



MEDIA RELEASE

Department of Public Safety

Ohio Department of Public Safety • John Born, Director

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John R. Kasich, Governor

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Ada Earns Top Honors for Contributing to a Safer Ohio

COLUMBUS - For weeks, the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) has been asking the question “how will you contribute to a safer Ohio?” We now know one city’s response.

Today, ODPS Director Born honored Chief Michael Harnishfeger of the Ada (Ohio) Police Department with the newly created “I Contribute” award. This honor was presented to the city for their dedication and hard work to keep its community safe, and ultimately contributing to a safer Ohio through the Seeking Aid From Every Resident (S.A.F.E.R.) policing program.

“The idea for S.A.F.E.R. came on the heels of 9/11,” said Chief Harnishfeger. “I was thinking of ways to keep our village safer as a result of this terrorist attack on our nation. Realizing that Ada is not a New York City, or otherwise large target, the fact remains that people as a whole, not just law enforcement must remain vigilant to keep a safer community, state and nation; law enforcement cannot do it alone, we must have aid from every resident.”

The essence of S.A.F.E.R. is to constantly remind and encourage residents of their role in making their community a safer place and to reward community residents when they do participate in making their community a safer place to live.

“Everything we do is centered around S.A.F.E.R. as a continual reminder that it takes all of us working together to keep our community safer,” said Chief Harnishfeger. “We believe very strongly that Ada is in fact a safer community because of the continued participation of our residents through the S.A.F.E.R. program.”

Since its inception, 17 S.A.F.E.R. awards have been given to individuals for their efforts in making Ada a safer community. Corporations and businesses have also received an award.

S.A.F.E.R. utilizes the following components in making an overall effective S.A.F.E.R. program:

- A S.A.F.E.R. committee that brings together various representatives of the community, including law enforcement, colleges/schools, business, government and members of the public;
- S.A.F.E.R. signs placed strategically in different parts of the community for high-visibility and as a constant reminder to the residents;
- S.A.F.E.R. newsletter for the community to keep them apprised of events, issues and other pertinent information;
- S.A.F.E.R. alerts used (sparingly) to reach out to the citizens to alert them to a specific issue in the community;
- S.A.F.E.R. kids is a component used to engage community children in a number of safety-related educational opportunities and events; and
- S.A.F.E.R. awards, which are presented to residents who have contributed substantially to the safety and security of the city. Since every football that is produced for the NFL is produced locally in Ada, and it is home to the only NFL factory in the United States, recipients of the S.A.F.E.R. award receive an NFL football with the S.A.F.E.R. logo on it, further reiterating the importance of community.

“I applaud Chief Harnishfeger’s efforts for creating and maintaining a successful program,” said ODPS Director John Born. “He is making a tangible difference to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Ada, and that is an illustrative example of what it means to contribute to a safer Ohio. The S.A.F.E.R. program is tremendous and certainly worthy of earning the inaugural “I Contribute” award.”

To nominate someone for the “I Contribute” award, please visit the ODPS Web site <http://publicsafety.ohio.gov/>

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