

## NEW POLICE TOOL: IT HAS AUDIO AND VIDEO



David Swanson displays the Vidmic, a device for law enforcement in which a full-color digital video and audio recorder, as well as a still photo camera, is housed in a shoulder microphone.

Photos by MIKE SIMONS /  
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# Smile, you're on the Vidmic

► Several area police departments love the \$700 device that's concealed in a shoulder microphone.

By RHETT MORGAN  
World Staff Writer

CATOOSA— When it comes to a new law enforcement gadget called Vidmic, veteran police officer Kevin McKim tends to gush.

"It's one of the best pieces of equipment, in the 32 years I've been in law enforcement, that I've ever seen," said McKim, chief of police for Catoosa Public Schools. "It's just dynamite."

Concealed in an operational shoulder microphone, Vidmic is a full-color digital video and audio recorder, as well as a still photo

camera. Developed in July 2007 by Utah-based EarHugger Safety (EHS), Vidmic has been purchased by 80 agencies nationwide, including a couple in northeastern Oklahoma.

McKim said his department has bought four Vidmics, and the Tulsa County Sheriff's Office has purchased three, Sgt. Bob Darby said. The Catoosa Police Department is testing the product, Chief Raymond Rodgers said.

"What it is is another set of eyes and ears for the officer," said David Swanson, an area sales representative for EHS.

Unlike dash cameras, which cost about \$6,000 and are mounted in a vehicle, Vidmic costs about \$700 and is commonly placed in the "V" of an officer's shirt, Swanson said. Catching what stationary cameras can't, it features about a 1-by-1-inch screen and a

3½-hour recording capacity.

The date- and time-stamped recordings may be downloaded to a computer and transferred to a disc. The still camera can be used to preserve on-scene evidence, such as injuries from a car crash, domestic violence or child abuse, McKim said.

The device is designed to reduce frivolous lawsuits, decrease agencies' liability, enhance officer professionalism and increase successful prosecutions, he said. His law enforcement team has used the technology for six weeks.

"When a person comes in and wants to fill out a proper complaint, I go to the video and it's either founded or unfounded," McKim said. "I can't find any negative right now to it."

Darby, a sergeant at the Tulsa County Sheriff's Office, was among the officers who used the

device to patrol last year's Tulsa State Fair. The sheriff's office still is evaluating the product for potential future purchases.

"It's a really neat tool," Darby said. "I thought it was great."

Rodgers, Catoosa police chief, said his department has been field-testing the Vidmic for about three weeks. He will document the feedback to determine whether purchasing the technology is feasible.

Training officers how to obtain optimal video with Vidmic would be a must, Rodgers said.

"There's not a perfect piece of equipment out there," he said. "But this is something that is very interesting, and it has a lot of potential."

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ON THE VIDMIC