



# **New Police Chief Marcos Pulido Looks Forward To Improving Quality of Life in Alton and Working With Community**

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ALTON - New Alton Police Chief Marcos Pulido is a man who has earned his role by working himself all the way up the ladder from a patrol officer. Pulido has some sincere goals for the police department and tops on his list are working with the community and improving the quality of life in Alton.

Pulido is currently a 20-year veteran of the Alton Police Department but has been involved in law enforcement since he was a 16-year-old sophomore at Alton High School.

Marcos was recently appointed Chief of the Alton Police, replacing Jason Simmons, who is retiring after over 27 years on the force. When Pulido was asked to become chief, the emotions he felt ran the gamut.

Marcos always knew he wanted to be a police officer, so he joined the Alton Police Explorers post at the age of 16 and remained a part of the post until he turned 21 and was able to test to be a sworn officer. Then at the young age of 22, Marcos Pulido became Officer Pulido.

Once employed by the APD, Pulido worked as a Patrol officer for four and a half years before becoming a Detective in the Criminal Investigations Division. Pulido also served as a member of the APD Street Crimes Unit, Investigator with the Illinois Child Death Task Force, Crisis Negotiator for both the Alton Police Department and the ILEAS Special Response Team, FBI Task Force Officer and a Supervisor with the Major Case Squad of Greater St. Louis. Chief Pulido is also certified as a Juvenile Officer and member of the Illinois Crisis Intervention Team.

Pulido later worked his way to becoming a Detective Supervisor, overseeing the APD Narcotics Unit. From there, he was appointed to the role of Alton Police Department Deputy Chief in August of 2019 then recently was promoted to Alton Police Chief.

"Whenever they asked me to become the chief of police, truthfully, there was a combination of emotions," Pulido said during a recent interview. "Humbled. Excited. Honored. Just a multitude of emotions, because it's a big responsibility. It's a big responsibility for a department and a city that I respect. I respect the city leaders, and it was just a combination of emotions, but primarily excited."

Like many other youngsters, Pulido had dreams about becoming an officer at an early age, and began thinking seriously about it as a teenager.

"From an early, early age, I have always wanted to become a police officer," Pulido said. "To be honest with you, I don't know why, I don't know where that came from, but it's always been something I have always wanted to do. And anyway, in high school, I

was 16 years old, and I joined the Explorer program. I was able to participate in ride-alongs, along with a lot of other things, and the goal was to see and expose you to law enforcement, to see if you're interested in it, and if you're not, you can move on, or you can grow upon it. I was interested in it, and I actually participated in ride-alongs from 16 years of age, until I was 21.

"At that point, pretty much after the first few ride-alongs, I knew what I wanted to do," Pulido continued. "So I was able to be kind of exposed to law enforcement at an early age, in the mid-90s, then I was able to be hired at 22 years of age, and just have been very thankful and humbled and blessed by the career that I've had"

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Simmons, the retiring chief, believes that Pulido will do good things for the city and its residents.

"Picking him was probably the best decision I've ever made in my 27 years," Simmons said. "He will do good for Alton. He wants to improve the quality of life for everyone in the city. And the City of Alton deserves someone that will definitely work hard to make things better in this community."

Simmons also believes that Pulido will help make the Alton Police Department a better department for its officers and its community as well.

"I think the Alton Police Department has improved over the years," Simmons said. "We have a long way to go. As I said, we're not perfect, but we have to be excellent. Sometimes, we do make mistakes, and we learn from those mistakes, and we move forward."

Simmons has seen many good things happening in Alton, and he believes that there are more good things ahead for the city in the coming months and years.

"I see good things happening in the city," Simmons said. "I've seen great things happening in the city, certainly in the last eight years or so. So, I'm very optimistic about the direction that the city and this police department is going currently."

Alton Mayor Brant Walker is also very enthusiastic about Pulido's appointment and believes that he's a joy to work with.

"If you don't know Marcos, he's going to be a joy to work with," Walker said. "His enthusiasm, his energy level, and his knowledge of policing in this community are unparalleled. I believe he has worked in every single department in the Alton Police

Department over his 20 years of experience. So, even for his youthfulness, to have the experience he has, he's been basically policing since he was a teenager, worked his way up, and got on with the Alton Police Department for over 20 years. We're very, very fortunate to have someone of his knowledge level and compassion about his community to step up and be chief. I'm looking forward to working with him."

Pulido's philosophy of having a successful police department is working with the community together to help solve problems and build positive relationships.

"I believe to be successful as a police department, we need to work with the community," Pulido said. "We have to work hand-in-hand. A lot of times, there are some community issues, in my opinion, that cannot be solved by themselves, It has to be a joint effort. And I believe in that joint effort, so I definitely want to continue to build upon the principles that have already been established."

But Pulido also wants his officers to show the human side of law enforcement as well.

"One of the things that I do love, and I encourage our officers to be - I know it seems silly," Pulido said, "and if you listen to my explanation, you'll understand. It's in the concept of humanizing. Humanizing the badge. I've already met with a handful of our community stakeholders in the past, and I've kind of explained that, and I've also explained that to our officers. What I mean by that is a variety of different things. But it basically means this: It's to remember that whoever I talk to as a human being, no doubt about it, but you are also a human being. Yes, I also want the community to know that we are also human beings underneath this. I do wear a uniform, I have this badge, and I have this car, and we get exposed to a variety of different things, and we do different things in the community. But at the end of the day, we're sons, we're husbands, we're wives, fathers and that type of thing.

"I am the type of person, I can be serious when it's necessary, but when it's not, I love to smile. I love to joke. I love to act like a human being. I don't want it to always be a formalized process; you know, there are times when it's time to be professional. But when I'm just walking in when I'm not on a call, there's not a call for service, and it's not a critical incident, and I'm just walking by someone that I can wave, I can smile, I can start up a random conversation. I can just do random things, in essence, to remind everyone - you and ourselves - we are human beings."