Troopers now armed with computers

Wireless technology is coming to a DPS patrol car near you, as the in-car computer program rolls out across Texas.

Commercial Vehicle units in Regions I, II and III already have the in-car computers and they are being outfitted in Highway Patrol cars in Region V. Within 18 months, all black and white units and sergeant vehicles in the Highway Patrol Division will patrol Texas roadways with the new technology. The Texas Rangers and Criminal Law Enforcement divisions are also testing the software applications.

The additional crime-fighting tool was approved by the Texas Legislature in 2007 and it gives troopers a direct link with Communications personnel. Troopers can access the Traffic Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (TLETS) and driver license information on their touch-screen monitor.

“This puts the Department on the cutting edge and moves us light years forward in our law enforcement capabilities,” said DPS Director Col. Thomas Davis Jr.

Real time alerts, digital photographs and homeland security information will all be available at troopers’ fingertips. It will also make it easier to identify wanted persons and stolen vehicles and equips units with GPS (Global Positioning System) technology.

Last month, just days after being deployed, the computers helped track an 80-mile pursuit near Amarillo as the suspect navigated dirt roads. With the GPS system, Communications personnel saw the chase unfold and helped position Highway Patrol units and bring the pursuit to an end.

Another example of how the system helps: a CVE trooper in Lubbock pulled up a driver license photo after a commercial vehicle driver gave what turned out to be a phony name. With the DL photo at his disposal, the trooper realized the deception, determined the man didn’t have a driver license and made an arrest.

Dear fellow employee,

As you know, the Department implemented Physical Readiness and Job Task Scenario Testing in 2006 to comply with legislative requirements in order to participate in the promotional process, obtain a career-pay progression or receive a legislative salary increase.

Mandatory testing started on Sept. 1, 2007. If you have not yet participated, you must complete all testing prior to March 1, 2008. Contact your PRT field coordinator or the Recruiting Office to reserve a testing time.

We now are at the point where commissioned employees must meet 90 percent of the standard. In FY 2009, all commissioned employees will be required to meet 100 percent of the standard.

I expect that each of you has been training for this testing. As I have said in the past, being physically fit is good for DPS. But it’s even better for you, because of the health benefits you will enjoy by participating in a regular exercise program.

Thomas M. Davis Jr.
On the mend...

Best wishes for a speedy recovery from line-of-duty injuries go to:

Sgt. Donald Clendennen, CLE Austin, injured while arresting a fleeing suspect;

Tr. Andrew Conquest, HP Austin, injured while arresting a suspect;

Tr. Timothy Godwin, HP Decatur, injured while arresting a suspect;

Tr. Carlos Rodriguez, HP Weslaco, injured in foot pursuit;

Tr. Robert Rosamond, CVE El Paso, injured during a struggle.

Awards

Chief Burton Christian, Administration Austin, received a Medal of Merit in recognition of his contributions toward one of the Department’s most important goals: recruiting qualified trooper-trainee applicants.

The Department will have to run at least five recruit schools over the next two years to fill more than 600 anticipated vacancies. Among the improvements to the recruiting process that Christian engineered are year-round testing and interviewing, an internship program that employs qualified applicants until the next recruit school begins, pre-setting starting dates for spring and fall recruit schools and diligently advertising in rural newspapers and on military bases.

During flooding in Fisher County, Tr. Todd Adkins, HP Sweetwater, and Game Warden Justin Valchar responded to a call about a vehicle that had been swept off of FM 57. When they arrived on the scene, they saw a vehicle in the floodwaters. An elderly man was trapped inside and water was rushing into the car window. Game Warden Valchar secured himself with a tow strap and waded into the water to rescue the man.

However, he had difficulty, so Tr. Adkins waded into the water without a safety line and made his way to the vehicle. They were able to free the victim from the car. Game Warden Valchar lost his footing and was swept away. He was pulled to safety by people on the shore. Tr. Adkins held onto the vehicle and the victim and was able to secure the victim with an inflatable life vest that volunteer firefighters threw to him. The firefighters got a fire hose to the trooper, who tied it to the victim. The firefighters then pulled both the victim and the trooper to safety. Tr. Adkins received a Director’s Citation and Game Warden Valchar received a Director’s Award for saving the man’s life.

Arriving at a two-vehicle head-on crash on US 59 in Victoria County, Tr. Christian W. Fogal, HP Victoria, saw a Ford Taurus with the engine compartment fully engulfed in flames. Bystanders told Tr. Fogal that a person was still inside the vehicle. He ran to the vehicle, where he saw Adan Sanchez Navor, who was unconscious and pinned in the car. Tr. Fogal tried to hold off the flames with his fire extinguisher, but they were too intense. As more of the car burned, he received assistance from two passersby and the three of them managed to pull Mr. Navor out of the vehicle. Tr. Fogal and Tr. Donnie Bolton, HP Victoria, administered CPR until EMS arrived on scene. Unfortunately, Mr. Navor did not survive his injuries from the crash. Tr. Fogal received a Director’s Citation for his efforts.

