

# MICHIGAN POLICE CHIEFS



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WINTER 2026



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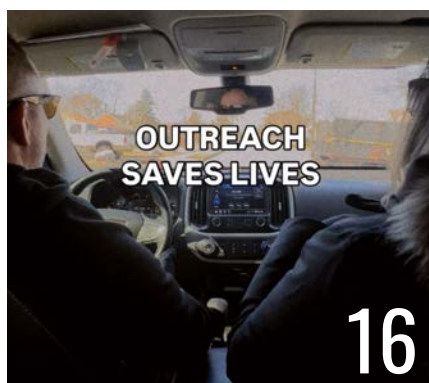
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**Chief Corrigan O'Donohue**

**New challenges  
continue to  
emerge, and our  
law enforcement  
leaders must adapt  
to an ever-changing  
landscape.**

As we settle into another Michigan winter, I am reminded that leadership in law enforcement rarely looks the same from one year to the next. New challenges continue to emerge, and our law enforcement leaders must adapt to an ever-changing landscape. This year is no exception, especially with the significant changes within the MACP.

I want to extend my congratulations to our new Deputy Director, Bryan Ergang. I also want to thank every candidate who interviewed for this position. We were fortunate to have an exceptional group of highly talented and qualified individuals step forward. As one candidate put it, "Interviewing for this position is like going for MVP of an All-Star game." He wasn't wrong. The decision was difficult, and it speaks to the depth of leadership within our profession. In the end, I am confident we selected the right person, and I know Bryan will excel in this role.

With Ron, Bryan, and Matt all being relatively new to their roles, it is equally important to recognize the critical support staff who keep this organization running so smoothly. They handle an incredible range of issues for members across the state, often quietly and behind the scenes. For example, as I write this, I'm sure Karah is more than a little frustrated with me for being well past my deadline for submitting this article. And Janeice, our longest serving (and extremely dependable) employee, continues to provide the kind of institutional knowledge that is absolutely invaluable, especially during times of transition. Their professionalism, patience, and commitment make a tremendous difference for all of us.

It is December as I write this, which places us in the heart of Advent. For most Christians, Advent is a season of preparation and anticipation. A time to slow down and reflect as we look forward to Christmas. I am personally blessed with a large family, and with so many children and grandchildren, this season is truly incredible. The joy, the energy, and also a healthy dose of chaos all combines to make it a great time of the year.

By the time this article reaches you, we will be well into winter. The holidays will have passed, the decorations put away, and the bills from that busy season arriving right on schedule. It's a rhythm many of us know well, but it also offers a moment to pause, breathe, and gently refocus as we step into a new year with fresh intention.

As leaders in law enforcement, we all know the path we walk is rarely simple. The weight of responsibility, the constant demands, and the emotional toll can sometimes feel overwhelming. In those moments, cynicism can creep in before we even notice. That's why it's so important to pause and give yourself the grace and space to notice the good that surrounds you—your achievements, the growth you've worked hard for, the resilience that carries you through tough days, and the people who stand beside you both at work and at home.

Take a moment to reflect on what you're grateful for, personally and professionally, and let that gratitude steady and strengthen you as you move forward. God bless you all! 🍀

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**Ronald L. Wiles**

**Michigan law enforcement is filled with talented people who believe in this profession and its future.**

As we close out 2025, it is clear that our association is positioned for an even stronger 2026. That momentum is fueled by our members who consistently step up to lead, serve, and mentor. Your dedication continues to strengthen the MACP and the broader law enforcement community across Michigan.

After a thorough and thoughtful search process, I am pleased to announce that Chief Bryan Ergang of the Kalamazoo Township Police Department has been selected as our next Deputy Director, pending his official retirement. Many of you know Bryan well, he has served as President of the MACP, contributed to numerous committees, and consistently brought a steady, collaborative presence to statewide discussions on public safety. Bryan's commitment to organizational excellence and his ability to build trust make him an outstanding addition to our team.

I also want to acknowledge and thank the other exceptional leaders who applied for the position. We had a truly impressive slate of candidates, professionals who have dedicated their careers to improving policing in Michigan. Their willingness to step forward speaks volumes about the strength of our membership and the depth of leadership within our state. Selecting just one person was far from easy, and the quality of the applicants reinforced something I already knew: Michigan law enforcement is filled with talented people who believe in this profession and its future.

That future is directly tied to how we support the next generation of chiefs. Earlier this year, we launched the MACP Chiefs Mentoring Program, designed to connect new chiefs with experienced leaders who can help them navigate the unique challenges of the role. I've long believed that no chief should have to lead alone. This program reflects that belief in action.

And I'm happy to say it is already exceeding expectations.

We have several mentor/mentee pairings in place, and the early feedback has been exactly what we hoped for, open conversations, practical guidance, and real support from people who have walked the same path. Our mentors are generously sharing their knowledge and experience, and our new chiefs are stepping forward with thoughtful questions and a genuine desire to learn. Together, they're building a culture that strengthens our profession from the inside out.

In many ways, this program captures who we are: a network of leaders helping leaders, committed to raising the standards of policing across Michigan. While it's one thing to talk about professional development, it's another to invest time, energy, and experience into helping other chiefs succeed.

As I reflect on 2025, I'm grateful for the dedication, professionalism, and partnership that define the MACP. This year brought significant accomplishments, continued growth in accreditation, legislative engagement, collaborative problem-solving with statewide partners, and a renewed focus on leadership development. None of that happens without the commitment of our members. You show up. You contribute. You care about this profession and the communities you serve. The work you do matters, and it continues to elevate the reputation of policing in Michigan.

Looking ahead in 2026, we're not slowing down. We're building on what we've accomplished and pushing forward with purpose. With Bryan joining the team, the mentoring program expanding, and our collective momentum stronger than ever, I'm confident that the year ahead will be one of progress, collaboration, and continued excellence.

We thank you for your continued support and are grateful for the outstanding work you do each and every day. Stay Safe! 🍀

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**Matt Silverthorn**

**The expanded  
MACP mini-grant  
program now  
provides financial  
assistance for  
agencies with under  
99 officers, opening  
the door to begin  
the accreditation  
journey.**

As we enter the new year and look ahead to the 2026 Winter Professional Development Conference, I continue to be encouraged by the steady momentum of the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Program. Consistently, more agencies express interest, more managers engage in training, and more chiefs view accreditation as a practical roadmap for strengthening operations. The statewide commitment to professionalism is evident, and it is reflected in the continued growth of the program.

During 2025, multiple agencies successfully completed the accreditation process, adding to the number of departments recognized for meeting Michigan's highest standards of law enforcement excellence. At the 2026 Winter Conference, the program will reach an important benchmark: 100 agencies that have become accredited. I want to congratulate these agencies and acknowledge the work of their chiefs, managers, and staff. Accreditation is an agency-wide effort, and every achievement represents significant dedication and internal improvement.

This winter also marks the completion of the first annual Standards Manual update cycle. As announced last year, the manual is now revised each October 1, with agencies implementing changes at the start of their next assessment year. Early feedback indicates that the shift to smaller, more frequent updates has been well received. The annual October 1 update will be the process moving forward, and I believe it is the least disruptive and most manageable approach. We will continue to refine and streamline the system to ensure it remains efficient and predictable.

Over the last several months, the MACP has been developing a new Advanced Accreditation Manager Training program, and we are pleased to announce its launch will be in March 2026. This course is intended for Accreditation Managers in the first few years in their role and is designed for graduates of the Basic Accreditation Manager Training, who are ready to deepen their expertise. The workshop focuses on strategic leadership, system-based process management, and assessment readiness which are key components for long-term success in the accreditation program.

A major recent development is the Accreditation Program has received a COPS grant for fiscal years 2025–2027. This funding allows the program to continue operating as it has, including ongoing compensation for assessors. The grant also enables the expansion of the Accreditation Mini-Grant program. Previously, mini grants were limited to agencies with under 25 sworn officers. The expanded MACP mini-grant program now provides financial assistance for agencies with under 99 officers, opening the door to begin the accreditation journey. It is a realistic opportunity for many small and mid-sized departments that recognize the value of accreditation but struggle with the initial costs.

The upgraded mini grant covers the initial accreditation fee and two years of PowerStandards. Our goal remains ensuring that every agency, regardless of size, has a feasible path to participate, and this expansion was developed with the realities of smaller and mid-sized departments in mind.

