

One-on-one sheriff interviews continue

Thomson: governor's pick Bohl: Army provided skills

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at the Sheriff's Office. I was appointed by Governor Graves to the sheriff's position in February 1999, and have since been re-elected twice.

Q: What is your proudest moment as Sheriff of Norton County?

A: An older couple from Texas hit a deer late at night, knocking their radiator out. I went and worked the deer accident, then brought them back to town. I took them to check into a hotel, then to a restaurant. When they were done eating, I picked them up and drove them back to the hotel. The next day I drove them around town so they could get a car to go back home. When it was all over and done, I got a letter from the gentleman. Turns out he was an instructor for the Texas Law Enforcement Training Center, (which he hadn't told me) and he'd submitted a story to Reader's Digest about small communities and the services they provide.

Q: Is there an issue that's important to you that you want to see resolved?

A: I'd like to have a D.A.R.E. program here. We currently are unable to provide this program due to lack of funding and manpower. I'd like to get officers more involved in a program like that, without adding to the taxpayers' burden.

Q: What is your schools/training history?

A: I graduated from Norton Community High School, then took business classes at Colby Community College. I graduated from the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center's part-time basics class in 1994, then their full-time class in 1995. I am a Drug Enforcement Agency-trained Meth-amphetamine Responder, I have training in bomb threats, school shootings, active shooters and media relations. Media relations was the least fun.

Q: Where did you grow up?

A: I was born and raised in Norton, and graduated from Norton Community High School.

Q: How long have you been Sheriff of Norton County?

A: I've been Sheriff for 9 years, and have been re-elected twice.

Q: What is your law enforcement background?

A: I first worked part-time for the Sheriff's Office and the City Police Department, then went on to become the sheriff. I was a part-time city officer for 3 years, and have been full-time with the Sheriff's Office for the last 15 years.

Q: Do you have any military experience?

A: No, I do not, but with the experiences I've had in the last 15 years, I've become good friends

and work well with many KBI agents, FBI agents, and INS agents. I've formed a network throughout the state and the United States. If I need to, I can call on the phone and get some help, even if it's not through the normal channels.

Q: What positive changes do you believe you've made in Norton County?

A: You see more deterrent patrolling. When a citizen has a concern, we'll put more patrol in that area, really saturate it. We've increased that dramatically.

With the new 911 system, we can now pinpoint a cell-phone caller's location if they can't tell us where they are. We're in the process right now of finishing the 911 addressing, and it should be done pretty quick.

We also have the reverse calling 911, which we've already used many times this year with tornado warnings. With this system, we're able to call the public and let them know of warnings they need to be aware of. This is better than the sirens, which are meant to warn people who are outside their homes, away from their tvs, but who live in town. This new system will also warn people who don't live in town, and cell phones can also be registered to receive alert calls. This way, we can warn our rural citizens as well as our city citizens.

Q: Are there more changes you'd still like to make?

A: Yes. Keeping up with the technological side of law enforcement. We are battling to get our officers up and trained on technological crimes. We have to be able to respond to the crimes committed using technology, for example, the Nigerian scams, the E-Bay scams and various other "check-cashing" schemes. I'd like all of us to be a little more in tune with that, and hopefully get someone in who's had extensive training with that. I'd also like to educate the public on those scams and schemes.

Q: What do you feel has been your biggest challenge being the Sheriff of Norton County?

A: The biggest challenge as been providing the service that I want to provide, while remaining within budget. There's so much that you want to do, and could do, but it's not feasible because you have to operate within a budget. And one of the things I've been able to do is stay within my budget and provide quality service.

Q: Final question: What is your funniest work-related story?

A: We had a couple of inmates that tried to escape by going up through the ceiling of the jail. They got up there, crawled, and ended up in the pipe chase in the jail, which is locked up as tight as their cells!

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Adult Education, training and development. What the Army has given me is the organizational skills on an officer level. I'm used to being on a higher managerial level when I write policy and procedure.

Q: What is your proudest moment in your work history?

A: Being in the Arab Republic of Egypt in the Gaza Strip, we were conducting intelligence missions and physical security. That's when you have all the buildings secure, key control, weapons and ammo count, and information sharing with a multi-national force with four or five other countries. We also patrolled the desert to make sure two fighting countries stayed on their own sides. It was a successful mission.

Q: Do you have a "pet" issue?

A: Promising Almena, Lenora and all the townships more patrol coverage. Training for deputies, maybe an hour every other week, coordinating with police and fire departments, adding reserve deputies and auxiliary, if we can afford to. Having more training so we don't have to call the highway patrol for little things. We should be able to take care of our own county. Cost effective training and faster response times for all calls.

