



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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National Police Week

This week is National Police Week and we would like to take a moment to recognize all who serve as law enforcement officers and remember those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in service of our community, our county, our state and our country. For this year's police week, Deputy Michael Morell who has served the sheriff's office since 1999 has put together some thoughts about sheriff's office history and those who have fallen in the line of duty here in Dodge County.

"This year, National Police Week will be celebrated from Sunday, May 12 through Saturday, May 18. It is a time for those of us in law enforcement to celebrate our profession, reflect on what we do on a daily basis and share our experience with the citizens we serve. It is also a time that we remember, mourn and celebrate the lives of our brothers and sisters who have paid the ultimate price, giving their lives in the line of duty, with the observance of Peace Officer Memorial Day on Wednesday, May 15. Around the country, memorial services will be held including at the National Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington DC, here in Madison at the state memorial and in Dodge County at the memorial site in Juneau.

The history of the current sheriff's office is interesting to say the least. Dating back to 1846 both Peter V. Brown and G.W. Brower served as Dodge County Sheriff that year. Seeing that date, it is not hard to imagine the stories some of us have heard about the sheriff of Dodge County responding on horseback. Times have changed DRAMATICALLY from that to the vehicles we drive today that are equipped with enough technology to make your head spin. Another piece of history that is unique is the fact that the current structure of the sheriff's office has only been around for about 40 years. Prior to the early 1980's the citizens of Dodge County were served by two separate agencies, the Dodge County Sheriff's Department and the Dodge County Traffic Police. The sheriff's department was responsible for the jail, civil process and investigations while the traffic police handled strictly traffic matters and traffic enforcement. In speaking with former members of the traffic police, I learned that the two agencies existed separately for as long as anyone knew of. I also found that the traffic police were formerly known as the Dodge County Motor Police and went in service in 1924. Many members worked seasonally from May through October and had to provide their own motorcycle for patrol duties. The current configuration of the sheriff's office happened when the two agencies merged on January 1, 1981 under then Sheriff Ted Meekma. That merger has led to what we have today where instead of working separately, all divisions of the sheriff's office work together. Another big change occurred in the early 2000's when a new courthouse and jail were constructed and the sheriff's office moved to its current home after the old courthouse was remodeled.

Unfortunately, with such a long history, tragedy has struck the agencies in Dodge County, including the sheriff's office and officers have lost their lives in service to Dodge County. Their names appear on the aforementioned memorials and as the

center point of Police Week is Peace Officer Memorial Day. I would be doing a disservice to their memory if I did not mention Officer Hugo Lisko (1926), Officer Kurth Bentz (1936), Sheriff Herbert Schwantes (1954) and Detective Donley Dye (1978), as well as many others from the agencies within Dodge County have given the ultimate sacrifice. This week truly is about them and the hope that no agency in Dodge County ever has to place another name on the wall. Unfortunately, we all know too well that agencies close to us and across this state will be adding names of their fallen brothers and sisters this year and sadly again next year. Our thoughts and prayers are with them, their families and their agencies as they deal with it.

Lastly, the men and women of the Dodge County Sheriff's Office would like to thank the citizens of Dodge County for their support for our mission. Your gratitude means the world to us.

We wish to thank Deputy Morell for his thoughts and for his dedicated service to the citizens of Dodge County.

Please join us this week at our law enforcement memorial in front of the Dodge County Administration Building in Juneau. The ceremony begins at 11:15 AM. The public is welcome to attend the ceremony. Please help us remember those who have fallen and if you run into a law enforcement officer this week, please take time to thank them for their service.

Questions may be directed to Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt.

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