

Jersey County BackStoppers Board Is Set, Police Chief Looks Forward To Affiliation

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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JERSEY COUNTY - Jersey County is embracing an official affiliation with BackStoppers. First responders are also set to support the organization with future fundraisers.

Jerseyville Police Chief Brad Blackorby said he and the other first responders in Jersey County are excited to move ahead with the BackStoppers agreement. He said it will not only benefit Jerseyville Police but Jerseyville Fire, Grafton Police, Jersey County

Sheriff's Office, and all the first responders in Jersey County. This also includes all volunteer firefighters in Jersey County and EMS personnel.

BackStoppers was started in this region by Richard H. Amberg, one-time publisher of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. The publisher took the idea of Nicholas Blassie, president of Meatcutters Union Local #8 in Detroit, who created an organization that provided relief for families of fallen public servants. Amberg invited key civic leaders from business, labor, and other professions and created the charger for BackStoppers on September 11, 1959. Amburg had deep compassion for fallen first responders after what he had witnessed in the St. Louis area.

Ironically, BackStoppers was only five months old when three St. Louis firefighters lost their lives battling a blaze at a run-down salvage first at 106-110.5 Sixth Street in St. Louis. The entire second story collapsed on them, killing them. The tragedy left three widows and 11 children, eight of whom were very young, and BackStoppers reached out and provided them support. Today, BackStoppers has expanded much beyond St. Louis and now Jersey County will be part of it. BackStoppers reached out to Jerseyville Police about membership in the latter part of 2021, Blackorby said.

"The St. Louis Metropolitan Back Stoppers asked us about expanding their organization here and we have done that and went through the steps to establish our own board in Jersey County," Chief Blackorby said. "It is a great organization. It helps first responders and their families in any kind of tragedy.

"We will do a fundraiser this spring and will do our fundraisers under one organization in Jersey County."

Chief Blackorby promised to let the public know when they would have their first big fund-raising event for BackStoppers in Jersey County.