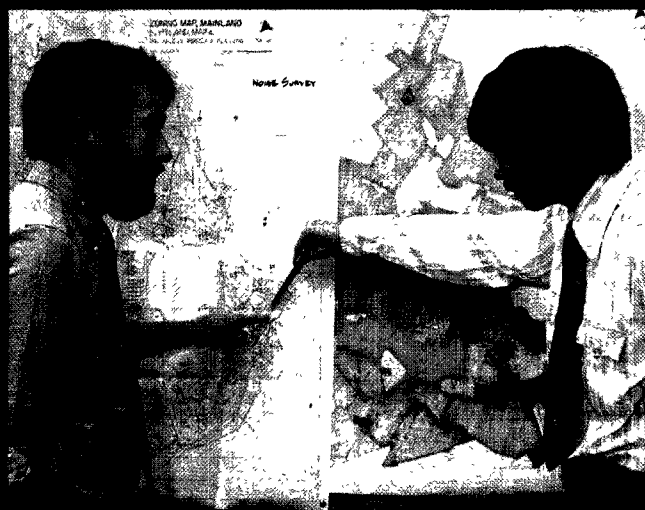


NOISE

A COMMUNITY PROBLEM: A COMMUNITY SOLUTION

Facts About the ECHO Program





Picture Credits

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Portland, Maine

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Portland, Maine

We would also like to thank Ecosometrics, Inc., and the community noise advisors for their photographs, as well as the *Kingsport Times-News* for letting us use its articles and questionnaire.



NOISE

A COMMUNITY PROBLEM: A COMMUNITY SOLUTION

Facts About the ECHO Program

*With ECHO's help, we were able to speed up
our noise program. All I furnished was the
manpower. ECHO did all the rest.*

—William D. Lamb
Chief of Police
Fort Dodge, Iowa

THE TROUBLE WITH NOISE

Noise is fast becoming one of the nation's largest environmental problems. As America's population grows, the effects of noise are felt everywhere—from major urban centers, to the suburbs, to small towns.

Aside from the annoyance it produces, noise can pose a health hazard: Some cardiovascular problems and high blood pressure may be related to excessive noise—not to mention what it can do to the human ear. Noise is a real threat to the quality of life, especially in urban areas, and the problem is not getting any better.

Late in 1978, for example, the National League of Cities asked Gallup to find out how city dwellers felt about their environment. The results of that poll showed the public to perceive noise as a more serious problem than either air pollution or drinking water contamination. Further, noise was ranked as the environmental problem that has worsened over the last five years.

The answer to the problem is not easy, however. The character and amount of noise varies from community to community. Where heavy industry may be the source of excessive noise in one community, vehicular noise may be the culprit in another. In most cases, then, noise is a local problem that requires local solutions. And finding those solutions demands community interest in the problem and the availability of local resources to tackle it.



ECHO CAN HELP

In 1976, the Environmental Protection Agency established a program called Each Community Helps Others (ECHO). Its purpose: to help communities with scarce resources solve their noise problems by working with expert advisors from other communities that have faced and met similar challenges. This assistance costs the communities receiving it nothing—but time, effort, and commitment to reduce noise.

The Role of the Environmental Protection Agency

Through the ECHO program, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) matches the skills of a local noise expert, called a community noise advisor (CNA), with the needs of the community requesting assistance, called the recipient community (RC). EPA gives special attention to pairing the right person with the right job; sometimes more than know-how is required. To make sure they can work effectively in the communities they are assigned to, EPA selects CNAs with an eye to similarities in geographic location, employment background, and even personality.

EPA pays the community noise advisors' out-of-pocket expenses, such as travel, per diem, and telephone calls. However, the CNAs are not paid for their time—they volunteer it. ECHO is a program of citizens helping each other because they want to and because they care.

EPA also gives technical assistance and tools as requested, sponsors or assists in workshops and conferences, and provides national publicity about the ECHO program. In some instances, it pays the travel and per diem expenses of RC staff members.

The Role of the Recipient Community

A candidate recipient community is one that has a noise problem, is in a position to do something about it, and has asked EPA for assistance from the ECHO program. On being selected as an ECHO member, the recipient community retains the responsibility for its own noise abatement activities, but it can call on the CNA and EPA for technical and management expertise, at no expense to itself.

