



ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

Deputy Tony Nickoles is credited with the idea of black cruisers, which have won a design award from Law and Order magazine.

Where the good guys are in black

By Andrea F. Siegel

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The new, sleeker look of Anne Arundel County sheriffs' cars has captured a design award in the law enforcement community.

The black car with large reflective gold letters and lower-profile emergency lights on top was named best Ford Crown Victoria in this month's Law and Order magazine's design contest. The car is shown in the current issue, which spotlights the trend toward bolder colors with easy-to-read identification and symbols for safety.

"It's a morale booster," said Sheriff Ronald Bateman, who credited Deputy Tony Nickoles for initiating the new look.

Nickoles first spoke to Bateman last year about moving away from the white patrol

cars that resemble any number of other agencies' cars in the region. Nickoles drew up the design, in which the department's name appears in big block letters on the sides of the car. Incorporating the trend toward featuring agency symbols and mottos, the lettering is punctuated by the star the deputies wear on their uniforms, with "serving since 1650" on the rear quarter-panel and the office's Web address on the back.

Bateman told Nickoles that he would go for a new design if the deputies liked it and if it stayed within budget. They did, and it did. Though the agency often transfers some of the law enforcement features from old cars to new ones, it added a lower-profile LED emergency light bar on the roof. The LED lights do not tax a vehicle's elec-

tric system as much as standard lights do, Bateman said.

So far, the office has only the two black vehicles, whose additional \$2,100 was for the light bar and striping, in its marked fleet of 16 cars plus two K-9 cars. A Chevrolet Impala was factory-ordered in black and the previously ordered white Crown Victoria was repainted for free by a Pasadena body shop.

The new design is being phased in as high-mileage cars are replaced. Whether the office will be able to replace seven vehicles at \$159,700 as planned for the current fiscal year is unclear, due to county budget constraints. Two marked black cars, with federal grants covering the lights and markings, would be part of that, Bateman said.