

# PROBATION CONNECTION

1st Quarter 2022

## The Technology Issue







# CHIEF'S MESSAGE

“

As your chief, I can say that we are committed to being the most progressive, best trained, and most technologically advanced Department in the state.

”

Change is constant, especially when it comes to technology.

Here is an example - when I started with this Department, we did not wear uniforms, we did not carry guns, and we didn't have answering machines. I drove my work vehicle - a Dodge Omni - throughout Barstow with no air conditioner. It's funny because I thought there was nothing wrong with that, I just did it because it was my job.

But look at what we have today. Our caged, County-provided vehicles have GPS, back up cameras, and MDCs, and our state-of-the-art command vehicles have emergency lights. We have implemented satellite phones and ham radios for emergencies. Our Juvenile Detention and Assessment Centers have electronic door swipes, which is a major upgrade from the heavy pocket of keys that we had to use to get into every building and every room. We've gone from using Thomas Guides to the ESRI tracking system.

There has been so much progressive change in the last 30 years, and I find that very exciting.

But over time, our mission has not changed. My goal back then, when I was riding around in the



**CPO TRACY REECE**

desert, was the same as it is today, serving as Chief Probation Officer. Our vision has remained the same - To Protect the Community.

You will notice that this magazine issue is dedicated to technology and progression. Technology is a tool that is meant to make our jobs easier and more effective, which in turn reflects how we serve the community. Technology has helped this Department communicate better between our staff and with the people we serve, it has helped us provide more services that reflect our balanced approach to rehabilitation, and it has served us well during local and national disasters.

The role of Probation continues to expand on the state level and the future of Probation is very bright. As your chief, I can say that we are committed to being the most progressive, best trained, and most technologically advanced Department in the state.

**Tracy Reece**  
Chief Probation Officer



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# SBC PROBATION RECOGNITION

## CORE 79



**PROBATION CORRECTIONS OFFICER CORE 79**

**“NO AMOUNT OF TALENT WILL TAKE YOU ANYWHERE WITHOUT  
YOUR TEAM”**







## Blood Drive

SBCProbation hosted a blood drive with the LifeStream Blood Bank on March 2, 2022 at the Probation Administration Building in San Bernardino. Forty Probation employees and San Bernardino County staff donated in an effort to cut the national blood shortage. This was the first Probation blood drive event in more than two years, and based on its success more events are being planned.









# Virtual Reality: The New Reality

**BY: PROBATION OFFICER III MIRNA DAY**

Advances in technology continue to improve the way law enforcement agencies provide training to their officers. Agencies across the nation have started incorporating some form of virtual reality training into their curriculum because of the versatility, cost effectiveness, and speed at which trainees can participate in various scenarios. Many of these courses aim to address recent changes in legislation and/or law enforcement training developments, including Use of Force, De-escalation, and Mental Illness to name a few.

The San Bernardino County Probation Training Center began incorporating virtual reality Taser training during the 2020-2021 year. Probation officers had previously been using AXON's Taser X26P, which was upgraded after nine years to the Taser 7. Along with the

purchase of Taser 7, AXON included five Oculus Go virtual reality systems and two training scenarios. The Oculus Go, which consists of a wireless headset and a handheld controller, was designed to immerse the trainee into realistic situations that include a 360-degree view. The Oculus Go has recording and casting capabilities that permits trainers to view the screen as the trainee sees it on another device.

Another recording device recently implemented in training scenarios is the GoPro action cameras. These cameras were originally designed to photograph/record extreme sports, but they are now finding their way into the hands of amateur photographers and in this case, law enforcement. For training purposes, a GoPro is mounted on an instructor using either a head



or chest strap to capture video footage of a trainee's interaction in "live" scenarios.

Our current training scenarios are based on situations that officers may encounter, like providing the perspective of what an autistic or schizophrenic individual may be enduring, an officer responding to a crisis situation. Each scenario pauses two times during crucial moments and prompts the trainee to make a decision based on two options. The scenario unfolds based on the trainee's decisions.

Overall, the majority of our officers said they were fascinated by the lifelike experience. They appreciated the insight received in the beginning of scenarios and believed that knowledge influenced the way they responded. They were empathetic to the subject in crisis and responded appropriately.

