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September 8, 1982

CONSOLIDATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES:
AN OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF
THE MONTANA EXPERIENCE

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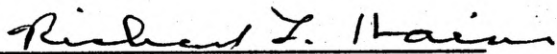
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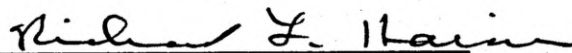
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ABSTRACT

Consolidation of law enforcement services is one of the latest in a progression of management techniques designed to control the growth of government. It has found favor in nearly every state, including Montana. There are many ways of consolidating law enforcement services ranging from an informal method to a highly formalized system. This paper will identify the types of consolidation, examine the philosophical pros and cons concerning consolidation, document what has occurred in Montana, and finally, offer some suggestions for successfully developing a method for a merger of law enforcement services.

This paper begins with a definition of operational consolidations. It places consolidation within the context of a management reform option which consists of a myriad of types based upon the level of formality which each law enforcement agency chooses to bestow upon their consolidation effort.

The second part of the paper describes the philosophical arguments which are attached to consolidation. This part looks at both the pros and cons of consolidating law enforcement services. Particular attention is paid to the empirical studies which have been completed in the course of investigating consolidation.

The third part of this paper identifies the operational types of consolidation that have taken place throughout the United States and specifically, what has occurred in Montana. An attempt is made to identify whether the participants in the consolidation consider the effort to be successful. Based on the material gathered and identified within the body of the paper, there is a final section offering suggestions for implementing a consolidation.

CHAPTER I

THE URGE TO MERGE

New Federalism, Proposition 13, and various taxpayer initiatives have inspired a period of self-examination and fiscal reevaluation for local governments nationwide. For the police - as for all other agencies - the message is clear: improve agency effectiveness and curtail rising operational costs. Faced with escalating building and equipment costs, rising salaries, and increasing dependence on high technology computers and specialized enforcement units to combat today's sophisticated criminals, law enforcement agencies are searching for ways to make their operations more cost effective. As they strive to meet mandated and suggested standards in times of fiscal restraint, local government officials and law enforcement administrators frequently examine the feasibility of consolidating some or all of their department's functions with those of other agencies as a way of controlling costs.

The consolidation of law enforcement agencies has been tried in every state in the Union; however, there are no definitive studies on whether the consolidations are totally successful. In Montana, there are over 20 counties which have attempted some type of consolidation; however, no one has identified the types of consolidation or their success. This paper will identify the consolidation efforts in Montana

and compare them with what has been done in other states and also compare them with what the prevailing literature on consolidation states.

A decade ago, consolidation of several small police and sheriffs' departments into one large law enforcement agency seemed-to-some the most promising answer to rising costs. Several national study groups made recommendations that small law enforcement agencies merge. Since 1970, more than one thousand communities have been involved in studying the feasibility of consolidation. It is presently estimated that nearly 500 communities are now engaged in operational consolidations, nearly all of which serve areas of less than 25,000 people.¹

Although the actual number of consolidated agencies has been significant, one could not consider or describe the response as overwhelming. Law enforcement consolidation is not labeled as a cure-all for the problems that plague small agencies. It does, however, represent a viable option which warrants consideration by those seeking alternative methods of police service delivery. The question arises, that if consolidation is indeed such a "viable alternative" why has its actual use been limited? In investigating this question, studies have shown that the answer rests on the limited understanding of elected officials, law enforcement personnel, and the general public as to what small police agency consolidation actually is and how it affects participating communities.

What is Consolidation?

Within the context of government reorganization, a wide range of approaches have been applied to curb the increasing costs of government while maintaining acceptable levels of service delivery. Because there are no set rules for implementing a consolidation, there have been many types developed. The most common of these consolidation approaches are the following.²

Informal Arrangements (Mutual Aid). This is an unwritten, cooperative agreement between localities to collectively perform a task that would be mutually beneficial (e.g., the monitoring of neighboring radio frequencies so that needed backup can be provided).

Sharing/Pooling (Functional Consolidation). Sharing is the provision or reception of services which aid in the execution of a law enforcement function (e.g., the sharing of a communications system of several local agencies). Pooling. This is the combination of resources by two or more agencies to perform a specified function under a predetermined, often formalized, arrangement with direct involvement by all parties (e.g., the use of a city-county law enforcement building or the establishing of drug teams).

Contracting. This is a limited and voluntary approach in which one government enters into a formal, binding agreement to provide all or certain specified law enforcement services (e.g., communications, patrol services, etc.) to another government for an established fee. Many "bedroom" communities which are near large cities contract for law enforcement at the time they incorporate to avoid the costs of establishing their own police capability.

Total Consolidation (Creation of New Agency). This type of consolidation creates a new law enforcement agency either composed of former law enforcement agencies or complete assimilation of one agency into an administering agency. Many cities and counties which merge other governmental and public service delivery systems use this approach. An example is a county which creates a Department of Public Safety to assume the duties of the police and sheriff's department.

In addition to the above approaches there are merged or consolidated law enforcement agencies which involve even further alternatives. The most common involves a county sheriff providing service to communities that no longer find it desirable to maintain their own police departments.

Sheriffs in many parts of the country (including Montana) administer consolidated law enforcement systems. The most common approach involves the sheriff providing expanded service for some or all of the communities in a county. In sparsely populated or rural areas, consolidation frequently results in the sheriff becoming the only law enforcement agency in the county. In more heavily populated rural and urban counties, some communities prefer to maintain their own police departments. Consequently, the sheriff assumes the police responsibility for only some communities.

Consolidation Effects

Past consolidation efforts have, according to various law enforcement and public administration journals, met with mixed success. Many of the consolidations have been implemented without really knowing how to proceed or how to measure the effectiveness of the consolidation. Among the hundreds of communities now involved in consolidated law enforcement systems, two primary conditions appear to have precipitated the original consideration to merge. They include:⁴

- Increased demands for more and better quality law enforcement services, coupled with declining or increasingly limited local financial capability to meet this demand.

- Interjurisdictional overlapping of law enforcement jurisdictions, and/or associated disputes, jealousies, etc.

Consolidation Concerns

Regardless of which approach a community's leaders examine, there are uncertainties which frequently inhibit the expanded use of small agency consolidation not only in terms of practicality, but also in terms of political considerations. According to a recent study of consolidation, the uncertainties center on the following general questions.

- What is small agency consolidation and what in general terms does it involve?
- How can a community determine if consolidation is a workable alternative under existing local considerations?
- If a community becomes involved in a study of consolidation, will it be bound by study findings and recommendations?
- If consolidation occurs, can a community retain any control over the cost, level, and quality of services it receives?

--If dissatisfied, can a community terminate its involvement in a consolidated system?

--Will consolidation cost a community more than its existing local police department?

--What have been the results of other law enforcement agency consolidations?³

The answers to the above questions are the focus of this paper. The consolidation of small law enforcement agencies is a subject about which a great deal has been written, but little proof exists as to its capability as a solution to modern day fiscal woes. As mentioned earlier, more than 20 counties in Montana have undergone some type of consolidation. At the present time, however, there is no documentation of whether the various consolidation efforts that have occurred in Montana are comparable to that of consolidation efforts throughout the United States. In addition, there is little documentation of whether the efforts of Montana cities and counties have been considered successful or whether their attempts can be used as a guide for future consolidation efforts.

Research has indicated that most law enforcement mergers, particularly in sparsely populated areas such as Montana, do not involve formal assessments of the feasibility of consolidation. Decisions are simply made, based on a general review of conditions and needs by local political leaders, in conjunction with the chief law enforcement officers of the agency that will likely provide the services; in Montana, this is usually the sheriff of the county.

Although this approach has worked in many cases, according to various articles, two shortcomings have been found.⁵ They relate to the method and extent of system financing (e.g., one merged agency was "bankrupted" because of poor financial planning) and the nature of services that are to be provided (e.g., misunderstandings were found in which recipient jurisdictions expected far more service than the provider agency either intended or was capable of providing). There is virtually no documentation of what types of approaches have been utilized in Montana concerning the consolidations which have taken place.

Chapter II - This chapter will explain why consolidation may be considered a radical departure from the status quo of home rule and decentralization of power. There are philosophical reasons scientists feel that consolidation is not a viable solution for

improving police services. These philosophical reasons will be identified for the reader.

Chapter III - This chapter identifies some of the consolidation efforts which have occurred throughout the United States. The majority of consolidation efforts which have been documented are consolidation of urban police services; however, there is some literature on consolidation of small law enforcement agencies. This chapter will not only identify specific consolidation efforts it will also reflect whether the consolidations have been considered successful.

Chapter IV - Chapter IV identifies where consolidation of law enforcement services have occurred in Montana. The chapter specifies where consolidations have taken place, the type of consolidation, and whether law enforcement and local government officials believe the consolidations have been worthwhile.

Chapter V - This chapter discusses how the consolidation efforts of Montana compare with other states. In addition, there are suggestions on how to proceed with a consolidation if local governments are considering a merger of law enforcement services.

CHAPTER II

THE POLITICS OF CONSOLIDATION

This chapter will review the pros and cons of consolidation from the empirical and political points of view. Unification or consolidation of public services is a contradiction in terms of some of the more basic democratic principles of "home rule" and "local control." To some, the very thought of eliminating control of such vital public services as local police protection "smacks" of a philosophy similar to that employed in Nazi Germany. To others, the idea of consolidation does not bring about the fear of a police state. They look at the merger of governments from an economic and efficiency point of view - will consolidation help in terms of providing a better public service at a similar price to what we presently have?

More than 30 years ago Charles Merriam wrote in his preface to Victor Jones' work, Metropolitan Government, "The organization of modern metropolitan areas is one of the great unsolved problems of modern politics."⁶ Based on recent literature, Merriam's dictum still holds; it is no less true today than at the time when he penned it. Indeed, it might well be stated that the question of what constitutes adequate governmental structure in any size population area has become more complex and confusing in recent times. Thirty years ago there existed, at least in academic circles, a fairly widespread

consensus that the road to urban governmental structural reform involved the consolidation or merging of local political units into a single or two-tiered areawide government.⁷ After all, according to the once dominant orthodoxy, the root of many of our local government ills could be traced back to the fractionated, fragmented, or decentralized political system and the consequent lack of a regional planning process and a regional delivery system.

However, no longer does the merger point of view enjoy the monopoly allegiance of scholars of local government politics, and attacks upon the consolidationist position in recent years have become increasingly numerous and more sophisticated.⁸ Unfortunately, a great deal of the consolidation literature has been in reference to the unification of urban public services.

Arguments dealing with the issue of the consolidation of governmental services and/or governmental units have increased in past decades with the realization that crime rates are not decreasing and people are demanding more efficiency in government operations. In fact, most introductory texts on urban affairs, for example, characteristically devote a section of readings describing and evaluating the "fragmented metropolis."⁹ Moreover, unlike many issues of interest to political science and public administration, the question of governmental consolidation extends beyond academia. The consolidation of governments has been the subject of popular press coverage, numerous

voter referenda, and has been the focus of attention of a variety of local, state, and federal governmental and nongovernmental commissions.¹⁰ While the debate on consolidation has generally been couched in terms of multi-purpose governmental consolidations (e.g., city-county mergers, "Unigov." and Metro consolidation, etc.), an essential dimension of the arguments supportive of areawide government has been the thought that the consolidation of particular government services, such as public safety departments, would lead to a more effective and equitable system for the provision of public services.¹¹ However, there are some social scientists and practitioners who defend the fragmented nature of governmental organizations.

Anti-Consolidationist Point of View

There is a rapidly growing body of literature which is highly critical of consolidation and in particular as consolidation relates to the provision of police services.¹² In recent years the police have been among the most heavily criticized of the municipal service agencies. Given the discontent demonstrated toward police practices in the 1960s, and the increased saliency of crime as a major public issue, many recommendations have been forthcoming for quite some time regarding the provision of more effective police services.¹³ The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, for example, concluded that one of the most certain ways of

bettering police services in metropolitan areas would be to consolidate the myriad suburban "Lilliputian" police departments that exists in the the metropolitan environment. Specifically, the Commission recommended that:

Each metropolitan area and each county should take action directed toward the pooling, or consolidation, of services through the particular technique that will provide the most satisfactory law enforcement service and protection at the lowest cost.¹⁴

Larger police departments, according to this "reformist" perspective, would offer better police services for reasons such as these: (1) larger police departments will allow increased specialization to develop; (2) larger police departments will allow higher levels of professionalization to occur; and (3) larger police departments will benefit from various operational economies of scale.¹⁵ Arguments for consolidating police departments reflect, in specific application, the broader arguments present in the continuing debate on metropolitan governmental consolidation. Conversely, the particular arguments against police consolidation also directly reflect the broader points made against areawide governments.

Specifically, anti-consolidationists argue that the reformists' arguments overlook the critical fact that local control and the representativeness of local police departments may be just as important to the citizenry as are questions of efficiency, costs, and equity.

Charles Adrian first pointed this out close to 20 years ago when he observed that value choices of potentially equal weight do exist in the preference of local government control to possible economies of scale associated with areawide metropolitan governments.¹⁶ These value trade-offs, in turn, may be linked to more general normative preferences implicit in the citizen's conception of what constitutes a local government and associated services.

