On a section of rural highway, a tanker truck carrying toxic chemicals slides through a wet curve, overturns, and begins leaking its contents.

The nearest town in this remote, mountainous area has a population of under a thousand and a police department of just a few officers. The chief of police knows he and his community lack the resources to deal with such a serious incident.

Thanks to a software project funded through the Office of Justice Programs’ National Institute of Justice (NIJ), however, he knows where he can turn to locate the critical help that he needs—CIRDRA.

CIRDRA, short for Critical Incident Response & Disaster Recovery Assistance, is an asset inventory and resource management system designed to function as a universal “Rolodex” for categorizing, indexing, locating, tracking, and sharing critical resources during emergency preparedness, readiness, response, and recovery activities.

Available at no charge to qualified first responder agencies, CIRDRA uses a simple open source design with a tiered hierarchy to help State and local law enforcement and emergency management departments organize their resources. Once an agency begins using CIRDRA to inventory its own assets, it can also enter into cooperative agreements with other neighboring jurisdictions to pool and share information and expedite the resource sharing needed to respond to many critical incidents.

CIRDRA had its origins in an effort to help members of NIJ’s National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC) System identify and document the assets available to first responder agencies in the wake of a natural disaster such as Hurricane Katrina or in the event of a terrorist attack. NIJ called on Fred Davis from the Border Research categorize, and share critical resource information,” Davis says. “It dawned on us, if we make it generic enough, it could be used by State and local police departments, and maybe eventually as a national database.” In early 2007, research lead Davis to find Marc Bracken, Senior Systems Architect for C4DB, Inc., who had developed previous systems with the desired features. Four

Classroom in Your Home Room

During the first day of a mandatory class on Pennsylvania’s Juvenile Act for newly hired correctional and probation and parole officers, the snow fell while road crews struggled to keep even the major routes open. Offices, businesses, and schools around Pennsylvania closed. But the class went on without a hitch.

The Pennsylvania Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research (CJJT&R), sponsor of the class, had used the Community Corrections E-Learning Collaborative (CCELC) to revamp classroom instruction into online training. While a major snowstorm raged that wintry day in February of last year, many of the first students to take the revised class sat down at their home computers and prepared to learn.

(See Organizing First Responder, page 3)
E-learning has been used with much success in the private sector, higher education, and the military; however law enforcement has been slow to adopt this technology. One major reason for this is the expectation that online training will not be as effective as classroom training, and this fear has been heightened by concerns about the use of computers in law enforcement agencies. Another reason is the cost of implementing an e-learning system, which can be quite high.

CCEL provided national expertise in online course development, course conversion, and production of all courses, and trained and mentored the CCELC facilitators in online teaching. The center will maintain the courses content and periodically update and enhance it as needed. The Pennsylvania system will open the door for other States and agencies to request development of their own specialized training courses. Several States have made the national skills, which is an asset in other aspects of their jobs. Bishop says the trainer/facilitators also have expanded their skills with CCELC providing training in online instruction.

“IT is such a different way of doing things than traditional classroom teaching, but they’re coming along really well,” says Lane. “The great thing about online instruction is you can teach from anywhere. If you’re on travel, anytime you’re out of the office, you can still teach. It totally changes the dynamics of what you are able to do. You really can be in two places at one time.”

There are other online training possibilities, such as online facilitation, working with multiple intelligences and learning styles, fostering collaborative learning, facilitating online discussions, using the learning management system and tracking in a virtual environment. The student orientation focuses on examining what students and faculty members in the technology involved, the learning environment, the concept of facilitated learning, the syllabus, and other course content. Other courses offered include the following:

- Official Safety in the Community
- Introduction to the Supervision of Sex Offenders
- Motivational Interviewing
- Individual and Group Cognitive Behavioral Approaches
- Family Dynamics and Domestic Violence

Each course roughly equals the content delivered in a 2-day face-to-face course. Students can participate in-class, by phone, via email, or using the course content. The course content is written by subject matter experts from jurisdictions across the country and produced by The Education Coalition, which serves as the producer, instructional designer, and technical consultant on the project.

