

TOWN COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Title: Resolution to Purchase Two TruNarc Devices in Partnership with the Mono County Sheriff and District Attorney's Offices

Meeting Date: February 19, 2025

Prepared by: Dan Casabian, Chief of Police

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt Resolution 2025-xx, authorizing the Town Manager to expend general funds, in partnership with the Mono County Sheriff and District Attorney's Offices, to purchase two (2) Thermo Fisher Scientific TruNarc handheld narcotics analyzers with two-year warranties and training in the amount not to exceed \$65,000, with expected reimbursement from Mono County Sheriff's Office and Mono County District Attorney's Office of \$42,135.96 in total.

BACKGROUND:

Law enforcement officers face a real threat of potential drug exposure on the job while encountering dangerous substances like fentanyl during investigations. To protect against this exposure, the Mammoth Lakes Police Department (MLPD) would like to purchase and utilize a handheld narcotics analyzer, called TruNarc. Officers and the District Attorney's Office previously used NIK testing kits, which required the officer to open any safety packaging the drugs are in, handle the drug in order to mix it with a solution, and then produce a positive or negative presumptive result.

However, the risk to Officers using NIK kits is now too high and they are no longer being used. There have been incidents of narcotic investigators being harmfully exposed to the substance fentanyl during evidence testing. Fentanyl is sometimes used as a cutting agent in commonly encountered drugs. Because law enforcement personnel can come in contact with these drugs during the normal course of duty, substances should remain packaged and be sent to a laboratory for analysis. Exposure via inhalation or skin absorption can be deadly.

The TruNarc device works by scanning through any clear packaging by simply holding the device up to the package and can identify more than 530 narcotics and drugs. Officers do not have to handle any type of drug, they just have to operate the scanner, then the drugs can be booked or re-booked just as they were seized. Items can be scanned multiple times for confirmation and scans are recorded and uploaded into a program that all users who are granted access can view.

In California, a defendant has the right to a preliminary hearing within 10 days of arraignment. For preliminary hearing purposes, presumptive results are allowed as

evidence. With constantly evolving changes in drug charges and laws, drug cases have increased in volume. Currently, all confirmatory testing for drugs occurs at the Bureau of Forensic Sciences in Fresno since NIK kits are no longer being used due to dangerous exposure to Officers. Turnaround time for results from the lab can take several weeks, which is often too late for preliminary court hearings. However, TruNarc scan results can be instantly used for the purpose of evidentiary value in preliminary and other court hearings, both protecting officers and preventing the loss of any case due to missing evidence.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION:

Staff research found that Thermo Fisher Scientific has developed a narcotics analyzer named TruNarc. The TruNarc handheld analyzer identifies dozens of narcotics, stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, and analgesics using lab proven Raman spectroscopy. The TruNarc provides clear, definitive results for presumptive identification with no user interpretation.

TruNarc is currently being used by several Agencies throughout the country. MLPD has provided demonstrations with a loaner device to local partners. As a result of this, the Mono County District Attorney's Office and the Mono County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) have decided to share the cost of two (2) devices, with one residing at MLPD and the other at MCSO in Bridgeport.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The cost of two TruNarc devices is \$63,203.93 with all tax and shipping costs included. This cost is based on government pricing and also includes a 2-year warranty. The amount is being split three ways between the Police Department, Mono County Sheriff's Office, and the Mono County District Attorney's Office with each Agency paying \$21,067.98.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Resolution 2025-xx

Attachment 2: TruNarc Quotation

Attachment 3: Thermo Fisher Scientific TruNarc Product Flyer