

A competitive awards program that seeks to identify and recognize innovative county government employees, programs, and ISAC affiliates.

The ISAC Excellence in Action Award Committee will rate each nomination based on the following seven attributes: innovation and creativity; leadership; replication; cost savings; increased efficiency; cooperation with others; and perseverance. Awards will be presented at the 2024 ISAC Annual Conference General Session on August 21 in Des Moines. Winners will also be recognized on the ISAC website and in a news release.

- ✓ **INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY**
- ✓ **LEADERSHIP**
- ✓ **REPLICATION**
- ✓ **COST SAVINGS**
- ✓ **EFFICIENCY**
- ✓ **COOPERATION**
- ✓ **PERSERVERANCE**

- Attach a narrative of the program or individual (three page limit). Criteria and guidelines are included on the next page.
- Return all nominations by June 1, 2024 (postmarked date) to:

**Iowa State Association of Counties
Attn: Jacy Ripperger
5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190
West Des Moines, IA 50266**

- OR email your application form (containing all the information on the form below) to jripperger@iowacounties.org.

Please fill out each field completely:

Please indicate nomination type: Program: X Individual: _____

Name of program/individual: Unified Law Enforcement County or affiliate: County

Name of nominator: Steve Kenkel Title: Chairman, Shelby Co. Supervisor

Nominator's phone: 712-579-1320 Nominator's email: skenkel@shco.org

ISAC– Excellence in Action Program

Unified Law Enforcement – 28E Agreement

OVERVIEW:

Unified Law Enforcement (i.e. consolidation of Harlan Police Department into the Shelby County Sheriff via a 28E Agreement) had been considered at various times over the past two (2) decades. In the most recent years, the Harlan Police Department (HPD) was experiencing challenges with recruitment and retention of officers due to a combination of consistently being a training ground for the Shelby County Sheriff in addition to leadership/command staff changes in the HPD. Similar to many other agencies, HPD was facing changes due to 'Back the Blue', challenging labor markets, increased costs, regionalization of/or contract services, and the need to innovate. There are pros and cons when organizations consider this type of change, and it was an ideal time for the City of Harlan & Shelby County to seriously revisit this idea in January 2023. The City of Harlan and Shelby County historically have a strong partnership which provided a conducive platform for discussions. The intended improvements consisted of better quality and safety for all Shelby County citizens and law enforcement; improved recruiting, retention, and employee satisfaction; cost neutral or reduced expenses; and the opportunity to serve as a model for others.

RESULTS:

- **Recruiting:** There was one (1) new position being recruited for at the time of the transition and one (1) position recruited since the unification. The applicant pool yielded more than 30, and over 20 applications, respectively. This is 4 to 5 times more applicants than prior to unification. The larger department has allowed for drawing applicants from a variety of areas. With competitive pay, flexibility of hours, availability of different shifts and specialized positions, the result has been that the unified agency is ahead of the curve in the ability to hire.
- **Training:** All staff now receive the same training resulting in a safer outcome for all. The larger department has resulted in a certified instructor in every discipline allowing for all state required training to be completed in-house resulting in cost savings. More outside agencies are also participating in Shelby County training. The opportunity of additional certified training instructors has increased job satisfaction through job broadening.
- **Investigation:** A single workflow and command staff has resulted in higher quality, seamless investigations. Cases involving both agencies, which previously may have taken months to close, now may only take days. In addition, the jail in-take is up nearly 40% on average since the unification.
- **One Team:** There is now a single, cohesive department with consistency resulting in the public knowing exactly who is showing up and what to expect when a call for service is initiated. The ability to cover shifts when people take vacation or call-in sick is much easier with a larger department. There is now oversight on all shifts with Sergeants on general patrol and the oversight of a captain as well. There is now the ability to have multiple people on overnight shifts providing the flexibility for quicker response times from a second car. All this while still providing 24/7 coverage for both the city and

county. An additional unintended result has been the additional presence of parked law enforcement vehicles throughout the community of Harlan. Many staff from the Sheriff office live in Harlan due to being the county seat and the largest town in the county resulting in more vehicles being parked at residences when not on-duty.

- **School Resource Officer (SRO) and Code Enforcement:** The Sheriff Office had previously added an SRO prior to the unification. The SRO had seen a positive impact while reducing the need for HPD at schools. In addition, due to cost savings with the new 28E agreement, the City of Harlan has been able to add a dedicated Code Enforcement position resulting in enhanced oversight and consistency with enforcement of nuisances.
- **Cost Impact:** The new structure was not positioned as a significant cost savings. It was presented as a cost neutral solution with anticipated long-term savings and benefits due to less turnover, less training costs, and efficiencies. All law enforcement staff are now on a similar pay system and the HPD staff which transitioned to the Sheriff received a pay increase under the new system. Year one (1) renewal of the 28E agreement resulted in a 2% increase in cost of services which is 1% less than the threshold in the agreement.

