



Courtesy photo

The county Sheriff's Department adopted this new black paint job late last year for its marked patrol cars. *Law & Order* magazine recognized the design in its August 2009 issue, saying the department's 2008 Ford Crown Victoria was the best-looking model in the nation.

Batarangs and grappling guns.

But the lawman who regularly jokes about being Batman is working to get his men behind the wheel of some new Batmobiles.

Over the past nine months Bateman has replaced two of the department's old, worn-out white squad cars with new models sporting a fresh, black paint job. And later this year, Bateman said he hopes to replace two more of the department's aging fleet of 18 marked cars.

The cars are already turning heads. *Law & Order* magazine recognized the paint job in its August 2009 issue, with a panel of judges deciding the department's 2008 Ford Crown Victoria was the best-looking version of the patrol car in the nation.

"This is one sharp looking Crown Vic! The black and yellow lettering jumps out at you and is easy to read. It's clean and simple, yet bold," the judges wrote.

Bateman credited one of his men — Deputy Tony Nickoles — with suggesting the new color scheme. The sheriff said he liked it, got some positive feedback from the rest of his department about it, and decided to run with it.

They purchased the Crown Victoria for \$24,400 last November and a Chevrolet Impala for \$22,500 earlier this year.

Bateman stressed the black cars cost about as much as the old, white ones, since the factory charges as much for black paint as it does for white.

'Batmobiles' hit county streets

Sheriff Ron Bateman still has his deputies wearing tan uniforms. And he still has them stocking their utility belts with handcuffs and pepper spray — not