

Squad 99 Police Blotter

Duluth Police Department

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Some thoughts and History....

Community Policing and where it started for me

The month of October was a fun and interesting month downtown. It still amazes me that I get to experience the things I do as a Police Officer serving the downtown community and the City of Duluth. I started this career almost 13 years ago and love it more than ever. I have worked for 3 agencies during my career and cut my teeth in “small town policing” in west central Minnesota. I started as a young cop at the ripe age of 22. We called it “small town policing” because that’s what it was, so we thought. It was, but it was also so much more. It was “community policing” at its core. I was able to learn very quickly that it was a necessity to not only build relationships with the community I served, but to foster those relationships as time went on. As a young cop this was admittedly a struggle for me because I thought my only job was to arrest bad guys and stop cars.

I remember one of the first connections I made in the community, Mr. Strand, the High School Guidance Counselor. I would spend time visiting with him as kids came in and out of his office. I was able to meet the kids and visit with them as well. Not only did I build relationships with school administration, but almost more importantly the KIDS! I had an “ah ha” moment!! The kids really opened up to me when they got to know me and saw me as “Mike” and not just the Police. This made them more comfortable talking to me and if they were involved in a police call the rapport was built. This same philosophy works across the board throughout communities.

Over my career, “Community Policing” came naturally to me and a passion of mine. I brought my skillset to Duluth when I started here in October of 2012. The same principles that were applied in that small town also worked here in Duluth... Who knew! That is why I say this was “community policing” as many call it today. As I am writing this article, I am wondering why do we call this “community policing”? It should just be policing! I think it’s imperative that we have an open relationship with the community we serve and do our best to get to know one another, as simple as that sounds. To this day I still talk with people from that

Fun Facts from October



Miles Walked- 89.22

Miles Biked- 12

Miles on Horseback- 10

Business Contacts- 120

Parking Enforcement
Contacts- 12

Meetings (hours)- 10

Self-Initiated Field Activity
and Community Engagement
Events- 34

Citations- 17

Arrests- 1

community in west central Minnesota and make the occasional visit back there. The members of that community helped mold me into the Police Officer that I am today, even if they don't know it.

During the time that I have been your Community Officer I have brought many things I learned as a young Officer working in a small community. As a community we have to work out some struggles in the downtown this summer but have had a positive outcome in nearly all instances. For those of you that voiced concerns and helped out in working on issues, thank you! We as a Police Department need YOU, the community, to be involved. You are an important piece to the puzzle and your involvement is appreciated!!

Hairy Holidays...

Fun Fundraising!!

You may notice something different the next time you see an Officer out and about. No...that's not dirt on their face. It's some well-trimmed and groomed facial hair! The Chief is allowing "Hairy Holidays" for the Duluth Police Officers. Male Officers are able to grow beards and mustaches and female Officers are able to dye a 1-inch strip of hair the color of their choice during the months of November and December. Normally this is not allowed, but is now for a great reason.... fundraising!! Officers who wish to participate have to donate \$25 per month to a youth organization or Shield 616. Money raised will go to youth organizations within the city to fund programs and activities or will go to Shield 616 which is an organization that raises money to supply Officers with active threat response gear. Both of these causes are great and we are happy to support them.

The New Squad 86

Another Introduction...

Over the years many of you have gotten to know Officer Lepak. He has worked as a downtown Community Officer for the past 7 years and done some amazing work during that time. Most notably was the problem solving work that was done concerning the Last Place on Earth. Officer Lepak undoubtedly made an impact on the downtown community during his years down here. Two years ago he transitioned to the East Community Policing Facilitator where his main mission was to assist and mentor Patrol Officers with "community policing". Officer Lepak has recently applied for and received a position in our Juvenile Unit and will no longer be walking the beat as he did for years.

After an application process and interviews a new East Community Policing Facilitator has been selected. Many of you may know Officer Ethan Roe from the work he has done as your Duluth Transit Authority Officer. Officer Roe will start his new role towards the end of this month and the two of us will be working hand in hand (not literally) as we tackle issues impacting our community.

A recent visit from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police...

