



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Akron Police Go High-Tech to Catch Criminals

Akron, Ohio (September 7, 2012) - Today, Mayor Don Plusquellic, Police Chief James Nice, FBI Senior Supervisory Agent Todd Wickerham, and Director of Neighborhood Assistance John Valle, unveiled the new training and technology called DIVRT, short for Digital Imaging Video Response Team, that is helping the Akron Police Department stay one step ahead of other police agencies across the nation in capturing criminals.

Thanks to the FBI and the Philadelphia Police Department, the APD received specialized high-tech training in DIVRT and portable equipment to be used out in the field to retrieve video from a crime scene. With the new kits, officers are able to release possible suspect images to the public within hours.

With the new equipment and help from citizens, the police department is hoping more cases will be solved, and that they will be solved quicker.

“What people do not realize is that the average person is captured on surveillance 72 times per day by private businesses and home video cameras,” said Chief Nice. “There are literally video cameras everywhere in the City and the more images we get out to the public, and the faster we can get them out there, the better our chances of solving the crimes.”

The police department has also partnered with the 311-Call Center and established a Customer Service Request for the City of Akron to make the DIVRT system even more effective. John Eaton, Akron’s 311 Call Center Manager believes the collaboration within the two departments will enhance protection in the neighborhoods.

“We are asking for anyone who utilizes a video surveillance camera on their property, business owners and/or individual residents, to register their equipment by calling the 3-1-1 center,” said Director Valle. “By registering your camera, you will be assisting in the crime prevention efforts in your neighborhood.” Valle also noted that, “there is no cost to a register your equipment and you will not be contacted unless there is a crime committed in the vicinity of your security camera.”

During the initial DIVRT trial period, the Akron Police Department created several videos with great success. After two videos produced in May were released to local media by e-mail, twitter and facebook, the suspects were identified within hours and arrested shortly thereafter.

“I have always tried to assure that our police officers are as well equipped and trained, if not better, than any other department in the nation,” said Mayor Plusquellic. “On July 5, 2012, NBC Nightly News showcased the Akron Police Department, the Philadelphia Police Department, and the FBI, specifically on the training, use, and success of the DIVRT program. There is no doubt that Akron is a step ahead of other departments in the use of this technology. And, I have no doubt we can stay a step ahead of the criminals with the added help of our citizens.”