

# MOUNT PROSPECT POLICE DEPARTMENT

112 E. Northwest Highway, Mount Prospect, Illinois 60056



Michael Semkiu

(847) 870-5656

Chief of Police

Fax: (847) 392-1070

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**Contact: Michael E. Janonis, Village Manager**

**Phone: 847-818-5300**

**Contact: Tim Janowick, Deputy Chief of Police**

**Phone: 847-870-5679**

## **Press Release**

For Immediate Release

### **MOUNT PROSPECT POLICE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL RETIREMENTS AND SUCCESSION PLAN**

#### ***Retirements of John Wagner, John Gross, and Lance Besthoff***

The Mount Prospect Police Department announces the retirements of Deputy Chief John Wagner, Commander John Gross, and Officer Lance Besthoff after dedicated careers serving the Mount Prospect community.

Deputy Chief John Wagner, a 24-year veteran of the department who currently oversees the Administrative Support Services Division, will be completing a 33-year career in law enforcement on July 7, 2014. Deputy Chief Wagner served as a police officer in Skokie for 9 years prior to joining the Mount Prospect Police Department in 1990.

During his career with the agency, Deputy Chief Wagner served most notably in the Crime Prevention Unit until his promotion to sergeant in 1997. In 2001, Chief Richard

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Eddington promoted Wagner to commander. During his service as a commander, Wagner oversaw the field training program for recruits. It was during his service as a commander that the police department saw significant turnover with an influx of new officers filling positions vacated by retiring personnel. Wagner coordinated multiple training schedules and numerous evaluations of the new officers. His oversight and management of the program was crucial to the development of the new officers. Wagner was named Co-Officer of the Year in 1995 for his work with the Crime Prevention Unit. In 1998, he received a Shining Star Award from the village. He has received numerous letters of appreciation from citizens and businesses within the community during his career. Wagner attended Northwestern University's School of Police Staff and Command in 2005 and the Executive Management Program in 2009. In 2009, Northwestern University' Center for Public Safety presented Wagner with the Public Safety Executive Leadership Award.

"My time here in Mount Prospect has been truly rewarding," said Wagner. "I will miss the daily interactions with my coworkers and citizens of Mount Prospect, but after 33 years as a police officer, it is time to try something new."

"I started my career as a police officer with the Skokie Police Department on March 24, 1981. I had three goals in mind when I took my oath: to serve for thirty years as my father had done with the Chicago Police Department, to attain the rank of sergeant as my father had done, and to make a difference. I believe I have met or exceeded those goals."

"John's 33 years in law enforcement are representative of the institutional knowledge the Mount Prospect Police Department will be losing on July 7," stated Deputy Chief Tim Janowick. "He has held many roles in the agency. John's historical perspective will be missed."

Commander John Gross will be retiring on June 30, 2014 after serving Mount Prospect for 28 years. During his career, Gross has served as a patrol officer, evidence technician, investigator, and as a sergeant and a watch commander in the Patrol Section. Gross received his promotions to sergeant in 1999 and to commander in 2003. Throughout his career, Gross has participated in several professional development programs related to his position including Northwestern University's School of Police Staff and Command in 2004 and the National Academy at the Federal Bureau of Investigation at Quantico, Virginia in 2009. Gross received numerous letters of recognition from citizens and businesses throughout his career in addition to receiving several departmental awards for his actions in the line of duty. Gross was a runner up for the Officer of the Year Award in 1989 and 1990.

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“John Gross’ departure is another loss of significant institutional knowledge,” noted Janowick. “I will miss John’s practicality and ability to provide keen insight in how we should manage and lead the agency.”

Officer Lance Besthoff will be retiring on July 17, 2014, concluding a 33-year career with the Mount Prospect Police Department. During his career, Officer Besthoff has served in the Patrol Section as a patrol officer, field training officer, truck enforcement officer, and range officer. Besthoff completed all of the required coursework to become a Master Firearms Instructor through the Police Training Institute at the University of Illinois. Officer Besthoff has been instrumental in aiding in the modernization of the department’s firearms training program. Besthoff received numerous letters of recognition and departmental awards during his career. In 1996, Besthoff was a runner up for the Officer of the Year Award.

“Lance Besthoff leaves a fine legacy in the officers he has trained throughout his career as a firearms instructor and field training officer,” said Janowick. “Lance was my field training officer and he started me on the right foot on a path to success. I am grateful for his contributions to the agency.”

### ***Promotions of Michael Eterno, Timothy Griffin, Edward Szmergalski, Bart Tweedie, and Anthony Lietzow***

After Chief Michael Semkiu recently announced his retirement effective June 17, 2014, Deputy Chief Timothy Janowick was designated by Village Manager Michael E. Janonis to succeed Semkiu as the Chief of Police effective June 17, 2014.

Deputy Chief Janowick is pleased to announce the department’s succession plan as the administration and command staff of the police department is in a cycle of renewal due to the natural maturation of any organization.

On June 17, 2014, Commander Michael Eterno and Sergeant Timothy Griffin will be promoted to the Deputy Chief of Police positions being vacated by Janowick and Wagner. Eterno will be assigned to oversee the Field Operations Division and Griffin will assume the role leading the Administrative Support Services Division. In addition, Sergeant Edward Szmergalski will be promoted to commander. Investigators Bart Tweedie and Anthony Lietzow will be promoted to sergeant.

