

# Police Department Services

## Bike Patrol

The City of Sparta retains the title of "Bicycling Capital of America" and it's only fitting that the police department utilize bicycles as part of its overall policing strategy. The Bicycle Patrol Unit was revitalized in 2022 with Rambo eBikes.

Officers volunteer to be part of the Unit and perform most of the same functions as their motorized counterparts. Patrolling from a bicycle affords officers the opportunity to interact with the public, promote bicycle safety, and gain access to areas where police squads cannot go. The stealth provided by a bicycle also makes it an effective crime fighting tool. The Bicycle Patrol Unit is one of the most effective methods for policing city festivals, concerts in the park, and various parades throughout the year.

The Sparta Police Department's K-9 Unit currently consists of Xanthos, our facility dog. Xanthos assists first responders after dealing with critical incidents. He also serves as support for crime victims after an incident, during interviews, and during court appearances. Xanthos can be seen at many events throughout the community and is a familiar face at the Police Department and throughout Sparta.

After the recent retirements of our patrol K9's, the department is slated for its next dual purpose patrol K9 in 2023. Officer Chase Nottestad will be assigned as the department's next K9 handler.

The canine program was initially funded through a federal grant intended to promote crime reduction in rural areas. This initial funding covered the purchase of K9 Nitro and the team's training, as well as outfitting a K-9 squad, start-up supplies, and veterinary services. Today, the K-9 unit is funded entirely by donations.

The officer/K-9 partnerships provide the community with an additional resource for fighting crime or enhancing public service through the K9's superior senses. The K-9 Unit also serves as a means to promote the Sparta Police Department through demonstrations and other community relation events.

## **Combined Tactical Unit (CTU)**

The Monroe County Combined Tactical Unit (CTU) is a part-time, multi-jurisdictional Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT) comprised of officers from the Sparta Police Department, Monroe County Sheriff's Department, Tomah Police Department, and Wisconsin State Patrol.

CTU was created to handle those rare high-risk incidents that require a unique set of skills and equipment not typically possessed by a patrol officer. CTU is trained and equipped to handle situations such as hostage rescue, barricaded subjects, and high-risk warrant service.

Officers assigned to the CTU are required to attend monthly training sessions and participate in extended tactical exercises. Trainings are conducted at various locations throughout Monroe County including the military installations of Fort McCoy and Volk Field. These installations provide access to advanced training facilities that include live fire shoot houses and the High-Risk Entry Facility. Both locations can visually and audibly record training so they can be critiqued after each session. It is fortunate for CTU to have these locations so close, as other teams must travel much further to utilize these same facilities.

With the exception of the Sniper and Medic, each team member is expected, and able, to perform any function of the other team members; these include breaching, entry, arrest, and perimeter containment. Since CTU members bring a unique skill set to their individual agencies they are often called upon for their expertise to resolve situations where the entire CTU is not needed. This enhances the agency's response and provides a safer working environment for all involved.

## **Chaplain Program**

*"Police Chaplains do two things; they help take care of police officers and they help police officers take care of Sparta. Police officers face some pretty special challenges to themselves and their families. The chaplains are here to help them deal with those stressors. We assist officers in lots of tragic circumstances in the community such as fatal accidents, suicides and death notifications.*

*The program in Sparta began in 2004. We are volunteers and we are grateful for the opportunity to serve the department and the community in this capacity. If we can be of help to you, we can be reached through the department. Give us a call.*

*We appreciate what the police officers do for us in Sparta. Each day they put their lives on the line to protect us. If we can help them do that better, we are honored to serve them in that way."*

*Chaplain Jef Skinner leads the Police Chaplain Program in Monroe County.*