

# PRESS RELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Date:** Wednesday, October 1, 2025  
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### **Village of Gurnee Police Chief Brian Smith Announces Retirement After 25 Years of Service**

GURNEE, IL – Chief Brian Smith, Police Chief for the Village of Gurnee, has announced his upcoming retirement effective December 1, 2025 after more than 25 years of dedicated service to the Gurnee Police Department.

Chief Smith began his career with the Gurnee Police Department in 2000. Over the years, he progressed through the ranks becoming a Patrol Sergeant in 2010, a Patrol Commander in 2014, Deputy Chief in 2017 and Chief of Police in 2019.

“Serving this community has been the greatest privilege of my professional life,” said Chief Smith. “My passion has been to serve others. While I will continue to do so in new ways, I feel deep gratitude and emotion as I close this chapter in my career. I am profoundly honored to have worked alongside such dedicated professionals and to have served the residents of Gurnee for the past six-plus years as Police Chief.”

Gurnee Mayor Tom Hood commented on Chief Smith’s service to Gurnee: “His commitment to excellence in all that he does has been an inspiration to me and the rest of the Village. Throughout his entire career and time as Chief, Brian has led with integrity, humility, selflessness and a genuine desire to serve others. He stressed integrity, customer service, transparency and technology, all aimed at improving relationships and increasing public safety and the safety of Gurnee’s officers. Brian faced unique challenges during his time as Chief, such as civil unrest and the pandemic. His leadership, dedication and resourcefulness resulted in Gurnee exiting these events stronger than when it entered. The Village Board and I greatly appreciate the 25 years of service he has provided to the Village and wish him the very best in his retirement.”

Under Chief Smith’s leadership, the Gurnee Police Department has made notable achievements, including:

- **Increased staffing and diversity** which included establishing a recruitment and retention team and police officer mentors. During Smith’s time as Chief, staffing increased from 62 sworn officers to 72 sworn officers and School Resource Officers increased to five. Additionally, representation of women, veterans and officers from diverse backgrounds increased from 24 to 54.

- **Expanded community engagement initiatives** including establishing the Lake County First Responder Expo, reintroducing the Citizen and Youth Police Academies, Visitor Oriented Policing Team, and launching new programs such as Public Safety Compliance Officer, the “Big and Small – Helmets for All” bike safety initiative, “Cops and Bobbers” fishing derby and “Dilly Bars and Safety Stars” back to school ice cream social.
- **Enhanced crime prevention and outreach** by establishing a dedicated Crime Prevention Detective and a sworn Public Information Officer for community and social media engagement. Under Smith’s leadership the Public Education Specialist was reintroduced to coordinate school and community programs.
- **Promoted Officer wellness and resilience** including establishing a Wellness Coordinator position, introducing the Cordico Wellness App to all employees, retirees and their families, launching a department-wide wellness program aimed at addressing emotional and mental health, family well-being, financial literacy, physical fitness, nutrition and introduced Comfort Dog Mira.
- **Implemented technology and safety advancements** including the deployment of three drones, including Drone as a First Responder, 23 data-collecting digital speed signs, over 30 fixed and portable license plate recognition cameras and nearly 30 mobile license plate recognition cameras. In addition, protective equipment to enhance officer and community safety has been upgraded.

In addition to his service to the Village, Chief Smith has served multiple public safety organizations in various leadership roles, including:

- Lake County Chiefs of Police Association
  - Secretary, Vice President, 2x President, Fundraising Committee Chair, Incident Management Team
- Lake County Sheriff Criminal Justice Council
- Northwest Police Academy
- Lake County Opioid Initiative
- Lake County Crisis Outreach and Support
- Northeastern Illinois Regional Crime Lab
- Illinois Association Chiefs of Police Presidents Committee

Reflecting on challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, staffing shortages and societal challenges of the times, Chief Smith praised the resilience of Gurnee’s officers: “They sacrificed, they adapted and they persevered. They ensured this department and community not only survived but thrived.”

While discussing his upcoming retirement, Chief Smith stated, “The goal of any leader is to leave an organization with a strong legacy, positive future and in capable hands. Together, our team has

achieved this. I thank this community for its support, trust, and confidence. It has truly been the honor of my career to serve as Chief of Police.”

Mayor Hood has announced that he will recommend to the Village Board the appointment of Deputy Chief Jeremy Gaughan to serve as the next Police Chief after Chief Smith retires in December. Deputy Chief Gaughan has served with the Gurnee Police Department since 2002 and has been a member of the Command Staff since 2018.

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