



# DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff Scott Mittelstadt Chief Deputy

## January Sheriff's Column – Agency Accreditation Process Under Way

Today I am excited to announce that the Dodge County Sheriff's Office has begun a process to become accredited through the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Accreditation Group (WILEAG). It is a process that has been years in the making because of many of the initiatives we have put in place, such as the migration of our policies from a paper version, to an electronic version which is constantly kept up to date with the aid of policy experts and lawyers using a program called Lexipol. Accreditation is a progressive and time-proven way of helping law enforcement agencies evaluate and improve their overall performance by adopting law enforcement best practices from around the country. Accreditation is not a process by which an agency can accomplish overnight. It takes years of preparation and staff who are dedicated to always improving. That is a culture we have worked hard to develop, one of constant self-evaluation and improvement.

The benefits of law enforcement accreditation include the following:

1. Promotes excellence and professionalism within law enforcement through voluntary compliance with recognized best practices.
2. Provides an enhanced sense of professionalism and pride for the agency and agency personnel.
3. Provides confidence that your agency is in functional compliance through an independent review and evaluation of agency operations.
4. Security in the knowledge that the agency is well-managed.
5. Confidence that operations and personnel are consistent and well-directed.
6. Policies and procedures following best practices can help reduce liability and may increase savings on insurance costs.
7. Networking and collaboration with other professional agencies and organizations.
8. Potential for monetary incentives from our municipal insurance carrier.

The sheriff's office began the process of preparing for accreditation in late 2021, and please understand that we are not yet an accredited agency, however, our staff is working hard toward that goal. The typical timeline for an accreditation process takes about three years. Our administration has set an aggressive timeline to complete the process by early 2023 with the bulk of the work being completed in 2022. There are very few sheriff's offices in Wisconsin that have achieved this status and our goal is to be the next sheriff's office in 2023.

To aid in the agency accreditation process, the Dodge County Sheriff's Office was awarded a grant for \$75,000 to offset the costs, which are needed to complete the process. I would like to thank Captain Chad Enright and Lieutenant Christine Churchill for their detail-oriented work on applying for the grant and organizing the process thus far. I certainly am not able to accomplish the great things the sheriff's office accomplishes every day without the great work of our staff. Agency accreditation ensures that our citizens receive the best service possible and is one more way we are working to make Dodge County a safe and enjoyable place to live, work and visit.

Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt