

**Body-Worn Camera Training and Technical Assistance
Lt. Brian Loos- Dodge County Sheriff's Office**

Todd Maxwell: Hello listeners, this is Todd Maxwell, a member of the Bureau of Justice Assistance Body-Worn Camera Team and today I'm speaking with Lieutenant Brian Loos.

Brian is a Lieutenant -- a Patrol Lieutenant for the Dodge County Sheriff's Office in Wisconsin. He's been employed with the sheriff's office for 14 years and has been assigned as a patrol deputy, patrol sergeant prior to being promoted to lieutenant.

He's had many different assignments during his career including nine years in various positions from the entry team to commander on the SWAT, 13 years as a drug recognition expert, the Honor Guard and overseeing many of the various teams -- special teams and programs the H.C. runs in addition to daily duties overseeing a the second patrol shift. His current duty -- extra duties with these programs led to an assignment to oversee the federal grant for the Body-Worn Camera Implementation Program with the Sheriff's Office.

Prior to working with Dodge County, Brian was employed for about two years as a non-sworn community service officer with the town of Grand Chute Police and worked simultaneous as a reserve deputy for the Waupaca County Sheriff's Office. He worked in the above position while earning an associates degree in police science and attending academy courses to become certified in the state of Wisconsin. Prior to law enforcement Brian served five years active duty in the U.S. Infantry -- Army Infantry. Thank you for joining us today.

Brian Loos: Thank you Todd.

Todd Maxwell: So, I was going to kick up the questions about what led your sheriff's department to implement body-worn cameras.

Brian Loos: Todd, I think it was just something that was naturally going to come eventually as technology was increasing. Nationwide there was a big push for

that or I guess a call publicly for law enforcement agencies to start utilizing body-worn cameras. Our agency was, during the last couple of years, trying to go through a decision and budgeting process to replace our outdated in-car systems that we currently had.

While we were doing that there were some of our employees who didn't have working in-car systems, including myself, which led us to in the meantime explore body-worn cameras as a cheaper alternative until we could get in-car systems replaced. So through that process we learned a little bit about body-worn cameras and had done some trial with several different types of cameras which helped us I think a little bit when we were able to budget for in-car systems to replace our old ones for our entire marked fleet of squad cars.

And also, during that same period of time our Sheriff, Dale Schmidt had applied for the federal grant for the body-worn cameras, which obviously was able to help our county and agency implement them. So again as I said, I think that technology was leaning that way towards just another tool that we can have to supplement our in-car systems and our goal is to get something that would work together with the in-car systems.

So, simultaneously record to get different view points. There's a lot of things that you cannot capture on an in-car system that can be captured with a body-worn system. In addition, you get different view points when you're inside of a house or along side a car in a traffic stop. There's just different information you can see there, although no camera system is all inclusive, nothing can see everything that is going on but it's just another tool that we can use to help our investigations.

Todd Maxwell: Thank you. So, what was the biggest challenge -- have you seen to be the biggest challenge for implementing body-worn camera at your department?

Brian Loos: Well I think our agency, just in talking with other agencies throughout the country at the conference here about a month ago and also reading some of the information online while we were going through this process, I see a lot of other agencies, particularly larger agencies, seem to have some push back

from some of their patrol officers or their unions and I think that our agency might be unique in that I think a majority of our employees are wanting this.

Many of them have been asking when they're going to get their body-worn camera because they are active in progressive employees who go out there and they're trying to conduct good investigations and do good work and they want that evidence to help them when they're preparing their cases for prosecution.

So, I think that wasn't really a challenge for us that I see a lot of other agencies have. But, I think the biggest challenge we had was just making sure that we do everything right with the grant. Making sure we're going through the steps like we need to.

The procurement portion, in my viewpoint, was the hardest that we had to do just making sure again that we offered that fair and impartial request for vendors to provide us what information they had and products that they have and make sure that it was going to work for our agency.

And, as we're in our procurement phase right now we're just getting into that area because of technology changing there are a lot of vendors out there who don't have working cameras yet that expected to by now or maybe they had some problems with their equipment early on and they're coming out with new versions virtually everyday depending which vendor you're talking to.

So, just making sure that we get something that is going to work properly, be dependable and reliable for our employees to use and that's also going to be useful for what the purpose is intended for.

Todd Maxwell: You mentioned using the body-worn cameras for evidence. Can you, sort of, elaborate on your outreach process around your BWC policy formation including collaboration with prosecutors, and since you are a sheriff's department, other law enforcement agencies that might have been -- be in your county?

