

Barnesville Fire Department Remains “In Good Shape”



Barnesville Fire Department battles a fire at 1009 Fifth Street Southeast on December 10, 2017.

By Michael Stein
The Barnesville Fire Department has had a pretty good year, said Mike Stetz, who continues to serve as fire chief.
The department is now working with the new ARMER (Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response) system, a mandatory upgrade which led to much greater efficiency in communication between firefighters and other departments in the area.
In December 2017, the department received an early Christmas gift when they received a \$40,108 grant from Firehouse Subs. Andy Boyum

of the department spearheaded the grant application process.
Early this year the department responded to two major house fire calls, one in Barnesville and one near Comstock. Both resulted in a total loss, but no fatalities or injuries.
“With the dry conditions we were expected to respond to grass fires in the spring and fall, but it stayed pretty quiet,” Stetz said.
He added that the department is in good shape in terms of equipment and personnel for the year. Firefighters receive training through M State in Moorhead. The

department also has its own training officer.
First assistant with the Barnesville Fire Department is Dave Grommish. Dean Julsrud serves as second assistant.
The Barnesville Area Fire Department is staffed by 26 volunteers who respond to fires and rescue events in the area. In addition to two meetings a month, there are training sessions at various times during the year. The Fire Department is governed by a board representing the City of Barnesville and surrounding townships.

Safety Is An Integral Part of Community Health



Service to residents of all ages with programs like the bike safety rodeo, seen here with Officer Mark Pearson, is an important part of the Barnesville Police Department’s service to the community.

By Michael Stein
The health of any community has a direct connection to how safe the residents feel. And that’s Job One for the Barnesville Police Department.
“We’re proud to have a safe community, and we hope it reflects on our department,” said Barnesville Police Chief Dean Ernst. “If the police department is doing its job, then citizens can enjoy their life and feel safe in their homes.”
Ernst said Barnesville deals with most of the same issues as larger communities and metro areas, just not as often. “Residents need to take precautions, like locking their doors

at night, but they shouldn’t have to put bars on their windows to feel safe. And that’s why we do everything we can to help our residents.”
Barnesville PD officers are working to improve and enhance cooperation with the city’s landlords by conducting background checks on prospective tenants. One officer recently received training in working with local landlords.

“We want to be a good resource for landlords and we want them to be successful,” Ernst said. “And I think we both want responsible people

renting the local properties.”
The PD is working closely with a property maintenance task force to clean up some blighted areas in town. The city also has an on-call animal control officer and an impound center, which cuts down on the expense of transport to the FM area.
Ernst said these efforts are meant to not only control stray animals, but provide an opportunity for people to adopt homeless pets.

For the first time since 1979, the Barnesville Police Department expanded its patrol force in 2017 with the addition of Jesse Atteberry as a patrol officer. Officer Jeff Theraldson became a full-time resource officer for the Barnesville School district, but he remains with the department on a part-time basis.

With Chief Ernst, the full-time officers are Chris Olson, Ryan Beattie, Mark Pearson and Atteberry, the Barnesville Police Department is available to residents 24 hours, every day of the year.
“We’re here to serve,” Ernst added. “We’ve heard people say, ‘we didn’t want to bother you.’ If there’s anything a resident feels we should know about, we’re glad to help out. Call us when something is happening, even if—and especially if—it’s in the middle of the night.”
Ernst is going on 28 years with the department, the last 16 years as chief. Experience is critical to efficient law enforcement and community relations.

“Knowledge of the people who live here is very important. It helps us to be better servants of the people when we know some of the background before we go in and deal with a situation.”
When Ernst started with the city the technology was sparse. Over those 28 years, Ernst said the city has been good about adding computers, digital equipment and other devices needed to maintain efficiency.
As with any community, visibility is important. “We want people to know that we’re out there and we’re here to help.”



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