

Strongsville station is state-of-the-art

By: Terry Brlas

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Police headquarters tours take place Oct. 23

By **TERRY BRLAS**
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Strongsville residents will have a rare opportunity to tour a police station on Saturday, Oct. 23. This is not just any police station, however. This tour will be of the state-of-the-art Strongsville Police Headquarters and newly renovated Mike Kalinich Sr. City Council Chambers at 18688 Royalton Road.

A dedication ceremony will begin at 11 a.m. Tours will commence following the ceremony and continue through 2 p.m. Mayor Thomas Perciak will give a welcome message. This will be followed by presentation of the colors by the Strongsville Police Honor Guard, playing of the national anthem by the Strongsville pep band and cantorum, an invocation, playing and singing of "God Bless America," and a special presentation regarding the overall project by Police Chief Charles Goss. This will be followed by the official ribbon cutting for police headquarters and council chambers with remarks by Kalinich.

"This is going to be a proud day for Strongsville," Perciak said. "Strong safety forces in a community stabilize your real estate prices. Of equal importance, it drags in businesses because they feel safe here."

Areas those touring will get to see in-

clude records/lobby services; administration; victim services; central dispatch center; staff services' detective bureau; field operations support; patrol division; evidence reception, processing and storage; jails; garage; and firearms training range.

Police employees will take a group of 10 to 15 individuals on the tour. There will be another employee at each stop describing what is accomplished there and answering questions. The tour escort can also answer questions along the way. The tour should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Photography inside the facility is prohibited due to security issues.

Every city has a building that tends to be its focal point. For Strongsville it becomes the new police headquarters at the center of town.

"I don't think people's jaws will drop a little bit. I think they'll drop a lot," Goss said. "It's going to be shocking to see what we've been able to put inside of this complex. I hope people come away with the idea that what we've done here will make a real difference in how we are better able to deliver police services. You have to come away with that notion when you see the advancements that have taken place."

Perciak echoed the chief's comments about advancements in the new headquarters.



Photo by TERRY BRLAS

Strongsville Police Chief Charles Goss (foreground) and Lt. Bob Satterwaite show off the briefing room at the new state-of-the-art police headquarters. Residents will get the opportunity to tour the new facility on Saturday, Oct. 23, following a dedication ceremony at 11 a.m.

"This is a state-of-the-art facility when it comes to technology," he said. "People have to come and see it for themselves. It is amazing. This is a major deterrent for crime. People will be held accountable a lot sooner due to the technology at our disposal."

The police headquarters building sits on the same ground as the previous headquarters. The original building was erected around the end of World War II and last renovated in 1976, according to Goss.

"There was no infrastructure for any kind of technology. It was kind of working out of a M.A.S.H. unit. When we used to lose power it didn't really affect our operations because we didn't have computers," Goss chuckled when remembering how it used to be.

Goss turned serious when enumerating the waste that occurred due to the old facility.

"There were things that were wasteful financially like housing prisoners somewhere else, pulling officers out of neighborhoods to transport them, leasing a range, and paying officers overtime to go shoot," he said. "Then there were

things that were bad form like conducting sensitive interviews in public places. There were things that were unsafe like taking prisoners through the corridors of our building. We used to store evidence in truck trailers parked outside. There were a lot of dysfunctional things taking place."

Police Lt. Bob Satterwaite remembers instances that seem like something out of a bad B movie.

"We used to have to take prisoners right by the victims," he said.

"We had to take prisoners by the clerks and administrative staff hoping they didn't start another fistfight. It was dreadful," Goss added.

But Oct. 23 is not about the past. It is about the future. That future is a bright one for Strongsville police and the residents they protect and serve.

"I hope there is a sense that things are looking up for public safety in Strongsville," Goss said.

Officials are asking residents to park at the Ehrnfelt Recreation Center. Free shuttle buses will transport people to and from police headquarters every five minutes.