

# IOWA POLICE JOURNAL

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## BOARD SPOTLIGHT: SUPPORT FOR IOWA LAW ENFORCEMENT

By Ryan Goecke, ISPA Immediate Past President



As a board member and past president of the nearly 3,200-member Iowa State Police Association (ISPA), I have had many opportunities to talk with officers from around the state of Iowa, as well as the United States. I've also attended the National Peace Officer Ceremony in Washington D.C., as well as the Iowa ceremony. We have spent many hours talking about issues ranging from what affects our officers in their local communities to the monumental change in the level of trust of law enforcement in America.

Ferguson, Mo. in August 2014. This incident was widely inaccurately reported despite statistics, sparking riots and a national movement that is often anti-police. Subsequent incidents with police elsewhere seemed to follow the same pattern, resulting in violent protests — often before the facts of the case were known. Reactions by members of the public, local and state authorities have created changes in law enforcement, and not necessarily for the better. This can make it more difficult to attract dedicated people to the profession — people who are needed now more than ever.

In March of this year, two Des Moines police officers were killed in the line of duty. While attending the services for these officers, I could see the outpouring of support — not only from the community, but from all of Iowa law enforcement. It put into perspective how proud we are to serve in this profession, coming together as one in sharing the grief for those brothers and sisters who paid the ultimate price.

In July, we witnessed the most tragic attack on American law enforcement since 9/11, as officers in Dallas were murdered for being police officers. Despite what appears to be anti-police reporting from national media and negative comments from some elected officials toward law enforcement, it was encouraging to see the number of communities nationwide that held vigils in a show of support for police.

Seeing that our officers have the support of the community helped me realize how important the public is in the protection of law enforcement. Though Iowa law enforcement is not without controversial incidents, it is satisfying to see citizens have trust and faith that our officers are truly doing their best to protect and serve. They are willing to support officers in their duties, and work together with law enforcement for the betterment of the community.

The officers I know do not join the profession to receive accolades, but they very much appreciate knowing they have support. There are very good people doing a very difficult job with public scrutiny at an all-time high — the most troubling time in my 30 years of law enforcement. However, one thing is clear: we are very fortunate to be in law enforcement in Iowa.

This is my final year on the ISPA Board and I could not be more proud to have served such a fine group of professionals. Stay safe, brothers and sisters. Keep the faith that we *do* have support. See you in Sioux City!