The benefits of participating in ECHO are twofold: First, key staffers in the recipient community increase their skills and effectiveness in controlling noise. And second, they can later help other communities by volunteering as CNAs themselves.

The Role of the Community Noise Advisor

Each community noise advisor is currently operating an effective noise control effort in his or her own community and is a recognized expert in the field. The CNA brings to the recipient community the knowledge gained through years of experience in motor vehicle noise, land-use management and zoning regulations, developing and passing ordinances, construction site noise, assessing local attitudes about noise, promoting community involvement, testifying at public hearings, and training noise enforcement officers.

How this experience can best be applied is taken into account when EPA matches a CNA with a recipient community, but the final decision rests with the RC. Before beginning work, the CNA travels to the recipient community for a meeting with key staff members to discuss the type of technical assistance to be provided and to agree on a tentative schedule of activities.

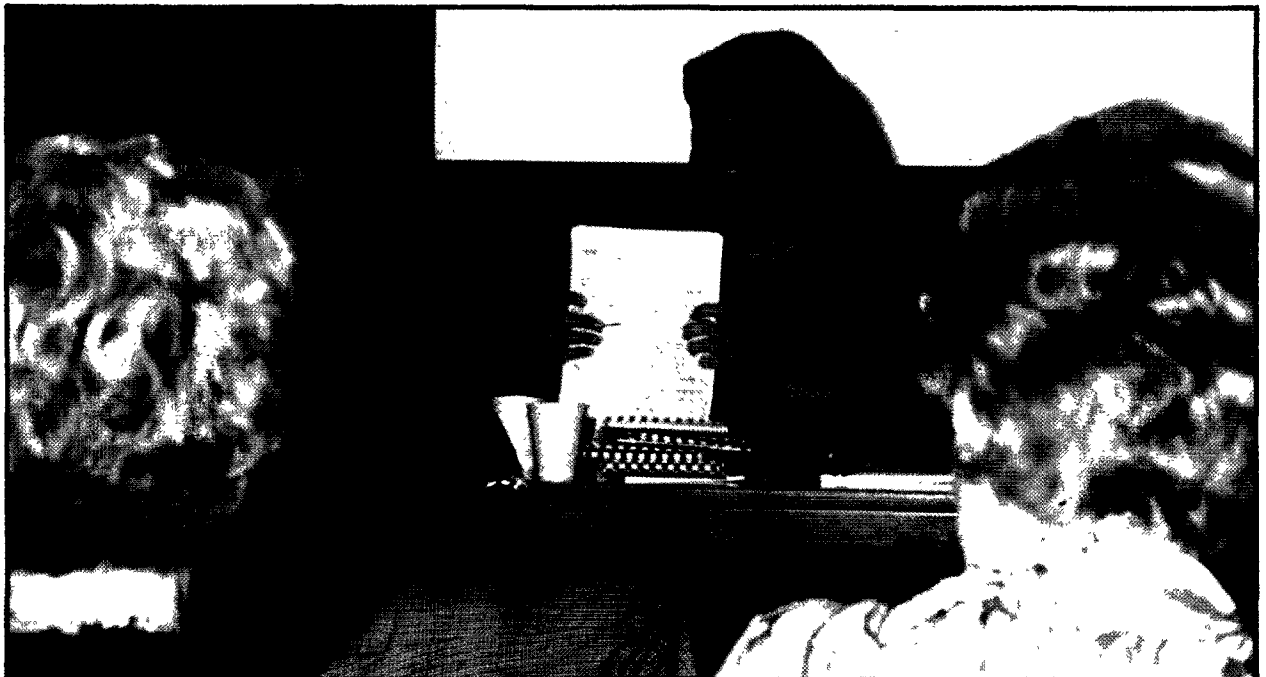
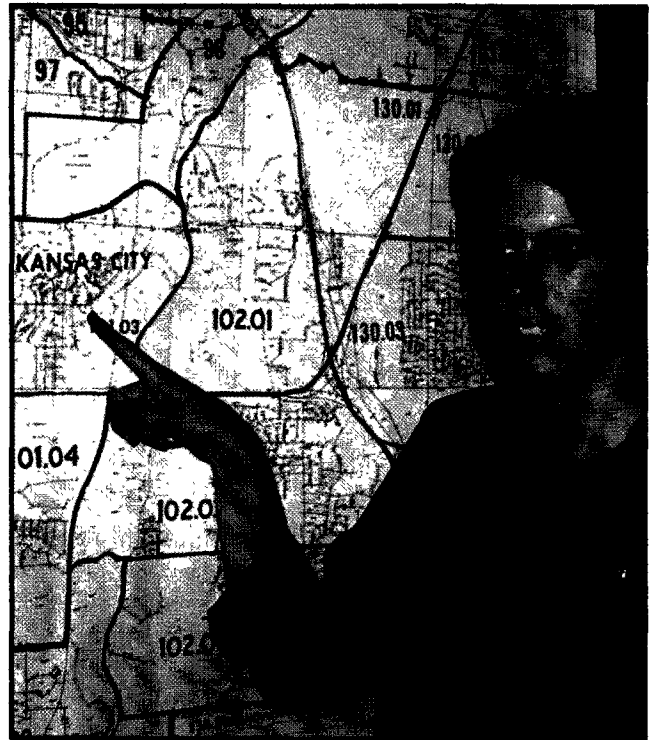
ECHO AT WORK

