

New police database has others interested

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Springfield Police officials said the recent launch of a new departmentwide computer system could make the city safer; and Greene County law enforcement wants in.

Law enforcement officials from the city and the county met Tuesday afternoon to discuss an unprecedented partnership in information sharing.

"We've shared information, but never to the extent that we are talking about," said Sherry Royal, police services administrator for Springfield Police.

This shared information can be extremely useful if in the right hands at the right time, Royal said.

"Hopefully, more crime gets solved -- that would be the goal," she said. "Or more crime gets prevented -- that's even better."

Niche

The potential partnership is made possible by a new record management system, called Niche, that Springfield officers have been using since last Sunday.

Chief Paul Williams said Niche is "working out great so far" as it networks patrol cars to each other, to administrators and to databases of criminal activity.

Royal said the new system will reduce the amount of time officers need to fill out paperwork, thereby increasing time spent catching criminals.

The ability to swipe a driver's license instead of entering the information manually is one time-saving example Royal listed.

It also gives officers in the field more actionable information than previous record systems, she said.

Williams said the technology could allow information to be shared with county law enforcement in real time.

"The biggest problem is our computer systems won't talk to each other," said Sheriff Jim Arnott.

Niche could make that communication possible, but the cost was still unclear after Tuesday's meeting.

"We gotta know a price," Arnott said. "Our budget is close to nothing."

Royal priced the system for the police department at about \$700,000 in grant funding, but estimates the county could be integrated for less.

Another meeting to discuss the partnership is tentatively scheduled for March.

Williams said other municipalities have expressed interest in the sharing system, including the Republic Police Department.

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Abstract (Document Summary)

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