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City of Brentwood

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Brentwood Police Department Launches Body-Worn Camera Program

Brentwood, Missouri – July 2, 2020 – The City of Brentwood, Missouri Police Department welcomes the opportunity for increased transparency by using body-worn cameras. Brentwood Police Department's body-worn camera program became fully operational on July 2, 2020.

Background

In early 2018, the Brentwood Police Department partnered with the Regional Justice Information Services (REJIS) and the United States Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to begin a body-worn camera (BWC) program. Spearheading the program in Fall 2017, REJIS was awarded \$350,000 in grant funding for the purchase of BWCs for participating police agencies within St. Louis County. This BJA grant award was one of the first to take a regional approach to BWC acquisition, rather than each agency filing for federal funds individually.

The result of this program was the purchase and future deployment of 247 BWCs for seven participating St. Louis County Municipal Police Departments: Brentwood, Bellefontaine Neighbors, Clayton, Moline Acres, Richmond Heights, Town & Country, and University of Missouri-St. Louis PD.

Why Body Cameras?

Body-worn cameras have become an important law enforcement tool. The Brentwood Police Department has adopted the use of body camera video/audio recording equipment to accomplish the following objectives:

- Enhance the safety of citizens and officers.
- Enhance transparency, accountability and trust.
- Increase the department's ability to review probable cause for arrests, arrest procedures, officer and suspect interaction, officer and citizen interaction, and training needs.
- Make prosecutions more efficient and effective.

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Limitations of BWC Footage

While body-worn camera footage can be a useful tool and can provide a unique perspective on police encounters, there are limitations, including:

- The camera cannot capture what happened outside of the camera's view or potentially the causation for actions shown, depending on the camera's perspective and breadth of view.
- How the camera is mounted and the angle at which the camera is mounted affect the perception of what is seen (officer, suspect, witness, victim perspectives).
- The camera cannot record some important danger cues (smells, tensing of muscles, increased pulse rate, physical resistance).
- The night vision component of the camera can see far better than the human eye.
- Camera speed differs from the speed of life.
- An officer's body may unintentionally block the view of the camera.

Body-Worn Camera Policy

Community involvement is critical to any successful BWC program. The Brentwood Police Department has developed a thorough policy regarding the use of BWCs. This policy, along with answers to Frequently Asked Questions, is available on the City's website, brentwoodmo.org.

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The City of Brentwood, Missouri celebrated its centennial in 2019. Brentwood is a full-service community with a unique blend of quality residential neighborhoods and one of the most thriving business districts in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Located within minutes of downtown St. Louis, Brentwood is known as the "City of Warmth" because of its small-town charm and friendly atmosphere. Learn more at www.brentwoodmo.org.