

TIME WAS 1998: Cops start community policing...Thieves target snowmachines...Eagle River man shoots wife, kills self

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20 years ago this week in the Star...

Police get community beat

A new trend in policing was being touted as a way to help stem crime in Anchorage, according to a front-page story in the Jan. 8, 1998 edition of the Alaska Star.

"The police in Eagle River are switching roles — they are asking for the community's help," read the story by Star managing editor Stacy Simonet. "Making a move to a community-policing model, officers are asking for local groups and organizations to get in touch with them."

Police chief Ron McGee said the department was changing its way of doing business from reacting to crime to being more proactive, saying officers were spending too much time chasing calls.

"They are so busy (responding) that is all they are getting done," McGee told the paper.

McGee said that as part of the new crimefighting effort, Chugiak-Eagle River would be assigned two sergeants, three daytime patrol officers, four night patrols, one detective, one detective for the schools and one patrol officer for follow-up.

Snowmachine thieves hit area

A flurry of snowmachine thefts hit the Eagle River area in the winter of 1997-98, with one taken from a resident on Davis Street and two others disappearing from a trailer on Sanctuary Drive. Another resident nearby also said his machine appeared to have been prepped for the taking after a cable locking his machines to a trailer was cut. Police advised residents to store the machines indoors or to park them out of sight and chained up.

Man shoots wife, kills self

An Eagle River man seriously injured his wife and killed himself in an incident reported in the Jan. 15, 1998 Star Police Briefs. According to the report, 48-year-old Dean Morris was apparently upset because his wife was leaving him. The woman was able to call 911 after the shooting, according to a police press release, but was unable to communicate with dispatchers. The call was traced to the family's home, and personnel from Anchorage Fire Department Station 11 responded.

The story said the couple's 16-year-old daughter was inside the home at the time but did not witness the shootings.