

Lake County Sheriff's Office

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John D. Idleburg
Sheriff

MEDIA RELEASE

A Message from Sheriff John D. Idleburg

A Message from Sheriff John D. Idleburg:

“I would like to take a moment and thank the thousands of Lake County residents who have peacefully protested over the last two weeks. There is nothing more resonating than thousands coming together peacefully, to express a message. To the peaceful protestors: we see you, we hear you, and we understand you.

Law-enforcement is nothing without the support and trust of the community. Pinning on the badge comes with a tremendous amount of responsibility and trust, and we must always earn our trust from the people we serve. The Lake County Sheriff's Office is service-oriented. We have embraced the concept of being guardians of the community that we serve. We have been working very hard to build new bridges with the community. I believe transparency is absolutely paramount in law-enforcement and it needs to be much more than a 'buzz word.' We are in this together with you Lake County, we are your partners.

Since taking office as your sheriff in 2018, I have made changes to organizational structure and policy to better hold ourselves accountable to the community. One of these items included expanding our Office of Professional Standards. The Office of Professional Standards is responsible for investigating any complaint made on our staff, reviewing every use of force incident our staff is involved in, and conducting random audits/inspections to ensure our staff is in compliance with policy and procedure. I added personnel to the unit to ensure we are holding ourselves accountable. It is an absolute must that we are accountable to the community.

Last year, I requested funds from the Lake County Board to purchase software to better track various performance metrics of employees, use of force incidents, and investigations conducted by the Office of Professional Standards. This year we purchased the software and are in the final stages of implementing the new program. This data-based system, also known as an early warning system, will assist us in identifying potential performance issues of our staff before those issues become a significant problem. Early warning systems are shown to have a profound positive impact on accountability.

All of our Highway Patrol cars are equipped with video cameras and all of our deputies wear body worn cameras which are utilized while interacting with the public. We do this for transparency and accountability. Our deputies understand all of their interactions with the public are evaluated. Not only does this provide increased public transparency, but it also helps us identify when one of our employees or our entire staff can benefit from training.

I've worked with our Training Division to ensure we are providing a very robust training program to our staff. All of our personnel go through extensive continued de-escalation training, human rights training, civil rights training, cultural competency training, harassment training, bias training, use of force training, and we are nearing every employee being certified as a crisis intervention officer. We go above and beyond minimum state training requirements and are always seeking additional training opportunities, to ensure our staff are extremely well-trained and well-rounded.

Every sheriff's office division has front-line supervision. Our sergeants, lieutenants, and deputy chiefs have all received significant training in front-line supervision, use of force investigation, and nearly every supervisor has attended Northwestern University's ten-week Staff and Command training program. There are numerous front-line supervisors working at all times and our supervisors are held accountable for not only their actions, but the actions of those they supervise.

We embrace the principals of procedural justice and legitimacy. We are keenly aware racism exists today, even though it has no place in our society. We know every single person has their own views of law-enforcement based on their own experiences, the experiences of family members, or the experiences of friends. We always remember this when we interact with the community. While it is our responsibility to enforce the law, we understand everyone views us differently and we must always be very consciousness of that.

I have added a standard in our use of force policy that each member of our staff has a mandated duty to intervene, if they witness any member of our organization using excessive force. Nobody is allowed to idly stand-by if there is a situation where excessive force is being used. It is the philosophy of the Lake County Sheriff's Office to always use de-escalation skills and using force is only used as a last resort. We have dozens of success stories where we have responded to very unstable situations where someone was in crisis which ended successfully, without using force, because of communicating effectively.

I pledge to you Lake County that I, along with my staff, will always treat the members of our community with the utmost respect. We will always be here to work with you and never against you. We will always be open to hearing your feedback and will always be accountable to you, the people of Lake County. We will always have an open door and be transparent in everything we do – even when we do make a mistake. We too are human, and we make mistakes. I can assure you we learn from our mistakes and we will always have robust training to be the best we can be. Racism, hate, corruption, and excessive force are some of the things which have no place in our society and I certainly will not tolerate them within the Lake County Sheriff's Office.

I have attached our use of force policy to this message, so you can see the standards our staff are held to.

If you ever wish to reach out to me or my administration directly, please call me at: 847-377-4000 or email me at: sheriff@lakecountyil.gov.

I would like to close this letter by reaffirming to you that the reason I got into this profession in 1977 was to serve the community and that is the same reason I am here in 2020 – to serve. When I hire new deputies, I look for those with

that same service-oriented drive, I look for candidates who are getting into this to be a part of the solution, not for self-gain, and not for power. Law-enforcement is supposed to be the most noble of professions and we simply cannot accept any behavior in the ranks that is not consistent with our core values: integrity, respect, and professionalism.

Thank you for your support, Lake County. I will always be willing to be a part of the conversation and will always strive to provide the highest level of service to the people of Lake County. It is a true honor and privilege serving you.”

Link to Lake County Sheriff's Office Use of Force Policy:

<https://www.lakecountyil.gov/DocumentCenter/View/35083/Use-of-Force-Policy>

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