These scenarios give officers the opportunity to learn how to recognize and respond to crisis situations in a safe environment, engage in each scenario at their own pace, consider options for de-escalation, and develop critical thinking skills.

Since incorporating the progressive tools, the Training Unit is actively pursuing additional scenarios that include more trainee interaction to be implemented in the near future.



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# Technology Taking Probation Into The Future

**BY: MEDIA SPECIALIST II LORI FOWLER**

As of March 2022, there were close to 50 technology- and business-related projects being worked on in Automated Services alone.

Some of those projects, which will propel the San Bernardino County Probation Department into the future, include:

- Enhancing Caseload Explorer for Pre-Trial needs to include the use of CE Assessments and CE CheckIn for text messaging that will allow staff to communicate with clients and send documents to court.
- Security cameras installed throughout the department on a unified platform.
- Revamping SBCProbation's website and updating the Intranet page - a strategic planning initiative that will create an employee portal for the Mentoring Program.
- Addressing higher education and programming needs for ARISE Program.

"The San Bernardino County Probation Department has come a long way in 30 years," said Department Information Services Administrator Michael Donahue. "And we have plans to go even further."

Like the majority of businesses and organizations over the last two years, the Coronavirus pandemic pushed SBCProbation into the progressive age of video conferencing. During the height of Covid-19, the Department allowed video visitation for families to stay in contact with those at the Juvenile Detention and Assessment Centers (JDACs). Youth also now have access to video court. Staff in the High Desert can be present with Central and West Valley employees without having to leave their region. All of this thanks to technology that provides viability and efficiency, and decreases transportation issues, among other things.

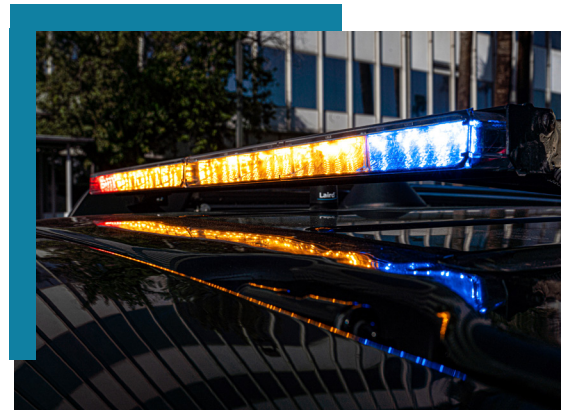
"Business is changing," Donahue said. "Technology is allowing us to communicate to so many people – our co-workers, our clients, the community – all while sitting at a desk."

SBCProbation is committed to being the most progressive Probation Department in the state, which means outfitting staff with everything they need to do their jobs well – including vehicle emergency lights.

In 2017, Probation officers were authorized to display emergency lights from their vehicle visible from the front, sides, or rear of their emergency vehicles.

"Although SB 587 allows us to display emergency lights, it does not expand the authority of Probation officers to conduct high-speed vehicle pursuits or conduct traffic stops," Division Director I Jason Swims said.

Emergency lights are currently installed on the three command vehicles and paperwork was recently submitted to purchase and install them on four new vehicles. There will be a rollout of more emergency lights, which will include 16 vehicles each fiscal year, Swims said. The lights will be installed on new vehicles







that are added to the Department's fleet. Older vehicles already in service will not be included in the roll out.



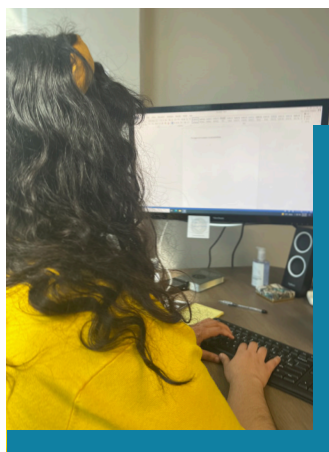
"The transition to emergency lights, and the training our officers are receiving, is another example of our Department's progressive attitude," Swims said. "The lights further our vision by allowing us to expedite our response to any life preservation incident, which will help protect any potential victims. It is another illustration of our dedication to training and our officers, who are taught the required skills to best perform their job."

