overwatch" with fortified watchtowers that project control of key intersections or streets, and deny insurgents the ability to maneuver freely in the area.



Customer service counter and visitor sitting area

Police practice has for decades been premised on the effectiveness of police presence and visibility to deter criminal activity. So if the basic assumption is that public safety is enhanced by a police presence in any form, including patrol officers, marked police cars, and closed circuit cameras, why have police been resistant to leverage the permanent and sustained presence of the police station itself?

NEW WAYS OF DEFINING COST-EFFICIENCY

In this age of scarce public dollars, creating efficient government practices has taken on a new urgency. Although neighborhood police stations are efficient at many levels, the traditionalist may object that consolidated patrol and investigation bases are organizationally more efficient because administrative support functions can be streamlined and consolidated. While that might be true in some limited and simplistic ways, creating safe neighborhoods is not identical to manufacturing widgets. True efficiency in the delivery of police services is premised on building enduring partnerships and relationships within the community, and decentralization is the best way to create that foundation. After all, the most powerful mechanism for crime control is not the police; it is the ability of the public to police themselves. The police are simply the professional catalysts.

Government strives to leverage public dollars to encourage legitimate economic activity that generates wealth and tax revenue, which is frequently only possible, especially in the most crime-challenged neighborhoods of America, if neighborhoods are safe and hospitable for people to socialize and congregate. Those potential customers lure business owners, resulting in commerce under the protective umbrella of a police station. Even in less challenged neighborhoods, a police station may help create a "sense of place" that encourages pedestrian traffic. Real efficiency is using public safety dollars to promote economic development and improve neighborhoods.

Police leaders now recognize the importance of tracking crime and holding police commanders accountable for crime in defined geographic areas. Yet arguably police organizations have not provided commanders the basic decentralization structure that will yield better results. A decentralized model pushes authority down the organization to commanders who can more effectively control crime at a neighborhood station that is open 24/7.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS AND HOMELAND SECURITY

As we confront the challenge to homeland security presented by terrorists operating within our communities, we have time and again over the last decade discovered the importance of the police opening lines of communication and building relationships with the community to gather intelligence. Police departments that are decentralized by neighborhood are far more effective in generating trust and communication. This model becomes a powerful tool in a successful homeland security strategy.

The current model of large consolidated police stations aligns with a traditional one-dimensional conception of the American criminal justice system, where police operate largely in isolation from courts and social services. Milliken's new model aligns with new strands of police innovation. If we are to realize the promise of community policing, police must operate in the community. Neighborhood-based integrated police and court centers represent a new sustainable concept of American justice.

Additional information is available at http://www.rothsheppard.com/pages/milliken-municipal. Right-click to enlarge small photos.

Jim Burack has served as Police Chief in Milliken since 2001, as well as Town Administrator since 2008. He is a Colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, and served with the 1st Marine Division in Ramadi, Iraq, in 2004–05. He was PERF Staff Counsel and Director of Operations from 1995 to 2001. He is a graduate of PERF's Senior Management Institute for Police and the FBI National Academy, and has a Juris Doctor degree as well as a Master's degree in criminal justice. He is on the adjunct criminal justice faculty at the University of North Colorado.

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stretched to fill a lot of needs in all kinds of social services. Police foundations are being affected by the same sort of constraints. And yes, there are more offers in lieu of cash. I think everybody is trying to leverage what they have to offer.

However, I think that over the years there's been an increasing awareness in the private sector of how valuable these partnerships with the police are. I see more and more interest in the private sector doing what they can to help police. For example, in cities where the police departments have had to lay off officers and where they have a vibrant private sector, they become more engaged. For a police foundation, there is an opportunity to engage corporations in becoming more involved and more generous in their giving towards police, because they see what's happening with police budget cuts.

In the past, this connection wasn't quite there. You would always hear, "Well, shouldn't municipal dollars be paying for this?" And yes, in theory, in a perfect world, tax dollars could pay for everything a police department needs. But the reality is that even in the wealthiest communities, there's never enough to go completely around.

Another trend I've seen is that there's a greater appreciation for the fact that police do make a difference in public safety. In the early '90s, I think people were kind of in despair about crime and thought that nothing could be done. But as crime has gone down and new methods of policing have proved effective and have had an impact on crime, I think the private sector has seen that if they invest their dollars in a police department, that will pay off—and that payoff is for them too. They have a safer environment for employees to live in, a safer environment for them to conduct business, a better environment for their customers. I think that connection has made the private sector more willing to invest its dollars, and we are seeing some growth and interest in police foundations where we wouldn't necessarily have seen it in the past.

Q: During this economic crisis, are you finding that police departments are becoming more popular among donors than institutions like art museums and opera companies?

Ms. Delaney: Yes, I think that there is a trend in that direction. For donors, contributing to a police foundation may not get you the social panache that a museum or hospital ward may generate. But I think there's a feeling that "Yes, it's lovely to have culture, but what's the benefit of having a great art museum if no one's going to come because it's too dangerous to get there?"

Q: I've seen estimates that currently there are about 25 active police foundations across the country. Does that sound correct to you?

