

The Pueblo Chieftain

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Critical incident team to probe shooting

Multi-agency team was formed in 2005 to investigate serious incidents involving law enforcement.

By **PATRICK MALONE**
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Wednesday's fatal shooting of a rape suspect by Pueblo police was the first officer-involved fatal shooting since the adoption of a multi-agency approach to investigate such incidents.

In September 2005, the 10th Judicial District Critical Incident Team was formed to bring independent eyes to investigate serious incidents involving police. The team's aim is to objectively review those investigations and bolster public confidence that members of law enforcement are not covering up wrongdoing on the part of their peers.

Every law enforcement agency in Pueblo County belongs to the team, and when a particular department is the subject of a probe, the investigation is headed by another agency.

At the conclusion of an investigation the district attorney rules on whether a crime was committed and whether anyone will face criminal charges. The district attorney also issues a public report containing his conclusions.

To date, the critical incident team has investigated four incidents. Only one has resulted in charges against an officer, and none have involved shootings. Pueblo Police Chief Jim Billings and District Attorney Bill Thiebaut said Wednesday that the Pueblo County Sheriff's Department has been designated the lead investigating agency for the critical incident team to probe the deadly shooting.

FATAL SHOOTINGS

The following is a list of fatal shootings involving the Pueblo Police Department during the past 20 years. Each was ruled justified by the district attorney's office:

2004

Officer Randy Wills halted a car driven by Daniel Pino after Pino allegedly menaced occupants of another car. Wills shot Pino when Pino allegedly turned toward Wills with a handgun clutched in both hands. Pino died. Robbery suspect Michael Martin fired at police during a traffic stop. Officers Glen Fillmore and Chad Jeffries returned fire. A shot by Fillmore struck Martin. Martin died.

2003

Fugitive Frank Gonzales broke into the home of two senior citizens and ignored police commands to drop his gun. Officer Chris D'Amour shot Gonzales. Gonzales died.

1998

During a traffic stop, robbery suspect Frankie Rodriguez shot officer Tom Rummel and tried to escape in his police cruiser. Rummel was wounded but returned fire. Rodriguez died. During a no-knock raid at Steven Taylor's residence, Taylor pointed a shotgun at officer Mark Bravo. Bravo fired his shotgun. Taylor died. He was the son of a retired Pueblo police officer.

1997

After a domestic disturbance when neighbors reported Jerold Perry was holding a gun, he was contacted in a vehicle by officer Richard Hardy. Perry turned quickly toward Hardy with something in his hand, and Hardy shot him. The object in Perry's hand later was determined to be a key ring. Perry died.

1995

Suicidal Andrew Youhouse started to raise a pistol in officers' direction. Officers Anthony Massaro and Ronald McMullen fired. Massaro's shot hit Youhouse. Youhouse died.

1993

Domestic violence suspect Randall Cone pointed a gun at police. Officers Kim Wittrup and William Washburn fired. A shotgun pellet fired by Wittrup hit Cone. Cone died.

1989

State hospital escapee and rape suspect Jerry Santifer confronted officers with knives, then charged them with a pair of scissors. Officer Richard Van Zandt struck him with a single shot. Santifer died.