A review of the numerous articles, monographs, and papers of the anti-consolidationist literature reveals the following major assertions present in this perspective.¹⁷

Assertion 1: Larger police departments are not more economical than smaller ones. Contrary to the consolidationist belief, per capita costs for police service do not decline as the size of the police force increases.

Assertion 2: Positive evaluation of police services by citizens varies inversely with jurisdictional size for municipalities of 20,000 or more residents.

Although the above two assertions are the combined product of many anti-consolidationists, there are two particular scientists who have been more prominent in their study and criticism of the growing trend

towards consolidation. As mentioned earlier, unfortunately their studies have all been made of metropolitan and suburban police departments and may not be much use in analysis of small towns.

Elinor Ostrom and Roger B. Parks have made a substantial contribution to the anti-consolidationist argument. Many of the arguments set forth in favor of consolidation were, according to the above authors, based on evidence which was not empirically sound.¹⁸ Ostrom and Parks, plus several associated scientists, began testing the consolidation argument on an empirical basis and believe the so called "evidence" did not establish a relationship to performance.¹⁹ They stated that the most frequent form of evidence presented by those in favor of consolidation was to list the number of police departments serving some particular metropolitan area. Their argument was that the number of jurisdictions serving a particular area was hardly adequate evidence that the multiplicity of jurisdictions is associated with poor police service or that suburban police departments are too small.²⁰

The central question asked by Ostrom and Parks was, "what evidence do we have that consolidation of police forces in metropolitan areas will lead to an increase in service levels or to a reduction in the costs of service without a reduction in service levels?"²¹ Ostrom, et al. tested the positive claims for consolidation by formalizing them into four working hypotheses:²²

H_1 : An increase in the size of the jurisdiction providing police services to citizens will be positively associated with higher service levels.

H_2 : For constant service levels, an increase in the size of jurisdiction providing police services will be positively associated with lower per capita expenditures on police services.

H_3 : A decrease in the number of police jurisdictions serving the citizens within a metropolitan area will be positively associated with higher service levels.

H_4 : For constant service levels, a decrease in the number of police jurisdictions providing police services within a metropolitan area will be positively associated with lower per capita expenditures for police services.

The four hypotheses were then statistically tested using findings from previous studies which utilized aggregate statistical data. The authors also re-analyzed the responses to a nationwide sample of citizens living in a variety of urban locations ranging from small, suburban municipalities to large center cities. The scientists also utilized

findings from two comparative studies of similar neighborhoods within single metropolitan areas served by small and large police departments.²³

Two of the working hypotheses (H_1 and H_2) underlying recommendations for consolidation - those relating to the size of jurisdiction - were not supported by the compiled evidence. With regard to H_1 , respondents living in larger units in both the nationwide study and in the two smaller, comparative metropolitan area studies were less satisfied with the services which they received than were respondents living in smaller units. Regarding H_2 , data presented from various aggregate studies, from the nationwide study, and from one of the comparative metropolitan area studies indicate increased per capita expenditures in larger jurisdictions. The quality of services was held constant in the nationwide sample, and the quality of service was higher in the smaller jurisdictions of the metropolitan area sample.²⁴

The two hypotheses (H_3 and H_4) relating to fragmentation were not as prone to analysis as the previous two, thus the authors stated that evidence was somewhat mixed. Citizen responses to the questions on efficiency and economy of scale were based on their location in relation to the central city. The responses of the suburban residents in the nationwide sample ran counter to H_3 and H_4 , whereas the responses of the center city sample population supported both hypotheses.

The authors stated that the major conclusion which could be derived from the analysis was that proposals for the elimination of suburban police departments by consolidation are not based on a firm empirical evidence. They believed that the level of police services provided to residents in independently incorporated suburban communities might be reduced if smaller police forces were to be replaced by one large police force serving an entire metropolitan area; however, they stated the costs of such police services would likely increase.²⁵ Based on their findings, the authors urged more theoretical and empirical efforts be devoted to the question of whether there are too many and too small suburban police departments, since their work revealed that such a statement could no longer be stated as a categorical yes.

Additional scientists utilizing data either borrowed from Ostrom et al., or created through their own studies reflect many of the concerns echoed by Ostrom. The scientist, Wilbur Thompson, in his book, A Preface To Urban Economies, did not support the consolidation contention that fragmented government increases costs of local public services or seriously impairs the effectiveness of service delivery. Thompson noted:

No phrase in urban affairs is encountered more frequently than political fragmentation. One interpretation is that the local public economy is made less efficient by being divided into too many political subdivisions too small to capture the many political internal and external economies of scale. . . .

The presumption is that the case for larger political scale is obvious and overpowering, so much so, that only apathy, vested interest, or plain cussedness could account for opposition to enlarged local government. . . . What is usually absent is any quantification of the purported economies foregone and/or the public service quality presumably sacrificed by retaining fragmented local government, and this is a gap in the case for bigness because political consolidation cannot rest easily on some trivial gain in scale economies.²⁶

Other scholars have disputed the maxim that government, by taking advantage of economies of scale, can lower the per capita costs of local public services and provide more effective services. As long ago as 1967, Dahl stated:

There is, for example, no worthwhile evidence that there are any significant economies of scale in city governments for cities over about 50,000. The few items on which increasing size does lead to decreasing unit costs, such as water and sewerage, are too small a proportion of total city outlays to lead to significant economies; and, even these reductions are probably offset by rising costs for other services such as police protection.²⁷

A final argument concerning the lack of credibility which appears to surround the economy of scale argument used by the proponents of consolidation, but which goes beyond the economy aspect, has been put forth in an article titled, "Economy of Scale or Bureaucratic Entropy?"²⁸ This article addresses the issue by analyzing the relationship between the population of cities and the size of city bureaucracies. The authors assert that if efficiency can be defined as serving more

residents with fewer employees, economies of scale might be demonstrated by a relative decrease in the size of bureaucracies as city size increases.²⁹ Conversely, increases in bureaucracy size may be associated with increasing complexity and differentiation that can decrease efficiency. A form of entropy may occur, a kind of disorder within the service delivery system which decreases the efficiency with which input energy (in the form of manpower) is converted into service production.³⁰ Or more simply put, it could be easier to "gold brick" in a larger bureaucracy. Thus, increasing city size may mean proportionally larger bureaucracies, and perhaps diseconomies¹ of scale.

To help support the assertions made in the article, the number of city employees and the populations of 799 of the largest cities in the United States were obtained from the 1972 County and City Data Book. The data were converted to natural logarithms and the relationship between bureaucracy size did increase faster than population. Overall, an increase of 1 percent in population had the expected result, on the average, of a 1.2 percent growth in the number of city employees.³¹

Finally, although merger advocates assert that the consolidation of local government services into an inclusive structure will bring about a more viable and responsive political process, there is little empirical evidence to support this claim. For example, there are no

data which reveal that citizen participation, as measured by voting participation, in the local political system is any greater in those few areas which have a consolidated government.³² In a rather ironic sense, a major argument against consolidated government concerns democratic preference. Popular referenda and survey data substantiate that the majority of the metropolitan citizenry oppose metropolitan government.³³ Marando reminds us that for every successful city-county consolidation attempt there have been three rejections.³⁴

Several explanations have been set forth accounting for the unusual citizen resistance to consolidation reform proposals. Some maintain that the basic factor responsible for the defeat of consolidated government involves the underlying cultural norms held by Americans toward local government and politics (specifically, that "government closest to the people is the best government") and the resulting political and government systems are built upon them.³⁵ More specifically, some scholars believe that the fundamental reason for the pattern of failure is the belief (whether derived from ignorance or not) held by a majority of the electorate that there is no need for an areawide governmental structure in their area. Marando has written about the politics of city-county attempts: "City-county consolidations do not spring from the desires of a broad base of the population. The benefits of a consolidated government appear too abstract or too long range for the immediate interests of the voter."³⁶

Banfield states that merger advocates generally suffer defeat because their reforms are predicated upon values, such as efficiency, which are not widely shared by the entire community, especially the working class voter.³⁷ Finally, Wikstrom, in his article, "Metropolitan Government Consolidation," states that, "consolidation of governmental units will be supported by those interests and groups which perceive that their political power will be sustained or enhanced, while it will be opposed by those who feel politically threatened."³⁸

Although much of the preceding evidence compiled against consolidation has been related to urban areas and has focused on consolidation of all government services, many of the arguments and considerations identified are applicable at the rural level for just police agencies. Consolidation has met considerable resistance; it is still not a politically palatable philosophy nationwide. Local communities are reluctant to share control over what they consider to be their police. They fear that reorganization will be detrimental to service delivery. It has yet to be proven that the degree of coordination within larger departments is greater than that among multiple jurisdictions. People, it seems, are reluctant to build larger police authorities which are one step removed from the public. It appears they want to avoid the possibility of police militancy and the loss of local control they have over smaller departments which must be sensitive to public mood.

If the large cities are anything to go by, the public may become more disaffected, productivity may decline with increased bureaucratization, and any economies may evaporate in the operation of over-elaborate systems. The supposed economic boom may be overshadowed by the political boondoggles as previous independent units struggle to preserve their autonomy and the new conglomerate struggles to reassure reluctant participants that nobody will lose. However, even the staunchest opponents, armed with an abundance of empirical evidence against consolidation, cannot deny some of the positive factors of merged organizations.

The author of "Economy of Scale or Bureaucratic Entropy" wrote, "while there is an accumulating body of evidence that questions the desirability of wholesale consolidation and increasing the size of service delivery systems, attention should focus on those aspects of reform proposals that have demonstrable benefits. In police protection, for example, patrol functions might need to remain decentralized, while planning, communications, and training functions might need to be centralized. Such alternatives may help maximize the benefits of both centralization and decentralization in service systems and may offer viable solutions to problems of economy and efficiency in local governments."³⁹

Pro-Consolidationist Position

In 1967, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice described the machinery of law enforcement in this country as fragmented, complicated, and frequently overlapping:

America is essentially a nation of small police forces, each operating independently within the limits of jurisdiction. The boundaries which define and limit police operation do not hinder the movement of criminals, of course. They can and do take advantage of ancient political and geographic boundaries, which give them sanctuary from effective police activity. Nevertheless, coordination of activity among police agencies, even when the areas they work in are contiguous or overlapping, tends to be sporadic and informal, to the extent it exists at all. This serious obstacle to law enforcement is most apparent in the rapidly developing urban areas of the country where the vast majority of the Nation's population is located and where most crimes occur.⁴⁰

As a result of its analysis, the commission recommended it should consider pooling or consolidation.

One year later, the President's Task Force on Suburban Problems echoed the same diagnosis in asserting that the low density of population in many small suburbs, as well as "confusing political boundaries, make law enforcement especially difficult and create special needs for the expansion and rehabilitation of police services of all kinds." The commission further argued:

If the metropolitan areas are to be made more efficient, their vitality released by the reduction of economic distress and racial tension, their mobility freed from the bottlenecks

of inadequate and ill-coordinated transportation, it is essential to apply policies that are comprehensive, that treat the metropolitan area realistically as an organic whole. Disorder, crime, pollution, and overcrowding, housing shortages . . . - these and the host of other problems are no respecters of antique jurisdictional frontiers. They must be dealt with comprehensively.⁴¹

The consistency with which scholars, Presidential commissions, task forces, and others repeatedly assert the inadequacies of the large number of police departments leads one to believe that arguments for consolidation are more than just another reformist fad.

The empirical studies of the anti-consolidationists revealed several flaws in the argument of those favoring mergers; however, like most scientific studies, their empirical results are subject to varying interpretations.

In 1977 two scientists examined the growing empirical sentiment against consolidation in their own scientific study.⁴² They examined the two major assertions of anti-consolidationist literature presented on page 5 and evaluated them using many of the same statistical and sample survey methods used by those opposed to areawide government. The assertion that larger police departments are not more economical than small ones was tested first. The anti-consolidationists have pointed out the following: "No one has reported a negative relationship between city size and per capita expenditures on police"⁴³ and ". . . no empirical evidence was found to support the proposition that larger size is associated with lower costs for local police protection."⁴⁴

As strongly as these findings appeared to be in the literature of the anti-consolidationists, the pro-consolidationists authors state that a simple correlation between size of municipal unit and per capita expenditure is not enough, it needs to be augmented by research in two important areas before any conclusions are possible. First, what costs are being borne by the larger police department that might subsidize smaller departments? Examples of subsidy items include traffic control and regulation, as well as consistent and scheduled training. Secondly, the nature of police work in large central cities is quite different from police work in most suburban or rural areas. As a consequence, simple comparisons of police expenditures by size of jurisdiction overlook the real differences that exist on the demands placed on police forces in central cities as opposed to the demands on police in smaller suburban municipalities.

