

Program Narrative

Statement of the Problem

Drugs and other criminal activity often associated with *urban America* have taken a strong foothold in rural South Dakota. The law officers in this region have witnessed the steady increase of drug activity and the related crimes that are closely associated. The National Drug Intelligence Center's *Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Drug Market Analysis 2008* highlighted the fact that "...street gangs based in Chicago, Detroit, and Minneapolis transport large quantities of powder cocaine, crack cocaine, and other illicit drugs to Midwest HIDTA markets in Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota." According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Mexican drug cartels have been tied to distribution rings in both Sioux Falls (SD) and Fargo (ND). The transportation corridor between these two cities is Interstate 29, which runs through Watertown and northeast South Dakota. The city of Watertown has experienced a 213% increase in drug arrests since 2004. Many of the rural law enforcement agencies within our region are ill-equipped to effectively combat drugs and associated urban crime problems. The people in this area of the upper Midwest are generally considered to be good, honest, law abiding people that want to help themselves and their neighbors. While this description is stereotypical, it is accurate; however, the profile of the citizens has not prevented *big city* problems from migrating into our rural areas of America.

Information sharing between the rural law enforcement agencies within the state is simplistic and consists of teletypes, quarterly meetings and informal undocumented communications. For example, the State of South Dakota does not operate its own records management system. The State only collects data required to comply with minimum NIBRS/UCR requirements. It is common for several different agencies to simultaneously, but unknowingly, be investigating related crimes committed by the same suspects who move about

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the region.

The primary connection between the law enforcement agencies within the region is through the WPD E-911 center, which is currently only capable of voice radio communications. The E-911 center provides contractual services to Codington, Day, Grant, Hamlin, and the southern third Roberts Counties, thus providing Enhanced-911 services to 15 law enforcement jurisdictions. The E-911 center suffers from problems associated with outdated equipment that lacks uniformity in technical standards and capabilities. The resulting mismatch of old and new technologies is quite difficult to maintain, problematic at best and dangerous at worst. For example, E-911 service is frequently disrupted due to failures in the existing equipment, officers are often dispatched having incomplete information, and surrounding areas often duplicate services due to outdated communications. Currently, each agency maintains its own incident, intelligence, warrants, and arrest files and photographs. The inability to share information among these various agencies has proven to be a significant hindrance.

Roberts County has requested the WPD to provide contractual E-911 services to the remaining two-thirds of Roberts County. They recognize the *enhanced* level of service provided by the WPD E-911 center will be a vast improvement over the Basic-911 service currently available to their residents. Roberts County sits almost entirely within the Sisseton-Wahpeton Indian Reservation, and 21.4% of Roberts County residents live below the poverty line (2000 U.S. Census). According to an NIJ Journal article, *Policing on American Indian Reservations* (Jan. 2001), "...the violent crime rate in Indian country is likely to be between double and triple the national average, comparable communities would be large urban areas with high violent crime rates." Because the projected call volume in the northern two-thirds of Roberts County will be too great for the existing E-911 center staff to handle, the plan has stalled.

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There is no immediate means of funding the necessary addition of these vitally needed dispatchers. According to the South Dakota Department of Labor, the unemployment rate in Watertown climbed from 2.8 percent in October of 2008 to 7.2 percent in February of 2009. The WPD and existing E-911 center have outgrown their physical space, and therefore the City of Watertown has hired an architectural firm and is currently in the design phase, making the project to construct a new WPD and E-911 center “shovel ready.” The E-911 center is funded by telephone surcharge monies, which are not sufficient to fully fund current operations. As a result, the E-911 center’s budget is subsidized by the City of Watertown’s general fund, which is derived from sales tax revenues, which have suffered from a slowdown in the local economy.

Recently, the WPD partnered with the Codington County Sheriff’s Office to implement New World Systems multi-jurisdictional Records Management and Computer Aided Dispatch software. In all, the WPD has invested over \$1 million in technology upgrades to include AFR-RMS, CAD, and CAD mapping. As a result, WPD officers can now search the RMS from the field during investigations. They can see the location of other officers on a digital map, which greatly improves safety. Additionally, fifteen other South Dakota police agencies have implemented the same software, which is compliant with industry standards including; UCR, NIBRS, NIEM, N-DEx, and Global Justice XML Data Model. However, none of these agencies have expanded their individual systems into a regional information exchange model. The Northeast South Dakota Rural Information Exchange Model (RIEM) will spread the technology advancements already enjoyed by the WPD to smaller agencies and extend justice information beyond the county line. Simply put...the WPD already has the hub in place; we now need to add the spokes to this information sharing wheel. With RIEM, we will serve as a model for other rural American police agencies to emulate.

