



ERIE COUNTY ASSOCIATION
of
CHIEFS of POLICE

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Representing
Erie County Central Police
Services

October 4, 2013

Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz
Members of the Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street
Buffalo, NY 14202

Subject: Critical Emergency Communications Funding Request

Dear County Executive Poloncarz and members of the Legislature,

At our Monthly meeting on September 12, 2013, the membership of the Erie County Chiefs of Police Association voted unanimously in favor of urging our County government to continue the funding of the police in-car air cards. These devices connect the officers in-car computers with critical local, State and Federal information and reporting systems.

The County currently funds the air cards for all Erie County police agencies accessing the Erie County Central Police Services Information System except for the City of Buffalo. According to C.P.S. Commissioner John Glascott, The annual cost for the air-cards is approximately \$204,000. The Commissioner further states that in the past, the air-cards were funded entirely with Homeland Security Grants. Beginning in 2014, he advises that the County will no longer provide funding for the cards.

We are all aware that funding has been decreasing in recent years and that cuts must be made. Having said this, we are unanimous in our opinion that critical communications systems must be given top priority in our County wide emergency management system. In emergencies or in the case serious criminal matters, we must have ready efficient access to the best information and communications systems available.

With the cooperation of the County, the Commissioner, and most Erie County police agencies, significant improvements to our critical communications systems have been achieved. Information sharing and general inter-agency cooperation is steadily improving. The in-car computers, wireless connectivity and the information systems they support have tremendously improved efficiency and overall policing services to the citizens of Erie County. The County has correctly taken the lead in funding and developing these systems. Individual agencies should not be left alone to develop and support their own proprietary systems as was once the case in Erie County.

In summary, We strongly urge you to find a funding source for the air-cards. They should be at the top of the list for the Homeland Security funds managed by the County or provided for as part of the C.P.S. Budget.

Sincerely,



John C. Askey
Chief of Police

Information from the C.P.S. Web Site

The Information Systems Division was established to create and implement standardized computer services to be made available to each of the full-time City, Town and Village Police Departments in Erie County.

With the focus on centralizing services that would assist each of these departments in complying with federal and state reporting mandates, division personnel implemented one of the most advanced and comprehensive Police Record Management Systems in the United States.

Core components such as: Police Reporting using standardized data gathering and reporting techniques; the Erie Municipal Police Information Retrieval Enhancement System (EMPIRE) System supporting the on-line Police Telecommunications Network with more than 250 terminals and pc's creating the link for immediate response to inquiry and maintenance transactions received from other state and federal Criminal Justice Systems, and the County Police System for Mobile Data (CPSMD) supporting up to 150 mobile data terminals installed in Police Vehicles, provide information needed to assist Police in the performance of their duty.

Though the core components are deemed to be the most important of Information Systems services and support, additional needs of Police and other Criminal Justice Agencies are met through:

- ▲ research and development of unique techniques that reduces personnel time and related costs in processing data by each Criminal Justice Agency;
- ▲ research and development of unique software designed for local Police Department in-house systems;
- ▲ research and development of unique techniques that assists processing data to the state level;
- ▲ consultation services in computer-related issues to all Criminal Justice Agencies;
- ▲ standardized training in Police Reporting to the State and Federal government;
- ▲ standardized training in use of the Police Communications Network and access to state and federal Criminal Justice Systems;
- ▲ maintenance of telecommunication and local system security programs;
- ▲ seminars related to privacy, security and freedom of information issues;
- ▲ on going maintenance and support of more than 900 programs used in the police systems.

Personnel, including mid-level management, senior to junior programmer analysts and clerical control, provide 24-hour, 7-day support for the police telecommunications network as well as crucial police record systems. In addition, research, design and implementation of state-of-the art technology along with the search for funding to support new applications is an on-going function within the Information Systems Division.

Previous efforts have resulted in application and receipt of grant funding for programs such as: