



## PRESS-REGISTER

### System to allow law enforcement to work together

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Staff Reporter

Mobile County law enforcement agencies will be better able to catch drug criminals by using a new database allowing departments to share information about suspects, Mobile County District Attorney John Tyson Jr. said Thursday.

The system and the task force assigned to coordinate it, dubbed "Intelligence against Violence And Drugs," combines agents from the Mobile Police Department, the Prichard Police Department, the Mobile County Sheriff's Office, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the District Attorney's Office to create a computer database containing all the information gained during the investigations of drug suspects in Mobile County.

"Criminals certainly don't respect any jurisdictional lines," Tyson said. "This technology is simply a way for all of the agencies to share the information that they think is important with all the other agencies so that they can instantly have the benefit of everyone's work."

The system will include mug shots, undercover video clips, information about known associates of a suspect and the type of vehicle a suspect drives, among other items.

"Many times we are working on one situation, Prichard is working on one, and sometimes we find we're working with the same person," said Mobile Mayor Sam Jones. "In this situation, we'll know that. We'll be able to share information. We'll be able to shorten the period of the investigation and shorten the period in which we apprehend someone."

Authorities said they believe the new software, which already has about 11,000 present cases uploaded, will be fully operational within the next month. The system will not be retroactive, meaning past cases and arrests will not be available in the database.

"We'll still go and check other sources, like we always have," Tyson said. The new software will simply be an additional resource, officials said.

The database will be available at certain secure locations within each department for now, officials said, rather than from every officer's laptop or personal computer.

Officers can search the database using information picked up in an investigation, officials said.

"Sometimes all we find out about is the description of the car," Tyson said. "We can take the description and punch that in, and punch in simply an address, whatever little piece of information we are able to gather. It's that kind of information that I think over time is going to make this a very, very valuable tool. Every day we use it, it becomes more valuable."

Assistant District Attorney Barbie Francez, who will head the task force in the District Attorney's Office, said the information-sharing database will be one of the most comprehensive systems of its kind in the nation.

"This is the only state agency in the country that has this level of technology among interagencies," Francez

said.

The program's focus is on drug crimes, Tyson said, "but there's really no reason that it couldn't be used for any other specific target or type of crime we're interested in."

Tyson said the development of the system cost the agencies only a little extra "elbow grease."

"We have all the computers, we have the capability, we're taking existing resources and leveraging them to better use everyone's resources," Tyson said.

Mobile police Chief Phillip Garrett and Prichard police Chief Lawrence Battiste both agreed that their agencies spent no extra money on the new system.

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