

**Government Services Committee
Submitted by
Jim Prochniak, NDHP**

December 14, 2011

STUDY OF OPTIONS FOR RELOCATING THE HIGHWAY PATROL TRAINING ACADEMY

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Government Services Committee. For the record, my name is Jim Prochniak, Superintendent of the North Dakota Highway Patrol. My testimony today will address the agenda items including maintenance costs of the existing training academy facility and future plans to operate the training academy, including options to use other state facilities.

Current LETA Building Expenses - 2011-2013 Biennium	
Description	Estimated Biennial Expenses
Data Processing Service	28,000
Telephone to ITD	4,000
Utilities	90,000
Rents/Leases - Equipment	6,000
Repairs	24,000
Service Contracts	46,000
Snow Removal	4,000
Insurance	2,000
Office Supplies	2,000
Computer Software	2,000
Professional Supplies/Materials	2,000
Food Supplies	106,000
Building, Grounds, Mtce Supplies	24,000
Laundry & Dry Cleaning	16,000
Miscellaneous Supplies	8,000
Equipment under \$5,000	26,000
Total Operating Expenses	390,000

As you can see, current operating expenses have been included for the existing training academy. That \$390,000 is included in the total program budget of \$1,602,488 for the Training Academy. When we prepared this information, we approached it from purely the operation of a physical structure. The overall total amount includes staff, training dollars, mileage/vehicle costs, Post Board training dollars, etc.

Future plans to operate the training academy if a new facility is not constructed would continue to place pressure on the staff and agency to provide the high quality training that we've conducted from our current site since 1970.

Chapter 39-03-13.1 states "the NDHP is responsible for the operation, maintenance, and administration of the law enforcement training academy.....the training director is responsible for coordinating basic and advanced peace officer training... All peace officer training which is conducted at the law enforcement training center shall meet the certification criteria established by the peace officer standards and training board."

The NDHP remains committed to this responsibility and will continue to offer training to the best of our ability.

Training is not stagnant. As mentioned in previous testimony, peace officer training has evolved and changed from a "law enforcement only" to a multi-agency/multi responder training. The training needs of students today is not the same as the needs of years past. High liability training aimed at risk management is increasingly important. The most important training is that which protects our officers and the public they serve.

During the 2011 Legislative Session, the NDHP proposed construction of an emergency vehicle operations course and an indoor weapons training range. These two components remain the initial priority for training purposes and provide facilities to address the important training that all officers need. Recent developments disclosed by the Bismarck Community Bowl authority add growing concern over our ability to continue use of the current driving pad (parking lot at BSC). The Bismarck Community Bowl plans an expansion that will include a build out on the current parking lot.



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NOVEMBER 2011

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CONCEPT RENDERING



Also mentioned in previous testimony is the difficulty of securing proper firearms training facilities. Differences in ammunition, limitations on outdoor vs. indoor training, proximity to housing, and scheduling conflicts continue to make training more difficult. Simply put, we are at the mercy of either Mother Nature, or more importantly, the owners of such facilities.

Two state owned training options were explored including the Minot State Fairgrounds where the local police departments utilize the Midway parking lot for EVOC training and the facility known as the School for the Deaf located at Devils Lake.

The Minot Fairgrounds site is surrounded by barriers on three sides of the structure. Fencing, grandstands, and restroom facilities are the type of obstructions we are trying to avoid by having a standalone facility. High speed maneuvers, by design, can send vehicles spinning out of control. A proper

training pad is void of such parameter development. Availability of the premises would become a premium as increased training needs continue to rise. Rental costs for the site along with lodging costs/availability would have to be considered for students.

The Devils Lake School for the Deaf is still currently being utilized and it is located near a residential area. Again, plans would be considered for a standalone driving pad and an indoor gun range. Not to mention retrofitting existing structures or facilities.

Both options would not address the reasons behind development of an independent training complex. Zoning concerns, lease and rental agreements, and lodging options for overflow students would all have to be considered. When trying to secure these facilities and the agreements or leases change, it impacts the training we are obligated to provide. This very example is what we are facing with our current track facility. A 50 year lease signed in 2003 may be in jeopardy with the Community Bowl expansion project.

As so vividly illustrated during the Special Legislative Session, all entities of public safety describe training and hiring needs that face their departments. In the Law Enforcement arena alone, Williston Police Department, Minot Police Department, Morton County, Dunn County, Stark County, Renville County, and many more are hiring. Many of these personnel will either need initial or ongoing training and will benefit from an upgraded training facility. With increased traffic needs in the oil patch, any public safety agency will benefit from an EVOC training ground.

The Bismarck location is centrally located with offices and staff from Game and Fish, Corrections, BCI, Parks and Recreation, and the Attorney General's office. All of these agencies add to staffing and support our instructor base. We rely on these agencies and their instructors to meet training needs. Moving training locations makes it difficult to draw upon that instructor pool.

Once again, I believe we have a golden opportunity for the future of public safety training. The NDHP, the City of Bismarck and their police/fire departments, and Bismarck State College have a plan that will educate our public service officials for decades to come.

This concludes my testimony. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.