

Sheriff favors upgrade to electronic ticketing

By **Matt Williams**

RRSTAR.COM

Posted Apr 14, 2009 @ 07:58 PM

ROCKFORD — Traffic tickets may soon become easier to issue for the officer and easier to pay for the driver in Winnebago County as the Sheriff's Department researches new electronic ticketing methods.

Electronic ticketing would allow patrol officers to scan a person's driver's license, print the driver's information and store it quickly in a computer that goes directly into court records.

This technology also could allow traffic offenders to use their credit cards and pay on the spot, something the department is considering.

Both methods could cut time spent on paperwork and would allow a driver to quickly handle the ticket.

Sheriff Dick Meyers said it's all but a done deal to get the squad car upgrades, but he is unsure when the technology would be available.

"We are researching it now, and we want to make it as soon as possible," he said.

Electronic ticketing

Currently, when officers pull over a traffic offender, the driver's information is handwritten on a paper ticket, with copies going to the driver and various agencies. Someone then has to enter that information into a computer.

Electronic ticketing could put several of those steps into one quicker, more efficient procedure.

Illinois driver's licenses have a bar code on the back that contains the same information as on the front, said Sally Claassen, Winnebago County purchasing and facilities director.

When a license is scanned, that information goes into the computer in the squad car so the officer would not have to write it down by hand.

That saves time for the officer and can prevent errors, such as misspelled names, Claassen said. It makes it more legible for the driver, too.

Advanced Public Safety, based in Deerfield Beach, Fla., is a leading provider of electronic ticketing technology.

The company has set up agencies in up to 45 states, including Illinois, and is continuing to expand, said Jack Siney, Advanced Public Safety chief operating officer.

"Out in the field, an officer typically takes 10 to 20 minutes to make a traffic stop," Siney said. "We can literally clear a traffic stop in one to two minutes. They are back on the road much, much faster."

Siney said he also has seen the number of cases being dropped because of errors on handwritten tickets decrease.

"Twenty to 30 percent of tickets are thrown out in court because of errors," he said.

The software allows for officers to put in an offense, and it will recognize the amount of fine and the statute number. The program can be customized to fit each department's procedures, Siney said.

Pay right away

Drivers already can pay immediately after being stopped with cash or by the officer writing down the person's credit card information. But that can lead to too many hassles, Meyers said.

"People can give you a credit card on the scene that doesn't have any money on it, so when you get in to process it you don't have any money," Meyers said. "It keeps us from handling cash. We prefer not to do that because we don't want to handle any more cash than we have to."

Swiping a credit card gives instant payment, fewer hassles and less time spent on paperwork.

"By swiping the card we have your cash money," Meyers said. "If we take your driver's license and you plead guilty we give you 90 days to pay. A lot of people don't pay, so now we have got to get a warrant and run you down to collect the money."

Circuit Clerk Tom Klein says his office would benefit from the new technology as well. The circuit clerk’s office has to send out notices to traffic offenders who miss their court date or don’t pay, which can cost a lot of time and money.

“It gives us a bond upfront, so if the person fails to appear (in court) we already have the cash on the case,” he said. “It is not only going to save us in staff resources but in postage and supplies.”

Swiping a credit card also would allow the driver to keep the driver’s license.

“People don’t like to give up their driver’s licenses and I understand that,” Meyers said. “It’s a sense of security, so some people say they would like to post cash bond.”

The squad cars already are equipped with printers that would handle the e-ticketing and be able to print credit card receipts. Meyers said it could cost an additional \$600 per patrol car to include the ticketing technology.

He is hoping with increased fee collection, the devices could eventually pay for themselves.

“There is no doubt in my mind that it could,” he said.

Staff writer Matt Williams can be reached at mwilliams@rrstar.com or at 815-987-1389.

Copyright 2009 Rockford Register Star. Some rights reserved

Woman is 51 But Looks 25

Mom publishes simple wrinkle secret that has angered
ConsumerLifestyles.org

Top Anti Aging up to -57%

Quality Anti Aging at great prices: Find Anti Aging & save
www.Anti-Aging.news72.com

3 Free Credit Scores

Get All 3 Credit Scores, It's Fast - Easy & Free!
www.debt-tips.com

Ads by Yahoo!

Comments (13)

mezenman
3 years ago

Report Abuse
You must be logged in to report abuse.

Report Abuse

I think it is a shame that the police have to spend so much time controlling how fast we drive. Why can't people just respect the speed limit. The police could do more important things. I'm sorry but these guys make too much money to be baby sitting us while we drive. Every time someone gets a ticket for speeding the fine should double. Lets put an end to speeders.

RangeMaster
3 years ago

Report Abuse
You must be logged in to report abuse.

Report Abuse

Mr. Williams I suggest you verify information provided by a company spokesperson before you put it into print - the claim that 20-30% of citations are dismissed due to poor handwriting is ludicrous and totally inaccurate.

Mr. Siney - push your companies product - but, don't lie to the point of being ridiculous.

jr192
3 years ago

Report Abuse
You must be logged in to report abuse.