

CITY OF MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

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MPD TO ACQUIRE TECHNOLOGICAL ALTERNATIVE TO DANGEROUS PURSUITS

Following up on its commitment to identifying safer, technology-driven alternatives to vehicle pursuits, the Milwaukee Police Department today announces its anticipated initial purchase of Pursuit Management Technology units from StarChase, LLC.

This technology-driven tool provides an alternative to police pursuits. The system includes a pneumatically-powered GPS tag to be deployed from an equipped squad car and attached to a target vehicle. Once the vehicle is tagged, the GPS movements can be monitored by officers and dispatchers alike, allowing for a safer, more focused, more effective apprehension of a suspect who flees.

The Department has participated in vendor demonstrations of these units and has decided to move forward with an initial deployment and field test. By utilizing available asset forfeiture funds, we expect to have the units installed and deployed within several weeks. When we take delivery of the product, we will schedule a demonstration. Information about this technology can be found here: <http://starchase.com/technology.php>

As has been previously reported, the Milwaukee Police Department changed its pursuit policy in March of 2010 following the deaths of multiple innocent parties related to police pursuits. The primary responsibility of the Chief and Department is to protect life: the lives of the innocent; the lives of police officers; and the lives of offenders. Chief Edward Flynn said, "I have been to too many funerals for officers and innocent people killed in police pursuits, commonly over trivial traffic infractions. I tightened our pursuit policy in order to reduce the likelihood of needless deaths and injuries. As I have said many times, if our only solution to combat people fleeing from the police is to engage in dangerous high-speed pursuits in police cars, then we have failed as a society. The purchase of this new technology is a step in the right direction of finding alternative means for apprehending criminals without unnecessarily endangering life."

"The Police Department's purchase of StarChase units is an excellent example of the thoughtful investments in innovative technologies that help us advance the mission of our city agencies," said Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett. "I am supportive of this initial purchase and am eager to see this technology in action."

Common Council President Michael Murphy added "The use of this technology-driven approach to public safety is a great means of balancing the need to apprehend suspects while reducing the likelihood of injury or fatality of police officers, offenders and private citizens. I fully support this initiative."

Public Safety Committee Chair Alderman Terry Witkowski said, "New technology such as Shot Spotter, Laser Speed Detection and passive alcohol detectors all have improved safety in Milwaukee and I am pleased to see this device being used to address this situation. "

In the midst of calls to relax the Department's pursuit policy, it is worth noting that comparing the three years before the policy changed to the three subsequent years, stolen cars decreased 29%, pursuits decreased 70%, crashes related to pursuits decreased 81%, and injuries and deaths related to pursuits decreased 47%. Even comparing 2014, a year in which we experienced a dramatic increase in stolen cars, to 2007, we see 14% fewer stolen cars, 52% fewer pursuits, 77% fewer crashes related to pursuits and 47% fewer injuries and deaths related to pursuits.

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