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FOXHe's hurting,  
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**JIMMY  
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AND ENJOY THECandidate 'Wears No  
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and other newspapers  
have reported that  
Huey Long is a  
candidate for  
governor.

A-12

OUR TIMES

HUEY LONG'S  
failed first run  
for governor

# The Times-Picayune

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2014

DAILY &amp; BREAKING NEWS AT



ALABAMA 20

| 13 LSU



## FIT TO BE TIDE

LSU suffers a heartbreaking defeat  
to SEC rival Alabama in overtime



BRETT DUKE / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**D**eAndrew White celebrates after scoring in overtime to give the No. 5 Crimson Tide the lead at Tiger Stadium. LSU was unable to score on its possession, throwing four straight incomplete passes. The Tigers had pulled ahead by a field goal with less than a minute left in regulation, but Alabama evened the score with just seconds on the clock.

COMPLETE GAME COVERAGE IN **SPORTS**

## Black renters face obstacles in wealthy areas

Group finds agents  
often discriminate

By Richard A. Webster  
Staff writer

African-American families are often steered away from the opportunity to rent in more affluent neighborhoods in New Orleans, preventing them from living in communities with lower crime rates and better educational systems, according to a

report released Thursday by the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center.

The nonprofit organization sent two undercover "mystery shoppers," one black and one white, with matching incomes, careers and rental histories to Lakeview, East Carrollton and Uptown near Audubon Park.

They attempted to view or apply for 50 apartments, and 44 percent of the time the black tester was denied the opportunity to rent or was "treated unfairly," including failing to show for

See **HOUSING**, A-6

Jarvis DeBerry says report shows hurdles  
black New Orleanians face, **REFLECTIONS**

## 25 YEARS AGO, A CURTAIN OPENED



TED JACKSON / STAFF ARCHIVE

Berlin resident Walter Ulwer takes a piece of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, before border guards confiscated his tools. On Nov. 9 of that year, the Cold War's most tangible symbol was opened, allowing East Berliners to cross and giving Westerners a view of life behind the Iron Curtain.

Staff photographer Ted Jackson was there, **A-14**

## CHANGE OF COMMAND

NOPD's Michael Harrison takes charge  
of a force that's low on manpower and  
morale amid a spike in major crimes

By Naomi Martin  
Staff writer

Police Superintendent Michael Harrison stood before a room of his top commanders, a sea of white shirts on a late October morning eight days into the job, to persuade them to help him recruit new officers. An incentive program would pay cops \$1,000 for each new employee they bring on board.

"Informants don't count," he said.

The officers laughed, and some leaned back in their seats, smiling. It was a light moment of humor over one of the heaviest problems facing the New Orleans Police Department — a problem Harrison knows intimately.

The New Orleans Police Department has shrunk by a third since 2010 and is losing roughly one cop every three days. Harrison

became chief after two years commanding eastern New Orleans, where he dealt firsthand with the difficulties of trying to fight crime in one of America's most violent cities as fewer and fewer officers show up to roll calls.

Born in New Orleans in 1969, Harrison speaks in a low drawl and has a salt-and-pepper buzz cut. In addition to being the city's top cop, he's military veteran, a minister and a professor. Though he has a tough job, he has the soft face and warm chuckle of a father.

And while his joke to the commanders might have been a brief moment of levity, members of police associations, who were often critical of the last chief, say it reflects the more upbeat environment officers have experienced since Harrison took over as interim chief in August. The "interim" was dropped on Oct. 14.

See **HARRISON**, A-11



New Orleans police Superintendent Michael Harrison plans to continue targeting the city's gangs while complying with a court-ordered overhaul. But his initiatives hinge on the department having enough people. "That's a delicate balance that we have to work through going forward," he said.

DAVID GRUNFELD /  
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

WEATHER

See B-6



DRY FRONT

HIGH 68° LOW 48°

BUSINESS

A-16

CLASSIFIED

G-4

DEATHS

B-4

LIVING

D

LOUISIANA

A-3

NATIONAL

A-21

PUZZLES

D-10

REFLECTIONS

E

SPORTS

C

TELEVISION

D-11

TRAVEL

D-6

WASHINGTON

A-4

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CONTINUED

# With fewer cops on the street, criminals can be emboldened



BRETT DUKE / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

New Orleans Police Superintendent Michael Harrison, left, arrives at the scene Oct. 22 after a man was found dead in a home on Pontchartrain Boulevard. The NOPD is struggling to perform its most basic duty: responding to emergency calls in a timely manner.

## HARRISON, from A-1

Still, the NOPD's staffing shortage hangs like a dark cloud over efforts at recruiting, improving morale and retaining officers. It is clearly his toughest challenge, especially amid spikes in most major crimes.

