**FORENSIC ARTIST:** Orange police officer Mike Streed uses a computer 'aging' program to help identify and locate missing children.

# New software program 'ages' missing children

**TECHNOLOGY:** The Orange police work in conjunction with a non-profit group.

**By JEFF COLLINS**
The Orange County Register

ORANGE — Officer Mike Streed wiggled his mouse and watched a missing girl's face age four years on his computer screen.

One click extended the nose. A few more clicks and the jaw grew bolder, baby teeth gave way to permanent choppers and a newer, wavier hairstyle appeared.

Minutes later, the forensic artist produced a picture showing how the missing 10-year-old girl might look today.

Thanks to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Streed will be producing a lot more pictures, helping families in five Western states track their abducted children.

Because state authorities were unable to take on the extra work, the non-profit missing-children center designated the Orange Police Department as one of five regional sites in the nation that have new $20,000 computers capable of producing pictures showing how missing children might have aged since estranged parents or strangers abducted them.

The equipment is similar to gear used by Santa Ana police since December, but Orange police are the only ones affiliated with the missing-children center. Since the equipment became fully operational in April, Streed has worked on two cases referred by the center.

And when he's not hunting for missing children, the computer can be used to help produce composite drawings of suspects, update mug shots to match a fugitive's change in appearance and help the coroner identify bodies.

"It's such a valuable tool in terms of identification," said Streed, a 15-year police veteran and son of former Orange Police Chief Wayne Streed. "You do all these things to save time and money in investigations, and you give people an image."

Streed demonstrated by displaying one fugitive with a prominent scar under his right eye. Detectives believe he has since had the scar removed. In minutes, he erased the scar.

In a case in which the coroner had the body of an unidentified man killed by a gunshot to the face, Streed was able to alter the picture to show what the man might have looked like without the wound.

The traditional method of drawing composite sketches of suspects — taking eyes from one chart, the nose from another, etc. — can be automated with the new computer.

"Part of what I wanted to do with this was to show people there is hope in finding their kids," said Streed, 35. "If I can do something with a missing kid and bring some joy and relief to families, there's not another sensation like it."