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Orange City Police Chief retires, city names new chief

ORANGE CITY – After 30 years of service to the Orange City Police Department, Police Chief Peter Thomas is set to retire at the end of April. Deputy Police Chief Wayne Miller will be promoted to the rank of Police Chief after Thomas’s retirement.

Thomas, the longest-tenured police chief of the department to date, relocated from New York to Volusia County in 1976. In 1989, while working as a brick mason at a job site, he shared with the property owner his desire to one day become a police officer. Luckily for Thomas, the property owner happened to be Orange City Police Chief Arthur Locke who, through the police department, sponsored Thomas’s basic law enforcement education.

After graduating from Seminole State College Law Enforcement Academy, Thomas joined the Orange City Police Department as a reserve officer in 1991 and a full-time officer in April 1992. As his career progressed, Thomas was promoted to Sergeant in 1999 and Commander in 2003. In 2010, Thomas attended the University of Louisville, Southern Police Institute for the 124th Administrative Officers Course – a first for the Orange City Police Department. Shortly after, he was promoted to the rank of Police Chief in January 2011. Thomas will be recognized by the Orange City Council for his service at the City Council Meeting on April 26, at 6:30 p.m.

“For 30 years, this department has been my home, every day a new challenge,” Thomas says. “As a police officer you get to make a difference every day; you get to help people, maybe even save a life. Nothing beats that kind of satisfaction, but I’m looking forward to retirement.”

City Manager Dale Arrington has named Deputy Chief Wayne Miller as the new chief.

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“Being Police Chief is a position that is very demanding. Chief Thomas is a progressive and thoughtful leader who will be missed. His dedication and commitment to the department and community is unmatched,” Arrington says. “But Orange City is in great hands with Chief Miller. He knows our city, has a stellar track record and is respected by his peers. His knowledge and expertise will be a vital asset in keeping our city safe.”

Miller has over 37 years of experience in law enforcement, beginning his career in 1985 with the Port Orange Police Department. He ascended through the ranks to become the Assistant Police Chief; a title he held until his retirement in 2015 with 30 years of service. Miller then accepted the position as Deputy Police Chief with the Orange City Police Department – not even taking a day off after he retired from Port Orange. He has been serving the Orange City community for the past seven years.

“I congratulate Chief Thomas on his career at OCPD and wish him health and happiness in his retirement,” Miller says. “It is an honor and privilege for me to serve as the Orange City Police Chief. I am extremely humbled for this opportunity and will continue to serve this community with professionalism, honor, and dignity.”

Miller will formally assume the role of Police Chief on April 29 and a public swearing-in ceremony will be held on May 6, at 10:00 a.m. at Mill Lake Park. The community is invited to attend.

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The Heart of Southwest Volusia