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Colorado - Regional Explosives Unit Protects Police Officers

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SUMMARY

The South Central Regional Explosives Unit responds to hundreds of explosive related calls in 33 Colorado counties each year. The Unit has responded to calls for service involving drug facilities, and suspicious packages.

DESCRIPTION

The unit responds and serves as the primary bomb squad for Homeland Security in the South Central Region, which encompasses five counties: Chaffee, El Paso, Lake, Park and Teller, as well as the Colorado Springs Metropolitan area (total estimated population of 720,256). Additionally, due to the limited number of geographically positioned certified bomb squads within the state of Colorado, the Colorado Springs Regional Explosives Unit serves approximately 33 additional counties in the southern part of Colorado.

Prior to this investment, when rural towns received bomb threats, town officials called upon retired miners or mountaineers to assess the threat – first responders in the area lacked explosive expertise and requesting assistance outside the jurisdiction was complicated and time consuming.

This team of explosives experts conducted more than 260 operations from 2010-2012. The unit recently deployed in response to a Russian training artillery device with a cell phone trigger next to a Buena Vista police station. The unit neutralized the explosive using a grant-funded Andros F6A bomb robot. The use of a bomb robot dramatically shortens response time, reduces property damage, and enhances officer safety. As a testament to the enhancement of responding officer safety, the unit's bomb robot was shot seven times in the last year and severely damaged with an explosive detonated during an operation.

INVESTMENT INFORMATION

Since 2010, Colorado has invested nearly \$500,000 in State Homeland Security Program funding to create and equip the South Central Regional Explosives Unit, a team of experts that responds to hundreds of explosive related calls each year throughout the region. As a direct result of the program, first responders are better equipped and trained to provide vital public safety services to communities within the State of Colorado.

Figure 1: Bomb robot used by the South Central Regional Explosives Unit

ABOUT THE LESSONS LEARNED INFORMATION SHARING PROGRAM

The LLIS program develops and disseminates lessons learned, trend analyses, case studies, and innovative ideas to improve preparedness for the emergency management and homeland security communities. These documents, produced through research and analysis by the LLIS team, support whole community learning and continuous improvement.

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