One of the primary objectives of creating CCEL was to create an online course that could be adapted to an e-learning platform and be made available to community corrections agencies nationwide. Tim J. Kooi, associate director of CCEL, says that the community corrections agencies that participate in the online initiative could be linked to a database of agency information, allowing agencies to share resources and information. The course content is written by subject matter experts from jurisdictions across the country and produced by The Education Coalition, which serves as the producer, instructional designer, and technical consultant on the project.

The newsletter went on to say that the National Institute of Justice (NJJ) is interested in the CIRDRA software and is considering the possibility of implementing it in their training programs. The newsletter also mentioned that the CIRDRA software is available for free download on the Internet and that it can be used by any agency, organization, or individual who needs to categorize and manage critical resources for emergency preparedness or response. The NJJ is interested in evaluating the software and determining its potential for use in their training programs.
Sponsored by the Office of Justice Programs' National Institute of Justice, the National Clearinghouse for Science, Technology and the Law (NCSTL) at Stetson University College of Law in Gulfport, Florida, recently added a number of new and useful resources for law enforcement and corrections professionals to its website. These resources include the following:

- The Cold Case Toolkit (developed in February 2007 and continually updated) provides links to information in areas that include NIJ and U.S. Department of Justice resources, investigative tools and technology, state government and police department websites that solicit information from visitors about cold cases, investigative resources and training, victim assistance, and prevention resources. The toolkit also includes a bibliography of resources on cold case information.
- A series of bibliographies offering information on a variety of current-interest topics, such as New Developments in Forensics, Calamatives and Less Lethal Weapons, Identity Theft, and the CSI Effect. New bibliographies are posted periodically, often when special research is requested related to an NCSTL conference or training.
- Four recently acquired special collections include the Caywood Collection of documents and firearms resources; a Questioned Document Article Database from the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners; the Florida Division of the International Association for Identification’s archive of its newsletter; and a reference index containing 1,900 latent print, footwear, tire track, and miscellaneous forensic examination citations.
- Coordination with the www.ssa.gov website now provides a direct link to the NCSTL database from that site when a user queries for information related to legislation and the law. (NCSTL staff note that other sites are welcome to create this kind of link and that no permission or formal agreement is needed.)
- It’s Evident, a free electronic newsletter published quarterly, includes articles written by NCSTL staff (outside submissions are also welcome). All NCSTL site members automatically receive the newsletter, and other individuals can subscribe by sending an email to watson@law.stetson.edu. Archived issues can be located on the NCSTL website.
- More than 30,000 new entries into the NCSTL database in the past 3 years raise the current record total to approximately 60,000. Many of the new entries relate to hot topics such as bioterrorism, cybercrime, arson and explosives, law enforcement technology, accident investigation, and the CSI effect. In addition to the rapid expansion of the database, many new related links have been added to the site.

To become acquainted with the National Clearinghouse for Science, Technology and the Law and all of its resources, visit www.ncstl.org.

Law enforcement agencies and school systems can now obtain three important school safety programs at no cost on one CD-ROM.

- A Critical Incident: What To Do in the First 20 Minutes, developed by the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, takes users through a scenario involving a shooter in a school. Viewers see the school’s response and how it implements its plan. At the end of the scenario, discussion questions allow them to discuss what went right, what went wrong, and how they can use the lessons learned to improve their own critical incident plans.
- School Crime Operations Package (School COP), which has been an extremely popular program, enables school resource officers (SROs), SRO supervisors, school administrators, and security officers to enter a daily log of incidents, display incidents involving a particular student quickly (valuable for meetings with parents or students), and produce graphics showing school “hot spots” or year-to-year trends, which can help solve problems and communicate issues at school meetings. For example, a map can show where bullying incidents have occurred on a school campus. School COP can also provide evidence of activities undertaken or problems solved, which can help persuade a school board to continue funding an SRO program.
- School Safety Plan Generator, a software program developed by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), allows law enforcement personnel to create a document that serves as a foundation for preparing schools for violent critical incidents and as a reference guide for information needs during a critical incident. The software, created as a result of input from the members of NIJ’s National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center System and the School Safety Technology Working Group, allows users to answer questions about a particular school and use the information to set up a profile that includes demographics, members of the critical incident planning team and their roles and responsibilities, emergency locations, supplies and equipment on hand, and critical lines of communication.

