



COURTESY PHOTO

**Florence police officer Matthew Braaten shows one of the department's 18 new Axon body cameras, which officers began using this week. Recordings by the camera are loaded onto a remote server by the Axon service independent of the officers.**

**Police from 1B**

coverage of police interactions with the public. The national attention on video-capture police body cams has become an important tool during civil disturbances and rioting this past summer, making the use of cameras by local police particularly timely.

The new body cams will allow for a markedly clearer record of all person-to-person interactions between local police officers and the public, while digitally archiving the interactions.

During a presentation made by Florence Police Chief Tom Turner to the City Council last August, Turner was clear in his support of the use of body cams and the added benefits he expected for both his department and the public.

"I am very proud of our department and I don't hesitate in sharing and documenting our daily interactions with the public we serve. This strengthens police transparency, performance, accountability and it ultimately strengthens the policing profession," Turner said in August. "The presence of cameras improves the performance of our officers. We are giving our officers and the public a

very helpful and informative tool."

The use of body cams is regulated by the state of Oregon and FPD has additionally mandated the activation of the body cams — also

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—Florence Police Chief Tom Turner

known as remote recorders — in any of the following situations:

- All enforcement and investigative contacts including stops and field interview (FI) situations
- Traffic stops including, but not limited to, traffic violations, stranded motorist assistance and all crime interdiction stops
- Self-initiated activity in which a member would normally notify the Communications Center
- Any other contact that becomes adversarial after the initial contact in a situation that would not otherwise require recording

The benefits of video recordings associated with police stops and other non-confrontational interactions allows the officers and the public to see and hear how these situations unfold.

It also provides a record of possible criminal behavior and can be used for training and disciplinary reasons. In addition, it may also be used in the resolution of complaints against re-

sponding officers.

"One goal of this program is to continue public trust in the Florence Police Department by maintaining transparency and accountability to our community," said Police Commander John Pitcher. "Our Officers are very supportive of

our body-worn camera program and welcome the benefits it will provide to both the officers and the community."

Officers have no contact with the data stored after public contacts and all information is up-loaded to Axon.

The agreement with Axon included the purchase of 18 cameras, one for each sworn officer of the department, and the coordinating equipment and technical support for the implementation of the program.

The first-year cost of the program was \$37,434. The on-going technical, support, equipment replacement and evidence storage and management costs will be \$18,580 per year.

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