

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 2, 2023

**ST. CHARLES COUNTY POLICE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS SHIFT FOCUS TO TRAINING, COMMUNITY DURING SUMMER MONTHS**

**ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO** – When the final bell rings and schools in St. Charles County let out for summer break, the police officers who keep those schools safe don't take a three-month vacation. Instead, the 23 School Resource Officers (SROs) of the St. Charles County Police Department turn their attention toward enhancing safety and public outreach in other parts of the community, says SRO Supervisor Sergeant Chance Mallett.

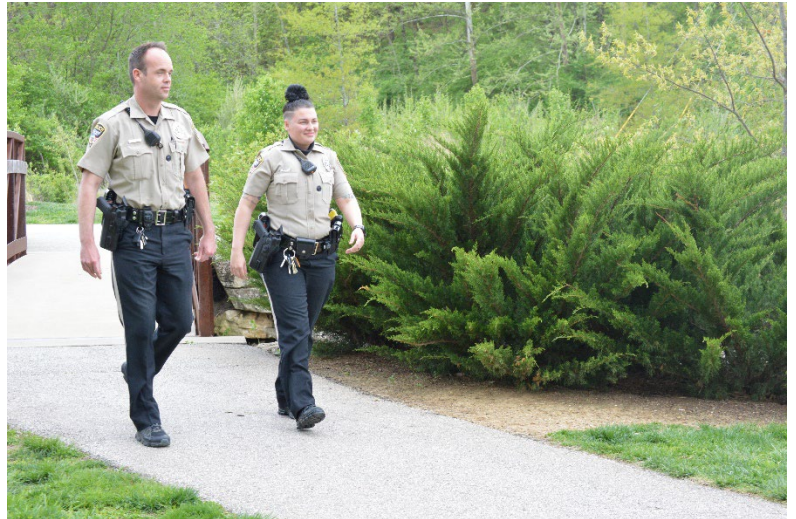
For about a month in the summer, several SROs still will be making the rounds for summer school classes in area schools. Outside that time, SROs will transition into patrols at the St. Charles County Parks Department's 18 parks, providing a proactive presence during the busiest season of the year. Sgt. Mallett says with a significant uptick in visitors and activity in the parks, officers want to discourage people from tampering with unattended vehicles or engaging in other bad behavior.

"If there is a patrol car driving around or an officer visibly at the park, the people who are up to no good will think twice before breaking a car window or anything like that. It's an important deterrence," Sgt. Mallett notes.

Summer is also the time when SROs schedule annual training, with one concentrated week of exercises where they renew skills related to firearms, first aid, and specialized equipment.

Separately, the officers instruct school staff in active threat training often referred to as "4E" – Educate, Escape, Evade and Engage – which has become an increasingly important part of the SROs' school safety mission.

During the 2022-2023 school year, St. Charles County expanded its SRO staff, which previously only included nine officers stationed at high schools and middle schools, but not elementary schools. Using funding provided by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the County Police Department added 14 additional officers to include every school in



*School Resource Officers Eric Macalady and Brandy Rocco survey a patrol area at Veterans Tribute Park ahead of summer duties.*

-more-

## **St. Charles County SROs, page 2**

unincorporated St. Charles County, Augusta Elementary School in the Washington School District, and schools in Dardenne Prairie and Weldon Spring which contract with St. Charles County for police services. St. Charles County Executive Steve Ehlmann says the County has agreed to provide these additional officers at no cost to the schools through the end of the 2023-2024 school year.

“These officers serve an important role in keeping our children safe and being ambassadors for the County Police Department,” says Ehlmann. “During the summer, when schools aren’t in session, they continue to be engaged with the public and have an active presence in the community.”

In addition to patrolling parks throughout the summer, SROs build positive connections in the community by visiting neighborhoods to talk with residents and answer any questions or concerns. They also provide a police presence for safety at summer events, and even host small outreach events of their own, explains SRO Shawn Birdsong.

“We’re trying to show a different side of law enforcement that a lot of people aren’t used to in traditional policing. We want to show the community we’re there for them, that we’re invested in our community,” Officer Birdsong says. He recalls one particularly meaningful interaction at a past community outreach event, when officers took the chance to help a family in need.

“We hosted a program at a local QuikTrip, and we identified a family with some financial challenges. We were able to give them a couple fill-ups of gas and donated bicycles and helmets for their young children. That was really great,” Birdsong recalls.

SRO Jaclyn Gubricky says officers value having different opportunities to interact with community members by meeting them where they are and engaging with any questions and comments they might have.

“It will be nice this summer to get to know a different part of the community,” says Officer Gubricky. “But I’m going to miss seeing my school kids every day, so I’ll definitely look forward to getting back to school at the end of summer.”

-end-

**Media Contact:** Mary Enger, Communications Director, 636-949-1856, or 636-443-1008, [menger@sccmo.org](mailto:menger@sccmo.org)

### **About St. Charles County:**

*St. Charles County, Missouri, founded in 1812, is one of the fastest growing counties in Missouri. With a population of 405,262, it is the state’s third largest county. It is home to 22 scenic county parks of which three are in reserve, encompassing 4,509 acres.*

*With one of the largest economies in the state, St. Charles County is home to multinational companies including General Motors, Citi, MasterCard Worldwide and Boeing. It is ranked among the top 25 counties in the nation in high-tech job growth by the Progressive Policy Institute and consistently has the lowest unemployment rate in the Metropolitan St. Louis area.*

*St. Charles County Government has more than 1,170 employees in more than 30 departments and offices who work to make the county an excellent place to live, work and shop. For more information, please visit [sccmo.org](http://sccmo.org).*