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****PRESS RELEASE****

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Umatilla Police Department Welcomes Two New Officers and Says Goodbye to Long-Serving Retiring Officer

Umatilla, OR- APRIL 2, 2024- The Umatilla Police Department is proud to announce the addition of two new officers to its ranks, enhancing its commitment to serving and protecting the community of Umatilla, Oregon.

Joining the force on April 1st, 2024, Officers Trenton “TJ” Smith and Anthony Garcilazo embody the core values of the Police Department with unwavering dedication to ensuring the safety and well-being of our community. They bring an array of skills and a commitment to serving with compassion and respect. They stand ready to uphold these values and work tirelessly to maintain a safe and secure community for all residents and visitors of Umatilla.

Chief Bridge offers perspective on the hiring process, emphasizing, “Hiring new police officers isn't just about filling positions; it is about entrusting guardians of safety, stewards of justice, and pillars of community trust. Each recruit embodies the promise of a safer, more equitable tomorrow.”

These new officers will be formally sworn in and introduced during tonight’s Council Meeting, April 2nd. We invite community members to join us in welcoming them to their new roles.

As the Police Department adds new faces, they will also be saying goodbye to a familiar one. The Umatilla Police Department bids farewell to one of its esteemed members, Officer Steve Vandever, who will be retiring on April 15th after 18 years of dedicated service to the community.

Officer Vandever's career has been marked by a diverse range of roles and responsibilities, showcasing his versatility and dedication. He has served as a detective, a firearms instructor, and a Field Training Officer, demonstrating his proficiency in various facets of law enforcement. Prior to joining the police department, Officer Vandever also served as an assistant Fire Chief with the Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District, highlighting his unwavering commitment to public service.

“As Officer Vandever retires from his badge, he will carry with him a legacy of courage, compassion, and unwavering dedication. His service echoes in the hearts of those who he has protected and the community he has served. The Umatilla Police Department wishes him the best luck in his next adventure” Chief Bridge stated, acknowledging the departure of a valued member of the force.

The Umatilla Police Department extends its heartfelt appreciation for his years of service and wishes him a fulfilling and well-deserved retirement. The Umatilla Police Department also invites the community to honor Officer Steve Vandever for his outstanding service and extend best wishes as he begins the next chapter of his life.

About Umatilla Police Department:

It is the mission of the Umatilla Police Department to ensure the safety and well-being of our community. As a dedicated police department, we are committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity, service, and accountability. Our purpose is to protect and serve with compassion, treating every individual with dignity and respect.

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