

Detroit Lakes Police Rolling On Two Wheels

Simple Change Results in Community Benefits

What if one simple change could improve the health of our police officers, make them more accessible to the community and help them do their job? For the Detroit Lakes Police Department, that change was to put their officers on two wheels instead of four.

Riding a bike instead of driving a squad car results in increased physical activity for police officers and demonstrates active living to the community. It also provides an opportunity to model safe biking; such as following traffic laws, wearing a helmet and using lights after dusk. Many feel officers on bikes are more approachable than in squad cars, increasing their contact with the public and fostering improved community relations. Departments that use patrol bikes also find them more useful than squad cars in dense pedestrian environments such as festivals and other community events.

Detroit Lakes Bike Patrol Makes Summer Debut

The Detroit Lakes Police Department unveiled their bikes late in the summer of 2017, using them to patrol several community events when streets were closed to motorized traffic. Officers report that the bikes have been a positive addition to the force.

"I think they are a definite asset to our services," said Steven Todd, Detroit Lakes' Chief of Police. "I had an officer use a bike during a large road race where multiple streets were blocked off. He was able to maneuver around really well during the event. He also was involved in helping capture a purse thief right before the race began."

Detroit Lakes, home to an active mountain biking community and a hot spot for summer tourists, now sports a successful bike patrol program. Nearby Frazee also partnered with PS4H to start their own bike patrol program. These collaborations between PartnerSHIP 4 Health and law enforcement demonstrate the interconnected nature of health and safety and the important role that cooperation plays in achieving them both.



Detroit Lakes officers show off their new bikes.

To fund this simple change, the Detroit Lakes Police Department connected with PartnerSHIP 4 Health (PS4H), local public health and community partners in Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, and Wilkin counties. Grant funds helped purchase two bikes equipped with racks and lights from the DL Bike Shop, a local supplier in Detroit Lakes. Three officers attended a police bike training session at North Dakota State University and learned how best to utilize the bikes in their day-to-day patrols as well as at community events.

Learn more about PartnerSHIP 4 Health's work in Becker, Clay, Otter Tail and Wilkin counties at <http://partnership4health.org>

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