The critics of police consolidation fail to discuss the above two intervening processes of subsidization and differential demands so they turned to the next argument against consolidation - citizen evaluation of police services as an indicator of the quality of police service. The anti-consolidationists would argue that for a number of reasons - such as the greater proximity of the citizen to his or her governmental authorities, the likelihood of greater homogeneity and community consensus on preferred modes of service delivery and mixes of service goals typically found in smaller communities, the

greater degree of personalism and de-bureaucratization possible in the provision of public services, etc. - that there will be a negative relationship between citizen satisfaction and jurisdictional size. The authors question this assertion because it is impossible to control the intervening effects of differing socioeconomic characteristics. If cities of all sizes had equal proportions of blacks, poor families, declining neighborhoods, and identical rates of reported crimes, would there be a negative relationship between city size and citizen satisfaction with police services? The authors, after further study, concluded that when socioeconomic characteristics are controlled the overwhelming trend is in the opposite direction.⁴⁵

It has been argued by others that the continuation of operation of the "multifarious," typically very small suburban police departments, is to be preferred over the consolidation of the same because their smaller size leads to police performance, which is both more satisfying to, and less expensive for, taxpaying citizens than would be the case if consolidation were to occur.⁴⁶ The above study presented evidence which suggests that the independent effect of size of jurisdiction (and size of police force) upon per capita expenditure and citizen satisfaction is not a negative one. In addition, that the difference between city and suburban expenditures and citizen orientation toward police are much more a reflection of differing socioeconomic characteristics than a result of relative sizes; and that there is even

some evidence to suggest that "if all things were equal" in cities and suburbs of differing sizes, the larger jurisdictions would produce more economical and more satisfying police services.⁴⁷

The above study appears to support a general consensus about consolidation - that neither proponents nor opponents of consolidating police agencies can muster much firm empirical evidence to back up their claims. The major problem with all the evidence presented by both sides, at least in terms of this paper, is that there is a paucity of information concerning small police agencies. The final part of this chapter will examine consolidation from the small police agency perspective.

As noted in a recent report:

Traditional wisdom and logic support the conclusion that fragmented authority and duplicative governmental functions are unnecessarily expensive, wasteful, and inefficient. Public administration scholars, practitioners, and citizens have long advocated consolidation of similar governmental functions as a reform method for⁴⁸ reducing governmental overhead and increasing efficiency.

Although this report goes on to say that consolidation may not always satisfy all expectations, it concludes that the fault is that of simplistic organizational designs rather than of consolidation itself.⁴⁹

Small Agency Consolidation

As mentioned earlier, one of the first major groups to promote this viewpoint in the law enforcement field was the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice in its 1967 report: The Challenges of Crime In A Free Society.⁵⁰ Since that time, a number of other national groups have advocated the merger of small law enforcement agencies. In 1971, for example, the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations indicated that:

Small local police departments, particularly those of 10 or fewer men, are unable to provide a wide range of patrol and investigative services to local citizens. Moreover, the existence of these small agencies may work a hardship on nearby jurisdictions. Small police departments which do not have adequate full-time patrol and preliminary investigative services may require the aid of larger agencies in many facets of their police work.⁵¹

The commission further proposed that "state governments improve the capability of rural police systems by . . . providing incentive grants to encourage consolidation of sub-county forces into a single county force. . . ."⁵²

In 1973, the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals recommended the "recombination and consolidation of police departments with less than 10 full-time sworn officers."⁵³ The Committee for Economic Development indicated that small jurisdictions, "lack anything resembling modern professional and police protection."⁵⁴

In a recent national survey of small police agency consolidations which compiled data on the basis of telephone and field interviews, as well as a literature search, a variety of purported and perceived benefits of small agency mergers were identified. In summary, supporters of consolidation tend to make the following arguments:

- a. "Consolidation mitigates several conditions which limit or reduce the effectiveness of law enforcement service." Supporters claim that small agency mergers reduce interjurisdictional overlapping, disputes, jealousies, and competition; eliminate questions of interjurisdictional enforcement authority; and provide consistent areawide practices and procedures.
- b. "Consolidation results in an improved level and quality of service." It is argued that mergers result in a broader range and level of service than is financially possible through small independent agencies. These improvements are said to be embodied in full-time, specialized law enforcement and emergency back-up capabilities; improved communications capabilities; and more intensive patrol coverage in both urban and rural areas, coupled with reduced response time to emergency calls.
- c. "Consolidation produces improved efficiencies and economies of scale." Proponents argue that per unit costs for police services are reduced through small agency mergers, or that more service can be provided for the same law enforcement dollar invested. Other claims along this same general vein include the following: specialized services can be provided because of economies realized through the greater utilization of expensive equipment and/or personnel; increased coverage can be provided without appreciably increasing costs; and more efficient and productive use can be made of auxiliary personnel engaged in such activities as communications, records, etc."⁵⁵

Although the substantiation of the above claims is limited, one anti-consolidation argument which appears to lose some of its relevance is that increased size does not improve economy of scale or improve levels of law enforcement service. The argument was based on the consolidation of small suburban police departments with large metropolitan law enforcement agencies. Study findings are not oriented towards the issue of merging small, primarily non-metropolitan agencies.

Claims that consolidation works no better than current delivery systems may sometimes be debated, but in many cases the argument is meaningless. Part of the reason stems from the fact that few yardsticks exist for measuring the performance of merged agencies and for comparing such performance with independent local police departments - especially in non-metropolitan areas. Finally, arguments that consolidation may cost as much or more than current systems are frequently misleading. This is not to say that such claims are false, but rather, examples in research are essentially non-existent which compare desired local service with the cost of the same services under a consolidated system. Most commonly, comparisons are made between expenditures for existing local service and the cost of desired services under a merged agency, with little or no attention given to the amount and nature of services actually provided under each system.⁵⁶

One issue that is not addressed in any of the research concerning police agency consolidation is whether the actual consolidation

is considered successful from an operational point of view. The reason for this, as will be illustrated in the next two chapters, is that little analysis is done of the effectiveness of an agency before consolidation, so there can be little comparison after the consolidation occurs.

CHAPTER III

TYPES OF CONSOLIDATION

This chapter will explain the different types of consolidation and give examples of the types which are operational throughout the United States. The purpose of the chapter is to give the reader some idea of not only what is occurring in terms of consolidation, but also whether the consolidations are perceived as being successful by those who are affected.

The Extent of Consolidation

Based on research in a recent report, it was found that several hundred feasibility studies dealing with the merger of law enforcement agencies have been instituted.⁵⁷ Many of these studies have been at least partially funded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration who has supported the merging of police agencies. It is estimated that well over 500 agencies have already begun consolidation operations, nearly all since 1970. This does not include the scores of contract police programs which are also operational across the country. It is also estimated that 85 to 90 percent of the consolidated units serve populations of less than 25,000 persons.⁵⁸

The highest concentration of merged law enforcement agencies appears in the central states. Nebraska and South Dakota, for

example, have the most totally consolidated units, with 15 and 12, respectively.⁵⁹ These units are largely county-wide in scope and are administered through sheriffs offices. Both states have utilized consolidation in sparsely populated non-urban areas, although a merger was being considered in 1977 (results not known) in the Sioux Falls, South Dakota area (population approximately 100,000). Both states, at the time of the research, had state criminal justice planning agencies and regional planning councils which actively promoted the consolidation of small law enforcement agencies.⁶⁰

General Approach to Consolidation

The number and types of approaches to consolidating or unifying police services are too numerous to be listed in full in this chapter. Among the variables are the number of participants (two or more municipalities, two or more counties, city-county, state-city, state-county, etc.); the method of financial participation; the question of whether the total service or only some of its components are involved; the form of agreement (contract with one unit providing service to another, or joint exercise of power); and the method of selecting the body which supervises the arrangements, if such a body exists. The following intergovernmental arrangements will be discussed as follows:

1. The commonly accepted mutual aid system, in which one unit, formally or informally, comes to the aid of another in emergency situations.
2. A unified system merging functional components while preserving the separate identities of all participants.
3. A unified system with one jurisdiction contracting with another for complete police services.
4. A unified system through establishment of a new governmental entity to provide areawide police services.⁶¹

Each of these approaches is discussed below, and examples are given that highlight the various techniques.

Mutual Aid

Mutual aid is perhaps the only universally accepted method of police service unification. Without question, it is the simplest and least disruptive approach. The fact that it is limited to emergency situations almost precludes its discussion with the other approaches to unification. Nevertheless, because it has achieved widespread

acceptance and because it often leads to other unified systems, it deserves some attention.⁶²

Mutual aid is defined as "an exchange of services, personnel, and/or equipment between law enforcement agencies during times of emergency."⁶³ Mutual aid is authorized specifically in twenty states and is permitted under intergovernmental cooperation legislation in forty-four states. It is undoubtedly used under some authorization in all fifty states and in the District of Columbia. The usual participants are neighboring municipalities and, by virtue of their county-wide office, county sheriffs.

One of the principal obstacles to implementing an effective mutual aid program is the problem arising over liability for actions of officers exercising their powers extraterritorially. In a nationwide questionnaire sent to law enforcement officials by the National Sheriffs' Association, 425 of 654, or 61 percent, of the respondents indicated the liability problem was the major obstacle. The National Sheriffs' Association recommends writing in a provision granting immunity from liability into a mutual aid agreement.⁶⁴

The most encompassing provision for mutual aid in the country is contained in the California Emergency Services Act, which established a statewide mutual aid system to cope with all types of large emergencies. The system is structured to permit city, county, regional, and state participation depending on the extent of the emergency. The

overall system has operated admirably in the many emergency situations encountered by California local and state officials.⁶⁵

As has been indicated above, the type of mutual aid system used in emergencies has often led to other unified systems involving agencies in a particular area. It has become very popular to consolidate radio communications to aid in neighboring jurisdictions in the performance of their duties. Robert Landon, now Chief of the Montana Highway Patrol, wrote an article titled, "The Case For and Against Consolidation of Services" which dealt with the advantages and disadvantages of radio communication consolidation.⁶⁶ He stated that in 1975 the Washington State Patrol, which he was then chief of, consolidated communications facilities in both urban and rural environments. Those in the rural areas were tolerated or are operating satisfactorily. The Kennewick and Walla Walla consolidation, which provides dispatch service for a geographic area in southeastern Washington that includes the Hanford Atomic Reservation and the Washington State Penitentiary, appeared to work well. However, the consolidation of the Metropolitan Puget Sound, Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, and Bremerton area did not prove to be satisfactory. The massive volume of incoming calls could not be handled effectively, even with increases in manpower and the best computer equipment available. Communications officers were forced to dispatch state troopers and other services into areas where

they had no personal knowledge, resulting in inefficiency and embarrassment. This led to an unhealthy, impersonal feeling between troopers and communications officers and eventually it led to mistrust and even fear in some cases. They were forced to decentralize a large communications center because they could not live with problems that resulted.⁶⁷

A final example of a mutual aid system which has developed into a more elaborate type of coordination are the so-called "metro squads." These operations commit officers from several jurisdictions and agencies to assist in specialized operations. These operations recently have involved programs to combat drug abuse, investigate major crimes, or apprehend fugitives. The Major Case Squad of the Greater St. Louis Area, comprised of investigators from Illinois and Missouri police departments, was initiated because officials of the larger area police agencies believed that they should make their resources available to the smaller municipalities.⁶⁸ No indication was given of the success of their unification; however, since that time other areas have completed similar cooperative arrangements, including Montana.

Functional Consolidation

A second approach to attaining a unified law enforcement system would be to combine separate elements of the various participating units into one. This approach views the police agency in its component

parts, not as a whole. In so doing, sharp distinctions can be made between those components or functions which are supportive (e.g., records and communications, training) and those which are operational (e.g., patrol services).⁶⁹ From this perspective it may be feasible to consolidate some aspects of police work while reserving others to the particular community. Examples are numerous for unified services of this type.

A functional consolidation is found in Olmstead County - Rochester, Minnesota. Here the two principal police service agencies within the county jointly share a law enforcement center located within the county courthouse. The Law Enforcement Center (LEC) provides ample facilities for both departments, yet preserves the identity of each. A single complaint reception and records center operated by Rochester serves both departments. The two departments are so intertwined that the area assigned to one cannot readily be differentiated from that assigned to the other. Important to their experience, however, is the fact that the working relationship extends beyond mere physical proximity. Some programs are mounted jointly (e.g., narcotics and vice) and some are run by one department for the benefit of both (e.g., communications center) and there is always backup assistance by one in the other's jurisdiction when circumstances require it. Functional consolidation has been beneficial to both, yet each maintains its discrete personality and style.⁷⁰

Cost questions are pivotal to any long-run success for a joint program. All participants must be cognizant of the various factors included in a unified service package, and the resulting price tag must be readily understandable. A technique for handling cost disputes in a joint service program used by Blue Earth County-Mankato, Minnesota, was to establish a city-county policy board to set and to review operating costs of any joint ventures and to apportion such costs in a manner satisfactory to the participants. After several years of joint operation no serious questions related to financing have emerged.⁷¹

Jails represent another function in which joint ventures are common. In Stillwater, Oklahoma, for example, the county (Payne) maintains a jail for a small per prisoner fee to the city. When an arrest is made the prisoner is transported to the county facility and is booked and held there. The sheriff's department in St. Louis County, Minnesota, provides a jail service for the city of Duluth, the city of Hermantown, and a number of other smaller cities and townships within the county which have their own police departments. A modest fee of \$8 per day per prisoner is charged for the service, a cost much less than that incurred by the city of Duluth, for example, when it operated its own jail.⁷²

Another arrangement classified as a functional consolidation occurs without any formal program or effort being mounted to achieve

it. In a number of smaller police agencies in Michigan, the city or township police department handles basic patrol duties and responds to service requests. Should a major crime occur, or should some particular problem require a concentrated follow-up investigation, then the Michigan State Police would be called in to provide assistance.⁷³

A unified service approach through functional consolidation, then, takes several forms. It can be a formal contractual arrangement, whereby one government provides a specific supportive service to another for an agreed fee. It can be merely the informal combining of resources to address a specific law enforcement problem in the field. A functional consolidation approach can also mean that another government (e.g., a state or county) will provide specialized support services beyond the capacity of a first-line unit independently, without recourse to special charges or fees. Functional unification need not be complicated or sophisticated, nor need it be regarded by the participants as an effort to provide unified service. Regardless of the variation used, it is an effort to expand the capabilities of the users by sacrificing a limited measure of local autonomy and control.