Those interested in applying should contact me at [msilverthorn@michiganpolicechiefs.org](mailto:msilverthorn@michiganpolicechiefs.org). I will provide the application materials, outline the requirements, and assist agencies as they begin the process. Awards will be issued on a rolling basis until funds are exhausted, so I strongly encourage agencies interested in pursuing accreditation to reach out early.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Winter Conference and discussing how accreditation can strengthen your agency in 2026 and beyond. Together, we will continue building a culture of excellence in law enforcement across Michigan. 🍀

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|---------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------|--------|
| Basic Sniper School                         | Apr 13-17, 2026    | Commerce Twp, MI | 20       | \$1019 |
| LPVO-Designated Marksman School             | Apr 20-21, 2026    | Commerce Twp, MI | 20       | \$499  |
| Advanced Sniper School                      | Apr 22-23, 2026    | Commerce Twp, MI | 20       | \$549  |
| Firearms Instructor School                  | Apr 27-May 3, 2026 | Sumpter Twp, MI  | 20       | \$1359 |
| Firearms Instructor Re-Cert                 | May 3, 2026        | Sumpter Twp, MI  | 20       | \$256  |
| Police Sniper Instructor School             | May 4-8, 2026      | Rockwood, MI     | 20       | \$1132 |
| Police Sniper Instructor School Re-Cert     | May 8, 2026        | Rockwood, MI     | 20       | \$256  |
| Patrol Rifle Instructor School              | May 18-22, 2026    | Rockwood, MI     | 20       | \$1019 |
| Patrol Rifle Instructor School Re-Cert      | May 22, 2026       | Rockwood, MI     | 20       | \$256  |
| RDS Instructor School                       | June 18-19, 2026   | Grayling, MI     | 20       | \$599  |
| National Patrol Rifle Championships - LEO's | October 17, 2026   | Commerce Twp, MI | 150      | \$99   |
| NPRC OPEN - Citizens                        | October 17, 2026   | Commerce Twp, MI | 50       | \$129  |



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# AIRSPACE UNDER PRESSURE: WHY MICHIGAN POLICE CAN'T AFFORD TO IGNORE DRONES



BY BILL JOHNSON

## PROTECTING MICHIGAN'S SKIES AND LEADING IN DRONE SAFETY AND INNOVATION

Drones have moved beyond the realm of futuristic technology and are now a practical and increasingly commonplace tool for public safety agencies across the country. From search and rescue operations to securing major events, unmanned aerial systems are reshaping how law enforcement protects communities. For police chiefs in Michigan, understanding and managing low altitude airspace has become a critical component of officer safety, operational readiness, and public trust.

### MANAGING INCREASINGLY COMPLEX AIRSPACE

As drone use expands, the complexity of the airspace in which they operate also increases. Safe and effective management requires coordination among local, state, and federal authorities. Airspace Link, a Detroit-based technology company, supports agencies across all levels by providing real time situational awareness, mapping, and regulatory guidance across multiple jurisdictions, helping departments operate safely and confidently.

### OPERATIONAL CONTROL AND SAFETY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

For law enforcement, effective airspace management means knowing who is flying, where they are flying, and whether flights are authorized and compliant. Accurate, real-time

data allows agencies to coordinate air and ground resources, respond quickly to incidents, and comply with rapidly changing federal and local regulations.

Integration of airspace information into command centers and emergency operations helps departments operate more efficiently during emergencies, large scale events, and disaster response.

Multi-jurisdictional coordination ensures neighboring agencies can collaborate without conflict, and platforms such as Airspace Link help departments distinguish critical flights from unauthorized drones. Counter Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) capabilities, including Friend versus Foe identification, allow departments to recognize immediately whether a detected drone is authorized public safety or emergency response, or a potential threat.

### COMMERCIAL DRONE OPERATORS AND AIRSPACE PRIORITY

It is important to understand that if commercial operators such as Amazon Air, Target, or Walmart begin drone operations in your area, they may receive airspace priority under current regulations. This may impact first responder operations during emergencies.

By engaging with Airspace Link and integrating their situational awareness tools, agencies can ensure that first responder flights maintain priority and that officer and public safety remain protected while commercial operations coexist safely in shared airspace.

### BUILDING SAFETY AND STRUCTURE IN DRONE PROGRAMS

Modern drone programs in law enforcement focus first on safety. Chiefs work to ensure compliance, train personnel, and establish risk management protocols that create a foundation of operational trust. Programs then develop structure through standard operating procedures, integration with existing Information Technology (IT) systems and policies, and alignment with local partners.

Once structured, departments can scale these programs by expanding into regional collaborations, data sharing efforts, and advanced applications such as accident reconstruction, search and rescue, and situational awareness for large events.

### A SYSTEM BUILT FOR INTEROPERABILITY

Michigan agencies often use different drone platforms, sensors, and command systems. Airspace Link provides a vendor neutral solution that allows all responding agencies to share a single operational picture.

When a major incident spans multiple cities or counties, police, fire, sheriff, state patrol, and federal partners can access the same real time airspace data. This prevents conflicts and enables coordinated response. The flexibility of the system allows departments to upgrade or change equipment over time without disrupting their overall airspace management infrastructure.

### COLLABORATION ACROSS DEPARTMENTS

Building a successful drone program



requires internal collaboration. IT teams, Geographic Information System (GIS) and planning personnel, emergency management staff, and public information officers all contribute to managing policy and compliance, integrating drone data, and communicating with the public.

Working together, these teams create a coordinated airspace ecosystem. Using a platform to unify these efforts ensures that first responders can remain focused on using drones to protect communities effectively.

#### **NAVIGATING A CROWDED SKY**

Public airspace is becoming increasingly crowded, and police chiefs must understand the dynamics of shared airspace. Without proper management, tactical responses or access to crime scenes may be delayed. Comprehensive airspace data provided by systems such as Airspace Link helps agencies plan with confidence and ensures officers can respond safely and efficiently.

#### **MICHIGAN'S OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD**

Michigan has a significant opportunity to lead the nation in the integration

of drones into public safety operations. By coordinating airspace across jurisdictions and building consistent programs that begin with safety and grow with intention, the state can set a model for others to follow.

Utilizing a platform to unify these efforts ensures that law enforcement agencies have the tools needed to operate confidently in increasingly complex skies. With effective planning, training, interoperability, and inter-agency collaboration, Michigan police departments can enhance operational readiness, protect officers, and maintain public trust while responsibly integrating drone technology into everyday operations.

#### **NDAA 2026 SAFER SKIES**

The NDAA 2026 Safer Skies provision establishes a clear federal framework granting SLTT law enforcement drone mitigation authority started January 1, 2026. Section 8602 authorizes trained state, local, tribal, and territorial agencies to detect and mitigate malicious or unsafe drones. This authority supports protection of people, critical infrastructure, correctional facilities, and

major public events. Use is limited to federally approved technologies and requires DOJ led training through the FBI NCUTC cUAS Academy. The authority sunsets on December 31, 2031, with DHS expected to support implementation through cUAS grant funding in FY 2027.

#### **CALL TO ACTION**

Police chiefs should take proactive steps now to manage low altitude airspace. Engage with Airspace Link to gain real time situational awareness, coordinate across jurisdictions, and ensure first responders maintain priority in an increasingly crowded sky.

Protect your officers, safeguard your communities, and lead the way in drone safety and operational excellence. ■

Bill Johnson leads operational strategy and financial planning for Airspace Link, a Detroit-based company. With more than 15 years of executive experience, he works directly with federal, state, and local agencies to streamline onboarding, identify strategic funding opportunities, and leverage contract vehicles for procurement. His expertise spans finance, operations, and strategic partnerships, driving scalable growth across defense, public safety, and critical infrastructure markets. Bill can be contacted at [bill.johnson@airspaceink.com](mailto:bill.johnson@airspaceink.com) and to learn more visit <https://airspaceink.com>.

# CONNECTING THE DOTS: THE CRITICAL ROLE OF NIBIN AND ETRACE IN MODERN CRIME GUN INTELLIGENCE



BY STANLEY  
KULIKOWSKI

## INTRODUCTION

Gun violence continues to challenge communities not only in Michigan but across the United States, demanding smarter, faster, and more collaborative responses from law enforcement.

In response to this, in 2024 the national High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program began the Multi-HIDTA Crime Gun Intelligence Center Partnership to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of regional HIDTA programs. The goal of this partnership is to leverage new technologies and to invest in innovative approaches to reduce gun violence, in particular drug-re-

lated gun violence connected to Drug Trafficking Organizations. This partnership also aims to provide education, awareness and training on the no-cost resources available to State, County, Local and Tribal law enforcement agencies. This article focuses on the two main pillars in modern crime gun intelligence, the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) and eTrace which have become crucial to any crime reduction strategy. These technologies allow law enforcement agencies to connect the dots to seemingly unrelated crimes, trace firearms to their sources, and build actionable intelligence to disrupt the shooting cycle and prevent future violence. When used consistently and strategically, the information obtained from NIBIN and eTrace don't just solve crimes, they help stop them before they happen.

## UNDERSTANDING THE TOOLS

### WHAT IS NIBIN?

NIBIN is a national database managed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), that captures and compares ballistic evidence—specifically, shell casings from crime scenes and test-fired firearms. Each casing has unique markings, which can be matched to other casings in the system (much like fingerprint data is compared in the Automated Fingerprint Identification System [AFIS]). This allows investigators to link shootings across jurisdictions, identify crime patterns, and connect firearms to multiple incidents.

