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Pecatonica Police Chief Pat McNamer said he can not think of anything wrong with the new CrimeStar program the police station is now using.

Gary Winters photos

Village police are using cutting edge software

By Gary Winters
Reporter

Winnebago and Pecatonica Police Departments may not be as large as the big city stations but that doesn't mean they aren't high tech. A very powerful software program is in use by Pecatonica, Winnebago, Rockton, Durand, South Beloit, and 424 other agencies in 45 states. It is called CrimeStar and allows the police to record everything they investigate as well as the ability to recover any bit of information they have recorded. If you have had any contact with one of these village police departments,

chances are CrimeStar has your number (address, telephone, license plate, arrest record, photo, etc.). This program gives the officers better, faster, and more professional information. In Winnebago, Pecatonica, and Durand this user friendly windows program has replaced an older DOS-based program called COPERS (Chief of Police Electronic Retrieval System) and in Rockton it replaced the program called PIPS. The Durand Village Police Chief Bob Corwin likes the program's abilities and notes that "If you don't upgrade as you go, you get left behind." Officer Randy Smith of the

Winnebago Village Police Department explained that the flexibility of the program was extra ordinary, "Every day we are finding more and more stuff." Since the program was implemented on Jan. 1, 2005, it has been used to generate all reports, log all tickets, record field interviews, track training, and provide property and inventory management. With the addition of digital cameras the departments are able to attach photos to the Booking and Arrest sheets, Property Damage Reports, and any other reports, as needed. The Pecatonica PD uses them to make their own ID cards for the police department and the Department of Public Works.

Future plans include wireless connections to the laptops in the vehicles through either wireless internet or wireless modem. The annual service charge provides the departments the ability to download patches and updates directly over the internet. Chief McNamer also reports that he was able to receive updates on disk. When asked if he had any complaints, Chief McNamer said "I can't think of anything." Unlike other programs, the program is modular and allows the system to generate custom reports, including village logos, in each section of the software.

Rockton Village Police Chief Stephen Dickson said they switched over in late 2003 and that "There is nothing out there like it for the money." The CrimeStar Professional has an initial cost of \$1,900 and an annual service charge of \$200. CrimeStar is a registered trademark of the Crimestar Corporation headquartered in San Jose, California.

*Winnebago, IL Gazette newspaper
April 7, 2005*

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the Editor May 28, 2005*