

# Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

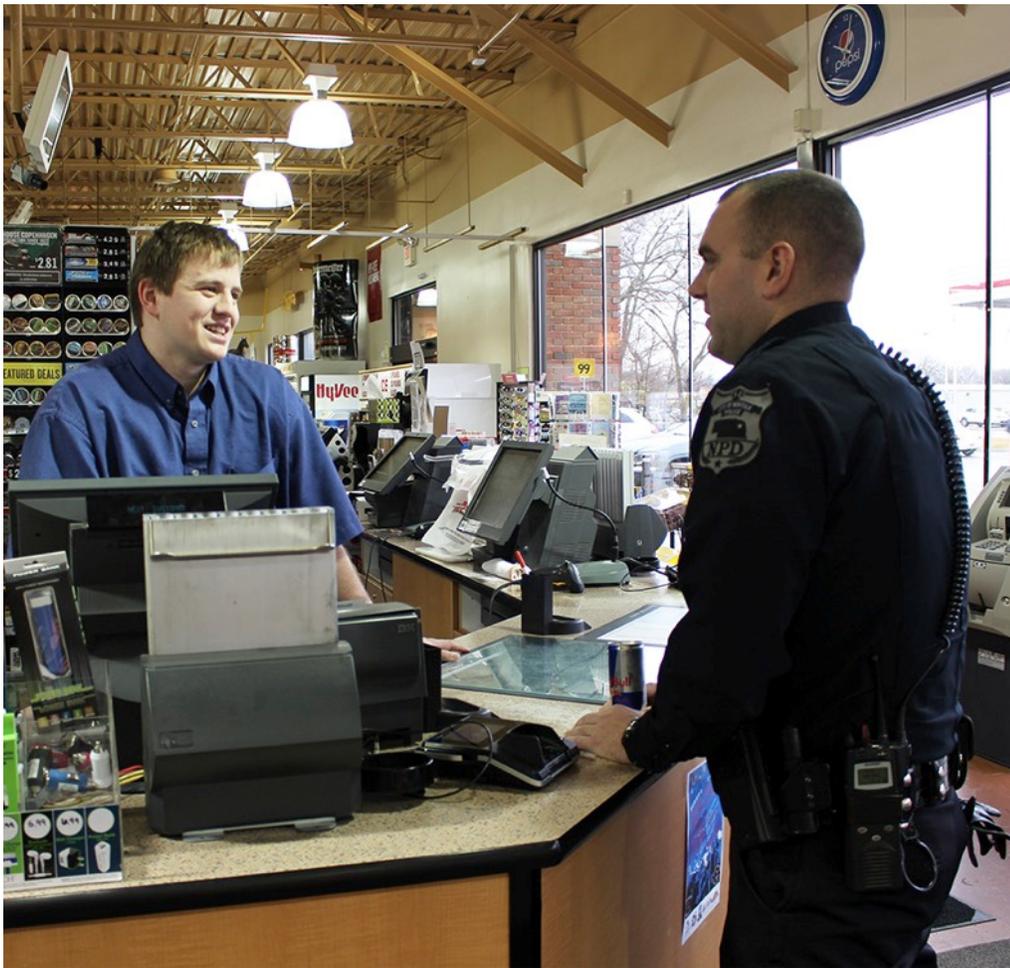
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## “Working as a Norfolk Police Officer”

In the wake of recent isolated acts of violence against police officers, Norfolk Police Officer Scott Hansen is glad that the Norfolk community is overall supportive of its officers.

“An advantage of working in a relatively small city is that you get to know a lot of people and we all work together,” Hansen said.



Since Hansen is originally from Butte, Nebraska with a population of about 340 people, seven years ago when he came to work here Norfolk seemed like a large town.

“I thought that I’d never get to know a lot of people and found out Norfolk is large enough so that officers get a lot of opportunities in answering calls, doing traffic work and getting involved with investigations. At the same time it’s small enough that we’re all like family in the division and we get to work closely with other support services in the community,” Hansen said.

Although he’s sympathetic to the criticism and, in some places, attacks on

other police divisions in the country, he’s not extra wary of serving as a police officer in Norfolk.

“We’ve always been vigilant and a little guarded around people we don’t know. Some people have had a bad experience with a police officer and so they carry that opinion over to all law enforcement. The negative attitude towards police officers in other parts of the country sticks a little bit in the back of my mind. On a traffic stop I have to consider if this is somebody who wants to do me harm,” Hansen said.

It has been a policy for years at the Norfolk Police Division that officers wear bulletproof vests when they are on duty. They also carry a Taser and handgun. A microphone is activated on their belt to record audio of encounters they have with the public. A camera in their patrol car automatically turns on when their emergency warning lights come on to document their encounters with the public.

Police officers in Norfolk work 12-hour shifts with every four months those shifts switching from daytime to nighttime hours. Hansen doesn't have to work Christmas Eve this year but he says the holidays have their own challenges.

"For some people the holidays are a joyous time. In other cases, holidays are stressful. Some families aren't always happy to see each other. There can be extra bills to pay, presents to get for the kids. Holidays can be hard for people without families," Hansen said.

Hansen said over the holidays they might see an increase of calls from people who call 911 or the police station with serious depression.

"We'll go out on call and talk to them about how they're doing. We'll ask if they have family or a support system that we can contact. There is a process we go through- criteria- that guides us to know if we need to call in professional help for the individual. We let them know that there are different options to assist them so they don't make any terrible decisions to harm themselves," Hansen said.

The New Year is typically when the officers also might see more intoxicated drivers.

"People in the community are pretty responsible as far as making arrangements for some one to stay sober and drive people home. We want people to have fun but we want them to enjoy themselves responsibly. We are going to find the people who are driving intoxicated and will enforce DUIs without question," Hansen said.

Not that being a police officer in Norfolk isn't a dangerous occupation. Hansen was recently involved in the arrest of individuals who were in possession of firearms who had burglarized an area business. He has also had to break down a door and Taser a suspect in an apartment where a woman had been stabbed and later died.

"We're human like everyone else. We try our very very best every day. There's always going to be the bad eggs out there. Police officers are all individuals with families at home just like everyone else. We treat people with professionalism even to those few who really don't like the uniform and what it stands for. That's our job," Hansen said.