



Business briefs

Springfield Police Department welcomes two new officers

The Springfield Police Department on Dec. 16 welcomed one new officer into the ranks who graduated from the 21st Lateral Police Academy and also welcomed a former officer back to SPD.

A lateral officer is an experienced officer who came from another law enforcement agency and attends an abbreviated academy at the Springfield Regional Police and Fire Training Center. During the lateral academy, they receive six weeks (240 hours) of training to become acclimated to Springfield and the Springfield Police Department. After graduation, the officers are assigned to an experienced field-training officer (FTO) for six weeks of on-the-job training. Once that's completed, the new officers are assigned to SPD's Uniform Operations Bureau.

Officer Rudy Rodriguez comes to Springfield from Long Beach, California, where he previously spent six years on patrol. Rodriguez also spent six years in the U.S. Marines and served in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He earned his bachelor's degree in business administration from Grantham University in 2013.

'I am excited to join the community in Springfield,' Rodriguez said. 'When I was looking for a place to raise my family and serve as an officer, Springfield was the perfect fit.'

Officer Damiun Walker resigned in good standing from SPD in 2021 to work outside of law enforcement but decided to return to policing and has now been welcomed back to SPD. Walker holds a bachelor of science degree in economics from the University of Arkansas and originally graduated with the 66th Springfield Police Academy in 2015.

City of Springfield Receives \$500,000 EPA Grant to Expand Green for Greene Program

The City of Springfield Department of Workforce Development has been awarded a \$500,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to continue and expand the Green for Greene environmental job training program.

'We are incredibly grateful to receive this \$500,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to support our Green for Greene environmental job training program. Nationally as well as regionally, demand for a skilled workforce has risen. This program provides participants the opportunity to become a part of the growing supply of skilled workers. We are excited about our continued partnership with the EPA,' said Maurice Jones, Deputy City Manager of the City of Springfield.

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SKILLED WORKERS. WE ARE EXCITED ABOUT OUR CONTINUED PARTNERSHIP WITH THE EPA,' said Maurice Jones, Deputy City Manager of the City of Springfield.

With the increased funding, Green for Greene will offer expanded certifications tied to environmental-related jobs. Participants will now have the option of two credential tracks based on their career goals. At the conclusion of each cohort a job fair will be held to connect graduates with employers.

'We will now be able to offer evening classes in addition to daytime classes to support the schedules of individuals who are already in the workforce but want to upskill. This allows the flexibility to be able to work while earning credentials that lead to a higher paying job,' said Ericka Schmeekle, Interim Director of Workforce Development.

The department has previously received four rounds of EPA funding in the amount of \$200,000 per round. In addition to the 13 certifications currently offered, the program will now expand to offer a CDL with Hazmat Endorsement.

To apply for this free training opportunity or for more information, visit www.springfieldmo.gov/greenforgreene or call the Missouri Job Center at 417-887-4343.

Arc of the Ozarks president/CEO Powers receives congressional resolution

Congressman Billy Long presented a Federal Congressional Resolution to Arc of the Ozarks CEO/President Mike Powers on Dec. 9. A Congressional Resolution is an acknowledgement of achievement read on the floor of the House of Representatives by a member and is made part of the historical Congressional Record. Congressman Long read the Congressional Resolution to honor Mike Powers' lifetime of accomplishments on the floor of the House of Representatives on Dec. 1.

The resolution cited Powers' work as 'an advocate, influencer, and leader in the disability community for the past 36

years,' whose 'influence has elevated The Arc as an industry leader that continues to improve community access and quality of life to people with disabilities at all stages of life.'

The Arc of the Ozarks is a nonprofit organization offering program and therapeutic services to people with disabilities with offices in Springfield, Joplin, Monett, and Kansas City. Program services include community living, community support, recreational, employment, educational, family advocacy, and autism services.



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