



PRESS RELEASE

From Mayor Dean E. DePiero

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Parma will place police levy on May ballot

(Parma) – Energized by massive reforms implemented within the police department, Parma Mayor Dean DePiero said today that the city will place a police department operating levy on the May ballot to raise much needed funds for the safety force.

Parma voters previously turned down police levy renewals in 2003 and 2004 after a series of scandals, documented mismanagement and wrongdoing were highly publicized in 2003. At the heart of the voter backlash were issues of administrative mismanagement, sanctioned excessive overtime and the abuse of sick leave policies; all of which strained the city's budget and eroded public confidence in the department.

As a result of the defeat of the last two levy attempts, the police department has shrunk from 106 officers to a low of 87 sworn members. The children's sex crime unit has been curtailed; the detective bureau understaffed; K-9 unit and DARE program disbanded and the motorcycle unit cut 50 percent.

"The Parma police department is operating at critically low levels," DePiero said. "This not only jeopardizes the safety of residents, but the safety of the community as a whole."

Since taking office in 2004, DePiero, in concert with Safety Director Greg Baeppler and Police Chief Dan Hoffman, has initiated and sustained major and sweeping policies and procedures to insure financial accountability within the police department.

If the police operating levy is passed by voters in the May primary election, Parma homeowners would pay about \$70 a year or about 19 cents a day based on a \$100,000 home.

DePiero outlined the reforms initiated within the police department as part of an ongoing effort to restore public confidence. Among them are:

- A new, fair labor contract has been negotiated with the police union that eliminates clauses not in the public interest such as the elimination of discretionary overtime and sick time abuse.
- The disciplinary process within the department has been streamlined.
- Accountability and evaluation processes have been implemented to insure a "check and balance."

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Also, he noted, traffic enforcement and efficiency has been maintained at maximum production given the understaffed state of the department. In addition, the department has “leapfrogged” from 1950’s technology to state-of-the-art law enforcement technologies that include computer terminals in police cruisers, Tasers, in-car cameras and the ongoing training of officers. All of the new technology has been implemented WITHOUT the expenditure of public funds but rather through competitive grants and forfeited drug funds.

“It is time for Parma to move forward in bringing our police department up to standards for a municipality our size,” DePiero said. “My Administration has taken the necessary steps to ensure the accountability of the police department and has put in place those reforms to maintain that accountability.”

He said that the “old leadership” of the police department has been purged, to include the indictments of the former police chief and a senior command officer. Other officers have been disciplined with suspensions and several officers are no longer on the force.

“It’s a new day and a new police department,” DePiero said. “And it’s a department that citizens can now be proud of as they protect and serve.”

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