

St. Louis County Sheriff's Rescue Squad

The St. Louis County Sheriff's Rescue Squad pioneered the use of VideoRay ROVs for law enforcement applications, especially search & recovery (SAR) missions. Since acquiring their first system in 2004, the SLCSRS has relied on their VideoRay ROV fleet to locate and recover dozens of drowning victims in Minnesota's Great Lakes Region.

Made up entirely of volunteers, the SLCSRS needed an ROV that was both capable and cost-efficient. They chose the VideoRay ROV not only because of the system's initial price, but also because it could be maintained affordably. VideoRay ROVs can be easily maintained and often repaired in field without being sent back to the factory. Despite its reasonable price point, the VideoRay ROV still delivers the high quality technology necessary to successfully conduct underwater SAR missions.

The extreme portability of the entire VideoRay system was another notable benefit for the SLCSRS, who services the entire 7,100 sq. miles of St. Louis County as well as mutual aid support to a much wider region. "We never know where or when we may be conducting a search, so we needed to be able to easily transport the unit" says St. Louis County undersheriff David Phillips.

Minnesota's Great Lakes Region is infamous for its unforgiving winters. With water temperatures often dropping perilously close to freezing, many of St. Louis County's 840 lakes are covered by thick sheets of ice for the majority of the winter. It is simply too risky to send human divers in these frigid conditions to search for a drowning victim or evidence without knowing its location, or even that it is definitely there. Instead, the SLCSRS deploys the ROV first to locate the object of interest. Accessories like sonar, positioning systems, and real-time video enhancement help the ROV pilots navigate the search area more quickly, safely, and often more successfully than with human divers.

