New Ulm (MN) Police Department

Benefits the New Ulm Police Department has achieved through labor savings, streamlined communications, officer convenience, and archived records easily justify the annual Aladtec subscription fee, officials say.

Chief Myron Wieland and Commander Dave Borchert estimate the subscription paid for itself within six weeks of integration.

"I'm very confident in saying it saves me 10 hours a week," said Borchert. "I don't think I'm exaggerating when I say that, out of a 40-hour week."

Borchert said that when other changes have been rolled out over the years, he'll hear rumbling from rank and file, such as "Administration picked this. Couldn't they have put a little more thought into it and found (something better?) I haven't had a single person say there's a better system."

Borchert was dubious when Aladtec account representative Bo Manor called and described various features the platform offers. Manor was prospecting area agencies after nearby Lake Crystal EMS had signed up.

Borchert was doing schedules on spreadsheets, and penning events onto wall calendars in the squad room and records office. He was regularly adding, subtracting, and amending, . He typically spent the better part of a week each January, building out the annual master schedule.

"You bought White-Out by the gallon, didn't you?" Wieland teased.

Borchert was skeptical as he explained NUPD's 10-hour, four on- three off, patrol schedule to Aladtec System Specialist Jeremy Rodewald ahead of a customized demonstration. "I told the Chief, 'We'll see.' I understand from a marketing standpoint, you have to push the product, but I'll have to say, it exceeded my expectations."
"When I had asked them about building out the schedule -- I'm not going to say it's complicated -- but just explaining it on the phone or in e-mail, I was like 'Good luck...' and I

Department Info:

Roster: 21 sworn - and civilian employees.

Calls: About 10,000 in 2017.

Service area: Pop: 13,500, approx. 10 sq. miles.

Apparatus: 7 squads, co-located with the Brown Co. Sheriff's Dept. in a law enforcement center attached to the Courthouse.

Features: Bucolic location in rolling farm country at the confluence of the Minnesota & Cottonwood rivers; home to August Schell Brewing Co., Flandrau State Park, Martin Luther College, regional shopping hub.

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Aladtec users since 2017

Neighboring agencies also using Aladtec:

Lake Crystal Area Ambulance, Lamberton Community Ambulance, Granite Falls Ambulance & Granite Falls Municipal Hospital, Waconia Fire Department, New Richland Community Ambulance, Pipestone County Ambulance Service, Carver County Dispatch Center, and Nobles County Sheriff's Dept.

told Myron, I'm a little bit careful with technology, we'll see how well this works.

"I thought we were going to have just major headaches, but I was impressed. (Rodewald) had it returned within two days. There were a couple of glitches but very minor.

"I've been very, very pleased. It saves me hours a week. There's no question about that."

Borchert said officers adapted quickly to entering time-off requests via smartphone, MDT, or an office desktop.

"Administration would always fill out the form for them when they called in, but there's been no one bucking the change. 'Just to keep it consistent, would you mind submitting that?' And they're like, 'Absolutely … Of course!' just because it's so simple," said Borchert. "From my standpoint, it saves hours. And it doesn't take time from anyone else. They verify that they're not coming in, and they send out that request and that's the end of it."

Supporting departments also benefit from NUPD's Aladtec program. Borchert shares out officer schedules with Brown County Dispatch, the City's human resources officer, and assistants in the City- and County Attorney's offices, to help avoid scheduling trial dates when officers have vacation. Previous, all that info was gathered by telephone.

Sgt. Dean Barstad said Aladtec has also eliminated off-duty officers "calling in, double-checking the schedule to make sure that they've got everything correct or we've made some changes that they're not aware of. We don't have people not showing up for work anymore. And the shift supervisors are not taking phone calls from somebody double-checking their schedule. Because this is so accessible remotely, people are simply checking it themselves," Officers, including Barstad, also like receiving shift reminders via text or e-mail.

Wieland and Borchert said the Department has always tried to be transparent, "but this has made it easier."

Borchert likes to over communicate when he has to alter someone's schedule. He sends out text- and e-mail reminders to those affected, and also plugs his narrative into a mandatory message that must be acknowledged by the recipient. Recently, when an officer implied he was surprised his shift had been adjusted, Borchert simply pointed to the verification received soon after the patrolman was advised of the change.

"The only thing better than the program is the customer service, I mean, my God, have we ever had a disappointment?" Wieland asked. "I enjoy the fact that all our history is contained in the cloud. In the last couple years, we've really moved toward going digital around here." "I'm not always this complimentary with vendors. Sometimes you get the product and then later, you're like 'Remember when we talked about this?'", said Borchert, implying that the real thing didn't match its billing. "I have nothing but compliments. Jeremy has been awesome to work with. I don't contact him as often now, but whenever I do,

it's immediate response. It's usually by e-mail. Even on a Friday, I'm expecting I'll hear about this early next week but literally, I'll get it Friday evening. I'm impressed with that. You definitely have a good product."

"Two things that we've bought during my tenure that have had phenomenal customer service and the products were bulletproof: Aladtec and (another cloud-based app)," said Wieland.
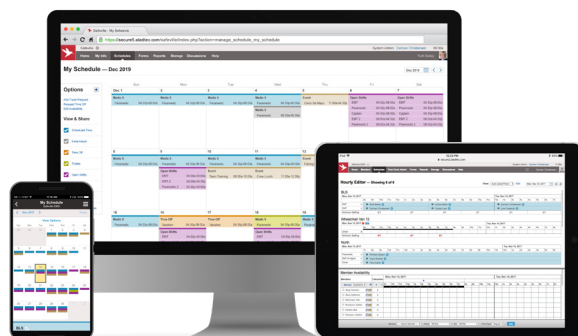
Myron Wieland

Myron Wieland, a native of New Ulm, joined New Ulm PD as a patrol officer nearly 31 years ago. He climbed the ranks from sergeant to commander, before being named Chief in February 2009. He plans to retire in late 2018.

Dave Borchert

Dave Borchert has served as Commander (assistant chief) at NUPD since 2009 and the City's Emergency Management Director since 2011. He holds a BS in Law Enforcement from Minnesota State University, Mankato; a BA in Spanish Language & Literature from Southwest State University, Marshall; a certificate in Organizational Leadership from the FBI National Academy; and an MBA in Management & Operations from Concordia University, St. Paul. He also holds elected office as one of five Brown County's commissioners.

Aladtec provides online employee scheduling and workforce management software to 2,000-plus organizations, primarily within the Public Safety Sector. Customers count on Aladtec constantly to help save time, improve efficiency and enhance communications. The company is headquartered in River Falls, WI. For information about our affordable platform or to try a free demo, please visit: www.aladtec.com