



Message from Altoona Police Chief Jesse James

Sometimes I watch silently as the men and women of the Altoona Police Department arrive to work to perform their duties. They brief each other, discuss officer safety issues, discuss current happenings, talk about a current case, or talk about an arrest made the day or night before. There can be some ripping of each other, they will joke and laugh a lot, maybe even complain a little. That's OK. This is the way cops are. They have a lot to talk about!

They get their gear out to their squad and perform squad checks. They search the back seat for any weapons, drugs or any other items which may have been hidden by those who become our passengers. They will test the emergency lights and siren, do a radar check, check their AED devices, and check their rifles and get them "squad ready." They are ready to go out and face the everyday challenges of being an Altoona Police Officer. They are going out to protect and serve!

As Chief, I enjoy observing these officers' conduct these tasks, from the veterans who've seen it all, to the new staff right out of the academy and anxious to make a difference. They have commitment to the badge and everything that it stands for, with different faces, different genders, and different personalities. It still gives me goose bumps in a way only a cop can understand. I'm still in awe of everything we do and see, day in and day out. Maybe it's the uniform, which hasn't changed much in fifteen years. Maybe it's the feeling sometimes we're doing "God's work." Maybe it is the mystique of being the "cop" and the danger willingly faced by these heroes every day. Maybe the infectious humor helps them cope with the daily dose of violence and pain. All I can say is this law enforcement profession is a noble and honorable calling.

Altoona Police officers are quality people who provide valuable services to this community, often at great risk to themselves. They deserve your gratitude and support. When you come in contact with them, please take the time to recognize the humanity behind the badge... don't just see the uniform, look at their faces. They are men and women who are husbands, wife's, father's, mom's, son's, and daughter's, but most of all human beings.

Like police departments nationwide, the Altoona Police Department is going through a transition period. As we cope with the social, economical, and technological changes in our society, we're adapting and expanding our mission so we can provide the best possible services to our citizens. You deserve no less!

Crime is sufficiently under control in Altoona, as we are ranked in the top 50 safest cities in Wisconsin. We can now take a more proactive approach to policing this great city. First and foremost, we must recognize that crime is a community problem and not just an Altoona Police Department concern.

Our goal is to merge the community and policing, this will blend them into a policing model for future generations. This model of policing will maintain the finest attributes of community-oriented policing and at the same time advance our partnerships within the community. We ask that you join us in our efforts so that together we continue to make Altoona a safer place to live.

Please take time to share your thoughts, criticisms, or suggestions by emailing me at jjames@ci.altoona.wi.us, or calling (715) 839-6090 Ext. 4021. Thank you for supporting the men and women of the Altoona Police Department.