

Dear Chief: Now that you have transitioned back into your full-time role as Chief of Police, what will be the focus of the Police Department in the coming months?

Dear Citizen:

Our focus doesn't change moving forward; it will be no different than when my assignment as Interim City Manager began in January.

Summer is always our busiest part of the year with all of the special events and this year is exceptionally challenging with the addition of three new events; Ride the Rockies, Barbeque Competition, and the Fireball Run.

Most people probably don't realize the impact special events have on public safety organizations. From a positive standpoint, these are all great opportunities for our officers to be visible and engaged with our citizens, but on the flipside we endure significant increases in workload, hours worked, and time away from family. With summer, comes heat and outdoor recreation and this presents a challenges related to increased traffic, multiple modes of travel, and additional challenges related to alcohol, pets, and noise. Finally, ordinance enforcement is at its peak in the summer; so educating citizens about noxious weeds and asking for voluntary compliance to control them. The general rule is NO WEEDS over 8" tall or in diameter and NO WHITE TOP.

Once the summer concludes, we will take a deep breath and review the summer's events for the purpose of identifying opportunities for improvement in 2014. In addition, we will get back into the classroom. This fall through next spring we will be bringing several high quality law enforcement training programs to Alamosa. Beyond the normal training regimen that includes Arrest Control, Driving, and Firearms we will receive training in the areas of Active Shooter, Legal Updates, Open Records Act, Cell Phone Technology, Interviewing, Death Investigations, Basic Crash Investigations, Sexting Investigations, Hiring and Background Investigations, and Leadership Skills for Challenging Times.

As we move into the winter months we will again switch gears and prepare ourselves for the nuances of colder weather. Many times in the winter we encounter more domestic violence and mental health related cases as well as increases in traffic accidents resulting from poor weather and road conditions. As mentioned in last month's article, we will be forming a citizen advisory group tasked with identifying local opportunities to deal with criminal justice issues.

In closing, although I am extremely happy to have returned as the full-time Chief of Police, the last 6 months as Interim City Manager was a wonderful and rewarding experience. The greatest lesson learned was that we have an extremely talented and professional group of City employees who know their jobs and are looking out for the best interests of the City of Alamosa. With our new City Manager onboard, our future is bright and I have no doubt we will continue moving forward as we did under the leadership of former City Manager Nathan Cherpeski.

Craig Dodd, Chief of Police