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Training Director's Conference: Alpena CRTC

The Commission hosted its first training directors' conference of 2006 in conjunction with its regular meeting, on March 7-8, at the Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC) of Phelps Collins Air National Guard Base in Alpena. The CRTC is an active military base that is also available for law enforcement training at very reasonable rates. The base has lodging, dining, exercise, training buildings and conference facilities. Several Michigan agencies, including those belonging to the Northern Michigan Training Consortium, have taken advantage of the opportunities this facility affords. The Commission thanks Colonel Ewin Sansom of the Air National Guard and his staff for providing the excellent facilities and hospitality and also appreciates the efforts of Thad Taylor, Alpena's Director of Public Safety and chairperson of the Northern Michigan Training Consortium for coordinating and hosting the conference and Commission meeting. For information on the availability of the facility, contact the CRTC at (989) 379-2672.

The training directors' conference was well attended by the training directors, MCOLES staff and Commission members.

Topics for the conference included:

- A presentation by Asst. Attorney General Tom Furtaw regarding the recruit dismissal process and issues the training directors may face in an appeal or court action;
- The Commission's policy on "zero tolerance" for alcohol possession or use, including measurable BAC and prohibition on illicit or unauthorized drug use;
- A pre-implementation review of the 2006 skill area instruction inspection plan; the plan calls for review of student documents, instructor qualifications, and adherence to MCOLES policies and procedures regarding firearms, subject control and EVO curriculum;
- Acceptance of college credit and degrees from "accredited" colleges and universities. Degree mills and bogus degrees threaten the integrity of individuals and programs; US Dept of Education guidelines on accredited institutions and other resources for detecting illegitimate degrees were discussed.

During the evening session, the training directors, Commission members and staff discussed issues and best practices for complying with the screening and selection standards for recruits. These standards include medical, mental and emotional, education, driver's license, and good moral character which is best assessed by the academy through self-disclosure and review of the candidates report on home, school, employ-

ment, integrity and personal traits. All violations of law are considered in this assessment.

Chief Doreen Olko Appointed to Commission



Governor Granholm has appointed Auburn Hills Chief Doreen Olko to succeed

retiring Chief Jeff Werner on the Commission. Chief Olko's appointment is subject to the advice and consent of the Michigan Senate.

Chief Olko is a law enforcement veteran. She entered law enforcement service as a correctional deputy with the Ingham County Sheriff Department. Within two years, Chief Olko had graduated from the Mid Michigan Police Academy, and she became the first woman to serve as a patrol deputy in Ingham County. In 1977, Chief Olko became a member of the Meridian Township Police Department in Okemos. There she served for a total of 17 years, holding positions and assignments from the ranks of patrol officer to captain. By

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A Message from the Executive Director...



As of this writing, we have lost three public safety officers in the line of duty thus far in 2006. Ann Arbor Firefighter Amy Schnearle-Pennywitt

lost her life in January as she participated in her agency's response to a traffic crash in icy weather along I-94. Earlier this month, Chelsea Firefighter Matt Tuttle and Chelsea Police Chief Riley Scott Sumner died in a helicopter accident. On behalf of the Commission, I extend our sympathy to her family.

MCOLES closed 2005 with encouragement from the state's political leadership regarding the Commission's renewed pursuit of dedicated funding. This has happened amid efforts to raise the priority level of public safety among our political leaders. At its lowest levels in recent times, the number of law enforcement positions in Michigan has fallen over 1500 positions below levels that existed prior to September 11, 2001. This

decline has been seen as indicative of diminishing priority given to local law enforcement since that tragic date. The hard evidence supporting this perception is found in reduced fiscal support at both the state and federal levels.

MCOLES has struggled to maintain services and financial aid for local communities in this fiscal climate. Our budget battles of 2005 were well publicized. To remedy this ongoing dilemma, we are being encouraged to join forces with the fire services, emergency medical service, prosecuting attorneys, and criminal justice information systems to seek stable funding that will support these essential services. At this writing, representatives from these groups are conducting regular meetings, which have been attended by the Governor's representatives. The success of this effort will ultimately depend on the support of local communities, which will also become key beneficiaries as their present levels of service and support from the state will remain constant

or be enhanced, without additional local expense.

In closing, I would like to bring one other matter to your attention. The successful implementation of the MCOLES Information and Tracking Network has eased ability of local communities to transact business with MCOLES. In this paperless environment, local law enforcement agencies now retain key documents that validate their officers meeting state standards. These documents were formerly held by MCOLES. In anticipation of state audits of examining this re-configured practice, MCOLES field representatives will be conducting spot checks, with advance notice, among randomly chosen law enforcement agencies across the state. The purpose of these visits will be to assess how well this method of operation is working and to assist agencies in assembling and maintaining these records well in advance of any official audit.

The Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards

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Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police

Officer Richard Weaver
Detroit Police Officers Association

Mr. Raymond W. Beach, Jr.
Executive Director

P.A. 302 Grant Workshops

This year's workshops for Public Act 302 grant applicants are scheduled for May. Attendance is mandatory for persons who intend to serve as grant project administrators and grant financial officers.

-May 10 at Lansing Community College West Campus 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.

-May 17 at Kirtland Community College M-TEC Center 9:00A.M. to 12:00 P.M.

for further details check at www.mcoles.org

Chief Olko Appointment

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1994, the search for new challenges brought her to the Auburn Hills Police Department where, within a short period of time, she was appointed Chief of Police.

Among educational achievements that include a Bachelors and Masters Degree, Chief Olko also is a graduate of the 44th session of the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Seminar. She is the recipient of numerous awards including the 2004 Oakland Distinguished Leadership Award.

With regard to her new responsibilities as an MCOLES Commissioner, Chief Olko identified public safety funding as her first priority. "MCOLES and other public safety support services are underfunded. I would like to see the Commission develop a dedicated funding source that would improve support services at the state level and provide a positive residual effect for local communities."

Chief Olko's term of office will run to November 1, 2007.

Defining Good Moral Character

Good moral character has been a part of MCOLES standards for many years. This key component in the makeup of a law enforcement candidate is most often revealed in the background investigation. Despite nearly universal recognition of its importance, an alarming number of law enforcement employers are less than aggressive in exploring a candidate's moral character.

This problem is rooted in indecision as to what constitutes good moral character in a world characterized by conflicting cultures and values. This condition is compounded by uncertainty as to what should be investigated to establish the existence of good moral character or the lack thereof.

For purposes of employing law enforcement officers, good moral character is defined in MCOLES Administrative Rules, which state that **a person selected to become a law enforcement officer shall possess good moral character as determined by a favorable comprehensive background investigation.** The rules go on to specify that **a background investigation must encompass school and employment records, home environment, personal traits and integrity.** And finally, MCOLES Administrative Rules indicate that **consideration must be given to all law violations, including traffic and conservation law convictions** - all of which are to be viewed as indications of the quality of a person's moral character.

Using the home, school and work environments as resources to discover a candidate's personal traits and integrity, MCOLES suggests the background investigation include the following questions in

his/her arsenal.

- Are there standards related issues that would preclude law enforcement employment?
- Is there a history of criminal or inappropriate behavior in previous employment or in military service?
- Is there evidence of drug or alcohol abuse?
- Is there evidence that the candidate has been dishonest, cheated or has failed to disclose requested information?
- Is there evidence of domestic violence?
- Is there evidence that the candidate abused law enforcement authority in the course of previous law enforcement employment?
- What is the candidate's demeanor away from work?
- Has the candidate exhibited any evidence of anger management difficulties?
- Has the candidate engaged in inappropriate sexual behavior?
- Does the candidate get along with and work well with other individuals?
- Has the candidate exhibited any sexist or racist tendencies?
- How well does the candidate communicate?
- Does the candidate exhibit leadership potential?

A detailed treatment of background investigations will be published by the Michigan Municipal League's LEAF Newsletter this Spring.

Commission Meets in Alpena

The Commission met on March 8, 2006, at Phelps Collins Air National Guard Base in Alpena, Michigan. This meeting was held in conjunction with the Training Director's Conference sponsored by the Commission on the previous day.

The issues addressed by the Commission were: the Regional Training Academy Approval Process, MCOLES Contested Cases Processes, the California E-Learning Experience, Modernization of the MCOLES Resource Center, the Governor's Recommended Budget for MCOLES during Fiscal Year 2007, the MCOLES Network Maintenance Contract, Policy and Procedure Manual

Modifications, and Approval to Move Forward on Administrative Rules.

Col. Ewin Sansom, Commanding Officer at the base, provided the Commission and attendees with a history of the base along with the training that is conducted regularly. Director Thad Taylor of the Alpena Department of Public Safety gave an overview of the Northern Michigan Training Consortium. The consortium is composed of approximately 50 member agencies that employ upwards of 500 officers. Currently the consortium provides approximately 50 training sessions throughout a typical year at various training sites across northern Michigan.

In addition, Chief Jeff Cobe, of the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians, gave a presentation outlining Criminal Jurisdiction on Indian trust lands.

The Commission took action on two items, providing approval of proposed modifications to the MCOLES Policy and Procedure Manual and voting to move forward in the promulgation process for proposed Administrative Rules.

Again, many thanks to Alpena Public Safety Director Thad Taylor and Air National Guard Colonel Ewin Sansom for coordinating and hosting our visit.

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