

September 24, 2012

News Release

For Immediate Release

New Vehicles, Equipment to Aid Police

(Media invited to learn more 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 25)

Two new vehicles and additional sophisticated onboard equipment will allow the Springfield Police Department (SPD) to better respond to dangerous incidents, track down and apprehend criminals, and collect forensic evidence to help solve homicides and other crimes.

Funding came from more than \$300,000 in grants and federal forfeiture funds, combined with savings from the City's general fund, for an automated license plate recognition system; BearCat special purpose response and rescue vehicle; and a new crime scene van.

License Plate Recognition System

The Springfield Police Department's new Automated License Plate Recognition / License Plate Recognition (APLR / LPR) system, was installed on a current police vehicle (2011 Ford Crown Victoria). The purpose of the LPR system is to read both stationary and moving license plates via three mounted cameras that feed the information to the onboard computer. Information entered in the system includes information regarding stolen vehicles, stolen license plates, wanted subjects associated to the plates and vehicles, and other information from crime bulletins.

The new equipment and software connects to local, state, and national databases and also has the capability to receive information from private companies.

Using this system, SPD can connect to other agencies that also have the LPR system and can share information on both a regional and national level.

“By connecting regionally and nationally, we will receive information on vehicles we normally would not have received,” Springfield Police Chief Paul Williams explained. “This, in turn, could lead to the apprehension of wanted and dangerous subjects in our area. It allows us to search the database for investigative information, which will only enhance our efforts to solve a multitude of crimes.”

Cost

- This grant funded LPR system (valued at over \$15,000) was awarded to the City of Springfield and Springfield Police Department by the Missouri Police Chiefs Association at no charge, however there will be approximately \$1000 annual cost for updates and maintenance fees.

Special Purpose Response and Rescue Vehicle

This specific vehicle is called a BearCat – a properly hardened special-purpose chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) response and rescue vehicle that allows SPD’s Special Response Team and other members of the Region D Homeland Security Regional Response System, to effectively transport and protect trained personnel during tactical situations. These tactical situations may include, but are not limited to, hostage and barricade situations, active shooter situations, high-risk warrant service, and terrorist attacks involving weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and/or CBRNE materials.

“Over the last several years, the law enforcement/security element of the Region D HSRRS, which includes tactical teams from the Springfield Police Department, the Branson Police Department, and the Joplin Police Department, has greatly expanded its training and knowledge base to facilitate effective response to WMD and CBRNE events,” Chief Williams said. “As a result of this training, and because of the acquisition of the BearCat, we are in a position to support and protect other responders in the field, such as bomb squad personnel, HazMat, fire and EMS personnel, who may be called upon to respond to such an incident.”

The BearCat will be housed in Springfield, but is considered a regional asset and can be requested as part of mutual aid agreements.

Cost

- Total Cost - \$273,962
- Grant funds provided by the Homeland Security Regionalization Grant: \$216,947.55
- Confiscated funds provided by the Springfield Police Department: \$57,014.45

Crime Scene Van

A new crime scene van, assembled on a 2012 Ford F-350 chassis, replaces a 1987 Ford van donated by Springfield Rotary members in 1995. The van had served as an ambulance prior to being donated to police. SPD uses the crime scene van for extensive identification, collection and processing of evidence in situations such as homicides and serious assaults.

The new vehicle contains equipment for response to crime scenes in a variety of environments. It includes shore power connection, a self-contained generator, exterior flood lighting, portable floodlights, AC and DC power outlets, a ladder, power tools, and a variety of specialized equipment to facilitate identification and collection of forensic evidence. The interior of the vehicle provides a climate-controlled work area for packaging and storage of evidence as well as coordination of the crime scene response. It includes counter top work areas, marker boards, equipment storage, secure evidence storage, and a drying cabinet.

Cost

- \$84,218 funded by savings from the City’s general fund at the end of fiscal year 2010-2011.

SPD will provide City Council a look at the new vehicles 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 25. Lt. Greg Higdon and other members of the Springfield Police Department will educate Council on the new capabilities of the vehicles on the lot, south of the Busch Municipal Building.

For more information, contact: Officer Dave Snider at 417-864-1786