Contract Law Enforcement

Contracting for a complete law enforcement service is another major option available to local governments for providing an adequate

level of police service. Typically, one local government unit (almost always a city) will contract from another (almost always a county) to obtain a specified level of police protection on a twenty-four-hour day-to-day basis. The Los Angeles County sheriffs department, beginning in 1954, was the first major policing agency to refine and develop the contract program - an approach that is now found in most states.⁷⁴

Contracting for law enforcement services permits great flexibility in service delivery. A contract for law enforcement services may range from the purchase of a single service to the procurement of a complete law enforcement protection package of primary, auxiliary, and technical services. To understand how contract law enforcement services are purchased and delivered, it is helpful to view contracting as consisting of either general service or selective service programs.⁷⁵

General service contract law enforcement programs involve three participants:

--Provider government: The state, county, or municipal government that agrees to provide law enforcement services.

--Producer agency: The provider government's law enforcement agency that actually produces and delivers these services.

--Recipient government: The government that purchases and receives these services.

Under the terms of a general service contract, the recipient government receives all or nearly all of its law enforcement protection from the producer agency. Though in a few instances a recipient government chooses to supplement its general service contract by providing limited ancillary services through its own employees. For example, the producer agency may perform parking enforcement and license investigation. In practice, the producer agency acts as the recipient government's law enforcement department.⁷⁶

Many general service delivery systems are possible. Four of the most common in operation today include:

--Standard Patrol Beat Delivery: In this delivery system the recipient government purchases a desired level of patrol coverage and the producer agency treats the contract service area as a new patrol beat. Any level of patrol service may be purchased. Whatever the size of the program, when contract services are delivered under a standard patrol beat system, the boundary integrity of the recipient government jurisdiction is recognized. Standard patrol beat delivery is found in contract programs in almost every state.

--Resident Deputy or Trooper: This is one of the oldest delivery systems for general contract services and one that remains popular in rural areas and small towns. A resident program involves one, or possibly two, designated officers assigned to a contract service area for extended tours of duty ranging from several months to several years. These officers usually live in or near the community they serve.

During their shift, residents deliver a full range of services, including patrol and investigation. Resident coverage is routinely supplemented by the regular field operations and support personnel of the producer agency, which is almost always a state or county law enforcement department. Though individual residents contracts may be quite small, an extensive network of service areas can be built up. For example, the Connecticut State Police now have residents in almost fifty towns throughout their state.

--Regional or Shared Patrol Beat Delivery: This system is of growing popularity among contiguous jurisdictions. In regional or shared beat delivery, artificial political boundaries are ignored and two or more contract service areas are treated as a single entity.

Regional beat delivery systems may be very limited in scope. For example, two small municipalities share a single contract patrol unit or they may be very large as in Los Angeles County's Lakewood Law Enforcement Region where six cities with a total population of 230,000 are serviced as a single entity. Regional systems may even include an entire county. In Decatur County, Iowa, for example, all unincorporated and incorporated (ten municipalities) territory is treated as a single county-wide law enforcement region with services delivered by the county sheriff. This individual is under contract to a specially created law enforcement commission made up of representatives of each of the governmental entities involved.

--Mixed Delivery: In some instances where general law enforcement services are delivered within a regional or shared beat delivery system, a recipient government may determine that it has particular law enforcement needs not shared by other recipients. These might include a community relations officer, a school safety officer, increased traffic control, and so forth. If this recipient government chooses to purchase supplemental or specialized services in addition to its general coverage from the regional delivery system, a mixed delivery of services results.⁷⁷

In selective service contracting, the recipient government purchases one or more services separately to supplement the general law enforcement services provided by its own department. Thus, there is a fourth recipient in selective service contracting: the recipient agency which remains the primary deliverer of law enforcement services throughout its jurisdiction.

Almost any law enforcement service or combination of services may be purchased through selective service contracting. Dispatch is one of the services most commonly purchased this way. A selective dispatch contract enables a recipient agency to obtain dispatch services from a producer agency in lieu of establishing its own base station and radio nets. Dispatch contracts may involve one municipal department dispatching for an adjacent municipal department, or they may be as complex as the St. Louis County, Missouri Police Department's selective service program in which over 25 municipal police departments contract for dispatch. Other services particularly amenable to selective service contracting include entry level training records, detention, crime lab, supplemental patrol, investigation, and helicopter and canine patrol.⁷⁸

The demonstrated flexibility of contracting in Los Angeles County led to the development of other general and selective service contract law enforcement programs in the years immediately after its appearance in the Los Angeles vicinity. Progress, however, was slow. More

recently, the increased stress placed upon improving the productivity of the criminal justice system has accelerated the growth of contract law enforcement and hastened its spread throughout the United States. Forces at the national level have encouraged the development of contract law enforcement services.⁷⁹

The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Criminal Justice characterized contract law enforcement as "one of the least complicated ways to achieve consolidation of police services" and concluded:⁸⁰

--Contract law enforcement programs can be effective without altering existing governmental structures.

--Any level of government can provide contract law enforcement services to other governments.

--A contract program can be effectively utilized to meet law enforcement needs in staff, auxiliary, and certain field services; it can also accomplish complete consolidation of all law enforcement activities.

--Costs of a contract program of law enforcement can be distributed equitably among participants and need not work to the disadvantage of non-participants.

--Contract programs are limited and voluntary and do not necessarily cover areas that are contiguous.

A contractual approach to unified police service does not come without disadvantages. There have been two issues related to contracting which have come to the forefront: local control and costs. In terms of local control, if a city were to contract from a county for police service the city would, in large measure, forego daily control over that service. The city's freedom of action would be limited by the terms of the contract in that the county would have operational control over police services. Indeed, the city would have to negotiate with the county in order to alter the service in some manner. From this point of view, it is important for the contracting party to be aware of the level of service they desire and be prepared for emerging issues which may call for additional services to be requested.⁸¹

Aside from issues of local control, perhaps the most important issue in contract law enforcement is cost. One common theme is that counties, which are the units typically providing the service, offer cut-rate prices to cities at the expense of non-participants; that is,

the county taxpayers as a whole are paying for the extension or expansion of services to a given area, not the users. This type of fear can be lessened, if not alleviated, by having the contracts specify that services already paid for through county tax dollars will not be incorporated into the service agreement. In this manner, a double taxation burden can be avoided and each of the participants can be charged reasonable fees for the special services.⁸²

Creation of a New Agency

The creation of a new governmental entity to provide police services to a given area is both the simplest and the most difficult solution. It is simple because inherent in its creation is the demise of any predecessor agencies; this does away with the need for close coordination found in functional consolidation and with the problems of assimilation and control present in contracting. It is a difficult solution, however, because it entails still another layer of government, one that is untested and is new to its responsibilities.⁸³

The cities of Yamhill and Carlton, near Portland, Oregon, entered into a mutual agreement for the operation of a joint police department. The two communities are separated by a five-mile span of county highway. Because of the proximity of the cities, the success of previous informal agreements regarding the provision of backup support, and the clear need for 24-hour patrol (which neither jurisdiction could

afford individually), a merger occurred. The combined department operates under the direction of a police committee comprised of members appointed by each city council. The committee oversees the general operation and personnel of the department and its reserve unit and makes recommendations to the respective city councils concerning the operation and financing of the unit.⁸⁴

Under this arrangement, each city maintains fiscal and administrative control over its own personnel, but generally exercises that control consistent with the recommendations of the joint police committee. In practice, primary responsibility for supervision of the officers, preparation of coordinated police budgets, and the direction of the consolidated program is in the hands of the Yamhill-Carlton police chief. The chief is selected by the police committee subject to the approval of each of the two city councils.⁸⁵ The consolidation was enacted July 1 of 1974 and is still in effect, although there is no documentation of its advantages or disadvantages.

The South Lake Minnetonka (Minnesota) Public Safety Department was established January 1, 1973. It provides law enforcement services to the contiguous villages of Shorewood, Greenwood, Tonka Bay, and Excelsior, Minnesota. Overseeing the agency is a joint law enforcement board comprised of the mayors of the four villages. During its first three years of operation the board was directly involved in many policy and personnel matters, in addition to participation in the

budgetary process. Since January 1976, however, all matters involving personnel and operational activities have become the sole responsibility of the chief.⁸⁶

The establishment of the department was made possible through existing Minnesota joint powers legislation. The approach was agreed to as a means of maximizing the quality and amount of available law enforcement services. Consideration of the sheriff as a possible provider of law enforcement services was dismissed because of the urbanized nature of the participating villages, their physical proximity to one another, and the past history of successful cooperative service arrangements between the villages. In a move to minimize competition between the former local agencies, a chief was selected from outside the area. The chiefs of the abolished agencies were retained at the rank of sergeant. This resulted in no loss in salary or benefits.⁸⁷

It is important that the question of seeking new approaches to the provision of police services be placed into political perspective. The approach that will work in a given community is one that is in tune politically with that community. Each of the major approaches discussed above have advantages and disadvantages and each requires that the existing local governments take some risks in seeking alternative ways to improve service levels. In the next chapter, an examination of the consolidation efforts which have occurred in Montana will take place.

CHAPTER IV

CONSOLIDATION IN MONTANA

Montana, like all other states in the Union, has suffered from the common foes of inflation, significant cost increases in law enforcement, and the increased difficulty faced by its smaller communities in hiring and retaining qualified law enforcement personnel. As a result, nearly half of the 56 counties in Montana have initiated some type of consolidated system of law enforcement. This chapter will identify and partially detail some of the consolidation efforts which have occurred throughout the state.

Methodology

Several years ago, the Montana Board of Crime Control identified counties in Montana which had instituted various types of consolidation. They also attempted to identify counties where consolidation had been proposed. Based on the results of their identification efforts and the lack of more up-to-date information, a questionnaire was sent to two public officials in each of the 30 counties that had either been identified as having consolidated or had proposed consolidation. The questionnaires were sent to the sheriff of the county and to the mayor in the county seat.

Preliminary research and interviews with staff personnel of the Board of Crime Control indicated that the county sheriffs usually administer consolidated law enforcement systems. The most common approach involves the sheriff providing expanded service for some or all of the communities in a county. In sparsely populated rural areas, consolidation results in the sheriff becoming the only law enforcement agency in the county.

A questionnaire was sent to the mayor of the town designated as the county seat because most consolidation efforts are comprised of combining the city where the sheriff and a large percentage of the county's residents are located. The questionnaire was sent to mayors to obtain a different perspective of their consolidation effort. (Research has shown that towns and cities which become part of a consolidated system experience a loss of control over law enforcement in their own town and others have cited increased costs as one of the consequences of merging two or more agencies.)

The questionnaire used to ascertain the extent of consolidation in Montana was derived from a previous nationwide study of small police agency consolidation. The questions were primarily general in nature and were designed to ascertain whether consolidation had occurred rather than the actual specifics of that consolidation. A copy of the questionnaire is located in the appendix.

The questionnaires returned (70 percent response rate) indicated a positive response to whether some type of consolidation had occurred in 24 of the 56 counties in Montana. (The extent of the consolidation and what type it is will be discussed later.) A primary consideration to whether consolidation can be implemented and the extent of that implementation is whether there is statutory authority allowing consolidation. In Montana there is specific legislation which enables consolidation of cities and counties; however, there is no specific statutory provisions for consolidation of particular public services.

The following map of Montana will indicate where some type of consolidation has been implemented based on the results of the questionnaires returned.

