

Monday, January 2, 2006

Chief retires after 32 years of service

Cold Spring

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When police Chief Rick Sears, 57, walked out of the Cold Spring city building on Dec. 22, it was the end of a 32-year career that was built across various Campbell County police departments, including stints as chief of two of them.

Sears' police career began as a member of the security department at Northern Kentucky University in 1973 where he spent three years before moving to the Newport Police Department. At Newport, Sears was on the bomb squad for 10 years and commanded the squad the last five of those. At the time, the squad was the only one in Northern Kentucky and was called upon often across the region.

One of the cases that stuck with him from those years was an accident at an illegal fireworks factory. It was operating on John Street near 10th and Monmouth streets, site of the current city building. Two of the workers were killed in the blast. The proprietor was not.

Another case that stays with him is that of William Federle, a man in his 60s who ran a hardware store. In December 1987, he was found behind the alley of his store beaten. The man later died.

"It was never solved, and that is one that I've always thought about," Sears said.

Sears left Newport as a lieutenant to become chief deputy jailer at the county's jail, but he didn't stay long. In 1991, Bellevue Police Chief Elmer Corbin was retiring and looking for a replacement. "I guess my reputation preceded me," said Sears.

"The chief is an administrative position," said Sears. "You have to have a good knowledge of police work but it's administration. In a small department you have to know a little bit about everything - make sure the officers are doing what they are suppose to do, make sure they know how to do it, prepare budgets, oversee the operations."

In 1995, he served as president of the Northern Kentucky Police Chiefs Association.

In 2002 Sears went to Cold Spring where he oversaw 10 officers.

With time to reflect, he said the challenges facing law enforcement he sees now are the same as those 32 years ago: "property damage and violence."

After a career answering the call of duty for three decades within four police departments, Sears is using up some vacation time until his official retirement date of Feb. 1, after which he'll be permanently off-duty.



ZOOM The Enquirer/Ernest Coleman
Cold Spring police Chief Rick Sears is retiring after 32 years of public service, during which time he has worked in several Campbell County cities as a member of the Newport bomb squad, chief deputy jailer for the county and police chief for the Bellevue department.

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