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Program Design and Implementation

Internationally renowned experts in criminology and police information systems Mark M. Lanier, Ph.D., Mike Flint, Ph.D. and, Kenneth Mike Reynolds, Ph.D. served as consultants on the development of RIEM. The project objective of RIEM is enhanced sharing of criminal justice related information between 15 law enforcement jurisdictions in a 5 county area. RIEM is consistent with the goals of the Recovery Act. It will create 4 new jobs and will add significant and essential technology upgrades. A viable plan to sustain the new jobs at the end of the grant period has been developed and is explained in detail in the Impact/Outcomes portion of this document.

RIEM will add 3 new communications officers to the E-911 center, which will enable the expansion of E-911 services into the northern two-thirds of Roberts County. RIEM will also create a fourth vital job. A Police Information Systems Technician (PIST) will be hired to service computers networked to the WPD. RIEM will facilitate the flow of information through the acquisition of laptop computers, which will be installed in 45 municipal, county, and tribal patrol cars that are not currently equipped with computers. The computers will include software necessary for end users to; 1) communicate directly with the E-911 center, 2) view mapping information related to calls for service and officer location, 3) generate and submit police reports to the WPD servers, and 4) query the database during field investigations. The computers are an essential part of RIEM and will serve as the conduit through which the entire information sharing network will flow to and from officers in the field.

RIEM will allow for the acquisition and utilization of “*next-gen*” equipment, which is essential to the success of RIEM. Four complete CAD stations will be implemented and configured to allow radio and computer communications with every law enforcement officer in

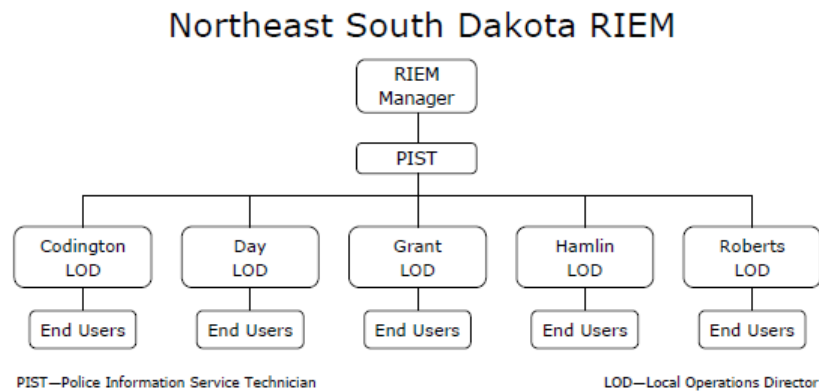
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the region. Modern dispatch equipment will better facilitate the flow of information to and from the E-911 center, and will result in the more efficient sharing of criminal justice related information among the fifteen agencies that serve the region.

RIEM will be implemented in phases. In Phase 1, three new dispatchers and the PIST will be hired and trained. In Phase 2, forty-five laptop computers will be acquired, and configured to access the WPD servers. In Phase 3, the laptops will be installed in patrol cars and end users will be trained. One new county will be brought on-line each month, which will allow ample time to work through any issues. In Phase 4, “*next gen*” equipment will be acquired and installed in the new dispatch center. Phase 5 will be a comprehensive review process to identify and resolve any end user problems.

Capabilities/Competencies

The Northeast South Dakota RIEM management structure is shown in the figure below.



The Administrative Services Captain of the WPD will serve as the RIEM Manager and will oversee the entire RIEM system, while user and operational supervision will be delegated to the PIST and Local Operations Directors (LODs), representatives from each of the counties being served. The RIEM Manager will establish agency and user policies, and will be responsible for addressing any information sharing policies and agreements that may emerge. The RIEM Manager will coordinate the operational use of the system, grant and revoke user rights, and

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provide initial user training and/or refresher courses. The LODs will serve as points of contact with end users in each county and will facilitate communication to and from the RIEM Manager.

