

http://www2.dothaneagle.com/news/2012/aug/14/dothan-police-department-nationally-accredited-ar-4336305/



Published: August 14, 2012

[Home](#) / [news](#) / [local](#) /

## Dothan Police Department nationally accredited

By **Matt Elofson**

Dothan Police officials announced Monday that it recently received national accreditation as a law enforcement agency, which among other things included an increased focus on training within the department.

According to a statement released by Police Chief Greg Benton, the department recently received national accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement (CALEA,) a gold standard organization.

Dothan Police Sgt. Eddie Henderson, the accreditation manager, said the accreditation has several specific goals, some of which include the strengthening of crime prevention, the establishment of fair and non discriminatory personnel practices and to solidify interagency cooperation.

“One of the big impacts for us with this is it has increased our focus in training for our officers,” Henderson said.

As part of the accreditation process, Henderson said the department’s officers went from 24 total hours of training to 40 hours of training per year. He said use of force issues were also included within the 40 hours of annual training.

“It causes us to intentionally look at what we’re doing,” Henderson said. “It enhances our training, and it can help reduce our liability.”

The training within the accreditation process also included good record keeping, which Henderson said will help reduce liability and lawsuits.

As part of the accreditation all of the department’s employees received training on mental illness. Henderson said that training specifically included officials from the state Department of Mental Health coming in and helping employees understand and recognize signs of mental illness in people.

“It impacts the service delivery that we provide to our citizens,” Henderson said. “The better trained police officers you have, you can expect to have a better delivery of services. It’s intentionally making your agency stronger and more accountable.”

Henderson, who was appointed as accreditation manager by Benton in 2010, called the accreditation process

an in depth one, which dated back at least three years. But he also called it an on-going continuous process, which will be reviewed each year. He also said the accreditation commission will assess the department every three years, which will determine whether the department becomes re-accredited.

According to a police statement, with the department's accreditation it became the fourth-largest accredited law enforcement agency in the state of Alabama.

“We've already increased our training dramatically, and it's better documented,” Henderson said. “It's an ongoing intentional process to put into practice what are considered to be the best standards in law enforcement.”

---

Dothan Eagle © Copyright 2012 Media General Communications Holdings, LLC. A Media General company.