## Progressive Change

The Research Unit, which is currently at the forefront of several of these new projects, is working with County ISD to integrate departmental data with Geographical Information System (GIS) software created by Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), Supervising Probation Officer Isaac Zaragoza said. The intent is to use ESRI software not only as a resource for supervising offenders in the community, but also for emergency management, sharing departmental data, etc.

ESRI is an international supplier of GIS software, web GIS and geodatabase management applications. The company is headquartered in Redlands, California.

In the simplest of terms, ESRI technology is a suite of applications used to visualize data. The Department actually started using it in 2012, when Crime Analyst Trina West saw a potential to track data outside of Excel Spreadsheets and enhance Operational/Spatial Awareness.



The goal was to "Work Smarter not Harder," West said, and also to allow Probation officers to make better decisions with their caseloads. SBCProbation goes a step further though, "by configuring the applications to work together with specific goals in mind," West said. "That makes us progressive. And designing our own GIS database is a first as a County agency."



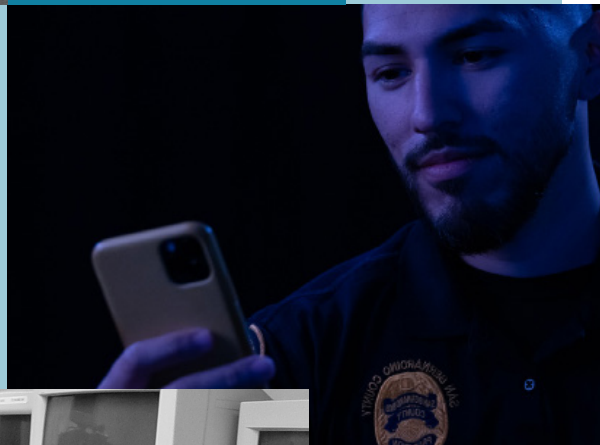
The Probation Department joins a long list of county, state, and national agencies, as well as international organizations that utilize ESRI technology, including the San Bernardino County Sheriff's and Fire departments, Department of Behavioral Health, nearly all City Police Departments in the County, Department of Public Health, Public Works, the Special Districts Department, and more.



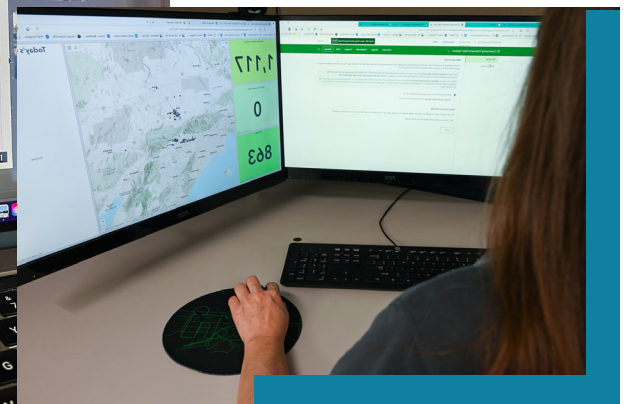
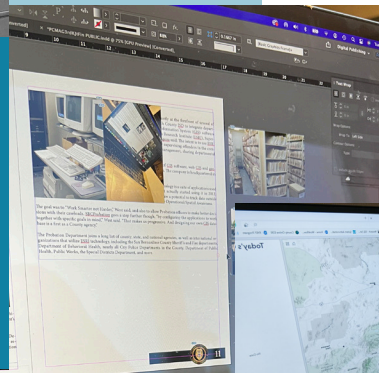


At the beginning of the pandemic, the County Innovation and Technology Department (ITD) had a short window to work with the Department of Public Health to create the COVID-19 County dashboard. Though the Offender Mapping project was temporarily delayed with County ITD, Probation continued to have brief conversations about the impact that the pandemic would have on various county agency operations. Division Director II Kim Binion realized the benefits stemming from ArcGIS Mission would provide for the

County in our response to the pandemic and proposed the idea of acquiring the program. Months later, County ITD attained two additional ESRI products, ArcGIS Indoors and ArcGIS Mission, which were approved by the Board of Supervisors in late 2021. Though both programs will be implemented with all county agencies, Probation will pilot the programs first.



