

GPD: 'Coffee With A Cop' series successful

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 26 May 2017 04:04



Cops, community come together over coffee

Lt. Roseanne Morrissette of the Gallup Police Department said officers weren't doing anything out of the ordinary May 19 at the Coffee With A Cop event held at the Silver Stallion Coffee and Bread Restaurant near the Downtown Walkway.

Rather, the event was simply another formal attempt at bringing the police department and members of the community together for informal conversation.

"It went well and each one that we've had has gone very well," Morrissette, a public information officer with the GPD, said. "I have noticed that we see some new faces and we see some familiar faces that stop by. It was a lot of fun."

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For about two hours, officers from the GPD met and talked with an estimated 90-plus members of the community and talked about things police officers typically don't talk about when patrolling the streets. That's one of the goals of the Coffee With A Cop setting – to bring both sides together over a cup of coffee.

Friday's Coffee With A Cop was the third that the GPD has put on in the last year. About 20 officers from the GPD came out and Gallup police chief Phillip Hart was also on hand to field questions.

“Anytime you get police officers and random members of the community together in a setting like that, it's always positive,” Hart said at this week's city council meeting. “That's the goal: To communicate with one another.”

A lot of the people that dropped by had seen a flyer put up throughout downtown. There was a school group of from Alaska, too, that showed up. Wonda Johnson of the New Mexico House of Representatives stopped by. Overall, some area residents deemed the event as positive.

“I think it's a great occasion,” Linda Spacey, 68, a Gallup resident, and retired county employee from Cibola County said. “You sort of get to know people at the police department in a whole different manner.”

Morrisette and Lt. Francie Martinez of the GPD were key to starting the community outreach series in Gallup. The two attended a training session a little more than a year ago in Hawthorne, Calif., and things took off from there. The event is now a mainstay of more than 100 police departments around the United States.

The two previous Coffee With A Cop events in Gallup were held at the Octavia Fellin Main Library and the other at Angela's Café at the Gallup Cultural Center along East Historic Highway 66.

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