



# Cities of Gulfport, Biloxi, and D'Iberville, MS

### AT A GLANCE

Three neighboring Mississippi cities' police departments partner with Tyler Technologies to implement a data sharing project that is the first of its kind in the state.

#### Gulfport, MS

- Population of 67,793
- Co-county seat with Biloxi, MS
- Sworn Police staff of 190
- 10 years as Tyler customer

#### Biloxi, MS

- Population of 44,054
- Co-county seat with Gulfport, MS
- Sworn Police staff of 128
- 4 years as Tyler customer

#### D'Iberville, MS

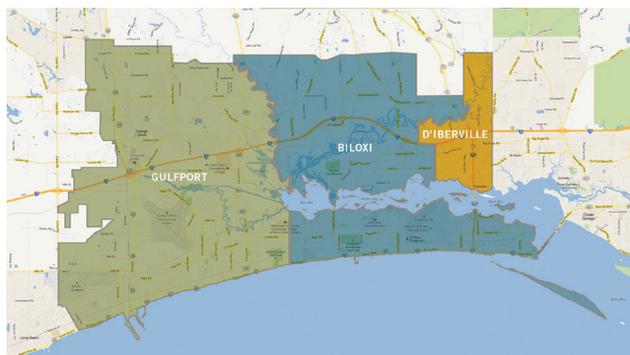
- Population of 9,486
- Sworn Police staff of 30
- 3 years as Tyler customer

### Integrated Crime Fighting

The neighboring cities of Gulfport, Biloxi, and D'Iberville are located along the southern coast of Mississippi with only a few miles separating their police departments. Despite the close proximity, they operated as most other police departments: completely independently of each other. Records, warrants, and important citizen information were all kept in separate databases, accessible only by that city's employees.

But in August of 2011, the police departments of these three cities recognized an opportunity to relook at the way they accessed data to enhance their shared objectives of stopping crime and keeping their communities safe.

Rather than maintain separate records, the agencies sought to combine their individual databases with the vision of having one centralized source of information. Since each agency maintained an ongoing partnership with Tyler Technologies, this dream would soon become a reality.



*"It doesn't matter to criminals which side of the street belongs to Gulfport, Biloxi, D'Iberville, or any other city. There's not any separation anymore."*

*– Rick Fisher, Support Bureau Commander,  
Gulfport Police Department*

"We were hoping to integrate our records – especially warrants and wanted persons – so we could serve more warrants and have more information available to our investigators and officers when they were doing research," Rick Fisher, Support Bureau Commander for the Gulfport Police Department, said. "The project ended up meeting and surpassing all of our expectations. We received a lot more than we ever anticipated."

### Before Data Sharing

#### Separate Data

Police officers were only able to pull information from their own city's database, meaning that any information outside the city limits could only be obtained after requesting it from the other agencies. The need for integration increased each day, as the movement of citizens continued to blur the lines separating each city. It was not uncommon for people to live in one city while working in another; the morning commute to work represented a steady shuffle of people back and forth over jurisdictional lines. According to Fisher, it was evident that a shared database was vital going forward.

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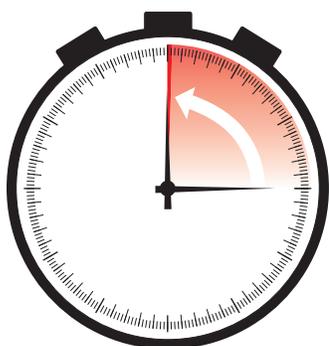
— Clay Jones, Captain of the D'Iberville Police Department, MS

### *Before Data Sharing*

First responders had out-of-date or incorrect information regarding warrants, records and citizen information. Communication between the cities to get the correct information was slow and tedious. Officers could sometimes spend hours trying to track down vital information.

### *After Data Sharing*

Officers can access real-time information shared between all three cities for accurate warrant status, records, booking photos, and more – without picking up a phone. The process that once took hours can now be done in seconds. Officers have access to vital information from their patrol cars for faster response times and better situational awareness.



The process that  
**once took hours**  
can now be  
**done in seconds.**



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“The Mississippi Gulf Coast area is becoming more of a true metropolitan area every year. We have cases that cross jurisdictional lines on a regular basis,” Fisher said. “It doesn’t matter to criminals which side of the street belongs to Gulfport, Biloxi, D’Iberville, or any other city. There’s not any separation anymore.”