To obtain copies of the School Safety CD-ROM, contact the Rural Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center, 866–RURAL LE (866–787–3853) or njprogram manager Mike O’Shan at Michael.Oshea@usdoj.gov.
**First Step to Interoperability**

**The Need To Set the Pace**

In Newberry County, South Carolina, the sheriff’s department and other public safety agencies found that a cooperative approach was the way to resolve a number of interoperability issues.

“We found the key to success was to start by getting the right people together,” says Maj. Todd Johnson. “Then, if a vendor says what you need can’t be done, keep looking. You will find someone who will work with you. Instead of the market setting pace for us, we need to set the pace.”

By this approach, Newberry County found solutions to a number of interoperability issues, to the extent that the Office of Justice Programs’ National Institute of Justice (NIJ) termed the project a “Best Practice for Wireless Network for Rural Law Enforcement” and featured it at the agency’s annual Law Enforcement Technology Institute in August 2007.

The rural South Carolina county capitalized on a congressional grant received in early 2006 and followed a step-by-step approach to improving communications in the area. The county started by placing laptops in all of its patrol cars. In the beginning, data had to be downloaded and uploaded into computers at the areas, neither cell phones nor law enforcement radios worked, and it was a cumbersome land-line relay between dispatch centers was their only method of communication. Now, says, as an indwelling of the project, the agencies have agreed to share frequency information, and a VoIP system connects the five dispatch centers. Instead of writing down and radioing questions, officers can key a button on their consoles namely talk to their counterparts. This provides instant communication and avoids turning up the limited shared frequency space and reduces the time it takes to get information to the scene.

**Modify Instead of Replace**

**Facility sizing as a national model:** the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Pilot Project in Danville, Virginia, demonstrated how public agencies and partners can benefit both sides. By partnering with a technology provider eager to develop a commercial product, the Danville project obtained cutting-edge technology at a low cost and the vendor received valuable evaluation and feedback.

The project participant got not only direct benefits from the equipment itself, but also the indirect benefit of creating long-lasting partnerships that will continue to help resolve interoperability issues in the future. Everybody thinks interoperability is purely a technical problem, but that’s not necessarily so,” says Pete Small of the Communications Technologies Center of Excellence, part of the National Law Enforcement and Justice Institute (NIJ).

VoIP refers to various technologies used to allow making telephone calls over IP networks such as the Internet. The voice data flows over a general-purpose, packet-switched network instead of traditional dedicated, circuit-switched voice transmission lines.

According to Small, NIJ assisted with the pilot project by providing evaluation and documentation for the overall scope of the project, summarizing regional government partnerships, and offering “honest broker” assistance with the project equipment. The assistance was carried out by NIJ’s Communications Technology (CommTech) Program, Communications Technologies Center of Excellence, NLECTC–Northeast, NLECTC–Southeast, and the Sheriffs’ Association of Texas. NIJ did not furnish any funding. Instead, participating public safety agencies (the city of Danville, Danville, and several other small towns, and lots of neighboring jurisdictions) contributed to the project.

The schools, the sheriff’s department, and the city of Newberry Police Department set up a user’s group that has encrypted access to “Wi-Fi hot spots” located at the schools. This allows students to go online safety property and make secure data transmissions during their studies.