### WHAT IS ETRACE?

eTrace is a web-based firearm tracing system also operated by the ATF. As NIBIN is like AFIS, eTrace is like the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), telling you the “DNA” of that weapon, such as the firearms dealer, important dates regarding that weapon, if the weapon has been previously traced and the identity of the first purchaser. This information is critical for identifying trafficking patterns, straw purchases, and sources of crime guns. When used in tandem with NIBIN, eTrace helps complete the investigative picture.

### THE POWER OF INTEGRATION

The real strength of these tools lies in their integration. For example, NIBIN might link a firearm to multiple shootings, while eTrace can identify where that firearm originated and who first purchased it. Together, they provide a



comprehensive view of a firearm's life-cycle and its role in criminal activity. This integrated approach supports intelligence-led policing and enables agencies to act on leads quickly and effectively.

### BENEFITS OF REGULAR AND CONSISTENT USE

When forward-thinking agency policy-makers and leaders follow best practices and implement these powerful tools into their agency's standard operating procedures, they often see a multitude of benefits such as:

### SOLVING AND PREVENTING CRIME

Consistent use of NIBIN and eTrace accelerates investigations and increases clearance rates. By rapidly identifying connections between cases, law enforcement can apprehend suspects before they commit additional crimes, getting these violent trigger-pullers off the streets before they can re-offend. This is especially critical in cases involving repeat shooters or retaliatory violence.

### INTELLIGENCE-LED POLICING

These tools also support data-driven decision making. Agencies can identify crime hotspots, monitor emerging trends, and use these technologies to allocate resources more effectively. This proactive approach shifts the focus from reactive policing to strategic intervention.

### ENHANCING INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

NIBIN and eTrace also foster collaboration between local, state, and federal agencies. By sharing data and intelligence, departments can break down jurisdictional silos and work together to address regional and national crime patterns.

### STRENGTHENING PROSECUTIONS

Ballistic and trace evidence can significantly bolster prosecutorial efforts. When investigators can demonstrate that a specific firearm was used in multiple crimes or trace it to a known trafficker, it strengthens the case in court and supports longer-term public safety outcomes.



### MICHIGAN'S INVESTMENT IN CRIME GUN INTELLIGENCE

It is important to note that not only has the Michigan HIDTA program invested in combating gun crime in our state through the Multi-HIDTA Crime Gun Intelligence Center Partnership but our partners at the Michigan State Police (MSP), Detroit Police Department, and Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety have recently allocated substantial funding to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their crime gun intelligence programs. Some examples include the recent purchase of five new NIBIN machines (MSP), the purchase of HIDTA/ATF Mobile Test Fire Trailers (Michigan HIDTA-ATF), and the hiring of Crime Gun Specific Analysts. Also supported are eight Michigan NIBIN Sites: Bridgeport (MSP), Detroit (Detroit PD, ATF Detroit Field Division), and MSP (Metro Detroit Forensic Lab), Grand Rapids (MSP), Kalamazoo DPS, Lansing (MSP) and the Oakland County Sheriff's Office where agencies can submit NIBIN submissions and also three Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGIC), which are located at the Detroit PD, Kalamazoo DPS and ATF's Detroit Field Division.

Detroit's CGIC is a collaboration be-

tween local, state, and federal law enforcement, and has dramatically expanded the use of NIBIN since becoming fully operational in 2020.

Since then, Detroit has more than doubled its NIBIN entries and increased actionable leads by an impressive 229%.<sup>1</sup> A 2024 peer-reviewed study found that cases with NIBIN leads were significantly more likely to be solved when the CGIC was active.<sup>2</sup> This success underscores the value of consistent and strategic use of crime gun intelligence tools.

Detroit's model demonstrates that NIBIN can go beyond investigation to serve as a proactive tool for identifying repeat shooters, disrupting criminal networks, and preventing future violence. Expanding this approach statewide, particularly in Michigan's most populated counties, could significantly enhance public safety and reduce gun violence across our state.

<sup>1</sup> Rojek, J., De Biasi, A., & McGarrell, E. (2022). *Evaluation of the Detroit Crime Gun*

<sup>2</sup> De Biasi, A. (2024). The impact of the Detroit Crime Gun Intelligence Center on fatal and nonfatal shooting clearance rates. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 94. [https://crimegunintelcenters.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/DeBiasi\\_2024\\_JCJ.pdf](https://crimegunintelcenters.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/DeBiasi_2024_JCJ.pdf)

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## CHALLENGES AND MISCONCEPTIONS

Despite their proven value, NIBIN and eTrace remain underutilized in some Michigan jurisdictions. A common misconception is that these tools are only useful for large departments or in our major cities. In reality, small and mid-size agencies can benefit from participation as well, especially when they collaborate with our regional or state-level partners.

Other barriers include limited training, staffing constraints, or simply lack of awareness. Addressing these challenges through funding, education, and policy can unlock the full potential of crime gun intelligence.

## CASE STUDY: DETROIT'S CGIC IN ACTION

In one notable case, Detroit's CGIC used NIBIN to link a single firearm to multiple shootings across different neighborhoods. eTrace then identified the original purchaser, who was later found to be involved in an illegal firearms trafficking operation. This intelligence not only led to an arrest but also prevented further violence by removing a key person providing access to these firearms from the streets.

Such outcomes are becoming more common as agencies embrace a data-driven, collaborative approach to gun crime.

## CALL TO ACTION

To fully realize the benefits of NIBIN and eTrace, agencies must commit to regular and timely submissions. This includes:

- Prioritizing timely entry of ballistic evidence into NIBIN.
- Tracing **every** recovered firearm through eTrace.
- Training personnel on the use and value of these tools.
- Collaborating with regional CGICs and federal partners.

By committing to the implementation and use of NIBIN and eTrace, agencies can shift from reactive investigations to proactive crime prevention. Accessing ATF's powerful Crime gun intelligence tools require no cost from an agency. You just need to contact the Michigan HIDTA CGIO or ATF Detroit Field Division to begin the enrollment process. The process is typically quick and uncomplicated, and once approved, agencies can begin analyzing NIBIN results and firearm trace data to help identify shooting patterns, link cases, and trace firearms back to their sources.

## CONCLUSION

NIBIN and eTrace are more than forensic tools—they are the pillars of modern crime gun intelligence. As demonstrated by Detroit's success, consistent

and strategic use can transform how agencies investigate, prevent, and ultimately reduce gun violence. These systems empower law enforcement to connect the dots between crimes, identify repeat offenders, and dismantle trafficking networks before they escalate.

With continued investment, and state-wide expansion, Michigan can lead the way in proactive crime gun intelligence. By making NIBIN and eTrace standard practice at your agency, not just optional tools, we can build safer communities, support more effective policing, and deliver justice more swiftly and reliably.

The technology is here. The results are proven. Now is the time to act. 🗡️

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Rojek, J., De Biasi, A., & McGarrell, E. (2022). *Evaluation of the Detroit Crime Gun intelligence center*. <https://forensic.msu.edu/assets/pdfs/mjsc/mjssc-detroit-cgic-final-report-2023.pdf>

In July 2024, Stanley Kulikowski was appointed as the Michigan HIDTA Crime Gun Intelligence Officer, recognizing his 26 years of distinguished law enforcement service. His career has been rooted in investigations and intelligence, with deep expertise in intelligence analysis, the production of actionable intelligence products, and inter-agency collaboration across federal, state, and local levels. He is the founder and Director of the Metropolitan Intelligence Group (MDIG) and served with the Michigan HIDTA Investigative Support and Deconfliction Center (ISDC) from 2011 to 2023. Stanley retired from the Dearborn Police Department in 2024, after 22 years of service, having previously served with the Canadian Pacific Railway Police and the Detroit Police Department.

Stan will be presenting at the upcoming 2026 MACP Winter Professional Development Conference with representatives from the ATF-Detroit Field Division and the Michigan State Police regarding their collaborative efforts to reduce gun violence in Michigan. If you would like information on how to obtain no-cost access to NIBIN or eTrace, please contact Stan directly at, [skulikowski@mi.hidta.net](mailto:skulikowski@mi.hidta.net).

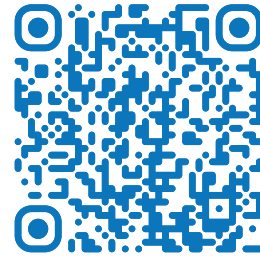


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# EVOLVING POLICING TO SAVE LIVES: HOW STERLING HEIGHTS IS REDUCING OVERDOSES AND REBUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS



BY CAPTAIN MARIO  
BASTIANELLI

Policing has always been about solving problems. As society changes, so do the problems we must confront. Few challenges have evolved more rapidly, or more painfully, than those involving mental health and substance use. In law enforcement today, we face a reality where addiction and mental illness are our main issues. They are at the core of countless calls for service, public safety concerns, and community tragedies. For many agencies across Michigan and the nation, finding effective solutions has been difficult. For some, resources have been nonexistent. And for all of us, the stakes could not be higher.

