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Holden News May 17, 2007

Holden Police Dept. earns certification

BY MELISSA MCKEON MMCKEON@HOLDENLANDMARK.COM



Holden Police Chief George Sherrill, Holden's Accreditation Manager Lt. Don Ball, Donna Taylor Mooers, Program Administrator of the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission and Johanna Adams of the Holden Police Department, who worked on the certification procedures with Lt. Ball. Melissa McKeon photo

It's only a little CD, but to Holden Police Chief George

Sherrill, it represents months of hard work by his office, his staff, and particularly by Holden Lt. Donald Ball.

To the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission, it means Holden's police department has done its homework - and some extra credit work as well.

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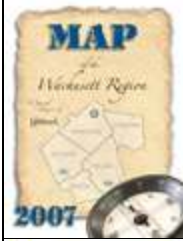


The CD contains the rules and regulations, procedures and all the information Holden staff might need to draw on to do their job according to the letter of the law. It's available in the office and on the laptops in all the cruisers for quick, easy reference.



That's earned the department the honor of being one of only 16 communities in the state to be certified by the Massachusetts Police Accreditation program.

Creating those procedures is no small thing. It means countless hours organizing material, researching, making changes the accrediting group believes need to be made, and training department members. But most heavily is the weight of writing it all, Sherrill says.



Sherrill lauded Lt. Donald Ball, the department's accreditation manager, for his work in completing the procedures.



"It's just monumental to write the manual and the policies," he said.

To Sherrill, those policies are a way to further professionalize

the department.



Most small police departments, he says, use a boilerplate manual of policies and procedures. Holden's is up to the standards of the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission, and that means a whole array of chapters on almost every possible situation.



Those policies may seem like something that's only relevant internally, but they impact officer and public safety - and the town's liability insurance. Having policies and procedures in place reduces the town's exposure to potential lawsuits.

The certification is judged by an 11-member board of directors, including members drawn from the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, the Coalition of Accreditation



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Managers of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Municipal Association, and the Massachusetts Police Association.

Sherrill would like to see the department meet even more stringent standards, those of the national accreditation group; in their current quarters, however, Sherrill's been told it's impossible.

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