Police get computerized

DWI breath analyzer

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By Paul Kedinger

Drunk drivers, beware — the Ville Platte Police Department has become one of the few, area law enforcement agencies to have the most up-to-date, computerized breath analysis units for the testing of suspected drunk drivers, announced Police Chief James Bordelon.

"It's the newest in breath analysis," explained George Dunn, breath analysis technician with the Louisiana State Police Training Academy, as he prepared to demonstrate the Intoxilyzer 5000 Thursday morning. The unit will drastically reduce the number of DWI suspects who will be able to argue in court that their alcohol-level readings were inaccurate or based on human error.

The $4,200 computerized desktop unit was obtained with federal grant funds for the local police department through the ef-

DWI analyzer

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forts of Gervis Lafleur of Ville Platte, who is a member of the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission. Lafleur was on hand in Chief Bordelon's office to hear technician Dunn describe the unit.

"This unit takes all the manual work out of testing," said Dunn, "and eliminates any human error." The instrument is permanently calibrated by the manufacturer. The self-contained unit provides a digital display and computerized, evidence card printout of the time of the test, date and BAC — the critical breath alcohol content — level. An alcohol reading of .10 is the legal standard for drunkenness.

Test results are provided within two minutes after a suspect blows into an air tube for a minimum of four and a half seconds.

Dunn pointed out to the local department's certified technicians, Lt. John Veillon and Officer Mike Johnson, that suspects won't be able to mask their alcoholic consumption with a mouthwash or breath freshener, because the analyzer detects

The heart of the system is a sample chamber, which gauges the amount of alcoholic breath vapors exhaled by a test subject. "We'll begin to use the analyzer immediately," commented Chief Bordelon, as he issued fair warning to those intent on drinking and driving in Ville Platte.