

THE BLUE LIGHT

Bulletin

Official
Publication
of the
Gastonia Police
Department

Tim L. Adams, Chief of Police

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To simulate a GPD photo from 1925, Central District Officers and City Manager Jim Palenick posed for a photo Dec. 1 in front of the new Main Avenue office. Back row left to right, Susan Psomadakis, Sgt. Mike Smith, Steve Moore, Capt. Ed Turas, Chief Tim Adams, Mr. Palenick, Assistant Chief Stacy Conley, Jamie Prather, Jason Eaker, Mark Peeler, Eric Woods, David Whitlock, and Shane Johnson. On motorcycles left to right, Aaron Wurster, Sgt. Vic Yager and Mark Tilley. (Photo by Det. Eddie Green)

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GPD's Downtown Office

By Donna Lahser
BLB Editor

Gastonia Police have opened a new office in downtown Gastonia, located at 193 W. Main Ave., but there are no office hours for the general public.

"We are pleased to be able to have this new office," said Gastonia Police Chief Tim Adams. "The Main Avenue office will help us facilitate a presence downtown, and provide a base of police operations for downtown events."

In addition, Officer Mark Peeler will have a downtown focus along with other duties in the city's Central District.

"Officer Peeler will work with a growing number of businesses

downtown and address quality of life issues as needed," said Capt. Ed Turas, commander of the city's Central District.

The façade of the Main Avenue office combines exterior lamp lighting with black and gold lettering in the office sign. The exterior lights are reproductions of Baltimore Police station globes.

Participants in the office development include the Downtown Pioneers, U.S. Representative Sue Myrick, Dixie Glass, Franklin Signs, Gunn's Flooring, Racetorations, Rainbow Paints, and Specialty Office Furnishings.

Contributing City personnel include Joe Hooper, Mike Warlick, Sgt. Mike Smith, Sgt. Vic Yager, Jamie Prather and Mark Peeler.

Message From The Chief

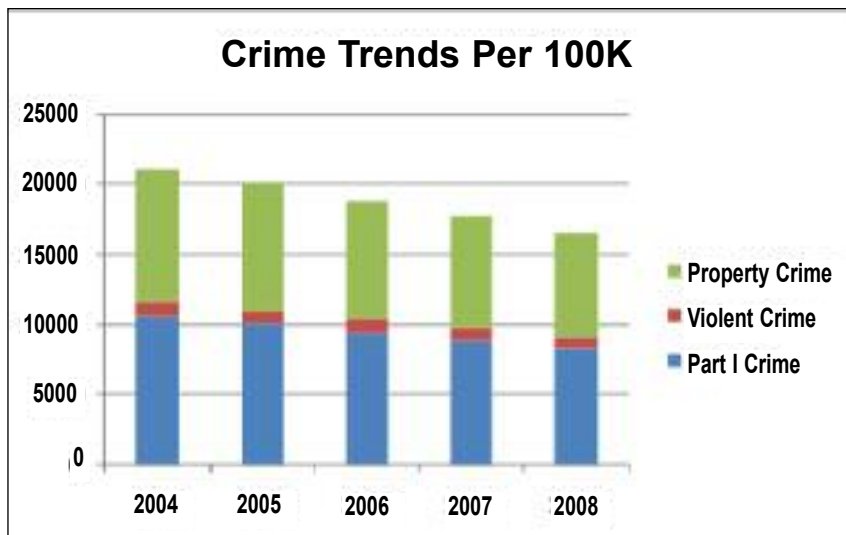
Challenges and Achievements

As the holidays quickly approach, it is evident this year is almost complete and we need to begin planning for a productive 2010. November 2009 marks my first full year as Gastonia's Chief of Police and it has truly been an honor to serve our department as we continue to make progress.

Crime numbers this year continue to be down. So far in 2009, reported Part 1 crime is down 14 percent compared to the same time period last year. Violent crime is down 10 percent while property crime maintains a steady 14 percent decline. Our crime rate decrease so far in 2009 is on top of four consecutive years of crime decreases (2004-2008).

We routinely compare our crime numbers to 17 other North Carolina cities and for several years, we have ranked third in Part 1 Crime per 100K population. This ranking has dropped to fifth place, which is great news based on 2008 numbers recently verified by the NC SBI.

As we all know, numbers go up and down continually, so it's not unthinkable that crime numbers will go up at some point in the future. However, we continue to look at crime statistics for any



crime trends that can be addressed to stop crime before more of it occurs. One arrest can thwart dozens of crimes, but the police department alone cannot take all the credit for our crime reduction just as we do not want to take all the blame when crime increases.

