May 15, 2018

Greetings from Your Executive Director:

This has been a busy week- here are a few quick updates on ongoing issues:

* The Governor’s Office continues to get information and work on a “work around” for the **loss of Social Security numbers** from DOL records.  The current idea is to have some sort of access to SS #s for certain communication center employees but that is not finalized or determined as yet.  There will likely not be a perfect solution but rather efforts to minimize the effect.
* The **I-940/3003 lawsuit** is moving to appeal at the Supreme Court, likely in June.  We will keep you advised of the progress and how that comes out.  We will continue to focus on making sure the agreed-upon language of 3003 becomes law.
* We are working through whether our Jail Booking and Release System (JBRS) database, which is run by us, is required to conform with the Governor’s Executive Order prohibiting use of state databases for immigration purposes.  We asked for a commitment from ICE that they not use the database for non-criminal purposes, but they were not able to provide that commitment.  In an abundance of caution and until we get a specific answer, we have to cut off access to JBRS for our ICE users until we get it resolved.  I will let you know once we get a resolution.

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Next- here is one from the “you never know what’s next” file.  In last week’s newsletter, I let you know that our incoming President, Ken Thomas, had ended his employment with Kent PD and we needed to find a contingency for that position, and Board Member and Olympia Chief Ronnie Roberts had graciously agreed to step up if needed.  Well, today Ken Thomas was announced as the new Chief in Des Moines, and starts as Chief tomorrow.  So, the contingency has been removed and Ken will be able to move forward as our President for the upcoming year.  I spoke with Chief Roberts this morning, and thanked him for his willingness to serve, and he will continue his service to WASPC as an elected Board Member.  All of us are very pleased that Ken will continue as a Chief, colleague and important element of our leadership here at WASPC.

Former DMPD Chief George Delgado has been named as Emergency Management Director with Des Moines, and we know he will do a great job in his new role.

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Like it or not, our profession is knee-deep in public controversy and the element of “messaging” and communication is a critical part of what we do.  Crisis response is no longer just tactical, but also includes **how things look and how they are perceived after the fact**.  Take a look at this link as it illustrates the very real and very significant challenge we face in the current environment:

<https://www.pe.com/2018/05/08/rialto-police-to-release-bodycam-footage-of-incident-involving-black-airbnb-vacationers-who-allege-police-overracted/>

The issue is that the dynamics and the environment of public perception, social media and the way people receive information based on their pre-conceived beliefs is at the center of our challenge right now.  It is very difficult and it is very complex.  All we can do is try to work through it and understand better how to handle it.  We will have  a session at the conference on media relations, and we will continue to work together to own our messages and get them out in a more effective way.

We have a communications firm with whom we are working, and we will provide more information at the conference about what they can do for you as far as training and availability for consultation if you ever need them.  In addition to exigent and emergent incidents, the firm will also help us to provide ongoing information to use as you see fit.  Here is some background and advice from our communications firm, GreatWork Communications, on the high-profile Starbucks incident in Philadelphia a few weeks ago--

***We have been thinking a lot about the reaction to the viral video of two black men who were arrested, while waiting for a friend, at a Starbucks store in Philadelphia.  The company quickly found itself in hot water that had nothing to with coffee.  I think there are some relevant lessons for law enforcement in how this incident was handled.***

***The first lesson is: The public is moved—for better or worse—by the response of leaders in the***

***field during a crisis.***

***Starbucks success doesn’t come from selling overpriced coffee. It comes from creating a place where people feel welcome and want to “hang out”.  The job of a store manager is to be constantly aware of the social interactions of customers and ensure the environment is open to as many people as possible.  In Philadelphia the store manager called police because the two men were sitting in the store without buying anything. They asked to use the restroom and were denied access.  When they refused to leave, the manager called police.  Her actions were unjustifiable (although they did not break any corporate policies) and they were perceived as overtly racist.  Customers became alienated, took out their phones and filmed the arrest.  Many bystanders vocally objected to the way the men were treated and said they did not believe this would happen to a white customer.  So management on-the-ground failed. Two days later Starbucks sent a weak apology that drew further criticism for being impersonal and overly legalistic. Starbucks had a crisis plan, but they were not preparedfor the media spotlight created by the Philadelphia incident.***

