

Behind the Badge - New faces and old friends

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I was going to write about the snow, but if you're like me, you're sick of snow; so I thought I would catch you up on what's happening in the department.

We recently graduated four representatives from Council Bluffs from the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy in Johnston. This group includes three police officers, Joshua Hughes, Joshua Horner and Travis Bradley, and a firefighter. The firefighter, Justin James, is a seasoned employee who went to the 13-week academy to strengthen his skills in investigating fire-related offenses.

I am pleased to announce that our city was well represented throughout the state. I was proud when they announced several awards winners, and our department was included on several awards. It was doubly rewarding as my brother, Jack, the chief in West Des Moines, also graduated an employee – and we came out on top.

The academy class contained 35 recruits, and we finished with the first-, second- and third-ranked students. The police officers have now entered their 15-week Field Training Officer Program.

At the end of the year, we retired a civilian employee, Carol Danker. She gave the Department 36 years of service. She worked in the Administration Division and the Services Division.

During her retirement party, several past members of this Department were in attendance to wish her well. This alone shows that Carol was a highly respected person on this department. Carol was the type of employee who always did her job well, with no fuss, and was one of the most positive persons that I have had the pleasure of knowing. I wish her well in her retirement.

We hired two new police officers. Paul Damrow comes to us from Woodhouse Mazda where he was employed as an auto mechanic but who always wanted to be a police officer. James Wheeler comes to us from Hy-Vee in Papillion, Neb. Jim, as well, had the desire to become a police officer, and we congratulate them on their new career.

During the swearing in ceremony, it was noted that one of the new hires would have to put in 30 years before he was eligible to retire. One attending officer jokingly commented that you do not have to do that much time for a bank robbery.

I want to welcome them and their families to the department. They started the academy on Jan. 11, and I look with great anticipation for their graduation in April. Paul and James were part of a list of five persons who were certified from an application pool of 47.

Finally, I need to comment on at least three letters I received from citizens. The letters are all positive about the department. I am going to leave this generic, because the officers involved did not conduct themselves in this manner to receive public recognition. They were simply doing their job.

Each letter indicates that the officers who responded to their call for assistance went well above and beyond the call of duty.

They ranged from offering assistance to a person in need to just understanding that the person involved in the call needed some assurance and guidance to make it through during the tough time.

I assure you that the officers involved have been notified and the letter will be placed in their personnel file.

I want to thank them for representing the department in a way that brings credit to all who wear a uniform.

As chief, it is truly a pleasure to receive these letters.

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