In a recent interview, Harrison laid out his plans to continue targeting the city's gangs and reducing the crime and murder rate. He also pledged to improve community-police relations and comply with a federal court-ordered overhaul.

All those initiatives, however, hinge on the department having enough people to do the specialty work and still perform its most basic duty: responding to emergency calls in a timely manner.

"That's a delicate balance that we have to work through going forward," Harrison said.

## New leadership

Since taking over after Ronal Serpas' abrupt retirement, Harrison has met with neighborhood and church groups — he's a minister at City of Love Church — and made an effort to listen to their complaints, as well as those of cops.

Through forging new relationships and repairing broken ones with various communities, he said, he plans to turn around the image of the department, which has often been seen as dysfunctional, unprofessional and corrupt.

Members of the rank and file largely welcomed the change in leadership from Serpas, 54, who was seen as "autocratic," said Donovan Livaccari, spokesman for the local Fraternal Order of Police lodge.

Serpas, who had served as police chief in Nashville and over Washington State Patrol, had a vision for the NOPD that "didn't necessarily include a whole lot of input from anybody besides Serpas," he said.

By contrast, Harrison, 45, has never led a department. A former National Guard sergeant, Harrison joined the NOPD in 1991 and rose steadily through the ranks, investigating drug traffickers and later supervising officers in the French Quarter. After that, he oversaw internal investigations.

Since taking office, Harrison has reshuffled the command staff. He swapped the No. 2 deputy chief, Darryl Albert, who had been at headquarters overseeing investigations for years, for Robert Bardy, who commanded the 6th District covering Central City, a neighborhood plagued by violence and drug dealers.

While it's too early to determine how his changes in leadership will play out, Livaccari said, Harrison has widened the inner circle around the superintendent.

"I think he's a lot more sensitive to what's going on in the department with respect to the cops themselves," said Capt. Michael Glasser, the president of the Police Association of New Orleans. "I don't expect he'll be

## MOST MAJOR CRIMES UP IN NEW ORLEANS

Crime	First half 2013	First half 2014	Change
Armed robbery	350	479	37%
Simple robbery	173	234	35%
Assault	755	987	31%
Rape	78	98	25%
Auto theft	994	1,209	22%
Theft	4,384	5,056	15%
Burglary	1,580	1,636	4%
Murder	77	71	-8%

Source: New Orleans Police Department

able to solve the problems overnight, but then again, the problems weren't created overnight."

## Recruitment, retention

Harrison, too, urges patience, saying it could take years to grow the force. He emphasized that the department has already come a long way from 2010, when Mayor Mitch Landrieu took office and the city was broke. Landrieu froze hiring and instituted furloughs for all city employees that amounted to a 10 percent pay cut.

The department began hiring again last year, but because its application infrastructure had been dormant for three years, Harrison said, the screening process has been sluggish. Also, many applicants didn't meet the qualifications.

The administration's goal of hiring 150 new officers this year appears to be falling short. There are 55 recruits in the training academy now, but more than 103 cops have left the department so far this year. And it could get worse: Livaccari said he knows of 15 NOPD officers who have pending applications to join the State Police.

Meanwhile, the force has shrunk to about 1,090 — far from the 1,600 the mayor and Harrison say the city needs. Some who left for other law enforcement agencies said they did so because of low morale, poor equipment and the city's changes to their off-duty details that they say hurt their ability to supplement their salaries.

To shore up more officers for patrol, Harrison is proposing to hire 22 civilians to replace officers currently doing administrative work. The city's inspector general, Ed Quatrevaux, released a report in May urging the NOPD to move up to 264 additional officers to street patrols to meet the city's emergency needs, filling many of their jobs with civilians.

Harrison said he hopes to dissuade more officers from quitting by providing them with career development opportunities, new patrol cars, better equipment and, in some cases, recently renovated police stations. That improved morale among his officers, he said, when he became commander of the 7th District in eastern New Orleans, which had just opened a new police station.

He also is supporting the mayor's proposal for a 5 percent pay raise. He knows that officers complain that the 5 percent is not enough because they have

not received a pay raise since 2007. The Civil Service department recently found the NOPD lags about 20 percent behind the average city in the Southeast. Police unions have called for a 30 percent raise.

## Sinking morale

But Harrison has urged the officers to understand how far the city has come, and to find personal fulfillment in helping people, not just receiving their paychecks.

In a city where at least five police officers have been shot in the past two years and one killed by a hit-and-run driver, Livaccari said, it's demoralizing for cops to show up to work and see only one or two others on patrol with them. They know they won't have the same level of backup as in past years, when 15 people would be on patrol at a time in a district, he said.

Cops often start their shift with a backlog of 30 or 40 emergency calls, leaving citizens waiting hours for the police to show up. Officers spend their entire shift rushing from call to call, with no time to eat, and they are frustrated with not being able to provide the level of services that they want to provide, he said.