The following sections highlight some of the activities CNAs have carried out in ECHO recipient communities. Most CNAs now in the ECHO program can and do perform many or all of the services discussed below, although here they have been identified with one particular activity by way of illustration.

Attitudinal Noise Surveys

Asking people how they feel about noise serves two purposes: One, it helps identify the extent of a community's noise problem. Two, it encourages citizen involvement by letting people know their opinions can make a difference. In addition, some surveys train and use local citizens as interviewers, emphasizing further the notion that the public can do something about noise.

Such was the case in Kansas City, whose noise abatement program was in the early stages of development when CNA Cindy Clark (shown on the right) visited there. Ms. Clark, coordinator of the Quiet Community Program in Allentown, Pennsylvania, was assigned to Kansas City because of her previous role as director of Allentown's attitudinal noise survey. In Kansas City, Ms. Clark helped adapt the Allentown questionnaire to meet local needs. She also conducted the training session (pictured below) for the twenty-five Kansas City senior citizens who served as interviewers.

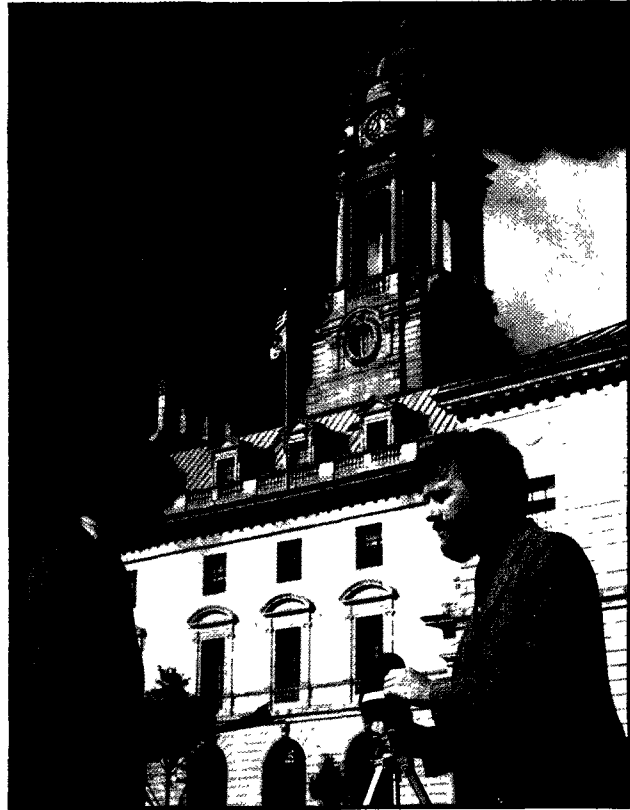


Noise Measurement Surveys

Actually measuring the amount of noise at various sites and from different sources is another way of assessing a noise problem. Noise measurement surveys can provide hard evidence about the need for new zoning and nuisance regulations or changing the ones currently in effect. They can also form the basis for enforceable noise control efforts by defining acceptable decibel levels in the community.

