

# LETTERS

## Roadside Trash

Many towns in New Hampshire follow the national trend on Earth Day and sponsor town-wide clean ups. What differentiates us from our New

I noticed that all of the other volunteers were gray-haired, as am I. That means that we older folks are cleaning up the various kinds of trash that the younger generations are tossing onto the roadside. We do it for safety reasons and for the pride we take in our community.

How about the trash tossers – what’s your reason for littering? An easy-access garbage container in your car or truck might solve the problem until you can bring trash to the Transfer Station on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Please be kind to us and dispose of your trash responsibly. The real reward, until a bottle bill is passed, is knowing you contribute to the good of this community.

Janet Moore



**Your opinion matters! Please send a letter to the Beacon expressing your thoughts on any local matters. Our readers want and need to hear your voice!**

England neighbors is that we have no bottle bill, no incentive to return drink containers for recycling.

Today, as I was picking up trash and plastic, aluminum, and glass containers,

The mission of *The Andover Beacon* is to serve and strengthen the Andover community. To that end, we welcome (by the 15th!) civil, reasoned letters addressing specifically local issues, events, and developments. Submissions must not be critical of another’s religion; blasphemous; obscene; hateful; legally objectionable; or commercial in nature. The *Beacon* reserves the right to edit or not publish submissions it deems inappropriate for any reason.

# OPINION

## Sheriff David Croft Reflects on His First Year in Office

### Adapting to the changing role of police

David Croft  
Merrimack County Sheriff

As I reflect upon my first year as the Sheriff for Merrimack County, I am humbled and honored to report to you the successes and changes that we have undergone to adapt to the changing role of police operations and services in our county, state and our country.

Members of the Merrimack County Sheriff’s Office have worked tirelessly to ensure you can trust us, rely on us, and expect the highest quality of law enforcement services for you as taxpayers.

The year in review was full of new police-community trainings and initiatives to help bring us closer together. Many people in our community have mentioned that we have brought back the human element to law enforcement.

I strongly believe that our community service and mission initiatives have been executed in a way that offers dignity and honor, coupled with accountability and respect for the rule of law. We are here to serve. We appreciate the need to work together with our community stakeholders for the betterment of Merrimack County.

We have implemented numerous strategies and new initiatives to make sure every member of our team fully understands the rapidly changing dynamics of police operations and services. We work hard to provide services in a way that ensures the highest degree of integrity and promotes fairness and equality to every person we come into contact with.

The State of New Hampshire, through the office of the Governor and Attorney General’s Office, approved/suggested following the recommendations of the New Hampshire Commission on Law Enforcement Accountability, Community, and transparency (LEACT). The Merrimack County Sheriff’s Office implemented all of their recommendations. More specifically, we immediately developed and set up mandatory training for all deputies in ethics, bias policing, culture awareness and de-escalation.

We accomplished this even prior to the New Hampshire Police Training Academy releasing their recommendations. We wanted to ensure that this critical component of the LEACT recommendations was completed as soon as possible.

We are currently developing lesson plans and training for dealing with mental health crises, working with people with disabilities, and enhanced community outreach programs. As the for-

mer director of the Merrimack County Diversion Program, I truly have a great understanding of the value of these programs and trainings. As a former small-town police chief, I have a firm belief in community policing. I also believe that our agency is only as successful as the people who reside in the county.

The coronavirus pandemic has impacted the criminal justice system substantially, and we do not know how this is going to impact us in the future. The Merrimack County Sheriff’s Office must still contend with bail reform, transportation of prisoners, court security, civil process, and providing police services to local communities that are in need. We have not been able to truly gauge the full impact this is going to have due to the changing environment and how the courts will operate regarding the pandemic. I am confident that, as an agency, we will adapt and overcome; something I learned in the United States Marine Corps many, many, many years ago.

The mental health crisis, which is a national issue, also continues to be problematic in Merrimack County. As an agency, we are currently working diligently to address this crisis and train our staff to be able to handle these situations with care and compassion. The men and women who serve and protect our community, on the road, in the courts, and in dispatch services, will continue to do so to ensure we keep Merrimack County residents and visitors safe. We have learned to do more with less and implement improved efficiencies wherever possible.

The Merrimack County Sheriff’s Office continues to invest in public safety and looks forward to continuing its strong relationship with the community. We are also implementing more technology in 2022 to increase public safety.

The Merrimack County Sheriff’s Office has been successful because we understand the importance of listening to and working with a multi-disciplinary approach to problem solving. We are successful because we work together as a team and I believe that no member of the team is more important than the other. We all have a job to do, and we must make sure that we continue to do that job to the best of our ability to keep our county safe and conducive to living, working, learning, and raising families.

We have embraced the changes made to modern policing and value each person and family we serve. All our members will abide by their oath of office and the code of ethics, and we will continue to be an agency that leads in law enforcement standards and makes our county residents proud.



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