



MAYOR'S NOTE

City of
Fairbanks

March 2015

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Community Policing Partnership Initiative

This month saw the beginning of the Community Policing Partnership Initiative in the City of Fairbanks. The first meeting of citizens and police officers was held on Tuesday, March 3rd, at 6:00 p.m. at the JP Jones Community Development Center.



Mayor Eberhart spoke to citizens about his vision to change the relationships, perceptions, and communications between citizens and Fairbanks police officers.

When I ran for Mayor, my campaign slogan was “Stronger Together.” It recognized that we are a diverse, multicultural community. The Great Seal of the United States contains the Latin words “E pluribus unum,” meaning “from many, one.” As a nation, as a state, and as a community, we work best when we work together. Despite our many differences, we need to get to know and respect one another. We need to get to know our neighbors. The Neighborhood Watch and Community Policing Partnership practices that our Police Chief, Randall Aragon, will be implementing are well in line with that vision.

Last year I went to Little Rock, Arkansas to attend The US Conference of Mayors training on Community Oriented Policing. A task force of seven police chiefs and seven mayors then produced the publication *Strengthening Police-Community Relations in America's Cities*. More recently, The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing issued its interim report. We will be paying close attention to these guidelines and are fortunate to have a police chief who has extensive history in not only implementing community policing, but also writing professional guidelines and teaching these practices to communities. This new perspective will create a partnership between citizens and officers. Now more than ever, citizens and law enforcement in our city and our country need to work together.

Community Policing and the Community Watch Program will begin in the southern half of the South Cushman/Bjerremark neighborhood. The area has been defined

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Community Policing Partnership Initiative Continued...

from 23rd Avenue south to the Mitchell Expressway, and between Lathrop Street and the Richardson Highway. The second area that will become part of the Community Policing Partnership will be the northern half of the South Cushman/Bjerremark neighborhood to Airport Way. South Fairbanks was identified to start the program based on reported crime statistics, police responses, and public comments and perception.



Fairbanks Police Chief Randall Aragon explains the Community Policing Partnership and what steps police officers and citizens will take next to implement a partnership of prevention.

The concept of Community Policing is not a new one, noted Fairbanks Police Chief Randall Aragon. Community policing “goes far beyond public relations, and is more than just waving at the citizens from a patrol car,” stated Chief Aragon.

Community policing is meant to stop the reactive cycle of police responding to a crime and making an arrest. Exercising community policing involves working with citizens to identify the problems of most concern and figuring out together how to prevent those issues from happening. It is a proactive and preventive approach.

Chief Aragon talked about the steps already taken in implementing Community Policing, including assigning po-

lice officers to particular neighborhoods so that residents get to know that officer and develop relationships of trust and communication.

At the kick off meeting, citizens discussed the issues most impacting their quality of life. Issues included the lack of sidewalks, vacant lots, hearing shots fired, traffic on 23rd Avenue, sexual assaults, bicycle thefts, speeding, boom boxes, petty theft, racism, and the need for self defense. The biggest three issues identified by citizens were drugs, speeding, and respect by police officers.

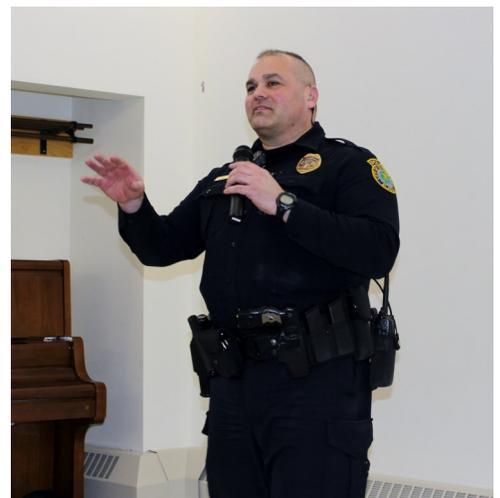
Officer Rick Sweet is the officer assigned to the South Fairbanks area. Officer Sweet has already been working with residents in the area by meeting with them in their homes to discuss their concerns. There will be another meeting of the South Fairbanks community group on April 30 at 6:00 p.m. at the JP Jones Community Development Center. Rodney Gaskins has been identified as the Community/Neighborhood Watch Chairperson, and several Block Captains have been identified as well.

