

# Public Safety Isn't a Game



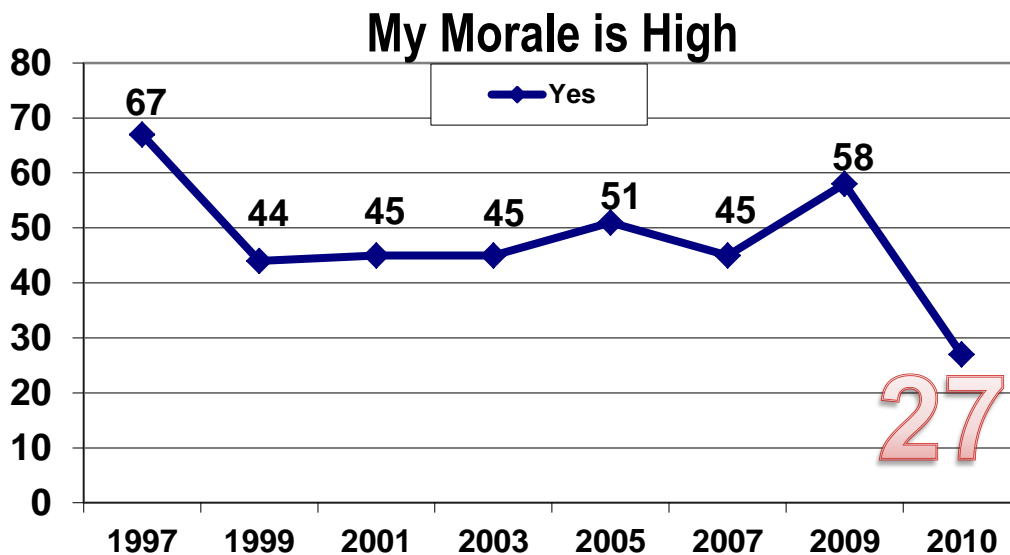
A dismal season. Dreadful and costly decisions. An organization in turmoil. Morale in the drain. A disconnect from those in the trenches. Workers and owners dissatisfied with the team's direction. Contracts under strain. Frustration in the office and on the field. In-fighting in the huddle. A team in need of new leadership. No, not Wade Phillips and the Dallas Cowboys but Jack Harris and the Phoenix Police Department.

PLEA recently finished a special survey sent to all PLEA members that supplemented the 2009 bi-ennial questionnaire for the membership. The nearly 25% response rate to this survey was very encouraging considering in a city of 1.5 million roughly only 150,000 (10%) participate in council elections. A specific question in this 2010 survey validated a longtime

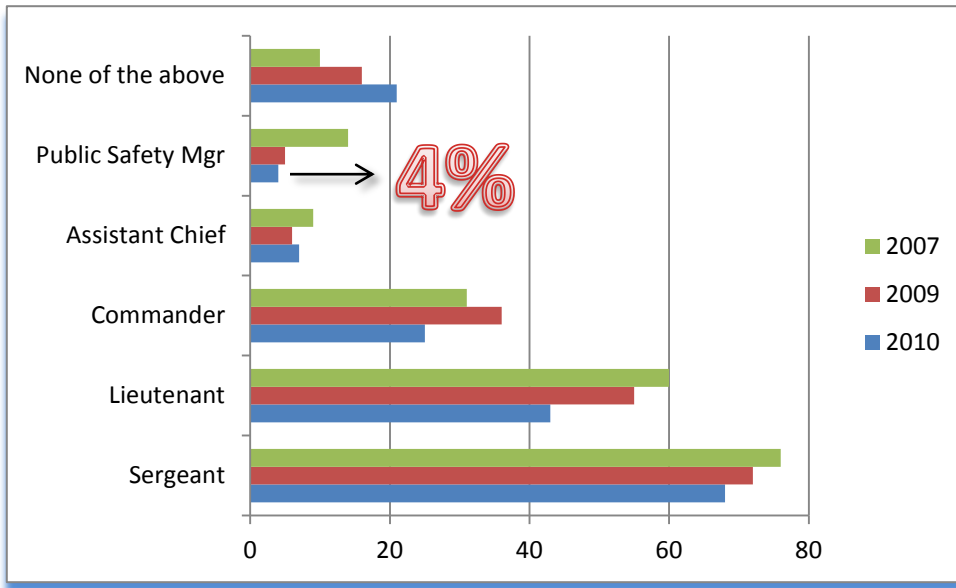


*"The Phoenix Police Department needs a new police chief"*

concern that PLEA members had been communicating to the Association. The response to "The Phoenix Police Department needs a new police chief" indicated that rank-and-file police officers and detectives had "NO CONFIDENCE" in Chief of Police Jack Harris. Only 15% of Phoenix Police Officers communicated that Chief Harris should stay at the helm of the Phoenix Police Department. We saw this in 2009 and we continue to see just as clearly through this specific question in 2010. In addition, morale is at an all-time low in the Phoenix Police Department.



