

Grant provides protective shields

Written by Chris Lee



Holyoke P.D. has taken another step in beefing up safety and security. On Tuesday, Oct. 20, two brand new shields or body bunkers arrived at the station.

The two shields came as part of a Northeast All Hazard Region Homeland Security Grant for \$5,200.

The ballistic shields can be used for high risk entries or at schools in emergencies.

They are made out of ballistic weave products, according to Sergeant Doug Bergstrom.

The shield is rated level three which will stop the bullet from almost any type of hand gun, according to Police Chief Phil Biersdorfer. The durability is the same as the safety vests the officers wear. Biersdorfer said there are different kinds of shields rated for higher levels and used for other high risk situations.

Biersdorfer said they will leave one of the shields in Holyoke while the other will be in Haxtun. He said that was part of the proposal of the grant. Additionally, any other emergency agency that needs to use one will be able to, Biersdorfer added.

As for other agencies nearby, Biersdorfer said Holyoke is willing to lend the shields to them in case of an emergency. He added there isn't a large number of departments in the area that carry this type of shield.

The units cost about \$1,700 apiece and the light on the front is another \$250.

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Biersdorfer and Bergstrom said the department will do some weapons training with the shields locally as part of their annual training and planning.

The shields have a strap that goes around the neck to help support the weight and allows the officer to use his/her handgun. The light is controlled from behind and is capable of illuminating most of the hallways within the schools, according to Biersdorfer.