

# Police Department Rolls Out New Technology

by Lt. David Knezek

The Dearborn Heights Police Department has entered a new hi-tech age with major improvements aimed to assist officers on the street and help to eliminate fictitious names given by persons that are arrested. The Dearborn Heights Police Department has begun using Oakland County CLEMIS (Courts and Law Enforcement Management Information System) to expand its technological base. "CLEMIS provides a very cost effective means for departments to increase their use of new technologies. We no longer have to purchase mainframe or computer servers for use by just our agency. CLEMIS enables us to not only check our data, but data from other participating departments as well," cited Police Chief Michael Gust. Currently, there are over 100 agencies participating in CLEMIS, throughout Oakland, Macomb, Wayne and Washtenaw counties.

In April 2002, new software was installed on the mobile data computers (MDC) in each of the patrol vehicles. The software, created by Software Corporation of America (SCA), improved an officers ability to check if vehicles are reported stolen, and acquire the vehicle registration information.



Officers can also check property to see if it has been reported stolen, as well as perform warrant and drivers license checks. Responses for vehicle and driver license checks are usually received within 2-3 seconds, much faster than if a check was requested from dispatch. "It has been shown that officers equipped with MDC's locate more stolen

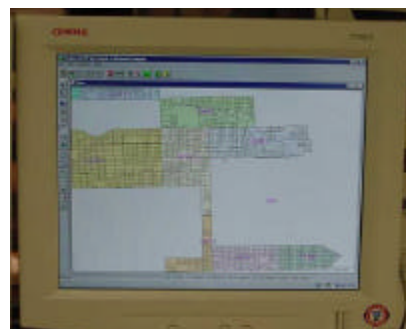
vehicles, recover more stolen property and make more arrests than officers that are not equipped with an MDC," noted Chief Gust. Officers also have the ability to send messages both between cars and the dispatch center, as well as to officers from other agencies that are CLEMIS members. Vehicle messaging works much like email, so that when an officer logs on to their MDC, it checks for any messages holding for that officer. Any new messages are transmitted nearly instantly between two units or the dispatch center. Officers will eventually write their reports on their MDC, then transfer them electronically to their supervisor for review. Upon approval the report will then be transferred to the records system and assigned to the appropriate personnel for any further investigation.



In June, CLEMIS CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) was installed in the dispatch center.

The new CAD system, manufactured by Printrak International, is an improvement from the previous system, utilizing a mapping program to show streets, business locations and the location of calls for service. The mapping program also uses automatic vehicle locators (AVL) which displays the location of a patrol car on the map. As the AVL equipped patrol car moves, its position on the map updates every few seconds.

A major benefit of AVL is for high priority calls,



where the closest unit can be dispatched, thereby reducing response times.

In early July, the department acquired a new "live-scan" fingerprint device, which allows officers to electronically submit a person's fingerprints for comparison with the State of Michigan's AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System) for positive identification as well as comparison against latent prints obtained from crime scenes.



Once fingerprints are submitted for comparison, an identification response is usually received within 10 minutes. The response will help to eliminate arrested persons from giving fictitious names when being booked. The device also submits fingerprints and demographic information for persons that are arrested, initiating the arrest segment of a computerized criminal history or CCH.

The cost of this device was greatly offset by a state grant secured by CLEMIS administrators for police and public safety departments. Chief Gust was most appreciative of the assistance from the CLEMIS staff, "With the help of the CLEMIS management team, the State of Michigan agreed to fund 75% of the cost our "live-scan" device. Without this financial assistance, this project would have had to wait until funding was available. Because of this grant, we were able to begin submitting fingerprints as soon as the device was installed."

"Our officers have had to participate in a lot of additional training in order to utilize these new devices. The officers are embracing this new technology and are eager to use it in their service to the community. The sharing of information between agencies covering several different counties is a major step in improving police service throughout the Detroit metro area. As our society has increased in its mobility, so have the people that commit crimes. The ability of agencies to connect crimes committed in different communities will greatly assist law enforcement and society as a whole," added Chief Gust.