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PRACTICE NOTE

Information and Intelligence Sharing: The Louisiana State Analytical and Fusion Exchange's Assistance to State and Local Law Enforcement Personnel

PRACTICE

Louisiana State Analytical and Fusion Exchange (LA-SAFE) personnel leveraged their technical, analytical, and information-dissemination capabilities to help law enforcement agencies apprehend a wanted fugitive, identify a missing terrorist suspect, and uncover a drive-by-shooting hoax.

DESCRIPTION

The Louisiana Department of Homeland Security, Louisiana State Police, and the Louisiana Governor's Office, along with other federal, state, and local law enforcement and public safety agencies, partnered to form LA-SAFE in October 2004. LA-SAFE serves as Louisiana's state fusion center by facilitating the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of homeland security and crime information among federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and the private sector. LA-SAFE aims to improve Louisiana's ability to safeguard against terrorism and criminal activity. The following three examples illustrate how LA-SAFE has assisted law enforcement agencies in the state.

First, a captain from the West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, Sherriff's Office (WFPSO) requested that LA-SAFE run a database check on an uncooperative shooting subject who at the time had been receiving treatment at a nearby hospital. WFPSO had previously run the individual through the department's database with negative results. However, LA-SAFE's database check pulled information from multiple police databases in the area, which resulted in the identification of a warrant for the individual's arrest. LA-SAFE notified WFPSO officers, who apprehended the subject as he was attempting to leave the hospital. The subject would have been released had LA-SAFE not located the arrest warrant.

Second, on April 13, 2009, a Louisiana State Police criminal intelligence detective observed an individual acting suspiciously in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The detective provided the individual's name to LA-SAFE personnel, who ran a database check and discovered that the individual was a Violent Gang and Terrorist Organization File (VGTOF) member. LA-SAFE forwarded this information to the local Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) field office. The FBI determined that this individual was a previous terror suspect who had disappeared after Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana.

The National Criminal Information Center created the Violent Gang and Terrorist Organization File as a way to identify members of violent criminal gangs and terrorist organizations. This information serves to warn law enforcement officers of the potential danger posed by certain individuals as well as to assist in criminal or terrorist investigations.

The FBI resumed its investigation and monitoring of the individual as a result of LA-SAFE's efforts.

Third, on April 23, 2009, LA-SAFE received information from Ascension Parish, Louisiana, authorities regarding a drive-by shooting that had occurred in the parish along the I-10 corridor. LA-SAFE disseminated a "request for information" to state and local law enforcement agencies asking if there had been any similar incidents reported in their own jurisdictions. A member of the New Orleans FBI field office responded to the request and notified LA-SAFE that similar reports had been submitted to Florida authorities but turned out to be hoaxes. LA-SAFE relayed this information to area police departments. When no victims from the alleged shootings came forward and no police reports were filed, law enforcement agencies realized that this report was indeed a hoax. LA-SAFE's quick dissemination of information prevented the wasteful use of critical law enforcement resources.

CITATION

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