



Sharing Ohio's Best Program

Recognizing Outstanding Community Policing



Agency of the Month

Bellefontaine Police Department

November 2020

The Bellefontaine Police Department serves approximately 13,500 residents. Along with numerous community partners, their mission has been very focused on community policing philosophies for many years. Since 2012, many new programs have been launched to involve youth, and adults. Through these extra programs, the police department has received numerous grants to help offset expenses, and donations from the public. They have transformed the way the community sees their police department. Rather than being seen only in enforcement efforts, the staff has been engaged in volunteerism, coaching, and mentoring efforts as the normal course of their duties. The following are just a few of the programs offered.

Cops and Bobbers. . . .

The Bellefontaine Police Department began the Cops and Bobbers program back in 2014. The program title originated in Wisconsin, and the program has been approved for use in Bellefontaine. Through an early donation by Cabelas, fishing rods and fishing tackle were donated to the program to fund 30 kids to fish at any one time. Each year since, BPD has offered two Cops and Bobbers events that puts officers and kids together for food, fishing, and fun! The goal is to help bridge the gap between officers and the city's youth by engaging in shared interests of fishing.



Annual Community Safety Event. . . .

For the last eight consecutive years, the Bellefontaine Police Department has offered an annual Community Safety Event. This event generally brings in between 2000-3000 visitors each year. Local, State, and Federal agencies are invited to attend, set up their area, and prepare to answer questions, meet visitors, pass out educational materials, and learn. It also is an event to support the K9 program through a chicken dinner BBQ meal, in which tickets are pre-sold and meals are then made available on the date of the event each August.



Multiple K9 demonstrations are done with K9 units from surrounding areas, including the US Marshals, Ohio Highway Patrol, Marysville Police, and others. Food, bounce houses, a small petting zoo, and much, much more are all a part of this event's draw to get citizens to interact with local law enforcement agencies and EMS. With the generosity of Medflight, Careflight, Survivor Flight, Columbus Division of Police and Ohio Highway Patrol Aviation, we have had successful years that include at least four helicopters landing and opening their cockpits to kids and adults of all ages. This is true

community policing.





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Neighborhood Outreach. . . .

In 2012, the police department began Neighborhood Outreach events in Bellefontaine. The police department would choose a different neighborhood for four months out of the year and pick an area in that neighborhood to hold outreach events. These are normally done by closing an intersection, or part of a street, and the police department then sets up a pop-up tent, bring a gas grill and grill out food for anyone that chooses to come. The officers eat with the neighbors, while sharing important law enforcement-related topic information. For example, during the heroin epidemic, it was an important way to share with parents and kids about the dangers of addiction and how to get help! These are also a time when citizens get closer to the officers and can share valuable tips and information about pending crimes, or suspect information of who may be committing crimes. They have proven very successful and offer citizens an opportunity to just walk out their door to speak to the police, instead of talking on a phone or having to travel to the police department to talk. Their goal is to host four or five of these per year.



Tailgate Parties. . . .

In 2016, Bellefontaine PD began hosting tailgate parties before a home high school football game. These are yet another opportunity to bring together the police and football fans with games, food, and fun. We normally get around 300 to show for this event that are also attending the game. The fans love it and have grown used to the event now being annual.

