

Press Release

Cortland Police Recognized for Sex Offender Management Keeping Communities Safe Using Best Practices

SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK – JUNE 15, 2010 The Cortland Police Department has been certified by the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police (Association) in a new sex offender management program. The certification recognizes that the Cortland Police are employing proactive and sound practices in managing sex offenders in their community. The “Certified Best Practices” program was launched one year ago to recognize police agencies that employ certain strategies to monitor sex offenders, provide community notification and conduct enforcement. Association Executive Director John P. Grebert said, “For several years, managing sex offenders has become an important function of law enforcement. Police are on the front lines in ensuring that offenders comply with the law and that citizens are informed about certain offenders living in their communities.”



Association President William J. Kilfoil (Port Washington PD) said, “The New York State Association of Chiefs of Police is pleased to provide this service to our members. It is a nice acknowledgement for the hard work being done to monitor sex offenders throughout New York State.”

The policies and operations of the Cortland Police Department were assessed and found to be in compliance with the elements of the Best Practices program. In addition to having a written policy pertaining to sex offender management, they were also required to provide proof of monitoring of offenders, community notification, cooperation with other agencies, and enforcement.

Police Chief F. Michael Catalano said, “We began enhancing our sex offender management program in 2005 when we instituted a 45-day physical address verification for all Level III (high risk) offenders. This is in addition to the 90-day mandatory address verification. Our agency has continued to make improvements to our sex offender management program through the community notification process, which now includes information on the Cortland Police website and a direct link to the state sex offender website. Our goal is to make Cortland the safest community possible, a place where citizens feel safe to walk the streets and raise a family. Our proactive approach to sex offender management is one avenue we are developing to assist us with achieving that goal.”

City of Cortland Mayor Susan Feiszli noted, “I applaud Cortland City Police for their proactive sex offender management program in our community. Informing our citizens of where sex offenders live is a critical component to ensuring the safety of our residents.”

Cortland School District Superintendent Larry Spring noted. “I am very pleased with our relationship with the Cortland Police Department,” Spring said. “They do a great job of keeping us informed about the status of sex offenders in our community.”



Mark Spawn (left) of the New York State Assn. of Chiefs of Police presents Chief F. Michael Catalano with a certificate at the June 15, 2010 Common Council meeting at Cortland City Hall.

Mary Hyder of the Cortland Child Care Council has been receiving information on sex offenders from Cortland Police for several years now. She noted, “I like the information they provide to us, it is very user-friendly.” Hyder explained that once she receives information from police, she is able to share it through her agency’s network with child care facilities in the city.

The Association’s director of research, development and training, Mark Spawn noted that the Best Practices program takes several factors into consideration. “This program identifies the most important aspects of sex offender registration and gives agencies the ability to have an external validation of their processes.” Spawn extended special thanks to Sgt. Penny Guerrera who provided information to the Association during the application and review process.

The Association’s program was presented at a National Symposium on Sex Offender Management in Houston in April 2009. Spawn said that for agencies that do not yet have a policy in place, the Association has resources to assist departments in developing a plan to meet their individual needs.