



'Filling' a Communications Cavity

It wasn't too long ago that people watched for the coming of this vehicle with anxiety and fear. Today, others will watch for it with hope and relief. At one time, its arrival meant an appointment with the dentist was imminent. Now, its arrival means restoration of vital communications is imminent.

What was once a 30-foot mobile U.S. Navy dental clinic has been transformed into a mobile communications center that includes satellite telephone, wireless Internet, computer terminals, and a radio interconnect device. This unusual usage turnaround took place through the 1033 Excess Property Program and the combined efforts of the North Carolina Law Enforcement Support Services (NCLESS), National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC)–Southeast, and Border Research and Technology Center (BRTC). Both NLECTC–Southeast and BRTC are programs of the Office of Justice Programs' National Institute of Justice (NIJ).

"We spent \$36,000," says Ken Dover, NLECTC–Southeast's Excess Property Program Manager. "To create this setup new, it would have cost between \$200,000 and \$300,000. We used excess computers and projectors. NCLESS provided a lot of the labor, which was a huge savings. They stripped out the dental chairs and other equipment, did some minor repair work, and installed the equipment. It didn't all come from the 1033 Program, but a lot of it did."

According to Dover, the 1033 Program permits the Secretary of Defense to transfer, without charge, excess U.S. Department of Defense supplies and equipment to State and local law enforcement agencies.

"We had been on the lookout for mobile communications possibilities, and I had heard about the van," he says. "NCLESS was the logical agency to turn to for a partner, and their response was extremely positive. They already had the ability and the staff through their 1033 program to assist. They were used to deploying equipment on this scale. After Hurricane Katrina, they had provided five tractor-trailers full of equipment."

Dover says the van, acquired through the efforts of NLECTC–Southeast in fall 2006, was the perfect vehicle. It had only 10,000 miles on the odometer and already included a self-contained generator and running water. With NIJ approval and NCLESS support, the reconstruction of the vehicle began. First, workmen divided the vehicle into two "rooms," one primarily for communications, the other for meetings. Additional equipment installed included a police agency radio, a marine radio, a citizens band radio, a ham radio, four computers, and an overhead projector.

EXCESS PROPERTY PROGRAMS

State and local law enforcement and corrections agencies can obtain excess Federal property at little or no cost through the following programs:

- **1033 Program:** This program permits the Secretary of Defense to transfer, without charge, excess U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) personal property (supplies and equipment) to State and local law enforcement agencies. Agencies can acquire vehicles (land, air, and sea), weapons, computer equipment, body armor, fingerprint equipment, night vision equipment, radios and televisions, first aid equipment, tents and sleeping bags, photographic equipment, and more.
- **1122 Program:** The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 1994 contained Section 1122, which allows State and local governments to purchase new law enforcement equipment for counterdrug activities through the Federal Government. The discounts the Federal Government enjoys because of its large-volume purchasing are thus passed on. These discounts may be especially attractive when dealing with high-tech equipment and newer technologies.

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“If it goes to an area that has been devastated, there is a satellite telephone connection, and local agencies can bring in their laptops and use the wireless connection if they have lost their own Internet capabilities,” Dover says. “If it goes to, say, the site of a chemical spill, with agencies from multiple jurisdictions responding, the radio interconnect device will let them all talk to each other. It could even be used in the same way at a big sporting event, like a college or professional football game.”

In the event of a long-term deployment, such as after a natural disaster, the mobile communications center will be accompanied by a camper (which sleeps five) and a maintenance truck, which carries enough fuel and supplies to last the crew for approximately a week. NCLESS has assigned one staff member full time to maintaining the center, and NIJ and NCLESS will supply additional staff as needed. Following testing last June in North Carolina and in Charleston, South Carolina, NCLESS, NLECTC–Southeast, and BRTC pronounced the van ready for deployment.

“We really wanted to show what can be done with the 1033 Program. If you put in a little bit of time and effort, you can save a lot of money and gain some terrific technology,” Dover says.

For more information on the Mobile Communications Center or the 1033 Excess Property Program, contact Ken Dover at NLECTC–Southeast, 888–874–5854 or kdover@nlectc-se.org. Additional information about the North Carolina Law Enforcement Support Services can be found at www.nccrimecontrol.org. Click on Divisions, then click on Law Enforcement Support Services Division.

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Excess Property (continued)

- **Surplus Property Donation:** Each State and territory has a State Agency for Surplus Property (SASP). These agencies were established to receive Federal surplus personal property and to donate it to public agencies and certain nonprofit, tax-exempt agencies. The General Services Administration has the responsibility of administering this program. Law enforcement agencies enrolled in the 1033 Program are eligible to obtain property from their SASP.
- **1401 Technology Transfer Program:** This program identifies, evaluates, deploys, and transfers surplus DoD technology items and equipment to Federal, State, and local first responders to be used in support of homeland security. DoD also provides training and expertise in areas such as interoperable communications and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defense. More information can be found at http://www.defenselink.mil/policy/sections/policy_offices/hd/faqs/techTransfer/index.html/.

For more detailed information on these programs, visit www.justnet.org/equipment.



This article was reprinted from the Winter 2008 edition of *TechBeat*, the award-winning quarterly newsmagazine of the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center System, a program of the National Institute of Justice under Cooperative Agreement #2005–MU–CX–K077, awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice.

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