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Tribal Law Enforcement Crime Data and Information Sharing

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TECHNOLOGY TALK

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According to American Indians and Crime, 1992-2002, a 2005 report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, American Indians experienced violence at a rate (101 violent crimes per 1,000 American Indians) more than twice the rate for the nation (41 per 1,000 persons). Crime rates, crime data reporting, and information sharing between tribal, state, and federal entities remains one of the most critical and complex topics facing law enforcement today. The role of technology in this discussion is the key to finding solutions to the complex issues that challenge law enforcement in the United States. Understanding the role of jurisdiction between partner agencies and the status of technology capacity in Indian Country was one of the expected outcomes of the training that was held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, April 3-5, 2006.

The training was the second in a series that began in 2004 to address tribal, state, and federal law enforcement crime reporting and information sharing. The first tribal crime data training, held in 2004, explored information sharing, crime mapping, and integrated justice systems. It also considered how crime data could benefit tribal programs for youth and promote effective justice systems in Indian Country. The recent 2006 training covered similar issues of critical importance to Indian Country and was provided through a unique partnership between the IACP Indian Country Law Enforcement Section, the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of the Interior, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Law Enforcement Services, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Native American Programs.

CAD and RMS Functional Standards Requirements

The Law Enforcement Information Technology Standards Council's (LEITSC) functional standard requirements for computer-aided dispatch and records management systems were highlighted in one of the several workshops being presented at the training. G. Matthew Snyder, IACP technology administrator, presented the workshop to acquaint participants with the LEITSC RMS standards, which is a need for Indian Country law enforcement. Visit (www.leitsc.org) for more information about LEITSC.

Other workshops include the following:

- Introduction to integrated justice
- Integrated justice policy, operations, and technical aspects
- Assessment, evaluation, and analysis
- Department of Justice use of crime data

Featured speakers include Patrick McCreary, associate deputy director for policy with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, who will address the topic of importance of interfacing the Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative (Global) with tribal systems. The IACP Indian Country Law Enforcement Section has worked with the Global initiative for several years on behalf of tribal law enforcement. At the 2005 annual IACP conference in Miami Beach, IACP membership passed a resolution that supports tribal law enforcement's efforts to gain representation on the FBI's CJIS Advisory Policy Board so that tribal law enforcement-related gaps in understanding, technology infrastructure, and information sharing will be bridged.

Addressing the Digital Divide

The technology divide between Indian and non-Indian law enforcement is immense. It is sometimes described by tribal law enforcement as the "dial-tone divide," because most of the nearly 200 tribal law enforcement agencies in the country have only dial-up connection to access state and federal information systems, if they are allowed access at all. Most of the 561 federally recognized tribes in the United States do not have access to local, state, or federal information systems such as NCIC. Because more than 265 miles of U.S. border is part of tribal land, connecting tribal police to national and state databases that promote safety is essential to securing U.S. borders and protecting citizens on and around tribal lands. Without this connectivity, even Amber Alert systems are sadly ineffective.

Building Partnerships

Tribal law enforcement's challenges, including technology capacity, information sharing between jurisdictions, and the importance of involving tribal governments in any and all technology development planning, are critical concerns that must be addressed by tribes and the local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies with whom they work if crime in Indian country is to be adequately addressed. ■

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