What we need to do is maintain a constant focus on problem areas, enhance the partnerships we have established with our citizens and place the manpower when and where it is needed the most. I am very proud of all the hard work everyone has put into making Gastonia a safer place.

Other solid achievements include the ability to hire eight additional officers due to the COPS grant. With challenges still ahead due to the economy, having additional officers is great for Gastonia. We want to prevent as much crime as possible, and a slumped economy can result in more robberies, shoplifting and

other money-related crimes.

The Holiday Task Force will be operating again this year to help fight crime at area shopping centers, and additional officers will beef up this year's initiative. The NC Governor's Crime Commission is

funding a position

until June 2010, and this is helping us further Gang of One Gaston efforts as youth gangs continue to be a challenge for our community. Our Citizens on Patrol (COP) volunteer program helps to maximize efficient use of our officers, and these volunteers are a big asset to the department.

Thank you to all GPD employees for your work whether on the job or serving as a community volunteer in efforts such as the two Hope 4 Gaston projects. Together we are a tremendous force for good in our community. Together we continue to make progress in our mission to Protect, Serve and Enhance the Quality of Life for All. Keep up the great work everyone!

Tim L. Adams
Chief of Police

Citizen on Patrol's First Year

By Patrick Daley

BLB Writer

The Citizen On Patrol program has finished its first full year of service within the GPD and statistics are outlined in the chart to the right.

Officers are getting used to hearing the Victor (COP) units on the radio and the Telecommunications Center is utilizing them much more. This holiday season the COP should have a greater presence with the addition of another patrol vehicle and four more COP volunteers. They have done a great job thus far and we are looking forward to another successful year!

All of our COP's received awards for work they have done at the department with several receiving multiple commendations from the chief for going above and beyond the call of duty. Awards are as follows:

	
COP Activities	
Patrol Car Hours	569
Motor Vehicle Accident Assists	115
Stranded/Disabled Motorists	110
School Checks	95

- Barbara Biggerstaff - Award for Tenure and Volunteer in Police Service.

- Don Brittain - Award for Tenure, Volunteer in Police Service, Community Service and Volunteer of the Year.
- Doug Carpenter - Award for Tenure, Volunteer in Police Service, and Community Service.
- Pam Gill - Award for Tenure, Volunteer in Police Service.
- Lisa Hargate - Award for Tenure, Volunteer in Police Service and Community Service.
- Larry King - Award for Tenure, Volunteer in Police Service and Community Service.
- Gail Kiser - Award for Tenure, Volunteer in Police Service.
- Randy Kistler - Award for Tenure, Volunteer in Police Service, and Community Service.
- Steve Lawson - Award for Tenure, Volunteer in Police Service, and Community Service.

In addition Doug Carpenter and Larry King have received commendations from the chief on several occasions.

Vader Gets Vest

K-9 Vader has his first new bulletproof/stab proof vest. GPD received the vest Aug. 14 after making contact with Susie Jean, founder of the non-profit organization, Vest N Police Dog Protection. Vest N P.D.P. is a non-profit corporation created in July 2002 to raise funds for bulletproof/stab proof vests for K-9s which cost \$695 each, according to the vestnmdp.com website.

"The vest fits well," said Sgt. Steve Colvard, Gastonia's K-9 Unit supervisor. "To my knowledge Vader is the only dog locally that is fitted for such a vest. Officer (Thomas) Doby (pictured with Vader) is in the process of securing vests for all our dogs now."



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Hope 4 Gaston & Landscaping



Police & Hope 4 Gaston

Many GPD volunteers and the GCSO's Explorers gave a boost to the landscaping around the Boys and Girls Club on Rankin Avenue, as part of the Hope 4 Gaston Christian Outreach project on Oct. 10, which targeted the Highland West area. The landscaping job involved placing 12.5 tons of rocks in a culvert, spreading six 20-ton-loads of mulch, cutting grass and planting more than 50 plants and flowers. More information is available online at Hope4Gaston.com. (Photos by Eddie Green, Jimmy Swanger and Donna Lahser)

Health Assessment & Healthy Living

From Sept. 1-Oct. 25, 789 City of Gastonia employees had completed the online Health Assessment (HA), according to Blue Cross Blue Shield North Carolina statistics. Completing the online HA is required and those who don't complete the HA before the end of the year face a monthly health insurance increase.

Assessing Your Weight

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provide an easy way to calculate your body mass index. Go online to cdc.gov/healthyweight and click

on "Assessing Your Weight," then "BMI – Body Mass Index." Or you can calculate BMI for adults by following these steps:

- 1) Multiply your height in inches by itself (Example: 68 x 68),
- 2) Divide your weight in pounds by the height figure (Example: 160/4624),
- 3) Multiply that by 703 (Example: .034602 X 703).

