

Police seek input from residents

■ Department wants to know problem areas

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San Angelo police are willing to trade — minutes of the public's time to take a survey in return for

better understanding of residents' needs.

Last week the San Angelo Police Department administrators, in cooperation with Angelo State University, created a survey — a tool they hope will propel the SAPD toward its goal of problem-solving and community-based policing.

“What we're trying to do is get a better gauge of

what the community is feeling to determine what our citizens would like to see us improve in,” Police Chief Tim Vasquez said. “Our main purpose behind that is we're trying to get a good grasp on the perception of crime.”

The survey is on www.sanangelopolice.org. A link also can be found at www.gosanangelo.com.

Vasquez, Assistant

Chief Jeff Fant and Casey Jones, a member of ASU's Community Development Initiatives, led the project.

Jones, a political-science professor, said on the surface the survey appears to have five questions, but can range to as many as 50 depending on responses. Three sections comprise the survey, which covers contact with police, satisfaction with individual

officers and satisfaction with the department as a whole.

Questions also address specific worries that people have, which crime-prevention techniques they think work and whether the city needs more after-school programs and social services.

The final section asks

See SURVEY, 6A

SURVEY from **1A**

race, age, gender, number of children younger than 16 years of age in the household and how long the respondent has lived in San Angelo.

Vasquez said when results are analyzed the department will use them to improve their policing strategy.

Department officials said when the process is complete they will focus on an education campaign that addresses whether that perception is a reality and, if it is, how officers can better serve and protect.

In identifying crimes or neighborhood problems, officers can address through increased patrol, by partnering with residents, and by keeping officers on patrol and detectives aware of the problem through sector-style policing.

Police said the final report will be made available after the process has been completed. Individual results will be held confidential, and information will not be sold or used for any other purpose, police said.

Although the survey was intended for residents of the city, those who live

outside San Angelo are able to answer the questions. On the website, residents can choose a section of the city in which they live or they can leave the box blank. Fant said the department likely will publicize the survey on its Twitter and Facebook sites.

One of the issues that came up when the survey was being developed was the possibility of an underrepresented portion of the population — which could include the elderly or low-income people who don't have easy access to computers. Public-access computers, such as ones found at the Tom Green County Library, can be used only once to submit a survey because of the survey's design.

In areas that are underrepresented, organizers said they plan to conduct door-to-door interviews or make phone calls. Residents also can request mail-in surveys from the police department in either English or Spanish. All prepaid return envelopes will be addressed to ASU.

"Whatever it would take to get a fair representation of that group, or an equivalent representation, we'll do," Fant said.