With a population of 65,000, Portland, Maine, is one of the largest cities in New England. Its major sources of noise are traffic, industry, and the international airport. Portland currently has a zoning ordinance that covers noise, but it is difficult to enforce because no decibel levels have been set. To remedy the situation and to prevent future problems arising from expected growth and development, Portland asked for ECHO's assistance with a noise measurement survey.

CNA Paul Willis, conservation director in Brookline, Massachusetts, was called in to work with the Portland planning staff. Mr. Willis arranged for measurement equipment, trained city personnel in its use, and selected 135 sites for measurements representing a variety of noise sources and levels. Here, Mr. Willis (standing to the right in the photograph) and a city staffer take a sound-level reading.

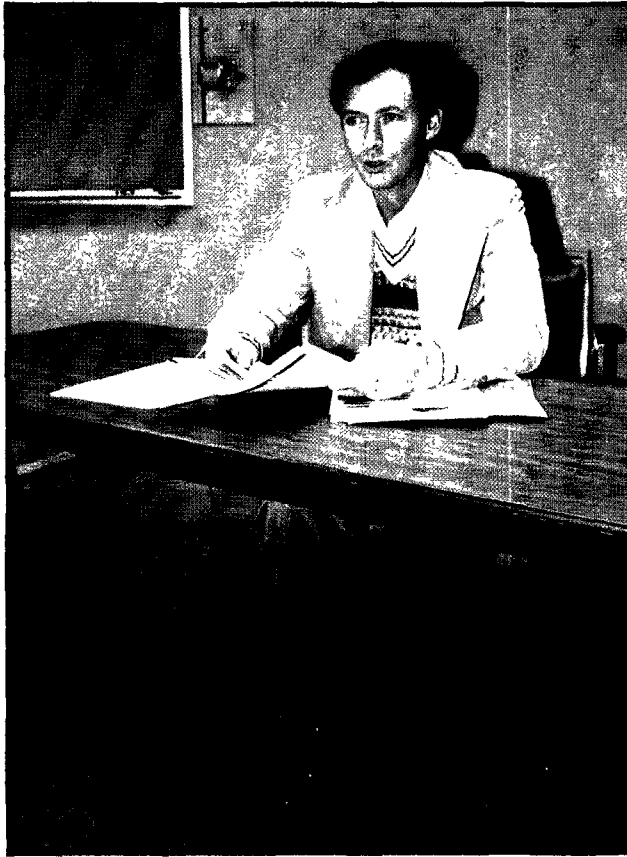


Training in Noise Measurement and Enforcement Techniques

In many cities, traffic noise is the primary problem. Too often, citizens fail to report vehicular noise because they feel the police can do little to apprehend the offenders. Unfortunately, that perception is right on the mark—unless police are equipped with enforceable noise regulations or ordinances, sound-level meters, and proper training in their use.

When Anchorage, Alaska, and Bellingham, Washington, needed someone to train their police officers in noise measurement and testing procedures, ECHO sent CNA Robert Laws, a sergeant with the Eugene, Oregon, Police Department. Shown at the left demonstrating the use of a sound-level meter, Sgt. Laws trained seven police officers in Anchorage and eleven in Bellingham. He also discussed at length techniques for enforcing vehicular noise regulations, particularly those pertaining to motorcycle and truck noise. As a fellow police officer with an impressive array of experience in local enforcement problems, Sgt. Laws commanded the respect of his students and afforded a perfect match for the technical assistance needs of these two cities.