BMI Categories: Underweight (18.5 or less), Normal (18.5 to 24.9), Overweight (25 to 29.9), and Obese (30 or above).

Preventing Weight Gain

According to the CDC, weight gain can be prevented by choosing a lifestyle of healthy eating and daily physical activity, or, in other words, balancing your calorie intake with the right amount of exercise for you. Weighing yourself on a regular basis allows you to catch small weight gains and make adjustments to eating and exercise. The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides dietary guidelines at mypyramid.gov. Individuals with chronic conditions should talk with a health care provider to determine diet and exercise guidelines.

Gang of One Gaston Update

By Nancy Capistran

BLB Writer

Gang of One Gaston was established in 2006, primarily as a hotline and referral service for gang prevention and intervention assistance. Program staff have worked to identify local agencies and programs within Gaston County that will assist youth, families, teachers, administration and community members with preventing or intervening in high-risk activity and gang association.

Program Statistics

Twenty-eight gang awareness presentations have been made from July 1-October 20, reaching out to 482 individuals including school teachers and staff, community watches, and youth ages 8-18. Fifteen teen gang members were helped this year from January through October 20.

Gang of One Gaston works diligently to connect those in need with local services that make a difference. Referral services collaborating with the program range from mental health and

substance abuse assistance to tattoo removal for those involved in gangs who have chosen to make a personal change.

Hotline for Assistance

Gang of One Gaston has initiated a hotline, 704-864-SAFE, to offer youth, their families and other Gaston County residents an opportunity to seek assistance in an anonymous fashion. The hotline is a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week service available to all residents of Gaston County. The hotline is available for anonymous calls, as well as calls requesting gang disassociation assistance, general gang educational assistance, and in-depth community training needs. The Gang of One Hotline is answered by a person Monday through Friday 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. For all other times, callers will need to leave a message and a volunteer will return the call as soon as possible.



Gang of One Gaston works in collaboration with other law enforcement agencies, community resource partners, business leaders and members of the community to establish opportunities for youth, families, teachers and others to learn more about how to prevent gang membership and intervene in gang lifestyles. The Gang of One Hotline offers the appropriate measures, resources and actions to assist someone in their efforts to leave a gang. With helpful volunteers to screen the incoming calls, each call is handled

with professional care and then assigned to a Gang of One Gaston Coordinator. The Gang of One Coordinator will follow up with each call and refer the individual to the appropriate community resource(s), based on the initial need.

The community resource(s) will then follow up with the caller to obtain additional information and begin providing the necessary service(s).



Chaplain Warner Doles Retires

Warner Doles, second from right, has retired as one of GPD's volunteer chaplains due to some health issues. He served as our chaplain for more than five years, and was recognized Nov. 5 at a Chaplain's lunch in the Community Room. Chief Adams presented Chaplain Doles with a plaque and many praised him for his ministry and fun-loving ways. Other GPD chaplains, pictured left to right, are Austin Rammel, Kimberly Morton and Dennis Boyce. (Photo by Sgt. Jamin Brackett)

Counselor's Insight

Make Relationships Top Priorities

What is important in your life? Has your job as Police Officer taken over your life and other areas have been neglected?

Maybe now is the time to stop and reassess where you are. Just like good officer safety: stop, scan the area, and assess the situation; sometimes we need to do that in our personal lives. We need to stop, scan, reassess and possibly change our plan, our way of living.

As a former Police Officer and now as a Police Chaplain, I have come to understand the value in

having priorities of life in order. It is not just about the job, not just about being a Police Officer. It is about being present in all of your relationships. We should not be so focused in one area of our life that other areas suffer.

Being a law enforcement officer makes it easy to get caught up in the mindset of "I need to do everything I can; be on every special team at the police department." There is nothing wrong with setting career goals, but don't further your career at the expense of losing the relationships

in your life. God created us to be in relationships with others and to not live a life in seclusion, only focused on our career.

Be careful; don't let the job of Police Officer become your only relationship. Don't forget Police Officer is a job title, not a definition of who you are. Make sure you are cultivating the relationships in your life, and consider starting with cultivating your relationship with God first.

Peace:

Chaplain Kimberly Morton

GPD Tidbits

Jamey Blalock Promoted To Sergeant

Gastonia Police Detective Jamey Blalock has been promoted to sergeant, effective upon the retirement of Sgt. Jimmy West on Nov. 1.



