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**HOW TO BUY PATROL VEHICLES
USING A REVERSE AUCTION**

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HOW TO BUY PATROL VEHICLES USING A REVERSE AUCTION

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You could say the Chicago Police Department didn't pick their new patrol vehicles. The Ford Police Interceptor sedan and P.I. Utility picked the department.

No, Ford's new vehicles haven't developed artificial intelligence. Instead, the department opted for a rarely used online "reverse auction" that brought the vehicles in house for a good price.

The department used the eBay-style auction earlier this year to award contracts to two Chicago-area car dealers to supply the new patrol vehicles.

Prior to the auction, the city's Department of Procurement Services circulated a "request for quotation" that included specifications of what the agency wanted for vehicles that will eventually replace the Chevrolet Tahoes and Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptors.

In the proposals, the department requested an all-wheel-drive pursuit SUV and a two-wheel-drive sedan. The Ford Police Interceptor Utility was the only SUV that met those specifications. The department also considered the Dodge Charger Pursuit and Chevrolet Caprice PPV sedans.

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"With the wet road conditions we get, it will better serve our officers by giving them all-wheel drive," said Matthew Stewart, senior automotive equipment analyst with the city's Department of Fleet and Facility Management. "It's just never been available before. We think it's worth the investment."

There were plenty of dealerships in the Chicago area competing for these contracts. Once the city had a list of bids from local dealers that met the specifications, the bidders were then given the date and time of the online auction. In addition to supplying the cars, the dealers would be required to add lights, sirens, communications gear, in-car video, and other police equipment.

The dealers logged on to their computers at the appointed time for the five-minute auction. They found a form that allowed them to submit specific pricing for each supplied item.

Once the auction began, the dealer with the lowest (rather than highest) bid took the lead. Each placed bid extended the auction by a minute to prevent "sniping" where one dealer could swoop in and get the contract as the clock ran out.

The winning bids went to Metro Ford in Chicago for the P.I. sedan and Roesch Ford in Bensenville for the utility. The final contract price for the base vehicles were \$23,248 (sedan) and \$25,792. The department has placed an initial order for 75 2013 model-year vehicles to be spread to patrol, tactical units, K-9, evidence technicians, and other specialty units.

"Our initial order will be about evenly split between sedans and utilities," Stewart said. "The department has a blend of various applications."

In February, Mayor Rahm Emanuel said the city would buy 100 vehicles a year for five years at a cost of \$3.5 million per year.

The department now maintains a fleet of about almost 1,500 marked enforcement vehicles—941 Ford CVPI and Chevrolet Impala sedans, as well as about 540 Chevrolet Tahoe SUVs. The Tahoes are primarily assigned to the department's 525 beats across the city.