

Franklin County residents invited to police academy

The second session of the county's Citizens Police Academy is aimed at fostering a closer relationship between the sheriff's department and residents.

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The Franklin County Sheriff's Office will host its second Citizens Police Academy in February, a six-week course that teaches residents about police work.

Franklin County Sheriff Scott Nichols said his main objective in offering the class is to connect the community with county law enforcement.

"It's about communication," said Nichols. "A lot of time people think we're this closed society when we're not."

Over the course of the classes, the attendees will get to meet all members of the department and finish the class with a chance to ride along with a deputy on patrol.

Nichols said that when county residents get a chance to become more familiar with the department, it helps dispel misconceptions about law enforcement and improve community relations.

Since Nichols took office in January 2013, he has introduced initiatives that he cites as tools for improving communication and transparency with the department, such as a weekly report on the department's activities, a Facebook page, and a department open house with all members present.

The department previously held a Citizens Police Academy from Jan. 7 to March 11 in Stratton with seven residents graduating.

This time around, classes will run 6 to 9 p.m. and be held six Tuesdays in a row from Feb.10 through March 31. The class will be taught by Cpl. Chris Chase at the New Sharon Town office. Classes are open to anyone living in Franklin County and are free.

Nichols said this time the department is hoping to draw people living in Chesterville, Industry, New Sharon and the surrounding towns who are interested in learning about the rural department.

The six-week program covers topics like patrol operations, use of K-9s, drug investigation and administrative functions. Nichols said they will get a chance to meet all the deputies and administration over the course of the class. There are 11 people signed up for the course so far, he said. Nichols said they are hoping to keep the class size small, but anyone interested should call the department at 778-2680.

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