

The Beginning

The history of the law enforcement in Brea goes back to a time before the city was incorporated. On March 8, 1916, George Bird was appointed the first constable of the town of Brea. He served as constable until 1920, walking a foot-beat downtown with a badge and stick. His job was multi-faceted: He was paid \$50 per month for policing and keeping order, \$25 as the street superintendent, \$10 as the tax collector, and \$5 as the pound master (\$90.00 total). Most streets were dirt. There were 44 automobiles registered in the town in 1916. At the same time, Isaac Craig was appointed Justice of the Peace. His office and "chambers" were located in his home at 338 N. Orange.

The city of Brea was incorporated on February 23, 1917. Within a week, Harry Winchell was appointed the first City Marshall. Winchell's son, H.N. "Frog" Winchell was usually at his father's side during patrols. There were 106 autos registered in Brea the first year of incorporation. I.N. Hurst took over as City Marshall on January 1, 1919, when the city's population was 1,491. Legend reports he was well known for the effective use of his cane in gaining compliance while enforcing the law. Typical crimes for the time included keeping the railroad workers in line, and dealing with drunken oil field workers.

The 1920's

Marshals appointed in the 1920's included D.O. Stegman, J.E. Stone, E.P. Rudy and James C. Looney. A 'call box' was installed at the corner of Ash St. and Pomona Ave (Brea Bl.) that was a direct line to the marshal's home.

In 1921, Charles McClure was appointed the first Chief of Police, and the Brea Police Department was established. The police department was made up of the chief, marshals and night watchmen. Early the following year, the city purchased a California Penal Code for the police department. Also in 1922, Brea Canyon Road was opened, becoming a major route connecting Orange County and the Pomona Valley. A marked increase in traffic was noted. Marshal Looney used his personal motorcycle, a red Indian, for traffic enforcement in the town.

In March, 1923, the Brea Star newspaper reported that the newly constructed water tower on north Pomona has a red light installed on top. When turned on, the light signaled police officers to respond for an emergency call. And city's three officers were kept busy . . . controlling bootleggers operating between Anaheim and the Brea Hills.



The new Brea City Hall at 401 S. Brea was completed in January 1929. It included the offices for the police department and the first town

jail. During this time, W. H. (Harry) Williams was appointed Chief of Police.

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W. H. WILLIAMS
Chief of Police

The 1930's

On March 10, 1932, the Brea Police Department moved into the modern era. Police radios were installed. Chief Ellis of the Fire Department built the radios. Calls received at city hall were diverted to the Los Angeles Police Department and then relayed over the radio to the police officer. This early radio offered no communication between the officers and the police station directly. Brea was only the second city in the state to acquire police radios. Later that year, Carbon Canyon Road was completed as a paved arterial to the Inland Empire.

1933 was a busy year for the small police department with some unusual occurrences to contend with. On January 11, 80-mph winds buffeted the city. Damages countywide exceeded \$1 million dollars (in 1933 money!). Old-time residents claim it to be the worst windstorm in memory. Then on March 10, the earth shook in what became known as the Long Beach Earthquake. Police and Brea residents assisted victims of that quake for several days, opening homes and shelters for those whose homes had been destroyed.

An officer's salary in 1933 was \$200 per month and benefits: 50 gallons of gasoline (later 100), paid auto insurance and phone bills. The next year, the historic "Welcome to Brea" sign was erected across Pomona Ave., south of Birch St.

In 1936, a building was completed that would one day play a major role for the police department. The headquarters of the Brea American Legion and the Brea Women's Club at 495 S. Pomona Ave. was dedicated on March 13. Years later, this building would become the police department.

Modernization continued in 1938 when Chief Williams developed a records filing system to document police activities. A monthly report written by the chief documented the number of arrests, dates of arrests, names and addresses of those arrested, and the identity of arresting officers. These reports were filed at City Hall. Gambling was one of the major crime concerns of '38.

There were three officers in the Brea Police Department in 1938.

Imperial Highway was being developed as a major throughway from Los Angeles east. The segment between Brea and Yorba Linda was completed in 1938. The passenger rail line (Red Car) was discontinued shortly thereafter. With increasing vehicular traffic, the police department

purchased a new 1939 Oldsmobile sedan as its first police car.

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The 1940's

1941 James Pearson was appointed Chief. That year the department purchased some new equipment: a 1941 Ford to replace Brea's first police car, a .38 caliber pistol, and two pairs of handcuffs. That equipment was put to use when the Oilfield National Bank at Pomona Ave and Ash St. was robbed. Little information is now known of the incident. The crooks got away with \$2,846.00.

