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Police get up to speed on new vehicles at race

NASCAR PATROL

July 12, 2008 By [CATHERINE ANN VELASCO](#)
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JOLIET -- Race fans waved beer bottles in the air as they listened to Country singer Gretchen Wilson belt out tunes Friday afternoon at the Chicagoland Speedway, but as soon as they heard the siren behind them, they moved to create a path for emergency personnel.

Lt. Dennis Goron was flashing the lights of the T3 Series, an electric-powered, three-wheeler patrol vehicle -- similar in appearance to a Segway -- so firefighters could get to a woman who had passed out from the heat.

Clean energy

The two vehicles are on loan by T3 Motion of California so Joliet police can test the clean-energy vehicles during the NASCAR events. It costs less than 10 cents a day to power the vehicles each day, and they can go as fast as 18 miles per hour. The batteries are plugged into an outlet to be recharged.

Police officers on foot alerted Goron via radio that the woman needed help, so Goron helped clear a path for emergency personnel in a type of golf cart to get to the victim. She was put in the fire department's small vehicle, and Goron cleared the path to a first-aid tent.

The T3 has a zero-degree turning radius that allowed Goron to maneuver in a way a golf cart couldn't in a crowd.

Also, there are so many golf carts driven by staff, vendors and law enforcement that people don't often get out of the way at the race track when there is an emergency, said Lt. Brian Benton who drove the other T3 during the concert.

After the woman was moved, Goron and Benton in quick succession helped with three more medical emergencies, including a child with heat exhaustion and an injured woman.

The vehicles platform is 9 inches off of the ground, giving Benton and Goron a view over the crowds, helping them search for injured people.

\$9,000 cost

Each vehicle costs about \$9,000. Goron said if the police department decides to buy the vehicles, they will use them at downtown events, including JackHammers games and parades. Officers could also use the vehicles in the mall at Christmas.

"It's really based on your imagination," Goron said. "It's truly the next generation of law-enforcement tools.

"It is probably one of the most popular items out here besides the cars," Goron said. "People stop us routinely to ask us questions. They ask how it operates, how long it runs and how fast it goes. The kids actually want to turn on the lights and sirens, and so do the adults."

Richie Maisonet, of Streamwood, took a picture of Goron and Benton on the T3s with his cell phone, sending it to his brother who is a police officer in Buffalo Grove.

"I wrote, 'You're not driving one of these,' he said.

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