

West Paterson goal is to save police time and money

WEST PATERSON - In a few months, the borough's police officers will be able to file reports from their cars that the chief can compile daily with just a few keystrokes, thanks to a new computer-automated dispatch system.

"It's about accountability, accountability, accountability," Police Chief Robert Reda said. "It's a basic tool that every department should have and needs."

The goal of using such a system is to save the department time and money - especially in overtime costs - and to make officers' jobs safer.

The new dispatch system will be created for the borough by Enforsys Systems, a Whippany-based company that has installed similar systems for at least 60 other New Jersey police departments. In Passaic County, Hawthorne, Pompton Lakes and Wanaque already use the system. About 20 departments in Bergen County use it.

"We find it to be a very good system that fits the needs of our department," Hawthorne Police Chief Martin Boyd said. "The more use it's getting, the more comfortable the officers are becoming with it."

The software will cost the borough \$52,865, which includes the licensing fee and several training sessions. The borough has already spent \$10,000 for two new servers to support the system, and it will purchase mobile data terminals for each of the department's seven patrol cars. The cost of those units is unknown because the borough has not yet chosen a vendor.

In addition to improving the department's filing of reports, the system can aid officers during emergencies by providing them on-the-scene information, such as how many people live in a particular house, how many stairwells a business has or whether anyone in a dwelling has a firearm.

Currently, the department has no way to give officers in the field such information in the time they need it. And when officers respond to a call or stop someone for a traffic violation, they have to write the report manually and then drive back to the police station to type it up and submit it. West Paterson officers responded to about 10,000 calls last year, generating about 2,500 paper reports.

The time and money saved varies for each department, but Keith Keller, the vice president of sales and marketing for Enforsys, said West Paterson will save more than \$30,000 a year in reporting capabilities.

The system also will allow the borough's officers to access Info-Cop, a wireless technology that provides officers a way to look up local, state and federal databases when responding to calls. Through Info-Cop, officers can scan drivers' licenses and registrations and check for alerts on a person or vehicle. These kinds of capabilities will make policing safer and more efficient, Reda said.

Complete installation of the software takes 23 days, said George Lieberman, chief executive of Enforsys. Once it goes live, Enforsys will help maintain the system but does not have direct access to the data that the department downloads onto it.

"The files are owned by the Police Department," Lieberman said. "There is no privacy concern or risk of losing information."