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## Moraga Gets Two New Police Officers

By Sophie Braccini



City Clerk Marty McInturf swears in new Police Officers Tyler Olson and Krista Koppinger as Police Chief Bob Priebe looks on. Photo Will Grant

Moraga Chief of Police Bob Priebe is pleased. This year his Department will have a full time detective position, filled by Will Davis, something Priebe has been looking forward to for years. A reorganization of the Police Department will allow his officers to spend more time where he believes they should be-on the streets.

The detective slot is made possible by the hiring of two new officers, one to replace a recently vacated post, and a 13th position that is funded by a Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) State grant. The newcomers, Tyler Olson and Krista Koppinger, are currently training with a senior officer in Moraga and will hit the streets on their own within a few months.

"When we started our testing process we got some very qualified candidates," says the Chief, "the trick is to find the right fit for the Moraga community."

"I was an officer for two years in Susanville, a little town north of Reno," says Olson, "it was a bit smaller than Moraga, with different demographics. We had two prisons there and a lot of parolees." Moraga is closer to where Olson's family lives, which is important to the young man who will soon become a new father.

"I was first hired by the Sacramento Police Department, but was let go as part of their budget cuts a month later," explains Koppinger, "I was attracted to Moraga because I want to work in a town where I can build a relationship with the community." She adds that being in Moraga will allow her to keep an eye on her younger sister who attends Saint Mary's College.

Both new officers say that working in a small department where you can handle your cases from the first phone call up to the District Attorney's office is a great environment in which to learn and grow. Creating the right environment for his force is of utmost importance to Priebe. "Our salaries do not compare with what many other departments can offer," he explains, "so it is my job to create a work environment that will keep them coming back to work."

"Everybody has been very welcoming here," says Olson. He enjoyed the warm welcome at the swearing ceremony during the December 14 Town Council meeting and added that the Chief made his transition very easy. "People wave to you on the streets here," adds the young officer.

"My training officer, Randy Pacheco, is letting me handle calls that he feels are appropriate," says Koppinger, "the Chief has also been very welcoming, he is a wealth of knowledge and experience."

Recently, Koppinger went with her training officer to oversee the Breakfast with Santa event and, according to Moraga Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram, she was beaming with joy as she performed her new duties.

"The COPS money that we used to hire a 13th position is not a guarantee," says Priebe, "we saved last year's allocation (2010), so with this year's money we can finance two years of employment. If the funds dry out, the Town will choose to either fund that position from the General Fund or eliminate it." Priebe notes that, so far, the COPS grants have not been on the State's chopping block.

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