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BODY CAMERAS, VIDEO SYSTEMS BECOMING ESSENTIAL FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT ACROSS NORTH AMERICA

aw enforcement agencies in Canada and the United States are taking a closer look at equipping officers on patrol with body-worn cameras as the latest tool to improve security and relations with the public.

They want to know whether body-worn cameras can be valuable tools in recording contact with the public in incidents that could turn out to be controversial.

A study by the police chief of Rialto, Calif., shows police misconduct complaints have dropped drastically when the public has been shown video of an incident, and the need to use force has been cut by more than half.

A body-worn camera cools off emotions in a confrontation and "officers become more professional and citizens tend to behave better," says Chief William Farrar.

Farrar's comments are contained in a report by Craig E. Ferrell, Jr., deputy director of the Houston Police Department. The report is called The Future is Here: How Police Officers' Videos Protect Officers and Departments. It was published in The Police Chief magazine.

The value of body-worn cameras for officers has become a hot topic since officer Darren Wilson shot and killed Michael Brown, Aug. 9 in Ferguson, Mo. What ensued were several days of protests by residents and violent confrontations with police and military personnel.

Wilson was not wearing a body-worn camera and witnesses gave contradictory and incomplete accounts.

The issue is of particular interest to Gatekeeper Systems Inc., of Abbotsford, B.C., which designs and manufactures high-definition body-worn cameras, digital storage and data management systems for law enforcement agencies, and a wide range of cameras for school buses, public transit buses, and the United States military and Coast Guard.

"The incident in Ferguson has created significant interest in body-worn cameras for police officers, creating immediate visual and audio records of what transpired. Visual and audio records are used to create evidence packs which help protect officers while building trust in the community," says Doug Dyment, president and chief executive officer of Gatekeeper.

Gatekeeper has a well-established foothold in the U.S., supplying 3,500 school bus fleets with video systems to assure the safety of students, plus additional systems in public transit buses, law enforcement vehicles, military and coast guard aircraft, and navy ships.

The great majority of customers are school districts, but also includes the U.S. air force, U.S. coast guard, U.S. navy, and aerospace giants Boeing and Lockheed Martin.



North American police forces are finding body-worn cameras to be a valuable tool for officer safety and public relations.

"Gatekeeper has installed nearly 80,000 systems in buses, trucks, aircraft, ships and police vehicles," says Dyment, a 20-year veteran in digital imaging and security systems. "Today we collect much more data than we had previously from reading license plates of violating vehicles. The data is managed by our cloud-based Traffic Infraction Management system, GPS, and vehicle sensors, which helps in searching incidents – an otherwise time-consuming task."

The events in Ferguson have ramped up interest in the bodyworn camera by police forces across North America, especially in the U.S.

"We were short-listed for a sale of 1,500 units to a major city in the U.S. Our proposal outlined our vision for managing data by way of a back-end enterprise management solution, allowing agencies to tag and catalogue incidents for future access. Finding incidents can be an overwhelming if not near-impossible task, and the need for scalable, easy-to-use data management software is

real," Dyment says. "The law enforcement agencies we've talked to are either ready to purchase and going through product comparison

an important component to an overall body-worn camera program. We also have the ability to add and modify features as needed, and can partner with local authorities to add specific features to their software, where [competitors] just don't do that."

A large part of the problem in Ferguson was the lack of in-

A DEVICE THAT RECORDS THE EVIDENCE ... CREATES A PACKAGE TO SUPPORT LAW ENFORCEMENT CASES

programs or analyzing how the data from body-worn cameras will be managed with their existing operational flow," Dyment adds. "They're realizing they've got to be able to find the data years down the road, therefore a structured datamanagement system becomes disputable evidence surrounding the events between Michael Brown, a recent high school graduate, and the police officer.

"Having a device that records the actual evidence, including vehicle location, audio and video from a body-worn camera or vehicle cameras,

creates an evidence package to support law enforcement cases," Dyment says.

"It also helps build trust in the community and support falsely accused individuals." he says, citing an incident in a school bus equipped with interior cameras.

"We've recorded students planning to falsely accuse a driver of sexual assault," he says. "If that charge had been made without any video evidence to support the driver's innocence, the driver would have been found guilty in the court of public opinion.'

An area of concern for school districts is the frequent passing of school buses by motorists while the stop-arm is engaged, a law conservatively estimated to have been violated 14 million

Gatekeeper has developed a Student Protector system that reads the license plate of a violator. The company's Traffic Infraction Management System, a software application, then tracks down the car and owner allowing the local authorities to issue a ticket.

Gatekeeper supplies the system free to school districts and shares in the revenue from fines paid by violators.

The body-worn cameras are manufactured under the brand name XFORCE, part of the Deep Development Corp. division of Gatekeeper.

One of the first customers for the body-worn camera and recorder is the police division of Aledo Independent School District (ISD) in Texas, which has been using Gatekeeper's video technology for several years.

"The XFORCE high-definition body-worn recorder is the best we've seen," says Chawn Gilliland, police chief of Aledo ISD. "Its rugged design is wellsuited for law enforcement mobile applications. The 160-degree field of view sees more than the human eye can see and the high-definition video provides outstanding picture quality."

Deep Development also produces the Viperfish brand of high-definition recording systems for airborne and marine applications that record long-range video and radar during special operations. The Viperfish recorders have been installed on AC 130 Gunships and Sea King rescue helicopters.

Dyment sees Gatekeeper (GSI.V), which has no debt and had under \$10-million in revenue last year, poised to grow in several areas, including body-worn cameras for police and security officers, of which there are approximately 30 million globally.

"Managing data will be the next big growth area for Gatekeeper. Our Traffic Infraction Management system was our first cloud-based software application that manages citations from a number of areas, including stop-arm violations," he says. "We're talking about a company that is quickly moving into a software for service entity."

Gatekeeper's XFORCE brand provides body-worn cameras, in-car video systems and scalable video management systems. Agencies of all sizes will be able use Gatekeeper's XVAULT data management system. Dyment says, "Our data management system will be attractive to all agencies. Officers simply drop off the body-worn camera to our docking station, trade-named DOKN-GO, which allows for hands-free charging while encrypting and preparing the data for long-term stor-

The software allows agencies, with up to 1,000 officers to store video from body-worn cameras while providing the ability to seamlessly retrieve it 10 to 20 years later by searching key tags, including officer ID, time, date, case file and

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