

Eye on Del Norte: CCPD Chief Richard Griffin update

August 3, 2022



Crescent City Police Chief Richard Griffin has been on the job over three years. When I asked the question about his service in Crescent City and he told me how long he's been on the job, I was taken back. Wow! Tempus fugit.

What's going on at the CCPD these last few years? Lots.

What's your vision for the Dept., Chief Griffin? "I'd like to make Crescent City a better place for my kids. What can I do today to make Crescent City better?" That's a good question for all of us ask ourselves.

The department consists of nine patrol officers, three in training, one school resource officer plus another soon- to-be on board and one Chief. Chief Griffin hopes to promote a Sergeant to Lieutenant rank, shortly. Two officer positions remain open and a records clerk position needs to be filled.

The chief is rightfully very proud of his leadership role in taking care of his officers. Chief Griffin's priority is securing the tools necessary for his officers to do the job. Easily said, not so easily done. As a City resident, I tell you the work product and morale emanating from the Department is exemplary. Kudos to the Chief for personally going over to Crescent Elk to calm students, staff and parents reacting to unfounded rumors of student safety at risk, during the Uvalde shooting tragedy several weeks back. Does that mean the Chief and I don't occasionally see eye to eye? Absolutely! I share my views with Chief Griffin and even in disagreement, I leave the conversation with the distinct impression I've been listened to and absolutely treated with dignity and respect.

What is the most challenging issue the department faces? The Mental Health issue prevails. Those afflicted with mental illness cause lots of problems. The Chief observes matters worsening until the State amends laws which change the role the Dept. plays. One of those changes includes a crisis intervention team on-site when there are mental health issues facing patrol officers. The Chief is a strong advocate for retaining City sales tax Measure S which may face repeal in November. Measure S funding has already purchased new video equipment so officers have an accurate record of each and every call they answer.

The chief reflects on the "revolving door" practice meting out justice and preserving community safety, when officers make an arrest. The suspect is detained, booked and immediately released back into the community. The Chief admits this practice is frustrating but he must adhere to his Oath and follow the law. Other legislative overreaches include voter-passed Proposition 47 and 57 which have amended many felony laws down to misdemeanor level. Griffin and the Department is the face of law enforcement, not a messenger for myopic misinterpretation of laws espoused by many frustrated citizens.

One problem continually vexing me is the wanton shoplifting of shopping carts. I reflect on scores of these \$300+ "vehicles" abandoned and splayed about town. No so anymore. I'm pleased to report CCPD officers are clamping down on these shopping cart scofflaws, and the message is a clear one: shopping carts may not be removed from the parking lot. One can certainly see the difference on the street.

The first Tuesday in August is National Night Out, August 2. This event brings awareness to our law officers across the United States. Reminder for all to turn on porch lights in support of law enforcement.

Here's to all the kids in Crescent City...We're going to make this community a better place for you and your children.

Roger Gitlin is a retired District 1 Del Norte County Supervisor. He resides in Crescent City