IACP NetSM: Helping the St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office Be the Best It Can Be

The St. Johns County, Florida, Sheriff’s Office has a straightforward vision statement: “Be the best we can be, in all that we do.”

David Shoar, Sheriff of St. Johns County since 2004, works hard to live up to this vision. A leader in his department and his community, Shoar has won many awards and letters of recommendation from both colleagues and civilians in his 29-year career.

Add Flexibility During Tough Budget Years
Part of doing what’s best for the residents is utilizing the county’s monetary resources as efficiently as possible. The most important issues St. Johns County faces today are budgetary—dealing with constraints on resources while still staying on the leading edge of technology and training. “Like everyone else in the United States right now, we’re trying to do more with less,” said Shoar. Fortunately, the sheriff has IACP Net to help overcome these challenges. Helping departments accomplish more with fewer resources is what IACP Net is all about. Sheriff Shoar was originally introduced to the service at a previous agency, and made sure to take out a membership for St. Johns County upon becoming sheriff. Despite budgetary limitations, he has no problem justifying IACP Net—citing significant cost savings over time.

“IACP Net’s annual cost of membership is easily outweighed by the savings realized in time saved by myself and my staff when we have to research an issue,” noted Sheriff Shoar. “Another cost savings is having subject matter experts just a click away, rather than paying them through costly retainers and hourly billings.”

Dynamic Problem-Solving Tools at Your Fingertips
The sheriff has used IACP Net’s Quest-ResponseSM service to query other departments on TASER® usage, policy development, and radio systems. “IACP Net is a great place to go,” noted Sheriff Shoar. “We’ve found it to be a great resource; staff can do what needs to be done.”

“I recommend IACP Net to all sheriffs and chiefs in the country—it’s a wonderful tool.”

New Additions to the IACP Net Database

Mobile Biometrics: The Potential for Real-Time Identification in the Field
As technology and hardware become smaller and more portable, companies that specialize in biometric identification have brought a powerful breed of tools to the law-enforcement and military markets: mobile multi-modal biometric devices. These gadgets capture ten fingerprints, the face, and the irises of both eyes, and then use that data to confirm an individual’s identity. But can that technology be useful to the crime-scene officer or investigator?

Document No. 612890

Counterterrorism: A Local Perspective
September 11, 2001, changed the law enforcement community. Most notable is the cooperation and information sharing among local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies regarding security threat groups. Developing a counterterrorism program at your agency is essential to covering your area of responsibility at whatever level you represent. This article lists a few initiatives that are being used by the Linden, New Jersey, Police Department that require little or no cost to implement. Document No. 612881

The Returning Military Veteran: Is Your Organization Ready?
Many law enforcement officers nobly serve their country not only at home but

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For Shoar, IACP Net is the ultimate tool for researching issues due to its exclusive focus on the law enforcement market. “IACP Net articles focus narrowly on law enforcement issues and are written by law enforcement personnel or those directly connected to the profession—which makes them invaluable,” emphasized the sheriff. “My staff and I are able to find concise information, rather than general articles written for public consumption by those who don’t understand the dynamics law enforcement agencies must deal with.”

IACP Net is also a dynamic tool for learning and quick online precedent-gathering when departments need extra support for their actions. “A staff member reviews IACP Net several times a week looking for articles in the Core and Policies Databases that support what we are doing and that we can learn from. We forward those articles to the folks doing the hands-on job for review and consideration.”

Shoar is enthusiastic about IACP Net’s capabilities. “For anyone considering joining IACP Net, I can confirm that this is ‘the’ online source for law enforcement professionals,” said Shoar. “It gives the St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office the ability to directly ask questions of colleagues, as well as providing direct access to a vast number of best practices within the industry.”

For these reasons and more, Sheriff Shoar endorses IACP Net: “I recommend IACP Net to all sheriffs and chiefs in the country—it’s a wonderful tool.”

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research and query people in the field. It’s a great tool—a police library at your fingertips.”

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IACP Net in Focus—Social Networking

Developing a social networking policy for your agency.

As a law enforcement leader, you know what it takes to run a modern police department or sheriff’s office. From keeping shifts filled and researching new equipment to staying on top of administrative tasks like updating policies and finding training opportunities, the demands on your time and resources keep growing.

Let’s look at a typical task—developing a new policy pertaining to the use of social networking at your agency. You may start by searching for “social network policy” using one of those big search engines. That yields over 125 million results, but which ones are relevant to law enforcement? Changing the search to “social network policy law enforcement” still shows over 22 million results. That’s a lot of links to search through to find what you’re looking for—if it’s even there at all.

IACP Net can help!

With your departmental membership to IACP Net, you have access to a library of over 60,000 documents containing best practices, innovations, and solutions on hot topics in law enforcement, plus a network of over 4,000 law-enforcement leaders to share experiences and knowledge. All of the resources available through the site are relevant to law enforcement and vetted by our team of information professionals, so you know that the results you find are reliable and trustworthy.

We’ll start our search on IACP Net by entering the keywords “social network” in the Site Search box. This search quickly yields 199 results in nine different sections of IACP Net. Included in the results from the Core Database is an article from Police Chief magazine discussing the need for such a policy and considerations for employee use while off duty, as well as several documents discussing the use of social media in community policing efforts. If you need to convince others in the department that social media is a valuable and powerful policing tool, IACP Net gives you the resources to make your case.

Now let’s turn to the Policies Database to see how other departments are addressing this issue. By searching the Policies Database using the keywords “social media,” we find eight policies. If we change our keyword to “Facebook” we increase our results to 12 policies. With these documents as a reference, you now have a great jumping-off point as you develop a policy for your agency.

Don’t forget the Forms Database! There you will find several Internet usage forms that you may want to incorporate into your agency’s policy. With IACP Net you don’t have to reinvent the wheel. You save time by building off the successes of other departments.

If you’re interested in hearing how other agencies are facing this and other hot-button issues, the Quest-Response service is a great place to turn. By posting a Quest you are reaching out to command-level staff at over 1,700 law enforcement agencies across the country and internationally. It is also a great place to share your knowledge and experience to help other agencies solve their toughest issues.

IACP Net’s Calendar section shows you available training opportunities related to your search criteria.

A keyword search of the Quest-Response service yields several discussions of social networking issues, including one pertaining to officers’ use of social media sites while on the clock and on their own time. Since all Quests and Responses include full contact information, you can quickly find other law enforcement leaders to contact regarding this controversial issue.

IACP Net’s Calendar section at the time of publication of this newsletter includes information on seven social networking-related training opportunities. They focus on a range of issues around this topic, from policing officers’ use of social media to utilizing these new tools to engage and inform the public.

This is just one example of how IACP Net can be used to find the information and resources that can help you get things accomplished at your agency. With IACP Net at your disposal, you will reduce the time spent on administrative tasks, and be at the leading edge of law enforcement trends and innovations. For more information, or to request a free demo of the site and 24-hour pass, give us a call at 800.227.9640, or take the virtual tour at www.iacpnet.com.
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