### *Timely Communication*

Besides having no access to their neighboring cities’ databases, the biggest obstacle the officers of Gulfport, Biloxi, and D’Iberville faced was a lag in communication. Since the cities are so close to each other, officers routinely had to verify warrants and other information with their neighboring cities – sometimes while they were still in the field. Fisher stated that the process of serving outstanding arrest warrants in particular was time-consuming.

“We would have to make several phone calls back and forth and play phone tag before we got the information we needed,” Fisher said. “Everybody is so busy it’s hard to take every phone call and answer every question. Time is money in every business and our old way of communicating took too much time.”

### *Implementation*

The cross-functional relationship between the three police departments soon proved to be a truly distinctive undertaking. Chief Alan Weatherford of the Gulfport Police Department stated in a city-wide press release that the level of multi-agency cooperation in the data sharing project was the first of its kind in the state of Mississippi.

Naturally, there was some concern between the agencies about how complex and time-consuming implementation would be, given that a project of this nature had not been implemented in Mississippi. However, since each city utilized Tyler’s Records Management System, combining them would prove to be a simple operation. Fisher was impressed by the efficiency of implementation.

“Everything happened exactly in the timeline we were given, there were no delays and we received more functionality than we expected. It was easier than we expected; once we made the decision to move forward with it, Tyler did all the work,” he said.

### *After Data Sharing*

#### *Improved warrant checking system saves time*

The imagination and hard work of these Mississippi police departments coupled with the support of Tyler lead to drastic improvements for all parties involved. At the center of the project was an improved warrant checking system. The inefficient process of placing multiple phone calls throughout the jurisdictions to check a warrant was replaced by real-time data sharing; the process that once took hours to complete can now be done in a matter of seconds.

**“This makes us more efficient at our jobs and saves money in a time where budgets are tight. Our arrests have gone up and it has the potential to increase our warrant service and fine collections. We’ve already connected hundreds of thousands of records; this leads to more intelligent policing which leads to a safer community.”**

— Rick Fisher, Support Bureau  
Commander for the Gulfport Police  
Department, MS

### *Mobile Data offers increased efficiency*

The functionality of the shared database gives officers the tools they need to become more effective in the field. Real-time data is now accessible in the patrol officers’ vehicles via Mobile Data Terminals. Officers can access the same real-time information while still in the field to provide a new level of connectivity.

Sergeant Michael Brumley of the Biloxi Police Department stated that having the ability to instantly access this information has had an overwhelmingly positive impact on the way the Biloxi Police Department functions.

“To be able to have all of the information you need at your fingertips is a wonderful idea and a great product,” Brumley said. “We’ve never had anything like it; we don’t have to call around dispatch because we can save time by accessing the information in our cars. It’s a great tool – I can’t wait to get it in all of our cars.”

### *Centralized database creates opportunity*

The agencies soon discovered that they not only linked their databases, but also enhanced the communication between cities in ways that had not been expected. Brian McGonagill, a business analyst for Tyler Technologies, said each agency saw a unique opportunity to increase interaction between cities and operate more efficiently.

“The proximity of these cities created a dynamic where each city’s officers interact with the same people over and over, but they had no way of knowing when one of the other cities had such an interaction,” McGonagill said. “The departments had an opportunity to improve inter-agency communication through data sharing and ensure that their officers had the most information possible, as well as the most relevant and up-to-date information.”

### *Better data leads to increased safety*

The data of all three agencies is stored in a centralized database where personnel can quickly retrieve and share information. Automated functionality eliminates redundant manual steps for faster response times and better situational awareness. A “combined search” capability allows officers to simultaneously check criminal information that was housed at all three agencies with one search.

Captain Clay Jones of the D'Iberville Police Department said the data sharing project has not only streamlined his agency's daily operations, but it has also increased the safety of officers and citizens alike.

“Information sharing is of the utmost importance in today’s day and age,” Jones said. “We now have access to locations of suspects and witnesses throughout each city; it helps facilitate public safety and the solving of crimes. Overall, our officers and citizens are safer.”

Likewise, Fisher sees the positive results as only the beginning of a bright future for Gulfport and its neighboring communities.

“This makes us more efficient at our jobs and saves money in a time where budgets are tight. Our arrests have gone up and it has the potential to increase our warrant service and fine collections,” he said. “We’ve already connected hundreds of thousands of records; this leads to more intelligent policing which leads to a safer community.”