Technology moved on when, in 1942, a new radio system was installed. Three radios were purchased from Brea Electric Co. at \$51.25 each. One was placed at City Hall, and two were placed in patrol cars. The department's call sign was "MQAD."

The Department roster in 1942 was: Chief James Pearson, Officer William Atkins, and Officer R.W. Philips. The chief worked 12 hours a day. Each officer worked 10 hours a day. Everyone worked six days a week.

William Atkins was appointed chief in 1946. The first red curbs were painted on city streets that year.

On New Years Day, 1947, Harvey Moore was appointed township judge. He served until October 31, 1952. He was the last judge in town. His office was in the city hall next to the police chief's. He is best remembered for his hard stand on drunken driving. He routinely handed out \$200.00 fines to violators, a stiff sentence at the time. When he retired due to poor health, trials were moved to the county seat in Santa Ana.

Radio communications improved in 1947 when the city went on-line with the rest of Orange County, instead of Los Angeles. A telephone "landline" was established to other cities in the county. The department's radio call signal changed to "KMA-152."

The police department purchased a 1947 Chevrolet "Stylemaster" and teargas equipment in 1947. The department also began furnishing uniforms for its five officers, after establishing a standardized uniform style. It was dark blue.

There were five department personnel at the beginning of 1947. As the year progressed, the city's first "Auxiliary Reserve" officer, Ken Irby, was appointed to a part time position. The department's first sergeant, Keith Barress, was hired at a salary of \$340.00. Sergeant Barress was assigned as the first juvenile officer, but wore a uniform. The department's first female employees started this year also. Police Matrons Louise Farwell and Grace Westerhout handled clerical and dispatch work. Matron Ann Penrod became the chief's secretary.

1949 brought snow to Brea, falling on January 11 and leaving drifts for much of the day in town and more than one day in Carbon Canyon. The roster of officers in 1949 was: Chief Atkins, Lt. Ray Phillips, Sergeant Keith Barris, and Officers Ben Oxandaboure and Dale Varner.

Late in 1949, the police reserve organization was established, for the principal purpose of providing security for the John Zacklin tract (area of Fir and Brea) that was under construction. The development had been experiencing problems of thefts of materials, particularly garbage disposals. There were eight charter members of the reserve unit, including the Department's first bilingual Spanish speaking officer, Benny Portillo. Membership in the reserve unit quickly grew. Reserve officers purchased their own uniforms, badges and guns. Chief Atkins, Lt. Barress, and Officer Oxandaboure were early reserve coordinators. The Acting Police Commissioner, Tattius (Tat) Weaver, approved this new program. Within a very short time the reserves' duties were expanded to include working security at the new Kirkhill Rubber Plant, and riding in patrol cars, either alone or with regular officers. Most reserves worked an average of three nights per week. In the next year, reserves will begin working special details including ball games, dances, and they begin scheduling to work the "weekly brawl at Sam's Place."

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The 1950's

In 1952 Officer Walt Hastings arrested Billy Rupp at Sam's Place. Rupp was wanted for the strangulation murder of a girl in Yorba Linda. He was later sentenced to death and died in the gas chamber at San Quentin on November 7, 1958. He was the last person executed for an Orange County case until February, 1996, 38 years later.



1953 saw six sworn officers and eight reserves serving the City of Brea. One year later, there were twelve full time members on the force, including one lieutenant, three sergeants and the three female matrons. In 1955, new, specific requirements were established for employment as an officer. They were: 1 - a high school diploma; and 2 - successfully passing a civil service exam. Floyd Goodell was one of the first hired under these new requirements. In the mid-1950's, the police department changed appearances. The navy blue uniforms were

scrubbed in favor of khaki uniforms. 1958 saw the reserve force grow to fifteen members. A detective "bureau" was started with the appointment of William Hobbs as the first detective.

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The 1960's

In 1962, the department had seven marked patrol cars. In February of that year, Chief William Atkins retired after 16 years leading the department. Walt Richison was appointed as interim chief of police.

1964 was a pivotal year for the Brea Police Department. On January 15, Lieutenant Richard Owen Baugh, Downey P.D., was appointed Chief of Police, receiving a salary of \$897.00 per

month. He was a 14-year veteran of Downey and L.A.P.D. There were 13 officers on the Force. Recruitment for new officers was ongoing with over 200 men taking a written test on February 17. Several new 1964 Dodge Sedans were purchased for use as patrol cars. Chief Baugh also instituted a new records system at the department in 1964.

