

Law officials air their worries, wishes and concerns

By Steve Schuster
News Graphic correspondent

Mequon — Top local and state law enforcement officials, attorneys and others addressed law enforcement concerns at a roundtable “brainstorming session” sponsored by state Senator Alberta Darling (R-Menomonee Falls) on Nov. 14 at Mequon City Hall.

Wisconsin Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen led the discussion.

The roundtable was an opportunity for prosecutors and members of the Ozaukee County law enforcement community to share information so various branches of state and local government have an opportunity to work together to better address local issues, roundtable participants said.

“If the meeting helps to bring out the problems between different sections of law enforcement, this is the place it should be discussed... so that we can work for solutions,” said Ronald Heinritz, a Thiensville village trustee.

In addition, concerns were discussed regarding the need for more uniform application of open record laws.

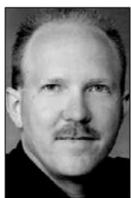
One official said, currently if a citizen asked for a public record document, one Ozaukee County jurisdiction denies the request while another jurisdiction complies with the request.

Van Hollen said, although open record law issues in Wisconsin are not the fault of the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ), his office would like to help.

“Our office wants to enable



Darling



Graff

local law enforcement to appropriately respond to public records requests, where there is some understandable confusion,” DOJ spokesman Kevin St. John said during a followup

phone interview.

On another topic, Mequon Police Chief Steve Graff said the state’s Department of Corrections should notify the local law enforcement departments when a paroled sex offender moves into a community.

Sgt. Paul Neumyer of the Mequon Police also requested that Wisconsin adopt legislation to comply with federal law allowing retired law enforcement officers to continue to carry a concealed weapon.

Additionally, the subject relating to local law enforcement’s encounters with illegal immigrants was brought to the table.

The attorney general said that although this is primarily the responsibility of federal law enforcement, his office would like to assist with the education and training of local law enforcement.

“We are working to develop materials which will outline the duties and obligations of law enforcement (officials) regarding (interacting with) foreign nationals,” St. John later said. “The aim of this is to make it more clear what the legal rights and obligations are... the shoulds and should nots.”

Overall, roundtable members seem to be pleased with the results of the discussion.

“The meeting was very helpful. Myself, not being involved with the problems of the judicial system, it was very important for me to learn about the problems

and hassles that they (the law enforcement community) must deal with... This meeting will improve police efficiency, and the over all safety of communities,” Heinritz said.

Van Hollen said he wants to hold similar meetings throughout Wisconsin, and Darling commended Van Hollen for not playing partisan politics with these discussions.



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Proposed bill would give drivers' photos to police

By Steve Schuster
News Graphic correspondent

Mequon — Wisconsin’s finest may soon have new technology that will allow law enforcement officers view driver license photos right in their patrol cars.

On Nov. 14, Chief Bruce Resnick of the Bayside Police Department addressed the law enforcement roundtable held at Mequon City Hall. Local and state law enforcement officials including Wisconsin Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen, chief prosecutors, and Wisconsin legislators attended.

Resnick said Wisconsin law must be changed so that the state’s Department of Transportation (DOT) is required to more readily share driver’s license photos with law enforcement departments.

Van Hollen said such legislation has already been introduced by Wisconsin Representative Kitty Rhoades (R-Hudson).

“A draft (of the bill) is pending, but has not yet been introduced,” Eric Schutts, a spokesperson for Rhoades’ office, said during a phone interview.

The law would require the DOT to make driver’s license photos available to law enforcement, Schutts said. The bill is being circulated for co-sponsors, he said, and will be introduced in the Assembly.

State Representative Daniel LeMahieu (R-Oostburg), who was also at the roundtable discussion, said he supports the concept of sharing information between DOT and law enforcement.

Most law enforcement vehicles in the state are equipped with computers linked to the Wisconsin Department of Justice’s Transaction Information for the Management of Enforcement (TIME) network.

TIME is used to exchange information among members of the law enforcement community.

“The system is connected to other law enforcement agencies including the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s National Crime Information Center (NCIC), and the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications Network System (NLETS).

The TIME system provides information on “wants and warrants, driver license and vehicle registration information, criminal histories, protection order and injunction files, sex offender and corrections information, stolen property, missing persons and more,” according to the Wisconsin DOJ’s Web site.

The Wisconsin Attorney General’s office supports legislation requiring the DOT to provide driver’s license pictures to law enforcement computer systems.

“It’s an excellent idea. Other states have the capability, and it would definitely improve the safety of officers responding to a tactical situation,” Wisconsin DOJ spokesman Kevin St. John said during a phone interview.

While most members of the law enforcement community support this legislation, some believe it may raise constitutional questions and privacy issues.

However, Mequon City Attorney John DeStefanis does not foresee any constitutional problems with the new legislation allowing the sharing of DOT driver’s photos with law enforcement officers.

DeStefanis said having a driver’s license is a privilege, not a right and when one voluntarily provides personal information (to the DOT), including a photo, it is understood it may be used by law enforcement.

At a glance

Also attending the roundtable:

Police department officials

Chief Charles Wenten, Grafton; Chief Dick Preston, Thiensville; Chief Thomas Frank, Cedarburg; Capt. Mike Keller, Port Washington; Lt. Jerry Ebert, Ozaukee County Sheriff’s Dept.; Sgt. Jim Johnson, Ozaukee County Sheriff’s Dept.

Attorneys

Sandy Williams, Ozaukee County district attorney; Kaye Vance, Cedarburg city attorney; John DeStefanis, Mequon city attorney.

State representatives

Dan LeMahieu (R-Oostburg); Jim Ott (R-Mequon).

Local officials

Karl Hertz, president, village of Thiensville; Rose Hass Leider, Ozaukee County supervisor; Cindy Bock, Ozaukee County supervisor; Jean Stern, Ozaukee County supervisor; Robert Walerstein, Ozaukee County supervisor.

Others

Charles Beck; Barb Fischer, Advocates Ozaukee.

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Holiday Remembrance Service

Hosted by

Mueller Funeral Home

Sunday, November 25, 2007

2:00 p.m.

at the

Mueller Funeral Home

979 Green Bay Road, Grafton

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Matt Solverson (2nd Team)
Corby Oleson (Honorable Mention)

FOOTBALL
Erik Neece (2nd Team)
Nick Baltzell (Honorable Mention)

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