

Capt. Davis retires badge

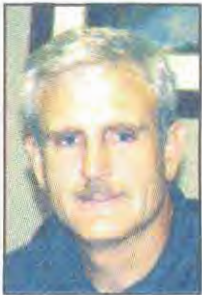
By Laura Bond

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After a quarter century of serving citizens and tracking down bad guys, Ruston Police Department Capt. Bill Davis has no regrets about his career decision.

"I would do it again in a heart-

beat," said Davis, who is officially retiring Aug. 1. "And I would not rather work for any agency than this one right here. I had some op-



Davis

portunities to leave during my career, but I thought this was the best place to raise a family and children. It's proved to be just that."

During his time with the RPD, Davis served in the criminal investigation division, as a training and public information officer, patrol supervisor, a K-9 officer and as a member of the bicycle patrol unit, SWAT team and narcotics task force.

For the last six to seven years, Davis has been the RPD's patrol commander, dealing with the daily operation of the patrol division, records division and communications, as well as control and maintenance of evidence.

RPD Chief Steve Rogers said Davis has made several strong contributions during his tenure, including the implementation of electronic advancements, such as the installation of computers and video recorders inside police vehicles.

“The department is losing years of knowledge and experience,” Rogers said. “He did a lot of good things for the department.”

As he sorts through his mental database of more than two decades in local law enforcement, Davis recalls the joys and hard times.

“Some of my most unpleasant memories are dealing with fatality car crashes or crimes where children have been hurt or injured,” Davis said. “Those tend to trouble you the most.”

His most positive memories are of his years with a dog as a partner when he was a K-9 officer.

“You learn to depend on each other,” he said of his relationship with the dog. “It’s amazing to see the training you put in with the dog come to fruition when you locate and recover evidence with (the dog’s) help. When my first K-9 passed away, we had been together since he was a puppy, and that was tough. I had to get into working with another dog after 14 years of being with the first dog.”

When it comes to suggestions for new officers, Davis said he would advise them to never lose sight of the reasons they got into the field — to help people and prevent crime.

“Too many times officers come in and are gung-ho about doing that, but because of what they are exposed to or how they are treated by the public, they lose their motivation for the job,” Davis said. “One of the most common things we hear from the public is ‘I’m going

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Retirement plans include travel

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to have your badge because I pay your salary.' It's easy to lose touch with why you're here when people are looking down on you."

Davis said many people don't take the time to understand police have to take certain actions to adhere to laws, regulations and procedures, regardless of whether the police officer agrees with them. Consequently, he said the officer may receive much more negative than positive feedback from the public.

"These guys need to hear when they're doing stuff right," he said. "It takes somebody special with a different type of dedica-

tion to go to a job where you have to wear a gun to protect yourself or protect someone else. Most people when they go to work will not

have to worry about taking a life to save a life. It says a lot for them to come to work and do that every day, and I don't think for the most part there's enough appreciation for what they do."



Peden

Upon his retirement, Davis said he will do some traveling and tackle work around the house. His memories of his days at the RPD, however, will live on.

"I'm going to miss the guys I work with," he said. "I've got a lot of good friends within the city employee ranks. Also, in this position a lot of what I do is helping the public understand what we do, so I'll miss that interaction."

Although it will be a couple of months until the retirement is official, Davis is scheduled to leave on extended vacation this week, and his replacement, Lt. Kevin Peden, will begin taking on his duties.

In his new role as patrol commander, Peden, who has been with the department for 21 years, will coordinate all uniform patrol, including 28 patrolmen, five dispatchers and three office personnel. As he looks to this new venture, Peden said his biggest challenge will be to meet minimum staffing requirements, ensuring there are an adequate number of officers for any specific event.

He noted Davis has left large shoes to fill.

"He had years of experience, and he's passionate about his job," Peden said. "He has always been ready to answer the call and do his duty."