**For Immediate Release**



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**New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police Expands Leadership Training Program into Eastern Pennsylvania**

***NJSACOP’s Academy Continues to Grow and Thrive***

**TRENTON – October xx, 2021 –** What began in 1992 as a leadership training program inspired by the U.S. Military Academy at West Point has resulted in more than 700 police officers across New Jersey and surrounding states receiving intensive courses in how best to lead and motivate their colleagues while fostering positive community relationships.

The work of the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police (NJSACOP) has not stopped at the state line. The 13-week program – known as the NJSACOP Command and Leadership Academy – initially expanded into Delaware. It is now growing again.

NJSACOP today announced the academy will soon be serving the next generation of leaders in five counties of eastern Pennsylvania. The inaugural class will enter the program in January, to take courses through the Chester County Sheriff’s Office under the direction of NJSACOP trainers.

“As a professional in law enforcement for 39 years, I immediately saw the tremendous value of New Jersey’s program and the need to bring it to Pennsylvania,” said Gerald R. Simpson, chief of the Southern Chester County Regional Police Department, “There is no doubt: Law enforcement needs more leadership training than ever, focusing on the behavioral sciences and the numerous theories of how best we can interact with one another.”

The program is set up similarly to college semesters, with the tuition-based programs offered in the spring and the fall, explained Paul Sorrentino, the academy’s program director. The curricula – following the leadership training that West Point cadets receive their junior year – focuses in four key areas: becoming a leader, motivating individual personnel, leading groups and managing environmental factors and outside influences.

“This military program translates well for supervisory officers in law enforcement preparing for the next step,” said Sorrentino, noting the trainees meet once a week, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and take exams as they move through the four key areas. At the end of each class, NJSACOP holds a graduation ceremony and confers certificates.

When the program was launched in 1992-93, there were northern and southern regions established for the course in New Jersey. As the program expanded, Region 3 was added to serve Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and southern New Jersey. Region 4 was launched last year for Middlesex and Somerset counties in New Jersey. And now Region 5 will comprise eastern Pennsylvania, through this new arrangement with the Chester County Sheriff’s Office.

“Besides these supervisors receiving superb leadership training modeled after West Point, the program also helps them secure credits for college degrees,” Sorrentino said. “The NJSACOP has established relationships with colleges and universities, in which this course and several certification programs translate into college credits, as these supervisory officers prepare to be future leaders in their organizations.”

Region 5 is expected to enroll between 12-16 officers for the inaugural class, to be held at the Chester County Government Services Center in West Chester, Pa., although total enrollment can reach 30 trainees.

“I am delighted to play a small role in what I know is a tremendous opportunity for first responders in our region,” said Chester County Sheriff Fredda Maddox. “Since the killing of George Floyd placed law enforcement and first responders in the national spotlight, the public has demanded that law enforcement and other first responders receive more leadership and professional training.

“I am fortunate to work with Chief Simpson and other progressive agency leaders who were already ahead of police reform when they started the Command and Leadership Academy to create transformational leadership.”

Simpson expressed appreciation to the NJSACOP for this new level of training.

“It is vital to run a healthy organization, with strong, positive leadership,” Simpson said. “In turn, we can then best serve the public. It has been a terrific experience working with the NJSACOP and we are pleased to expand our relationship in this new way.”

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