



LEXINGTON DIVISION OF POLICE

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

November 29, 2017

Dear Mayor Gray,

I am writing to inform you that, after thoughtful reflection, I have decided to retire from the Lexington Police Department. I have had the distinctive honor of serving this community as its 35th Chief of Police for the last three plus years, and have proudly worn the uniform for over 31 years. I humbly request that you accept my retirement as of January 7, 2018.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for entrusting me with the stewardship of this outstanding organization. Your support, along with the consistent backing of the members of the Urban County Council, has enabled us to put in place an innovative and strategic vision that has brought about truly significant advancements in public safety in Lexington.

Those who call Lexington home have long known that we live in a vibrant, culturally diverse and safe community. Lexington's low occurrence of violent crimes in comparison with cities of similar size is the result of a number of initiatives and programs we have implemented over the past three years. I would like to touch on a few of these and give you a snapshot of the current status of the department.

Personnel/Staffing

- Over the last three years we have hired 239 new officers, and grown our sworn authorized strength from 565 to 630. Our authorized strength is projected to reach 660 sworn officers with the implementation of a newly created 4th sector, which is designed to improve police responsiveness, community interaction and support our crime reduction strategies.
- Through a job tasks analysis, we have created non-sworn positions allowing us to place more sworn uniformed officers on the street. The re-instituted safety officer program is a key example. Lexington averages nearly 17,000 collisions a year, the safety officers respond to those collisions allowing sworn personnel to focus on crime prevention and neighborhood safety initiatives.
- According to the U.S. census, Lexington is the 13th best-educated city. Research indicates officers with advanced education utilize less force and rely more on critical thinking and problem solving skills. Our department recognizes the importance of having officers who reflect this demographic. Applicants who have earned college degrees are highly sought recruit candidates. Recruits without advanced education degrees are awarded an Associate's degree upon graduation

from the police academy. All officers are provided incentives to complete their Bachelor's and Master's degrees. As a result, 92% of our officers have obtained degrees, are actively working, or have earned higher education credit hours toward degrees.

- We have an unparalleled training academy spanning 32 weeks of instruction, and 15 weeks of practical training with field training officers. The Bureau of Justice reports the average police academy is 21 weeks. Our intensive experiential learning environment establishes the strong foundation that our city expects from its police officers. Our structured yearly in-service training reinforces the principles of community policing, where problem solving is encouraged, and crisis intervention and strategic enforcement are emphasized.

Infrastructure

- An important part of the delivery of police services is the upgrading of our Records Management System (RMS) to a more advanced system that will meet the needs of the department for the foreseeable future. This not only allows us to electronically collect and store reports, but also allows us to organize and search detailed information with ease. It will provide us with timely and accurate information for investigations, responses to citizen complaints, and allow us to share information with other law enforcement and governmental agencies. It is an essential tool that will enable us to be more effective, accessible and responsive to the needs of our community. We expect our new system to be in place next year.
- A new Central Sector Roll Call facility was opened on Industry Road. This facility allowed us to relocate the Central Sector, Bureau of Patrol and to move the Special Operations Bureau and elements of the Bureau of Administration into a larger, more efficient space. This consolidation of police services was designed to improve public accessibility, increase police visibility, and enhance the vitality of the Eastland neighborhood.
- With the support of the Urban County Council we sought and obtained funding for the development and construction of a new Canine Unit facility, which replaces a 40-year old, undersized building. This new building has the capacity to house 20 police canines, and will provide ample space for training, equipment storage, offices, and kennels to provide a high level of safety for our growing community.
- The Urban County Council, realizing that public trust is absolutely essential to the department's success, funded the purchase of a body-worn cameras system. This initiative represents our department's ongoing commitment to adopting technological advancements, operational transparency, and to maintaining and strengthening positive relationships with our community.

Crime Prevention

- As part of a comprehensive strategy to address the national emergency that is the opioid crisis, we have doubled the size of our Narcotics Enforcement Unit. We were the first police department in Kentucky to specifically assign detectives as full-time overdose investigators. These detectives focus not only on investigating and prosecuting those who are responsible for importing and distributing opioids in our community, but also on helping opioid abusers connect with resources to more effectively address their addiction challenges, and associated issues.
- As part of a plan to address the prevalent problem of human-trafficking, our department was the first in the state to designate a detective as a full-time investigator. We are committed to employing a victim-centered approach that places equal value on identifying and stabilizing victims on one hand, and the investigation and prosecution of traffickers on the other. This detective works closely with social services and health care providers to offer support and understanding to the victims, to develop rapport, trust, help them feel safe and secure to tell their stories, and to ensure the successful prosecution of the perpetrators.

Community Outreach

- In the last three years we have focused on being more responsive to the needs of the victims of crime. As an example, we have increased the number of victim advocates and expanded the scope of services from sexual assaults and domestic violence to include providing services to victims of violent crimes, homicide families and work with victim's organizations within our community. We also hired the department's first bilingual advocate so that we could better serve the members of our diverse community.
- Over the last three years we have placed more emphasis on partnering with organizations in our community to increase our responsiveness, and to heighten interaction with all segments of our community. The invaluable assistance of our many civic-minded partners, including but not limited to the Lexington Chamber of Commerce, the Human Rights Commission, faith based organizations, the LGBTQ community, and many other dynamic and indispensable organizations, have helped to make Lexington a place with a high quality of life where people want to live and raise their families.
- A year ago, two local businessmen partnered with us to form the Lexington Police Foundation. It is a nonprofit, philanthropic partnership that allows individuals, businesses and organizations an opportunity to charitably support the department. A first of its kind for the department, contributions to the foundation assist with unbudgeted equipment requests, community outreach initiatives and to assist employees who are experiencing hardships.

- In the past three years a number of creative initiatives have been undertaken as part of a comprehensive plan to provide officers with new opportunities to interact with the youth in our community, outside of their normal duties as a law enforcement officer. It is essential that our young people have opportunities to see our officers as ordinary people, role models and mentors. Some of our programs include:
 - The *D.A.R.E. Program*: this program was reinstated to provide positive classroom interactions between law enforcement officers and elementary school children;
 - *Lexington Bigs in Blue*: this is part of the national *Big Brothers Big Sisters* volunteer program that partners police officers with the community in mentoring relationships;
 - The *Police Activities League*: as part of the *National Association of Police Athletic/Activities League*, this promotes the prevention of juvenile crime and violence by providing civic, athletic, and mentoring and educational opportunities that build relationships among young people, department employees, and the community; and
 - *Police Academic Teams*: we partnered with two elementary schools to create and sponsor academic teams. The officers mentor the teams and the Police Foundation helps us buy books, uniforms and provides travel expenses to events.

The innovative strategies and programs described above, and the positive outcomes they have and will continue to yield, would not have been possible without your support, that of the Urban County Council, the community, as well as the dedicated efforts of all the outstanding men and women with whom I have had the privilege to serve. I am extremely proud of them. I am proud to leave the LPD in their very capable hands.

My successor will undoubtedly rely on the continued support and assistance of these dedicated employees to safeguard our long tradition of excellence, and continue to move the department forward. During the transition period, I will be available to assist the next Chief of Police in preparation to lead the Lexington Police Department.

It is with great optimism for the department's future, and with heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity to serve the Lexington community, that I respectfully submit this letter of retirement.

Sincerely,



Mark Barnard
Chief of Police

MB/rmh