Sgt. Blalock

Sgt. Blalock, 41, was hired by the department on July 21, 1997, and has served with Patrol, the Street Crimes Unit and the Vice and Narcotics Bureau. He's been a SWAT Team member since February 1999.

Sgt. Blalock holds a bachelor's of science degree from Western Carolina University, as well as the Advanced Law Enforcement from the State of North Carolina.

Awards he has earned include GPD's Medal of Valor, the Exceptional Duty award and several Chief's Achievement awards.

"Jamey Blalock is a dedicated officer, and is very deserving of this promotion," said Chief Tim Adams.

***Recent transfers include Sgt. Jimmy Arndt to Investigations, Sgt. Jeff Dobbins to Traffic, Sgt. Paul Smith to the Training Division, and Sgt. Kevin McSwain to the Street Crimes Unit – Team A. Officers Kevin Putnam and Chad Bingham have transferred to Vice/Narcotics, and Bryan Lindsay has transferred to Criminal Investigations.

***New Shift Tactical Officers

named in June are Craig Lowrance, Craig Singer, Corky Falls, Morris Elliott, and David Brogdon.

***Changes on the SWAT Team include: Sgt. Blalock is a new Team Leader; new SWAT Team members are David Wind, Tony Cape, Craig Singer, David Lancaster (Belmont PD), and Joe Griffin (Gaston County Sheriff's Office).

***A retirement ceremony was held for Sgt. Jimmy West on Friday, Oct. 30, where he was presented with his retirement certificate, his service weapon, plaques, gifts and cards with cash. Capt. Isenhour shared remarks

(Please see **GPD Tidbits**, page 7)

Flag Flown To Honor GPD Employees

A U.S. flag was recently flown in Kuwait and Iraq in honor of GPD's past, present and future employees as a way of saying thank you from Mike Rudisill. A GPD officer since 2007, Mike is serving



as a sergeant with the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team of the North Carolina Army National Guard.

"Ever since I

received the official notification of my deployment to Iraq, I have been employed by the police department," Mike said in an email. "I have received hundreds of well wishes and prayers from many members of the department

A U.S. flag flew in Iraq, right photo, and in Kuwait with other flags, left. Below Sgt. Mike Rudisill, left, and First Sgt. Robert Newsome, right, fold the flag.



in return for their support that had meaning to it and I thought there wasn't a better way to do that than to fly a U.S. flag at our headquarters building in their honor."

The flag was flown Aug. 22 at Forward Operation Base FALCON which is located on the outskirts of Baghdad, Iraq. The flag was flown for about five minutes, brought down and folded to be presented to the police department upon the



and I have continued to receive their support while deployed. I wanted to do

something

National Guard unit's return to the U.S. The flag was also flown at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, next to the Kuwait and British National flags. The flag has been certified and has a memorandum for authenticity.

"Since early May of 2009, our brigade has partnered with the Iraqi Security Forces to protect the population in order to set conditions for secure, free and credible elections to ensure continued development of Iraqi civil capacity," Mike said. "I am looking forward to the final leg of this deployment and a speedy return home in order to switch uniforms and get back to work with the finest officers and support staff that North Carolina has to offer."

GPD Tidbits, continued from page 6

from detectives about Sgt. West including praise for his work ethic and being a friend. Sgt. West's saying, "Nobody's going home until somebody's gone to



Chief Adams and Sgt. West

mail," was inscribed on one plaque. A crowd of family and friends from Kings Mountain as well as GPD employees, retirees, and other law enforcement friends filled the

Community Room for the ceremony. Sgt. West's retirement plans include pursuing a new job with the DMV.

*** Sgt. Mark Lanier retires effective Dec. 1, and sent an e-mail to GPD employees on Oct. 30 to inform everyone of his upcoming retirement and that he would be taking some vacation time during the month of November. "I have

enjoyed working with everyone and wish each of you the best," he said.

***Recently hired officers are: Travis Kistler (May 18), Keith Moses (June 1), Jarod Ewers (July 13), Marquis Douglas (Aug. 3), Robert Carrigan (Aug. 17), Adrienne Walker (Sept. 8), Timothy Pilkington (Sept. 8), Francis Towle (Oct. 5), and Brooks Luckadoo (Oct. 26). Amber Smith was hired Aug. 17 as a Police/Investigative Records Technician. (PIRT).



Never Forget

A 9-11 Memorial Ceremony was held at the Gastonia Fire Headquarters. The ceremony began at 8:46 a.m. on Sept. 11, the time the first plane hit the World Trade Center. Honor Guards with Gastonia Fire and Police Departments presented the flag dedication. Another memorial ceremony was held simultaneously at station #4 on Armstrong Park Road. (Photo by Jim Landis)

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