

# Virginia Tech Police patrol campus in style

Brittney R. Davis, CT News Reporter

Among the efforts in making the campus more secure, the Virginia Tech Police Department has been given a new T3 series electric vehicle about a month ago by T3 Motion, Inc. and the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA).



Patrol officer Dean Lucas rides the new T3 Series Electric Vehicle.

Though the T3 is not necessarily in response to the April 16 events, it will do its part in helping the police department maintain security on campus.

"The department is using the T3 as an additional tool in implementing a different strategy for security," said Virginia Tech Police Department Lt. Jackson. "It's something new that we are trying to see how feasible it is in helping the officers patrol."

The new T3 weighs about 300 pounds and is built in America out of a California plant. It features a zero degree turning radius, a stable platform for the rider, emergency integrated LED lights, a headlight, a siren, brakes, and is environmentally friendly. It contains a small electric motor that can be turned on low power for travel up to eleven miles per hour, or on high power for a maximum speed of 25 miles per hour.

"The T3 doesn't have to be pedaled so it is easier for officers to just stop and talk to people who may have questions," Jackson said. "We still have people on foot, bike and in vehicles, but it is easier than being on foot because spending twelve hours patrolling this campus in this heat can easily take a lot out of a person. We think the T3 will be more efficient and it provides another avenue of patrol."

The T3 series electric vehicle has been in development for the last three years and was launched in October of 2006. T3 Motion, Inc., the developers of the T3 series, has worked with IACLEA to donate the vehicle to Tech for campus policing and incident response.

"We have worked very closely with IACLEA to reach out to campus public safety departments so that they can become acquainted with our product," said T3 Motion, Inc. spokesman Jeff Simpson. "We have units at Florida State, University of South California, University of Nevada, Univeristy of California at Riverside and at some other junior college campuses. The T3 is a high performance vehicle that is agile and maneuverable and narrow enough to drive headfirst into an elevator and back out without having to

back up and turn because the T3 can turn on its own axis. The T3 also has the ability to swap power in that an old battery can be removed and a new one put in so that the vehicle can be used on virtually a 24-hour basis."

The cost to operate the T3 in California, where electricity costs are among the highest in the nation, is literally a dime a day since the T3 is not operated by gas.

"One of the best features of the T3 is that it generated a lot of interest from the general public, which in turn opens up the lines of communication between constituents and officers," Simpson said. "We have found during our testing that the T3 makes the general public feel that officers are more approachable. When testing our product in a high school in California, an administrator using the T3 said that in the process of using the T3 for 3 days, he was approached by more students than he had been in two months. We just think that the T3 is a tremendous tool for public safety and campus image and we are very proud of it and our ability to work with Virginia Tech."

Patrol officer Dean Lucas agrees.

"There have been a lot of positive comments, it's a plus," Lucas said. "It's another way to enforce stuff on campus. Everyone seems to like it pretty good. It's a good public relations tool too, people stop to talk about it, they want to know about it."

Two Virginia Tech Police and two Virginia State Police officers were positioned at the War Memorial intersection of the Alumni Mall and Drillfield roads at 5 p.m. yesterday, including a trained bomb-sniffing dog courtesy of the State Police.

One Tech student thinks that the T3 is a good idea to help alleviate the physically burdensome job the police officers have.

"The T3 seems cool," said sophomore finance major Cameron Hart. "It seems like it makes their job a little easier since they don't have to undergo the physical demand of riding bikes while still having mobility to patrol."

Another new sight on campus is the addition of the VTPD's newest vehicle, the T3Motion, a segway-esque, electric tricycle.