

# law enforcement **TRENDS**

**If you're looking to capitalize on the current wave of tactical-equipment sales, look for those items that reduce weight, increase power and offer greater versatility**

**By Chris Christian**

One might wonder whether 9/11 was the impetus, or whether the trend was already developing, but during the last eight years, the tactical-equipment market has literally exploded. In terms of new products, the growth has been phenomenal. Those with more than a decade of SHOT Show experience under their belts can remember when the LE Section was tucked quietly away in a small corner. No more—these days it commands attention as a major product display section.





Winchester Supreme Elite Bonded PDX1 is now available in 9mm, .40 S&W, .45 ACP and .38 Special. The Ranger SXT line is getting a new bonded JHP load as well.

Given the wide range of tactical products already on the market, new products need to emphasize some sort of improvement. As a result, we're seeing new gear that is lighter, stronger, more powerful and more versatile. Although the dominant trend in this year's tactical product lines center around long guns and accessories for them, there is more to the tactical market than guns and lasers. Here's a look at some other products being introduced for 2009.

## AMMUNITION

The April 1986 FBI shoot-out in Miami, Florida, forever changed the prevailing wisdom on law enforcement handgun rounds. The existing standard was a rapidly expanding bullet that limited the possibility of the round passing through the target. In the aftermath of the Miami event, the criterion became assured penetration through a variety of intervening obstacles. That trend continues today, with an added emphasis on bonded-core bullets that prevent core-jacket separation upon impact.

Speer Gold Dot is a popular duty round. This year, new .40 S&W and .327 Federal Magnum loads come on board.



The Speer Gold Dot hollowpoint has become one of the most widely used bonded LE duty rounds, and for 2009 Speer will add a 200-grain .40 S&W and a 115-grain .327 Federal Magnum load to its Duty Ammunition lineup, as well as a 200-grain TMJ .40 S&W load to the Lawman training ammo line. In addition, Speer will make the bonded Gold Dot bullet technology available in rifle loads with a 64-grain .223 Rem., 55- and 64-grain offerings in 5.56x45mm, a 110-grain .30 Carbine load, and 150- and 168-grain .308 Win. loads. (800-627-3640; [le.atk.com](http://le.atk.com))

Winchester's Ranger SXT line has earned an excellent reputation in LE circles, and for 2009 Winchester offers a new bonded JHP load. The Supreme Elite Bonded PDX1 is now in use by the FBI and will be available in 9mm (124 +P and 147-grain), .40 S&W (165- and 180-grain), a 230-grain .45 ACP and a 130-grain .38 Spl +P load. (618-258-3340; [winchester.com](http://winchester.com))

Savvy LEOs have been toting a backup gun for years, but the practice is now becoming widespread. Federal addresses the snubby revolver market with the re-introduction of the standard-pressure 125-grain .38 Special Nyclad Chief's Special load. In common LE use years back, the Nyclad round features a soft lead core hollowpoint bullet encased in a nylon jacket. Originally developed as a practice round to reduce lead emissions on indoor ranges, hollowpoint versions quickly earned a reputation for consistent penetration and expansion on the streets. (800-322-2342; [federalpremium.com](http://federalpremium.com))

## LIGHTING EQUIPMENT

Criminals don't keep regular hours; they're a 24/7 operation, and much mischief occurs at night. LEOs have been attempting to shed some light on the subject for as long as there have been LEOs, and flashlights, in

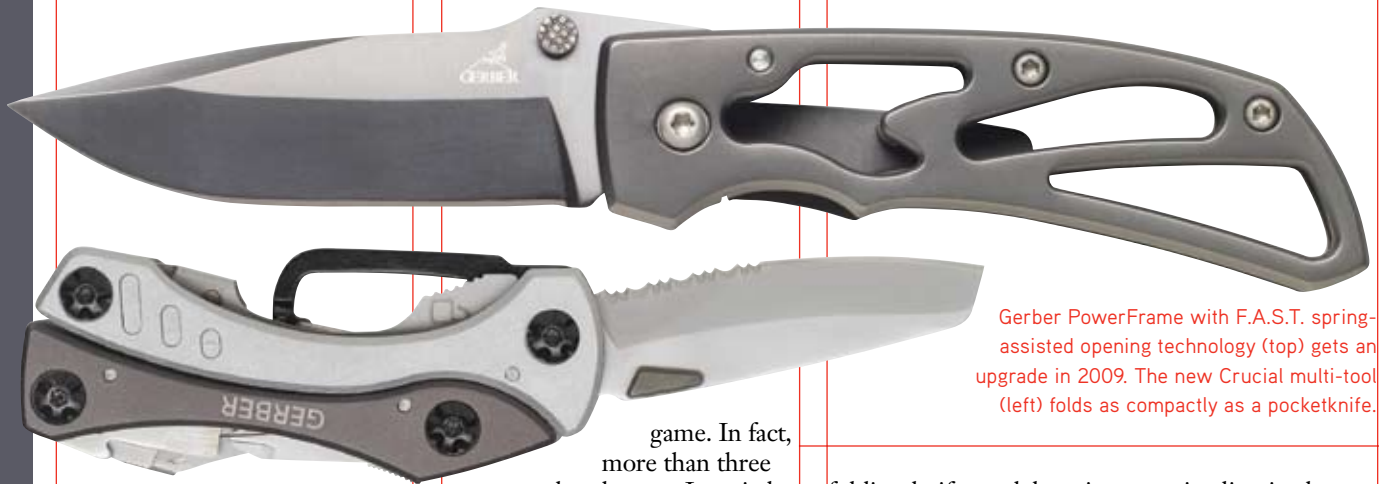
one form or another, are standard equipment. During the days when a LEO's duty belt sported little more than a sidearm, ammo and handcuffs, the size of the light wasn't a significant concern.