The Community Kick Off Meeting for the South Fairbanks North residents will be on April 21 at 6:00 p.m. at the JP Jones Community Development Center. Citizens north of 23rd Avenue up to Airport Way between Lathrop and the Richardson Highway will be invited to attend.

I look forward to seeing many of you at one of these events and hearing your concerns and suggestions.

Mayor John Eberhart

Officer Rick Sweet is the Fairbanks Police Officer assigned to work with the South Fairbanks community.



F-35s—A Huge Opportunity for Our Community

In August 2014, the United States Air Force (USAF) chose Eielson Air Force Base (EAFB) as a possible site to base F-35 fighter aircraft. No other alternative site was listed. This means Eielson AFB is in the running with no competition, which is about as good as it gets. However, no F-35s is still an option.

The F-35 is a fifth generation stealth fighter aircraft, “invisible” to radar, with new technologies and capabilities. The USAF proposal would base two squadrons of F-35s at EAFB. Although normally a squadron consists of 24 planes, a few extra jets are provided to replace those out for maintenance or repairs, so this means EAFB would actually get 54 F-35s. Currently, EAFB houses F-16s and it is important for us to keep those, as well as gaining the F-35s. This month, the USAF is scheduling scoping meetings for the F-35s Environmental Impact Study (EIS). The scoping meetings are March 24th in North Pole, March 25th in Fairbanks, and March 26th in Delta Junction. We should receive the revised EIS later this year.

If we gain the F-35s, there will first be the need for the USAF to undertake extensive Military Construction (MILCON). This MILCON alone could mean several hundred million dollars of work at EAFB, a project that will clearly be of interest to workers and contractors in our community. To my understanding, the first F-35s would arrive in 2019. The economic impact of F-35s would include at least 3,000 additional persons and an estimated expenditure of \$1.9 billion per year coming into our area. The F-35s are planned to be flown for up to 40 years.

For several years the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) has conducted monthly Civilian-Military meetings. In addition, nearly weekly there is a meeting of the Tiger Team, focusing on military issues. Since I became Mayor in October 2013, I have worked closely with the FNSB and City of North Pole on these committees. The three mayors also meet monthly and the military is an important topic for our discussions. As mayors we also try to attend military events in our community.

Last month, FNSB Mayor Luke Hopkins and I, as well as key staff, were able to extensively consult with USAF commanders and community partners for Luke Air Force Base in Arizona, and Hill Air Force Base near Salt Lake City, Utah. We gathered valuable contacts and insight into such matters as to how to prepare for the EIS scoping meetings; what information to present now and at subsequent public hearings; how to generate community support in advance of the F-35s being based at EAFB, and how to continue community support after the F35s come to EAFB.

Russia’s planned establishment of four brigades in the Russian Arctic, the actions of Kim Jong-un in North Korea, as well as other increased traffic and activity in the Arctic underline the importance and strategic location of Alaska. In addition to the F-35s, the Army Grey Eagle drone project appears to be moving ahead. To my understanding, the drones would fly out of Fort Wainwright or EAFB.

These programs and activities bode well for the future of our community. If we get energy prices significantly lowered, life will shine brightly in the Golden Heart City.

City of Fairbanks

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STRONGER TOGETHER

The City of Fairbanks is known as the “Golden Heart City.” If you have the good fortune to visit or live here, you will soon discover why we have earned that name. The people of Fairbanks are known for their generosity of spirit, hospitality, and friendliness. Our city is vibrant with business and trade, outdoor and sports activities, and a dynamic arts community.

Departments: The City government provides essential police, fire, paramedic-level emergency medical and emergency dispatch service. In addition, Fairbanks provides garbage collection, street maintenance, building and fire code enforcement and a variety of other municipal services designed to make our city a great place to live, work and visit.

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