

SkyCop ® is “Sweet Music” in the Blues City for Memphis Police Department

Memphis, TN. As criminals embrace more creative ways to evade law enforcement, it has become clear that just having a police presence in the community is becoming less effective to reducing crime. That is exactly what the Memphis Police Department recognized before launching its 2009 IACP award-winning Blue Crush initiative. Blue Crush stands for “Crime Reduction Using Statistical History” and entails the mapping and analysis of statistical information gathered through a variety of sources including an integrated approach of surveillance in targeted crime hot spots. Since 2005, Blue Crush has proven to be highly effective in the identification of chronic criminal perpetrators leading to increased public safety, law enforcement efficiency, and higher arrests ratios. You can now add Blue Crush to Memphis’ Beale Street, barbecue, and blue suede shoes.

However, to launch Blue Crush effectively, the Memphis Police Department had to find the right technological platform that supports state-of-the-art surveillance equipment with the capability of gathering critical information used to identify crime-ridden hotspots in the Blues City. Senior law enforcement leaders contacted the SkyCop team to design the platform and assemble the supporting equipment that would provide the department with the ability to begin intelligence-led policing. Now the department applies research-based approaches to determine an area’s susceptibility to criminal activity occurring through the use of video, audio and other sensing technology to harness critical data intelligence. According to Lt. Ken Shackelford of MPD, SkyCop ® was the needed solution for innovative technology that serves as the platform for Memphis’ Real Time Crime Center.

The value of the SkyCop ® surveillance technology has proven to be invaluable. After rolling out Blue Crush using SkyCop ® technology, the city saw a 10 percent reduction in crime due to robust data collection and analysis. SkyCop ® has been extremely effective in running the criminal out of town, and now the SkyCop ® team is installing advanced surveillance and monitoring technology in nearby cities. For most thugs in Memphis, the thrill of committing crimes is definitely gone for sure.

The SkyCop ® remote video and mobile trailers allow law enforcement to be strategic in their surveillance efforts and to cast a bigger net of policing presence in more locales. SkyCop ® collects data that pinpoints where the hotspots are so MPD can allocate the needed resources to fight crime as the criminal moves. All critical information is transmitted to an “interoperable regional data-sharing center that is based on a multi-pronged approach” according to Lt. Ken Shackelford with the Memphis Police Department, and “this approach is data sharing, video surveillance, and crime analysis”. The SkyCop ® is scalable and flexible and can start from basic equipment and software such as remote camera systems up to a cutting-edge fusion center such as MPD’s Real Time Crime Center. Surveillance equipment can be placed remotely as fixed units or can be attached to mobile trailers that allow officers to monitor activity from any vantage point. In addition, SkyCop ® offers several options for license plate recognition on police vehicles, digital recording systems, and wireless communications capabilities.

When the Memphis Police Department piloted LPR technology [License Plate Recognition] on a cruiser, two officers across 12 shifts were able to complete 27 arrests, recover two stolen vehicle recoveries, and apprehend four major felony warrants. What is unique is that the LPR systems provide the officers with an audible when a suspicious or tagged license plate passes by the police vehicle. According to Lt. Shackelford, “This capability allows the officer to multi-task and still watch for the criminal element. Without the LPR system, they [MPD officers] would have no idea if there was an issue unless they run every tag. Each tag is checked one-by-one against all of these databases.” Since 2008, Memphis Police

Department has installed over 70 police cars equipped with LPR technology, some including infrared and thermal imaging cameras, as part of its mobile arsenal to detect criminal activity.

In reflecting back on the decision to choose SkyCop ®, Lt. Shackleford quotes, "We quickly learned that we needed to leverage technology to monitor more crime hot spots than we had resources. We looked around in the market and could not find the perfect solution with the needed technological capabilities and scalability to perform the job. We turned to SkyCop ® as our solution for intelligent-policing. SkyCop ® is a proven platform used to fight crime, and now we look to expand our relationship for additional electronic surveillance and monitoring innovation".

Written by the SkyCop ® Staff Reporter with the assistance and permission of the Memphis Police Department, Memphis, Tennessee.

SkyCop ® is a patented product.