REPORTED CONSOLIDATIONS IN MONTANA

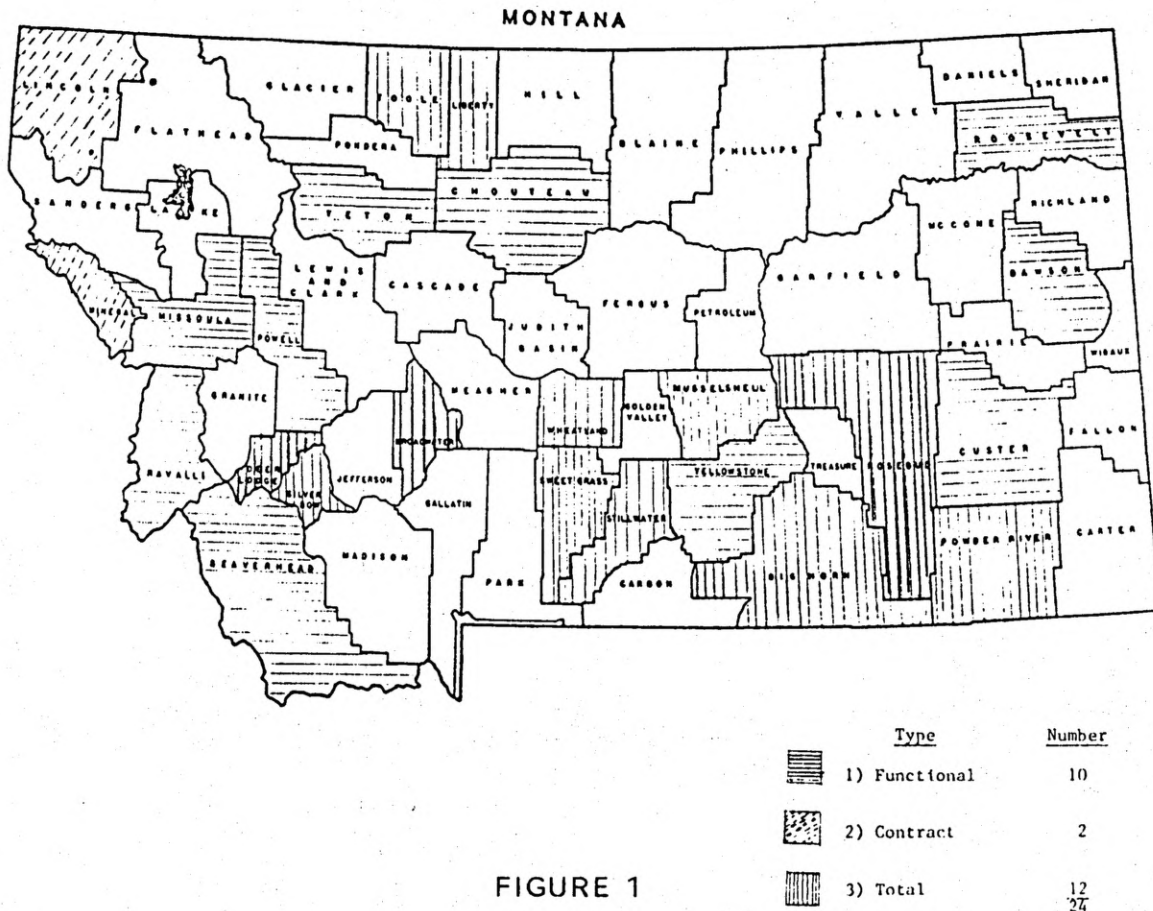


FIGURE 1

Consolidation in Montana

The following section will detail some of the cities and counties in Montana which perceive themselves as having some type of consolidation. A limiting factor to the complete accuracy of these descriptions is the generality of the questions asked the respondents, the number of respondents, and who completed the questionnaire. In Chapter III, I identified several types of consolidation which are common throughout

the United States. The examination of Montana's merger efforts will include classification of the consolidations into a general type of merger.

Mutual Aid

Mutual aid, as explained in Chapter III, is the simplest and least disruptive approach to unification. The most commonly accepted mutual aid system consists of a unit coming to the aid of another in emergency situations. The rural nature of Montana has created the need for mutual aid systems without the necessity of formal agreements. All law enforcement agencies in Montana participate in this system. In the event of a crisis or emergency situation all available law enforcement personnel, including brand inspectors and game wardens, are utilized to sufficiently staff a contingent large enough to cope with the situation. There are no agencies in Montana which could be considered "not consolidated" if mutual aid is considered a type of merger. A recent example of the mutual aid system in operation in Montana took place in southeastern Montana when a confrontation between union and non-union construction personnel occurred. Law enforcement personnel from various agencies and counties responded to the location to provide the needed backup. Mutual aid has been used as a rationale for more formal and far-reaching systems of

consolidation based on the cooperation and success of two or more agencies working together both in other states, as well as Montana.

Functional Consolidation

Functional consolidation is a unified system which merges functional components of each unit or agency while preserving the separate identities of all the participants. In so doing, distinctions can be made between those components or functions which are supportive (e.g., records, communications, and custodial services) and those which are operational (e.g., patrol services and jurisdictional boundaries). In Montana, there is a plethora of law enforcement agencies (many of which were not sent questionnaires) that have initiated some type of functional consolidation. The following agencies, by virtue of their responses to the questionnaire, have been classified in the functional consolidation category.

Yellowstone County/Billings - Two responses, one from the sheriff and one from the chief of police were received. The sheriff and police department are involved in a cooperative agreement to share in custodial services (detention facilities) and partially share in investigative services and records/identification services. The cooperative agreement was established in 1974 although, according to the sheriff's response, no formal contract is used to specify the services provided

by each agency. The factors identified by both the sheriff and the chief of police as having led to the cooperative agreement are inadequacies of existing services and overlapping or duplicative law enforcement services.

Advantages: (Sheriff) - Exchange of information for an investigative benefit. (Chief of Police) - Effectiveness and efficiency have increased, duplication of services eliminated, long-range cost savings gained, and the taxpayers share equally in costs of services.

Disadvantages: (Sheriff) - Suspects a total consolidation will not save as much money as some opinions project and there will be added cost to the taxpayers. (Chief of Police) - Transition costs, morale problems with personnel (turfdom), and political considerations both internally and externally.

It should be noted that at the time of this writing the county of Yellowstone and the two major cities of Billings and Laurel are considering total consolidation of law enforcement services. The issue will be presented to the voters in a June election.

Chouteau County/Ft. Benton - Two responses were received with the mayor indicating no consolidation exists and the sheriff's office saying yes. The county and the city appear to have merged the communications/dispatch and custodial services functions. The agreement was established in the 1950s and reestablished in 1973. The factors which led to the merger included all the conditions listed, as

well as a statement that the city method was inadequate. There is a formal contract used to define the level and type of services. According to the respondent, costs have increased since services have been combined.

Advantages: The communications/dispatch function is more efficient and there is more efficiency and less duplication because detention costs are shared.

Disadvantages: That either the city or county decides they can reduce their share of involvement and that the other entity is then stuck with the responsibility. Other comments included being against a total consolidation.

Missoula County/Missoula - A response was received from the sheriff and the chief of police. The city and county appear to share dispatch services and custodial services. The agreement was entered into in 1981, according to the sheriff; however, the chief of police stated involvement concerning custodial services will begin July 1, 1982. The merger will incorporate formal contracts to specify the type and level of costs for each agency. The factors which led to the consolidation include local government financial problems and the establishment of a 911 system to dispatch all emergency services. The sheriff stated that costs have increased but only because of 911 staffing and the equipment involved.

Advantages: (Sheriff) - Remove jurisdictional lines and questions of "who responds to what," uniformity of quality of work with one head and one department, and centralized records and perhaps more specialization in various types of crime. (Chief of Police) - None.

Disadvantages: (Sheriff) - Difficulty in merging two separate organizations--especially with two retirements, loss of friendly competition between agencies which promotes professionalism, and difficulty in selecting supervisory personnel from the departments without causing jealousy and morale problems. (Chief of Police) - Goals are much different on the city level than county level--we are traffic oriented and non-political.

Custer County/Miles City - The sheriff and the chief of police responded; however, only the chief of police felt a consolidation existed. The two agencies appear to share communications/dispatch services and custodial services. The cooperative agreement was established in 1975 and formal contracts are utilized. Factors involved in initiating a consolidation include overlapping services, local government financial problems, and the need for newer and more modern space for the city police department. According to the police chief, costs have increased since the consolidation was established.

Advantage: Respondent stated that since they are not totally consolidated, he could not make a good value judgment.

Dawson County/Glendive - A response was received from both the mayor and the sheriff; however, only the sheriff indicated a positive response to whether a consolidation had occurred. The sheriff's department and police department share investigative services, communications/dispatch services, and custodial services. The cooperative agreement was informally established in 1969. Duplication of services led to the consolidation. The sheriff states that costs have remained about the same.

Advantages: None.

Disadvantages: Department differences which cause friction and differing policies of operation.

Powell County/Deer Lodge - Two responses were received, but only the chief of police felt a consolidation had occurred. The two agencies appear to share communications/dispatch services and custodial services. The cooperative agreement has existed since the 1950s and a verbal agreement between the city council and county commissioners specifies the types and costs of services provided. Local government financial problems appear to have led to the consolidation of services. The police chief states costs have increased as a result of the consolidation.

Advantages: It would not be economically feasible to operate a dispatch and detention facility for both the city and the county in a small county.

Disadvantages: As the sheriff's office provides the services, we are greatly influenced by the character of the elected sheriff and his policies. It could greatly inhibit cooperation between the agencies. The sheriff feels he has leverage over the police because the city is dependent on the services provided by the county.

Roosevelt County/Wolf Point - Only the sheriff responded to the questionnaire. He stated that a partial consolidation existed. Consolidated services are investigative, communications/dispatch, patrol, traffic control, purchasing, and custodial services. The merger was established in 1970 and formal contracts are utilized to specify services and costs. The factor which led most to consolidation was local government financial problems. According to the respondent, costs have increased as a result of the merger.

Advantages: On part-time/partial consolidation, we have better law enforcement coverage and response time for emergencies.

Disadvantages: None.

Beaverhead County/Dillon - Only the sheriff responded to the questionnaire for this county. The response indicated that a partial consolidation exists consisting of communications/dispatch services, records/identification services, and custodial services being shared. The services were consolidated in 1976, however, no factors or conditions for establishment were noted. A formal contract is used to specify types and level of cost of law enforcement services. There

were no opinions offered as to the advantages and disadvantages of consolidation, although the respondent noted that costs of services had decreased.

Teton County/Choteau - A single response from the mayor indicated that a partial consolidation now exists in which the city and county have joint communications/dispatch services. (During 1977 through 1979, a total consolidation was operational; however, due to various difficulties, the consolidation was dissolved to its present level.) According to the respondent, the total consolidation was formally established because of overlapping law enforcement services. The response indicated that the cost of law enforcement costs increased as a result of the consolidation.

Advantages: Stop duplication of patrol work.

Disadvantages: As long as the sheriff is an elected official consolidation will not work. City people are taxed twice for police services because they pay county taxes for the sheriff's department and are also charged taxes for the city police. Consolidation is the best way to go but we in the city feel it will not work as long as the sheriff is elected and is not responsible to anyone for his operation.

Ravalli County/Hamilton - Only the sheriff responded to the questionnaire. He indicated that a partial consolidation of law enforcement services existed. The city and county share communications/dispatch, records/identification, and custodial services. The consolidation took

place in 1977 and was established because the consolidation resulted in a grant for recordkeeping, a communications center, and jail facilities. According to the respondent, costs have increased.

Advantages: For a small populated area consolidation was workable and beneficial. They received a new communications system, closed circuit TV, plus such jail facilities as electric locking doors.

Disadvantages: No opinion.

Contractual Consolidation

Contracting for law enforcement services can involve a myriad of varieties and examples. By definition, contract law enforcement is a voluntary program in which one government enters into a formal agreement to provide law enforcement services to another government for a fee without altering the powers and responsibilities of either government. In most cases, the contract is for complete law enforcement services; however, in Montana, because of its small population and rural nature, many cities contract with counties for selected law enforcement services. Indeed, many of the cities and counties mentioned above could be considered contractually consolidated based merely on the formal contracts which exist between the governmental entities. Functional consolidation and contractual consolidation are similar in appearance and operation. Those cities which pay counties for custodial services and communications/dispatch services, but

retain their patrol and investigative functions, may be considered to be either functionally or contractually consolidated. Because of the generality of the contract law enforcement definition, the number of contracted consolidations is minimal in this paper and there are a large number of cities in Montana which were not sent questionnaires, therefore, a realistic indication of the extent of this type of consolidation is not being presented.

Two counties that responded to the questionnaire specified that they had contracted law enforcement. Their responses are as follows.

Mineral County/Superior - A response was obtained from the sheriff and the mayor. Contracted services consist of investigative, communications/dispatch, patrol, parking enforcement, records/identification, purchasing, and custodial services. Both the mayor and the sheriff indicated that only a partial consolidation existed and it was formally established in 1973. The two factors that led to the consolidation were overlapping law enforcement services and local government financial problems. Although a written contract is used to specify type and level of service including costs, the mayor indicated costs for law enforcement have increased, while the sheriff responded that costs have decreased.

Advantages: (Sheriff) - No duplication of services, no jurisdiction problems, better communication between law enforcement

personnel, and more law enforcement for tax dollars spent. (Mayor) - Cooperation between the two agencies has increased and there is now full-time dispatch service and law enforcement coverage.

Disadvantages: (Sheriff) - Budgets, there are now three budgets to work on instead of just one. Also, there is a reporting responsibility to two entities: the town council and the county commissioner.

Lincoln County/Libby - Only the mayor responded to the questionnaire. He stated that a total consolidation is to go into effect July 1, 1982. They will use a contract to specify types and costs of services. The factors involved in going to a consolidated system are overlapping law enforcement services and local government financial problems. The respondent believes costs will be decreased by using contractual consolidation.

Advantages: Better law enforcement coverage within a community range (city-county area of 5 miles) and consolidation will cut down on duplication of services.

