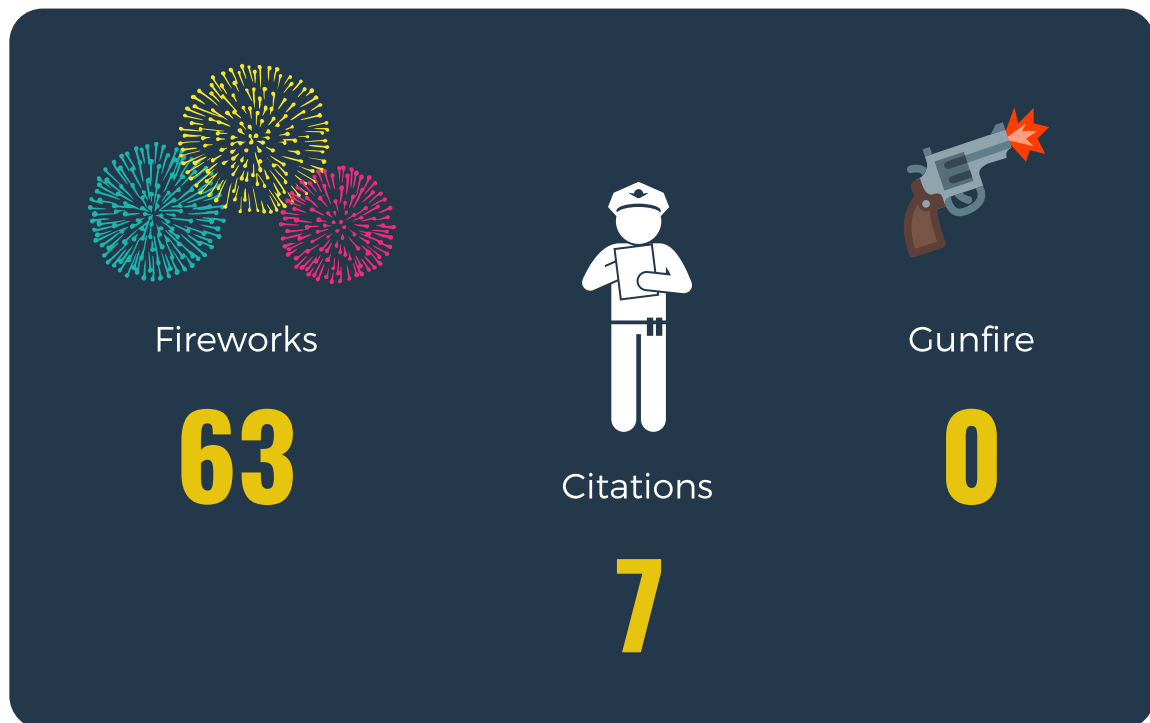JULY 4, 2021

AFTER ACTION REPORT

SAN MATEO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE HQ PATROL BUREAU

AFTER ACTION REPORT JULY 4, 2021

CALLS FOR SERVICE

Headquarters Patrol reviewed the data regarding fireworks and gunfire activity collected via ShotSpotter and calls for service received for the North Fair Oaks area.

On the evening of July 4th, San Mateo County Public Safety Communications received a total of 230 calls for service regarding illegal fireworks. The North Fair Oaks area generated 63 calls for service regarding fireworks. By comparison, in 2020, there were a total of 167 calls for service regarding fireworks for July 4th.

Fireworks
63

Citations
7

Gunfire
0

A total of 7 citations were issued over the July 4th weekend in all of the Sheriff's Office jurisdictions. In the North Fair Oaks area, 4 citations were issued, including 2 citations for the new county ordinance.

FIREWORKS CALLS FOR SERVICE AND CITATIONS ISSUED

On July 4th, we conducted our joint briefing with Redwood City and began proactive patrolling at 7:00 pm. For the holiday, we staffed an additional 8 Deputy Sheriffs to patrol the North Fair Oaks area specifically for firework suppression. We also deployed our newest UAV (Unmanned Arial Vehicle) which allowed us to monitor the problem spots from afar. Due to some airspace restrictions, we were not able to use the drone to its full capability, but that will be resolved in the near future.

Initially, the reported calls for fireworks complaints was relatively light. We proactively patrolled the main areas where we had issues last year. These areas included the 500 and 600 blocks of Stanford Avenue, Hampshire Avenue, and Warrington Avenue. Unfortunately, as the night progressed the calls for fireworks service greatly increased.Again, the issue came up that the callers were not providing dispatch with a specific address to complain about the fireworks and just stated "in the area of Hampshire". When deputies arrived the fireworks would stop, but would start again when they had to leave to respond to another location.

FIREWORKS PREVENTION SPECIAL DETAIL

Celebratory firecrackers and gunfire are problems most cities face every year, particularly during the celebration of the fourth of July holiday. Headquarters Patrol prepared a Gunfire and Fireworks Suppression detail in preparation to monitor the area and respond to potential calls related to detonation of firearms and/or firecrackers in the area of North Fair Oaks.

- On July 4th, 2021, starting at 1700 hours, we had a suppression team patrolling the area of North Fair Oaks.

- Special detail Deputies actively patrolled the designated "hot spots" during daylight hours, contacting citizens and educating them on firework laws and violations as well as the new County Ordinance.

- Throughout the evening they conducted surveillance and although no activations to ShotSpotter were received, fireworks were heard in the area.

- Special detail with 8 Deputies began by patrolling areas known for the use of firecrackers or gunfire based on reports from previous years and continued patrolling until the entire area was saturated.

CONCLUSION

Initially, the reported calls for fireworks complaints were relatively light. The Sheriff's Office proactively patrolled the main areas where we had issues last year. These areas included the 500 and 600 blocks of Stanford Avenue, Hampshire Avenue, and Warrington Avenue. Unfortunately, as the night progressed the calls for fireworks service greatly increased.

It was challenging to respond due to callers not providing dispatch with a specific address to complain about the fireworks and just provided vague descriptions such as "in the area of Hampshire". When deputies arrived the fireworks would stop but would start again when they had to leave to respond to another location.

The members of the Special Detail noticed that it was not one or two residences setting off fireworks but more of a block celebration. At each of the residences, we estimated crowds of 15 to 30 individuals, many whom appeared to be families celebrating the holiday.