

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS
ACTION AGENDA SUMMARY

DEPT: Sheriff's Department

BOARD AGENDA # *B-3

Urgent

Routine

CEO Concurs with Recommendation YES NO

(Information Attached)

AGENDA DATE April 19, 2011

4/5 Vote Required YES NO

SUBJECT:

Approval to Declare the Chemical Agent Detection Unit Purchased through the Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP) Grant Funds and Central Valley High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Grant Funds as Surplus, and Authorize the Sale of the Vehicle and Equipment

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Declare the Stanislaus Anti-Terrorist Chemical Agent Detection unit (SAT-CAD) as surplus equipment and authorize the sale of the vehicle and equipment.
2. Direct the Auditor-Controller to place the proceeds from the sale of the vehicle and equipment in the Sheriff's Operations Legal Budget Unit.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The SAT-CAD unit was purchased eight years ago using Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP) and Central Valley High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (CVHIDTA) grant funds of \$615,037. Proceeds from the sale of this surplus equipment and van are estimated to total approximately \$25,000 and will be deposited into the Sheriff's Operations Legal Budget Unit.

BOARD ACTION AS FOLLOWS:

No. 2011-234

THIS ITEM WAS REMOVED FROM THE AGENDA.
NO ACTION WAS TAKEN.

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DISCUSSION:

During the mid to late 1990's the CVHIDTA and Stanislaus Drug Enforcement Agency (SDEA) investigated and dismantled an average of 100 Methamphetamine labs per year in the Central Valley and Stanislaus County. Methamphetamine labs are highly volatile and produce dangerous gas clouds.

Research was conducted to see if it was possible for detection of these gas clouds to assist in interdiction efforts and public safety. The Aerospace Corporation developed, built and maintained chemical detecting devices for military use. Aerospace believed they could build a library of known chemicals used in Methamphetamine production and build a mobile sensing detector to aide law enforcement efforts.

On September 12, 2000 the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors approved the acceptance of Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP) grant funds of \$500,000 to purchase a stand-off chemical agent detector for use in the Central Valley High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (CVHIDTA).

Between September 2000 and January 2003, Aerospace determined they were not capable of manufacturing the entire device. The only company responding to a request for proposal to acquire and assemble the component parts for the complete detector was Wenzlau Engineering in South Pasadena, CA.

On January 14, 2003 the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors approved the Sheriff to enter into negotiations and sign a contract with Wenzlau Engineering for the manufacturing of a chemical detection van. Wenzlau Engineering sub-contracted with MESH Inc.(Micro Engineering Software and Hardware), in Oxford, PA for production of the chemical sensor to be used in this project. The Board also approved the use of \$150,000 of additional Cal-MMET grant funds to bring the total project budget to \$650,000.

MESH Inc., develops, builds and maintains chemical detecting devices used by the Federal Government at various domestic and foreign sites. MESH agreed to incorporate military agents into the library to assist with any terrorist threats that may arise in our area.

During the last few years of the 1990's, great restraints were put on chemicals used to produce methamphetamine. The production moved from the Central Valley of California to Mexico where the chemicals are easily obtained. Since 2000 the methamphetamine lab seizures in California and more importantly the Central Valley dropped off dramatically. CVHIDTA and SDEA have averaged less than 20 methamphetamine lab seizures annually during the last 10 years.

In May of 2004 Stanislaus County / CVHIDTA took possession of the SAT-CAD van. MESH provided training and controlled tests were conducted to ensure the equipment worked properly. During controlled testing it was found the SAT-CAD unit could properly detect chemicals used in manufacturing methamphetamine.

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The SAT-CAD van was taken to methamphetamine labs and scans were conducted from various angles. It was found that the equipment was not showing detections at actual lab sites. It was found that once these chemicals were mixed together in the production process, they then omitted a bi-polar gas. These gases were unknown and not in the library for detection. MESH requested additional funding for research and development in order to identify a signature for these bi-polar gases. No other funds were available for this research and development and the State Environment Protection Agency would not issue authorization to conduct this activity in a controlled environment.

The SAT-CAD van has been idle since 2006 because the sensor unit does not detect the bi-polar gases emitted by methamphetamine labs. The sensor requires annual maintenance and the helium in the cooling system will begin leaking when not used or maintained. Since no other funds were available or willing to be spent for research and development, no monies were spent for annual maintenance.

The electronic equipment and computer equipment are all outdated by industry standards and the cost to refurbish the sensor will exceed \$100,000: a new cryo-cooler is \$40,000; a new transducer is \$6,500; installing a new cooling system would be \$12,000; a new pan and tilt is \$23,000; new electronics would be \$25,000 and realignment of the spectrometer is \$5,000. Research and Development costs are undetermined as no one else in the world has attempted to determine the bi-polar gases emitted from methamphetamine labs.

No other agencies have shown interest in purchasing this equipment due to the unknown costs of research and development. The equipment cannot be sold to the general public due to the classification of information it contains and due to the specifications for its use. The electronic and computer equipment that could be pieced out of the van are at least 7 years old and outdated by industry standards.

MESH Inc. was contacted and they indicated interest in purchasing the van and all equipment. Their best offer is \$25,000.

POLICY ISSUES:

The Board of Supervisors previously accepted grant funds for this project to support the Board's goal of A Safe Community and A Healthy Community.

STAFFING IMPACT:

There is no staffing impact associated with this agenda item.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Adam Christianson, Sheriff-Coroner (209) 525-7015.