

GOODBYE, 2007! HELLO, 2008!

Like many of you, I find it difficult to comprehend that 2008 is here. It seems like yesterday that my kids were little, gasoline was \$1.50 a gallon and my hair was much less gray. Now that I think about it, not only was my hair darker, it used to be easier to tie my shoes, read the paper and run after bad guys!

2007 was witness to many changes. Your government evolved in the form of a new City Manager, a changing City structure, and a new City Council. Your police department evolved through a downsized work force and the addition of an *Air Support Unit*, *Citizens' Privacy Council* and a *Volunteer Park Ranger* program.

This past year we also benefited from the continuation of many of the things that make Redlands so great. The tremendous level of volunteerism and historic preservation were present as never before. In the RPD, the contribution of our volunteers has never been greater.

Take the Civilian Volunteer Patrol (CVP) for example. In 2007, the 65 members of the CVP donated more than 17,000 hours to the department and community. From community bike safety rodeos, to working our *Children's Community Christmas Party*, traffic control, to crime scene security, these selfless, everyday heroes continue to amaze me. Their contributions represent \$1,000,000 in equivalent cost savings to the City.

The CVP, formed in 1991, still has three members of its first graduating class. Some of these folks have volunteered more than 10,000 hours, helping make Redlands a safer place for families and businesses alike. I cannot imagine what the department would look like without them. Collectively, they have made us a better organization, and, individually, better people. I will be forever blessed to call them friends.

So, what does 2008 have in store for your police department?

First, we look forward to continuing our search for innovative ways to serve and protect Redlands. The continuing budget concerns have, at once, been challenging and energizing (of course, my staff might beg to differ!). We have tried to view these fiscal challenges as opportunities to become more efficient and innovative. It's amazing how creative we can be when we're compelled to do more with less. Our plane and park ranger program were, in part, borne from the realization that if we were going to retain any semblance of our previous service levels we had to find ways to leverage our existing resources.

Second, we will continue to deal with the challenges of an inadequate, deteriorating police facility and seek affordable solutions to housing police personnel. The current RPD building at 212 Brookside Ave., which was built in 1961, was outdated and scheduled for replacement in the 1980s. Today, every one of the building's systems are substandard (e.g. electrical, plumbing, structure, worst dispatch center in the region, etc.) and we have recently been forced to "red tag" about 20 percent of the building due to structural instability. The eventual solution to this dilemma is a new building, funded by a voter-approved bond. When that occurs, due to escalating construction costs, my guess is we'll be able to afford to build only about 60 percent of the department's future

needs. That fact notwithstanding, I think the members of the RPD are unanimous in their belief that 60 percent is exceedingly better than our current situation!

Third, this year we will be working on a wide breadth of organizational development issues. Over the next three years, the entire command staff of the department will be eligible to retire. This has obvious leadership succession ramifications we must address. Managing our collective knowledge about crime in Redlands continues to be a focus of our attention. Locking in meaningful department performance measurements (“measuring what matters,” to you, the taxpayer) is one of our ongoing efforts we hope to complete in the first quarter of 2008. And finding new ways to leverage our resources through the use of volunteers is an ongoing interest of mine.

Fourth, directing our employee recruitment “destiny,” in an era when campaign chatter about the City’s fiscal health has scared off many experienced lateral police officer candidates, is a critical priority. Two years ago, we had as many as 20-40 experienced officers from other police departments applying to be Redlands cops. In our last hiring round we had three. Top quality candidates are what we hire. We have been able to continue this tradition through our own in-house applicants. However, they take a year of training – and about \$200,000 – to bring up to speed. Highly trained, lateral officers have already been through the police academy and have the field experience necessary to start serving Redlands almost immediately. Changing the regional perception of Redlands’ fiscal solvency, as it relates to policing, will clearly be one of our upcoming priorities.

Finally, this year I hope we can really integrate our “Parallel Justice for Victims of Crime” initiative into the daily routine of our community. Helping victims of crime rebuild their lives, via a process akin to the judicial process afforded offenders, has been a professional goal of mine for many years. To read more about this paradigm-shifting idea go to the National Center for Victims of Crime web page http://www.ncvc.org/ncvc/main.aspx?dbID=DB_ParallelJustice156 or the RPD website at www.redlandspolice.org.

2008, with all its potential challenges, portends well for Redlands and its police department. I hope 2008 finds you and your family in good health and appreciative of our great town and the people who serve us each day. May peace, love and happiness be with each of you throughout 2008.

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