A Director’s Citation was awarded to Cpl. Royal Andrew McMullen, CVE El Paso, for his off-duty efforts in saving the life of a man who almost drowned. Cpl. McMullen and his family were camping at Elephant Butte Lake in New Mexico, when his wife heard someone yelling for help. Cpl. McMullen went down to the lake, which was a quarter of a mile away from their campsite. When he arrived at the lake, he saw a yellow raft without anyone in it about 200 yards from shore. A 17-year-old man had swum from shore attempting to recover the raft, which had drifted away. The water was extremely cold, and the young man had been in the water about 15 minutes and was becoming exhausted and hypothermic. Cpl. McMullen swam to the raft and then paddled the raft to the victim. He pulled the victim onto the side of the raft and paddled back to shore. Once on shore, Cpl. McMullen treated this victim for shock and hypothermia and then transported him from the shore to a nearby emergency vehicle. The victim recovered fully. The young man’s guardian said that she did not believe that he would have survived if Cpl. McMullen had not been at the scene.
Promotions

**THP**

Jeremy Christopher Nordloh, Lt., CVE Houston to Capt. CVE Corpus Christi; Terry Dwayne Truett, Sgt., HP Huntsville to Lt., HP Conroe; Brandon Edward Speed, Cpl. II, HP Odessa to Sgt., HP El Paso-East; Jeremy J. E. Rowland, Tr. II, HP Refugio to Sgt., HP Alice; Jeremiah Lee Richards, Tr. II, HP Bryan to Sgt., HP Liberty; Hughie Leon Clark, Jr., Tr. III, HP Pineland to Sgt., HP Austin-Capitol; Douglas Brian Hart, Tr. II, HP Mineral Wells to Sgt., HP Weatherford-South; Walter Timothy Marlatt, Tr. II, HP San Angelo to Sgt., HP Snyder; Joshua Scott Mason, Tr. II, HP Atlanta to Sgt., HP Uvalde; Christopher Dean Frost, Tr. II, HP Waco to Sgt., HP Laredo-South; Kevin Wayne Gray, Tr. IV, HP Clarksville to Sgt., HP Cotulla; Rowland David Adkins, Tr. II, PH Bastrop to Sgt., HP Harlingen; Regina Rose Sutton, Oper. II, Comm. Svc. Midland to Supv., Comm. Svc. Midland; DL Quirino Reyes, Sgt., DL Austin to Lt., DL Waco.

Rangers


CLE

James Warren Behrens, Tr. III, HP Kerrville to Sgt., MVT Austin; Andrew Stephen Priddy, Tr. V, CVE Alice to Sgt., MVT Corpus Christi; Kenneth Michael Garza, Tr. II, HP Corpus Christi to Sgt., MVT Corpus Christi; Brian Paul Wilson, Sgt., HP Odessa to Sgt., MVT Beeville; James Wilson Jones, Tr. III, HP New Braunfels to Sgt., MVT Laredo; Augustin Valdez, Tr. II, RLS San Antonio to Sgt., MVT Laredo; Eric Fournier, Tr. II, HP El Paso to Sgt., MVT El Paso; Janet Alane Nichols, Tr. II, HP Brownfield to Sgt. MVT El Paso; Michael Scott Meeks, Tr. II, HP Denton to Sgt., MVT El Paso; Robert Delton Hitt, Tr. II, HP Lubbock to Sgt., CIS Amarillo; Billy James McCloskey, Cpl. II, HP Columbus to Sgt., CIS Austin;
Mile Markers, cont. from p. 3


Retirements
Oscar Javier Guzman, Sgt., Governor Protective Svc. Austin, 26 yrs., 5 mos., 20 days; Nancy Caroll O’Neal, Tech. DL Cuero, 32 yrs., 4 mos., 6 days; Raymond Terrill King, Lt., HP Waco, 26 yrs., 11 mos., 17 days; Israel Zamora Camacho, Sen. Tr. CVE San Antonio, 25 yrs., 6 mos., 22 days;

Jeffery Glenn Cook, Sgt., Rangers Richmond, 23 yrs., 6 mos., 18 days; Carlton Ray Scott, Sgt., CIS Austin, 22 yrs., 11 mos., 22 days; David Lynn Doyle, Capt., CVE Corps Christi, 30 yrs., 24 days;

James Wayne Haney, Sgt., CVE Amarillo, 29 yrs., 7 mos., 7 days; Michael Wayne Finch, Sgt., CIS Bryan, 27 yrs., 22 days; William David Warren, Sgt., DL Garland, 26 yrs., 11 mos., 17 days; Cleo Venegas Smith, Admin. Asst. III, Narcotics Svc. Wichita Falls, 26 yrs., 4 mos.;

Paul Ballard Braden, Sgt., HP San Antonio, 23 yrs., 11 mos., 20 days; John Andrew Martin, Sgt., Rangers San Antonio, 21 yrs., 6 mos., 20 days; Rebecca Ann Galey, Tech., DL Snyder, 16 yrs.;

Homer K. Winger, Maintenance Worker, HP Midland, 10 yrs., Evelyn Sharon Wells, Receptionist, HP Hurst, 6 yrs., 9 mos., Ralph Edward Hicks, Tech., DL Waco, 6 yrs., 1 mo.; Kevin Lee Largent, Sen. Cpl., HP Lufkin, 28 yrs., 10 mos., 20 days; Sandra Marie Blaha, Operator II, Comm. Svc. Austin, 27 yrs., 2 mos., 19 days;

Henry August Muenich, Jr., Worker II, Training Austin, 18 yrs., 8 mos., 10 days; Angie Moreno Clark, Admin. Asst. DL Humble, 16 yrs., 7 mos., 29 days; Allen Keith Miller, Tr. HP Austin, 6 yrs., 2 mos., 29 days;


Deaths

Retiree e-mail news list
The Public Information Office sends occasional e-mails with DPS news, such as funerals, to retirees. To get on the e-mail list, please send your name and e-mail address to: tela.mange@txdps.state.tx.us.

March Chaparral: Don’t Miss!
Be sure to see the March 2008 issue of the Chaparral, which will discuss the new statewide insurance database and other issues facing the Department.