

# 2006 Police Department Annual Report

To The Honorable Board of Selectmen and the Citizens of Stockbridge:

I hereby submit a report of the activities of the police department for the year 2006:

The untimely death of **Jan Stackhouse** in 2005 remains a focus of the police department's time and energy. We meet on a regular basis with members of the Massachusetts State Police Detective Unit attached to the Berkshire District Attorney's office, as well as District Attorney David Capeless and his staff, and continue to follow-up on all aspects of the investigation.

During June, July and August of 2006 we had four house breaks with a similar MO and during discussion with area police departments we discovered there were 32 house breaks scattered throughout Berkshire County and neighboring New York State that appeared to be connected by MO. A task force was created and through the joint efforts of county police departments, the Mass State Police, the New York State Police and the New York Sheriff's Department, the group was able to solve the breaks, obtain arrest and search warrants, both of which were served, and recover a significant amount of the stolen property.

Sergeant Louis J. Peyron's replacement on the police department, Officer William DeSantis, left the department at mid-year to join the Lenox Police Department. We miss his ready smile, sense of humor and work ethic and we wish him well in his new position. In July, Adelheid Teutsch, one of our special officers, began working full time to fill in for Officer DeSantis and has since been offered a full time position pending successful completion of the police academy. In addition we hired special officer Jesse Norton of Lanesboro for additional part time help. She is currently finishing up a degree in Criminal Justice at

Westfield State College.

The addition of speed bumps on **Elm Street** has done more to curb the speeding problem than all the enforcement efforts to date. We have received a great deal of positive feedback from townspeople and will, continue to work with the Highway Superintendent and Board of Selectmen regarding the design and location of the speed bumps.

In an effort to be more socially responsible we have replaced one of the **Ford Expeditions** with a **Ford 500**. It gets about 10 miles to a gallon in better gas mileage, takes less resources to build, and cost about \$10,000 less to purchase. The vehicle is highly rated for safety. It has all wheel drive and to date we have not had a winter that tests its capability. We have been forced to reduce the amount of equipment we carry and not all of the equipment found in traditional cruisers is currently available, but in the balance we thought it was a worthwhile experiment.

We have continued to work with the **FBI** regarding the 1978 art theft from the former Michael Bakwin house in Stockbridge. The art work, now valued at around \$35,000,000.00 has all been recovered and charges are pending against a retired Watertown, Mass attorney.

Grant money in general has been greatly reduced in both the law enforcement and Homeland Security areas by the federal government. Stockbridge has been fortunate to have been able to apply for and receive a number of grants. We have just closed out a \$50,000 **Buffer Zone Grant** from Homeland Security, which resulted in the town being able to purchase a number of pieces of equipment for both police and fire, which will enhance any response required for Tanglewood. The **Berkshire County Law Enforcement Council** (BLEC), where I serve as President, has finished up installing equipment for round one funding in the amount of \$480,000. We are currently installing equipment based on a \$502,000 round two award. Round three has been approved for an additional \$490,000; all monies have gone to upgrade the communications equipment county-wide and have addressed a

number of interoperability issues, as mandated by the federal grant requirements. Again this year I am extremely grateful to **R. Michael Kirchner**, Retired Police Chief of West Stockbridge, for all his efforts in making this a reality. We also received a **Governor's Highway Safety Grant** for \$7,500 for seat belt and drunk driving enforcement, a portion of which could be used for the purchase of federally approved equipment. We were able to purchase a number of pedestrian crossing signs, to replace over time the one to three that are victim to motor vehicle contact each year. Once again this year the department was awarded a **Community Policing Grant** for \$11,299.00 for use in dealing with summer traffic, bike patrols around Lake Mahkeenac, speed enforcement and concert related issues at Tanglewood. The BLEC, with the help of Police Chief Stephen O'Brien of Lenox, our representative to the Western Region Homeland Security Council, had been able to procure two additional grants for a significant number of county police departments. That grant money has unfolded in three phases under a **Berkshire County Cross-Agency Working Group** concept, which will allow information sharing among all county police departments, the installation of police software upgrades and will allow us to have **Mobile Data Terminals** (MDTs) in each cruiser. The grant monies obtained total \$295,325 is to be somewhat unevenly divided among twelve agencies. I continue to serve as Vice-President of the **Western Mass Law Enforcement Council** which has received similar, though much larger grant monies, for infrastructure improvements to Hampshire and Hamden counties.

Policing in Stockbridge is a team effort and I would like to recognize the ongoing work of Officers **Robert F. Nielson**, **Michael J. Stanton**, **Brian A. Shaw**, **Bruce J. Stringer**, **Adelheid I. Teutsch** and Special Officers **Louis J. Peyron**, **Elizabeth McCormack**, **Kimberly Shaw**, **Paul F. Petrescu**, and **Jesse N. Norton**.

Respectfully submitted,