

# Darien Times, The (CT)

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### Would help police at accident scenes

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In the chaos of a crime scene or car accident, it is often difficult and time-consuming to determine the original sequence of events leading up to the mayhem. But the Darien Police Department is about to receive state-of-the-art accident investigation software that should make this task much easier and more accurate going forward.

The Board of Selectmen unanimously approved on Monday the acceptance of a \$20,000 gift from the Darien Technology & Community Foundation, which raised this money for the software through donations from just 20 people. Pending approval from the Representative Town Meeting, the Darien Police will receive this software and be able to bring their work into the 21st Century.

This software will allow the police to put aside their tape measurers and rulers, and utilize GPS technology and lasers to get exact measurements at crime and accident scenes.

"What we do now when we investigate an accident or crime scene is use tape measurers, rulers, and triangulation to conduct our investigation," Police Chief Duane Lovello said. "But the points of reference we use to measure from can change over time, and our measurements are also subject to degrees of human error."

Lovello provided an example: "Say there is an accident at the Post Road coming off the exit 11 ramp from Interstate 95, which resulted in litigation two years from now. In two years, that ramp is going to be completely changed and look totally different - and the reference points we used to measure from probably won't even be there. To re-create what happened for the court would be very difficult."

That won't be the case with this new software, however. The combination of GPS technology and laser measurements will allow police to more "accurately and effectively document a crime scene, and re-create the scene in the future," according to Lovello.

In addition, the GPS component will allow them to conduct the necessary measurements in a place that has no good reference points-such as a park or wooded area.

Not only will their investigations be more accurate and precise, but this software will also save the Darien police several man-hours in the future. Instead of having to hand-measure using old fashioned methods, the police will now be able to complete their crime and accident scene investigations much more efficiently.

"It is difficult to forecast how much time this will save us because we have never had it or used it before," Lovello said. "But it is a much more forward thinking, professional, efficient way of documenting a scene."

The selectmen expressed slight concern over continuing costs for this software after the purchase is made, but Lovello was able to put those concerns to rest when he spoke to The Darien Times Wednesday. "The only operating costs is a \$199 annual software subscription for crash data retrieval, but we only have to renew if we actually used that component," Lovello said.

"I think as far as technology goes, we are pretty up to speed and we have a lot of talented officers," Lovello said, "but this is something that will bring us to a whole new level.

"We are very excited and very grateful to the Darien Technology and Community Foundation," he added.  
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