Disadvantages: We do not know yet (system not operational until July 1, 1982).

Creation of a New Agency - Total Consolidation

As noted in Chapter III, the creation of a new governmental entity to provide law enforcement is both the simplest and the most

difficult solution. It is simple because a new agency is being created and old problems can be left behind; there is no longer a need for the close cooperation that is required in functional consolidation and many of the jurisdictional struggles that occur when there is overlapping service are dissolved. The difficulty in creation of a new agency comes from developing a new layer of government that is untested and has new responsibilities. Also inherent in creation of a new agency is how to assuage the law enforcement officials who lost their positions in the old agency as a result of the consolidation. Technical, as well as social, aspects of such a consolidation must be considered, including what personnel will be transferred from the old agency to the new, will they retain a similar position in the new agency, and will the fringe benefits be the same? Finally, the amount of control that can be exercised by the governmental entities and the public over the new system must be considered. The following counties are classified as having a totally consolidated system based on their responses to the questionnaire.

Liberty County/Chester - The only response to the questionnaire from this county was from the sheriff. He stated that the sheriff provides the law enforcement services and the consolidation was established in 1974. The factors that led to the consolidation were inadequacies of existing law enforcement services and local government

financial problems. The responses also indicated that costs of law enforcement service have increased since consolidation.

Advantages: There are no duplication of services, records are unified, and one agency can perform in our area for a lower overall cost.

Disadvantages: They are unable to come to an agreement with the city on the amount of funding that should be contributed by each government. The city feels it would be cheaper for them to hire their own officers and they do not believe 24-hour dispatch service is needed, whereas the county believes this is necessary. The respondent indicated they are in the process of negotiating, however, he states by June 30, 1982, there may be two departments.

Powder River County/Broadus - The city attorney responded for the mayor for this county and no response was received from the sheriff. The respondent indicated that the consolidation had occurred in 1976 with the sheriff of the county providing the law enforcement services. The factor that led most to the consolidation was overlapping law enforcement services. The respondent also stated that costs have increased since consolidation; however, that is mostly due to inflation - that the cost of a joint department is lower than separate departments.

Advantages: The system is more economical, no duplication of services, better training, and it got rid of old rivalries. Great system - everyone should try it.

Disadvantages: Some loss of control by city officials.

Broadwater County/Townsend - The mayor was the only respondent to the questionnaire. He indicated the consolidation had occurred in 1975 with the county sheriff assuming all law enforcement responsibilities. Consolidation was implemented because of overlapping law enforcement services and local governmental financial problems. He stated that costs have increased as a result of consolidation.

Advantages: Better communications through full-time dispatchers, greater degree of training, and personnel who have chosen law enforcement as a career.

Disadvantages: Increasing costs.

Toole County/Shelby - The mayor was the only respondent for the county. He indicated the consolidation had occurred in 1979 with the sheriff providing the law enforcement services for the entire county. The reasons for going to a consolidated system were overlapping law enforcement services and local government financial problems. The respondent indicated that costs have increased since the consolidation.

Advantages: Consolidation offers a better overall law enforcement due to better equipment, training, and choice of officers because of better salaries. Also, there is no duplication of services.

Disadvantages: When first consolidated, public opinion was that they were not getting the same service but, in fact, they were getting better service.

Big Horn County/Hardin - The mayor's response was the only questionnaire returned. He responded that the consolidation took place in 1976 with the sheriff assuming county-wide law enforcement duties. The reason for consolidation was based on the findings of a local government study commission. The respondent believed costs have increased, however, they have not increased out of reason.

Advantages: They find no particular advantage. Think the advantage would have been in keeping our own force and using a common physical plant (records, radio, detention, etc.).

Disadvantages: Increased costs. There is also a psychological factor, which is hard to define, but enforcing city codes seems to be below the dignity of the sheriff's department. The quality of law enforcement, at least here, has deteriorated greatly.

Rosebud County/Forsyth - Only the mayor responded to the questionnaire. He indicated that consolidation was put in operation in 1972 with the sheriff providing the law enforcement services. Local government financial problems led to the consolidation of law enforcement services. Costs have increased as a result of consolidation.

Advantages: No duplication of equipment, facilities, or manpower. Also, there is a central dispatch for all emergency services.

Disadvantages: The feeling of inadequate coverage for the cost. When a manpower shortage occurs, officers' priorities appear to be county enforcement. They are presently looking at withdrawing

from the agreement to establish our own force again, so as to be responsive to the city council. At this time, however, it does not seem economically feasible to change.

Musselshell County/Roundup - The mayor was the only respondent to the questionnaire. He stated the consolidation took place in 1975 with the sheriff assuming responsibility for law enforcement. The respondent indicated that local government financial problems was the factor that led most to the consolidation of services. He also indicated that costs have increased as a result of the consolidation.

Advantages: Since the sheriff is the ranking law officer in the county it is proper that his office handle law enforcement.

Disadvantages: The city loses control of its police and the sheriff's department is not familiar with all city ordinances so we have "gray" areas. The sheriff is an elected official and he decides what areas of enforcement are most essential and is not receptive to some of our complaints.

Sweet Grass County/Big Timber - A response was received from the sheriff and the mayor. The consolidation was established in 1972 under the control of the county sheriff. The two factors which led to the consolidation were inadequacies of existing law enforcement and duplication of services. Both respondents indicated costs have increased since the consolidation.

Advantages: (Sheriff) - Elimination of duplication of services and the ability to hire and train better personnel. (Mayor) - More consolidated effort in enforcement and investigations with no jurisdictional disputes or jealousies between county and city departments.

Disadvantages: (Sheriff) - Possibility of termination of contracts each year--having to negotiate new agreements annually. (Mayor) - Priorities - City patrol work may become a secondary function to brand inspections and other strictly county duties.

Deer Lodge County/Anaconda - Both the chief of law enforcement and the city manager responded to the questionnaire. The consolidation took place in 1977 and law enforcement responsibilities were put in the hands of a chief law enforcement officer for Anaconda-Deer Lodge County. The factors that led to the consolidation were overlapping law enforcement services and local government financial problems. The chief of law enforcement stated costs have increased, but the city manager indicated costs have decreased.

Advantages: (Chief of Law Enforcement) - No duplication of services, more available manpower, and a better retirement system. (City Manager) - Cost savings.

Disadvantages: (Chief of Law Enforcement) - None. (City Manager) - The initial non-cooperation of individuals--which is solved with time.

Wheatland County/Harlowton - The sheriff and the mayor responded to the questionnaire. The consolidation was established in 1980 with the county sheriff assuming responsibility for county-wide law enforcement. The factor contributing to the consolidation was local government financial problems. The sheriff responded that costs had remained about the same, whereas the mayor indicated costs had increased.

Advantages: (Sheriff) - One boss, no duplication, and better morale among personnel. (Mayor) - Financially it is more feasible; although costs for services have increased, it has not been as high of an increase as it would have been if the police department was still in effect.

Disadvantages: (Sheriff) - More work and responsibilities for the sheriff but no more pay. (Mayor) - The city has little or no internal control. Although the city has a police commission, the sheriff is entirely on his own.

Stillwater County/Columbus - Both the sheriff and the mayor responded to the questionnaire. The consolidation occurred in 1976 with the sheriff providing county-wide law enforcement. The major factor that led to the consolidation was the lack of qualified, trained personnel who were willing to work the required hours for the pay that was available. Both respondents indicated costs have increased since consolidation, but the mayor qualified this by indicating costs for everything have increased.

Advantages: (Sheriff) - More effective law enforcement because of a full range of investigate services, full scope of support services, including reserves and search and rescue, coordinated and more effective manpower. In addition, there is no duplication of records or communication. (Mayor) - No duplication. One responsible head of agency (elected sheriff); best service for the money with better coverage and not hampered by (city only) jurisdiction.

Disadvantages: (Sheriff) - There are disadvantages--a consolidation may not be less expensive, however, in reality a more effective law enforcement agency is inevitable. (Mayor) - We have experienced no disadvantages. However, our consolidation depends very much on the attitude of the sheriff in office at any one time. In other words, both sides must cooperate fully.

Silver Bow County/Butte - Both the sheriff and the chief executive of Butte-Silver Bow County responded to the questionnaire. The consolidation occurred in 1977 with law enforcement responsibility being transferred to the sheriff. The factors that led to consolidation were overlapping law enforcement services and local government financial problems. Both respondents indicated costs had increased since consolidation.

Advantages: (Sheriff) - Better record and reporting system, along with more adequate dispatch center, and the increased

eligibility for federal funds as result of the consolidation. (Chief Executive) - The lack of duplication, lack of jurisdictional disputes, more harmony among personnel, and a better system of governmental control.

Disadvantages: (Sheriff) - Loss of sworn officers without loss of area to be served. (Mayor) - I don't see any disadvantages.

The types of consolidation mentioned in the preceding pages all show a similarity to one another in what services have been consolidated and the factors leading to the consolidation. Based on the definitions of consolidation that have evolved through the years and the examples presented in the last two chapters, it appears that classifications of mergers is sheer speculation on the part of an observer and a matter of personal interpretation for those within the consolidated system. Contractual consolidation seems to be the pivotal point between a functional and total consolidation. If an agency utilizes a contract to specify the types of services and the associated costs, the system, depending upon the number of services contracted, may be any of the three classifications mentioned above. The next section of this chapter will detail more about the systems previously identified.

Consolidation Details

Of the 60 questionnaires that were sent out, 42 were returned for a 70 percent response rate. Only 5 of the 42 responses received indicated that no type of consolidation existed. The questionnaires indicated that 11 of the 24 counties who responded had done a feasibility study of consolidation prior to implementation. The questionnaire did not establish the extent of study done before the consolidation. The factors or conditions that led most to the consideration of consolidation as a possible means of providing law enforcement services were overlapping or duplicative law enforcement services and local government financial problems. Eighteen of the twenty-four counties utilized a formal contract to establish the types and costs of services received by the participating jurisdiction. Nearly all of the counties involved in consolidation (21 of 24) indicated that costs have increased since their systems became operational. Finally, the responses revealed that only four counties had done a formal evaluation of their systems, of these four, three of them had also done a feasibility study prior to the consolidation.

Intervening Factors

The responses to the questionnaires revealed several interesting interpretations or perceptions of consolidation. In several cases, where the chief of police and the sheriff responded, the sheriff said

no consolidation had occurred, but the chief of police said it had. In these cases, the police had transferred their records, detention facilities, and communications capability to the sheriff's office. This is perceived as a consolidation by the police chief or others; however, the sheriff did not perceive this as a consolidation because there were no alterations in his functions, facilities, or responsibilities.

A second consideration or point of view was expressed by the mayors of the cities that consolidated their police functions with the county. Several of the responses indicated dissatisfaction with the consolidation because the sheriff allegedly did not respond to the needs of the city. The respondents noted that consolidation may not be a workable solution because the sheriff is an elected official who does not have to be responsible to city officials; therefore, the law enforcement services that had been transferred were perceived as being less than desired. (This issue will be addressed in Chapter V.)

A third noteworthy item is that two of the counties responding indicated the factor that most led to consolidation was their eligibility for outside funds as a result of the consolidation. These funds, in one case, were used to update and modernize communications services and detention facilities. In other states the consolidation of services has been actively promoted by state planning agencies and has been used as an eligibility criteria to obtain state and federal funds.

Finally, the questionnaire results revealed that, in most cases, costs for law enforcement services have increased since the consolidation took place. However, few of the respondents indicated that this is a major disadvantage of consolidation. Several respondents believe that, although costs do increase, one should consider what they are getting for the price. They noted there is little or no duplication of services, personnel are better trained, and even more importantly, there is the ability to hire personnel who are more qualified and who can be retained because of better salaries and fringe benefits.

The next chapter will examine Montana's consolidation efforts in relation to other consolidations and also examine its efforts in relation to the prevailing literature on the subject.

CHAPTER V

COMPARISONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Consolidation Comparability

One of the purposes of this professional paper has been to identify what types of consolidation have occurred in Montana and then compare its systems to those in other states and those identified by various professional journals. It appears that Montana law enforcement agencies have initiated and developed their unifications in much the same manner as those talked of in Chapter 3.

Since there is no strict definition of consolidation and only non-specific categories, comparative analysis of consolidation efforts does not appear to be a realistic task. It seems that the only consistent similarity which lends itself to comparison is the general approaches to consolidation. There is a multitude of variations within the approaches that can be adopted by the officials formulating the consolidation. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it appears that the consolidation efforts of Montana are similar to those of other states. During the course of my research I did not find any literature which tried to do comparisons of various consolidations, they simply reported what had taken place. There are, however, a few general conclusions that can be drawn from the consolidations which have been implemented.

Selection Criteria

Each of the consolidations and their classifications discussed in the past two chapters--functional, contractual, and total consolidation have advantages and disadvantages. Each requires that the existing local governments take some risks in seeking alternative ways to improve law enforcement. Apart from mutual aid, which is a statewide practice, the functional approach to unification would appear to be the least disruptive to traditional methods because the participating units may maintain their separate identities, particularly for patrol. In Montana where at least 10 of the 56 counties have implemented functional consolidation and in other states, the maintenance of identity seems to be a major factor in implementing this type of merger. The alternative approach of a new agency such as those in Butte and Anaconda, for example, are probably the most disruptive to established methods because existing agencies are discontinued and a new one enters the process. The contractual approach is a compromise because while the local community may lose all or part of its own police force it is still a participant to the contract and can set forth terms and conditions related to local priorities. Thus, with degree of change as a criterion, functional consolidation is the most practical alternative and creation of a new agency is the least.

