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Media Contact
Terri Denemy
Public Affairs Director
tdenemy@chinoaz.net

Chino Valley Police Chief Announces Retirement

Chino Valley, AZ: Chino Valley Police Chief Chuck Wynn announced his plans to retire after 34 years in law enforcement, the last 22 with the Town of Chino Valley.

Chief Wynn started his law enforcement career in Florida serving initially with two municipalities and before moving on to two state agencies in administrative / protective service roles. His desire to return to his roots in patrol work and to be closer to family in Arizona prompted the job search that eventually led him to Chino Valley. "Initially I applied for positions in the Phoenix Metro area, but during the testing process with a couple of agencies, he quickly said, "Thank you but no thank you, I couldn't imagine working patrol in this heat." He switched his focus to cooler temperatures and smaller departments with a rural atmosphere farther north. "I was excited to be offered and accept a patrol position with the Town of Chino Valley," he said.

After spending his first few months in Chino Valley as a patrol officer, he was assigned to the Partners Against Narcotics Trafficking (PANT) taskforce as a detective for two years before being promoted to the role of Sergeant. A few years later when the Deputy Chief retired, the duties were divided into two new command positions of Lieutenant. Wynn was promoted to one of these roles to oversee administrative operations. When Chief Pat Huntsman retired in 2011, Wynn was appointed as Interim Chief, before being officially being appointed Police Chief by Town Council six months later in 2012. Wynn has proudly and effectively served the Town and the Department in that role for the past 12 years.

With his full-time law enforcement career coming to a close, Chief Wynn reflected on how much Chino Valley and the department have changed over the last two decades. When he came to Chino Valley the population was about 8,000, now it is over 14,000, he said, "That is a significant change." He continued, "We widened the highway, added roundabouts, and traffic lights. The town didn't have a sewer plant. There wasn't a Walgreens or a Maverik. On the residential side, they were just building Appaloosa 1, and the Highlands Ranch and Brightstar communities didn't yet exist." Chief mused, "We practically rolled up the sidewalks at 10 o'clock. You could park somewhere on the highway and go five minutes without seeing a car. Now we have traffic around the clock every day of the week."

When asked what he was most proud of as he looked back over his career, the first thing Chief Wynn mentioned was the animal shelter. "When I took over it was not a no-kill shelter. About 15 or 16 years ago we were able to transition to no-kill status and have maintained it ever since, while still containing costs," he said. Chief attributed it to exceptional community support.

Another point of pride for Chief Wynn is the department's award-winning National Night Out. "When we staged our first small event in the park, we really didn't envision it taking off to the level it is now," he said. "We simply wanted to create a fun, relaxed atmosphere for the community and police officers to interact and build trust." The event now fills Memory Park and much of the surrounding parking lots, with over 17 agencies participating. "It's something the department and the entire community look forward to every year," Chief said. "Other communities are looking to copy our model and our success. They say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery."

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Wynn cited the shooting range as another milestone accomplishment during his tenure as Chief. “We were initially going to share the public range. A separate police range was a long-term vision.” Chief stated. “But through RICO and outside agency funding we were able to piece it together without using any Town general funds.” He stated the dedicated police range and training facility is a huge asset as his officers can do their firearms training locally. In addition, the range is used by almost all the local agencies.

Chief recognized without question the most impactful change for the department and the community is the new police building. “It gives us a place we can all be proud of and to do our job properly and professionally.” Chuckling he added, “We used to have one bathroom for 30 officers and staff.” He said it is hard to even describe the impact the new facility has and expressed his deep appreciation for the community and Town Council for their support that made the building a reality.

In fact, the support of the community is something the Chief stated he will always remember and cherish. In addition to the new building, the culture and atmosphere of the department and the town are incredible recruiting tools. “We have become an employer of choice,” he said. “Lateral officers who have been on the job with us for six months or so routinely tell us this is such a great place to work and wish they would have come here sooner.” The community support has a great deal to do with that he said, “It’s unique here in Chino Valley and you don’t find that very often.”

Upon retirement Chief said his law enforcement career will come full circle as he will continue to serve the department and the community in a reserve role back out on patrol. “It was what I loved most and look forward to the ground level interaction again,” Chief stated. “My goal during a traffic stop was always to get a smile or a laugh.” In addition to his wife’s honey-do-list, Chief stated his retirement goals also include devoting time to his hobby of restoring vehicles. He has two projects in the works currently, a 1996 Bronco and a 78 Camaro that he said, “is a real wreck.” He plans to take courses at the college. “So, I can learn to do it right,” he said.

Town Manager Cindy Blackmore said there is much she will miss about Chief Wynn, but he can proudly go into retirement knowing he left an indelible mark that will be felt for years to come. “Chief served with distinction,” she said, “He is always professional but with a commonsense approach. Most importantly he always put the safety and security of his community and his officers as his top priority.”

Wynn’s last day as Police Chief will be Thursday, August 15th, 2024. He will be formally recognized for his service at the Town Council meeting on Tuesday, September 24, 2024. Council meetings begin at 6:00 pm and are held at Town Hall, 202 N. State Route 89, Chino Valley and are always open to the public to attend in person or view online on the Town’s Facebook page.

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