



Bike Patrol 2002



Captain Joy Citta



Sergeant Dennis Miller



Officer Tim Carmichael



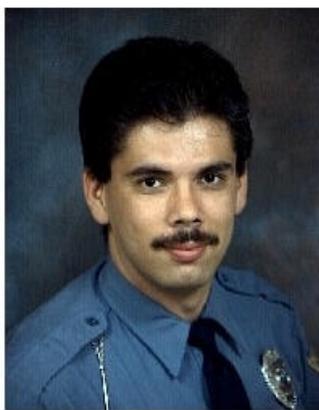
Officer Court Cleland



Officer Todd Danson



Officer Charlie Marti



Officer Eric Meyer



Officer Brian Ward

A traditional pose in front of the
Nebraska State Capitol
at Centennial Mall.

The bike patrol duties have expanded over the
years to include all the special details occurring
in the downtown area.

These details include Wild Parties, Concerts,
Special Events, and football. Officers use regular
patrol methods and undercover to find law viola-
tors. Their charge is to maintain a safe environ-
ment in the downtown entertainment district.



2002 Bike Patrol

Back Row: Officer Charlie Marti, Officer Brian Ward, Officer Eric Meyer, Officer Court Cleland
Front Row: Officer Tim Carmichael, Sergeant Dennis Miller, Officer Todd Danson

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Bike patrol protects streets

By Carina McCormick
Daily Nebraskan

Sometimes a Crown Victoria just doesn't cut it.

For that reason, several officers from the Lincoln and University of Nebraska-Lincoln police departments serve their community on two wheels instead of four.

On campus or in downtown Lincoln, the small but mighty bike patrol plays a pivotal role in law enforcement.

Lincoln Police Capt. Joy Citta said that when riding bikes, officers have the ability to get into areas that would be difficult for cruisers to enter.

"It's really handy because cars can't get through traffic like bikes can," she said.

Lincoln Police Officer Court Cleland, a full-time bike patrol officer, said riding a bike allows him to sneak up on people who would notice police cars.

"People don't expect police to be on bicycles, even though we've been doing this so long," he said.

UNL Police Sgt. Jerry Plessel said being on bikes instead of in cars can improve interaction with the community.

"For the pure fact that it's community based, when you're on a bike, people can come up and talk to you," he said.

"For me, the bike patrol is one of the best ways for us to get out and meet the students, faculty and staff. It's good communication between our department and the community."

Cleland said interaction with the public was one of the main reasons he applied for the position.

Citta said the Lincoln Police bike patrol leads the Star City

"(The car) gives them much more mobility and more chance to handle the myriad of calls we have."

Joy Citta
Lincoln Police captain

Parade every year, works with NU Directions daily and visits the Lincoln Children's Museum a few times a year.

"Most of the officers are proficient in at least three or four balloon animals," she said.

Downtown is the only area in Lincoln that has a full-time bike patrol. Two Lincoln police officers patrol from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. five days a week, and four officers patrol four days a week from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m., Citta said.

Cleland said they probably ride 20 to 30 miles during the 10-hour shift.

Citta said bike officers have marked patrol cars parked nearby when patrolling downtown. If they need to transport someone to the station, they can take him or her to the car or have another officer bring the car to them.

"(The car) gives them much more mobility and more chance to handle the myriad of calls we have," she said. But without the luxury of a heated vehicle, winter brings changes to the bike patrol.

UNL police officers currently do not ride bikes on duty during the winter, but Lincoln Police leaves the decision to brave the elements up to the individual officers.

Plessel said the university police have set a goal to have officers on bikes year round and should realize this goal the first week in March.

Lincoln Police Officer Brian

Ward said as long as it wasn't raining, snowing or close to zero degrees, he would probably be out on bike patrol.

He said at night, bike officers patrol concerts, bars and other activities downtown.

"We deal a lot with the drunk college kids," he said. "Well, I guess they're not all college kids."

Cleland said the desire to take a break on cold nights gives them an opportunity to do bar checks.

"It gives us a good excuse to warm up," he said.

On some Saturdays, UNL police deal with a crowd much larger than that of any bar.

Plessel said the UNL bike patrol is especially active during football games, patrolling the exterior of the stadium.

If they need to get through the fans quickly, the officers can turn on the bike's lights and sirens.

The department is currently undergoing reorganization that will increase the size of UNL's bike patrol, he said.

"Our bike program has come a long way," he said.

Six to eight new bike officers will attend a week-long training session starting March 1. When the bike patrol is active, two officers will usually patrol at night, and one will patrol during the day year round, he said.

"With this policy and the leadership we have with the new chief, we'll be able to do that," Plessel said.