“Technology continues to evolve and enhance how information is readily available to us. The programs that we use should make our jobs easier to carry out as well as align with our Department’s Mission,” Division Director II Kim Binion said. “Utilizing these ESRI programs should enhance how we manage our operations, and is our opportuni-





SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY PROBATION  
PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM



# 1ST ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT FUNDRAISER



The San Bernardino County Probation Department Peer Support Program is a non-profit with the sole purpose of assisting staff and their families in times of need; contributions are tax deductible.  
**501c(3) Tax EIN#85-0967767**

MONDAY MAY 9TH, 2022	REDLANDS COUNTRY CLUB
SCHEDULE	FEES
Registration/Check-in begins at 9:00 AM  12:00 PM Shotgun Start	\$150 Per Person  \$500 for a team of 4
Raffles, Dinner, Contests, Awards Ceremony and more!	

*For questions and information, please contact:*  
*- [Probation.peersupport@prob.sbcounty.gov](mailto:Probation.peersupport@prob.sbcounty.gov) -*

[www.JoinProbation.Org](http://www.JoinProbation.Org)





# Ham Radios

## The Future of Communications



**BY: DIVISION DIRECTOR | TOM SHILEY**

While the world moves forward with computers that fit on your wrist, SBCProbation is relying on a hand-held radio traced back to the early 1900s to aid in a crisis.

The ham radio - another term for an amateur radio that requires an operator - can be an essential tool during an emergency, and this Department has seen our fair share of those over the years. From fires, floods, and earthquakes, to active shooters and now a pandemic response, we are always learning how to be prepared for every crisis. One of those ways was to equip staff with ham radios.

Several years ago, the Incident Management Team (IMT) met with County Office of Emergency Services (OES) to get an understanding of the processes and capabilities of the OES. During that meeting, it was identified that the County has the ability to use ham

radios as an alternate means of communication. During further talks with Administration, the IMT identified ham radios as an additional means of communication for the Department.

Then, in 2021, while talking with other departments, Chief Reece learned that the use of ham radios were instrumental for communication during the wildfires. She is excited to bring another tool to this Department in preparedness of emergency or natural disaster.

We have put 12 IMT staff through an intense, 3-day ham radio License training and there are more staff scheduled for training in March, May, and August. The plan is to eventually have 80 of our sworn and non-sworn staff licensed to provide information and communication from each station during an emergency.



We also plan to put a radio in each Probation building. We have installed antennas at the Department Operations Center at the West Valley Training Center, the ARISE facility in the High Desert, and the Administration Building in San Bernardino; and we are in the process of outfitting antennas at the Central Valley Juvenile Detention and Assessment Center and the Joshua Tree Probation Office. The field commander vehicles will also be outfitted with ham radios. Our success in times of crisis is dependent on the

availability of and access to communications systems that can perform essential functions and provide critical services.

During an emergency, we want to ensure that we have the ability to execute our essential functions, which means taking care of our staff and protecting the community. Ham communications, which is a major component of the Counties Disaster Communications program and coordinated by County OES, allows us to do just that.



**...we are always learning how to be prepared for every crisis. One of those ways was to equip staff with ham radios.**



# Technology is Changing Field Work, and Beyond



**BY: SUPERVISING PROBATION OFFICER ANGELA GENTRY,  
SUPERVISING PROBATION OFFICER RODNEY SERMONS  
AND CRIME ANALYST TRINA WEST**

ArcGis Survey123 (also known as Survey123) is a database tool used to capture statistics and contact information for probationers and non-probationers. For years, the San Bernardino County Probation Department has provided help and service to the community, but has not had a way of capturing contacts made on a daily basis. This system, which was designed to collect that exact data, was a collaborative effort between Research, mainly Probation Crime Analyst Trina West, Supervising Probation Officer Angela Gentry, and Probation Officer III Lorraine Amaya. Probation Officer Julia Briseno also helped to offer data capture points for services offered.