Two additional factors which should be assessed include degree of autonomy lost to another agency and degree of responsiveness to

citizens on the part of the agency. As regards the amount of local control or autonomy lost by one unit of government to another, the functional approach appears to pose the fewest problems, because the basic police agency remains and only certain services are shared. Here, too, a contractual approach appears to strike a middle ground because, although some local control would be lost and the local force reduced or disbanded, a well-drafted contract can preserve certain prerogatives and, further, a contract can be cancelled. (It would be much more difficult to tear down a new governmental entity.) The issue of contracts and local control will be discussed further in a later section.

The question of a degree of responsiveness to citizens presents a somewhat similar pattern. What is meant is the capacity to respond to and satisfy the articulated needs of the community. Little change is likely to be noticed by local residents of a community involved in functional consolidation because these services typically involve programs which are supportive of patrol activities such as communications, detention, and training and are not of principal interest to the citizen. In most instances, as the questionnaire results reflect, the patrol operations remain independent of a consolidated support program, and as a consequence there are few overt signs to the public that change has, in fact, occurred.

Quite the opposite pattern emerges through the creation of a new police agency. Existing channels of communication are gone because the institution itself is likely to be substantially different. An example of this change is in Anaconda/Deer Lodge County where a Department of Public Safety has been created with neither the sheriff nor the police chief becoming the chief law enforcement officer. This is not to suggest that a new agency cannot be responsive to citizen needs and concerns, but rather to suggest that the establishment of communication networks will take some time, both for the citizens and governmental officials. Contracting, again would appear to occupy something of a midpoint. Clearly, a new or at least altered agency would be involved in day-to-day police operations, but the overall policy body would remain in place and could, through the contract, ensure that citizens would be heard.

The general approaches to consolidation rest on some rather large assumptions. One of the major assumptions surrounding their approaches is that the participating agencies have a clear-cut idea of what they want, how they are going to initiate the merger, and what the outcome will be. As has been illustrated throughout this paper, however, each consolidation is unique because of the vast array of alternatives, not to mention political limitations. A second assumption is that all criteria can be identified and specified in a written form. This assumption has a somewhat shaky foundation because of the

criticisms leveled at consolidations by law enforcement and local government officials. Specifically, they talk of increased costs, lack of responsiveness, and loss of autonomy--all conditions which could be addressed in a contract but are not because not all considerations are usually identified.

Suggested Guidelines

There are some specific guidelines which may help strengthen the assumptions surrounding the approaches to consolidation--guidelines which have been developed by law enforcement and government officials who have had experience in consolidation efforts. In Chapter I, two conditions were identified that appear to precipitate a consideration to consolidate: limited local government financial capability and/or overlapping law enforcement services. The results of the questionnaire indicated that these two conditions were most responsible for considering a merger in Montana as well. The following guidelines for consolidation may help those who are afflicted by one or both of the above conditions decide whether a merger is the appropriate solution to the affliction.

Feasibility Assessment

The fundamental purpose of law enforcement consolidation is to give the public a better services delivery system. Regardless of the

approach to unification, there are several steps which should be followed in evaluating the feasibility of a unified system, whether partial or total. More than half the agencies that responded to the mail questionnaire used either an informal approach to assessing the feasibility of merged law enforcement service or none at all. The use of an informal assessment has certain advantages. Among political leaders, for example, once the decision to establish a merged system is made, the need for a more formal feasibility study is obviated; the political bases are covered.

On the negative side, the informal feasibility study has certain drawbacks. Certain aspects of these systems may suffer from improper planning. Two such aspects concern the method and extent of system financing, and the nature of services that are to be provided. One agency in Montana had problems with both financing and service delivery. The decision to consolidate was made exclusively by county commissioners and local council members. This led to a serious underestimation of the cost of providing services because certain items were overlooked in the budget equation. In addition, the informal planning led to severe misunderstandings. In one area, an agreement was reached whereby the particular services to be provided were not specified. When the agreement was executed, the recipient community expected far more service than the sheriff was physically and financially

capable of providing. This situation, ultimately, led to the termination of the merged law enforcement agency.

If an informal approach is to be used to assess the feasibility of consolidation, the following should be clearly detailed.⁸⁸

- Why law enforcement reorganization is necessary (e.g., inadequate coverage under existing systems, the inability of localities to finance, etc.).
- How the restructured service delivery system will be organized and administered (e.g., who will be in political and administrative control; how will the voice of recipient jurisdictions be heard, etc.).
- What specific services should be provided to recipient agencies.
- What the total cost of the reorganized system will be, including equipment, facility, and service costs; the criteria to be used to fairly allocate overall costs to all participants.

Formal Feasibility

Formal feasibility studies, as opposed to the informal variety, are generally prepared by local study groups, criminal justice staff of

state or regional planning agencies, or by private consultants. A successful study depends on the quality of its direction, control, and management, and these in turn are influenced by the character of the study committee. Two essential considerations are the composition of the study committee and its functions.

Most successful committees for consolidation studies consist of persons who: reflect public constituencies which will be affected by changing the current system, and have some technical expertise in police services and intergovernmental relations.⁸⁹ The functions of the committee should be (1) defining the nature of the study; (2) defining the expected products; (3) determining who will conduct the study; and (4) reviewing and approving study products. It should be remembered that its objectives are to facilitate completion of a study and to assure that the purposes of the study are achieved objectively, rationally, and thoroughly. Decisions concerning desirability or feasibility of merger are the options of the public--the committee should only serve as manager and catalyst, not as a legislative body.⁹⁰ In the mail questionnaires, the responses indicated that 11 of the 24 Montana counties who have some type of consolidation, completed a formal feasibility study prior to the unification.

There are reasons which support local decisions to undertake a formal feasibility study. First, it provides a means to thoroughly assess the benefits and costs of police service restructuring. Second,

if a merger is considered feasible, the resulting information can be used to promote the concept, using the resulting data and documentation. Finally, formal feasibility studies, if conducted properly, can produce the data necessary for the subsequent monitoring and evaluation of merged law enforcement services.⁹¹ Thus, after the implementation of a consolidated system, participant communities have a basis for objectively judging the value of merged service, and for deciding on its continuation, change, or termination.

The conduct of a law enforcement consolidation study should be a straightforward exercise containing several steps. To determine whether retention of the present system or conversion to an alternative system is the more desirable option, the following study tasks should be completed: (1) review of the present system; (2) evaluation of the present system and definition of needs; (3) identification of unification alternatives; (4) comparison and evaluation of the present system with alternatives, and selection of the system which meets the defined needs.⁹²

Review of the present system. The purpose is to assemble all information that describes and explains the current police services system. The following information is useful: (1) area geographic and demographic data; (2) governmental patterns, including the

general environment for and characteristics of interlocal cooperative relations; and (3) information on police agency resources and operations.

Evaluation of the present system and definition of needs. The following should be determined for each police agency: (1) whether all necessary functions are being carried out by the agency or otherwise provided to the public; (2) whether the functions are carried out at levels demanded; (3) whether the quality of services meet modern police standards; (4) whether services are being duplicated; and (5) the degree of compatibility of operations in terms of quality, scope, manpower, salaries, fringe benefits, selection, promotion, and retirement systems. Evaluation is primarily a function to ascertain knowledge of present police services and intergovernmental relations.

Identification of unification alternatives. The purpose of this task is to identify and define the various consolidation options. The broad approaches have already been identified in Chapter III. However, consideration has and should be given to utilizing combinations of these when designing alternative systems. When designing a combination form, the task is to evaluate each police function and determine how it might be best administered in the

area. The design should begin with the function, not with existing structural arrangements.

Selection of the best alternative. Comparing alternatives and selecting the best one is largely an analytical exercise based on knowledge and judgment. This is where the study committee's composition can contribute its fullest value.

The final steps in the study include: (1) review of the study by the committee; (2) a resolution by the committee to accept or reject the study; and (3) transmission of the committee's resolution to governing bodies within the service area.

Public Acceptance

It is important to gain public acceptance of potential mergers of police services, particularly if implementation depends on a local referendum. The process of gaining this acceptance must focus on informing the public about the concept and it must be accomplished in such a way that the arguments against unification are addressed. The people or groups that oppose consolidation vary. They include persons who disagree with the concept, persons who are uninformed about the concept and resistant to change, and persons who feel they

will be adversely affected by the change. This latter group frequently includes the chiefs and officers of agencies that will be abolished.

When dealing with the arguments opposed to consolidation, it is important to remember that most people are uninformed, incrementally-oriented, and have strong psychological attachment to their "local police department." Therefore, although they may favor law enforcement improvement, they may oppose consolidation because they do not fully understand the pros and cons of the concept. Most successful merger campaigns are based on the positive merits of consolidation.⁹³ Several viable steps can be taken to keep the issues of consolidation before the public in a positive fashion. These include the following:⁹⁴

- The campaign should be well organized and should seek support and involvement of people who are well known and respected in the community.
- The public should not be told that consolidation will cost less.
- Fact sheets should be prepared and distributed which summarize the key features of the merger. They should also discuss why consolidation is needed, and the problems that this approach will resolve.

--Elected officials, sheriffs, or chiefs from successful consolidations in communities of a similar size or character should be brought in to meet with the public.

Financial Planning

Financing is a key factor in the successful planning and implementation of all consolidated law enforcement agencies. Research leading to this paper revealed numerous cases in which financing was the subject over which the greatest time was spent and the most disagreements arose during the planning of consolidated agencies.⁹⁵ Financial considerations are also significant when it comes to public acceptability and/or decisions to continue merged agencies.

Several of the respondents to the mail questionnaire indicated difficulties as a result of inadequate financial planning (Teton and Liberty Counties were the most critical of this aspect of consolidation). Regardless of the consolidation approach used, the most critical factor in a consolidated agency budget is the method used to distribute costs among participating jurisdictions. Some agencies share costs "proportionately," based on such factors as population, crime rate, etc.; others use a "direct cost" allocation system; and still others use a formula based on a "per unit cost" for specific law enforcement service.⁹⁶ Whichever method of cost allocation is used, however, participating communities must recognize that the purpose of

consolidation is to minimize the cost of improved law enforcement services. Thus, all cost sharing techniques should be designed to achieve equity, not to profit or take undue advantage of some communities at the expense of others.

The first few years of a merged agency represent a highly capital intensive period. Because significant investments are usually needed to implement a consolidation and to improve previously sub-standard conditions, the effect frequently balloons total costs. Communities considering merger should be prepared for this. Although some proponents claim consolidation lowers the cost of law enforcement service, this is rarely the case in terms of actual dollars. (Of the 24 counties who indicated a consolidation had occurred, 21 stated costs of law enforcement had increased since the merger.) Consolidation may, however, provide more law enforcement service for the dollar than is possible under individual local agencies.⁹⁷

Transition From Old to New

Many mergers among small law enforcement agencies utilize neither a formal nor an informal transition period. Most simply involve the extension of existing services to additional jurisdictions. The merger is agreed to by the affected jurisdictions and it "happens."

Unfortunately, when mergers of other than the smallest agencies are involved, this form of "action planning" may not be sufficient.

As the size of communities increase and their respective law enforcement needs become more complex, so do the problems of implementation. Questions of interjurisdiction equipment transfers begin to arise as do such issues as standards for hiring personnel from agencies that will be dissolved, equalizing salaries and benefit packages, insuring interjurisdictional enforcement authority for members of the provider agency, merging records systems, and developing common general orders and field manuals.⁹⁸ As the number and complexity of issues grow, so does the need for a more structured transition period.

Provider-Recipient Relations (Contract)

Interlocal agreements and contracts are the most widely used formal instruments of cooperation among governments in the United States.⁹⁹ They offer a flexible yet predictable and enforceable method of providing consolidated law enforcement services and can be used without affecting basic governmental structure or organization.

In the strictest sense, service "agreements" are commonly used to undertake jointly any functions or responsibilities which governments can undertake singly. They provide formal status to arrangements which might otherwise be carried on informally, for example, sharing responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of a border street or other facility between jurisdictions. They also offer a

formal basis for mutual aid, for example, when the need arises for back-up law enforcement services.

"Contracts" are used mainly for the purpose of services which are to be provided by one agency on behalf of another. Here, the relationship between the agency buying the service and the agency selling it is virtually identical to that between any public agency purchaser and a vendor. Generally, if a mutuality of interest, resources, facilities, and potential contribution exists among jurisdictions, a joint agreement approach should be used. For example, in developing mutual "backup" agreements many law enforcement agencies, including those in Montana, operate on a "you help us, we'll help you" type of understanding.

