

The News-Star

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Our View

Staff
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Sheriff seeks big connection

Ouachita Parish Sheriff Richard Fewell wants local law enforcement to be informed and connected.

That's the goal behind a move toward putting laptops in sheriff's office patrol units with access to the Thinkstream Inc. network. Fewell is using federal funds to make the database connection a reality over the next few months.

We believe it's a good plan that will help law enforcement and the community.

The system is designed to put a wealth of information in the field to provide deputies quick access when information is vital. Easier access to local, state and federal databases can make a difference in a critical situation.

"This will make sure everyone has the same information, and more importantly, it will be in the field where it is needed most," Fewell said.

Fast access to information on vehicles or individuals can help law enforcement determine what kind of situation they face. We believe that should help with their safety and public safety.

The East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office has used Thinkstream for two years. It's also used in Lafayette, Bossier, Lake Charles and Orleans parishes. East Baton Rouge Col. Mike Barnett said it makes a big difference. That's an advantage our law enforcement officials, and citizens, need.

We commend Fewell and his department for leading the way in the technological advancement. The system is already operating in other parts of the state and the

sheriff's office will serve as the hub in northeastern Louisiana. The goal is to eventually include other sheriff's and police departments. We hope that other regional departments can follow the OPSO lead.

"This has never been done locally," Thinkstream President Barry Bellue said. "It provides not only access to 150-plus databases nationwide, but also to each others' systems."

The potential advantages of Thinkstream goes beyond patrol cars. The system can be used for more efficient information input and access in the court system. Time and efficiency are vital in the judicial system.

Our local law enforcement agencies should have better access to information and other agencies. Communication is vital in addressing crime and providing public safety.

This system has the potential to have a positive effect on the area.