This system was used during the Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding (CESF) Grant Outreach Operations in late 2021 to track how many grant-purchased Enhanced Hygiene Kits (EHKs) were distributed, as well as the number of referrals and resources offered at the Outreach events. Up until that point, the Department had not been tracking non-probation contacts in a formal matter, so Survey123 allowed staff to really capture the true picture of the work they do in the community.

It was helpful in real time because staff could see how many EHKs were being given out and where. The sys-



tem drops a GPS pin where the contact was made, and makes a note of where the person frequents or where they set up camp. Survey123 also has layers of information embedded into it, including which officer made contact, when and where the contact was made, the type of contact (in person, at the office, a Day Reporting Center walk-in, in the field, etc.), basic identifiers, and photo captures.

This technology also enables access to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department's HOPE Program data collection efforts in real-time. This assists homeless outreach efforts because information on the latest homeless individual and encampment sites are provided.

There are currently other projects in development using Survey123. In October 2021, a Client Satisfaction Survey was created and has since been implemented at the Day Reporting Centers (DRCs) to get feedback from those attending classes and help locations decide if additional class hours are required. It will also give insight into the obstacles offenders experience while

taking DRC courses. ARISE is in review of several Pre/Post surveys to periodically measure gratitude, anxiety, and well-being based on the youth's self-assessment. The AB1913 School Probation Officers collect and report their statistics on an excel form and the Research Unit is in the process of developing a form to capture this data electronically in the field so the Probation officer does not need to spend additional time tallying their contacts. There are also plans to develop other data collection questionnaires to track outreach activities.

Eventually, the system can be used by anyone in the department as a means to track referrals, resources and items given out to the community. Ideally, all staff will have the ability to track contacts and understand their geographical needs or highly populated areas that may need services.

Survey123 has advanced this Department by allowing staff to keep up with the latest technology used to track and monitor services or needs within the county.



# TEACHING TECHNOLOGY TO PROBATION YOUTH

## BY: MEDIA SPECIALIST II LORI FOWLER

The Animatronics Academy hosted at the Central Valley Juvenile Detention and Assessment Center teaches Probation youth a lot more than just technology. Although, they learn a lot about technology too.

The 5-day program focuses on developing real, world-of-work skills, exposes youth to a variety of career paths, and helps the youth communicate and collaborate as a team to accomplish their goal of building a robotic figure that creates the illusion of life. Animatronics can be found at the most popular theme parks around the world.

“Our hope is that the youth will gain hands-on, working technology skills that helps them in the future,” said Monica Hatcher, principal at the San Bernardino Juvenile Court School. “It’s not just about the curriculum, it’s about teaching them how to communicate with each other. Communication is always the most important skill.”

The program is a collaboration between the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools (SBCSS), the San Bernardino County Probation Department, and Garner Holt Education through Imagination and Garner Holt Productions - an industry leader in the production of theme park animatronics located in the Inland Empire region of San Bernardino County.

During their time with Garner Holt Education

through Imagination staff, the youth learn how to develop animatronics that utilize science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics. The students are divided into groups and taught how to build the figures that present a story or theme.

“Each team of probation youth work throughout the week to create and build their animatronic,” said Bill Tynan, Director of Secondary Education, Garner Holt Education Through Imagination, LLC. “On the last day of the academy, they host a final showcase and operate their creation in front of an audience.”

The Animatronics Academy has been hosted multiple times at the CVJDAC since 2019.

“Normally, students attend the academy at Garner Holt productions. After I visited the site in September of 2018, I spoke to the curriculum manager and we were able to bring this program to our students,” Hatcher said. “It was wonderful that Garner Holt was willing and able to bring this academy into the JDAC.” Teaching Probation youth about technology – or what Tynan calls 21st Century Skills – is a big part of the Animatronics Academy. But he is hoping the youth learn so much more.

“We are really passionate about providing experiences that help to increase student’s sense of hope for what the future holds, and increase their sense of engagement in school,” Tynan said.





**“WE ARE REALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT PROVIDING EXPERIENCES THAT HELP TO INCREASE STUDENT’S SENSE OF HOPE FOR WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS, AND INCREASE THEIR SENSE OF ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOL.”**



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