

**TOWN OF ARNAUDVILLE
CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

July 21, 2015

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

On Thursday, July 9, 2015, at 7pm Patrolman James Bell was honored as Police Officer of the year for the Arnaudville Police Department by the St. Landry Crime Stoppers Organization. I was delighted to be present to witness the presentation of a certificate to Patrolman Bell honoring his service and dedication.

The full installation of the LEMIS program for report writing is being somewhat utilized while we work out some of the bugs. Although some training has been done, it is felt that we need to have more hands on training before we can fully use the program. The Patrolmen and Dispatchers in our Department do not have the hands on experience to readily grasp how these programs operate. Our intent is to send all our personnel to Baton Rouge for a two (2) day, intensive, training seminar in how to use LEMIS fully. Scheduled training for the Red Shift is on August 10 and 11, 2015 while the Blue Shift will be attending August 12 and 13, 2015. As I pointed out at the last Council Meeting, our Department will have to be held accountable for our own statistics and this will not be possible until the beginning of next year. In the meantime, we will strive to become proficient in the use of the LEMIS program.

The LACRASH program for vehicle accidents is currently being used by our Officers. We are still learning the program; however, as we progress we are finding that the program allows us greater flexibility in recording vehicle crashes.

I recently attended the Louisiana Chiefs of Police convention in Shreveport. Besides being informative, I came away with a few ideas that will help our Department better serve our Town and its residents. There were plenty of vendors available selling their products; however, my budget would not allow me the flexibility of seriously considering any purchases. I was fortunate that, though networking with Chiefs from other towns and cities, it's possible that some needed equipment may be obtained at little or no cost.

It was hoped that our Department might be able to get two (2) used Ford Crown Victoria's from our friends in Mandeville. While meeting with Chief Richard of the Mandeville Police Department, he informed me that those vehicles had already been promised to another municipality. Chief Richard assured me that our Department would be kept in mind when some of his other vehicles would be decommissioned by his department. In the meantime, I have contacted other jurisdictions with the hope of fulfilling that need.

It was recently brought to my attention that rumors have been circulating about Patrolman James Bells' fitness to perform his assigned duties for the Arnaudville Police Department. While investigating the qualifications of Officer Bell I uncovered, while on the internet, that he had been involved in apparent speeding violations during his employment at the Sorrento Police Department, so I contacted the Assistant Chief of Police of that disbanded agency and inquired as to the validity of those charges. The Assistant Chief informed me that during Officer Bells' tenure in their Department all of their patrol vehicles had been equipped with speed recorders that would mark each time the vehicle topped seventy (70) miles per hour. The Assistant Chief further informed me that Officer Bell had written over 600 speeding tickets during which, in many of the cases, when he gave chase in his vehicle he would drive at speeds greater than 70 mph. The Assistant Chief also informed me that during his employment Officer Bell, who resided in Baton Rouge at the time, would use his patrol unit to drive from his residence to the town of Sorrento when he finished his tour of duty. The Assistant Chief confirmed that Officer Bell usually drove on I-10 to and from his residence and that the speed recorder would record the 70 mph information every 2 minutes or so, thus the readings accumulated during these trips. During my interview with Officer Bell, without any prompting on my part, he told me about these occasions as well as an accident he had been involved in while conducting a high speed chase. At no time did Officer Bell try to withhold any information from me and I could not uncover any instance where he was convicted and reprimanded for any wrongdoing. For anyone who would like to speak with Officer Bell about the incidents I am sure he would be willing to answer all your questions. I will assume that this detailed explanation, which I was under no obligation to provide, lies to rest the insinuations that such false rumors serve, and that when repeated, injure the person targeted; and in this case, undermine my judgement and my department.

I wish to inform the Council and all other interested parties that I try very hard to properly substantiate the background of anyone who applies for a position here. I believe in investigating any applicant that wishes to have a job with the Arnaudville Police Department. Do I uncover everything that they have done since birth...No; however, I do try to ascertain if they are trustworthy and competent. I call former employers, check their references, research the internet, and have one or more face-to-face interviews. It is during these personal interviews that I question the applicant about my concerns, or ask them for clarification of a particular issue. Their responses are an indication of their trustworthiness. After this process is completed, I then make a determination on whether I will consider hiring them. Of the eight (8) employees currently employed by the Police Department only four (4) were on the payroll prior to my taking office, the other four (4) were vetted by me and, in my opinion, were worthy to be hired as Patrol Officers or Dispatchers. Each individual that has been hired by me is then evaluated on an ongoing basis to determine if they are doing their jobs proficiently enough for them to keep their jobs. A small Police Department like Arnaudville is usually not one that someone will strive to work for until their retirement. Young Patrol Officers usually come here to hone their skills until such time as they may move on to

bigger Departments with the lure of better pay and more benefits. Those Officers who have held positions with other agencies come here to rebuild their reputations in the hope that they can move on as well. This trend is shared by all smaller agencies across the country. My main focus on any new hire is that he or she is competent to perform the duties assigned them and that they do not embarrass themselves, the Police Department or the Town of Arnaudville. I again wish to encourage any Council member to visit me if you should have a question about anyone that I am considering placing on the payroll.

Statistics from our Department for the month of June were: 181 citations issued, 51 FIC's written, 116 MIC's written, 3 arrests, and 351 calls for service, while 50% of time worked by the Officers was spent on patrolling our town

It is now time to name the "Employee of the Month" for the Department. As it always is, it is my honor to present this month's recipient of the award to Patrolman Zachery Williams. This concludes the Arnaudville Police Report.

Respectfully submitted,

Eddy J. LeCompte, Chief of Police