

Police look to technology to improve efficiency

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Duluth Chief of Police Gordon

By: **Gordon Ramsay**, Duluth Budgeteer News

In June I read about a great new software application whereby officers' laptops or tablets receive data, such as sex offender addresses, addresses of those with warrants, and hot spots. As the officers drive around they are notified on their computers when they are in front of an address where any of these folks reside.

We continue to look at technology to improve our efficiency. In June I read about a great new software application whereby officers' laptops or tablets receive data, such as sex offender addresses, addresses of those with warrants, and hot spots. As the officers drive around they are notified on their computers when they are in front of an address where any of these folks reside. It's called Proactive Police

Patrol information (P3i) and it is a location-based service application that the Director of Public Safety in Lincoln, Neb. developed and is using at the Lincoln Police Department, in collaboration with the University of Nebraska and with funding from the National Institute of Justice.

I contacted Lincoln Public Safety Director Tom Cassidy in July to request use of an article he had written on P3i for a presentation I had to give. Not only did he grant me permission to utilize his article, but he also extended an invitation to use the software for free under the grant, as they are looking for different-sized cities to test the product. Needless to say he did not have to ask twice for this wonderful opportunity. At this time our technology folks are working through the details and we hope to have the program up and running with several officers in the coming weeks. We will be one of three police departments in the country trying out this great new software.

Violent assaults on police officers increase

I also wanted to touch on the increase in violent assaults on police officers. We have seen our share in Duluth recently and it mirrors nationwide statistics where more officers are being hurt and killed. In 2010 there was a 20 percent increase in the number of police officers killed from 2009, and 2011 is running about 20 percent ahead of last year for the number of police officers killed. Earlier this year the trend was so alarming that the United States Attorney General called for law enforcement leaders to come together in an effort to reduce the number of police officers murdered. There are many incidents that never make the news, but it is no longer uncommon for our officers to be assaulted and have their lives threatened. In addition to the attempted murder of Sergeant Brad Wick and Officer Steve Ring a couple of weeks ago, we had an officer fighting

for his life after a drugged-crazed man broke the officer's hand. When I read the reports on the man who broke the officer's hand, I immediately recognized him as someone who our department has been dealing with for many years. It is important to remember the life-threatening challenges our officers face as they work on preventing crime in our community.

Community policing change

There have been a few changes to our community policing officers over the last couple of months that I wanted to share. Officer Joe Miketin has replaced Officer Shawn McGovern from the West Duluth-to-the-Zoo area. Thanks to Shawn for his service to the residents and businesses of West Duluth. Shawn was instrumental in our implementation of the Crime Free-Multi-Family Housing ordinance. Officer Miketin can be reached at jmiketin@duluthmn.gov or (218)730-5742.

Officer Jason McClure replaced Officer Barry Midthun in the Central Hillside and Observation neighborhoods. Barry retired from the police department in July and is pursuing his entrepreneurial dreams. Barry was one of a kind and is greatly missed. Our thanks go to Barry for his years of service to the citizens of Duluth. Officer McClure can be reached at jmclure@duluthmn.gov or 218-730-5518.

Civic roles

Lastly, a friendly reminder on the importance of our citizens' role in preventing crime BEFORE it happens. We are again seeing an increase in the number of auto burglaries, despite making a number of arrests. Not only should you not leave valuables in your car, but we need you to report suspicious activity when you see it. The majority of our arrests of car burglars happen because of vigilant neighbors. One of our goals is to increase the number of block clubs and citizen patrol groups, as we have seen tremendous success when our neighborhoods partner with us in an effort to prevent crime. If you have an interest in starting one of these groups call my office at 730-5020 and we will help you get started. Remember to check out our crime-mapping page and sign up for alerts in your neighborhood. As a way to further connect, check out my blog at the Duluth police home page or at squadone.blogspot.com.

Contact Duluth Police Chief Gordon Ramsay at 730-5020 or gramsay@duluthmn.gov.