In Sterling Heights, we recognized several years ago that traditional enforcement-only approaches were no longer enough. We were responding to the same homes, the same families, the same individuals—again and again. Addiction was fueling crime, burdening our jail, overwhelming officers, and claiming lives at an unprecedented pace. The opioid crisis was not just a public health emergency; it was a law enforcement emergency.

So, we decided that if addiction was at the core of so many problems, then addressing addiction—directly, compassionately, and with evidence-based support—had to become a core component of how we police.

Today, the results have exceeded anything I have witnessed in my 24-year

policing career. Since 2020, Sterling Heights has reduced overdoses by **63 percent** and overdose deaths by **45 percent**. These numbers are not abstract; they represent human beings—mothers, fathers, sons, daughters—who are still alive today because of a new approach to policing, one grounded in partnership, innovation, and a willingness to evolve.

Modern policing places greater demands on officers today than at any point in the past. Chiefs and officers alike know that our profession is increasingly tasked with addressing social and public health problems that were never traditionally within our job description. Mental health and substance use disorder are among the most significant challenges facing agencies of every size and location. These chal-



lenges are deeply intertwined, feeding into cycles of crime, crisis, and community harm.

The question is no longer whether police should be involved in addressing these issues. We already are—every day, through every call for service, through every overdose response, through every family in crisis. The real question is whether we will confront these challenges with the tools of yesterday or with the strategies needed for today.

In Sterling Heights, we chose to lead from the front.

A major catalyst for our progress has been our partnership with Face Addiction Now (FAN). Before this part-

*(Continued on Page 18)*



(Continued from Page 17)

nership, we simply did not have the resources, the connections, or the infrastructure to truly help individuals struggling with addiction. As officers, we often encountered people at their lowest moments but had nowhere meaningful to send them for help. The result was frustration—for officers, for families, and most tragically, for the individuals caught in the cycle.

FAN changed that.

This partnership gave us access to recovery coaches, treatment pathways, follow-up resources, and a true support system that extended beyond the initial 911 call. Together, we built something new: a model that merged compassionate care with proactive policing. It created a bridge between the public and resources which allowed officers to do more than simply respond—we could now intervene effectively.

The most visible and impactful product of this partnership is the **COMEBACK Quick Response Team (QRT)** program. Its mission is simple: within 72 hours of an overdose or our officer encountering someone with an addiction, a team consisting of a police officer, a trained peer recovery coach, and a trained family recovery coach goes directly to the individual's home. This team provides immediate support, treatment options, and compassionate engagement at a moment when the in-

dividual is most vulnerable—and most open to change.

The COMEBACK program has become one of the most successful initiatives in our department's history. So successful, in fact, that 23 other police agencies in Michigan have adopted the model. The program is now being studied and evaluated in New York and Kansas, with agencies across the country recognizing that this innovative approach could be a nationwide model for saving lives.

This spread of interest is no accident. Chiefs everywhere are seeking solutions that reduce repeat calls, reduce preventable deaths, lessen the burden on officers, and build trust with communities. COMEBACK is doing exactly that.

Addiction is not only responsible for many of our medical emergencies, it is a driving force behind recidivism. Too many individuals are caught in a revolving door between addiction, criminal behavior, and incarceration. To address this, the City of Sterling Heights, FAN, and the Macomb County Prosecutors Office created **ReDirect**, a jail diversion program designed to break that cycle before individuals fall back into old patterns.

ReDirect identifies individuals in custody who are struggling with addiction and provides them with immediate ac-

cess to treatment options, recovery services, and ongoing support. Instead of releasing someone back into the same environment with no plan, ReDirect creates a true off-ramp—one rooted in accountability, assistance, and long-term engagement.

The results speak for themselves: a 50 percent success rate in preventing recidivism and avoiding a return to jail. In the world of addiction, a 50 percent success rate is extraordinary. For policing, it represents fewer crimes, fewer victims, fewer repeat offenders, and a safer community. It also reflects a fundamental truth: when people receive help instead of only punishment, outcomes improve dramatically.

The programs we have implemented in Sterling Heights represent a broader shift within policing—a shift based on recognizing that enforcement alone cannot solve deeply rooted societal challenges. Innovative, outside-the-box policing is not simply a buzzword; it is the path forward for agencies that want to reduce crime, improve public safety, and rebuild community trust.

Traditional policing will always have its place. We will always enforce the law, arrest violent offenders, and protect our communities. Yet in addressing addiction—an illness, not a moral deficiency—our approach must broaden. Officers require both the authority to enforce and the tools to provide meaningful assistance.

Our programs have shown that when police are equipped with resources, partnerships, and alternative pathways, we can achieve outcomes that would have been unthinkable a decade ago. We can turn the tide on overdoses. We can reduce jail populations. We can help families heal. And we can rebuild trust with communities that too often only see the badge during moments of crisis.

In my 24 years in policing, I have seen many programs come and go. Some



were successful, some less so, and some had only small impacts. But I can say without hesitation that there has never been another program we have implemented that has helped as many people, and saved as many lives, as our addiction-focused initiatives.

These programs have changed the trajectory of our department, our community, and the lives of countless families. They have made Sterling Heights safer, healthier, and more resilient. And most importantly, they have proven what can happen when law enforcement chooses to evolve—not because it is easy, but because our communities demand it.

Every community in Michigan is touched by addiction. Every agency is asked to respond to its consequences. Chiefs understand the strain it places on officers, budgets, jails, and families. But we also have the unique ability, and responsibility, to lead change.

Sterling Heights is not unique because we faced an addiction crisis. We are unique because we chose to confront it with innovation, compassion, and partnership. And the results have been nothing short of transformative.

My challenge to police leaders across the state is this: **Don't wait for someone else to bring you the solution. Become the agency that builds it.** The tools exist. The partnerships are available. The outcomes are proven.

The future of policing requires us to adapt. When we do, we don't just re-



duce crime—we save lives, strengthen families, and build safer, healthier communities.

And that is a legacy worth fighting for. 🍀

With over 24 years of dedicated service in law enforcement, Captain Mario Bastianelli has built a career defined by leadership, innovation, and compassion. In 2018, while serving as a lieutenant, he co-founded a nonprofit organization focused on supporting individuals struggling with addiction in Sterling Heights. He became the founding President of the Sterling Heights Drug Free Coalition, an

initiative that continues to make a significant impact in the community.

As a leader deeply committed to public safety and community wellness, Captain Bastianelli has played a pivotal role in launching two transformative programs in partnership with Face Addiction Now: the COMEBACK Quick Response Team and the Re-Direct Jail Diversion Program. Both initiatives bridge the gap between public safety and mental health, offering support and resources to individuals battling substance use disorders.

If you have any questions or would like more information, you may contact Captain Bastianelli at [mbastianelli@sterlingheights.gov](mailto:mbastianelli@sterlingheights.gov).

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# LAW ENFORCEMENT'S ROLE IN ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

BY SARAH GUSTIN  
LORI MARS

Elder abuse is a pervasive and complex social, legal, and human rights issue that affects millions of older adults worldwide. An estimated 1 in 10 community-living older adults aged 60 and older experience some form of abuse each year. Those are just the cases we know about. Most abuse is hidden and unreported by victims. That is because

it is frequently committed by family members or caregivers upon whom older people may rely for necessities. Pre-existing age-related vulnerabilities like chronic disease, cognitive impairment, and frailty can expose people to an increased risk of harm. In the aftermath of abuse, the fear of retaliation, shame, isolation, and loss can have a chilling effect on disclosure and access to safety and supportive resources.

Abuse comes in many forms and can have severe and long-lasting consequences. Physical, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse as well as neglect may result in depression, anxiety, serious physical injuries, long-term care placement, increased cognitive decline, financial harm, the loss of independence in later life, and premature mortality. For older victims who live with abuse, options for relief



and recovery may seem unattainable.

### THE CRITICAL ROLE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT IN COMBATING ELDER ABUSE

Law enforcement professionals have a vital role in identifying, investigating, and responding to cases of abuse. Often the first point of contact for older adults living with abuse, officers can be a bridge to safety for many struggling older victims fearful of reporting abuse, unable to access relief, or unaware of the resources available. Officers and investigators are central to efforts to secure elder protection and ensure perpetrator accountability.

### CHALLENGES IN ABUSE DETECTION AND RESPONSE

Many officers may be untrained in the signs and risk factors of abuse, and unfamiliar with approaches to working with older victims of family harm. This can hamper opportunities to identify and investigate abuse and reduce recurrence. Additional barriers that may impede investigation and response include insufficient understanding of the laws relating to older adult protections and associated criminal charges like sexual assault. Potential difficulties in interviewing older victims with cognitive, sensory, and chronic medical conditions may also inhibit the law enforcement response.