Q: What are your schools and training history?

A: I graduated the Kansas Military Academy in 1993, received my Bachelor's of Science in Adult Education, Training and Development in 1997 from the University of Louisville in Kentucky. I have half of a Masters in Counseling and Psychology, which I do plan on finishing. I have been to the Infantry Officer Basic and Advanced courses, the Calvary Officer Basic course, Army Airborne Course, Army Ranger Course, and have training and experience in planning and coordinating military operations.

Q: Where did you grow up?

A: I was born and raised on a dairy farm that also had crop farmland in Norton County. I graduated high school in Norton.

Q: What is your current job?

A: I am helping on the family job, and finishing up reserve work for the Army. I'm transferring back to the Kansas Army National Guard from a training and support battalion out of Minnesota.

Q: Have you ever run for public office before?

A: No. I've always been in the military. But with the training and leadership skills I have, I don't think running for or holding a public office is a prerequisite for this job.

Q: Can you summarize your military experiences?

A: I graduated from the Kansas Military Academy in 1992 as a second lieutenant. I was a rifle platoon leader in an Infantry unit, a Paratrooper, first lieutenant in a reconnaissance unit, which meant we were to gather information and report it back without being seen. I was the Executive Officer of a rifle company of 250 soldiers, I spent five years in a Military Academy as an instructor training officer candidates. 90 percent

of the soldiers I trained ended up in Iraq. In 2003 and 2004 I was an Active Duty intelligence officer, then as a Captain I served as a General's Aide for a year and a half. The last three years, I was in an Military Police unit as a combat plans officer, writing orders for more than 6000 troops. I made the rank of major about two and a half years ago.

Q: What changes would you make as the Sheriff of Norton County?

A: I'll do whatever it takes to accomplish each day's mission, communicate with other departments, like county health, city police and the fire department. Under my command, there will be no such thing as separate entities. We are all different branches on the same team. I'd be more open with the public. When we know something is going to happen, we need to let the public know ahead of time. We will review all options, public input is welcome, make a plan and explain that this is absolutely the best possible thing we can do. I would do daily shift-change briefs. I'd have the deputies come in 10 to 15 minutes early and talk with the out-going shift about the previous shift's events. I'd improve communications with the local papers. I'd either send a deputy or go myself to all cities' council meetings to represent our department. I'd also have quarterly counseling for deputies, to review goals and needs.

Q: Do you have a plan for if you are deployed?

A: I won't be deployed for a couple of reasons. Right now, I am an instructor with a training support battalion which is a non-deployable position. Also, I will have qualified for retirement from the reserves in the next year and a half, and I do plan to retire.

Q: You've never been a civilian law enforcement officer before. How well do you think you can mesh your military background with being the sheriff?

A: I have a good personality, I am a "people-person," and I can talk to people. I think my work with the military police will be a big help. I'm not trying to turn deputies into the Green Berets, but I will have an expectation of higher standards.

Q: What is your funniest work-related story?

A: When I was in the Middle East, one of my duties was approving passes for spouses and family to visit. There was a lady in the Public Affairs Department who was having her fiance' fly out for a visit. One morning at briefing, while her fiance' was in-flight over Egypt, I announced that all passes were cancelled for the next two days due to an attack on an airport that morning. Everyone in the room, and including her fiance', were in on the joke. She didn't catch on at first, and walked back to her office. After a few minutes, she came back in and said "Sir, that's a bunch of bull! My fiance' is already in-flight!" She was mad, slamming doors, and we finally told her the truth. She thought it was funny and laughed with us about it.

Your Turn

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Driver's license renewal tips offered by revenue agency

By JOAN WAGNON
Secretary, Kansas Revenue Dept.

Kansans are being reminded of new state and federal requirements to provide proof of identity, proof of Kansas residency, and a valid social security number or other proof of lawful presence when renewing a driver's license. Unless these documents are presented at time of renewal, the applicant will be turned away.

Director of Vehicles Carmen Alldritt noted that approximately 11 percent of renewing drivers, first time drivers and replacement licenses fail to arrive at driver license offices with the required documents.

Proof of identity would include a state issued birth certificate, passport, and a marriage license if the name has changed. If you are a foreign visitor, documentation proving lawful presence is required. Proof of Kansas residency could be the renewal card received in the mail, providing it shows the "principal residence" address and not just a mailing address such as a P.O. Box.

Additional documents to prove Kansas residency include utility bill, vehicle registration, payroll stub and Kansas school records. Kansas verifies social security numbers with the Social Security Administration.

Additionally, applicants must appear in person, pass a vision exam, a written examination, pay the applicable fee, and have a new photograph and signature captured.



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