



*Office of Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **ROCKFORD POLICE CHIEF EPPERSON ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT**

Rockford, IL – Rockford Police Chief Chet Epperson has announced his intent to retire from the Rockford Police Department, effective Friday, November 13, 2015.

Epperson, 53, has been with the department for more than 33 years, working his way up the ranks as a patrol officer, sergeant, lieutenant and deputy chief, until he was appointed Chief in April 2006, a role he has held for the last nine and a half years.

“Chief Epperson has been a rock solid, steadfast, and stalwart leader of the Rockford Police Department over the entire course of his career, especially during his time as Chief,” said Mayor Larry Morrissey. “I can’t imagine working with anyone more prepared and more committed to help our community transition into a modern, effective, constitutional police department than Chief Epperson, and I thank him for his service and dedication to our community.”

During his tenure as Chief, Epperson has achieved significant organizational reform, most notably in the department’s transition to community-oriented policing, the deployment of a geographic policing model, and the implementation of progressive policing and community engagement practices and programming, some of which include COMPSTAT, Citizen’s Police Academy, Parolee Call-In, Project Safe Neighborhoods, Weed & Seed Enforcement, and the Youth Police Academy.

His commitment to excellence and accountability is evidenced by the implementation of several process improvement measures such as the Constitutional Policing Force Accountability Management process, which uses contemporary technology to monitor and track agency uses of force, and the Early Intervention System which monitors police-related performance and risk management issues.

Epperson also led in the formation of the Winnebago and Boone County Integrity Task Force which provides a neutral third-party investigation of officer-involved shootings and serious uses of force, and the Winnebago County Violent Crime Task Force that concentrates on intelligence, investigations, street-level enforcement, and public review of work.

Under his leadership, the Rockford Police Department was the first, and still sole, agency in the state to implement the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), a best practice comprehensive records management system that allows more accurate identification of crime trends and more effective deployment of resources.

Led by Epperson's efforts, the department has met rigid requirements for the initial and two subsequent reaccreditations from the Commission on Accreditation Law Enforcement Agencies, implemented several police reforms to provide constitutional policing standards to protect officers and residents, witnessed a 45 percent increase in neighborhood watch programs, seen decreased recidivism based on initial parolee call-in participant data, strengthened community and law enforcement partner agency relationships, cultivated relationships with the minority community, increased departmental transparency and accountability, and most importantly, employed collaborative efforts to reduce crime.

"It has been an honor to serve this community and a privilege to lead a team of people with an unwavering commitment to integrity and public service," said Epperson. "This is a time of important transformation for the department. Our supervisory and command staff teams are set to take the next steps, the strategy we have generated is first class, and our new organization, which is centered on community and geographic policing, is right for the opportunities and challenges ahead."

A strong proponent of police reform, Epperson's decision to retire accommodates his recent appointment to the New Orleans Louisiana Police Department Federal Consent Decree Monitoring Team. In this role, Chief Epperson will assist in offering his professional police experience to the New Orleans Police Department in compliance with the current consent decree requirements.

A reception will be held on Friday, November 13, 2015 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. in the City Hall lobby.

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