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This flying parachute is part of an experimental program being evaluated by the Ripon PD and the Rural Law Enforcement Technology Center. (Photo courtesy RIPON PD)

departments nationwide, took place Oct. 25–29 across the bay from San Diego, on the island of Coronado. Attendees were picked on the basis of submitted presentations. Their trip was paid for by the institute in return for presenting to the group. Topics included field voice translators, RMS/CAD, automated traffic signal enforcement, in-car cameras—even flying parachutes.

"I'm realizing now that we all face similar issues at smaller or rural agencies," says Lt. Adam Weingartner of the Ottawa (Kan.) Police Department. "Each of us has differences, of course. Our products might be from different vendors, but at the end of the day the challenge is the same. Being here, that's me trying to keep in the information loop, because this is where you find answers."

RULETC does more than just convene officers, it also facilitates vendor demonstrations and funds innovation that will benefit smaller departments. One of those projects entailed supplying the Ripon (Calif.) Police Department with a flying parachute, which was trailered and brought to the conference. This project was voted the best of the bunch by attendees.

"This thing is great," says Sgt. Steven Merchant, the contraption's pilot. "We can do drug recon. We've participated in a swift-water rescue. ... And all at a fraction of the cost of getting a chopper in the air."

RULETC and the DOJ are evaluating expanding the program to other departments. Other pilot programs involve an evaluation of inexpensive firearms simulators that is currently

Sky's the Limit

RULETC symposium a reminder of tech's role in smaller agencies

Crawford Coates, Senior Editor
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The NIJ's Rural Law Enforcement Technology Center (RULETC) symposium is proof that smaller and rural agencies occupy the cutting edge of law enforcement, despite the challenges they uniquely face.

The symposium, which convened 50 change-agents from small and/or rural

taking place across three different departments.

"My staff wants me to come home because I keep on texting and e-mailing them to look stuff up," says Chief Tim Jayne of the Leland (N.C.) Police Department. "When I get home, I'll have to do all the research on my own!"

If this sounds like something you'd be interested in and you belong to a small or rural police department, visit www.ruletc.org.



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