Newberry County encompasses 620 square miles in the western part of the State, with the majority of its population concentrated around the city of Newberry and several other small towns, and lots of uneven terrain can cause gaps in coverage. The schools, the sheriff’s department, and the city of Newberry Police Department set up a user’s group that has encrypted access to “Wi-Fi hot spots” located at the schools. This allows students to go online to access school property and make secure data transmissions during their studies.

“Everything is real time, we have one central server,” Johnson says. “Instead of one arrest warrant needing to be entered multiple times into multiple systems, as soon as we serve it, it’s available to everybody.”

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TechBeat

The award-winning newsmagazine of the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC) System.

Our goal is to keep you up to date with current and developing technologies for the public safety community, as well as other research and development efforts within the Federal Government and private industry. TechBeat is published four times a year.

Better Bait, Better Catch

BETC–Western Operations

In 2005, more than 30 percent of all vehicles thefts reported to the United States took place in the four southern U.S. border States of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, according to Uniform Crime Reports. In 2007, the Border Research and Technology Center (BETC) – Western Region undertook a review of lessons learned in the use of “bait vehicle” technologies as a means of combating motor vehicle theft along the southwestern border.

The report, “Bait Vehicle Technologies and Baiter Vehicle Theft,” describes bait vehicle projects, their results, and potential implications for law enforcement with a focus on law enforcement agencies and organizations using vehicles and technologies to prevent and investigate cross-border auto theft. Findings show that targeted raids and raids from inside auto theft vehicles have proven extremely effective in court proceedings and that law enforcement values from inside auto theft vehicles is so low that even an enhancement of technologies to maximize bait vehicle effectiveness. In addition, information received through such organizations as the Border Auto Theft Information Center in El Paso, Texas, also supported the potential application of targeted testing in which information testing in performance and other factors should properly and accurately be used in the identification of technology in vehicle thefts in the United States and found in Mexico.

“Bait Vehicle” Technologies and Baiter Vehicle Theft Along the Southwest Border are available through BETC – Western Operations at betcinline.gov.

Who’s the Big Man on Campus?

NLECTC System Center

A Federal grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, awarded in 2007, resulted in the formation of the Innovate in the Field (InF) Program, a Web-based application developed to aid educational institutions in keeping their faculty, students, and staff informed by providing current law enforcement agencies in Illinois. Deadlines will be announced for papers and their distribution by the Illinois 1951 Program.

With the development of this program, Illinois joins North Carolina and Missouri as States that have computer-driven programs. Between the three programs, more than 1,000 computers were distributed to law enforcement agencies in 2007.

The 1951 Federal Bureau of Property Program permits the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Defense personal property (supplies and equipment) to State and local law enforcement agencies. For more information about the evaluation project, contact Program Manager Mike O’Keefe at the National Institute of Justice, Mike.Okeefe@ojjdp.gov.

Computers That Can Aid Public Safety

Sensors, Surveillance, and Biometric Technologies Center of Excellence

State and local criminal justice practitioners, including law enforcement, correctional, and court personnel, can receive complimentary access to a customized criminal justice version of Bill.com (www.bill.com), an online repository of information on business- and performance-related technologies and sources, and news of worldwide information on fingerprint, face recognition, and biometric technologies and highlights the latest biometric techniques in criminal justice applications.

Access is provided under the Sensors, Surveillance, and Biometric Technologies Center of Excellence (BCT), which is hosted by the International Biometric Group. The BCT’s goal is to promote innovation in technology to State and local criminal justice practitioners.

To learn more about biometrics and how the technologies can aid an organization’s activities, e-mail Bill.com@biometricgroup.com and express interest in Bill.com access.
In September 2007, the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, created four Technology Centers of Excellence (CoEs) as part of the NLECTC System. Establishment of these CoEs within the existing NLECTC System will further the mission of NIJ by better aligning the NLECTC System with NIJ’s research, development, testing, and evaluation activities, enhancing the cost-effective delivery of technology information and assistance services required by State and local public safety practitioners.

