



TECHNOLOGY BEAT



Law Enforcement Technology for the 21st Century Conference

Local Law Enforcement Needs Federal Support

Friday, April 12, 1996



The Federal Government needs to do more to ensure that local law enforcement is adequately equipped to fight crime, said U.S. Representative Jane Harman in her address on the closing day of the Technology Solutions for Public Safety Conference.

Harman, who represents California's 36th District, praised programs in place such as the National Law Enforcement

and Corrections Technology Centers and the Justice Department's Community Oriented Police Services office, but said additional support is needed despite financial restraints.

"I support a balanced budget, but the operative word is balanced. And though many programs can be eliminated or trimmed, the Federal Government needs to do more to provide the financial resources necessary to purchase crime fighting technology," Harman said.

She said suspects are increasingly sophisticated in their use of advanced technologies, and easily outstrip most law enforcement with access to high-powered weapons, computing equipment, chemicals, communications gear, and document forging presses.

"It's about time that we begin to actively arm you with the best crime fighting technology available," Harman told the audience.

Harman also noted that her congressional district, which includes portions of Los Angeles and 10 other independent cities in the area, is a center for the aerospace industry, which has fallen on hard times as defense and science funds decline due to budget constraints. Transferring defense technology to law enforcement would benefit both groups and the public as well.

"It is an industrial base in need of commercial diversification and new customers—customers like local law enforcement," Harman said. "More money to purchase critical technology

means less wasted police time, more and quicker apprehensions, and more public safety. This also means a new and important market for our local industrial base—a win, win, win."

Harman sought to encourage participants to be hopeful about what can be achieved.

"I believe that no matter how hard it is and how polarized our Congress is, there are bipartisan solutions to be found to tough problems," she said.

"I congratulate all of you for how far you and we have come, how much you do for these communities, how much you do for me personally. I thank you very much for your friendship and support," she concluded.

Thoughts on the Conference

Participants said the conference provided the opportunity to obtain information on a variety of technology and topics affecting law enforcement.

"It was extremely helpful," said Sgt. Bret Parker of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

"It had a wide range of topics, and they selected, or were able to assemble, some of the best people in terms of job and technical knowledge that I've seen in a long time. In one place, in 3 days, I got 6 months worth of education on a wide range of topics that affect law enforcement directly," he said.

Conference Information

The National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC) is preparing a conference report and summary video of the event. To receive copies or other information about NLECTC products and services contact:

NLECTC
Box 1160
Rockville, MD 20849
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Technology Breakout Highlights

Conference breakout sessions on the last day featured a wide spectrum of expertise. Some highlights follow.

Legal & Liability Issues of Technology Employment. Using simple technology such as microcassette recorders and video cameras and providing officers with good training are key to guarding against liability in law enforcement. Attorney Marty Mayer told the audience, “The microcassette recorder, in my opinion as a defense attorney representing the interests of law enforcement, is the single most important defense weapon a police officer can carry—if you turn it on. If you leave it off, it’s a useless tool.” State laws vary on consent. Using a video camera before and after executing a search warrant can help a police department’s case if a lawsuit is filed over damages—the police have a record that could help the defense counsel and possibly kill the lawsuit before it reaches the court. Mayer said training is of “monumental” importance in law enforcement.

Simulation Training Technologies. Simulation training provides law enforcement with a means to hone skills while reducing risk. Lt. Forrest Billington, Emergency Vehicle Operations Center, San Bernardino Sheriff’s Department, said that between 2,000 and 2,500 students go through his department’s driver simulation training each year. Benefits include the ability to create scenarios that are too complicated and too dangerous to replicate in actual training; and the ability to identify problem traits in students before they are in the actual situation. Billington said use of technology is critical because it allows the training of many people in a short time and can provide a realistic evaluation of student judgment and decisionmaking skills.

Location & Tracking Technologies. This session focused on both the technology of location and tracking and on practical application in placing a system. Spokesmen for the Rockwell Corporation presented a detailed description of the Global Positioning System (GPS). Also discussed was the equipping of the Redondo Beach Police Department with GPS, and how department considerations were answered. A discussion of labor relations relating to GPS

implementation followed. Also presented was a detailed look at current and future technology regarding the tracking command and control system.

Video Surveillance Systems & Imagery Analysis. Robert Rodger of the Police Scientific Development Branch in the United Kingdom addressed closed circuit television in public areas (CCTV) as an effective tool for crime detection and deterrence. Rodger advised potential users to define their needs and operational requirements before acquiring a system. CCTV evidence can direct an investigation and result in a noncontested trial, saving time and money.

Berkeley Police Capt. Patrick Phelps and Officer Peter Bjeldanes discussed the use of a remote controlled video surveillance system and cleverly disguised cameras hidden in everyday objects. The audience viewed a video sampling of filmed criminal activity obtained by undercover police officers. These innovative video techniques provide a less confrontational, cost-efficient means of combating crime.

Training Technology Delivery Applications. Partnering with different agencies to prepare and disseminate training materials allows for sharing of expertise and expenses. Speakers from Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) Ken Whitman, Dr. Dennis Aronson, Ray Bray, and G. Kelly Michelson elaborated on the use of interactive multimedia and microwave- and satellite-based technology teleconferencing. Though Telecourses (distant learning) are expensive to prepare and cannot be used for psychomotor skills training, they can be easily updated, are cost effective within partnerships, and have high-retention results.

P.O.S.T.-certified training via the Internet is another resource for law enforcement. “It addresses one of the biggest issues today—duplication of efforts and costs,” said Frank Patino from the Rio Hondo Regional Training Center. Patino discussed online courses available from the Rio Hondo College Web Site, Department of Public Service. The Web site offers real time chats, a questions and answers page, videotapes, synopses, and entire programs.

Conclusion and Thanks

In concluding the conference, David Boyd, Director, Office of Science and Technology, NIJ, praised the various agencies and staff who helped organize the event, as well as participants and exhibitors. “The California team did a remarkable job putting this conference together,” Boyd said. He cited NLECTC-WR Director Robert Pentz and Program Manager Mike Epstein, and individuals from the California Department of Corrections; the police department of Hawthorne, California; the Los Angeles County Forensics Lab; the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department; the California Department of Justice; California Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.); the Aerospace Corporation; and the Redondo Beach Police Department.

Also thanked were the American Defense Preparedness Association; the Advisory Council for the Western Region; and NLECTC staff in Rockville, Maryland.

Conference Vice Chairman VADM E.A. Burkhalter, USN (Ret.), said, “I don’t believe I’ve ever attended a 3-day session that I thought was more productive or more stimulating. That comes from the hard work of a lot of people—moderators, panelists, and those of you who participated.”

Exhibitors

The conference, which was attended by more than 400 people, gave vendors the opportunity to display their products and services to both line officers and decisionmakers from the Federal, State, and local levels. More than 20 vendors exhibited products, ranging from firearms training to imaging systems

Technology Beat is a periodical published by NIJ’s National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center that was adapted as a daily newsletter for this conference. This issue highlights the last day’s events. **Technology Beat** is published periodically to highlight the activities of NIJ’s Office of Science and Technology and other public safety technology initiatives.