In 1966 the department had 21 officers, six matrons, four crossing guards and 15 reserves, with a fleet of five patrol cars and three unmarked units. Brea was linked to the nationwide Law Enforcement Teletype System. Chief Baugh established a Rules and Regulations Manual. The department had in its inventory rifles, shotguns, automatic weapons, tear gas equipment, and a fully equipped photo lab. A 25-yard outdoor range was used by officers for their regular pistol qualifications. The Brea Police Association was founded in 1966. Originally seen as a social organization, the association would evolve over the years as labor-relations demands increased.

The police department continued to be involved in community affairs in 1968. Bicycle safety programs, traffic safety programs, and a Boy Scout merit badge program were all offered by department personnel. The Brea Police Explorer Post 822 was formed that year in conjunction with the Boy Scouts of America. Cliff Trimble was the first Post Advisor.

In 1969, the police cadet program was initiated, with the intention of giving young people experience as they prepare for a career as a police officer. Jeff Keyworth was the first Brea Police Cadet.

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The 1970's

A decade of significant change began in 1970 when the police department moved from City Hall to its "new" station at 495 S. Brea Bl. (originally the Brea American Legion and Women's Club building.) The building was shared with the fire department. Police records, dispatch, detectives, administration, and the briefing room were all upstairs. The jail and locker room were downstairs. Fire Station #2 occupied the rest of the lower level.

The City of Yorba Linda, which incorporated in 1967, had been receiving police services from the Orange County Sheriff's Department. After several months of discussions and negotiations between the cities of Yorba Linda and Brea, an agreement was reached to have the Brea Police Department provide police service to Yorba Linda. This was the first time in California history that a municipal police agency provided police protection to another city. Special legislation was passed in Sacramento allowing this unique arrangement. On October 1, 1970, Brea police officers began routine patrols in Yorba Linda. Nine new officers and three new cars were authorized. The Department's Records system was revised to accommodate the new contract. The square Brea city seal, which had been on the doors of the patrol cars, was replaced by a gold badge shield. Thus originated this Department's ongoing relationship with our neighbor to the east.



In 1971 the Police Department experimented with its first "Traffic Detail." Initially, a motorcycle was rented from the La Habra Police Department. Two Motoguzzis were later purchased. The Traffic Bureau has grown to over 14 personnel today, promoting traffic safety, investigating traffic collisions, enforcing traffic laws, and working commercial enforcement.

Chief Baugh resigned in 1971 to become the Police Chief for the City of Ventura, CA. Robert Wasserman was appointed Brea's new chief in September, 1972. In the next year, Chief Wasserman initiated several improvements and changes. New light bars and electronic sirens were installed on patrol cars. Previously, the cars had only had spot lights and "growler" sirens. Shotguns were installed in units. New "class A" (dress) uniforms were tried: dark brown blazers, with a circular breast patch, over a shirt, tie, and slacks. New shoulder patches were designed, replacing the old, blue California Bear patches. The new patches were in brown tones with Brea's modern logo incorporated.

Orange County implemented the new state-of-the-art countywide radio system, the most technically advanced in the nation at the time. It included an eight-channel radio and teletype printer in each patrol car, and the capability for officers and dispatchers to communicate with other county police agencies. The system is still in use today.

The police department appointed the first School Resource Officer, Joe Morris, in 1972. The S.R.O. worked with school officials, taught safety classes to students, and helped solve problems on school campuses.

In 1973, the Brea Police Department scored two "firsts". The "Citizen Contact Tape Recorder" program was instituted through money from a grant. Officers carried a cassette tape recorder on their "Sam Browne" belt and recorded all contacts with the public. This was the first such program in the state. The program continues today, and has been copied by many other agencies and individual officers.

And the Department was the first in the state to install blue emergency lights on its patrol cars. The California Highway Patrol was in the final stages of testing the lights for approval when Brea put them on the cars.

The Department continued to grow. In 1973 there were 53 officers and other personnel, seven marked patrol cars, six unmarked vehicles, and two motorcycles.

In 1974, the title of "policeman" was officially changed to "police officer." And for good reason: in May of that year, Suzanne Oliver (Drlik) became the department's first female reserve officer. On December 7, she became the first female regular officer.

