

## The Patrolman, Backbone of the Department

The patrolman is the most visible ambassador of the Police Department-easily identified by their uniform and marked police vehicle. The patrol division is one of three within the department. Commanded by Lieutenant George Marsh, the division operates three shifts, each commanded by a Sergeant. The patrol division, at 28 officers, represents 76% of the department's staffing.

The patrolman is the first to arrive on the scene of a citizen's call for assistance, motor vehicle collision, or any other request for police. Each officer is state P.O.S.T. certified and is required to attend a state approved police academy and maintain certification by attending a minimum of forty hours of in-service each year. The officers may have additional duties that include child passenger restraint system technicians, SWAT members, hostage negotiators, accident reconstruction, firearms instructors, domestic violence, anti-terrorism and state traffic liaisons.

Each officer performs a variety of functions. The officer must reach into their toolbox of skills and knowledge, and depending on the situation, seek to aid and assist in whatever manner necessary. At the Tullahoma Police Department, "*there is nothing I can do*" is not an acceptable response. We advocate there is always some way to help by directing or referring people to another resource, provide assistance based on past experiences and training, or just talking. Of course in addition to the assistance given, there is still the requirement to document incidents, enforce city and state ordinances and balance the need, when necessary, for an arrest, a citation, or a warning. The Police department must maintain an active partnership with the community and encourages any citizen needing police assistance to call 455-3411 (non emergency) or 911 for emergencies.

Chief Blackwell can be reached at 455-0530 or [pblackwell@tullahomatn.gov](mailto:pblackwell@tullahomatn.gov) should you have questions or need additional information.