

IACP 2004 Best of Show

The primary focus of this year's chiefs' show was how to get the most out of available resources.

Each year's version of the International Association of Chiefs of Police conference seems to have if not a theme, then a primary concern that seems to be the focus of most attendees.

For example, it's not hard to imagine that the big issue of the day back in 1893 when IACP held its first conference in Chicago was what to do with them new-fangled automobiles. A more sobering example is the 2001 and 2002 IACP's which were less about conventional policing and more about anti-terrorism and response to terrorist incidents.

At this year's IACP held last month in Los Angeles, terrorism took a back-seat to money concerns. Almost every chief at the show was looking for ways to stretch budgets without compromising public or officer safety and maintaining officer morale and pride.

The state of American policing in 2004 is, in a word, beleaguered. Most agencies don't have enough money for training, equipment, or even a full complement of officers. Perhaps that's why so many of the most innovative products at this year's IACP show were intended to help chiefs maximize their resources, enhance officer safety, improve officer well-being and morale, and multiply the capabilities of their departments.

Enhanced Visibility

Safe Lites has developed a way to eliminate some of the hazard faced by officers responding to vehicular accidents, investigating crashes, or performing traffic control duties. The company's new BeaconWear safety apparel includes ANSI standard high-visibility yellow and orange vests that have been augmented with strips of electroluminescent material that the company calls GlowSkin. The GlowSkin is powered by a lightweight, rechargeable battery. Safe Lites says its BeaconWear makes officers visible at more than 500 feet and has been tested in fog, rain, and snow.

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