A recent anonymous survey of nearly half the department by federal court monitors found that a majority of officers feel they would not be satisfied with police services if they lived in their district. And more than half described police services in the city as either fair or poor.

Harrison said he was dismayed to read that and hoped to get the message to all officers to think while they're responding to calls: "How would I deliver services to me?"

He knows especially well the pressures afflicting street cops, having been commander over the 7th District in eastern New Orleans, where manpower issues are acute. As the city's largest police district — a 100-square-mile land mass — with pockets of relentless violence, the 7th has officers rushing from call to call and citizens suffering the longest wait times after calling 911.

## Spike in crimes

Not only has the reduction depleted morale and caused 911 response times to lengthen, Harrison said, but it has also emboldened criminals, who have taken advantage of the lack of police on the streets.

Armed robberies and

property crimes have jumped this year, Harrison said, calling the rise "a direct correlation to our shrinkage."

Harrison said he doesn't have enough police to maintain the level of visibility that prevents so-called crimes of opportunity. He could, he said, but he also has to juggle that pressure with the need to solve murders and build cases against gangs and groups who he says commit a disproportionate share of the city's violent crime.

"Getting our murder rate down is our highest priority," he said, adding that he also wants

See HARRISON, A-13

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# Murder rate is 'highest priority'

HARRISON, from A-11

to focus efforts on all shootings, whether the victim survived or not. "We're at a 30-year low in murder, but it's still too high."

The low staffing is also something Harrison has to reconcile with academic theories of policing. Harrison, who has a master's degree from Loyola and teaches criminal justice at the University of Phoenix, said he sees validity in the "broken-windows" theory that has been credited with driving crime down in New York City.

The theory goes that if authorities crack down on small offenses, it creates a general sense of order that eventually prevents more serious crimes from occurring. But, Harrison said, he doesn't have enough people to accomplish that.

"While I believe in it as an academic, practically we have to make sure that we're efficient and effective in the way we deploy our resources," he said. "Murder is our highest priority, and broken-windows theory doesn't always directly connect to murder. It's very indirect. It's a long process. So there are things we have to do now."

## Crime watch

One of Harrison's first celebrated moves internally was to allow district commanders more flexibility in deploying their officers, the police associations said.

Harrison also directed four of his top-ranking supervisors to improve the department's Comstat system after researching how other departments nationwide conduct their meetings. The Comstat model, based on computer statistics, focuses on weekly reported crimes and compares them to previous weeks and years.

He said the new system is more efficient than the old one; meetings last only about 90 minutes now, down from four hours.

Critics have said the Comstat meetings put pressure on cops and supervisors to make any arrest, even relatively minor ones, as opposed to focusing on the more serious offenses. But Harrison said he is pushing the department to concentrate on bigger-picture crime trends and how to combat them, and whether efforts are working, not individual arrest statistics.

Glasser, the PANO president, agreed that he has seen that change and commended Harrison for making it.

Harrison said he plans to crack down on the rising property crimes and robberies by directing his officers to be proactive in stopping and questioning suspicious-looking cars or people.

But he never wants high-crime neighborhoods to feel like the police are harassing them, as some groups have complained. Like his predecessor, Harrison preaches officers to communicate better with people who they stop and frisk.

"If our officers do a better job of explaining the reason for the stop and the reason why they're doing what they're doing, I think a lot of people will use that word harassment a little less," Harrison said.

## Community policing

The city's civilian Office of the Independent Police Monitor urged Harrison to focus on reforming the long-troubled department, which has a history of civil rights violations.

"Complying with the Constitution needs to be the biggest priority," said Ursula Price, a spokeswoman for the office.

Harrison said he wants to bolster community-policing efforts, such as more foot patrols and neighborhood meetings held by officers and supervisors, so that residents build trust and start to feel comfortable with the police. Eventually they will be more likely to share information about crime if there's a good relationship there, he said.

But all that takes time. Community policing "is not in the absence of traditional police work," he said. "It's in addition to police work."



PHOTOS BY BRETT DUKE / STAFF ARCHIVE  
NOPD Interim Superintendent Michael Harrison plays a little hoop at Stallings Playground in September. Through forging new relationships and repairing broken ones, Harrison said, he plans to turn around the image of the department as dysfunctional and unprofessional.



Michael Harrison talks with Susannah Burley during a 1st District anti-crime walk in New Orleans in September.

In juggling the heavy load of community policing, strategic gang and murder investigations, statistics analysis and emergency response amid short-staffing, Harrison did right to reach out to officers and let them know he's on their side, said one union leader.

"It's a lot to do," said Capt. Simon Hargrove, the president of the NOPD's Black Organization of Police. "Those are things we all want, but you can't get those things accomplished without the men and women getting behind you and doing the heavy lifting."

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