

ATKINSON POLICE DEPARTMENTS 1999 TOWN REPORT

Overall, 1999 was a relatively quiet year. Crime has been at an all time low. With all of the new developments going on there was a demand to pay close attention to job sites as building materials seemed to be in great demand, especially if these materials were taken at no charge. The Police Department is pleased to be awarded the Governors Circle Award of partnership with the Academy School. This award was for the Police Departments involvement with the children in the elementary grades at the Atkinson Academy.

As you are quite aware, our agency has experienced a considerable turnover in full-time personnel over the past several years. One of the major reasons we are experiencing this turn over is due to the low wages and for all intentional purposes a non-existent benefit package. We must be in a position to at least be competitive with the surrounding towns to keep good quality officers on board. Almost all departments provide dental, long and short-term disability and a group retirement plan. Until our agency is brought up to speed with our surrounding towns we will continue to experience a larger than normal turn over rate.

Through the efforts of our officers, especially Officer Anderson, we have been able to continue to expand our senior citizen program. The Recreation Committee has done a terrific job in putting in place many new programs for our seniors at the Community Center. The Police Department will continue to supply the manpower and resources to our seniors to make our programs the best in Rockingham County.

Since we are going into the new millennium. I would like to give you a brief overview of how we have progressed over the past thirty years. Until 1976, the town of Atkinson had no official police cruisers. When an officer went on a limited patrol he was forced to use his or her privately owned vehicle. We only had small hand held portable radios that provided a very limited distance for communications. In 1976 we purchased our first police cruiser, and outfitted it with radios and even a prisoner's cage. We presently have 4 fully outfitted police cruisers and also have a full size pick up truck that was outfitted to be the departments' D.A.R.E. vehicle. This truck is a 4-wheel drive unit and is used in major snowstorms.

The force in 1970 was comprised of all part-time officers and had a force of about 15 officers on its roster. Police coverage was provided on a stand by basis except for Friday and Saturday nights when we were allowed to patrol for 4 to 6 hours per night. At the present time the town provides 24 hours a day active patrol coverage seven days a week and we employ 4 full-time police officers and 20 part-time officers.

We operated out of the old Central School House which was built in 1830 until 1994 when the town purchased the old Rockwell School House and refurbished it into a modern police station with its own holding cell. This building now houses our own dispatch center, which operates 46 hours per week. Our dispatch hours are: Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Monday nights from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., and Saturday mornings from 8:00 am until 12 noon. Our after hour dispatching services are provided by the Plaistow police department.

I have in the past, and will continue in the future, to make myself available to any Atkinson resident. I can be reached through the police department at 362-4001 or at my home at 362-5627. All members of the police department are dedicated to providing the residents of Atkinson with the most efficient and professional police services possible.

Please drive defensively, love and respect thy neighbor, and make 2000 a safe, memorable, and enjoyable new year.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip v. Consentino, Chief of Police