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Metro

Boston police to be armed with iPads

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JANUARY 30, 2013

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Criminals beware: Boston police will have a new weapon at their disposal, and it comes loaded with apps.

Officers on patrol will soon be armed with Apple iPads. The Police Department plans to buy 100 of the tablet computers, which are expected to arrive by mid-February, said spokeswoman Cheryl Fiandaca.

The iPad will allow officers to check for warrants quickly, search the Web, and use software applications for language translation, mapping, and tracking stolen property, city officials said.

“These capabilities will aid the Boston police in protecting the citizens of Boston,” Mayor Thomas M. Menino said.

The iPads are being funded through an \$83,619 donation from Suffolk Construction chairman and chief executive John F. Fish. Fish said that he made the gift after a recent

conversation with Police Commissioner Edward F. Davis, who told him that the department has been hoping to adopt more crime-fighting technology but lacked funding.

“He said they would love to be able to experiment with iPads,” Fish said. “For officers who are on their way to the crime scene, iPads can give advanced notification and much more detail about the situation than they’ve ever had before, and they can give information on people in that area, as well.”

Lowell police began using the tablet computers about a year ago, becoming one of the first departments in Massachusetts to do so. The department has 50 iPads so far and plans to put one in the hands of every officer eventually, said Superintendent Kenneth Lavallee.

“The technological advantages of having an iPad are tremendous,” he said, citing how a recent bank robbery suspect was identified quickly and arrested thanks in part to how officers shared a surveillance photo of the suspect via iPads.

Compared with laptop computers that are typically mounted inside police cruisers, iPads are faster, simpler to use, and less expensive to maintain and buy, officials said. And, iPads come with added features, such as the ability to take photos.

Fish said he is hopeful his donation will help curb violent, youth-related crime in Boston.

“The issue to me is really all about youth violence and doing what we can do as a community to help make the jobs of public safety officials easier,” Fish said.

Boston police recently used technology funding from last year’s budget to buy 200 iPhones, which will be distributed to patrolling detectives and police officers, Fiandaca said.

The department now issues about 150 iPhones to detective supervisors and commanders.

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