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**Sussex County
Government**

News Release

Sussex County, State agree to add more troopers to patrols

Georgetown, Del., Aug. 21, 2012: More police will be working the streets in Sussex County to keep citizens safe under a renewed partnership between the County government and Delaware State Police.

County officials joined State Police Col. Robert M. Coupe and others Tuesday, Aug. 21, 2012, in announcing that both parties have agreed to resume terms of a contract signed in 2007 that pays for additional troopers to be assigned to Sussex County. Under that agreement, Sussex County pays for a portion of the salaries of 40 additional troopers, above the normal complement already assigned to the three State Police troops in the county. Four more troopers were to be added every year, per the contract, but County and State leaders agreed in 2009 to temporarily delay adding those officers until economic conditions improved.

Officials announced the number of troopers assigned to Sussex under the contract will now rise by four officers, to 44 additional troopers, by Spring 2013. The new officers will begin training at the State Police Academy this fall.

“Our citizens want to feel safe in their communities. They expect that, and they expect government to provide enough police, paramedics, and firefighters to keep their families safe,” County Council President Michael H. Vincent said. “This renewed commitment today is an investment in public safety, one that strengthens the law enforcement presence and, hopefully, reminds criminals that Sussex County belongs not to them, but to the people.”

For Immediate Release

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Sussex County has partnered with the State of Delaware since the 1990s to increase the number of troopers in the county – the largest geographic area of the state at 938 square miles – without having to substantially increase budgets. By teaming up, the County and State have shared the costs, making it more cost-efficient to add troopers to serve a growing population.

State police perform law enforcement duties in unincorporated parts of Sussex County, while municipal police forces serve within their respective towns or cities. Sussex County does not have a county-wide police force. Establishing such a force would cost approximately \$124,500 per officer, versus the \$49,000-per-trooper cost the contract allows, based on estimates.

“This is the best bang for the taxpayers’ dollars,” County Administrator Todd F. Lawson said.

For this fiscal year, Sussex County is budgeted to pay the State of Delaware \$1.7 million for 40 extra troopers; four more troopers will cost an additional \$445,000 to cover salaries, benefits, uniforms, equipment and four vehicles, County Finance Director Susan M. Webb said.

Rep. Ruth Briggs King of Georgetown played an instrumental role in helping to broker the re-instated agreement. As a member of the Delaware General Assembly’s Joint Finance Committee, Rep. Briggs King brought the issue to light during this year’s budget negotiations, calling for a re-instatement of the previous cost-share agreement.

“For a number of months now, I have heard personally from constituents about their concerns over the need for a larger police presence in our area,” Rep. Briggs King said. “I could not agree more. It was an honor to be part of this process.”

Col. Coupe said State Police and the County have historically had a good working relationship, and he is pleased that will continue with the re-instated agreement.

“The Delaware State Police are looking forward to the opportunity of resuming the contract agreement with Sussex County Council and increase the complement of troopers in Sussex County,” Col. Coupe said. “We value our partnership with the Sussex County Council and appreciate the support of the Council and our State Legislators to afford the DSP with this opportunity for growth.”

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