An earlier RAND report, *Needs and Prospects for Crime-Fighting Technology: The Federal Role in Assisting State and Local Law Enforcement* (Schwabe, 1999), discussed various aspects of technology-related support the federal government has provided to state and local agencies and commented on needs and prospects for such support in the future. That report recommended a more exhaustive study of what law enforcement technology is currently in use across the nation and how the federal government might better render technology-related support.

Subsequently, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy commissioned RAND’s Science and Technology Policy Institute to conduct the more exhaustive study recommended by the *Needs and Prospects* report. This study was also supported by funding from the National Institute of Justice.

This report, *Challenges and Choices*, presents the overall findings of the follow-on study. A companion volume (Davis, Schwabe, and Fricker, 2001) provides more detailed findings from two nationwide surveys RAND conducted as part of the study.

The authors’ aim is to provide information that may help federal policymakers in the Executive and Legislative branches as they formulate goals and programs to support technology utilization and modernization for law enforcement over the course of the first decade of the 21st century.

The Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) was created in 1976 to provide the President with timely policy advice and to coor-
dinate the science and technology investment. OSTP’s Technology Division helps to develop and implement federal policies for harnessing technology to serve national goals such as global economic competitiveness, environmental quality, and national security. The Division’s priorities include: sustaining U.S. technological leadership through partnerships to promote the development of innovative technologies; research and development (R&D) and policy initiatives for advanced computing and communications technologies; advancing technologies for education and training; and the U.S. space and aeronautics program.

The Science and Technology Policy Institute at RAND was created by Congress in 1991 as the Critical Technologies Institute and renamed in 1998. It is a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the National Science Foundation and managed by RAND. The Institute’s mission is to help improve public policy by conducting objective, independent research and analysis on policy issues that involve science and technology. To this end, the Institute

- Supports the Office of Science and Technology Policy and other Executive branch agencies, offices, and councils
- Helps science and technology decisionmakers understand the likely consequences of their decisions and choose among alternative policies
- Helps improve understanding in both the public and private sectors of the ways in which science and technology can better serve national objectives.

Science and Technology Policy Institute research focuses on problems of science and technology policy that involve multiple agencies. In carrying out its mission, the Institute consults broadly with representatives from private industry, institutions of higher education,
and other nonprofit institutions. Inquiries regarding the Science and Technology Policy Institute may be directed to:

Bruce Don, Ph.D.
Director, Science and Technology Policy Institute
RAND
1200 South Hayes Street
Arlington, VA 22202-5012
Phone: (703) 413-1100
http://www.rand.org/scitech/stpi
E-mail: stpi@rand.org