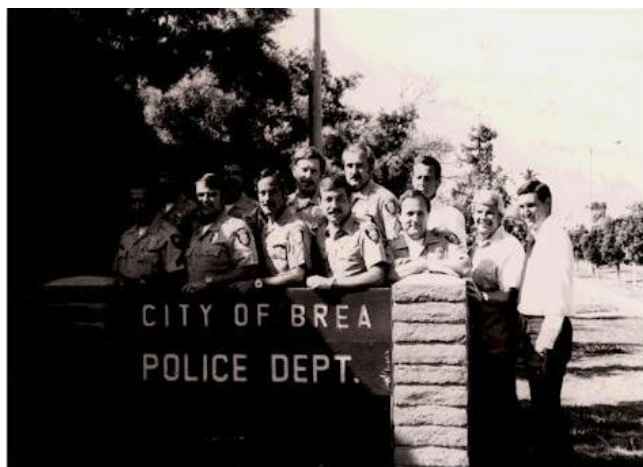
In February of 1976, Sergeant Donald L. Forkus was appointed Chief of Police. Chief Wasserman had resigned to be chief in Fremont, CA. That year, an innovative 10-hour, 4-day work week was established for patrol officers.

In 1977, the department consisted of 43 sworn officers, 16 civilian employees, ten patrol cars, and five motorcycles. All that personnel and equipment was put to use on Valentines Day,

February 14, 1977, when the Bank of America on Main Street in Yorba Linda was held up in a take-over "political robbery". A lone gunman armed with a shotgun held seven bank employees hostage for over three hours, demanding to talk to the press, saying this was "a political robbery in retribution of the United States government..." After sometimes intense negotiations, the suspect surrendered to officers. No one was hurt in this incident that was reported by national news media outlets.

In 1978, Brea Fire Station #2 was relocated to new facilities at Birch and Laurel. The Police Department expanded to take over all of the building at 495 S. Brea Bl. A civilian Traffic Control Officer position was initiated that year. These TCO's would investigate traffic collisions and handle other traffic matters, relieving patrol officers to handle other calls for service. This program has been modified over the years into the Community Service Officer position. CSO's handle "cold" report calls and other non-emergency duties.

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The 1980's

In June of 1980, the Department underwent a major restructuring process. Captains would be division commanders (uniform, investigation, services). Lieutenants would be watch commanders. Sergeants would be field supervisors. All this was in preparation for the move to new police facilities in the Brea Civic Cultural Center, which was completed in 1981. This facility continues to be the Police Department's home.

In 1982, new graphics were applied to patrol units. The cars remained white, but

the gold shields were removed. Large, blue letters now spelled out "POLICE" below Brea's city seal on the front door. "Serving Brea and Yorba Linda" was on the back door.

On February 9, 1983, three armed men robbed an armored car parked in front of the Bank of America at Imperial and State College Bl. Officers pursued the suspects' vehicle as they attempt to get away. The suspects fire several gunshots at pursuing officers along city streets and freeways. The suspects eventually crashed along Brea Canyon Cutoff. After another shoot out, two suspects were arrested. One was wounded. No officers were injured. The entire \$675,000 loss was recovered.



In May, 1983, in the first documented incident of its kind in the department's history, an officer-involved shooting results in the death of a suspect. An armed man had been wandering through an apartment complex in Yorba Linda,

waving a handgun in the air and firing shots. When confronted by an officer, he pointed the gun at him, forcing the officer to shoot the suspect.

On July 1, 1983, uniformed officers took on a new appearance when they donned navy blue uniforms for the first time, replacing the tan uniforms worn since the early 50's. New patches were also designed. A new badge, incorporating a gold seven-point star on a silver shield was issued in 1984.

A police K-9 program was inaugurated in 1984. Two officers spent weeks in training with their German Shepherd partners. The program later expanded to include three dogs, and continues today. These four-legged officers are able to smell narcotics hidden in vehicles, track suspects, and apprehend suspects instead of using more lethal force.

In 1985, patrol units were re-painted to a more traditional black and white color, in the hopes they will be more readily identifiable as police cars. There were 71 sworn police officers in the department.

1987 was a busy year for innovation. The DARE program was instituted in Brea and Yorba Linda schools. Computer Assisted Dispatch (CAD) goes on-line in the Communications Center. Mobile Digital Terminals (MDT) are installed in all patrol vehicles. Officers were now able to check for stolen vehicles and wanted persons from their patrol cars, significantly reducing radio time. And a Records Management System (RMS) was initiated in the Records Division. The computer age arrives at Brea PD!

