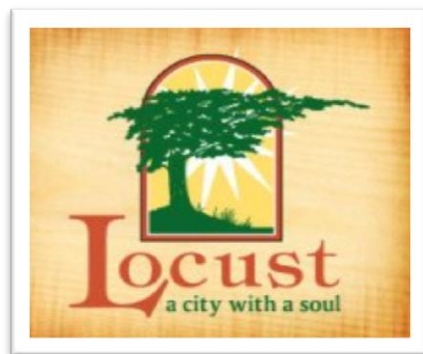




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COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER
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LOCUST POLICE DEPARTMENT COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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Welcome all to the January 2016 edition and the RETURN of the Locust Police Department Community Newsletter. Although the newsletter may appear to be the same as when I last produced it in May, the return of the newsletter will actually bring with it a greatly altered format. In translation, it means the newsletter will only consist of what I have time to produce for the given month. This way I can still distribute at least some information and goings-on within the city from a law enforcement perspective each month while still attending to my other responsibilities within the agency. That being said, here comes this month's update to catch you all up on happenings since the last newsletter in May.....

State Of The Department Address

Although for the most part it has been "business as usual" for the department since the last newsletter in May, there have been some developments and activity of note. I still plan to publish the annual "Year In Review" edition within the next couple of months that will update most of the notable happenings. This will also include the annual crime statistics for the year that will show how statistics are trending in a city that continues to grow. I believe the stats will show another positive year of work by our department providing the best service and protection we possibly can provide. I do know there was a sizable increase in the number of arrest charges our department made for the year compared to 2014. Although this may suggest more criminal activity occurring, in my personal evaluation it has not appeared to be any change in the quality of life of our residents in regards to personal safety or the security of property. Other specific news of note since May:

- After five extremely positive years with the department, Assistant Chief Eric Thomas tendered his resignation in April. There was nothing negative with this development whatsoever, Chief Thomas simply said when he began with Locust in 2010 that he planned to stay for five years which he did. Chief Thomas loves challenges and improving situations in agencies so he took a position as Captain over the patrol division with the Stanly County Sheriff's Office. (Now) Captain Thomas has over 30 years of law enforcement experience and is likely the most respected law enforcement

figure in Stanly County. Also in my estimation if there was a “Mt. Rushmore” of law enforcement in Stanly County, Captain Thomas would be the first one up there. I cannot adequately describe the positive impact he made with the Locust Police Department and how large a role he had in our agency gaining such a positive reputation within the county. We have all attempted to continue following his “teachings” and methods since his departure.

- After Captain Thomas’ departure, it also left the role of department detective vacant. I was asked to fill that role at the end of April which I graciously accepted. Since that time I have been in charge of coordinating all investigations for our department as well as conducting all major investigations. In addition, I was placed in charge of the property and evidence room as well as acting as liaison between the agency and the District Attorney’s Office preparing all case files and assuring all investigative evidence is handled or turned over properly. This new position has been incredibly rewarding however does not provide the same amount of “peaceful time” that my former position as a patrol officer contained. This would also be the reason the newsletter ceased to be published since last May.
- On July 24th, we responded to what would be determined to be a homicide on a Locust annexed property north of the city just outside the city limits on NC Hwy 200. To our knowledge this was just the second time a homicide has occurred in Locust jurisdiction. With the invaluable assistance of the NC SBI, Cabarrus County Sheriff’s Office, and the Concord Police Department, we were able to make an arrest in the case one week later. Randy Lee Edwards of Concord was arrested in the death of Donna Marie Helms-Perez also of Concord. Mr. Edwards remains incarcerated as he awaits trial.

http://www.independenttribune.com/news/bubba-s-towing-owner-to-face-murder-charge-in-woman/article_816cdb6c-3639-11e5-b514-8366fc0080c5.html

- Also in the vicinity of July, our department was awarded a 100% grant for the purchase of new tasers and taser equipment. This came as a result of several of the tasers our officers currently carry began to malfunction as well as the technology becoming outdated. The tasers we were able to acquire through grant funding are safer for both the officer and a suspect we may be

forced to use it on. They also possess technology that will allow us to connect the taser to the body cameras our officers wear in a use of force situation.

- This summer we also welcomed our newest officer to the Locust Police Department. Officer Dustin Wells who had been a recent graduate of Stanly Community College's BLET program was hired as a patrol officer with the department. Officer Wells is a very polite young man who came with a reputation from BLET of being in great shape. Officer Wells has done a great job for the department so far and has been a great addition to our roster.
- Finally, we are currently evaluating the prospects of applying for a grant through the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program. This grant would supply our department with an additional officer position. This position would be utilized as a traffic officer position to assist in enforcement and traffic compliance on our streets and highways. The DOT's decision to raise the speed limit to 45 miles per hour throughout the city is a factor in our consideration of this. Although many believe the speed limit change is a long overdue necessity, the fact is that very few people travel right at the posted speed limit and often use the sign as "guidance" for how much over the limit they can go without getting a citation. The other fact is that faster moving vehicles can result in more dangerous traffic crashes, thus the reason we are considering pursuing the grant.

I will continue to compile our stats for the last year to hopefully have ready to publish for next month. As always, if you have any questions or concerns you would like for me to address, please don't hesitate to contact me at 704-888-4744 or through email at jbslpd@gmail.com. I hope everyone has a blessed start to 2016.