### THE ELDER ABUSE GUIDE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement professionals can access a range of resources to support their response to elder abuse. First among them is the Elder Abuse Guide for Law Enforcement (EAGLE), a free web-based resource supported by the United States Department of Justice, Elder Justice Initiative. It is designed to aid officers in identifying, intervening, and resolving cases of abuse. EAGLE is equipped with quick reference guides, checklists, and tools to assist with evidence collection, documentation, and interviewing older adults. The website provides easy access to state-specific statutes. It also offers guidance on

multidisciplinary collaborations that can improve case coordination, investigation, and comprehensive case resolution.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION

Elder abuse multidisciplinary teams bring together professionals from various disciplines to review, analyze, and provide options for resolution in complex cases of abuse. Teams may be large or small, and may include adult protective services caseworkers, long-term care ombudsman, prosecutors, civil attorneys, elder advocates, the public guardian, and law enforcement, among others. These working relationships can help ensure that cases move more smoothly through investigative, prosecutorial, and judicial processes. Clearly understanding the roles and responsibilities of other professionals, gleaned from their perspectives, and utilizing their specialized skills can better facilitate person-focused justice and more meaningful outcomes for older victims. Visit EAGLE to find multidisciplinary teams and resources in your community.<sup>1</sup>

### TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

EAGLE offers several mechanisms for continuing education, including off-the-shelf asynchronous training modules, remote training, tailored in-person training, and roll-call videos. Trainings run from 1-hour to 8-hour curricula depending upon the subject matter, the breadth of topics addressed, and the needs of the law enforcement agency. Interactive training uses case-based, problem-solving teaching tools to inform learners.

### COMMUNITY-BASED RESOURCES

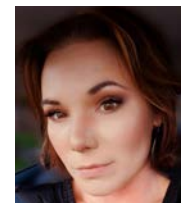
Officers can also support older victims by providing referrals to victim advocates and community-based services. Local resources such as counselling, transportation, food delivery, and social connection may promote healing and recovery following abuse. The EAGLE website provides access to in-

formation about community services. By entering your zip code on the home page, EAGLE will populate helping resources in your area.

### CONCLUSION

The critical role of law enforcement in combating elder abuse cannot be overstated. As frontline responders, law enforcement professionals must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively identify and investigate abuse, provide support to victims, and hold perpetrators accountable. Understanding the complexities, including its various forms, consequences, and risk factors, law enforcement can develop targeted strategies to prevent and address abuse. Further, collaboration with other agencies, such as adult protective services and healthcare providers, is essential to facilitate a comprehensive response to elder abuse cases.

With elder justice as a priority, law enforcement can play a prominent role in creating a safer and more supportive environment for older adults and ultimately prevent the devastating consequences of elder abuse. 🍀



Sarah Gustin is the Program Administrator for the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) and the Elder Abuse Guide for Law Enforcement (EAGLE). She holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and brings

18 years of experience working with older adults and advocating for their rights across various systems, including Adult Protective Services, Ombudsman, Law Enforcement, and Prosecution. Sarah's work is informed by her understanding of and experience in working with older adults and direct service provides.



Lori Mars, JD, LLM, is the Director of the NCEA and EAGLE. She is an assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. Her concentration lies at the intersection of law, aging, education, and elder abuse. She

can be contacted at: [Lori.Mars@med.usc.edu](mailto:Lori.Mars@med.usc.edu).

<sup>1</sup> cited website: <https://www.justice.gov/elder-justice/eagle-elder-abuse-guide-law-enforcement>

# LEADING IN THE GRAY ZONE: HOW MODERN POLICING CAN NAVIGATE THE LARGEST GENERATIONAL SHIFT IN ITS HISTORY

BY DR. JOEL ROBERTSON

MARC DECKER

Police leadership is entering a moment unlike any seen before. For decades, agencies were shaped by a command system built on Baby Boomer values: discipline, hierarchy, and unquestioned chain of command. That framework served its purpose remarkably well for the generations it was built around.

But today's recruits are not those officers.

Millennials and Gen Z now represent the future of policing. They arrive with different expectations, different communication styles, and, most importantly, different brains. Their formative years were shaped by digital saturation, constant flow of information, and earlier exposure to psychological stress. The result is a widening cultural, emotional, and cognitive gap inside agencies nationwide.

This is known as **the gray zone**.

**A leadership moment between two eras, where traditional leadership tools no longer produce the same results, but the next-generation approaches aren't yet fully formed.**

How agencies lead through this transition will determine whether they thrive, stagnate, or struggle under the escalating pressures of recruitment shortages, retention issues, and burnout.

## THE COMMAND CULTURE POLICING INHERITED AND WHY IT'S CRACKING

For generations, traditional police leadership drew from a well-worn formula:

- Military-style, hierarchy
- Baby boomer learning styles
- Rigid procedural consistency
- Clear, top-down communication

This approach created stability. Officers followed orders. Structure was predictable. Promotion pathways felt straightforward. Agencies prized grit, stoicism, and endurance. Qualities that served the profession well. But today's officers were shaped by a profoundly different environment, one

defined by:

- Constant digital feedback
- Collaborative decision-making
- A need for psychological safety
- Purpose-driven work
- Personalized learning and development

*It is not that newer officers reject discipline. They reject discipline delivered without context, rules without meaning and directives without explanation.*

This is why the old reflex "tighten up and crack down" is no longer generating commitment. It may produce short-term compliance, but that compliance evaporates the moment morale drops.

But generational research is clear: what was interpreted as strong leadership by older officers is often perceived by younger ones as dismissal or disengagement.

More rigidity may produce short-term compliance, but it rarely creates long-term commitment. Standards themselves are not the problem, how they are communicated and reinforced is.

Standards still matter. But the way we deliver those standards must evolve.

## THE PERSONNEL CRISIS BEHIND THE CULTURAL CRISIS

Police agencies today face pressure from two powerful, competing forces:

### 1. Veteran officers are retiring faster than agencies can replace them.

These officers carry decades of situational wisdom, instinctive decision-making experience, and emotional maturity. Yet many feel increasingly disconnected from modern culture, shifting leadership expectations, and the new emphasis on wellbeing and psychological sustainability.

### 2. New recruits arrive with a different psychological and cognitive foundation.

- They place high value on:
- Mental health
- Transparency
- Work-life balance
- Collaborative leadership
- Purpose and meaning in their work

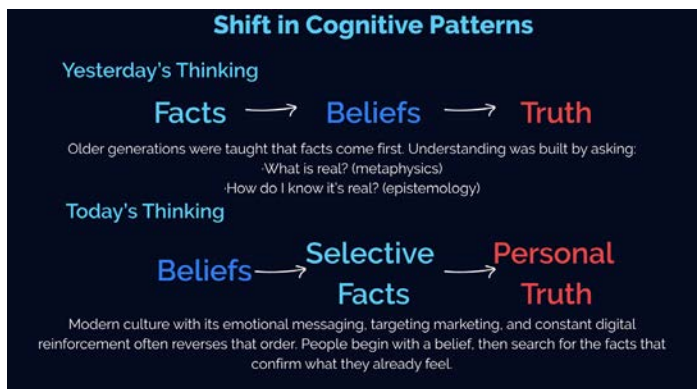
They struggle with:

- Rigid authority
- Vague or shifting expectations
- “Because I said so” styles of leadership

The resulting friction is not about right or wrong, it is that each group was shaped by different worlds.

### HOW THOUGHT PATTERNS THEMSELVES HAVE CHANGED

The generational shift in policing goes beyond values, it extends to how officers think, process information, and make decisions. This image illustrates a fundamental change in thought patterns:



Recognizing this shift is key to effective leadership, communication, and training in modern law enforcement.

This shift influences how younger officers interpret guidance, evaluate leadership decisions, and respond to organizational communication.

The crisis becomes most acute when a shrinking pool of experienced officers collides with new hires shaped by a completely different cognitive world. The result creates vulnerabilities in organizational stability, operational readiness, and overall safety.

### HOW OUR SOCIETY IS CREATING ADDITIONAL STRUGGLES FOR LEADERSHIP NEUROPOLARIZATION AND ITS IMPACT ON POLICING

Media outlets and digital platforms have increasingly fostered polarized thinking, training individuals' brains to rely on familiar and affirming information. This tendency poses distinct challenges within law enforcement, where impartiality and objectivity are foundational principles. Both new recruits and experienced leaders must navigate the effects of

this rigidity in thought, which can undermine effective decision-making and collaborative problem solving.