Ms. Delaney: I think 25 is a pretty accurate number. There have been attempts to get a handle on the actual number of police foundations, but it's a little elusive, in part because there are some groups that call themselves police foundations that are not really police foundations as we think of them.

Q: How high could the number go? Could the United States someday have 1,000 police departments with their own police foundations? Is this mainly a big-city phenomenon, or can medium-size cities and small towns also have police foundations?

Ms. Delaney: I don't see it as a big-city vs. small-town issue; it's really more about people being involved in the community. There are very small cities that have police foundations, and there are big cities. A lot of it depends on how the private sector is engaged. In small communities, it's based more on individual donors, maybe with some core businesses. Residential communities probably have a harder time. I hate to use the term "bedroom communities," but that's what I mean—in places where there are not a lot of core businesses, it can be more difficult. But the potential is still there. It may not be for the millions of dollars that a big city may be able to access, but the needs are not as great in a smaller residential community. If a town only has five police cars, it's an easier thing to pay for computers for all of the cars.

Q: Is there a particular way in which police foundations typically get established? Who takes the lead in starting one up?

Ms. Delaney: It's really all over the place in terms of how it starts. In the past, it was usually someone in the private sector who would think of creating a police foundation. But I'm seeing a trend toward elected officials taking the lead. For example, Cory Booker in Newark came in with the idea of creating a police foundation there. And in other places it's the police chief who wants to get it off the ground. And we still have the private sector taking the lead in some places. Someone will say, "I just came back from a trip to LA, and they have this wonderful police foundation, and it's exactly what this community needs. I'm going to approach the police department and the mayor about it."

In terms of a trend, perhaps because organizations like PERF have held workshops on police foundations and have helped spread the word, I see more police chiefs becoming the impetus.

Q: On the other hand, it has been said that often the biggest opposition to a police foundation comes from the police department—that the police are hostile to the idea because they think, "This will just lead to a lot of people telling us how to do our job." Is that still the case?

Ms. Delaney: I think there's still that fear, but it's loosened up a little bit. Police chiefs are seeing how other cities are managing it, and as they learn more about police foundations, I think their comfort level is increasing. They are seeing that these 25 or 30 organizations are functioning well.

Sometimes, even in a city where a police foundation is doing really well, when a new chief comes in, if he or she does not have experience dealing with police foundations, there is a reluctance about it. And because their plate is usually incredibly full when they transition in, the police foundation goes to the bottom of the pile. I've heard a number of chiefs say they've heard of police foundations but weren't sure what they did. All they know is that there's a group of citizens out there whom they don't know, and the chief is thinking, "Who are these people, and are they going to tell me how to run my department?" And they don't have time to look into it, so it gets pushed down to Number 45 on a list of 46 priorities. But the more the word gets out that there are examples of strong foundations that have good relationships with the police, the more this is improving.

I've also heard chiefs say, "You know, I'd like to do this, but I don't know how. I can't just call up the head of a big business in my community and ask for money. How do I take this step without crossing the line in ethics? The first thing we are taught in policing is 'Don't take that cup of coffee.' So if I do call this guy and he is willing to contribute, what is he going to want from me in return?" Police foundations essentially are fundraising organizations, and as soon as you say "fundraising" to police chiefs, their palms begin to sweat, with good reason.

So there's a lot of teaching that has to be done about good examples of how police foundations have helped police departments, how to establish strong ethics rules, how to take care that the right people are on the police foundation board of directors, and so on. Those early steps are really important. A big part of what we will be doing in this PERF/Target project will be focusing on helping police leaders understand more clearly what a foundation is, what the benefits are, and how to get it off the ground.

Police foundations are nonprofit organizations, so they are established under federal and state laws, and like other nonprofits, they are carefully scrutinized by monitoring groups and by the news media. And the rules for police foundations are even stricter in many ways than for other nonprofits. There is a completely different set of standards. For example, if a wealthy citizen or corporation donates a wing to a museum, a ward to a hospital, or a library to a university, they may name it the "Corporation X Atrium" or "Mr. and Mrs. Jones Library." Obviously that would be outrageous in the case of a police foundation.

Furthermore, I think that police foundations are very special organizations, because they must make sure that if anything goes wrong in the foundation, it doesn't discredit the police department. A scandal involving an art museum wouldn't have the enormous consequences as an impropriety involving a police foundation.

Another dynamic is that police chiefs are the "stars" in the police foundations' cause. So while you have Marlo Thomas as the spokesperson for St. Jude's Hospital, with police foundations the celebrity is the police chief, which makes some chiefs uncomfortable. And that's completely understandable, but there is an important role for them to play, and there is a balance. Part of what we'll be trying to do is help people understand what that balance is and how to develop a successful partnership with the private sector.

Q: What will be the top priorities of this PERF/Target project?

Ms. Delaney: The main purpose will be to gather the existing police foundations into an association so that we can share information. The association will help the foundations that are already in existence and bring new ones on board, so we'll have a functioning network and a way of communicating and sharing best practices. The goal will be to ensure that police foundations are on the same path, so when you say, "City X has a police foundation," everyone will know that the foundation meets certain criteria in how it is organized and that it adheres to strict rules and requirements.

Q: Thank you, Ms. Delaney.

For further information, contact Pamela Delaney at pam@pamdelaney.com.

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