The training of new officers is of paramount importance to the Brea Police Department, thus upholding the high standards set and expected. In 1988 the Field Training Unit was established. The Department's Field Training Program was revised and updated to the highest professional standards, and continues to be reviewed annually.

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The 1990's

For several years, the Police Department had used a house next to the Yorba Linda Jr. High School as a "substation." Officers were able to go there to prepare reports and interview witnesses. As Yorba Linda continued to grow, the need for additional office services became evident. In 1990, the Yorba Linda Police Administrative Annex was opened in an office complex on Yorba Linda Bl near Fairmont. The office was open and staffed during the day to serve Yorba Linda residents.

On June 19, 1990, the Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace opened to the public in Yorba Linda. Presidents Nixon, Ford, Reagan, and Bush, along with their wives, attended. Several other national and world dignitaries attended. It becomes a national news event, drawing over 50,000 people. Security requirements and crowd control needs necessitated the use of officers from nearly every police agency in Orange County, as well as the Secret Service and FBI. Over 375 law enforcement personnel were on scene that day, in the largest event ever organized by officers of the Police Department.

In 1992, the City of Brea celebrated its 75th birthday. Officers wore specially designed badges that year, similar in design to a badge dating back to the 1920's. Also during 1992, Chief Forkus took a medical leave of absence for several months. Captain Larry Baker was appointed Acting Chief of Police until his retirement in December. Captain Jim Oman was appointed Acting Chief in his place. Chief Forkus returned to duty in mid-1993.

The Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace was in the forefront of department activities during the next two years. In June, 1993, Pat Nixon, wife of President Nixon, died and was buried at the Library. Several thousand people passed the coffin as it lay in state. Approximately 300 national, world, political, and entertainment industry dignitaries attended the funeral services. Police department officials handled all security and crowd control for the event.

Less than a year later, President Nixon passed away and was buried at the Nixon Library on April 27. His body lay in repose in the afternoon of the 26th and morning of the 27th. It is estimated that 47,000 people passed by the coffin to pay their respects. Eight-hour waits were common. President Clinton and former presidents Bush, Reagan, Carter and Ford, and their wives, attended. National and International political figures were at the library, along with world and national news media. 275 officers from Brea and surrounding agencies provided security, traffic, and crowd control.

On June 6, 1994, Chief Forkus retired after 28 years with the Police Department, 18 of those as chief. Captain Jim Oman was appointed acting Chief until August 29 when he was selected to be the new permanent chief.

On December 1, 1994, new shoulder patches were put in to use. To better recognize the Department's relationship with Yorba Linda, "also serving Yorba Linda" is embroidered onto the new patch design. Patrol Unit graphics are also redesigned to incorporate the Yorba Linda city seal, along with the Brea city seal and Brea Police badge.

1995 saw a major transition in the perspective and day-to-day operations of the Police Department when "Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving" (COPPS) was adopted as the philosophy and driving force of the Department. This back-to-basics philosophy will put officers in more direct contact with the public, working with residents and business owners to solve community problems and enhance the quality of life in Brea and Yorba Linda.

In May of 1995, motorcycle traffic officers adopted the use of "full-face" helmets for safety purposes. This was rather unique in United States law enforcement, although the helmets have been used in other countries for some time.

On May 23, 1995, Detective Danny Valenzuela collapsed and died after suffering a heart attack while participating in the department's Bicycle Training in Westminster. He was the first Brea Officer to die "in the line of duty." He had joined the Department in 1980, working as a patrol officer, traffic officer and detective. He was survived by his wife, Jean, and children, Christopher, Sarah, Brian, and Diana. He was buried with honors at Bellevue Cemetery in Ontario on May 27.

On September 1, 1995, Chief Oman retired after 30 years with the Brea Police Department. Two months later, City Manager Frank Benest appoints Captain William C. Lentini Chief of Police.

The Chief, several officers and family members attended the annual California Law Enforcement Memorial ceremonies in Sacramento on May 17 1996, in memory and honor of Detective Valenzuela and all other California Peace Officers who had died in the line of duty. Ironically and tragically, less than one week later, another member of the Brea Police family would die.

