

Bigger Push Bumpers Are Better

By Christy Whitehead

Dealing with wrinkled fenders from minor accidents can be a pain. Not only is the department left with one less vehicle to use, but the repairs are expensive. Departments that often drive country roads and are used to seeing cattle and other animals in the roadway often have the extra pain of frequently hitting animals, especially deer. This is why some departments are taking steps to reduce the damage to their patrol vehicles by adding larger push bumpers and deer alerts.

Lieutenant Rick Whitehead, the former fleet manager for the Travis County, TX Sheriff's Department believes that the addition of the larger push bumpers (plus deer alerts) has saved the departments thousands of dollars each year.

According to the Garden City Telegram in Kansas, there were 9,500 deer accidents in that state resulting in 379 injuries and one death. The Island Packet, a newspaper in South Carolina, reported that the average insurance claim in the state for animal-car collisions was \$2,243.

"It used to be not if you hit a deer



on patrol, but when," said Lieutenant Jamie Paige, the current fleet manager for Travis County. The central Texas area has the largest white tail deer population in the world, estimated at well over a million deer. The animals are nocturnal, moving around during the early morning hours, laying up during the day and then becoming active around 4 p.m.

A Bigger Push Bar

Whitehead saw the larger push bumpers in a catalog and saw other departments in the "Hill County" of Texas with heavier populations of

deer using them. The regular push bumper didn't do any good unless they took the deer straight on, which is rare. A lot of accidents with the deer involve running into the sides of the patrol car. The wrap around really reduces a lot of the body damage from these collisions. While the deer in Texas tend to be smaller than corn and soybean fed whitetails from the Midwest, damage still can be high, especially at the speeds patrol officers are often driving.

With regular push bumpers the patrol cars sustained a lot of headlight, grill and fender damage in a deer-vehicle collision. With the new