Agreements, however, are not applicable in many cases where one organization provides services to another. Contracts are normally executed if services are needed on an ongoing basis. The contract approach may also be more appropriate when the cooperating jurisdictions are of different types, with different organizational structures, e.g., a county sheriff working with a city police agency. Notably, contracts for services are particularly well adapted for providing a standardized service such as that involving law enforcement services. A contract also provides a binding legal document which details the type, nature, and conditions under which some services are to be

rendered. It can detail points in a manner and format that can avoid later misunderstandings and disputes.

Although contracts can be made specific, the opinions expressed in the mail questionnaire indicate that where there are problems between the provider and the recipient, the inadequacy of their contract appears to be the root of the difficulty. Two agencies indicated that consolidation is not feasible with an elected official being the chief law enforcement officer. Others stated that service had deteriorated since the consolidation--these types of concerns seem to reveal that the contract between the recipient and the provider is possibly not strong enough or not specific enough. Although lack of specificity in the contract may not be the root of all the conflicts, the negotiation and enforcement of contract conditions is vital to a successful consolidation.

Unfortunately, contracts are rarely uniform. Variations reflect the nature of the understanding, controlling statutes, prevailing local conditions, and the style of those involved in the contract negotiations and preparation process. There are, however, certain basic provisions that should be covered in any contract for provision of law enforcement services. These provisions are outlined below.¹⁰⁰

1. Nature of the document. This includes the jurisdictions involved and their legal relationship. It should also include generalities about the nature of the services to be provided.

2. Work to be performed. The contract should clearly set forth the nature and level of services that are to be provided. The "nature" of services should include reference to preventive patrol, response to other calls for service, etc. Reference to the "level" of service may specify the number of hours of patrol coverage that will be provided each day or week. Additional determinations might include number of personnel to be assigned; stipulations as to back-up service when duty officers are called away from the city; and periodic reports the provider would present to document service actually rendered.

3. Liability. The contract should specify which party will assume responsibility of defending the provider agency in a suit. Since the recipient will have little control of the actions of patrolmen, an understanding should be sought to hold the recipient jurisdiction harmless for any type of liability.

4. The amount and manner of payment. The contracts should specify the amount the recipient jurisdiction will be required to pay and the time and manner in which payments are to be made. The amount should be based on a mutually agreeable (and understandable) formula or procedure.

5. Other fiscal procedures. The contract should require the maintenance of records and issuance of a financial report. Provisions should also be made for periodic review and assessment of rates for services.

6. Administration. There should be specific reference to persons or officials who represent the parties to the contract, so that all notices, amendments, and other communications will be received by those persons or officials.

7. Law enforcement boards. If the merger incorporates a standing law enforcement board, the contract should specify the composition of the board, as well as its role, responsibility, and relationship with the administrator of the provider agency.

8. Real property. The contract should detail the types of real property (e.g., equipment, vehicles, etc.) and the manner in which it will be transferred to the provider agency.

9. Duration, termination, and amendments. Provisions should specify the duration of the contract, which may be for a set period or may be indefinite. Such procedures should also detail procedures for cancellation and renewal. The circumstances

under which either party may withdraw from the contract for cause should also be specified. Finally, procedures should be delineated to permit modification or amendment to the contract.

10. Other provisions. Depending upon the nature and terms of the merger, other provisions such as the recipient jurisdiction to pay specific additional costs for services not spelled out in the contract. This may include special events, traffic or crowd control, school crossing guard service, etc.

Generally, contracts need not be overly complex, but they should stipulate those basic provisions which the parties intend to let govern their relationship. Nothing should be left to chance. All matters verbally agreed to should be reduced to provisions in the contract. Only through a written contract can safeguards be provided against future misunderstandings and disputes over interpretation.

Evaluation

This is still a new area of examining consolidated law enforcement. Until fairly recently, evaluation was likened by many to a program "audit," where an "outsider" studied an agency to identify its mistakes and flaws. Fortunately, both evaluators and program managers have begun to understand that such assessments can be a

positive tool for improvement.¹⁰¹ (Only four of the Montana counties with some type of consolidated system have undergone a formal evaluation since the consolidation occurred.)

Although the science of evaluating consolidated law enforcement systems may be limited, certain indicators exist which may be used to obtain some idea of provider agency activities and accomplishments. These areas relate to:

- An agency's effect on crime-related activity, or its "impact."
- An agency's service capability and operations, or its "efficiency."
- An agency's reception within the area it services, or its "acceptance."

Guidelines For Partial Consolidations

The mail questionnaire responses revealed that the consolidation efforts of Montana have been centered on partial consolidations. However, many of the guidelines discussed above are more closely related to total consolidations. This does not mean that the future consolidations of law enforcement agencies should continue to occur with only a modicum of formality. Granted, an extensive feasibility study to consolidate several law enforcement functions is neither

sensible nor economically productive, but many of the guidelines could eliminate procedural difficulties and perhaps lead to more extensive mergers of existing law enforcement agencies.

Summary

In Chapter I of this paper there were seven questions which centered on the uncertainties of consolidation. Those questions, although general in nature, are still the focus of this paper, but hopefully the information presented will help answer some or all of them. A small police agency has been defined as one having 10 or fewer men, however, for general purposes of study and more realistic assumptions, that figure has been increased to 25. There are only a few agencies in Montana with a greater number of law enforcement personnel; to not consolidate some or all of the functions of small agencies is not only economically wasteful, but may border on being irresponsible. The questions asked in the first chapter not only have answers to uncertainties but also pose a challenge to local government officials and law enforcement administrators in terms of saying why not consider consolidation?

Consolidation, as has been illustrated in this paper, can take many forms and be as complex or as simple as a community wants it to be. It can involve some or all law enforcement functions and it can retain, modify, or dissolve existing police agencies and their

related political support. A community can determine if it is workable by doing an informal or formal feasibility study which can be tailored to each community. A study commission, as pointed out earlier, should be a fact-finding body not a legislative force whose findings cast a community and its law enforcement agencies into an irreversible course of action.

The course should be decided by the community, not the commission. The question of control after a consolidation occurs can only be answered by the individual agencies involved. The key factor is the ability to create a contract which is specific enough to cover the details, yet is flexible enough to allow change if and when it is needed. Dissatisfaction with services after a consolidation has occurred can and does happen. If the contract provides flexibility, as well as enforceability, perhaps the dissatisfaction can be resolved, if not, withdrawal is an option that should be written into any agreement. (Nearly all the agencies who indicated they had some type of consolidated system responded that withdrawal is a stated option.)

The question of costs, as noted in the mail questionnaire as well as much of the literature, is a major concern when considering consolidation. Merging law enforcement services as revealed in the results of the mail questionnaire (21 of 24 agencies noted costs have increased) is likely to cost a community more in actual dollars. However, the benefits mentioned by several of the consolidated agencies should be

considered. A unified communications center, a single detention facility, training that is standardized and upgraded, and maybe even more importantly, personnel who consider law enforcement a career, are benefits which are difficult to measure in a fiscal sense. Finally, the results of other consolidations is important to establish credibility and instill confidence that mergers can work; however, they are not necessarily an indicator of success or failure. The reason is that each unification is and should be unique to the community and its characteristics. The amount of effort that each community, its governmental leaders, and the law enforcement agency(s) put into the consolidation in terms of preparation and ongoing cooperation is more important to the final outcome than what has been done elsewhere.

The initiation or consideration of initiating a merger of law enforcement may in terms of success be more dependent upon philosophical beliefs than the preparatory guidelines discussed in this chapter. Consolidation entails altering two ideals which are synonymous with American democracy. One is our very basic suspicion of "change." We live in a society where incrementalism is the by-word of our existence. The second ideal that is challenged is our national paranoia of centralizing power; a perceived removal of a check in the check and balance scheme of things. Both of these ideals, incrementalism and checks and balances, should be addressed by the proponents of a merger. If the level of consolidation appears to be a public concern

because it is too radical a departure from what a community presently has, perhaps the degree of consolidation should be reexamined. Emphasis, however, should be placed at least on consolidation of the support services of communications, training, and detention facilities.

Centralization of facilities and personnel seems in some cases to bring about fears of a police state. These fears should be assuaged or reduced by emphasizing the ability to control the provider agency through legally binding contracts and the force of the electoral process. The philosophical beliefs can be turned into advantages in the political game instead of handicaps which may hinder efforts to improve law enforcement service.

Future Considerations

As public concern over police services increases in terms of both the "crime problem" and the increasing costs of a public service delivery system, there will be greater receptiveness to areawide solutions to the organization and financing of police services. The three approaches discussed in the past three chapters - functionalism, contractual services, and the establishment of a new agency - provide enough adaptability to serve Montana or any other state. The guidelines presented in this chapter can help improve any level of consolidation and the experiences of cities and counties with similar populations

and crime activity can be used not only as an example of success, but as an educational tool to improve mergers of the future.

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²G. Stephen Lloyd and David L. Norrgard, "Police Service Unification," Local Government Police Management (1977):50.

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²⁴Ibid, p. 374.

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²⁶Nelson Wikstrom, "A Reassessment: Metropolitan Governmental Consolidation," Growth and Change 9 (January 1978):4.

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⁶⁶Robert W. Landon, "The Case For and Against Consolidation of Services," International Association of Police Chiefs 46 (July 1979):24-25.

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APPENDIX

March 26, 1982

Dear Sir(s):

My name is Mike Wingard and I am attempting to complete the requirements for a master's degree in public administration from Montana State University. I am presently writing a paper on consolidations, mergers, and cooperative agreements between law enforcement agencies in the United States, specifically in Montana. Part of the research involves identifying what types of cooperative agreements have been used, and documenting successful agreements which may benefit other law enforcement agencies contemplating some type of merger.

The following brief questionnaire will hopefully:

- Confirm where cooperative agreements have actually occurred.
- Identify the agencies/jurisdictions participating in the agreement.
- Define the different types of merged systems that exist (i.e., total consolidation, informal cooperative agreements, partial consolidations, etc.).

Please assist me in identifying what has happened in Montana by completing and returning the questionnaire by April 19, 1982. A self-addressed, stamped envelope has been enclosed for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Mike Wingard

Enclosures

A BRIEF QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY MERGERS

The following questionnaire seeks information concerning mergers of law enforcement agencies. The resulting information will aid in the development of a reference manual for use by Montana localities which may consider merging as an alternative means of delivering law enforcement services.

For purposes of this inquiry, the terms "merger," "consolidation," and "cooperative agreement" are interchangeable to define the following:

The abolishment of an existing full or part-time law enforcement agency and the assumption of the responsibilities of that agency by another organization (i.e., sheriffs department, police department, etc.); or, the formal assumption or performance of some of the responsibilities of a law enforcement agency (i.e., dispatching, major investigations, traffic control) by another organization which may not necessarily involve the abolishment of the former agency.

Person and Title Completing Questionnaire

County

1. Have any law enforcement agencies in your county been involved in any cooperative agreements or consolidations?

_____ No
 (If you check "No," do not answer any further questions.
 Simply return the questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed,
 stamped envelope.)

_____ Yes

_____ Do Not Know
 (If you do not know the answer to this or any subsequent ques-
 tion, please consult with someone who is knowledgeable on the
 subject.)

2. If "Yes," does

_____ the sheriff of the county provide law enforcement service?

_____ someone other than the sheriff provide law enforcement service?
 (If this one is marked, please indicate their title.)

3. Can the system be defined as a total law enforcement consolidation (i.e., all law enforcement services are provided) or a partial consolidation (i.e., only some law enforcement services provided)?

_____ Total Consolidation

_____ Partial Consolidation

4. If your agency is involved in a partial cooperative agreement or consolidation, which of the following law enforcement functions previously performed by individual agencies are now performed on a consolidated basis?

_____ Investigative Services

_____ Communications/Dispatch

_____ Patrol

_____ Traffic Control

_____ Parking Enforcement

_____ Other (specify) _____

_____ Records/Identification

_____ Purchasing

_____ Custodial Services (detention
 facilities)

5. When was the cooperative agreement or consolidation established?

_____ Year

6. What factor or condition led most to the consideration of consolidation as a possible means of providing law enforcement services?

_____ Inadequacies of existing law enforcement services

_____ Overlapping or duplicative law enforcement agencies

_____ Local government financial problems

_____ Other (specify) _____

7. Was the decision to provide consolidated enforcement services preceded by a formal feasibility study?

_____ Yes

_____ No

8. Are formal contracts used to specify the types, level of cost of law enforcement services received by each participating jurisdiction?

_____ Yes

_____ No

9. Did all the jurisdictions participating in the consolidated system once have their own full-time or part-time law enforcement agency?

_____ Yes

_____ No

10. Does the merged system permit a participating jurisdiction to pull out of the joint services arrangement?

_____ Yes

_____ No

11. Have any jurisdictions exercised such a termination option?

_____ Yes

_____ No

12. What is the total full-time and part-time sworn manpower complement of your agency?

_____ Full-time

_____ Part-time

13. Has the cost of law enforcement service changed since consolidation?

_____ Costs have increased

_____ Costs have decreased

_____ Costs have remained about the same

14. Since the establishment of the consolidated unit, has a formal evaluation report been prepared?

_____ Yes

_____ No

15. In your opinion, what are the major advantages of providing law enforcement services on a consolidated basis? (Specify)

16. In your opinion, what are the major disadvantages of providing law enforcement service on a consolidated basis? (Specify)

17. Other comments:

Thank you for your help.