***The second lesson: Words must be backed by action:  Recognizing they were losing in the court of public opinion, Starbuck’s leaders stepped up. CEO Kevin Johnson issued a memo to employees and sent out a somber video apology. He also flew to Philadelphia and met with the two men who were arrested.  In response to advocacy group calls to fire the store manager, Johnson said “I believe the blame is misplaced.  I think the focus of fixing this issue lies with management, and I am accountable to ensure we address the issue of racial bias with better policies and more training.”  The company subsequently announced the closure of 8,000 company owned stores for racial bias training.***

***The third lesson: The public responds to leaders who are genuine and committed to fixing a problem. The personal apology to the men and the upcoming May 29th training announcement sent a clear message to the public and employees.  All of us know that truly professional racial bias training is difficult. There is also limited evidence that implicit bias training, on its own, is truly effective.  However Starbucks is bringing in some heavy hitters, including former Attorney General Eric Holder, the NAACP’s Sherilynn Infill and the Equal Justice Initiative, to help design the training session and quantify its effectiveness.  We also know, corporations often have many more resources—including financial resources—to tell their side of the story. None-the-less, my takeaways from this incident are: it’s important to communicate our values—the reasons we went into public service—and to be prepared to make changes when our policies or training can be strengthened to meet those values. For Starbucks sales in the month of April were not affected by the negative publicity and the reputation of the company remains positive.***

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Finally, we will have some number of openings for Board positions up for election at the conference at the end of this month.  I remember when I first started attending WASPC conferences, it seemed as if the board election process was sort of a mystery, and there was an element of “you need to know someone” to it.  I also thought you had to be well-known and spend a lot of time “schmoozing” if you wanted to be on the board.  Well, now that I have served on the Board and in my current capacity as Executive Director, allow me to remove some of the mystery.

You don’t need to be “in” with anyone to run for, or be elected to, the Board.  We are all respectful colleagues, and we all respect anyone who is willing to serve.  It is not about “running” or getting out there, I view it as “willingness to serve”.  If you have an interest in serving, all you need to do it express that interest to any Board member, and raise your hand at either the Chief’s or Sheriff’s meetings, which are at 8:00 AM on Tuesday of the conference.  The Sheriffs choose to put forward a specific person, determined at that meeting, to the general election on Thursday morning.  The Chiefs can choose to do the same, or anyone can indicate their interest and be elected by the WASPC voting membership at the Thursday morning meeting.  It is really that simple.  I highly encourage anyone who is interested or willing to serve to speak to President Burnett, any Board member, or myself because **we need you and we want to make very sure everyone feels welcome**.  This is a strong organization and your involvement and participation is what makes it all work.

If you are possibly interested in serving, we are willing to send out your name to our members ahead of the conference to let members know you would like to be considered and to provide some advance notice before next week.  At this time, one Chief position is open, which is Chief Pierpoint’s position-  he has indicated he will not be running again. The Past President, President and President-Elect have already been designated, but at this conference, the Nominating Committee will forward a slate with the Vice President, who will sequence into President-Elect the following year.  If a current Chief on the Board were nominated for Vice President, then that current chief’s position would also be open. The Nominating Committee is made up of the following, appointed by President Burnett: Chief Chuck Spoor, Raymond PD; Chief Dusty Pierpoint, Lacey PD; Sheriff Dale Wagner, Adams County, and Sheriff Will Reichardt of Skagit County.

There is one Sheriff’s position up for election.  Office of the Insurance Commissioner, Director Mark Couey’s board position (designated for Executives who are not a Sheriff or a municipal Chief) is also up for election, and he has indicated that he is willing to continue to serve.

So, the bottom line is we want to remove the mystery, make sure everyone feels welcome and comfortable expressing interest, and there may be more than one Chief’s positions open.  If you would like me to include your name as a Chief interested in election, let me know and we will send it out Friday.  That is not a requirement for standing for election at the conference, just an offer in case you want to let people know.

Hope that makes sense-  if you have any questions at all, please let me know.  I really honor and respect this profession, the challenges you face, and the opportunity to improve what we do by working together.  See most of you next week!

***Work Hard- Have Fun- Stay Safe***

Steve