### NEUROSCIENTIFIC INSIGHTS INTO THOUGHT PATTERNS

Recent functional MRI (fMRI) research focused on the dorsal medial prefrontal cortex (DMPFC) has highlighted two primary patterns of cognitive activity. When individuals engage in integrative thinking, the entire DMPFC is activated, allowing for the consideration of multiple viewpoints, contextual integration, evaluation of trade-offs, and preservation of cognitive flexibility. Conversely, Neuropolarization, characterized by rigid, emotionally driven, or pre-determined thinking—results in only partial activation of the DMPFC. This selective neural engagement strengthens preexisting beliefs, disregards conflicting information, and diminishes one's ability to adopt alternative perspectives. The outcome is a polarized neural response, which stands in contrast to the balanced reasoning achieved through integrated cognitive processing.

### PERPETUATING THE CYCLE OF NEUROPOLARIZATION IN DAILY LIFE

In everyday situations, influences such as political discourse and social media activity commonly encourage individuals to “choose sides.” This environment perpetuates entrenched viewpoints by prompting people to seek out information that aligns with their beliefs, rather than pursuing thorough or unbiased research. Consequently, individuals often confine their exploration to sources that reinforce their existing perspectives, progressively narrowing their understanding of complex issues.

After gathering information that supports their views, people frequently join groups or communities, sometimes described as “tribes,” whose members share similar opinions. Within these communities, agreement and validation are continually reinforced, which further entrenches the division between differing viewpoints. This recurring pattern of selective information gathering and collective affirmation intensifies Neuropolarization, gradually diminishing the ability to consider alternative perspectives or apply integrative thinking in decision-making.

### NEUROSCIENCE DATA: WHAT'S REALLY CHANGING IN TODAY'S RECRUITS

Research indicates that the brain forms perspectives regarding self, others, as well as past and future experiences within the first 12 years of life. These early developments influence an individual's perceptions and expectations, serving as reference points for evaluation throughout their lifetime.

The global, national, state, regional, familial, religious, and peer cultures in which an individual is raised play a substantial role in shaping their responses to various life situations.

This explains why the brain is programmed and struggles to grasp leadership styles from other generations.

(Continued on Page 24)

Robertson Research Institute's data on 1,797 law enforcement patrol officer paints a striking picture of Gen Z, the generation now entering the profession.

## 1. Gen Z Arrives with Higher Childhood Stress

Childhood stress leaves a neurological imprint that shapes how individuals see themselves, interpret others, and respond under pressure—often without conscious awareness. Before age 12, Gen Z experienced:

- Twice the depression rates of older generations
- Significantly higher compulsive tendencies
- More early-life anxiety
- More environmental and social stressors

This means they begin policing with:

- Reduced emotional reserve
- Faster escalation into overwhelm
- A higher need for reassurance and clarity
- Elevated baseline anxiety

This is not weakness. It is neurological exposure.

Their childhood was shaped by:

- Social media saturation
- School lockdown drills
- Pandemic isolation
- Academic and social pressure
- Constant comparison and digital evaluation

Their brains developed in an environment with no off switch.

## POLICING IMPLICATION:

Sink-or-swim training breaks this generation. Supportive, structured, feedback-rich training grows them.

## 2. Gen Z Thinks Differently—And Responds to Leadership Differently

Robertson Research Institute data shows Gen Z has *double* the rate of “Diverse” and “Focused” thinkers compared to older cohorts.

This means they are:

- Creative, but not innovative
- Strong pattern-recognizing
- Quick to adapt
- Highly focused when they're engaged

But they struggle with:

- Long, linear procedures
- Vague instructions
- Monotonous tasks
- Rigid, strictly top-down communication

## POLICING IMPLICATION:

- Explain the *why*, not just the *what*.
- Context creates buy-in.
- Command alone creates distance.
- Today's recruits need meaning as much as direction.

## 3. Their Project Strengths: Stabilizers and Optimizers, Not Conceptualizers

Every individual has a natural brain preference for one of four project strengths: conceptualizing, implementing, stabilizing or optimizing projects. When comparing generations, a clear pattern emerges.

Gen Z scored:

- Lowest in conceptualizing (creating solutions from scratch)
- Highest in stabilizing and optimizing (improving existing systems)

They excel when:

- Systems are consistent and reasons are clear
- Rules are clear and the why's are explained
- Training is structured and supportive
- Expectations are transparent

They struggle when:

- Policies that are ambiguous
- Instructions shift without explanation
- Supervisors assume they “should just know”

## POLICING IMPLICATION:

Give them stability first, innovation later.

## 4. Their Decision-Making Style: Fast but Sometimes Shallow

The brain is no longer understood through the old “left-brain vs. right-brain” model. Instead, it operates through three major networks:

- **Salience Network** – filters and prioritizes what grabs your attention
- **Default Mode Network** – interprets meaning, stories, and internal thoughts
- **Executive Control Network** – makes decisions based on what you filtered and how you interpreted it.

When comparing these networks across generations, Gen Z scored highest in:

- Rapid filtering
- Quick perceiving
- Fast responding

But lower in:

- Deep, integrative processing

In practical terms, they tend to:

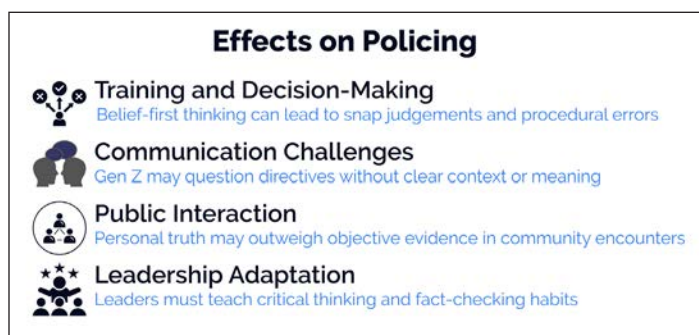
- Take in information fast
- React fast
- Adapt fast

But they may also:

- Jump to conclusions
- Miss nuance
- Struggle with layered or ambiguous situations
- Hit cognitive overload faster

#### POLICING IMPLICATION:

Scenario training must slow them down, not speed them up.



#### THE GENERATIONAL DIVIDE: WHY TRAINING CONFLICTS HAPPEN

The tension many agencies feel during training isn't personal, it's generational and developmental. Officers from different eras were shaped by entirely different learning environments, leadership models, and cognitive development.

Older officers grew up valuing:

- Linear step-by-step processes
- Patience and endurance
- Clear hierarchy
- A "do your time" culture
- Rule-first thinking

Gen Z grew up valuing:

- Rapid problem-solving
- Instant feedback
- Emotional transparency
- Collaborative communication
- Purpose-driven work

This mismatch leads to predictable conflict:

#### VETERANS FEEL:

- "They're too sensitive."
- "They want everything explained."
- "They can't handle stress."
- "They feel entitled."

#### GEN Z FEELS:

- "No one tells me what's expected."
- "My training officer gets frustrated instantly."
- "I can't ask questions without looking weak."

Both perspectives are understandable because both groups operate from different cognitive wiring and formative experiences.

#### WHY CHANGE IS HARD IN POLICING

Unlike other industries such as tech, healthcare, or private-sector industries, police agencies cannot simply pivot when culture shifts or new challenges emerge. Their operating environment is tightly constrained by:

- Union contracts
- State mandates and licensing requirements
- Standardized training models
- Legal and liability frameworks
- Constant public scrutiny
- Political oversight from multiple directions

These exist for good reasons, but they also slow modernization. Agencies must adapt within the structure, not around it. This is what makes the gray zone both difficult and critically important.

#### A NEW LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR THE MODERN POLICE WORKFORCE

Bridging the generational divide doesn't require abandoning or lowering expectations. It requires a hybrid leadership model, one that preserves the foundation of policing while integrating modern neuroscience and what we now know about how today's officers learn and respond.



#### THE MOMENT AHEAD

Policing is undergoing a once-in-a-generation transformation. Agencies that adapt will recruit more effectively, retain talent longer, and develop healthier, more resilient officers.

Those that cling to outdated assumptions will continue to face:

- Staffing collapses
- Burnout and fatigue
- Early-career resignation
- Low morale
- Erosion in public trust

The challenge is not choosing between tradition and innovation. It is building a bridge strong enough for both.

(Continued on Page 26)

## FEATURE

(Continued from Page 25)

This is leading in the gray zone – the future of the profession depends on it.

### PROTECT THE PROTECTORS™

The insights in this article come straight from **Protect the Protectors™**, the only program that gives agencies the data, tools, and strategies to close the generational gap, build resilient teams, and lead the future of policing based upon agency personal data.

Our proprietary Protect the Protectors™ program helps those who help us. By combining real-world data with neuroscience-based strategies, the program strengthens first responders' emotional, mental, and physical health, thereby reducing burnout, improving performance, and building more resilient officers and teams. In an era defined by the gray zone, this program equips agencies with the tools to not just survive the generational shift, but to thrive.

