

SWOSU Public Safety Receives Grant for Vests

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Southwestern Oklahoma State University Department of Public Safety was recently awarded a \$1,829 from the United States Department of Justice for the purchase of bulletproof vests for SWOSU campus police officers. Major Ron Russ (third from left), principal investigator of the grant, holds a bullet proof vest that is worn by SWOSU officers. Others pictured include (from left): student cadet Brandon Lee; Anita Blankenship, director of the SWOSU Office of Sponsored Programs; and Chief Rick Bolar, director of the SWOSU Department of Public Safety.

Southwestern Oklahoma State University and the SWOSU Department of Public Safety were recently awarded a grant in the amount of \$1,829 from the United States Department of Justice for the purchase of bulletproof vests for SWOSU campus police officers.

The award was made as part of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Act of 1998. Major Ron Russ, campus police officer, is the principal investigator for the grant.

The U.S. Department of Justice has awarded \$118 million in federal funds for the purchase of 450,000 vests to over 11,500 jurisdictions. The BVP Act requires that at least half of the funds go to communities with populations under 100,000 people. BVP funds up to 50 percent of the purchase price, which is typically around \$610 each. The U.S. Department of Justice introduced this initiative to provide a critical resource to state and local law enforcement officials. When purchased, the bulletproof vests will be replacement vests for the ones currently being used.

SWOSU's Department of Public Safety is the law enforcement division of the university. It provides the same services one would expect from any city, county or state law enforcement agency and is responsible for enforcement of all state laws as well as rules and regulations of SWOSU.

Campus police have the legal authority to make arrests, issue traffic citations, conduct criminal investigations, serve warrants, and issue summons for parking violations.

Chief Rick Bolar said the department provides a sensitive, meaningful, measured approach to situations which require police assistance, while at the same time maintaining the autonomy of the University. SWOSU Campus Police has the responsibility for the protection of persons and property of approximately 5,000 students, 300 faculty and staff members, and many visitors that frequent the campus each year.

The SWOSU Weatherford campus consists of more than 73 acres and 41 permanent buildings, all of which are protected by the campus police. The Department of Public Safety employs six full-time officers, one dispatcher, three student-cadet officers and eight reserve officers.