

City Page

NEWS & INFORMATION FROM THE CITY OF CHARLOTTE

Public open house at new uptown arena

The City of Charlotte and the Charlotte Bobcats organization will host a grand opening weekend for the Charlotte Bobcats Arena, Oct. 20-23, 2005.

"The grand opening of Charlotte Bobcats Arena is a milestone moment for the City of Charlotte," said Pat McCrory, mayor of the City of Charlotte, which broke ground for the new arena in July, 2003. "On behalf of the Charlotte City Council and City Manager's office, we are proud to open the doors to the building that helped bring the NBA back to our community and that will give our city an opportunity for unprecedented entertainment options and economic growth."



The Arena will be open to the public October 22 and 23.

Opening day activities on Friday, October 21 include free, pre-concert entertainment on the outdoor plaza stage at the arena's Trade Street entrance. The event is open to the public and begins at 5 p.m. followed by an official countdown to the 6 p.m. opening of the arena doors for The Rolling Stones concert, which begins at 7:30 p.m.; only Rolling Stones ticket holders may enter the arena on Friday night.

Doors open to the general public on Saturday, October 22 and Sunday, October 23, with Bobcats Open House events from 2-6 p.m. The free open house events will feature a raffle for a pair of season tickets to every event in the arena for a year as well as entertainment and self-guided tours. Visitors will receive a navigation map highlighting must-see areas and amenities, including backstage and behind the scenes tours of team locker rooms.

Explore a career in policing

More women than ever are choosing careers in policing with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD). Learn more about the rewards of being a CMPD officer at the:

"Women in Policing" Career Fair
Saturday, October 29 at 10 am
Police & Fire Training Academy
1770 Shopton Rd.

The event will provide women interested in law enforcement careers a chance to learn about the opportunities available with CMPD. At the career fair:

- Tour the academy
- Talk with female officers about their own experiences
- View equipment and visit information booths and displays
- Hear from Police Chief Darrel Stephens and other CMPD staff
- Enjoy refreshments



For more information, including job benefits and qualifications, please call 704-432-1603, 704-432-1616 or visit www.cmpd.org.

POLICE



TASERs reduce arrestee, officer injuries

By Capt. Mike Campagna, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department

With recent incidents prompting renewed debate about the use of TASER devices, some background and facts about their use would provide appropriate context.

While officers prefer peaceful arrests, subjects are not always cooperative. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) equips officers with the TASER (Conducted Energy Weapons) to control, using the minimum amount of force necessary, violent individuals subject to arrest. In letters to the editor over the last few weeks, writers have expressed both objection to and support for the use of TASERs on school campuses to "control" students, to "teach them respect" or to "discipline" them. The CMPD only uses the devices on subjects who have engaged in criminal behavior and pose a physical threat during the arrest process, not to gain compliance with commands, intimidate people or discipline students.



TASERs led to a 59% reduction in injuries to officers and a 79% reduction in injuries to arrestees.

The department conducted extensive evaluations for more than three years before deploying TASERs and followed up at the end of the first full year with TASERs with an evaluation that compared the use of force statistics from 2002 with 2004. The results provide compelling evidence that TASERs accomplish the department's goals of reducing injuries to arrestees and officers using the minimum amount of force necessary:

- Arrests in 2004 decreased by less than one percent compared to 2002, yet there was an 18% reduction in overall uses of force
- There was a 59% reduction in injuries to officers and a staggering 79% reduction in injuries to arrestees
- The report also revealed at least 19 cases in which officers faced subjects with weapons and were able to get them under control using TASERs instead of escalating to deadly force.

A TASER utilizes pulses of electricity to temporarily disable a subject in order for law enforcement officers to take them into custody. The electric pulses interrupt communication between the brain and the muscles. The muscles react to this by contracting, therefore causing the subject to lose muscle control. One of the chief advantages of the device over the other weapons evaluated is that the loss of muscle control is effective on subjects who, because they are under the influence of drugs or in a state of emotional distress, feel little pain. The TASER delivers a five second cycle of electricity every time the trigger is pulled.

The CMPD established clear protocols for the use of TASERs based on three core points:

- TASERs are only to be used in situations in which the suspect poses a physical threat to the officer, to another citizen, or to himself.
- Anyone subjected to the electrical discharge of a TASER will be transported to a medical facility for evaluation and clearance.
- All TASER discharges will be investigated by the supervisor and reviewed by the chain of command.

Before being certified to carry the device, each officer underwent eight hours of training during which many received a TASER discharge so they fully understand the implications of its use. Officers are trained when and how to use the device, including proper tactics to minimize the number of five second cycles necessary. Throughout the project, officers have received updated information and training to recognize signs of physical and psychological distress that require immediate medical attention.

The CMPD takes very seriously its law enforcement responsibility and a part of that responsibility is arresting people who do not want to be arrested. Along with this comes the burden that we use minimal force to take these subjects into custody. The TASER has enabled officers to do this with substantially fewer injuries to all parties. While healthy debates about use of weapons should continue, the results favor the TASER as a viable alternative to other use of force options.

Campagna is the head of the project team that evaluated and implemented the TASER devices. A full copy of the first year TASER report can be found at www.cmpd.org.

Ask us to 'Notify' You

Receive updates on your favorite web pages from the City/County website at www.charmeck.org. Through the site's new online notification feature, citizens can request emails to alert them when new information is posted to their favorite pages. Information available via the subscription service includes job vacancies, contracting opportunities, transit rider alerts and CMail, the City's electronic newsletter. To view the information available for notification, visit <http://notifyme.charmeck.org>.



CHARLOTTE.