ZUERCHER

Gahanna Division of Police

A survey conducted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police indicated that over 85% of law enforcement agencies were forced to reduce their budget. Given that this is a continuing trend with no anticipation that the need for reductions will end soon, a new era in policing has emerged. In this era, law enforcement agencies are operating on reduced budgets with minimal staff while continuing to protect and serve the larger community. In order to provide an efficient level of service and protect the community, technology becomes a critical tool to enable police departments to become more efficient.

This has been par for the course for police departments in small municipalities such as the Gahanna Division of Police, a full-service law enforcement agency nine miles northeast of Columbus, Ohio. Located adjacent to the Port Columbus International Airport and with several miles of interstate running through its jurisdiction, Gahanna and its officers have many unique challenges for a suburban agency of its size. According to Lieutenant Jeff Spence, administrative bureau commander for the Gahanna

Division of Police, "As a small department with only 62 sworn officers, our budget has always been tight. Even prior to the economic downturn, we realized that there were technological changes that we could put into operation which would maximize efficiency and save money in the long-term. Since implementing those changes and new technology, it has helped us tremendously as every dollar that we spend is closely scrutinized."

The Division of Police manages the emergency communications services for the City of Gahanna. The Division's Communications Center is the primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for all 9-1-1 calls generated within the city and also serves as a transfer point for Fire and Emergency Medical Services. When the outdated computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system for the Gahanna Communications Center needed replacing, Spence capitalized on this opportunity to overhaul all of its department's software that interfaced with CAD.

Agency
Gahanna Division of Police
77 full-time law enforcement employees (62 sworn officers)

Products
IMC CAD; IMC Mobile; IMC RMS; Field Reporting; Administrative; Detective; Property and Bar Coding Applications; Ohio Crash Module

Vital Statistics

Area Served	13 sq. miles
Population	35,198
Call Volume	39,225 (annual)
Go Live	2006

Spence continues, "Our existing CAD system had been in use since 1991, so we were operating on very outdated technology. With little to no integration to the department's other applications, many of our internal processes were very repetitive. When information in CAD required updating, we also had to update files in our Records Management System (RMS) and vice versa. We were also heavily dependent on paper records which burdened our small administrative staff and proved challenging when it came to storage. Patrol officers couldn't access CAD or records information from their vehicles, so radio traffic was very congested. It wasn't a very efficient way to conduct business. When researching a new system, complete integration between the applications – CAD, Mobile, Records, Administration – was critical for us to streamline our processes with quick and easy information management and analysis."

After a competitive proposal process, Gahanna selected TriTech's IMC product suite solutions - CAD, Mobile, RMS, Crash, Field Reporting, Administrative, Investigative, and Property and Bar Coding Applications. The IMC Solutions platform is specifically developed for agencies like Gahanna who need a fully integrated, single platform that is affordable and fast to deploy.

With a fully integrated solution, Gahanna is experiencing tremendous operational and administrative workflow improvements. Spence continues, "Rather than creating multiple reports for various departments and personnel, the RMS systems makes information available for authorized personnel to access from their mobile or office computers. Having a completely electronic system with quick and easy information retrieval has drastically reduced our operating expenses, and our staff is able to focus on more critical tasks."

Gahanna's previous mobile application was strictly a text-based system providing a portal to NCIC and Ohio's Law Enforcement Automated Data System (LEADS). Patrol officers had no access to dispatch or records information from their vehicles. Dispatch notifications, incident information and previous criminal contacts were provided via radio. Additionally, without any field reporting component, officers had to return to headquarters to fill out reports, enter property and a host of other tasks.

"The Mobile solution is very effective, intuitive and benefits our entire operation," said Spence. "With access to CAD and Records and an interface to LEADS, patrol officers have immediate access to real-time incident updates and historical information with images. By having this information at their fingertips and without the need for dispatcher assistance, Mobile empowers field personnel to make important decisions from the field. Decisions that can save time and save lives."

Additionally, Gahanna has experienced a tremendous increase in self-initiated activity, field interviews and investigative efforts since implementing Mobile. Officers have become more efficient and able to spend more time on the streets doing their job – protecting the community – and less time travelling back to headquarters to conduct paperwork and other administrative tasks.

TriTech's IMC product suite solutions provides the patrol

supervisor a much greater ability to manage his or her workforce. With a quick glance from their mobile solution, the front-line supervisor can locate units, the time they have been on a call, pending calls for service and a history of unit activity. As a management tool, supervisors can ensure their officers' safety or make adjustments to ensure the efficiency of their officers and individual shift operations.

With an integrated system that includes mobile data and field reporting capabilities, patrol officers can conduct nearly every task from the field. Essentially, each unit can function as an independent dispatch center. By eliminating the need to travel back to headquarters for paperwork and administrative duties, Gahanna is saving money on fuel and vehicle maintenance costs as well. "As gasoline increases steadily to $4 - $5 per gallon, anything we can do to save dollars related to fuel cost becomes mission critical for the success of our agency and city operations as a whole," said Spence.

Finally, Gahanna is saving money on licensing and maintenance costs with a single vendor solution. Spence recalls, "Previously, we were paying at least three different vendors for separate licensing and maintenance of our software products. Now, we are only paying one vendor for all of our software needs at a cost far less than what we were paying previously. Just recently a nearby agency contacted me to complain that they were paying nearly double our annual maintenance costs and still did not have a fully functional software solution in place despite multiple vendors."

According to Spence, "Since we've deployed TriTech's IMC product suite solutions, we've found a better way to manage our department's resources. In this new era of budget reductions, we encourage other agencies to leverage technology to help them work smarter. The initial costs of a new solution may be daunting, but the total cost of ownership will be greatly reduced in the long term. With the improvements in efficiency and reduction of other costs, the return on investment in new technology, such as what we experienced with TriTech's software, will make any small police department, a professional leader in today's tough economy."

Gahanna's Creekside Park