Support at Public Hearings

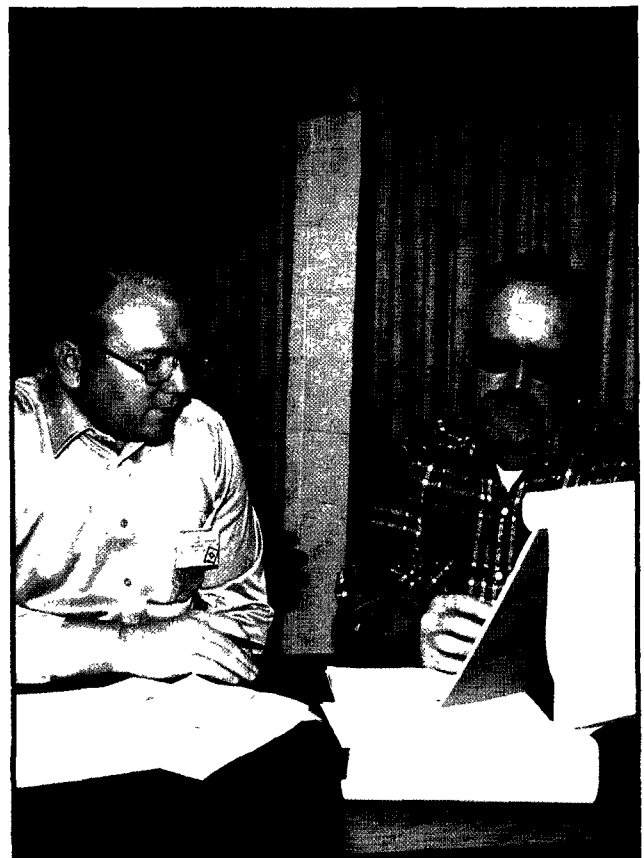
The public hearing process provides the mechanism for the formal consideration of local noise issues. It is the forum where all interested parties can make their views known. CNAs frequently serve as witnesses at such hearings, as in the case of Anchorage and Sioux Falls discussed later.

CNA Frank Habelka (on the left) helped develop evidence for public hearings held in Charlotte, North Carolina, during March 1978. Charlotte's noise problem had received much publicity and a good deal of citizen complaint. The resultant spotlight under which the hearings would take place underscored the need for solid advance preparation. Although Mr. Habelka, chief mechanical inspector and noise control officer from Daytona Beach, Florida, did not testify at this particular hearing himself, he made experts of those who did.

Design of Noise Ordinances

Noise ordinances offer an effective tool for local noise abatement activities. To be truly useful, however, they must clearly specify the types, sources, and levels of noise to be restricted under the law. If an ordinance is too general or vague, violations may be difficult to uphold and consequently the police may be reluctant or unable to enforce it.

Recognizing the need for a well-written noise ordinance, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, requested help from ECHO. CNA James Adams, environmental protection officer from Boulder, Colorado, was the answer. Mr. Adams, hard at work on the right in the photograph, designed a noise-level survey to identify the city's needs. Later, he helped draft the ordinance and testified before the board of commissioners. The result of Mr. Adams's technical assistance: Sioux Falls adopted the noise ordinance.



For example, CNA Mel Schneidermeyer, until recently deputy commissioner of environmental protection for the state of Connecticut, helped the Iowa Technical Advisory Committee on Noise develop a state noise ordinance. Based on his experience in Connecticut, Mr. Schneidermeyer gave a presentation in which he contributed valuable insights to the planning of state noise control programs and suggested a ten-point strategy for developing Iowa's ordinance. Mr. Schneidermeyer (shown here on the right) reached an even broader audience of state and local officials when he was invited to speak at the New Hampshire Noise Control Workshop in Concord.



Tuesday, August 21, 1979

Opinion

The problem of noise

A motorcycle roars through your neighborhood rattling you down as it blazes past. Cars flash down the street and squeal around a corner. Teen-agers loiter—the afternoon sun isn't at its maximum so pounding rock from cars parked in windows for minutes on end works are delectable.

These are examples of noise. In many communities, noise is a chronic problem.

The City of Kingsport is an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated area. They are trying to do something about it and your help is sought. The terms just how irritating noise pollution is a survey questionnaire was published Sunday in this newspaper and is reprinted here today. Take a few moments and fill it out and let the public of friends know how you feel.

As our region becomes more banded and families are closer together, we must take notice of what we're doing to the rights of our neighbors.

peace and quiet. That means a rising resentment and it guarantees that parents — their children — worst off.

Noise Ordinance Study

By Ed HANCOCK
Times-News Staff Writer

How many counties was there a noise ordinance in 1978?

How many counties in the state of Tennessee have noise ordinances?

How many counties in the state of Tennessee have noise ordinances that are enforceable?

How many counties in the state of Tennessee have noise ordinances that are enforceable and have a noise ordinance that is enforceable?

