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FIRST REPORT SHOWS POLICE DEPARTMENT PROGRESS ON SEXUAL ASSAULT AGREEMENT

Initial 15 Weeks of Work Yields Improved Approaches

Committed effort by the Missoula Police Department has made substantial progress toward achieving a true community-coordinated response to sexual assault, according to the first report from the Independent Reviewer who is tracking the department's compliance with an agreement reached last May with the U.S. Department of Justice.

That agreement was developed following an investigation into the manner in which the Police Department (MPD) investigates reports of sex assaults. Tom Tremblay, a law enforcement consultant with extensive experience in investigating sexual violence, prepared the report as part of his duties in a contract with the City. The report is being released today.

In his report, Tremblay reflects on the Police Department's successful efforts in working through the multifaceted agreement.

“The Reviewer is pleased to report throughout this initial report that substantial progress on the terms of the agreement are being made,” he writes, “but more importantly these efforts are beginning to show the intent of the agreement, which is to ensure the success of MPD’s effort to improve its response to adult sexual assault.”

Police Chief Mark Muir is happy with the report, which he earlier today shared with community partners who have worked cooperatively with the department to develop more comprehensive and victim-centered approaches to dealing with sex crimes.

“I’m very pleased that the reviewer recognizes the dedication and hard work that our officers are putting into making a better reporting environment and helping victims through the investigation process,” said Muir.

The report is available for the public on the City’s website at
<http://mt-missoula.civicplus.com/Archive.aspx?ADID=7343>

It includes a description of the work performed by the reviewer and documents what steps the department has taken through Oct. 1 to reach compliance with the agreement.

“This initial report makes it very clear that the City of Missoula and its Police Department is committed to taking care of victims and bringing perpetrators of sexual assault to justice,” Mayor John Engen said. “I’m pleased with the efforts MPD was making before we entered our agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice and with our efforts in meeting the terms of the agreement. Chief Muir and his staff, as well as our partners at the University of Montana and the larger community, deserve tremendous credit for moving forward in the interest of taking care of the citizens we serve. I have no doubt that given a bit more time, we’ll be in full compliance.

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