If you have questions or would like to get more information on how Protect the Protectors™ can support state and local law enforcement agencies, contact Robertson Brain Health President Marc Decker, at [mdecker@robertsonhealth.com](mailto:mdecker@robertsonhealth.com) or (616) 915-4328. 📞



Dr. Joel Robertson is the CEO & Founder, Robertson Health Companies & Co-founder of the Protect the Protectors™ Program. Dr. Robertson created Robertson Institute in which he consulted with Fortune 100 companies and lectured for multiple medical associations, as well as other national and international organizations.



Marc Decker is a leader in applied behavioral medicine and global health innovation and currently serves as President of Robertson Brain Health. He is also the Co-founder of Protect the Protectors™, a pioneering brain-health initiative supporting thousands of first responders throughout the Midwest.

His work focuses on translating advanced brain-health science into practical, preventative tools that strengthen individual wellness, performance, and relationships. Over his 20-year career, Marc has combined operational leadership with a deep commitment to humanitarian impact, helping expand access to health technologies in underserved regions and guiding the development of programs that meaningfully improve quality of life.



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**DAN WRESINSKI**  
Ford Municipal Inventory Specialist  
(517) 481-3638  
dwresinski@lafontaine.com



**IN MEMORIAM: CHIEF DON LEE VER HAGE**  
**KALAMAZOO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**  
**E.O.W. NOVEMBER 10, 2025**



Chief Don Lee Ver Hage of Kalamazoo, MI, passed away on November 10, 2025, at the age of 82.

He graduated from Otsego High School in 1961 and went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree from Western Michigan University in 1993. On May 16, 1964, he married Carol Lee Smith, who survives him.

Chief Ver Hage began his distinguished career with the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety, where he served for 31 years. He spent 13 of those years in the Crime Scene Investigation Unit. Following the merger of the police and fire departments, he cross-trained as a Public Safety Officer (PSO). He was promoted to PSO Sergeant in 1984 and PSO Lieutenant in 1986, retiring in May 1996 at the rank of Lieutenant. For 22 years, he also taught Crime Scene Investigation at the Police Academy at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, sharing his expertise with the next generation of officers.

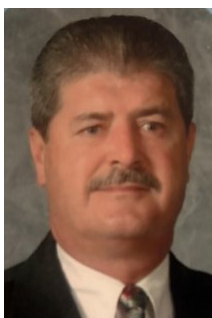
In June 1996, Donald continued his service in law enforcement as Chief of Police for the Village of Mattawan, retiring in May 2015. He took great pride in his 50 years of combined service to the communities he served.

We honor Chief Ver Hage's five decades of dedication to the City of Kalamazoo and the Village of Mattawan. He served with integrity, compassion, and unwavering commitment to public safety. His leadership left a lasting and meaningful impact on both departments and the communities he protected.

Surviving are his three children, Kelly, Cynthia, and D.J., and his nine grandchildren. His son D.J. also followed in his footsteps, retiring from the Wyoming Police Department after 27 years of service.

Our thoughts are with his family, friends, and all who had the privilege of serving alongside him. Chief Ver Hage was a proud member of the MACP until his retirement in 2015. 🍀

**IN MEMORIAM: CHIEF ROBERT "BOB" KISH**  
**LINCOLN PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**E.O.W. OCTOBER 5, 2025**



Chief Robert "Bob" Kish, of Wyandotte, MI, passed away peacefully at home on October 5, 2025, at the age of 78.

Chief Kish honorably served in the United States Army during Vietnam, having received a Bronze Star. He was sworn in as a Police Officer with the Lincoln Park Police Department on March 31, 1969. Over the course of his

distinguished career, he held various positions within the department and was appointed Police Chief on November 13, 1997. After 35 years, he concluded his dedicated service to the department on October 1, 2004.

Chief Kish was the proud father of Kelly (Jim) Williams, Lisa (Rick) Cadez and Steven, and proud grandpa of Avery, Nathan, Alex, Rickey and Haley. He will be deeply missed by many. 🍀

**SAVE THE DATE**

2026 Administrative  
 Assistants Conference

**April 23-24, 2026**

**Mt. Pleasant, MI**

# HIGHLIGHTS

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GRADUATES OF THE 2025 FALL POLICE EXECUTIVES & NEW CHIEFS SCHOOL



**Row 1 ( Left to Right )** – Captain Dustin Lockard, Bloomfield Hills Department of Public Safety; Chief Aaron Phipps, Albion Department of Public Safety; Lieutenant Joe Mullally, Canton Township Police Department; Lieutenant Scott Burley, Roseville Police Department; Chief Ahmed Haidar, Dearborn Heights Police Department; Captain Starr Gonzales, Detroit Police Department; Captain Amber Roberson, Detroit Police Department; Lieutenant Michelle Hesse, Auburn Hills Police Department; Captain Erica Frederick, Detroit Police Department; Captain Stacy Greer-Travis, Detroit Police Department; Deputy Director Todd Anderson, Farmington Department of Public Safety; Captain Domenic Lauria, Farmington Hills Police Department; Deputy Director Dan Northup, St. Joseph Department of Public Safety; Deputy Chief Bob Gaiser, Caro Police Department; Lieutenant Kevin Cisler, Zeeland Police Department.

**Row 2 ( Left to Right )** – Captain Scott Lucas, Sterling Heights Police Department; Lieutenant Adam Shulman, Canton Police Department; Chief Joel Catts, Village of Hesperia Police Department; Lieutenant Dan Langbeen, Troy Police Department; Chief Adam DeBoer, South Haven Police Department; Captain Shaun Dunning, Detroit Police Department; Captain Sederick Dunbar, Detroit Police Department; Deputy Director Jeff Case, Sturgis Department of Public Safety; Sergeant Duane Hunger, Port Huron Police Department; Deputy Chief Blake McKinney, Benton Township Police Department; Captain Chris Takemoto, Bridgman Police Department; Administrative Sergeant Shawn Poole, Hartford Police Department; Detective Will Bowen, Petoskey Department of Public Safety; Lieutenant Daniel Loder, Cheboygan Police Department; Lieutenant Sam Carlsen, Paw Paw Police Department; Lieutenant David Allen, Sterling Heights Police Department.

**Row 3 ( Left to Right )** – Chief Rich Mackey, Emmett Township Department of Public Safety; Assistant Chief Dan Mercer, Boyne City Police Department; Administrative Lieutenant Chris Wenzell, Midland Police Department; Lieutenant Scott Lamont, Petoskey Department of Public Safety; Lieutenant Chris Fredenburg, Saginaw Township Police Department; Lieutenant Michael Andes, Canton Public Safety; Chief Tony Carrick, Chocoley Township Police Department; Chief Jason Wise, Zilwaukee Police Department; Sergeant Jean-Pierre Gracey, Essexville Public Safety Department; Chief Jordan Wieber, Manton Police Department; Sergeant Thomas Raisanen, Walker Police Department; Lieutenant Eric Hix, Oakland County Sheriff's Office; Lieutenant Stephen Dooley, Oakland County Sheriff's Office; Detective Sergeant Jody Horne, Clawson Police Department; Director Louis Tyson, Bishop Intl. Airport Department of Public Safety.



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# NEW MEMBERS

## ACTIVE VOTING

Chief Kyle Binger ..... Gladwin Police Department  
 Chief Austin Calderon ..... Marenisco Township Police Department  
 Chief Joel Catts ..... Village of Hesperia Police Department  
 Chief Ryan Hillard ..... Clinton Police Department  
 Director Daniel B. Lindstrom ..... Grand Valley State University DPS  
 Chief Steve McKenney ..... Sandusky Police Department  
 Chief Sheila Peters ..... Munising Police Department  
 Chief Evan A. Thomas ..... Denton Township Police Department  
 Chief Cameron Wassman ..... Central Michigan University Police Department  
 Chief Jeffrey L. Wright ..... Tecumseh Police Department

## ACTIVE

Lieutenant Michael Andes ..... Canton Township Police Department  
 Deputy Chief Todd Brozek ..... Grosse Ile Police Department  
 Detective Sgt. Dean M. Caldwell ..... Wixom Police Department  
 Deputy Chief Frank Canning ..... Trenton Police Department  
 Lieutenant Kevin F. Dush ..... Central Michigan University Police Department

Sergeant Donovan Ennis ..... St. Clair Police Department  
 Patrol Sergeant Jeremiah Haner ..... Manistee City Police Department  
 Lieutenant Matthew A. Ivory ..... White Lake Township Police Department  
 Sergeant Brandon Kueppers ..... Gun Lake Tribal Police Department  
 Captain Domenic Lauria ..... Farmington Hills Police Department  
 Captain Justin Moore ..... Lansing Police Department  
 Lieutenant Steven Morrow ..... Baroda-Lake Township Police Department  
 Sergeant Thomas Raisanen ..... Walker Police Department  
 Deputy Chief Phillip Randazzo ..... Center Line Department of Public Safety  
 Deputy Chief Alison Rieser ..... Roseville Police Department  
 Lieutenant Thomas Sarasin ..... White Lake Township Police Department  
 Captain Barry C. Schrader ..... Michigan State Police - First District HQ  
 Lieutenant Jonah Schutte ..... Gerrish Township Police Department  
 Lieutenant Curtis Smith ..... Calhoun County Sheriff's Office  
 Director Erik Tilli ..... Wayne County Regional Police Academy  
 Admin. Lieutenant Chris Wenzell ..... Midland Police Department  
 Captain Austin L. Young ..... Escanaba Department of Public Safety

