



Improve service through technology

By Matt Bostrom

Values

- Provide safety through community policing
- Practice fiscal responsibility
- Collaborate with local law enforcement
- Encourage diversity
- Connect with youth
- Improve service through technology

Technology is a tremendous tool which can be used to increase community safety. The more reliable the information, and the more access to this information, the better the service that can be provided by law enforcement. Accurate and timely data not only provides helpful information to the community, it facilitates information sharing between law enforcement agencies as well. Therefore, this information can be used to guide best practices internally and externally.

I have been working to improve law enforcement technology for many years. For instance, in 1999, I was asked to lead the Saint Paul Police Department's automated records management initiative. I worked as the project manager for several multimillion-dollar technology grants from the Department of Justice.

This assignment required a complete overhaul of the police department reporting system. I was able to move the police department from a paper system to an electronic wireless/mobile system. Police officers can now submit police reports from laptop computers in their patrol cars or office desktops.

Saint Paul was one of the first medium-sized cities in the nation to have a completely electronic police reporting and case management system.

I also led the City of Saint Paul's efforts to revise the city's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). This is the comprehensive plan which guides the city's activities during large scale emergencies. The previous EOP was last updated in the late 1980s and functioned as a rarely used reference manual.

The new EOP is in an electronic format that exceeds federal and state standards.

The Saint Paul EOP is a model for thoroughness and effectiveness. At the same time it is much more user-friendly, searchable, visual, and accessible. Instead of a reference book on an office shelf, the EOP is now a document that can be accessed nearly anytime, anywhere.

Another exciting technological development is the use of closed-circuit television (CCTV). I have led Saint Paul's efforts to install and integrate hundreds of CCTV cameras along the Central Corridor, downtown, along the river, and into several neighborhoods. CCTV provides us with unbiased eyewitnesses in our busiest neighborhoods which results in safer public places.

Community partnerships make a difference in the use of technology. Technology should be viewed as tool for safety and not as a replacement for human contact. In the case of CCTV, community input was very important to the establishment of our policy

and practices. I listened to concerns related to public access and privacy, and developed a policy which addressed those concerns.

As a result, the community can view live images, or recorded data, from any CCTV camera in Saint Paul.

Innovation is one of the keys to a relevant and exciting organization. If elected Sheriff of Ramsey County, I will be eager to continue working with the community and our law enforcement partners to meet challenges, solve problems, and become more effective and efficient through innovative technology. ■