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Sunday, August 19, 1979

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KINGSPORT

TIMES-NEWS

- Automobiles
- Aircraft
- Chain saws
- Construction equipment
- Barving uses
- Gas leaks
- Industrial noise
- Household equipment appliances
- Trucks
- Stoves, h.t. radios
- Parties
- Fireworks
- Leaf blowers
- Motocross motorcycles
- Rock bands
- Sirens
- Sports cars
- Trucks
- Others (write in)

COMMENTS

NAME

ADDRESS

CNA Newton Vaughan, head of the Huntsville, Alabama, Noise Control Department, has been assisting the recipient community of Kingsport, Tennessee, for some time. Through his efforts, several articles on the local noise problem were published in the *Kingsport Times-News*. Following an interview with Mr. Vaughan, the paper not only printed an editorial, but also urged readers to fill out its own questionnaire as additional proof of the need for city officials to act on the noise problem.

ECHO SUCCEEDS

As a final look at how the ECHO program works, the following three case studies exemplify the success to be gained from one community helping another toward a quieter environment.

A Small City Noise Problem: Fort Dodge, Iowa

Noise is a problem that affects all communities—large and small. And Fort Dodge, a small city of about 33,000, is no exception. There, traffic is the main source of noise. Because CNA James Cornelia of the Sioux City, Iowa, Police Department had done considerable work with vehicular noise in his own community, ECHO matched him with nearby Fort Dodge. Sgt. Cornelia (in the two photographs at the right) helped Fort Dodge officials design an effective noise abatement program. A typical sequence of events in the design process is shown below:

March 14, 1979. Fort Dodge asks EPA for assistance under the ECHO program and becomes a recipient community.

April 4, 1979. Sgt. Cornelia makes his first visit to Fort Dodge and talks with the mayor, chief of police, commissioner of public safety, and seventeen police officers. In this three-hour meeting, the feasibility of a vehicular noise ordinance is discussed and a plan is developed.

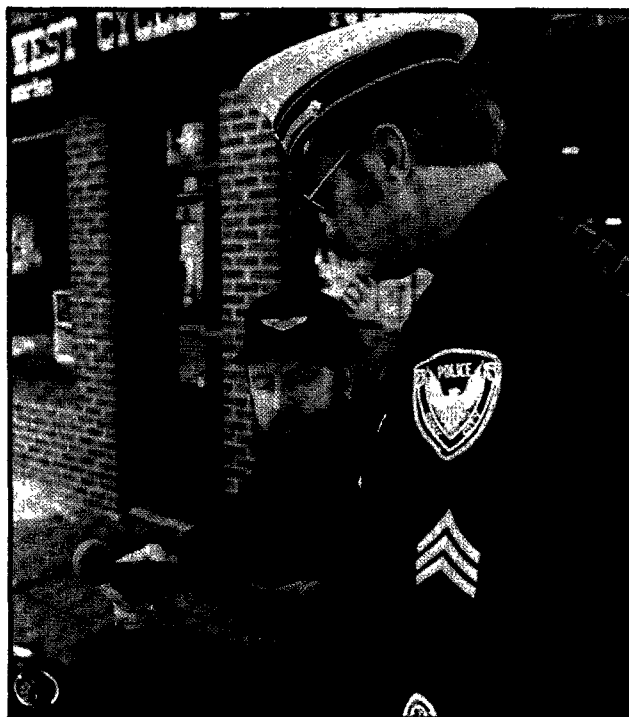
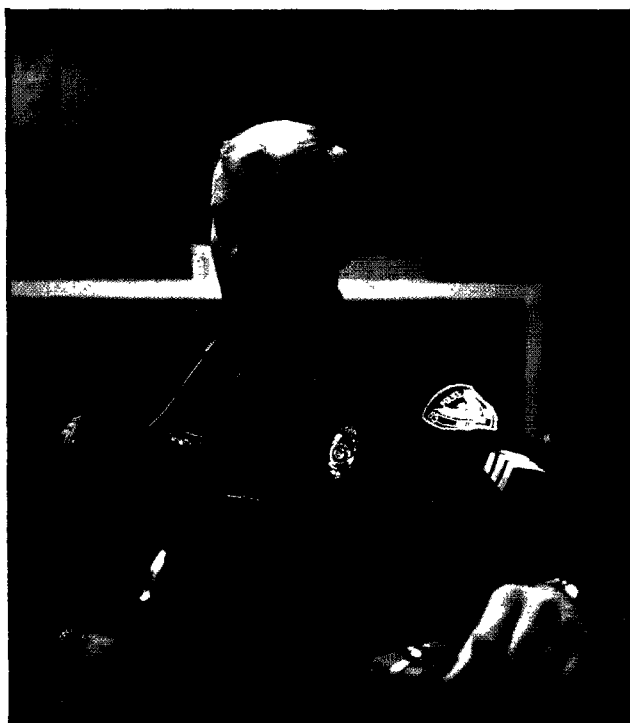
April 18, 1979. Sgt. Cornelia reviews the final draft of the proposed ordinance and makes recommendations.

