

Crime-mapping program expands across Northland

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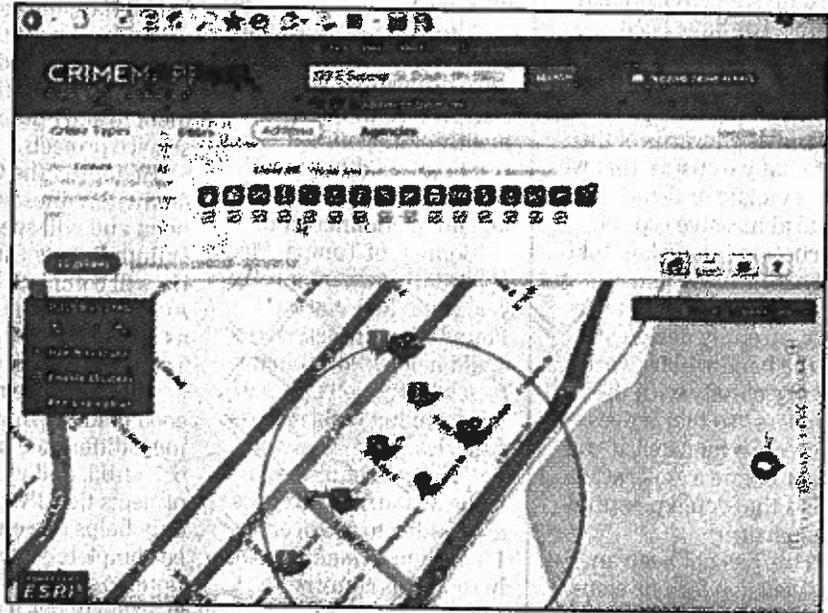
A group of about 30 Northeastern Minnesota police departments, sheriff's offices and the State Patrol announced Wednesday they have joined a crime-mapping service that will allow agencies to work together to track and monitor crime throughout this part of the state.

"The mission is safety and crime prevention," Duluth police Chief Gordon Ramsay said at a news conference with the Northeast Law Enforcement Administrator's Council. "Crime doesn't stop along the borders. Our criminals often cross lines of jurisdictions. This will also enable the citizens to see what is going on regionally."

Duluth police and city residents have been using the Web site, www.crimemapping.com, for nearly two years. The site tracks 15 types of crime by type, date, time and location where it was perpetrated within two miles of any address entered on the site.

Residents also can enter their address on the Web site and receive incident alerts from police for their neighborhood.

The new inter-agency Web site will allow about two dozen Northeastern Minnesota communities to track crime as their law enforcement agencies track and post crime statistics. Police say it's the



A screen shot of the crimemapping.com Web site. The user selects an address and then clicks on a icon representing the crime type to see what kinds of crime were committed at a particular location.

largest contiguous area in the United States covered by crimemapping.com.

"Crime mapping is important for public safety because it helps law enforcement quickly track crime trends and it creates a better informed, more self-reliant citizenry," said Gilbert Police Chief Mark Skelton, president of the Northeast Law Enforcement Administrator's

Council.

Milan Mueller, president of The Omega Group, which maintains the Web site, said about 200 agencies nationwide use his company's service, but Northeastern Minnesota law enforcement is unique because of its collaboration. "I think it represents a model in what law enforcement should be doing," Mueller said.

See Crime, Page B2

CRIME

Continued from Page B1

Carlton County Sheriff Kelly Lake and Lake County Sheriff Carey Johnson said this is another way for law enforcement agencies to share information and better inform the public.

"People that are committing crimes aren't sta-

tionary," Lake said. "They aren't just committing them here in Carlton County or here in Duluth. They are moving all over the area. We can use crime-mapping information and share it with each other as a way to prevent future crimes."

The service also is on duluthnewstribune.com for the local area. Click on "Crime" under the "News" tab.