Brian Loos: Sure. We -- our prosecutors in our county are very supportive of it and as I mentioned, we've had digital in-car systems for quite a period of time. Prior

to that we had non-digital VHS recorders in our squad cars, but our prosecutors are very supportive of it.

Again, I think it offers prosecutors, judges and juries and anybody else in a courtroom a different angle that they're not used to typically seeing with the traditional in-car systems that we see on the news all the time, so they get to see what a person's reactions are like, their facial expressions, their body movements that otherwise would not potentially be captured by in-car system. So, I think that that brings a lot of useful information to a prosecutor and a jury and a courtroom to be able to see that information.

So, our prosecutors have been very helpful or I should say very supportive and really didn't have any major input for us. Other agencies around here -- we have some medium size agencies within and that border our counties and I think that our agencies probably the first one that's going to fully implement body-worn cameras in our county.

I think some other agencies have experimented with them but don't have full implementation, so I think, at least my viewpoint is that a lot of those agencies are probably going to look towards ours to see what we did and how we did it to potentially implement their own.

Todd Maxell: OK and just to reference, how large is your agency?

Brian Loos: Our agency, we have about 32 sworn uniformed deputies that are actively on patrol. That's not including our sworn management of the patrol division. In total we have I think it's about 50 to 60 sworn deputies within our agencies, some of which are our jail staff that are dual status that are sworn. And, we have about eight detectives as well.

Todd Maxwell: OK. And are there -- you guys provide services besides -- to other municipalities also?

Brian Loos: We do. We provide service to the entire county which is about 900 square miles. We have several law enforcement agencies that are full-time that serve various cities or townships within our county; however, we also have agencies which are part-time agencies. So, when their officer's are not working we

cover those villages and cities and townships that do not have their own police department.

Todd Maxwell: Great, thank you. Just giving our listeners a reference. I meant to do that earlier, so I apologize.

Brian Loos: That's all right.

Todd Maxwell: Are there any differences in use cases for the sheriff's department versus police departments for your county?

Brian Loos: Well I think any agency across the country will say there's always a difference between the city police department and a county sheriff's office. And, that can vary from state to state depending on what their statutory duties are. I think our agency does a lot of traffic crash and traffic crime investigations, particularly with OWI Enforcement, driving while impaired and a lot of serious and fatal crash investigations.

On top of that, we have a lot of drug investigations and domestic abuse calls and complaints. So we see a lot more of that as being the things that we end up doing most on a daily basis, whereas police departments may be a little bit different with that. However, the police agencies in our county I think do a lot of the same investigations because we are a relatively small agency and cover a large area.

We rely on other police departments to assist our deputies on calls and vice versa, our deputies go into the cities because there's often one officer working in some of those cities at a time, so they go in and back them up.

So we collaborate a lot, a lot of our law enforcement leadership work together well, there's various associations and meetings so there's a lot of sharing of information; there's a lot of sharing of work that goes on and we rely on each other a lot.

So I see a lot of collaboration there in which we are going together on the same calls with each other. And we end up I guess having the same type of cases that we're working on.

Todd Maxwell: So that brings up a question that we've been asked before and I'd like to get your perspective on it. So if you are doing a mutual aid or a collaborative response to a call and your agency is wearing the Body Worn Camera and has it activated, does your policy therefore – how does policy handle that if it becomes a city issue or municipal issue where you have the Body Worn Camera?

Do you provide that as evidence for them? I'm realizing you probably have the same prosecutor, but how does that work with them? Or if they're – they have a policy that might be different from recording in the home than yours, how do you guys resolve that issue?

Brian Loos: Well again, I don't believe there's any police agency within our county that is using them, perhaps beyond a trial basis.

Todd Maxwell: Right, OK.

Brian Loos: I don't think there's been any widespread implementation. But our deputies would operate under our own policies typically, unless another policy you know is in conflict and then it's going to be a little bit more situationally dependent as to what they'll do.

With recording inside homes, you know our policy I think is pretty good in leaving some discretion to the deputy as to whether or not it should be recorded. Particularly if you know, we're on a medical call and we're not doing any kind of criminal investigation, there's probably not a need to have that on.

Additionally when our deputies show up, even with all body cameras, if they just have their in car system, I know usually notify the other officer that are there that they're recording just so they're aware of it, but around here most of our agencies have some type of recording at least in their car right now. So that's pretty common.