## I see leadership in my...



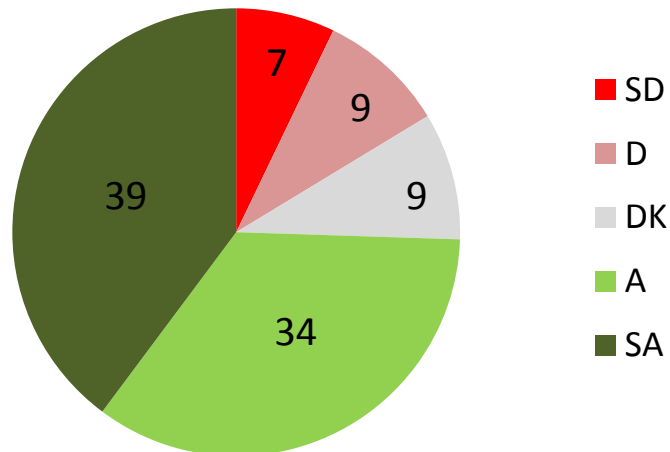
The lack of confidence in police management continues to fall. In 2010 only 4% of PLEA members saw leadership coming from Jack Harris. This lack of confidence is also seen by our community partners. The work-study company Berkshire Advisors is currently engaged in an efficiency study of the Phoenix Police Department. When speaking with community leaders in Phoenix during the week of October 24, the study coordinators were told that the problem in the Phoenix Police Department did not lay with officers and detectives, but with police managers. Members of the PLEA board will be meeting with Berkshire on or around December 2.

When politics becomes the deciding factor as to who gets booked and who goes free, it's time for a new chief. When successful crime reduction strategies that are easily recognized by the men and women who do the work but appear beyond the grasp of "the top person," it's time for a new chief. When superficial personnel "switcheroos" are considered a viable solution to a minority community in crisis, it's time for a new chief. When questionable kidnapping numbers attached to federal monies attract the Office of the Inspector General to Phoenix, it's time for a new chief. When party affiliations begin to fuel policing policies, it's time for a new chief. When community leaders rely on Judicial Watch to police law enforcement managers, it's time for a new chief. When patrons in a South Mountain barber shop see the same need for change on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor as police officers in a patrol car, it's time for a new chief.

Why make a change in leadership through the replacement of Jack Harris? The following statement holds great truth and provides a reasonable answer: "The purpose for this leadership change is to offer police management a new perspective

and fresh eyes for continued emphasis on developing community policing strategies which support increased community partnerships, organizational and transformational problem-solving. Losing the support of our community is not an option." Jack Harris was right when he wrote this in an ENS on November 5, 2010. PPSLA recently communicated to their members on November 5 that "PPSLA cannot support the

## New Immigration Laws/Policies Are Reducing Crime in Phoenix



Department's actions...Perhaps of greatest concern is that the affected lieutenants were rendered voiceless within their own precinct." The notice concluded by saying, "We would like to gauge our members' perception of some of the decisions being made by upper management...a satisfaction survey is forthcoming." Many might translate these "fighting words" as an upcoming vote of no confidence

Who sets the strategy for the Dallas Cowboys? Wade Phillips. I guess the Dallas Cowboys could have gotten a new group of 6 trainers. But they didn't. What the Cowboy's owner Jerry Jones did was implement a common sense strategy; fire the coach – the "top person." Performance was more important to him than personality. Wade Phillips was the coach in charge and calling the plays. And even though the coach didn't drop the pass, miss the field goal, or throw the interception, he was held responsible for the performance of the team. Consequence and accountability, as well as compensation, are directly connected to responsibility. Jerry Jones saw the big picture, enacted a reasonable solution, and the team won the next two games without Wade Phillips. The Dallas Cowboys were in operation before Phillips and are playing well after Phillips. Lesson: everybody is replaceable, whether it be a US President, senators, legislators, governors, attorney generals, county attorneys, mayors, council members, union board members, and yes, even coaches and police chiefs.

Who sets the philosophy for police management? Jack Harris. Perhaps transferring and tramping on the rights of 6 lieutenants from South Mountain Precinct *might* make a difference with the "disconnect" our minority community partners are sensing – but the guys in the barber shop don't think so. Perhaps throwing officers under the bus with sloppy indictments is useful if one's solution is momentary deflection – but the guys in the patrol cars don't think so. Perhaps the solution to the Department's damaged image within our neighborhoods is wringing one's hands in front of the media and stating:

"I'm the face of the Phoenix Police Department. Is there some way I could have prevented this? I'm not aware of that at this point. But of course I accept full responsibility for what goes right and what goes wrong in the organization.

*But...*

if you expect the top person to be able to solve every issue that is going on in the organization, and fix it, when they're not even aware that it's occurring, I don't think that's reasonable"

*Translation: it's not my fault for not paying attention.*

The current strategies of City Manager David Cavazos and Assistant City Manager Ed Zuecher of getting the Phoenix Police Department back in gear appear about as useful as Jack Harris' fifth star. It seems David and Ed have given up on performance and have instead committed to a personality. It's easy for Jack Harris to say he's responsible for the poor performance of the police department. It's fun for him to accept the compensation. But now it's time for him to embrace the consequence and accountability that comes with failed leadership.

The Phoenix Police Department was in operation long before Jack Harris came along. Phoenix Police Officers will still be bleeding and dying to protect citizens long after he's gone. The way the City Manager's office can correct decisions, reduce the turmoil, improve morale, reconnect with communities, adhere to contracts, eliminate frustration, and stop the in-fighting is to fire ~~Wade Phillips~~ Jack Harris. Just ask Jerry Jones what the termination of a head coach did for his team who just plays a game. Political and petty paybacks won't generate effective and responsible policing. Backroom deals behind closed doors won't restore the dwindling confidence of our community and cops. Maybe Mr. Cavazos and Mr. Zuercher will spend time in barber shops and with beat cops to discover the solution to the leadership void; it's not through old superficial tricks but a new ~~each~~ police chief.