HIDDEN CLUES
Traffic Accident Investigation

SITUATION:
Late one night in a small Texas town, a vehicle lost control while driving down the highway. The driver of a pickup truck had rolled the truck over and landed in a ditch on the side of the highway. The truck was in bad shape when officers arrived on scene. The driver had been thrown from the vehicle, but officers were able to spot him right away. A life flight helicopter was called in to evacuate the driver to the nearest hospital for treatment of his injuries. He was unconscious and had some injuries. No drugs or alcohol were found at the scene or in the driver's system.

NEED:
After officers had ensured the driver was safely taken care of by the EMT and life flight crew, they had to begin their accident scene investigation. In many cases, accident scenes don't reveal many clues, at least not visible to the naked eye. Sometimes there are witnesses or tread marks on the road, but not always. Law enforcement professionals needed a way to quickly determine the cause and actual location of the accident and re-open the traffic flow on the road.

SOLUTION:
Officers utilized their Thermal-Eye thermal imaging camera to investigate the accident scene more closely. The thermal imaging camera picked up yaw marks on the road that were not visible to the naked eye. Yaw marks often occur when a driver makes a hurried steering maneuver. The marks were 200 yards down the road from where the driver was found, thrown from his vehicle. The marks showed where the vehicle had actually flipped and left the road. Officers were able to determine where the car had left the road and estimate a possible cause and speed. This allowed officers to complete their report quickly and clean up the accident scene, therefore relieving some of the traffic congestion caused by the accident.

RESULTS/BENEFITS:

- Officers were able to See the Unseen™. The yaw marks were not visible to the naked eye, but the thermal imaging camera picked them up immediately, providing clues to how and where exactly the accident occurred.

- Officers were able to save time overall in the accident investigation, which in turn reduced labor costs and the number of officers required on the scene.

- Officers were able to clear the accident scene quicker and more safely, in turn relieving traffic congestion sooner.