

**City of Ridgeland  
Community Affairs**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICER PROGRAM TO LAUNCH IN RIDGELAND**

*Ridgeland, Mississippi, October 17, 2006* - Two Ridgeland Police Department employees are now assigned to designated areas of Ridgeland for a pilot Community Police Officer program. Neighborhood kick-off meetings will be held this Saturday, October 21 in three targeted areas of the City where introductions of the officers will be made to the residents and a litter clean-up project will be conducted.

The primary role of Ridgeland's Community Police Officers, or CPO's, will be neighborhood problem solvers. The CPO's will treat the target areas as a walking beat, as opposed to a patrol beat. There will be more personal attention from the CPO's to address residents' concerns such as littering, disorder, and other issues that are detrimental to a neighborhood. Their presence will be more greatly felt by the residents, and their involvement will be full time.

The Community Policing Program was created as a focused and proactive approach to crime prevention. In other cities, community policing has been shown to produce a positive impact on reducing neighborhood crime and the fear of crime while enhancing the quality of life in the entire community. It accomplishes these things through partnerships formed between residents and officers. When Ridgeland's Police Chief Jimmy Houston learned about community policing, he decided to introduce a pilot program in Ridgeland.

Three areas were selected in Ridgeland as the first to participate in the Community Policing Program.

- neighborhoods east of Wheatley Street and west of Pear Orchard Road, north of Peach Orchard Road and south of Lake Harbour Drive
- neighborhoods of Greenbrook, Ralde Circle, Squirrel Hill, and Wheatley Place
- neighborhoods of Blackthorne, Hawthorne Green, Village Glen, and Village Square

Residents in these areas will have opportunities to get to know the officers personally. The two Community Police Officers for Ridgeland are Mike Raffield and Richard Waltman.

They will research complaints and develop effective strategies for resolving them. It is anticipated that issues that need to be addressed by the Police Department and

other departments within the City will more readily come forth through the community policing effort. The officers will assist in the development, production and presentation of educational, neighborhood watch and other crime prevention programs.

In addition to bringing police closer to the people, community policing offers other benefits. Making effective use of the talents and resources available within communities will help extend severely strained police resources. As police interaction with the community becomes more positive, productive partnerships will be formed, leading to greater satisfaction with police services and increased job satisfaction among officers. Reduced levels of crime will allow more police resources to be allocated to services that have the greatest impact on the quality of community life.

Area residents will be able to meet Officer Raffield and Officer Waltman and learn more about the community policing program on Saturday, October 21 at the following times and locations.

- 9:30 a.m. at 501 Sycamore Circle
- 10:30 a.m. at 689 Greenfield
- 11:30 a.m. at 1909 Lincolnshire

For more information, please contact the Ridgeland Police Department at 601-856-2121.

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