

Crash in Keizer? You can look it up

People will be able to view incident documents from their computers at home

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Keizer Police Department received a \$50,000 grant this month from the Oregon Department of Transportation to buy software enabling officers to enter crashes, warnings and citations immediately into the laptops they carry, said Keizer police Sgt. Lance Inman.

The software will enable people who have been in crashes to use their home computers to view documents related to the incidents.

The new ReportBeam program should be in place by mid-June and is expected to be a convenience for city employees and the public, as well as a long-term money saver. It also could take more criminals off the streets.

ReportBeam allows an officer to create a crash report or citation by scanning one or more driver's licenses and checking a few boxes on a computer screen. The scanned data is saved in a secure server; ReportBeam also queries state and national crime databases.

"If a person has warrants or is wanted for identity theft or any of those types of things, an officer will know immediately," said Steve Vitolo, ODOT spokesman.

When the program is in place, people in a crash will be able to view documents about their incident on a home computer, and drivers will start getting a printed ticket or warning instead of a handwritten one. Keizer police used \$13,000 in police funds to install thermal printers in traffic and patrol vehicles.

A few drivers may have gotten an electronic warning in the past two weeks, as Inman has been testing the software.

"They've responded favorably," Inman said.

That's probably not because the drivers got a warning - but because they got it fast, he said

ReportBeam also is estimated to save about 1,026 personnel hours per year spent on citations alone. That time is worth almost \$24,000 per year or about half the annual salary of a full-time city employee, Inman said. Currently, traffic procedure requires an officer to submit a handwritten crash report or citation to a police records clerk, who enters the document into the police database. A citation also is sent to a Keizer municipal court clerk, who enters the data again in a court database.

ReportBeam also could increase the number of reported crashes. Now, only about 38 percent of the state's traffic crashes are reported, and about 60 percent of the crashes in Keizer are reported.

About 20 percent of citations are dismissed on average nationwide because forms are not filed on time, often because handwritten forms can be unreliable, Inman said. In Keizer's case, about 2 percent to 5 percent of citations are dismissed for the same reason.

"Maybe a ticket is lost, or maybe (an officer) is out there going to a crash, and the (crash report) falls into a mud puddle, and the ink is all blurred," Inman said.



Keizer police Sgt. Lance Inman uses a new device to scan a driver's license. New software is allowing Keizer police to immediately produce crash reports and traffic citations electronically. (THOMAS PATTERSON | Statesman Journal)

A grant allowed the purchase of vehicle-reporting devices and software, which is being tested for full activation in mid-June. (THOMAS PATTERSON | Statesman Journal)

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Keizer joins 13 other police and sheriff's offices in the state, including Salem and Portland police, that now have the service, said Steve Vitolo, ODOT spokesman. A Clackamas County Sheriff's deputy gave Oregon's first electronic ticket in October