April 25, 1979. With the ordinance about to be passed, Sgt. Cornelia gives a demonstration of the sound-level meters that will be used. This meeting is attended by the chief of police, commissioner of safety, thirteen command officers, and seventeen police officers. A field trip is conducted to simulate actual conditions.

July 9, 1979. The Fort Dodge City Council passes the ordinance.

July 12-13, 1979. Sgt. Cornelia gives an enforcement workshop for twelve police officers; attendance is open to the public. Officials from Mason City, Iowa, are also present.

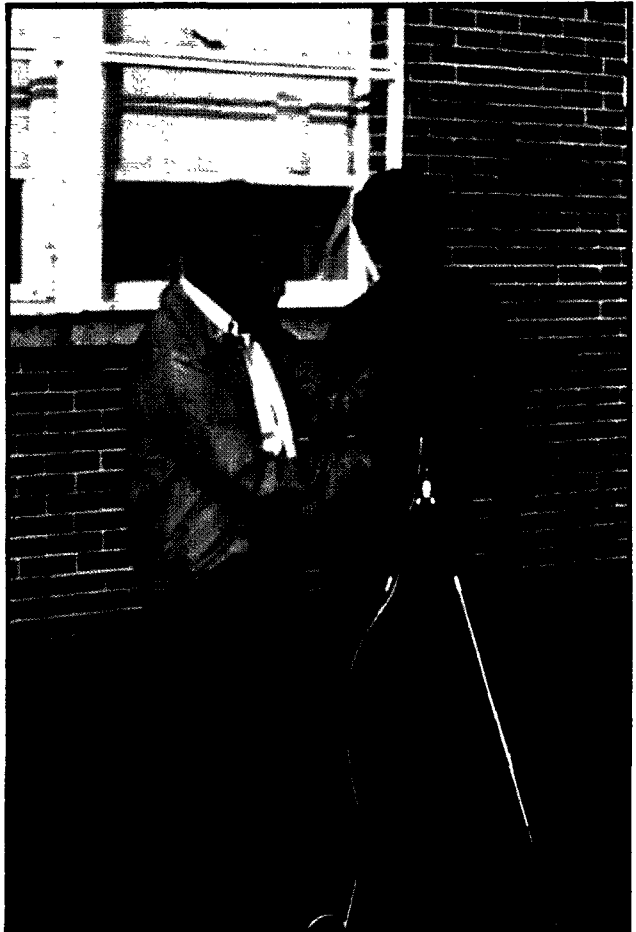
As a result of ECHO's assistance, Fort Dodge has a vehicular noise ordinance and police officers who are highly qualified to enforce it.



A Regional Approach to Noise: Norfolk, Virginia

Once CNA Donna Dickman began helping Norfolk control its noise problem, the idea caught on, creating interest in the neighboring communities that form what is called the Tidewater Area. As the need for an areawide approach became apparent, Dr. Dickman's previous regional experience as manager of the Washington, D.C., Council of Governments' environmental noise program proved especially valuable. Dr. Dickman provided technical assistance for a noise-monitoring survey; gave a training seminar on noise control to health department staffers, nurses, and CETA employees; conducted a land-use planning workshop for city officials from the Norfolk metropolitan area; and made a presentation on the noise problem to every health director in the state, among other activities.

After working with Dr. Dickman, Mr. Pete Nicholas, project manager of Norfolk's noise study, volunteered as a CNA himself and extended his efforts to other Tidewater communities. In the process, ECHO and the Tidewater Area gained a new CNA along with a coordinated approach to noise control. Here, Mr. Nicholas (standing to the right) works with two CETA employees.



