

# CITY OF AKRON POLICE DEPARTMENT

CHOOSES BRITE'S SMARTER AND MORE  
EFFICIENT FUJITSU MOBILE SOLUTION.

Akron is the fifth largest city in Ohio with a population of almost two hundred thousand and is located in the Great Lakes region south of Lake Erie and along the Little Cuyahoga River.

The Akron Police Department Patrol Bureau is comprised of over 175 sworn officers and 7 civilians. The Patrol Bureau is divided into five platoons and provides 24-hour coverage in the city's 12 cruiser districts. In addition to regular patrol functions, the bureau utilizes smaller, specially trained units to accomplish specific tasks and goals. In total, these units utilize 140 patrol vehicles.

Mobile information technology has become an essential weapon for patrol officers working the streets and keeping citizens safe. Timely access to information from the 911 Center, along with State and Federal databases saves lives of both the citizens of Akron and the officers that serve them. Rapid access to sensitive information needs to be readily available



to the patrol officers at a moment's notice. Investigations come to a close rapidly when officers can tap into national crime databases. Aside from the access to information the utilization of the mobile office allows the officers the ability to file paperwork electronically in the field, increasing overall efficiency and patrol hours. The Akron Police Department recognized the benefits of deploying the mobile office early on and equipped its officers with the technology in 2005. Five years later the aged, three-piece units fell out of warranty, break-fix issues increased and cruisers were delayed in the garage waiting for equipment to be fixed or replaced. The Akron Police Department identified two primary requirements for a successful technology refresh to be met: an ergonomic, economy of space for an ever shrinking cockpit, and a fiscally sensitive solution to meet its constrained budget.

Akron PD understood the constraints of the new police vehicle platforms with regard to the size of the interiors and the ergonomic design required for the amount of hours experienced in a mobile office environment.



***“Some (mobile computing) units are big and bulky, and cars are getting smaller and smaller. We were having Trouble getting a solution where the passenger seat wouldn’t have laptops or wiring dropped in, ”***

*- Sergeant Rick Schmahl.*

The economic constraints of the past several years have been devastating to local economies and, by extension, their local law enforcement agencies. According to a report by the National Institute of Justice, the United States is currently experiencing its 10th economic decline since World War II (Wiseman, Jane 2011). The effects of this recession have resulted in less grant funding for departments and reduced budgets for technology. Akron's mandate was to identify the best, most efficient and most cost effective mobile computing solution that could assist them in improving their response outcomes and increase efficiency.

The Akron Police Department set about testing many different name brands of mobile computers and designed an evaluation for the project that would “leave no stone unturned.” The evaluation included extensive testing in both the office and the field, measuring the equipment's compatibility with existing software, resilience in harsh, cold weather environments and officer feedback.

Mike Carillon, Programmer/Analyst needed to ensure any solution chosen would be compatible with the proprietary Records Management Solution (RMS) utilized by Akron's police force. He began with a set of specifications each product would need to meet, and then he diligently tested each machine in his office. “I'd install the software to see how it feels and reacts. That was a big test, I wanted to be able to get hands on with it,” Carillon said.

The evaluation criteria also included testing the effects of extreme swings in temperature upon the units they were testing. Their current solution had difficulties booting in the sub-freezing winter weather of central Ohio, causing long delays getting the officers on patrol.

***“Our cars are not assigned to an officer, after roll call an officer gets into an available vehicle,” Sgt. Schmahl continued. “Patrol shifts can have an eight hour gap, so it is possible cars could be in sub-zero temps idle for a day. The old machines couldn’t handle it and would not spin up. Sometimes we’d have to have a blow dryer on it to get it warmed up to turn on ”***

The demo machines being evaluated would need to withstand a two-day test in a freezer. Brite's Fujitsu Solution, having met Mike Carillons specifications and software compatibility test, withstood this test and displayed no delay, or performance degradation, after being in the freezer for a full 48 hours.

Once the office testing was completed, the units were rotated in the field, and a detailed account from the officers utilizing the demo equipment was collected.

The Brite Fujitsu Mobile Computer Solution is ergonomically designed with an emphasis on ease of use, officer comfort and maintains the use of the passenger seat. The Fujitsu Solution was designed to be placed at the center of the vehicle and close to the dash, consisting of a MIL-STD-810G convertible notebook featuring top of the line Intel technology, mounted in tablet form, with a backlit, removable keyboard, swing-away mount, armrest (with optional printer), cupholders and 12-volt plug. The Fujitsu Solution Swing-Away mount features a latch mechanism to lock the tablet in place with the ability to swing the mount open for access to the dash controls. The monitor and keyboard can be adjusted independently of one another to provide more comfortable data input. Furthermore, the keyboard can be removed from the mount for even more comfortable use. The mount design improves officer safety with an unobstructed view out the windshield and full use of the passenger seat.



AMPLE TRUNK SPACE

**“It has been pretty pleasant, the one-piece (tablet design) ... looks like a monitor. It has been great! It made it a natural transition from the old equipment to the new equipment without needing the CPU in the trunk.”** - Officer Nathan Keith

**“(The officers) don’t realize it is a tablet.” Carillion said. “(And) now we have horsepower in the car with the ability to multi-task between the RMS and CAD systems. We can send out photos in the future, and we can possibly implement mapping that we could never do with the old machines. ”**

**“We had guys who would race out of roll call to try and get a car with the Brite Fujitsu solution in it, ” - Sergeant Rick Schmahl**

Brite’s Fujitsu Solution answered all of Akron’s needs on price, value, ruggedness, ergonomics, the ability to allow an officer to sit comfortably in the passenger seat and most of all, positive officer feedback.

To complement the computing solution, Brite also worked with the Akron PD to deploy NetMotion Wireless Mobility XE VPN, creating a persistent connection and private network which enables the Akron IT department to treat each machine like another node on the network. The machines are able to receive necessary software patches and updates. If there are any issues, the help desk is able to fix remotely without needing to bring in the cruiser from the field.

The Akron Police Department is also evaluating the Fujitsu Q550 Tablet for field deployment to their Investigators and Detectives. They demanded a tablet device that will stand up to the rigors of a mobile workforce, and the security and compliance needed for their critical applications. The lightweight Q550 not only meets their criteria for security and compliance, the tablet features a

Windows 7 operating system, integrated WWAN and hot swappable battery

Sgt. Schmahl noted the ease of working with Brite, especially since it lessened the amount of vendors needed to complete the project.

**“It was a total solution. Brite was able to provide the brackets, the mounting, the computers and the expertise to put together a template for the install. (The Fujitsu Solution) saved us money, because we could do more cars on a tight budget. ”**

*- Sergeant Rick Schmahl.*

Today the Fujitsu Solution is a vital part of the Akron Police Department’s tool kit enabling them to carry out their mission to serve the community of Akron in a collaborative effort to enhance the quality of life through crime prevention, enforcement of laws, promotion of safety and reduction of fear.

