

## **City of Lander Police Department – Justice Assistance Grant 2009 Incident Management and Safety Initiative**

### **Program Narrative**

The City of Lander Police Department is dedicated to protecting the public using the safest, most effective devices available. Unfortunately, due to the recent economic recession we will not be able purchase several critical pieces of equipment to achieve this goal in the foreseeable future. Our 2009 Incident Management and Safety Initiative strategically identifies several pieces of equipment needed to improve our ability to achieve this purpose by purchasing:

- 15 electronic control devices, several boxes of cartridges, and 6 holsters;
- 8 protective vests;
- 10 lights and 2 mounts for rifles;
- 1 fiber optic scope; and
- 1 portable generator for incident command

The main component of this initiative is acquiring electronic control devices for our officers on the street. This device, otherwise known as the taser, is one of the most widely-used, effective, and safe tools that can be used to help prevent injuries and increase safety.

Tasers are an effective and proven instrument in a variety of emergency settings where lives are at stake. When a less than lethal force is possible a taser is often more effective than baton strikes, pepper spray or other means. Studies show that these devices are effective in:

- decreasing officer injuries by over 80%
- decreasing or eliminating worker's compensation expenses
- reducing deadly force incidents by 78%
- reducing suspect injuries by 80%
- reducing excessive force litigation by 54%

A nearby community, Rock Springs, discovered the implementation of tasers reduced officer injuries by nearly 80 percent and suspect injuries by nearly 60 percent.

One of our officers, Shawn McRae, is a certified trainer for taser devices. Because tasers are so critical to our daily operations, we developed a taser training program which all Lander officers are required to complete. As part of our program, we also held several public meetings to inform the public on the use of tasers. However, we are only able to afford three tasers – obviously a number which is severely inadequate for a department of 18 officers. These tasers have already proved effective during several incidents. In one case, a man under the influence of illegal drugs was running back and forth across a river away from several officers. The suspect was taken into custody with the use of a taser, with no injuries to any party involved. Had a taser not been available this incident would have likely ended in serious injuries. The Lander Police Department would like to apply

for funding to purchase 15 units to fully equip our department and help protect and serve those who reside in our community.

We also need lights for our rifles and a fiber optic inspection scope for special situations that require the Lander Police Department to perform proper room clearance, identify threats, and identify victims or hostages. Also, several of our officer protective vests need to be replaced because they are no longer guaranteed by the manufacturer that they can adequately protect our officers. Lastly, we have discovered the generator for our portable command center will not work in cold weather. This is equipment that is only used periodically but absolutely must be functional during critical situations. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints we are not purchase this equipment at this time.

It is estimated that illegal substances and abuse of alcohol are involved in 90 percent of all calls to the Lander police department. In fact, substance abuse related deaths in Fremont County are ten times the national average according to the Fremont County Coroner (Fremont County 153/100,000, National 15/100,000). It is also important to note that Lander is located on the southern border of the Wind River Indian Reservation. While we have a great deal of respect for both the Shoshone and Arapaho traditions, as their close neighbors we are significantly impacted by the reservation's high rates of crime, drug use, and serious gang problems and must deal to the best of our abilities with these issues.

Since 90 percent of our calls involve individuals who are under the influence of a substance, most of these suspects are aggressive, uncooperative and incognizant of the danger they present to the officers, the public and themselves. We respond to many incidents, especially suicidal situations, where this equipment may save lives. Last year, three Lander Police Department Officers, or approximately 15 percent of our police force, were injured during the same incident and missed several months of work. The suspect was injured as well. In this instance, we believe a taser would have prevented the injuries to both the police officers and the suspect. Instead, we lost three officers for an extended period of time.

Through our Incident Management and Prevention Initiative, Lander would like to increase public safety, save lives and systematically reduce injury-related costs. Last year, we were only able to afford 3 tasers, one for each shift. The cost to our force of not having this equipment has reached a critical point. From a cost effectiveness perspective, it may be more beneficial to decrease our police force by one officer and purchase the equipment than lose several officers to long-term injuries. However, from a practical standpoint decreasing our force by an officer would be extremely devastating to our ability to serve our community on a daily basis. The Justice Assistance Grant will allow us to purchase the equipment we need while retaining all our officers and creating sales from United States manufacturers. This funding would allow us better serve our citizens by improving our ability to manage situations that are unsafe to suspects, innocent bystanders, and police officers. Thank you for your consideration.

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### **Review Narrative**

The City of Lander submitted this application to the Lander Mayor and City Council, our governing authority on April 1, 2009. We displayed the application on our website from April 1 to May 12, 2009. Also, the application will be available for public comment during the regular city council meeting on April 12th.

No funds are requested in this proposal for administrative funds and the budget narrative provides a list of items and amounts to be spent on each component requested.

## **City of Lander Police Department – Justice Assistance Grant 2009 Injury Prevention and Safety Initiative**

### **Budget Narrative**

The Lander Police Department is requesting \$24,860 for our 2009 Injury Prevention and Safety Initiative. These costs were estimated using information dealers in the Rocky Mountain region.

### **2009 Injury Prevention and Safety Initiative**

<b>Equipment Description</b>	<b>Cost per Unit</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
15 taser devices	\$ 822	\$ 12,330
2 boxes of 25' taser cartridges	\$ 1,175	\$ 2,350
10 taser training cartridges	\$ 22	\$ 220
6 taser holsters	\$ 50	\$ 300
15 AR weapon lights	\$ 107	\$ 1,600
2 AR weapon light rail mounts	\$ 130	\$ 260
1 fiber optic inspection scope	\$ 400	\$ 400
1 Portable generator for incident command	\$ 400	\$ 400
8 Protective Vests (Kevlar)	\$ 925	\$ 7,400
<b>Total Project Cost</b>		<b>\$ 25,260</b>