The existing NLECTC sites will continue to serve as the initial point of entry for technology information and generalized technology assistance. The new CoEs will serve as an authoritative resource within their respective technology focus areas, providing specialized technology assistance to public safety personnel as well as working with technology developers and users to test and evaluate equipment in operational environments.

The duties of cold-case squads vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and can include focusing and working with witnesses, evaluating preliminary evidence, even performing an outreach and networking role. Law enforcement agencies also needed help to find the right tools and information to successfully investigate their cases.

In addition, by taking advantage of free cold-case training offered by NIJ, practitioners learn how to leverage all available tools and resources and bring the majority of cold case investigations to a successful conclusion. They then work with investigators and industry to develop, manufacture, and distribute these new, innovative products and technologies.

The NLECTC System disseminates information to the criminal justice community at no cost through educational bulletins, equipment performance reports, guides, consumer product lists, product information databases, new summations, meeting/conference reports, videotapes, and CD-ROMs. Most publications are available in electronic form through the JustNet Technology Information Network (JUSTNET) at www.justnet.org. Hard copies of all publications can be obtained through NLECTC’s toll-free number, 800–248–2742, or e-mail at info@oletc.org.

Recent advances in DNA technology and the development of searchable Federal, State, and local criminal databases that can link DNA profiles from crime scenes to convicted offenders and arrestees, as well as to other crime scenes, are major contributors to the success of cold case units. Another contributor is the development of missing persons databases that contain DNA profiles of unidentified remains and of relatives of these missing persons.

These advances in technology have encouraged many law enforcement agencies across the country to reevaluate their cold cases for possible DNA evidence. Although DNA plays a major role in many cold case investigations, it is not the only tool that cold case units use to work unresolved case investigations.
databases and the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network ballistics and firearms database,” Heurich says. “We wanted to give them access to the tools and techniques they needed.”

Training programs have also included modules on preparing cases for prosecution, developing a media strategy/managing the media, sexual assault, how the crime laboratory fits in the process, and case management for missing children and child fatalities. Trainings have been offered at both basic and advanced levels, in addition to special trainings focusing on cases related to children.

“The trainings are actually more like symposiums in that participants often have been doing cold case investigations for years, and we are trying to give them tools that will help them do their jobs more effectively,” Heurich says. “One very important point we try to convey is that in cold case investigation, you have to have a very strong triangle of cooperation consisting of the law enforcement agency, the crime lab, and the prosecutor’s office.”

Heurich explains that most large metropolitan jurisdictions already have cold case units, but NIJ also receives applications from medium-sized agencies that want to start a small unit of one or two detectives, or sometimes even a temporary task force to investigate a few cases. In some instances, he says, medium-sized jurisdictions have asked retired investigators or retired FBI agents living in their area to come back to work part-time to analyze cold case files. And for small and rural agencies, there are regional cooperatives such as the Mid-Atlantic Association of Cold Case Homicide Investigators (see www.coldcasehomicide.org).

“One very important point we try to convey is that in cold case investigation, you have to have a very strong triangle of cooperation consisting of the law enforcement agency, the crime lab, and the prosecutor’s office.” Heurich says. “We found that cold case units in general are more open to interagency cooperation,” Heurich says. “On some level they relate to each other. When a person is struggling, there’s no hesitation in contacting someone in a different agency for help.”

The 2- to 3-day trainings offered by NIJ are open to approximately 100 investigators, 2 per agency (exceptions will be made for extremely large agencies). The trainings are currently held twice a year, once on the East Coast and once on the West Coast. NIJ funds transportation, lodging, and per diem for participants, and the training itself is no cost. Topics change from training to training based on feedback from investigators.

To obtain more information on upcoming trainings, go to www.dna.gov, or contact Charles Heurich, program manager for NIJ’s Investigative and Forensic Sciences Division, 202–616–9264 or charles.heurich@usdoj.gov.