

Bill Dwyer picked as president of chiefs' group

BY JONI HUBBARD
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Farmington Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer has stepped up to the position of Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police president a little sooner than he expected.

Serving as first vice president, Dwyer planned to take over the top cop spot in June. However, President Laurence Van Alstine Jr., police chief in Tecumseh, had to step down when he was appointed under-sheriff in Lenawee County.

Dwyer said he was grateful for the opportunity.

"It's something where you can have a great impact on law enforcement and many different issues," he said.

Among the hot topics he expects to tackle during his term are racial profiling, the state's new concealed weapons permit law, police recruiting, training and ethics. Dwyer will coordinate the efforts of more than 1,000 MACP members from across the state, leading a board of directors and more than 15 professional committees that deal with legislation, traffic safety, computers in law enforcement and other important issues.

"The association is recognized as one of the premiere chiefs' associations in the country," he said. "I look forward to



Chief Bill Dwyer

continuing the excellent tradition of the organization as set forth by past presidents and the current and former members."

Dwyer will celebrate his 18th year with the Farmington Hills Police Department on Feb. 18. He came to the community after 23 years with the Detroit Police Department, where he rose to the position of commander on the chief's staff and headed up Detroit's Narcotics Section.

A graduate of the 97th session of the FBI National Academy, Dwyer holds a bachelor of science degree from Mercy College and a master's criminal justice degree from Wayne State University.

Patrolman is Hills 'Cop of the Year'

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Eric Buckberry has never seen himself doing anything other than being a cop.

The 27-year-old Redford native must be good at it; he's the Farmington Hills Police Department's "Officer of the Year."

Buckberry joined the department's cadet program right out of Redford Union High and became a full-fledged police officer in August of 1994.

"I just like the diversity of the job," he said. "I like the people."

The Hills Police Department had an unusual number of high profile cases in 2000, and Buckberry was involved in several of those investigations -- from preventing an armed robbery at Howard's Discount Jewelry Store on Grand River to the arrest and conviction of pedophile Jim Thompson, who pled no contest to charges that he molested two Hills boys.

Buckberry also responded to an incident in Southfield, where a gambling party was being robbed by armed intruders.

"It's been busy," he said, mastering the understatement.

Other calls may not have gotten as much press, but gave him a great deal of personal satisfaction with his job. Buckberry helped track down a man who abused his girlfriend, kicking her so hard the black from his shoe came off on her face.

"That makes you feel good, when you can catch a guy like that," he said.

Though he spent two years in the detective division, Buckberry returned to patrol work, because he likes to be "where it's happening." This past year, he was really in the thick of things, earning several citations for meritorious service.

A major factor in his selection, said Chief Bill Dwyer, was the Howard's Discount store case, in which Buckberry and other officers identified and chased down suspects who had weapons, masks and other materials that

would likely have been used in the commission of a crime. Weeks earlier, Buckberry had identified the suspects' car, a blue Dodge Neon, as suspicious.

"As a result of Officer Buckberry's initiative, instincts and perseverance, two dangerous men, both with criminal histories, including armed robbery, are in prison," Dwyer said.

The chief also cited Buckberry's actions in the case of Jim Thompson, convicted last year of criminal sexual conduct in a case that uncovered his more than 30 years of illicit contacts with young men.

"Acting on information from an Investigative Bureau bulletin, Officer Buckberry stopped the driver of a red Viper on Feb. 16," Dwyer explained. "Although the driver was not arrested, he was identified and further investigation led to the execution of a search warrant and arrest of the pedophile 10 days later."

While he's proud of all his accomplishments, Buckberry was still surprised to be chosen for the departmental award.

"It's a big honor for me," he said. "There's quite a few officers who are very deserving."



Eric Buckberry

Buckberry credits his wife, Kelly, a Southfield Police officer, for helping him achieve the honor.

"Having her being an officer really helps," he said. "She's the biggest motivator and supporter I have."

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