



BLOOMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT



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Chief Simington Announces Implementation of the Community Engagement Unit

Bloomington, IL - As a commitment to improving the quality of life in neighborhoods, the Bloomington Police Department (BPD), has created a new unit called the Community Engagement Unit.

Chief Simington stated, *"The Community Engagement Unit will work in partnership with the community members of Bloomington to not only enhance the quality of life in our community, but to strengthen bonds and build trust between the BPD and the community we serve. The trust created and maintained will allow for collaborative problem-solving, crime prevention, and safer neighborhoods. Additionally, this team will coordinate branding and recruitment efforts with a spirit of attracting diverse talent to join our profession and team! I am very excited about the potential of this new unit."*

Simington continued, *"The Community Engagement Unit will be led by Sergeant Kiel Nowers, a 20-year veteran of the BPD. Additionally, Officer Brandt Parsley, a 9-year veteran of the BPD, was recently appointed as the new Public Information Officer. Please welcome them to their new roles!"*

The Community Engagement Unit will be an expansion of Chief Simington's vision for taking a strategic approach to building new relationships, communication, and interactions with the community, while strengthening current relationships. The CEU will encompass the Sergeant of the Community Engagement Unit, Public Information Officer, and the existing Neighborhood Focus Team (NFT). The NFT was primarily focused on Towing / Animal Complaints, acting as a liaison to the City's Planning and Code Enforcement, and a Sex Offender Compliance Officer. The NFT roles will be integrated in the CEU, and consists of Officer Ben Brace, Officer Chad Hitchens, and Officer Scott Sikora.

The CEU will focus on:

- Proactive engagement with the community through a variety of department-sponsored events.
- Solicit and address on-going problems from community members.
- Use existing technology and social media to interact, inform, educate, and engage with community members.
- Serve as the community's direct liaison with the police department to increase transparency and accountability.
- Enhance BPD's ability to attract diverse and qualified talent to serve as police officers, telecommunicators and support staff.
- Increase community engagement to continuously build trust and partnerships with the community.

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