

East Alton Police Department, community give thanks to "old school" officer Shannon Hobbs

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EAST ALTON – **Shannon Hobbs** devoted 42 years of his life to the East Alton Police Department and the community, but as of this Thanksgiving his full attention is turning to his family and his outdoors passions.

Hobbs likely gave thanks for his retirement and his years of success with the **East Alton Police Department** on Thanksgiving Day. He retired as an officer in 2001 and has been a telecommunications operator ever since. The other members of the East Alton Police Department and the city of East Alton are feeling a sense of loss with Hobbs' official departure after 42 years of service.

For Hobbs, being a police officer was something that was a calling from the time he was a boy. He said he will officially retire March 10, 2016, but he has vacation accrued to take him to that point.

"I was an officer for 27 plus years and it was my childhood dream to do that," he said. "Being a police officer allowed me to meet different people in town and serve the community. I have handled just about everything we have here. Working at the scene of crimes involving little children probably bothered me more than anything."

One of the most horrifying incidents that Hobbs said he ever had to go to involved a young child that was struck in their house by a semi tractor trailer on St. Louis Avenue and Broadway.

"I handled quite a few different types of accidents," he said. "When they involved children, they always bothered me more."

Hobbs has always had the community and the people at heart with his work in the East Alton Police Department.

"What we do as officers is so important," he said. "I had a young man come to me a few years back and I honestly didn't recall speaking to him, but he said because of me talking with him when he was smaller, he decided to go into law enforcement. You never know who you touch. You can touch someone just by taking the time to speak to them and I didn't know until years later the impact I had had on that young man."

The East Alton man said being in telecommunications wasn't an easy job and it was much more stressful to him than out on the street as an officer.

"It is a very important role," he said. "Often you have more than one serious incident going on at the same time. I really had to multi task."

In retirement, Hobbs plans to do more hunting and fishing and mostly spend more time with his family, especially has eight grandchildren and one great-grand child.

“They have been pretty much delegated to second place because of my job,” he said. “When you have to put your city first you don’t get to spend as much time with them as you want and I hope to do that now.”

Shannon wants to spend a lot of time with his wife, Sandra, in retirement. He said she has always supported him and been so patient about his work, but now will be their time together to enjoy life.

East Alton officer Christian Cranmer has always admired Shannon Hobbs. He described him as “a great guy.”

“He is old school,” Cranmer said. “He was a cop back when law enforcement was different in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. He retired as an officer in 2001. He was retired before I got here and was dispatching and I have always known him as a dispatcher.

“He is a prime example that you can’t take away from him what he has always had in his blood. One time, the department was chasing a guy and I don’t remember what it was, but the person was running through yards and we lost him until we saw Shannon. I don’t remember why he was in the area, but he had the guy down on the ground and we snatched him up and arrested him. As I said, he is old school.”

Cranmer said Hobbs is a Christian man and through all 42 years in law enforcement he kept his faith.

“He is a good example of how you are supposed to be when you are a retired officer,” he said. “When you are a young guy and you see he has his faith you know you can make it through the negativity. I look up to him a lot.”

Hobbs was always able to provide a wealth of information and advice to the younger officers, Cranmer said.

“I know that he is also an avid hunter and fisherman,” Cranmer said. “He loves that. If there are fish in the water he will find them and catch them. Officers come and go, but Shannon is going to be missed. He always knows the answers to almost any type of question you would ask him.”

Shannon Hobbs wanted to leave with some simple, but wonderful thoughts: “Hopefully I have represented the city well,” he said. “East Alton and the department have always stood behind me and I truly appreciate that.”