# IACP 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



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2024



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Other Big Boss

2025



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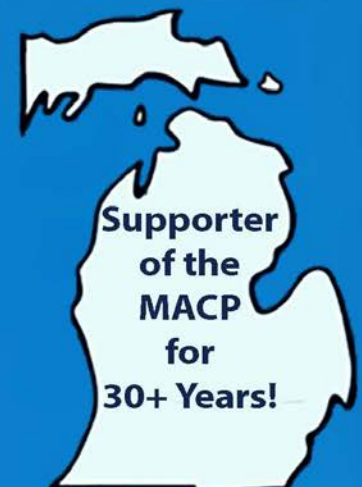
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# Upcoming Events

2026 Spring Police Executives  
& New Chiefs School

May 4-8, 2026

2026 Summer Professional  
Development Conference

June 22-24, 2026

2026 Fall Police Executives  
& New Chiefs School

September 14-18, 2026





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Clinton Township Police Command Center (left), Shelby Township Police Station Building Additions and Interior Renovations (right).

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## ACCREDITATION RECOGNITION

Congratulations to the Saginaw Police Department on earning their accredited status. Chief Ruth was presented with the department's Certificate of Accreditation during a recent city council meeting with their elected officials, team members, and community all present. There are 93 agencies across the state who are currently accredited by the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission.



Saginaw PD

Left to Right: Chief Robert Ruth and Lieutenant David Kendziorski.



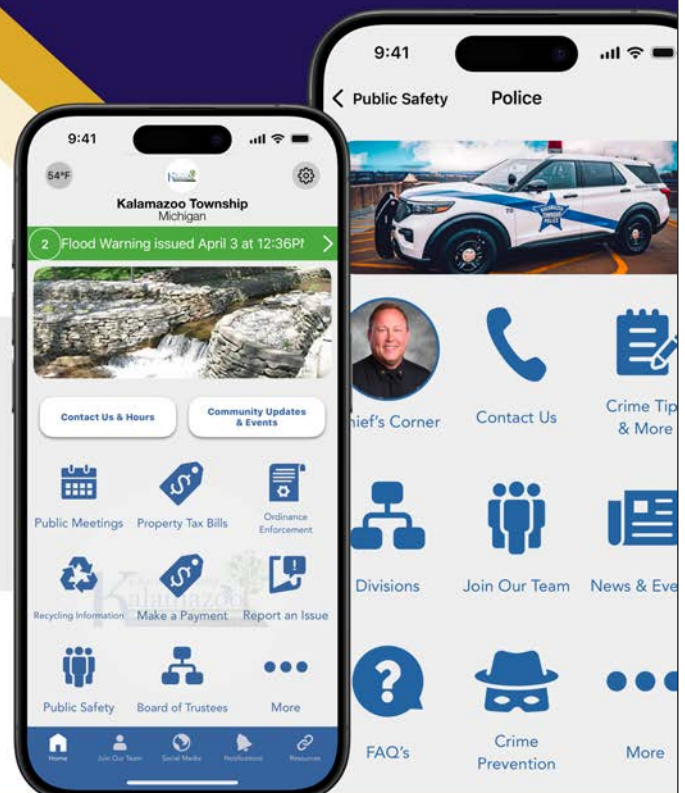
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# 2026 WINTER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 4-6, 2026

AMWAY GRAND PLAZA HOTEL, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN



## Conference Agenda

### Tuesday, February 3, 2026

- 9:00 am MLEAC Hearings Ford Room
- 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm MLEAC Meeting Ford Room
- 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm **REGISTRATION OPEN**
- 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm MiPAC Meeting Pearl Room
- 5:00 pm MACP Board Meeting Emerald Room

### Wednesday, February 4, 2026

- 7:30 am - 6:00 pm **REGISTRATION OPEN**
- 8:00 am - 8:30 am **BREAKFAST** Sponsored By: Empco, Inc.
- 8:30 am - 10:50 am **MACP Welcome & Keynote Presentation** Sponsored By: Airspace Link  
**Duty to Intervene: Culture Beats Policy**  
Attorney Anthony Bandiero, Sr., *Legal Instructor, Blue to Gold Law Enforcement Training*
- 11:00 am - 11:50 am **Crisis Intervention Teams in Your Community**  
Kevin Fischer, *Executive Director, CIT International/NAMI Michigan*
- 1:00 pm - 6:00 pm **EXPOSITION OPEN**
- 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm **Alarm Management Meeting** Kendall Room
- 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm **Legislative Committee Meeting** Berkey Room
- 2:00 pm - 2:50 pm **Enhancing Public Safety Through Crime Gun Intelligence and Collaboration**  
Stanley Kulikowski, *Michigan HIDTA Crime Gun Intelligence Officer, Michigan HIDTA*  
Paul Kadrovach, *Field Intelligence Supervisor, ATF (Detroit Office)*  
Rebecca Smith, *Technical Leader Firearm & Tool Mark Identification Unit (MSP)*
- 3:00 pm - 3:50 pm **Innovative Law Enforcement Ways to Fight Addiction Through Community Partnerships**  
Captain Mario Bastianelli, *City of Sterling Heights*  
Linda Davis, *CEO, FAN - Face Addiction Now*
- 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm **WELCOME RECEPTION** Sponsored by: DeWolf & Associates and LexisNexis Coplogic Solutions
- 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm **MITLEA Meeting** Ottawa Room

### Thursday, February 5, 2026

- 8:00 am - 3:00 pm **REGISTRATION OPEN**

|                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:30 am - 9:00 am                      | <b>BREAKFAST</b> Sponsored By: SoundOff Signal                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 9:00 am - 12:00 pm                     | <b>EXPOSITION OPEN</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 9:00 am - 9:50 am<br>Emerald Room      | <b>Leading in the Gray Zone: How Do We Lead a New Generation That Thinks So Differently?</b><br>Dr. Joel Robertson, <i>CEO and Founder, Robertson Research Institute</i>                                                                      |
| 10:00 am - 10:50 am<br>Emerald Room    | <b>The Elder Abuse Guide for Law Enforcement: Elder Maltreatment Prevention &amp; Response</b><br>Lori Mars, <i>Director, National Center on Elder Abuse and Elder Abuse Guide for Law Enforcement, Keck School of Medicine of USC</i>        |
| 11:15 am - 12:00 pm                    | <b>EXHIBIT PRIZE DRAWINGS ★ <u>MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN</u> ★</b>                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm                     | <b>ATTENDEE LUNCH</b> Sponsored by: Tobacco Law Enforcement Network <b>Governors Room</b>                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1:00 pm - 1:50 pm<br>Pantlind Ballroom | <b>Achieving Multi-Disciplinary &amp; Multi-Jurisdictional Collaboration</b><br>Jim Etzin, <i>Fire Department and EMS Coordinator, Oakland County Tactical Consortium</i><br>Matt Koehn, <i>President, Oakland County Tactical Consortium</i> |
| 2:00 pm - 3:50 pm<br>Pantlind Ballroom | <b>Use of Force Training: Are We Training Our People the Right Way?</b><br>Dave Siver, <i>Captain, Grand Rapids Police Department</i>                                                                                                         |
| 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm                      | <b>Campus Public Safety Administrators</b> Winchester Room                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm                      | <b>Central Region Chiefs Meeting</b> Berkey Room                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm                      | <b>Mid-Michigan Region Chiefs Meeting</b> Heritage Hill Room                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm                      | <b>Northern Region Chiefs Meeting</b> Haldane Room                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm                      | <b>Southeastern Region Chiefs Meeting</b> Pearl Room                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm                      | <b>Western Region Chiefs Meeting</b> Ottawa Room                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm                      | <b>ATTENDEE RECEPTION</b> Sponsored by: Critical Response Group and Axon                                                                                                                                                                      |

## Friday, February 6, 2026

|                                           |                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:30 am - 9:00 am                         | <b>BREAKFAST</b> Sponsored by: EMU Staff & Command                                                                                                                 |
| 9:00 am - 12:00 pm<br>Ambassador Ballroom | <b>Keynote Presentation</b> Sponsored By: FirstNet Built with AT&T<br><b>Courageous Leadership</b><br>Dr. Travis Yates, <i>CEO, Courageous Leadership Alliance</i> |
| 12:00 pm                                  | <b>CONFERENCE CONCLUDES</b>                                                                                                                                        |

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