

2008 Amherst Police Report

The Amherst Police Department is comprised of eighteen full time police officers, a full time administrative assistant, and three part time officers. The employees are dedicated to providing the highest quality police service to the community, following our mission statement to *“work in partnership with the citizens of Amherst... to deliver quality service to the public... and to perform our tasks with pride, always displaying the highest levels of professionalism...”* In the past year, the department employees have followed the mission statement admirably, and the Town of Amherst has remained a safe place to live, work, and visit. In order to continue with the same level of service, policing with a proactive approach, and responding to ever-increasing calls for service, the Department is seeking the addition of a new full time patrol position.

After several years of recognizing the need but resisting the associated increased costs, we are in a position in which we must respond. Many changes have occurred in the ten years since a patrol position was last added to the department. In that time arrests have increased 9 percent, reported crimes have risen 39 percent and accidents have increased by 73 percent. Additionally, traffic volumes have risen on our arterial roadways by twelve to twenty-three percent, and the population has increased approximately 15 percent. The position will be phased into the fiscal year in order to ease the increased tax burden caused by the new position. The extra patrol hours will allow the department to continue focusing attention to the Route 1010-A corridor, as well as providing preventative patrols in the outlying neighborhoods of the south sector of town.

One of our full time officers resigned during the year to return to school in pursuit of a career in the medical profession. However, he has elected to stay with the department in a part time capacity. The vacancy created by his resignation will be filled in the very near future. In the meantime, however, the department is using part time hours and overtime hours to provide appropriate coverage.

Although the town made it through the spring season without the flooding that we have come to expect in recent years, Mother Nature was not so kind in December. As all will remember for many years to come, Amherst, as well as a good number of communities in NH, was hit by a record-breaking ice storm on December 11. Much of the Town was without electricity for several days, with some being without electricity for more than a week. The police, fire, EMS and public works departments worked together during many long days to provide for the citizens' safety and security. The departments will continue to review the response with the goal of building upon the successes and improving in the areas indicated.

The department continues to provide a variety of services to the community. We are committed to being a resource within the Town, assisting in the education of our youth on issues such as personal safety, and healthy decision-making. We have continued with specific programs, such as the bicycle patrol, motorcycle patrol, DARE, and school resource officers, all of which continue to be popular and helpful in addressing the community's needs.

We will continue to use these resources throughout the coming years, in addition to trying new and innovative ideas to address the concerns of the community. We value your suggestions, criticisms and input, and encourage you to call, e-mail at plyon@amherstnh.gov or stop in at any time.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter A. Lyon

Chief of Police