

Citrus Heights Police try new “Trikke” tech to stop crime

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By Citrus Heights Sentinel

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You may have seen them out on patrol at Sunrise Mall already. They’re the new, three-wheeled “Trikke Patroller” electric units — the latest tech deployed by the Citrus Heights Police Department in an effort to minimize crime at the Mall.

The light-weight, collapsible, quiet units are able to go up escalators or down a flight of stairs, and feature California-legal red and blue flashing lights and even a siren — all for a cost of about \$4,000 a piece, with civilian versions available starting around \$1600.

Officer Jeff Schouten, CHPD’s full-time policeman handling Sunrise Mall, listed nearly a dozen benefits the Trikkes have, including speeding up officer response time and being great for public relations.



Officer Jeff Schouten now patrols the Sunrise Mall with one of Citrus Heights Police Department’s new Trikkes.

“I want one... Where do I get one,” are the repeated comments Officer Schouten said he receives from curious shoppers while he’s out patrolling his “little city,” as he calls the Mall. “You see the smile on their face when they see us [on the Trikkes].”

Officer Schouten — or “Jeff,” as he prefers to be called — said the Trikkes top out at about 15 mph, with officers required to go through a short training course in order to ride them, including learning how to dismount quickly during a pursuit at full throttle.

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The California-based Trikke company advertises that quick mobility of security personnel on a Trikke can enable one officer to cover an area that would normally take three or four officers. For Jeff, he says that means a several-minute walk across the width of the Mall is now cut down to about a minute on a Trikke — helping raise awareness to police presence and likely cause criminals to think twice.

The “zip-zip-zip” speed advantage has also helped cut response time in half, according to a loss prevention worker at Macy’s, whose team relies on the police department’s Mall officer to handle arrests or difficult situations.

Jeff also emphasized the height visibility officers gain when standing on the Trikkes, enabling them to more easily spot people in a crowd and quickly scan activity in a store by looking over racks. He said the height also helps in scanning for suspicious activity in parking lots, and the electric-powered Trikke saves fuel costs with a battery that typically lasts a 10-hour shift.

The Department first considered buying the Trikkes after seeing them at a CopsWest law enforcement exposition last year that featured new law enforcement vehicles and equipment, according to CHPD Sergeant Mike Wells. He said a big plus is the mobility the 53-pound Trikkes have over the Department's older "T-3" electric patrol units, which were bulkier and couldn't fit in the back of a police car.

The Trikkes were first put in use at the Mall toward the end of 2014, and police said they plan to feature the new three-wheeled scooters in community events like the City's annual Red, White and Blue Parade.



Officers Jeff Schouten, left, and David Tsverov now patrol the Sunrise Mall with two new Trikkes.



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Officer Jeff Schouten, now patrols the Sunrise Mall with the police department's new Trikke.
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