Commander Eterno is a 17-year veteran of the department who has 3 years of prior experience with the Lindenhurst Police Department. During his career, Eterno has served as an evidence technician, field training officer, youth officer, breath test

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operator, investigator, and as a member and supervisor of the Major Accident Investigation Team. The department promoted Eterno to sergeant in 2004 and commander in 2010. During his tenure as a sergeant, Eterno supervised the department's Traffic Unit. In 2008 and 2009, the Traffic Unit received state recognition with 3<sup>rd</sup> place awards in the Traffic Safety Challenge sponsored by the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police. Eterno completed Northwestern University's School of Police Staff and Command in 2006 and the Police Executive Research Forum's Senior Management Institute for Police in Boston in 2011. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Management from Benedictine University. During his career, Eterno has received several letters of recognition from citizens and awards from the department, including Officer of the Year in 1999 and runner up for Officer of the Year in 2000, 2001, and 2008.

"It is an honor and privilege to be entrusted with this responsibility," commented Eterno. "I'm grateful for the guidance and leadership Chief Michael Semkiu, Deputy Chief Timothy Janowick, and Deputy Chief John Wagner have afforded me over the years. I am looking forward to my new position as Deputy Chief of Field Operations and realize my predecessor, Deputy Chief Janowick, has left some big shoes for me to fill. I truly feel I'm up to the task and I am ready to work with the outstanding men and women of the Mount Prospect Police Department in my new role."

Sergeant Griffin is a 16-year veteran of the agency who has served as field youth officer, investigator, and as a School Resource Officer at NSSEO-Westbrook School and Prospect High School. Griffin was promoted to sergeant in 2009 where he served in patrol until his assignment as the department's administrative sergeant in the Administrative Support Services Division in 2013 where he oversees the department's grants, technology, research, and training.

"While working in each of these assignments, I have always felt honored to serve the Mount Prospect community alongside the exceptional men and women of the Mount Prospect Police Department," said Griffin. "I am extremely humbled to have been selected to serve as the next Deputy Chief of Police in the Administrative Support Services Division. I am excited to be a member of the department's new leadership team. I am also extremely thankful for the support and mentorship I have received from Deputy Chief John Wagner as I have been transitioning towards this new position."

Griffin completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice through St. Xavier University, a Master of Arts degree in Law Enforcement and Justice Administration through Western Illinois University, and he will be completing his Doctorate degree in Organizational Leadership at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology in 2015.

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In addition, Griffin attended Northwestern University's School of Police Staff and Command in 2012.

Griffin noted of his doctoral experience, "While completing the coursework in this intensive executive leadership program, I've had the luxury of being part of a dynamic learning community and learning from an exceptional faculty of accomplished organizational leadership experts. The lessons learned from my faculty and fellow cohort members have been extremely instrumental in my development for this position and I will be forever grateful for my association with the program."

Sergeant Edward Szmergalski is a 17-year veteran of the Mount Prospect Police Department. Szmergalski currently serves as a sergeant in the Investigations Section where he supervises the personnel assigned to the General Investigations Unit. During his career, Szmergalski has served as a patrol officer, breath test operator, youth officer, tactical/narcotics officer, investigator, and a patrol sergeant. As part of the department's professional development for staff and command level personnel, Szmergalski completed Northwestern University's School of Police Staff and Command in 2011.

Investigator Bart Tweedie has served with the Mount Prospect Police Department for 12 years. During his career, he has served as a patrol officer, field training officer, breath test operator, Crime Free Housing Officer, an investigator with the Major Accident Investigation Team, and an investigator. In addition, Tweedie has served in a leadership role as a defensive tactics and firearms instructor. Tweedie has many letters of recognition from citizens and several departmental awards.

Investigator Anthony Lietzow is a 10-year veteran of the police department. Since joining the department, Lietzow has served as a patrol officer, tactical/narcotics officer, and investigator. Since 2006, he has served on the Major Case Assistance Team, a multi-jurisdictional crime task force. Lietzow received the Cook County Sheriff's Award of Merit in 2006. He served for 12 years with the Cook County Forest Preserve Police Department prior to joining the Mount Prospect Police Department. Lietzow was

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awarded the Officer of the Year in 2005, 2007, and 2009, and he received a runner up award for Officer of the Year in 2008.

Tweedie and Lietzow completed Northwestern University's 80-hour Supervision of Police Personnel course earlier this spring. The department will assign Tweedie and Lietzow to the Patrol Section as supervisors in mid-June.

"We are in a very exciting period for the agency and for the community," stated Janowick. "I look forward to realizing the great potential of this new group of leaders within our organization."

Village Manager Michael Janonis said, "What is notable to me is how many of these outstanding officers decided to leave other agencies, in some cases with considerable years of service, to come to Mount Prospect. I think it speaks volumes about the reputation and professionalism of the Mount Prospect Police Department."

Mayor Arlene Juracek opined, "As we see some very talented and dedicated law enforcement professionals leave the organization after stellar careers, the Village Board is confident that the new generation of leaders will carry on the tradition of the finest police department in the area."