

Hail to the Chief

The City of Woodland received an early Christmas gift last month. City Manager Paul Navazio announced the news in October when he named Derrek Kaff as the next Woodland Police Department (WPD) Chief. The official ceremony honoring Chief Kaff was held on Monday, November 4, 2019 at 4 p.m. in the WPD parking lot. With 100 members of the law enforcement, firefighter, and civic leadership communities along with family and friends in attendance, County Superior Court Judge Dave Rosenberg swore in Woodland Police Chief Kaff. In his address, Chief Kaff said, "I am honored to serve as Chief of this great agency alongside the dedicated women and men of our department. Woodland is a strong community and I see many opportunities in our future. I am passionate about serving the community and working with staff to keep Woodland safe."



Chief Kaff has a central leadership role concerning both Woodland and Yolo county public safety. Both Navazio and Mayor Xochitl Rodriguez praised his exceptional qualifications for the leadership role and noted that his strong personal and professional relationships were critical to maintain clear communication with both city leaders and citizens.

The scope of the Chief's responsibilities can be seen through the size of the WPD and the breadth of its work. As reported at the November 19, 2019 Woodland City Council meeting, Chief Kaff leads 89 staff members and 53 volunteers. These dedicated professionals include 67 sworn officers and 22 support staff. He oversees the WPD's four bureaus: Patrol, Investigations, Community Relations, and Support Services. The Office of the Chief supervises the Volunteers in Policing (ViP), which consists of 34 ViP volunteers and seven chaplains. Twelve members of the Explorers, a program which introduces young people to policing, complete the 142-member team led by the Chief. During his remarks, he asked his team to use innovative solutions and new strategies for solving crimes and maintaining good community relations.

The Department's community relationship is established by a variety of activities that were also described at the recent city council meeting. Last quarter, the Department answered 18,014 calls for service. Each call results in an officer completing a report, which may require further investigation. Currently, there are about 300 active investigations, with the top two being property crimes (77) and violent felonies (39). The WPD made 611 arrests, primarily for larceny and theft.

The Department has also been busy with several crime prevention programs, such as Youth Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention (YGRIP); Woodland Youth Public Safety Academy, a middle school student cadet program; Citizen Police Academy; and five UNIDOS events. Community service events include Coffee with a Cop, Woodland Police Activities League Junior Giants Program, National Night Out, many Woodland Farmers' Markets, several Movies in the Park, and Family and County Resource Fairs. Many of these efforts were supported by the ViPs and the Explorers.

Chief Kaff has impressive credentials to lead his department. He was among a select group of law enforcement professionals from across the county nominated to attend the 10-week FBI National Academy in Quantico, VA. The Chief previously completed the California Police Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) Supervisory Leadership Institute and Command College, and earned his P.O.S.T. Executive Leadership Certification. In 2018, he was appointed Deputy Chief of Police after being promoted to the rank of Captain in 2016.

Chief Kaff has been with the WPD since 2000. He was first a patrol officer. He was then promoted to the rank of Corporal in August 2002, Sergeant in August of 2003, and Lieutenant in 2009. Throughout his tenure, he has served as the Professional Standards Division Sergeant, Bike Patrol Sergeant and Special Weapons and Tactics Team Tactical Commander. Prior to coming to Woodland, Chief Kaff worked for the Los Angeles Police Department in their Patrol, Narcotics, and Traffic Divisions.

As ViP members of the WPD, we are supported by the very experienced and dedicated Chief Kaff. This holiday season, let's all celebrate by saying, "Hail to the Chief!"