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Live Oak

# Missing in Live Oak: deputies

By MARK BERGSTROM

Sentinel Staff Writer

LIVE OAK — Condominiums must grow at night.

Every morning, new neighborhoods seem to have sprung to life on rapidly disappearing fields here.

Every night dozens of new people return home from work and school to this city that's not a city.

Often someone has been there ahead of them.

A broken door. A missing VCR. A crook and a victim.

What's missing from this picture?

None of the new people in Live Oak is a sheriff's deputy. Thirty percent of the sheriff's calls are now in

**'Burglars aren't afraid, they've got the odds on their side.'**

— Sgt. Denny Clare

Live Oak, the busiest of the six patrol "beats."

Yet, just as 10 years ago, only one deputy is assigned to the area.

The Live Oak beat stretches from the Small Craft Harbor to 41st Avenue, from the bay to Highway 1.

More than 27,000 people live in Live Oak, roughly the same number as live in the city of Watsonville, where four officers are on duty at any one time.

Just next door in Capitola, three officers a shift serve a population of 10,000. In Santa Cruz, a minimum of five officers patrol a city of 43,000, and Scotts Valley has a minimum of two officers for a city of 7,500.

Burglary is the major crime in Live Oak. "It's a big residential area and most people go away to work. The burglaries occur during the daytime," says Sgt. Denny Clare.

"Burglars aren't afraid, they've

got the odds on their side," he adds. Frequently people in Live Oak wait hours for the deputy to come take a burglary report.

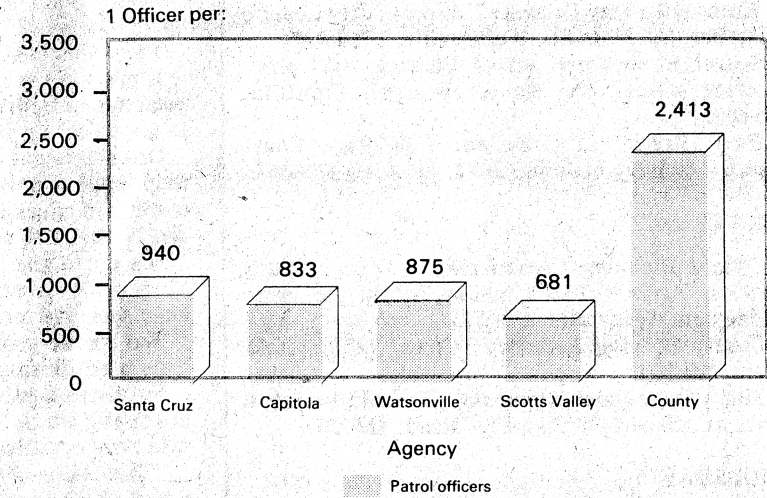
"Yesterday a woman whose car had been broken into called several times. It took me hours to get there," says Deputy Mike Scofield, who works the swing-shift beat in Live Oak.

"The most frequent complaint I hear is 'What took you so long?' They're frustrated, and I can understand their frustration."

Sometimes Scofield never gets there at all. Victims instead are sent form letters to fill out and mail back in to the sheriff's office.

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## People served by one officer



Alfred F. Noren, Sheriff-Coroner

Source: Sheriff's Office