



Saint Louis County

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Ross Litman
Sheriff

NEWS RELEASE

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Sheriff's Office recognized for Toward Zero Deaths efforts, receives LiDAR

St. Louis County deputies have a new tool to use to keep motorists and their passengers safe. The Sheriff's Office was presented Tuesday with a LiDAR device, valued at \$3,000, in recognition of its work with the Toward Zero Deaths program. LiDAR is an acronym for Light Detection And Ranging. Using laser light pulses, the technology can detect speeding vehicles from a greater distance than radar.

The LiDAR device was presented to Sheriff Ross Litman during Tuesday's County Board meeting. It was given by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety's Office of Traffic Safety to call attention to the county's extra enforcement efforts this past December.

Toward Zero Deaths, formerly known as the Safe and Sober program, provides funds to law enforcement agencies to cover overtime costs of extra patrols during key travel periods. Deputies watch primarily for the four key causes of traffic deaths and injuries: impaired or distracted driving, speeding and lack of seatbelt use. In the ten years since Toward Zero Deaths began, traffic fatalities in Minnesota have dropped significantly, from 655 deaths in 2003 to 395 in 2012.

The St. Louis County Sheriff's Office already owns one LiDAR unit, but the new equipment is more portable, making it easier to use. Deputies will now be trained on how to operate it and plan to use it during future increased enforcement efforts. The unit is small enough it could even be used by the Sheriff's Snowmobile Patrol.

"The safety of our citizens and visitors as they travel through our large county is always one of our top concerns," said Sheriff Ross Litman. "We appreciate being recognized for our efforts and are grateful to have one more tool to encourage safe driving habits."

To serve the more than 200,000 people living within St. Louis County's 7,000 square miles,

Sheriff's deputies operate out of regional offices in Duluth, Virginia and Hibbing, with additional stations in Ely, Mountain Iron and Aurora.

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