

# A Revolutionary Solution

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CENTRAL INDIANA — Approximately one person gets shot every nine seconds during an active shooter incident. Law enforcement agencies know every second counts, and are trying to accelerate response times and reduce the chances of death in such a situation.

The Montgomery County Multijurisdictional SWAT team practiced Monday on a revolutionary security system at a central Indiana school that may accomplish that objective.

The system includes an immediate response alarm to local dispatchers and throughout the building, the ability to constantly view the school remotely, counter measures, reinforced doors and call centers — all of which are paradigm changes in public safety.

“This system changes our tactics completely,” said Mike Kersey of the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office. “It puts the battlefield back in our favor rather than the active shooter’s. We are able to alter the shooter’s plan and force him to follow our plan. The survivability is way higher than it is in conventional buildings.”

Kersey has served as a liaison between law enforcement agencies in favor of Best Practice Solutions, a flagship site of the Indiana Sheriffs’ Association, which supports the security system.

The system does not exist anywhere else in the world. Part of Monday’s simulation was testing the system and arranging law enforcement protocols.

Traditionally, officers have relied on instinct to find active shooters. They listen for screams and gunshots, which often leads to a lengthy search.

With the system, SWAT members tracked an active shooter using various means in the school’s command center, which can follow multiple shooters at once. Officers can follow the shooters remotely in their vehicles.

“We know what door to enter, where the shooter is at and the best tactical position for us to be in before we even arrive at the building. It takes the guess work out of everything,” SWAT team commander Brian Chesterson said. “Once we arrive on a scene, it’s 20 seconds to an end.”

The reinforced doors make classrooms safer. They incorporate a different hinge system, reinforced



## Entering

Montgomery County sheriff deputy Ben Fullenwider and Crawfordsville Police Officers Andrew Ellsbury, Tony Bowen and Cpl. Jack Taylor enter a building.

lock system and stronger glass.

Chesterson broke through a standard school door with minimal effort.

“Classrooms used to be a dangerous place to be during shootings,” Kersey said. “With these doors, the classrooms are one of the safest places to be.”

The immediate notification system informs students that an active shooting is taking place. Statistics show it takes approximately two minutes or longer for someone to call 911 once a shooting occurs.

Call centers allow students and faculty members to communicate with police officers.

Counter measures reinforce a law enforcement agency’s ability to disorient an active shooter. The measures are triggered remotely and can be monitored, which enables officers to effectively neutralize a shooter.

“This is a valuable system,” Chesterson said. “It improves the safety of students, teachers and police officers. I am anxious to see if it will come to Montgomery County.”

Detective Travis King of the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office acted as an active shooter in several simulations. He thought the system was effective from a law enforcement standpoint.

“I felt like I was going into a slaughterhouse with the doors being locked and the constant monitoring,” King said. “I knew I was going to die or be apprehended fairly quickly.”

Kersey believes the system is the future of law enforcement and that it will enhance the profession.

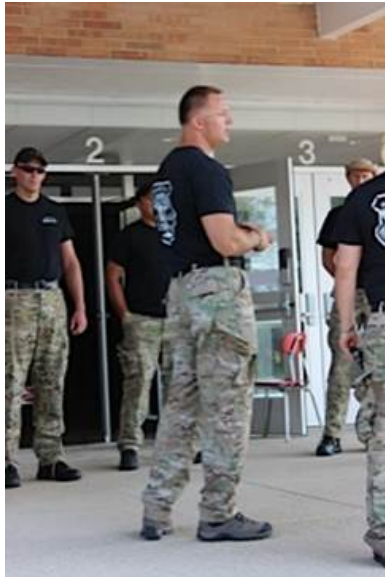
“We are typically reactionary in our profession,” he said. “What we have here is an environment where we can prevent a massacre. We cannot bulletproof the world or prevent an event from happening, but we can mitigate the damage. We have the technology to do that, and this needs to happen.”

The Indiana Sheriffs’ Association is leading a campaign to go after new funding avenues for schools to purchase and install the system. The system has already received endorsements from the National Tactical Officers Association. However, the goal is to expand the system nationwide.

“We are finally in position to make this more than just an isolated event,” Kersey said. “This can be replicated throughout the state and country. Hopefully Montgomery County will have it.”

The Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office was invited to practice the system. Montgomery County Sheriff Mark Casteel accepted the invitation, and Kersey invited the SWAT team to join.

The county with this new technology is requesting to be unnamed until a full unveiling has been announced. The identity and location of the school was withheld from this story for security purposes.



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