Todd Maxwell: OK.

Brian Loos: It was early on that was more of an issue, but that's not too much of an issue now.

Todd Maxwell: OK great. And we get that question actually asked a lot between the city and county, where people are in different stages of implementation and how they notify each other and work together for evidence sharing purposes and such.

Brian Loos: ... I was just going to say one part of that question that you had I didn't answer was in sharing that information as far as the evidence for prosecution, in my experience I have that police agencies, because they know that are a couple of us that have been wearing body cameras in our agency for a couple of years now, they'll actually ask for us to go into a house with them so that they have some of that evidence or to back them up on that traffic stop.

Where they think the body camera might be more helpful and we have provided that to them for their municipal court and it also goes to our district attorney's office for any criminal charges.

Todd Maxwell: Great thank you for the follow up.

Brian Loos: You're welcome.

Todd Maxwell: What are some of the biggest considerations you had when you were selecting a vendor and storage options?

Brian Loos: Sure I kind of touched on a little bit on what the vendors – just the one of the biggest I've seen is the change of technology from when I first started looking at just getting a couple of units here about two years ago or so was technology has changed a lot since then.

Both in size and how long the different devices can last, how long they'll work for, how much training you need to actually operate the device, but there's a lot of that that's coming out right now with the vendors. There's a lot more vendors out there that are offering body cameras that you can get for you know a hundred bucks or less or up to several hundred dollars per unit.

So there's a lot of information there that I think is still becoming standardized so to speak, that I think the various vendors are going to try and create their equipment to meet maybe a certain level of nationwide standard of what they should minimally do and how they should operate.

So just I think knowing what each vendor has, because there are so many differences in the technologies changing, is probably one of the biggest considerations we've had, as well as the fact we are looking for a camera that works with or syncs up with an in car system.

As far as storage is concerned, storage is always a huge issue. Our agency opted to go local storage on a server, that's how we've done it in the past and how we believe we're going to continue to do it at least for the near future.

But getting enough storage space to fit retention needs, retention policies, I would expect at some point in the future, there'll probably be more statewide legislation that will cover retention periods, even for something that's not evidentiary. But just making sure you have enough storage because 10, 15 years ago we didn't have need for very much, if any, electronic storage and now with all the in car systems and the implementation of body cameras we're going to have a lot more storage needs.

We're going to need to have larger storage facilities and I'm not an IT expert, but I know that it costs a lot of money to get that stored and maintain it and back it up. So that's the biggest concern that I have with storage is just making sure we have enough so that we can continue to retain our videos for the period of time that we need to.

Todd Maxwell: Thanks and final question is what advice would you offer to other sheriff's agencies that are looking to implement Body Worn Cameras?

Brian Loos: I think the biggest advice I could give is to rely on another agency that has been there and done that. To try and go to a nearby agency that has already implemented them to ask some of the people who have maybe led that project what they did right, what they did wrong.

And just to collaborate, at the conference again about a month ago, it was nice just to sit down with other agencies throughout the entire country and find out at their various stages in implementing this stuff what they had done, what they wished they had done and to get some advice to go forward with before you start working on it because it's very complex, especially when you're dealing with a Federal grant to make sure you're doing everything right and in the right order so that you don't end up skipping a step or missing something that you wish you would have done.

So again just reaching out to other agencies that have already implemented it and you know, especially some agency that may have had it for a couple of years and know what changes they have made after a year or two of using the devices and anything that they've overlooked and decided that they needed to make changes to.

Todd Maxwell: Well thank you very much for joining us, Lieutenant, I appreciate you ...

Brian Loos: Thank you.

Todd Maxwell: ... taking the time to share your knowledge on this.

Brian Loos: You're welcome and thank you.

Todd Maxwell: We encourage law enforcement, justice, public safety leaders and others who are interested in learning more about the implementation of Body Worn Camera programs to visit the Body Worn Camera toolkit at www.bja.gov/BWC. The toolkit offers a variety of resources that agencies can use to help with the adoption and use of community engagement, policy development, data collection, officer training and educational purposes.

We also encourage listeners to share and promote these resources with your colleagues and staff. All these resource in the toolkit have been designed as a national resource, your resource. So please submit ideas for new content through the BWC support link at the bottom of the home page.

This is Todd Maxwell with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Body Worn Camera Program signing off. Thanks to our listeners for joining us today.

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