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CITY OF KEARNEY **PRESS RELEASE** ***For Immediate Release***

Issued Date: May 30, 2023

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Thanks To A Generous Grant from A Local Private Foundation the Kearney Police Fleet Is Expanding for A Take Home Cruiser Program

Thanks to a generous donation from a local private foundation, the Kearney Police Department will begin the process of adding nearly thirty police cars to the fleet. This generous donation allows the city to start the first ever Kearney Police Assigned Vehicle Program, often referred to as a “Take Home Vehicle”. A major factor for this project is the continued effort to support our department and to recruit and retain talented police officers during a competitive and challenging time for law enforcement across the entire state and the United States. This project will serve to once again set the Kearney Police Department apart from similar mid-size municipal law enforcement agencies.

A grant of nearly \$3 million dollars from a local private foundation will allow the department to begin implementing the program, which will take approximately 18 – 24 months. We will start with the purchase of approximately 30 vehicles, adding to the current fleet, all officers will then be issued a vehicle.

Law enforcement take home vehicle programs are considered a desirable benefit of the job for police officers, but they also have many benefits for the department and community at large. For these reasons, the option is popular and widely used in progressive law enforcement agencies across the country. In Nebraska, the only known mid-size agency similar to Kearney providing a take home police car for uniform patrol officers is the Bellevue Police Department. The Nebraska State Patrol and most County Sheriff’s Offices, including Buffalo County, provide take-home vehicles.

The assigned vehicle program (AVP) is where a police officer is assigned a vehicle that they can take home with them at the end of each shift. Additionally, by providing a police presence in the employee’s community, a take home vehicle program is seen as a crime deterrent, if a police car is parked in someone's driveway, a person may be less inclined to commit crime in the area. It also gives the feeling of more protection and presence in the neighborhood and has a visible mark in the community.

Lastly, an AVP provides the ability for officers to quickly respond to emergencies from multiple areas within the city and the potential to save money on vehicle maintenance and repair. It can also be a positive incentive within a hiring process, studies suggest that a take-home vehicle program has become an employee benefit widely used for recruitment and retention.

The estimated cost per vehicle including emergency lighting, police radio, computer, radar, camera, weapon mounts, storage, prisoner transport cell, associated electronic equipment and outside vendor upfitting is \$75,000 - \$80,000 per vehicle. The police department typically budgets for the replacement of five police vehicles per year, totaling approximately \$250,000 within the capital equipment budget. This program will permit a two year pause on the replacement schedule, saving approximately \$500,000 over the same period. The department will resume the replacement schedule to sustain the AVP through the capital equipment budget, replacing five vehicles per year based on a data driven replacement schedule, factoring in mileage, engine idle hours, maintenance cost, vehicle assignment, and overall condition of the vehicle.

“We are incredibly blessed to have a high level of support from our community, a generous donation like this does not happen without positive, professional, caring, dedicated policing for all citizens, this serves as a strong reminder of this support. I have confidence this program will have a direct impact on public safety, while also strengthening the recruitment and retention capabilities of our first-class organization. I can’t even begin to thank those responsible for this donation and will continue to be thankful for the support we enjoy from our City Manager, City Council, Mayor, and the entire community. Kearney is indeed a special place”! – Chief Bryan D. Waugh

Check out our web site at www.cityofkearney.org.

We are sending this News Release as a service to the news media and citizens of Kearney.