An Environmental Milestone: Anchorage, Alaska

The Anchorage Department of Health and Environmental Protection has been working on a noise ordinance since 1975. When the ECHO program was introduced, Anchorage quickly requested technical assistance. CNA Paul Herman, acoustical project manager and noise control officer in Portland, Oregon, volunteered for the job. Initially, Dr. Herman (shown at the left) provided information on noise program management, briefed city officials on how to prepare legislative packages, and reviewed the draft ordinance. Later, he spoke to the Anchorage Assembly and discussed issues raised about the ordinance's effect on the trucking and construction industry. On December 19, 1978, the ordinance passed the Anchorage Assembly, prompting city officials to write EPA: "without ECHO's assistance, our noise control ordinance would never have been enacted."

INTERESTED IN ECHO?

ECHO assistance is available to cities, counties, and states with noise problems. If your community could benefit from the technical assistance of a CNA, or if you would like additional information about ECHO, contact the EPA noise chief in your region (shown below). If you prefer, you can use the reply card on the next page and EPA will forward it to the appropriate regional noise chief.

EPA Region	States	Address	EPA Noise Chief
I	Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut	John F. Kennedy Building Room 2113 Boston, Massachusetts 02203	Al Hicks (617) 223-5708
II	New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands	26 Federal Plaza Room 907G New York, New York 10007	Tom O'Hare (212) 264-2109
III	Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, District of Columbia	Curtis Building Room 225 6th and Walnut Streets Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106	Patrick Anderson (215) 597-9118
IV	North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, Georgia, Florida, Alabama	345 Courtland Street, N.E. Atlanta, Georgia 30308	Kent Williams (404) 881-4861
V	Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Minnesota	230 S. Dearborn Street Chicago, Illinois 60604	Horst Witschonke (312) 353-2202
VI	New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas	1202 Elm Street Dallas, Texas 75270	Mike Mendias (214) 767-2742
VII	Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri	1735 Baltimore Street Kansas City, Missouri 64108	Vincent Smith (816) 374-3307
VIII	Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado	1860 Lincoln Street Suite 900 Denver, Colorado 80295	Larry Svoboda (303) 337-2221
IX	California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii	215 Fremont Street San Francisco, California 94105	Richard Procunier (415) 556-4606
X	Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Alaska	1200 Sixth Avenue Room 11C Seattle, Washington 98101	Helen Baer (206) 442-1253

PEOPLE ARE TALKING!

Through ECHO, we are receiving the technical assistance we need to undertake a noise assessment survey. ECHO is giving us the confidence that we will be producing meaningful data and that they will be properly analyzed. The results will help us decide what shape our program should take.

Howard Bellinger
Executive Director, Chatham County-Savannah
Metropolitan Planning Commission
Savannah, Georgia

ECHO has enabled us to transfer knowledge to surrounding communities, standardize decibel levels, and unify enforcement standards for the entire region.

Jeff Everett
Acting Director, Bureau of Public Health
Allentown, Pennsylvania

We were looking for a mechanism to address the problem of traffic noise—motorcycle noise in particular. The more we learned about ECHO, the more we liked it. ECHO has been an invaluable tool in planning and eventually implementing our vehicular noise ordinance.

Roger Campbell
Assistant City Manager for Community Services
Kingsport, Tennessee

Because of ECHO, Portland is currently realizing the great extent and influence of noise in our community. ECHO is providing the assistance necessary to understand the problems and how they can be solved. As mayor, I am most pleased that Portland, Maine, is participating in this program.

Llewellyn Smith
Mayor
Portland, Maine

Thanks to ECHO, we were able to determine noise levels, arouse public awareness, and work with surrounding communities to combat an areawide problem.

Harry Wise
Director, Public Health Department
Norfolk, Virginia

Every time we have asked for support, we've gotten an immediate response from ECHO. I am so enthusiastic about ECHO. I encourage other cities to seek ECHO's help.

Susan Oswalt
Department of Health and Environmental Protection
Anchorage, Alaska

☐ Yes, I am interested in learning more about the ECHO program.

My community's noise problems are: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____

Agency: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: () _____



EPA-ONAC
ANR 471

**Please use an envelope:
the Post Office will not accept
this coupon as a Post Card.**

Send to:
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Noise Office - ANR 471
Washington, D.C. 20460