More Feet on the Street

Supporting police with the information they need to protect the community and themselves

With more than 6 million pages of records and 225,000 audio files, the City of Riverside's document management solution arms police with a vast reserve of case knowledge. It also simplifies the work of records staff and helps the entire department get more from every budget dollar.

Records Manager Roz Vinson and Captain Mike Blakely reveal how the Riverside, CA, Police Department took bold first steps and now makes great strides in quality of service to officers and the community.

More than 100,000 pages accumulate in the Records Bureau each year due to high volume and long retention. Every day, nearly 300 new reports are filed. Homicide records are never destroyed, and other felony records have a 10-year retention. The state's three-strikes law mandates permanent retention for related records. The Records Bureau also must navigate the web of rules and regulations that governs the release of police records: the Freedom of Information Act, the California Public Records Act, court orders. Bureau staff must verify each requestor's right to know before releasing sensitive documents.

That's the records management side. On the street, officers and detectives need complete information to work safely and effectively. But according to Captain Blakely, in the past, "We simply couldn't afford to have officers off the streets long enough to pull together all of the details they might need."

The challenge facing Riverside PD was how to put more intelligence into officers' hands without pulling them off the street to wait in line for records. All without compromising security or complicating the already difficult job of the Records Bureau.

"The push for conversion from paper-based files to electronic document management started in the mid-1990s with senior police officials who were very pro-technology," Ms. Vinson says.

Captain Blakely adds, "We have a fiduciary responsibility to get value from tax dollars. We felt that we had an obligation to enable the officers we had to be more efficient and chose to focus our attention on automation."

Organization Profile

The City of Riverside is a thriving Southern California municipality just southeast of Los Angeles. The Riverside Police Department serves this community of 255,000 residents with over 550 sworn and non-sworn employees.

Situation

High volume and long retention periods increase the size of the Riverside PD's records repository by more than 100,000 pages per year. The challenge facing the department was how to get millions of pages of accumulated knowledge into the hands of officers and investigators without taking them off the street to wait for records.

Solution

Integrated with the department's CAD system, the Laserfiche® solution manages more than 6 million pages of records and 225,000 digital audio recordings. Records Bureau staff, detectives, sergeants and the Legal Department have customized access rights based on their need to use the information under appropriate guidelines.

Benefits

- Officers spend more time on the street and less time waiting for paper records
- Police are better prepared with easier access to more complete case information
- Records Bureau staff more easily manages complex records retention requirements
- CAD integration reduces data entry and automates records filing

Laserfiche Components

- Enterprise Server
- Workflow Suite™
- Audit Trail-Advanced™ with Watermark
- Plus™ CD Publishing
- Snapshot™

Laserfiche®

A successful proposal to the federal Office of Community Oriented Policing Services' Making Officer Redeployment Effective (COPS MORE) program won the funding. Riverside proposed that a document management solution would free officers to spend more time on the streets and less time waiting for records.

The Laserfiche project got underway in 2000. Records Bureau staffers were the first authorized users. Only when Ms. Vinson had confirmed the effectiveness of the system to her rigorous standards did she consider providing wider access. "You just can't afford to have computer programs down if you are a detective working a case," she says.

In 2001, the department extended access to detectives and sergeants. "We've slowly increased the number of users, making sure we did sufficient training to prevent the introduction of errors," she says. "We now have 250 users."

Detectives, sergeants and police management have access to reports in Laserfiche. The Legal Department has read-only access. This alone is a major gain in efficiency over pre-document management days, when bureau staff lost countless hours making copies for the Legal Department, the District Attorney and other law enforcement agencies.

And what improves productivity in the Records Bureau helps protect officers in the field. "Thanks to our document management project," says Captain Blakely, "the reports are available, and they do read them. Knowing the full details, including descriptions of suspects, means that they are going to be more prepared and, therefore, safer."

The Records Bureau is also exploring application integration to further advance its records automation strategy. Its CAD system is already integrated with Laserfiche to automatically create case folders in the document management repository.

The integrated solution creates an archival TIFF image of the CAD history, autopopulates index information from the CAD system and places it in the Laserfiche folder. That folder then becomes the primary holder of case information, including supplemental reports, toxicology reports, photo sheets, CLETS teletypes and more.

Looking ahead, Riverside PD plans to build on today's successes. Ms. Vinson's vision is to have all reports, digital audio and video recordings, digital photos and supplemental information accessible in one Laserfiche case file.

Until then, she concludes, the current improvements mean that "police officers and detectives are on the streets more than before, with more information at their fingertips."

"If you want to know how different things are, go on a ride-along with officers who were here before we automated our record-keeping."

Captain Mike Blakely

About Laserfiche

A resource for over 23,000 public- and private-sector organizations around the world since 1987, Laserfiche creates simple, elegant document management solutions that help organizations run smarter. From streamlining digital records management to automating the agenda process, Laserfiche helps improve efficiency while integrating seamlessly within any environment.

Your Next Step

Visit **laserfiche.com/gov** to get a free white paper on implementing an electronic document management system. Or call **(800) 985-8533** to get answers now.

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