

POLICE UPDATE SYSTEM PROGRAM EVALUATES JOB CANDIDATES

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

An expenditure of just over \$20,000 will allow the Miramar police department to update its screening process for police candidates and more efficiently obtain grants that will benefit the department.

“We have been using what is called a B-pad system (Behavioral Personnel Assessment Device Simulation) for several years to screen police applicants,” explained Captain Denny Davis. “This system is used nationwide to help process candidates.”

Davis said that the computer program presents a candidate with five scenarios that police officers encounter in their daily work, such as a hysterical person or a normal traffic stop, and provides an opportunity for the department’s Professional Standards Unit to see how a person responds.

“Basically, they sit in front of a screen and watch the situation, then they talk as if they were talking to the person,” Davis said. “Their responses are reviewed by a panel of two police officers and a civilian who score them.”

“We want to see how they talk and how they interact with people,” Davis said.

Davis reported that the candidates who participate in the test do not have to be trained police officers to respond well. “While some of the situations provoke thought, we are more interested in testing their interpersonal skills and their ability to handle situations. We are not testing their knowledge.”

The B-pad program that the city purchased contains new material that is updated every three or four years.

The acquisition was made possible by Florida State Law Enforcement Forfeiture Funds made available to the city. The city commissioners approved the expenditure on June 4.

Funds from the same source were also used to purchase the eCivis Grants Locator System that will allow the city to better locate and apply for grants that can fund police department programs.

“The locator system provides a listing of sources of grants and is more searchable,” said Tymira Mack, a grant writer for the Miramar police department. The system is designed to reduce the time that employees spend searching for grant opportunities.

Other city departments will also have unlimited access to the grant locator system.

Mack said that there are many grants available for police work including those that have funded a youth crime watch, a victims advocacy program, school resource officers and community police.

The majority of grants that the department receives are from federal funds received directly or as pass-through grants via the Florida state government.

During her three years with the department, Mack has raised \$2 million dollars in grants for police work.

“I’m excited about what I do,” Mack said. “If I can help out, it makes me feel good.”

POLICE UPDATE SYSTEM PROGRAM EVALUATES JOB CANDIDATES, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, June 25, 2003