MODEL FOR OTHERS and LESSONS LEARNED:

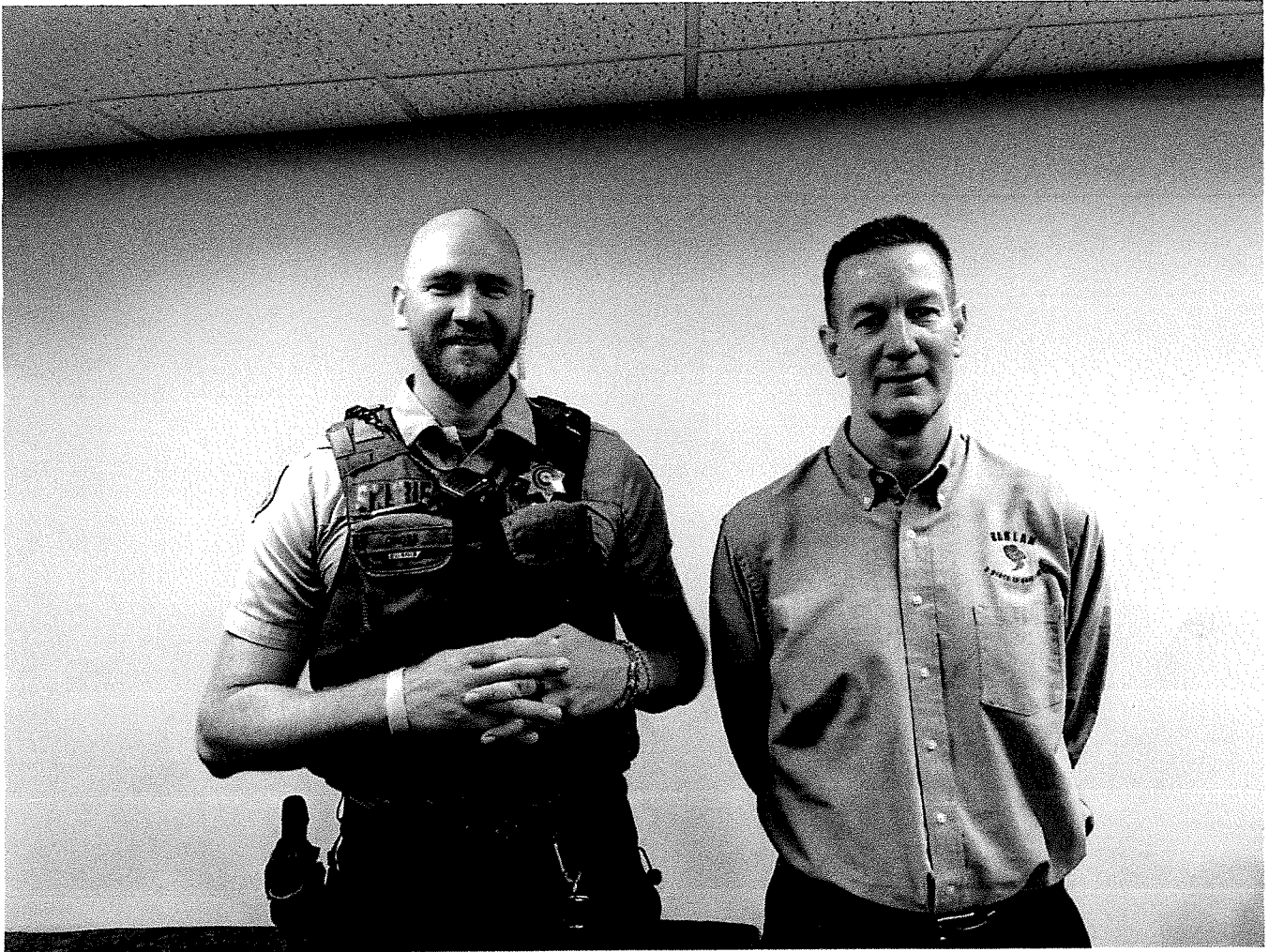
There continues to be multiple law enforcement departments seeking to fill positions and other communities are evaluating changes to their law enforcement service model. For example, since the unification of HPD and Shelby County Sheriff, no less than fifteen (15) other municipalities and counties have contacted us to learn more about our unification. As previously mentioned, the existing strong partnership between the city and the county, in addition to Sheriff Gross being open to the idea, were ingredients for a successful outcome. Harlan is the county seat, centrally located in the county, and the offices of both agencies were within one (1) block resulting in little change for staff and citizens.

The pace at which the transition occurred resulted in some negative public feedback. Although there was a public forum and opportunity for public comments, it was perceived as an already “done deal” between the agencies and governing bodies. However, the time necessary for planning & analysis prior to public process/forum, and the critical staffing and command staff levels at HPD, required an accelerated review and decision process to move forward.



Shelby County Unified Law Enforcement.

Shelby County Sheriff - Neil Gross



Shelby Co. Sheriff - Neil Gross

Harlan
City Administrator - Gene Gettys

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

4/16/2024