

## SUCCESS STORY: LA CROSSE POLICE DEPT

### BACKGROUND

La Crosse police department has been in operation since 1870. They employ 96 sworn officers and 27 civilian employees. The La Crosse police department serves the city of La Crosse, Wisconsin, population 52,109.

### PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

20 vehicles, with 425,000 miles/annually at latest analysis. Autogas vehicles used by the police department are patrol and parking enforcement vehicles.

### WORKING WITH ALLIANCE AUTOGAS

In 2009, Police Chief Ed Kondracki noticed an article about a Southern sheriff's department starting an autogas vehicle program financed by drug seizures and arrests. At that point, gasoline was approaching \$4 per gallon and the police department was looking for a program that would bring significant cost savings. In addition, the mayor was encouraging all city departments to move toward a



“green footprint” by reducing carbon emissions. Switching to autogas as an alternative fuel would be a win for both cost and environmental savings. La Crosse PD piloted their autogas program with one vehicle conversion working with an AAG competitor, but the closest service station as in Mankato, MN, so this was neither a cost-effective nor a logistically pragmatic solution. The department also faced a hurdle of individual officer program adaptation as most officers had not yet been educated nor personally experienced the capabilities and safety of autogas. However, when an autogas fueled patrol car was rear ended in the first year, both officer and community fears were allayed because there was no unusual or unexpected damage or danger to the officer different from a gasoline fueled vehicle. Overall, the city and department leaders were pleased with the autogas program, but

continued to face serious challenges with officer acceptance, a long-distance service station, and a difficult pumping system.

The police department leadership continued to look for a practical solution to their alternative fuel program, so they could fully realize the benefits of using autogas. They turned to Alliance AutoGas in 2015. The AAG team moved in quickly for what Assistant Chief Robert Abraham later described as a “hassle free process.” The leadership was very impressed with AAG’s “plug and play” autogas conversion systems which allow for quick fueling, and make daily use



Ronald J. Tischer  
Police Chief  
La Crosse, WI

### FLEET STATISTICS

**FLEET TYPE:** Law Enforcement

**AAG PARTNER:**

Premier Cooperative  
([www.premiercooperative.com](http://www.premiercooperative.com))

**AUTOGAS VEHICLES IN**

**FLEET:** 20

17 Interceptors

3 Jeep Wranglers

**TOTAL ESTIMATED ANNUAL**

**SAVINGS:** \$50,000

**ANTICIPATED ANNUAL**

**USAGE:**

48,000 gallons of autogas

**ANNUAL MILEAGE (per**

**vehicle):**

425,000 miles

**AUTOGAS FUELING:** Onsite

**TIME OPERATING ON**

**AUTOGAS:**

8 years

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easy to manage, thereby winning over even the most resistant officer. In addition, AAG also addressed and resolved challenges experienced in the initial rollout by offering technical training to the City of La Crosse garage mechanics. La Crosse is now able to service their own autogas vehicles, eliminating the inconvenience of driving to Mankato, MN (about a five hour round trip) for vehicle service.

### RESULTS AND AUTOGAS BENEFITS

Autogas runs farther and longer, is a lower cost investment, and cheaper fueling option than gasoline or diesel. La Crosse has their own refueling station provided by AAG, and fueled by AAG partner, Premier Cooperative. Savings historically average a dollar or more gallon per gallon when compared with gasoline, which allows the department to invest savings back into officer and public safety. Specifically purchased items from fuel savings include ballistic shields, thermal imaging, cameras in cars, automatic license plate readers and light packs.

According to Lt Bob Berndt, Ret and one of the initial officers in pilot program, cost savings is the single greatest benefit of autogas. In addition, autogas is more convenient, as a readily available fuel.



### MOVING FORWARD

All current patrol cars are converted to autogas. The patrol cars are routinely traded in every 100,000 miles. Since they use the “plug and play” AAG systems, the La Crosse mechanics are easily able to convert new patrol cars over to the autogas system with the equipment from previously used car.



*“[Alliance] has really taken our autogas program to the next level.”*

**- Asst Chief Robert Abraham**