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The Dalton Police Department Commendation policy reads, “A Division Commander may select an employee of his / her division who has significantly contributed toward reaching the division’s goals, consistently shown initiative in achieving the Department’s mission, and displayed a very high degree of professionalism for this commendation.”

For 2020, the patrol division commander has selected Officer Terry Smith as the recipient. Officer Smith has been with the Dalton Police Department since 1996 and has served in the capacity as a School Resource Officer for many of those years. During his time in Dalton Public Schools, he has represented the agency well.

In 2020, the Sergeant over the School Resource Officers had to take an extended leave of absence and Officer Smith stepped in to take a leadership role. The following is an excerpt from an entry made by Officer Smith’s supervisor:

Entered 11/5/2020

During my absence Officer T. Smith took a leadership role in the SRO program to ensure the day to day operations was not affected during my absence. Officer Smith communicated with other SROs regularly to ensure each officer had what was needed. Smith also assisted the other SROs with issues that arose by either finding a solution or by speaking with other department supervisors to solve the problem. It’s good to know that officers are willing and able to step into the leadership role when needed.

Another example of Officer Smith’s dedication to leading and finding solutions to issues he faced is described below:

On 2/18/20 Blue Ridge School began a new traffic pattern for car-rider pickup. Officer Smith was instrumental in assisting the school staff in the flow of the design and working with them to ensure the pattern got off to a good start. Officer Smith pointed out how the current traffic pattern was a safety issue due to vehicles staging on a main street (Fredrick St) and causing other vehicles to violate state laws to avoid the pick-up line. Officer Smith was able to show the school officials how the traffic pattern would benefit the safety of the parents/staff/ and students.

Officer Smith communicated with the traffic unit and requested additional officers to assist with the new pattern for the first two days.

Due to the implementation of this new traffic pattern, staging traffic is no longer blocking the roadway of

Fredrick St. In the two days I have monitored the new traffic pattern I have not noticed any traffic staging on any main streets of town with only a few vehicles staging on a secondary street. This traffic shift will increase safety of not only the students, parents, and school staff, but also the general commuting public.

For his dedication to helping meet department goals, his initiative in finding solutions to problems and his willingness to lead by example, Officer Terry Smith is awarded the Dalton Police Department Commander's Award.