



PRESS RELEASE

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TALKINGTON STEPS AWAY WITH PLENTY OF MEMORIES

Veteran police officer ends 35 years of service to citizens of Muscatine

MUSCATINE, Iowa – Brett Talkington spent his final day as Chief of Police for the City of Muscatine just as he has done almost every day during his nearly 35-year career in law enforcement ... meeting with members of the public. Talkington officially retires from public service today (February 28).

Talkington joined the Muscatine Police Department in 1988, was promoted to Corporal in 1996 and Lieutenant in 1998. He was promoted to Captain of Patrol in 2010 and became the Chief of Police on February 3, 2011.

“I started thinking about being a police officer in high school but really started wanting to do it early in my career in college,” Talkington said.

It was during those college years that he played fast pitch softball during the summer with a couple of police officers from Ames.

“I did a couple of ride-alongs with them and figured out pretty quickly that being a police officer was something that I kind of wanted to do,” Talkington said.



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As a pretty social individual, Talkington found out early on that one of his favorite parts of the job was being able to visit with members of the community on almost a daily basis. That led to his dedication towards and active promotion of community policing by the Muscatine Police Department. Community policing basically is a collaborative partnership between law enforcement and the individuals and organizations they serve to develop solutions to problems and increase trust in police.

"I always liked to get out and talk with people so I probably was doing community policing before it was actually a thing," Talkington said. "There has always been community policing in law enforcement and we always try to push the page on that, do more of that, and do a better job of that."

Some of Talkington's top memories as a police officer came from his interactions with individuals and families during some of the darkest times of their lives. He believes that by getting out and talking with the people, talking with the kids, and trying to help people through some of their issues can give you a feeling of great accomplishment. You deal with people at some of the worst times of their lives, he said, and if you just make a difference in a few of those lives that is what it is all about.

"Thinking back over my career, some of the top moments were when people got back to me later in life and thanked me for helping them through a personal issue or a family issue or with the kids or parents," Talkington said. "Just dealing with people in general through the years and helping those people through problems was one of the biggest satisfactions for me. Again, people are at their worst times when we deal with them, not always, but most of the time."

A field training officer who guided Talkington early in his career told him that how you deal with people initially is how that interaction is going to go. You set the tone for how it is going, he was told, good or bad.



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That philosophy stuck with Talkington who has tried to pass it along to others as he rose through the ranks.

"In my 35-year career I have come across a lot of good cops and a lot of good supervisors," Talkington said. "And I like to think that I have helped mentor some of those people and mold them and form them. As a field training officer, I like to think that I helped develop a lot of officers in the department."

One of those that he has seen rise through the ranks. Tony Kies, will be taking over as Chief of Police Wednesday.

"Tony is going to do a great job as chief and Jeff (Jirak) is going to do an outstanding job as captain," Talkington said. "As I look down the list of the new lieutenants, sergeants and corporals, each will do a great job in their new roles, and in their different positions. They will develop into those positions and Muscatine will be better for them."

This is an exciting time for the Muscatine Police Department and Talkington knows that the department is in a real good place right now.

"That goes back to the whole department doing what they are supposed to be doing and following the rules," Talkington said.

Being accredited by CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies) by meeting an established set of professional standards and the use of ABLE (Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement) to prevent misconduct, avoid police mistakes, and promote officer health and wellness has created one of the top police departments in the state of Iowa.

"With CALEA everyone knows what is expected of them and they are held to higher standards than a lot of other departments are," Talkington said.



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Members of the Muscatine Police Department were doing some retaining on the ABLE program Tuesday, a process that the department does annually.

“ABLE gives everybody from the lowest person, the lowest officer, the rookie officer, all the way up to the chief, the techniques to intervene if somebody looks like they are getting out of hand with the person they are dealing with,” Talkington said. “Other officers, no matter their rank, can step in and this training gives them the right to do that without repercussions.”

The training has led to a dramatic reduction in the number of complaints, and a better relationship between the department and citizens.

“Sometimes you get into situations and it gets the better of you,” Talkington said. “The continual training from this program has helped our officers to stop before saying something they shouldn’t say or do something they shouldn’t do.”

The department and the citizens of Muscatine have also benefited from some additional high-end training that officers have been able to take.

“We have been blessed by a council and city administration that has provided us the money to send our people to really high-end training,” Talkington said.

“I would classify Muscatine as one of the better departments in the state of Iowa,” Talkington said. “Being CALEA certified is a huge thing for us and for the community itself, as well as the training programs that we send people to.”

Talkington’s message to those might like a career in law enforcement, especially with the Muscatine Police Department is ... “we will get you trained, get you out on the road, and we are always looking for good people”

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