

## Behind the Badge: A few notes about the work of local law enforcement

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I am writing this article knowing that I will be leaving on vacation in less than a week, so I assure you this will be short but hopefully informative.

I want to begin by thanking everyone who was at the memorial service on May 13. Our chaplains and members of the Refuge Bible Church did an outstanding job.

We are currently in the process of making a list for promotional testing. I find it very interesting to listen to the officers who have gone through the promotional testing. Some of the comments are positive; others, let's say, not so flattering. I can personally tell you this process is something they will remember throughout their careers. I admire those who take the opportunity to test. It is a very long and difficult process, and the odds of advancement are not that great.

Summer is upon us, and the calls for service have increased. To give you an example, in February of this year, we handled 2,849 calls for service; and in May, we handled 4,129 calls for service. The calls for service will continue to increase as the summer months continue. Our officers take this in stride and continue to do an excellent job.

I would like to add something to this as I received a call from the father of a person who was in need of help. To make a long story short and try to keep this generic in an effort to protect any complainant, this father wanted to thank the police department and the efforts of three of our officers. This call involved two shifts and required assistance from three officers. The father basically stated that we were instrumental in saving the life of the person about whom he was concerned. What a compliment, especially since it involved two shifts and three officers at two different times. This tells me that we have great employees. Officer Greg Becker, Officer Dean Sharp and Officer Rob Dobyns did an excellent job.

Some of the technology we purchased with our grant monies has paid off. I am talking about our laser shot (shoot don't/shoot simulator). The use of this equipment, along with our firearms instructors, has given us a heads up on our annual qualification course that is required by the state. We do have some officers who struggle with qualifying yearly, but after some time with this machine, they qualified with no problems. This also gives them the necessary confidence they need.

I am also a part-time adjunct professor at Iowa Western Community College, teaching courses in criminal justice. The class has a chapter dealing with advancements in technology and how it plays a role in law enforcement. I usually have a street officer come out and explain the inner workings of a police cruiser and all its equipment.

During one such session, one of the students was asking about the portable radios that the officers carry. The officer explained the necessity of such equipment and the importance. I told the class that when I started with the department, we did not have the portable radios. The look on the officer's face, told me he must have thought that I started in the Stone Age.

I told you I would keep it short, so I'll keep the workings of a cruiser and other equipment for another article.

– Ralph O'Donnell is the Council Bluffs Chief of Police.