

Department has eight body cameras

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think the only reason why currently that it isn't mandatory is because they are expensive and it's hard to get the budget to supply them all, especially for a bigger agency."

McKnight, who is a Tribal member, said he wanted to get ahead of the curve so the police department used an amended grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to purchase body cameras.

"I figured that it's time to try to get in front of that so we're ready for it when they do decide to make it mandatory for all law enforcement throughout the country," said McKnight. "I also want to be as transparent as possible as a police department. That was my main push for it, I guess, was to be transparent."

McKnight said despite being only a phone call away, he still can't be with all his officers all of the time.

"I figured this would be the best supervisor I could give them is a body cam," said McKnight. "It basically reminds the officers to stay professional because they know we will be watching their stops and their contacts with the public."

McKnight worked with Planning and Grants Development Manager Kim Rogers to secure funding for the cameras. Rogers amended an earlier grant to make it available for the purchase of the equipment.

Rogers said the Department of Justice grants have regularly amounted to \$300,000 annually and that those funds have been used to establish the Tribal police force.

The Department of Justice issued \$20 million to be used for police body cameras in 106 state, city, Tribal and municipal law enforcement agencies in 2016.

"We used these grants to build the police department because their goal was 24/7 coverage," said Rogers. "We have just enough officers now to do that."

Rogers said most of the funding the department has received has hired officers, but that there are provisions for the purchase of necessary equipment for use in law enforcement activities. He said that awards received are open for three years to spend and that he was able to amend the funds from a 2014 grant to purchase the body cameras and related software.

McKnight chose to work with a company in the United Kingdom to secure the cameras his personnel use today.

"We tested out a couple of different cameras. The one that we chose to go with is Reveal," said McKnight. "The reason we chose them is because they had good quality



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Body cameras sit in a docking station at the Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department. The department has eight body cameras, one for each officer, and one extra. At left, a body camera is seen on the vest of Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department Sgt. Rod McAllister. The cameras are front facing and record what the officer would see while responding to a call.



cameras and also the lens on the camera is adjustable so we're able to turn it. Officers can adjust the lens. The other ones don't move so I figured these would be the best."

Each 32 gigabyte camera cost \$989 and the department purchased eight cameras and a docking station for \$349. Each camera has an articulated, rotating head and a front-facing screen.

"One of the big features on the camera is that it has a front-facing screen so that way the person you are talking to can actually see their face on the screen," said McKnight. "It's a deterrent for them to act up. I, for one, have noticed that. A lot of times when they are talking to you they actually just stare at the screen. I think it works. My officers haven't told me anything different so it's another good option to have."

According to Revealmedia.com, body-worn cameras reduce officer complaints by as much as 90 percent and reduce officer's use of force by 50 percent. Reveal also claims its users report a 90-percent increase in early guilty pleas and that use of its technology creates a 22-percent increase in officer's time available for patrol.

Reveal has been in business for nearly a decade and the company's cameras and software are being used in more than 30 states and throughout Europe, Asia, Canada, Australia and Hong Kong.

Reveal's Marketing Program Manager Rini Chacko said the

Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department is the first Native American police department the company has worked with.

"Our main customer base is made up of police forces from around the world," said Chacko in an e-mail interview from England. "We have trials and deployments in more than 40 countries around the world. We are very interested in playing an active role with Tribal authorities in helping them through the education, purchase and implementation process of body worn cameras."

Chacko said the company's customers appreciate how simple it is to turn on the recording feature, the adjustable lens feature, the ability of the camera to pick up images in low-light conditions and that the cameras have encrypted memories for even more security for the video footage stored.

Warm Springs Tribal Police Sgt. Casey Lockey said he also thinks the cameras work. He said that Warm Springs Tribal Police Department personnel have been using body camera technology for three years.

The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs is made up of 4,000 Wasco and Paiute Tribal members.

Warm Springs police use WatchGuard Copvu body cameras and Lockey said their officers have five in-car cameras recording at all times as well.

"So we have five cameras in our car," said Lockey. "All four points and one in the prisoner cage and then we have the body cams, too. We love them. We love having them because it reduces complaints from citizens. Also, it checks our officers – you've got to be professional. Our complaints went down dramatically. We hardly get any officer complaints now."

Lockey said there was a transition at first and that the officers did not like hearing and seeing themselves on camera. In time, he said, it changed and now they all

welcome the cameras.

"When we first had them it was a big deal to us. Nobody liked them," said Lockey. "It doesn't change you as an officer. To this day, I almost forget I'm wearing one. I'm aware it's there, but it's no big deal to us."

Umatilla Tribal Police Chief Timothy Addleman said his department has not seen a need for body cameras yet, but that he sees the day when they will most likely also have body-worn law enforcement cameras on their officers.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation has had a Tribal police department in continuous service since 1981. The Umatilla Tribal Police Department has 18 sworn officers on duty and five communication officers who provide 24/7 service to the Tribal community.

Addleman, who has been the chief of police for the Umatilla Tribe for seven years, said his department has gotten in-car cameras, but they are not in use yet. He said he is working closely with his Tribal Information Technology Department to get the in-car cameras working.

"There are a lot of issues that especially a Tribal nation has to look at," said Addleman. "One of the issues is when it comes to record keeping – you will have to comply with records requests for copies of the tapes and you have to look at blanking out people's faces that aren't involved. ... There is a lot of work to this. There is a lot that goes into this."

Polk County Sheriff Mark Garton said that his department does not use body cameras, but he can see a day when his officers will have that technology in place.

Garton, whose department has 20 officers, pointed to the shooting of Dallas Police Officer Sgt. Rob Hatchell in the parking lot of a Wal-Mart in Dallas on Friday, Dec. 16, as an example of why he thinks it

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