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Patrol cars to receive laptops

Nov 8, 2007 3:00 AM (480 days ago) by [Kashmir Hill](#), The Examiner

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(Andrew Harnik/Examiner)
 District Police Officer Richard Mason works in his police cruiser Wednesday, which has been equipped with new "Smart Patrol" technology.
 more time on the street fighting crime."

WASHINGTON (Map, News) - The Metropolitan Police Department will spend \$5.2 million to put laptops in all patrol cars over the next year, giving officers access to criminal databases and allowing them to file reports online from their vehicles.

"This technology allows me to free up thousands of man-hours," Police Chief Cathy Lanier said. "An accident report used to take an hour and a half to file. Now, it will take seven minutes."

Mayor Adrian Fenty praised the police department for the "use of technology to be more efficient so officers can spend

Presently, officers depend on radios and a wireless system called "the brick" by officers due to its unwieldiness, police Chief Technology Officer Travis Hudnall said. The brick, a tower unit kept in the trunk, gives officers access to D.C. criminal data and sometimes FBI data.

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"The biggest change with the new Smart Patrol technology is integrating with national law enforcement agencies," Hudnall said. Previously, officers had to radio the station to run checks on federal databases.

"[Radio] air time is valuable. Before, if you couldn't run a tag, your life could be put in danger," police Assistant Chief Patrick Burke said.

Wireless Panasonic laptops with a touch screen will be mounted in 800 patrol cars over the next year, at a cost of \$6,500 per car.

Locators in the laptops will allow dispatchers to see officers on a map and allow patrolling officers to locate one another when they need backup.

The project will be paid for out of the department's technology fund.

In addition to greater efficiency and the improved safety of her officers, the upgrade will improve information gathering and data analysis through online report filing by officers, Lanier said.

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