Given the amount of equipment burdening LEOs today, that's no longer the case. When it comes to lights, the current trend is increased power at a decreased weight, and modern technology has provided some impressive tools. Much of that has come from quantum-leap advances in LED technology.

This year, Surefire introduces 4-Die LED upgrades into its new product line, and as conversion heads for many existing products. This includes weapons lights and hand-held flashlights that boast greatly increased power output with minimal (if any) weight and size increases. (800-828-8809; [surefire.com](http://surefire.com))

The Bayco Night Stick (below left) is useful for illuminating a crime scene. Streamlight Stylus (right) receives new C4 LED technology.





Gerber PowerFrame with F.A.S.T. spring-assisted opening technology (top) gets an upgrade in 2009. The new Crucial multi-tool (left) folds as compactly as a pocketknife.

Streamlight introduced its C4 LED technology in 2008, and 2009 sees it introduced into a number of compact lights—constructed from both polymer and aluminum—that offer up to triple the brightness of the previous models in the same size range. (800-523-7488; [streamlight.com](http://streamlight.com)).

From Insight Tech-Gear, this year sees improved technology in the C Series and X Series LED hand-held compact lights, as well as several quick-detachable gun mount lights. (877-744-4802; [insighttechgear.com](http://insighttechgear.com))

MagLite is a veteran player in the LEO-oriented flashlight

game. In fact, more than three decades ago, I carried one on military police duty, and the same light served well in future private-contract security work. Built tough, many older MagLites are still in service, and MagLite now offers an upgrade module that can convert any C- or D-size MagLite from bulb technology to a three-watt LED by simply replacing the lamp assembly. (800-289-6241; [maglite.com](http://maglite.com))

A high-lumen intense-focus light is an asset, but sometimes it's not really what's needed. When it comes to illuminating a vehicle accident or crime scene, or just providing a place where search-and-rescue personnel can sit down, check their gear and grab a cup of coffee, a diffused floodlight is a better bet. The Night Stick by Bayco offers a solution in its 9800 Series. It combines a 300-lumen flashlight with a 400-lumen floodlight in the same unit, and uses an anti-roll Tri-Lobal design that allows it to stay where it's placed. (800-233-2155; [baycoproducts.com](http://baycoproducts.com))

folding knife models to its extensive line in the PowerFrame and F.A.S.T. spring-assisted opening technology. The new Crucial multi-tool weighs only 5 ounces and folds as compactly as a pocketknife, yet provides many of the features of the larger Multi-Plier line. An interesting addition is the Cut Release Tool (CRT), designed to quickly and safely cut flex-cuff restraints. (307-857-4700; [gerbergear.com](http://gerbergear.com))



Bushnell's Back Track is an incredibly easy-to-operate GPS unit that also features a digital compass.

A number of cosmetic changes mark new models in the Spyderco clip/folding knife line. A new blade design, however, looks interesting. The Rock Lobster, by designer Jens Anso, weighs in at 4.1 ounces, and features a 3.75-inch knobby-nosed blade that provides maximum cutting power in a compact design. (800-525-7770; [spyderco.com](http://spyderco.com))

BlackHawk has new versions of its popular XT and QD Storm Slings. Each features a quick-release buckle.



## BELT TOOLS

Knives, multi-tools and special application tools are an important part of any LEO's equipment, and each year sees a number of new and useful items in this arena.

Gerber Legendary Blades offers a half-dozen new clip/

## USEFUL ACCESSORIES

From BlackHawk comes two new models of its popular Storm Sling. The XT and QD both feature a quick-release buckle that allows a long gun to quickly be attached or removed, along with a plastic-encased MASH clip that allows silent attachment of the gun. Both slings feature heavy-duty buckles and 1.25-inch webbing. (800-694-5263; [blackhawk.com](http://blackhawk.com))

The Bushnell Back Track is a simple hand-held GPS unit combined with a digital compass. It can mark and store up to three locations per situation, with the compass providing direction and distance to any one of them. That could certainly come in handy during search-and-rescue operations, as well as in marking spots where evidence may have been thrown by a suspect during a pursuit. (800-423-3537; [bushnell.com](http://bushnell.com))