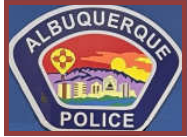


EAGA Business Builder

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Today's speaker was Albuquerque Chief of Police — Harold Medina



Chief Medina is a graduate of the University of New Mexico, receiving a Bachelors of Science Degree (with a double major in Biology and Criminology) in 1994. He then graduated from the Albuquerque Police Academy in 1995 and immediately began his career in law enforcement. He was named as the interim Chief of Police in September of 2020 and was appointed as permanent Chief of Police in March of 2021. September 2020 was quite a time for an interim Chief assignment to the Albuquerque Police Department, or probably most any other police department. That was

the period of many protests, with an often byproduct of unruly crowds. Chief Medina believes in Community based policing. Part of his process for mitigating problems with protests was to contact those in charge of organizing the gatherings and begin a dialogue where the Chief could better understand their complaints, and the organizers could better understand the Police Department's need for the activities to be lawful and orderly. Even today, Chief Medina continues to promote ambassador type programs where the Department seeks to listen to community participants and build positive relationships, while making sure that all involved do not lose sight of the need for enforcing laws. In today's presentation, Chief Medina noted a few challenges that he and his officers have to deal with in the current status of the Department. The biggest challenge (one that hinders the ability to properly address all the other issues) is a major need for more police officers. There are many different types of law enforcement actions that have to happen on a daily basis. There are traffic violations; property crimes; violent crimes; vagrant and homeless person activities...and those are just the major ones. 'Violent Crimes' get a lot of news media attention. Those are undisputedly, serious crimes, but they primarily occur during other illegal activities and/or in places, and at times, that are known to be risky situations. Arguably much more concerning problems are those that occur during a 'Property Crime' (like when a person is injured on their own property when simply trying to protect themselves, or their possessions). When Chief Medina was involved with the property crimes division in 2010 and 2011, there were 69 detectives assigned to work those cases. Today there are only two, and they are not even dedicated to investigating property crimes on a full time basis. A large percentage of the property crimes are related to drugs and/or homeless circumstances. The people who commit those offenses are themselves in bad situations. It would seem that a socially responsible method for reducing the crimes would be to improve the potential offender's situation so that the crime never even takes place. Many offenders could be rehabilitated, but, although they want to change, they don't know how to do that, or where to go for help. There are also those criminals that refuse to change. The system needs to know how to identify which people would benefit from assistance, and which people make incarceration the only solution. Right now though, our criminal justice system is broken. It is not capable of figuring out where to draw that 'line in the sand' that differentiates offenders that can benefit from guidance from those that are just violent and refuse to change. A viable substance abuse program does not exist; Cases are getting 'fast tracked' with plea bargains; Courts are not able to hold people pending trial; and there is the aforementioned shortage of law enforcement officers. Federal rules actually prohibit, in most instances, local officers from arresting someone for a misdemeanor crime (like trespassing). So what can be done? There are 50 cadets in the Police Officer Academy right now, and the expectation is that they will all soon become APD officers. Likewise there are 40 participants in the Public Service Aids Academy and the plan is that they will become trained, and interested enough in law enforcement, to sign up for the Police Officer Academy as their Service Aid terms expire in a couple of years. Chief Medina has established an education program for detectives as well. It is designed to better train existing detectives in technologies, procedures and regulations so that their investigations are thorough enough, and properly documented and completed, and their cases result in a higher rate of conviction. But officers are not social workers, nor are they supposed to be. There has to be appropriate personnel and programs for that. The City's newly announced homeless center, and its proposed guidance programs, should be a benefit to the community by assisting folks to productively return to society. People called 'navigators' are social workers with the job of helping situationally challenged people navigate through the system, and to help them get the assistance that is available for rehabilitation. The best overall solution would be to achieve a justice system that appropriately uses all the components of early intervention; diversion; sentencing and officer training and retention. Though hopefully achievable, that model system will not immediately materialize. So, as it goes, Chief Medina, and his officers, will continue to make their own progress in areas that they can improve in a relatively shorter timeline. Undercover officers are now being assigned to work around the 'big box' type of businesses for quicker, and more official, response to the shoplifting 'craze' that is affecting our community. The criminals that commit shoplifting crimes are most often the same criminals that commit other types of more violent activities, so getting those offenders off the street would have multiple benefits. Other officers will concentrate on 'hot spots' where repeat crimes regularly occur. The Chief is re-emphasizing regular accountability by Area Commanders. That means police activities are established, reviewed and monitored for proper progress on a regular basis. It stresses proper implementation and follow through for the best result that appropriately benefits to the community. Chief Medina also intends to add qualified officers to the ranks, via the above mentioned academies, and also by continuing to pursue the program that gives a sign-on bonus to qualified officers who join APD via lateral transfer from other law enforcement agencies. In response to a question from the audience, Chief Medina noted that there could be beneficial improvement in officers actually being 'in the field' if there were appropriate changes in the definition of, and/or the need for time consuming investigation, of 'resistance arrests'. Currently, a resistance arrest investigation is triggered by almost any move or action, no matter how minimal, taken by an offender in an attempt to avoid being taken into custody. Each incident is investigated and during that time the involved officer is unavailable for normal duties. It means that, even when the event was minor and was easily determined to be acceptable action by the officer, the community still had to be without that officer for at least a couple of hours while the investigation took place. Refining the conditions for those investigations could help. We thank Chief Medina for taking the time to speak to us this morning, and we appreciate his work, and that of his officers, in attempting to make our community a safer and more desirable place to live.

Reciprocity:

- Thank you to Pat Wallace—Essential Pest Management for help with a mouse problem. Great advice!
- Jack Zipper

If you have information that you would like published in the bulletins, you can submit it in person at the meeting, or via email to bmacc@swcp.com. (Please note the email subject as "EAGA")

- ◆ Directors please note: There will be a Board of Directors meeting right after breakfast this coming Tuesday, August 10th.
- ◆ The Jim Fanning Memorial Trap Shoot has been scheduled for Friday, September 24th. Please mark your calendar now so that you can be available to participate in this always fun event. Loaner shotguns will be available if you don't have one of your own. More information will be provided as we get closer to the date.
- ◆ A couple of beneficial pieces of Irish wisdom:
 - Do not resent growing old. Many are denied the privilege.
 - Its no use boiling your cabbage twice.
 - You've got to do your own growing, no matter how tall your grandfather was.

Badge Board Greeters

Aug 10 th	Kevin Lorenzen—Aflac
Aug 17 th	Kit Turpen—Berger Briggs Insurance
Aug 24 th	Joe Sierra—Century Bank
Aug 31 st	Miguel Mendoza—Perfection Pools & Spas
Sept 7 th	No Meeting Labor Day Holiday
Sept 14 th	Soren Thomsen—TEMA Furniture
Sept 21 st	Lance Darnell—Darnell Cable & Fasteners
Sept 28 th	Kale Isaacson—Fyzical-Albuquerque
Oct 5 th	Hass Aslami—Pizza 9 Franchise System
Oct 12 th	

Upcoming Speakers

Aug 10 th	John Mead—John Thomas Jewelers
Aug 17 th	Paul Wynn—Acme Iron and Metal
Aug 24 th	Paul Jew—Moji Studios
Aug 31 st	Soren Thomsen—TEMA Furniture
Sept 7 th	No Meeting. Labor Day Holiday
Sept 14 th	
Sept 21 st	
Sept 28 th	
Oct 5 th	Kevin Lorenzen—Aflac
Oct 12 th	

Contact information for Executive Director: Mario Hernandez

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