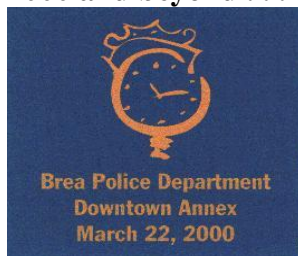
Detective Terry Fincher was struck and killed by a train on May 22, 1996. Detective Fincher had been searching for a weapon used in an aggravated assault case along the railroad tracks near Esperanza Road in Yorba Linda when a train came around a bend in the tracks. Terry was a 16-year veteran of the Police Department, and had worked as a patrol officer, traffic officer and detective. He was survived by his wife, Brenda, and children, Edie, Erik, Nathan, and Melissa, as well as two grandchildren. He was buried with honors at Rose Hills in Whittier on May 28. Officers and family members traveled to the National Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington DC, and the California Law Enforcement Memorial in Sacramento in May, 1997, again to pay respects to Danny, Terry, and others. A small memorial with plaques was installed at the flagpoles of the Brea Civic Cultural Center in honor of the fallen officers.

Brea has had a long relationship with its sister city, Lagos de Moreno, Mexico. In September, 1997, Officer Rob Aberle went to Lagos as the first participant in Brea's Police Officer Exchange Program. Officer Aberle stayed there for one month, living with a Lagos de Moreno officer, observing law enforcement in that community, and helping that Department to establish some training in tactics and officer safety techniques.

After nine months of planning, the Brea Police Department Citizen Academy, Class #1, began on September 2, 1998. Twenty-eight members of the public attended weekly classes. During the twelve-week program they are introduced to the many areas of law enforcement and the police department, with the hopes of creating partnerships between officers and community members. The class graduated on November 11, 1998. Citizen Academy classes continue to be held every six months.

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2000 and beyond . . .



On March 22, 2000, after nearly three years of planning, the Downtown Police Annex was opened near Birch and Walnut. Located in the heart of the Birch Street Promenade, the Annex will serve the entire downtown area.

In September and October, the Brea Police Department celebrated the 30th anniversary of their contract relationship with the City of Yorba Linda. During one of those celebrations, on September 18, Chief Lentini presided over a ceremony in which 10 members of the police department were promoted at one time, the largest such event in the department's history. Dave Carlock and Doug Dickerson were promoted to captain. Monica Anderson, Marty Needham and Clyde Wason were promoted to lieutenant. John Burks, Jack Conklin, Chris Haddad, Greg Parker and Jim Tibbetts were promoted to sergeant.



April, 2001, saw the installation of the new countywide 800-megahertz radio system at Brea. This new system replaced the system the county had used since the early 70's. Channel availability was increased several fold.

January 2002 was a very busy month. On January 11, 2002, Chief William C. Lentini retired after 31 years of service, six as chief. Captain Mike Messina is appointed chief, along with the promotions of Lieutenant Billy Hutchinson to captain, and Sergeants Bob Bugbee and Dennis Gray to lieutenant.

On January 19, the Patrol Division instituted a new "12/11 plan" work schedule. Officers work three 12-hour days one week, followed by four 11-hour days. The previous patrol "4-10" schedule had been in existence since 1976.

On January 29, 2002, the Police Department adopted a set of Core Values. These values were developed during meetings involving more than 100 department members in a true collaborative environment.

Core values of the Brea Police Department. **INTEGRITY** Adherence to moral and ethical behavior in our personal and professional lives in a manner that brings honor to ourselves, our families and our profession. **GOLDEN RULE** Treat others as we would like to be treated. We will strive to treat everyone with respect, dignity and fairness at all times. **LOYALTY** Faithfully dedicated to our values, family, profession and community.

Over the years the Brea Police Department continued to grow and expand to meet the needs for service and law enforcement in Brea and Yorba Linda..eventually staffed with 100 sworn officers, 1 reserve officer, and 55 full and part-time civilian employees; and equipped with 28 marked patrol cars, 16 motorcycles, undercover cars, bicycles, computers, advanced weaponry and techniques.

2013

After a 42-year police services relationship, patrol of the City of Yorba Linda transitions to the Orange County Sheriff's Department effective January 5, 2013.

**Note: This history of the Brea Police Department was compiled by retired Lt. Dennis Gray. It is meant to be a living document and updated as new milestones are reached and/or new historical information is discovered. We would welcome and appreciate your assistance. If you have any information—old photographs, newspaper clippings, artifacts, or other memorabilia about the history of law enforcement in Brea and Yorba Linda and the men and women who have served these communities, please contact Officer Jason Celmer at (714)990-7625 or e-mail him at jasonc@cityofbrea.net.*

