

A WELCOME CHANGE  
**Pulaski County  
Gets a New Jail**

CITIZENS ACADEMIES  
**Building Understanding  
Through Education**

GAME-CHANGER  
**New 911 Program  
Saves Lives**

# THE MISSOURI SHERIFF



## ACHIEVING GOALS

**Clark, Wayne, Lafayette and  
Carroll county sheriffs are doing  
what they were meant to do**



## VENDOR SPOTLIGHT: VISUAL LABS

# BODYCAM SYSTEM WORKS 'SMART'

High-tech solution protects the office and the deputies.

**W**hen weighing the cost against the benefits of equipping deputies with body-worn cameras, many times the budget is the determining factor.

That doesn't have to be the case with Visual Labs, the body camera company that does not make body cameras.

"Our system is completely different from any other because we take a much different approach. We are a software company and we've developed a smartphone application that works in conjunction with an evidence management website to record and upload footage to the cloud," explained Alexander Popof, chief operating officer of Visual Labs. "That means you can still make phone calls, take pictures and send texts from your smartphone but with an easy tap of a button you can turn that smartphone into a body camera to also capture interactions with the public."

Once the footage is recorded, it gets encrypted and then it is automatically uploaded to the cloud from the field — no docking stations are required. Once the footage is uploaded and the upload has been confirmed, it is deleted from the device and, within minutes, is available for viewing by command staff or to share if needed.

The footage is stored in the Microsoft Azure Government Cloud which provides secure cloud services to federal, state and local government organizations. Popof said the length of retention is at the discretion of the law enforcement agency, but most choose a relatively short default retention period — usually 90 to 120 days. "If it's just a traffic ticket, for instance, the footage is automatically purged from the system after that default period. However, if it's something more serious — an arrest or a shooting — agencies can designate that footage to be stored as long as they choose, even indefinitely."

Crossing another concern off the list, there's no separate charge for that storage. It is included in the base fee that averages \$50 per smartphone user, per month.

"We don't try to make money on storage; we're a service provider. We haven't had this come up but if, for instance, a sheriff wanted every piece of recorded footage kept for 10 years, well, obviously our storage costs are going to be a lot higher and they would have to pay a little more than \$50 per month, but the practical answer is — nobody wants to do that," Popof said. "That's one of the reasons our solution is so cost-effective."

Some cellular carriers provide free smartphones to law enforcement agencies and only charge a monthly service fee. Therefore, the

initial startup cost can be close to zero. One major carrier sells smartphones to agencies but then provides free monthly service for up to 10 years. "There's a lot of subsidizing that can help law enforcement deploy body cameras at a very affordable cost," Popof said. "All it takes is a little research, which Visual Labs can assist with."

Popof added that the Visual Labs solution also includes a deputy safety feature that allows someone with the right authorization — like a sheriff or chief deputy — to remotely turn on the camera to get a live video and audio feed, if, for instance, they thought a deputy's safety was in question. Additionally, because smartphones have

built-in GPS, command staff would know where a deputy was so they could send assistance.

"One of our customers is the State of Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Over the summer, they redeployed some game wardens out of the parks and off the lakes and sent them to downtown Atlanta to assist other law enforcement agencies during the protests. A command center was set up and those game wardens in the field were streaming live footage back to the center. That way, commanders could see and hear things from the warden's perspective, get a better understanding of what was happening on the ground, and make appropriate decisions. That was all possible because the Visual Labs solution uses a smartphone, which is connected to the internet."

The smartphones are mounted on the chest, like any other body camera. Visual Labs offers several different types of secure mounting options and in several different colors. Mounting pouches can even be ordered in a custom color that blends in with the uniform.

"It's a great option for counties where funding is tight because there are no hidden fees and we don't require a long-term contract. In fact, we have one sheriff's office in Minnesota that has had month-to-month service with us since 2017. And we're fine with that."

For more information or a no-cost trial, email [team@visuallabsinc.com](mailto:team@visuallabsinc.com) or visit Visual Labs' website at [visuallabsinc.com](http://visuallabsinc.com). There you'll find several testimonials and stories, including one that appeared in Lincoln News Now about the Winfield, Missouri Police Department acquiring the system last year after Chief Bill Burleson saw a demo of the software at the Missouri Police Chiefs' Association meeting.

For the officers, the system provides a level of safety, Burleson said, and for him it's a great management and analytics tool because a web portal provides a large number of metrics regarding officer location, where officers traveled and how much time patrols spend in certain areas. He said the cameras not only provide safety for his officers, they also hold his officers accountable to the public.

BY NANCY ZOELLNER

