

Document and Image Seized Currency in Minutes



Lt. Brian Stutsman, Special Investigations Division, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office brings the JetScan iFX into the field to document confiscated currency right at the scene.

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, Phoenix, Arizona

The Problem:
Documenting seized money is a time-intensive process requiring multiple counts

The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, based in Phoenix, Arizona, has never been shy about strict law enforcement. Led by Sheriff Joe Arpaio, often called "America's Toughest Sheriff", the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office prides itself on tackling crime efficiently and effectively. Towards that end, Maricopa County utilizes procedures and tools that support efficient law enforcement, and thus decided to trial a Cummins-Allison JetScan iFX™ to process evidence currency.

Like most law enforcement agencies, Maricopa County must carefully document money that is seized during an arrest – a painstaking process which takes time and diligence to ensure an accurate count and a strong evidence chain.

In fact, many agencies spend hours photocopying all confiscated currency so that they have a picture

of the serial number of each and every note.

Evidentiary protocol demanded involvement by several people

Maricopa County had kept all seized currency in an evidence warehouse until trial. But this still consumed significant time and manpower.

"Our evidentiary and security protocol required that seized cash be counted multiple times, by multiple people," said Lt. Brian Stutsman, Special Investigations Division. "Each time the confiscated currency was accessed, multiple administrative personnel and detectives had to again sign off on the currency. When dealing with significant cash seizures, the amount of time involved was incredible."

Solution provides considerable time and manpower savings

Using the Cummins JetScan iFX, Maricopa County Sheriff's personnel



can now process seized currency within minutes. Mixed notes are stacked into the iFX hopper and accurately counted at 1,200 notes per minute.

"A few months ago, we had a huge seizure of \$919,000 which we were able to process quickly and accurately using the JetScan iFX," reports Lt. Stutsman. He goes on to cite several other important benefits: "The serial number of every single note is digitally imaged and recorded at the same time the money is being counted," he says. "Our County Attorney now has an additional level and form of evidentiary value – and nobody had to spend hours at a photocopier!"

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Serial Number Tracking Provides Stronger Evidence

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Since the Maricopa County Sheriff's Department also opted for Cummins Image Management System (IMS) software, these serial numbers are readily accessible for retrieval from a database which can be labeled by officer, case number, batch number or any classification of their choice.

Flash money is also run through the JetScan iFX and serial numbers are stored in the IMS software. Seized currency can then be compared to the flash money for serial number matches.

Lt. Stutsman chuckled at one interesting case where serial number capture had a rather unusual, but powerful benefit:

"Thousands of dollars were found in a mattress during a drug bust," Lt. Stutsman recalls. "The perp claimed he had so much cash because he had been saving steadily over the past 10 years. However, we were able to prove that none of the bills had a serial number older than four years. The defense case was crushed."

Maricopa County also uses the serial number capture feature in the field, using a small Cummins printer attached to the JetScan iFX to generate a print-out detailing the count and serial number by denomination and leaving it with the search record.

Confiscated money earns interest income

"The JetScan iFX unit is portable, only weighing about 20 pounds, which allows our officers to bring it into the field and count the currency right at the scene," states Lt. Stutsman.

"Plus if the seizure takes place during a banking day, we can deposit the



The JetScan iFX generates a print-out detailing the count and serial number.

currency immediately and start earning interest. This also avoids the time and manpower involved in taking the evidence to the warehouse."

Speaking of interest earnings, Maricopa County had over \$3 million sitting in their evidence warehouse for nearly four years awaiting the trial. Once they had the JetScan iFX run the currency and image the serial numbers, they were able to finally deposit the cash into the bank and begin earning considerable interest income.

The counterfeit detection capabilities of the JetScan iFX have also proven

Counterfeit detection an added bonus

advantageous. Intercepted cash is generally good money, as drug dealers don't want to take chances with counterfeits. However, Det. Edd Cason, who worked closely with Lt. Stutsman in evaluating the JetScan iFX, cites a sting which resulted in a \$130,000 seizure.

The JetScan iFX kept stopping on notes as "suspect". Thinking that the machine may have been misreading, since again counterfeits are rare in drug busts, the officers kept re-processing the suspect notes.

"We finally examined the \$100 notes closely," Det. Cason recounts, "and saw Abraham Lincoln's image in the watermark. Of course, Lincoln is on the \$5 note. We found \$30,000 of counterfeit bills. I guess the JetScan iFX was doing its job!"

Lt. Stutsman added a final observation: "The entire system – JetScan iFX and the IMS software – is extremely user-friendly and simple to understand. I like the fact that I can go several weeks without using it, but then can easily pick it back up."

Bringing time savings, labor savings, better accuracy, superior counterfeit detection and serial number documentation to evidence currency processing, the JetScan iFX has become a valuable contributor to the renowned efficiency of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

To learn more or to set-up a free demonstration, please visit us at cumminsallison.com/ifx