In the early phases of the project, the RIEM Manager will collaborate with the LODs to establish an appropriate implementation and training schedule for agencies within each county. The RIEM Manager will also coordinate the installation of the hardware and software components, which will ultimately be performed by the PIST. Once RIEM is operational, the RIEM Manager will support the LODs on a daily basis and hold monthly group sessions with the LODs, at which time success stories and lessons learned from end users will be shared with the group as a whole. The sessions will also provide an opportunity to evaluate and improve the system by addressing user issues and problems, with the goal of improving functionality.

The City of Watertown Finance Office provides budgetary and other financial guidance to the WPD. They will assist the RIEM Manager to ensure that grant expenditures and drawdowns associated with RIEM are tracked separately from any other federal, state, or local sources of funding.

Impact/Outcomes, Evaluation, Sustainment, and Description

The WPD has the capacity to actively participate in an evaluation managed by NIJ. The WPD has participated in several federal grant projects in the past and has complied with reporting requirements. RIEM, by its very nature, is designed to be a data management system, and will help to effectively facilitate the evaluation process. The RIEM Manager will be responsible for overseeing the collection of data related to the evaluation of the project. RIEM's effectiveness will be demonstrated by two methods; 1) surveys will be administered to the end users to determine RIEM's impact in assisting end users, 2) the exchange of data captured by RIEM will be closely tracked as part of the evaluation process.

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PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Number of jobs retained – While there is an immediate threat, the WPD has yet to lose any jobs due to the recent downturn in the economy. Therefore, RIEM would not directly retain any jobs.

Number of jobs created – RIEM will result in the creation of 4 new full-time jobs. This addition of personnel will have a significant impact on rural law enforcement in the region. Additional dispatchers will allow a critical E-911 service to be provided to some 8000 residents who are currently without it. The PIST will help ensure there is little or no interruption to the system through which essential justice information flows. The data related to the wages and other benefits associated with the hiring of new personnel will be calculated by the City of Watertown Finance Office and will be submitted as part of the performance evaluation process.

Percent of essential services maintained without disruption – The services provided by the E-911 center are critical to the overall mission of the WPD and essential to the mission of RIEM. The existing dispatch equipment is antiquated, and E-911 service is frequently disrupted due to system failure. Once this model project is implemented, data related to the number, and duration, of disruptions will be collected and compared against previously collected data.

Number of collaborative partnerships established to avoid reductions in essential services and duplication – RIEM is the result of a collaborative partnership among 15 law enforcement jurisdictions. The partnerships will provide sharing of a computer network and justice related information, which will in turn reduce the duplication that would be required if each individual jurisdiction were to work independently. The specific number of partnerships created by RIEM will be documented and submitted as it is implemented.

Amount of electronic information exchanged – RIEM will result in the merger of fifteen individual justice information databases that will be stored on the same computer server, which

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will be accessible by any officer within the region. The number of new database submissions (name files, incidents, arrests, etc) and the number of NCIC inquiries through the network will be tracked and provided during the evaluation process. RIEM will result in the steady increase in name files and other relevant information available to officers, which will translate into an improved ability to combat crime and drugs throughout the region.

A viable sustainment plan for RIEM has been developed. It involves using a combination of City of Watertown sales tax dollars, and additional telephone surcharge revenues resulting from the expansion into the northern two-thirds of Roberts County. Additional revenues from the expansion will provide a projected annual increase of \$45,900. Furthermore, the counties being served by the E-911 center are aware of an upcoming increase in the percentage of surcharge monies that will be paid to the City of Watertown. The current contracts, which expire in December of 2010, require each county to remit 75% of its surcharge revenue to the City of Watertown in exchange for 911 services. The 2011 contracts will call for 100% of that surcharge revenue and will result in an additional projected annual increase of \$65,800. Thus, the total annual increase in surcharge revenue will be \$111,700. Additional personnel annual expense is expected to be \$170,000. The \$58,300 shortage will be funded by City of Watertown sales tax revenue that otherwise would have funded capital improvement projects in the E-911 center. The new equipment acquired by this project will result in a decreased need for those capital projects over the next five years.

Currently, the WPD has 9 software maintenance contracts with New World Systems. As a result of RIEM, maintenance costs will increase by \$40,000 annually at the conclusion of the grant period. That increase will be sustained via contractual services to the participating agencies who will enjoy an affordable information sharing solution to combat crime and drugs.