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Full-Time Town Marshal on Job

Dickson Speeders Advised

By Barbara Webb

DICKSON - Fast drivers and other potential lawbreakers beware, Dickson now has a full time town marshal.

In a move to improve conditions for Dickson's some 1,000 residents, three months ago the town board of trustees hired its first and only full time employee - Town Marshal Roger Barraza.

And, in order to have a system available to try offenders, the board has set up a municipal court and appointed Dickson's first town judge, Dennis Myers.

Action establishing the court was taken in the board's Friday night meeting.

Ora Mae Sullivan, town clerk, said Dickson was able to hire Barraza after receiving a grant from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA). LEAA funds are administered by the Oklahoma Crime Commission.

Barraza provides his own patrol car, but other equipment needed in the job is provided by the town.

A car radio was "donated" by the county until Dickson can afford to purchase a more modern one, Mrs. Sullivan said.

"We've now applied to the Crime Commission for a grant to purchase the new radio equipment," she added.

Barraza said "everyone" in town likes him, so he has little trouble from Dickson residents.

One problem area in the town, however, seems to be speeders traveling along U.S. 70, which runs directly through Dickson and in front of the Dickson school.

"When I'm parked in clear view of the highway, traffic slows down. But when I'm not there, drivers speed, Barraza said.

The town clerk said the board of trustees is hoping to receive a state grant to install caution lights on the highway near the school area so drivers will slow down.

"We had a little girl run over while crossing the highway in front of the school last year," Mrs. Sullivan explained. "We want these drivers to slow down and prevent potential hazards to our school children along the highway."

Barraza said he too is worried about the traffic problem near Dickson School and makes a special effort to be in the area when school activities are conducted.

"I'm on 24-hour call and available - anytime, anybody here needs me," he added.

Barraza came to Dickson upon hearing the marshal's job was open. He's a native of Laredo, Tex.

The new marshal has had no previous law enforcement experience, but currently is taking courses at East Central State College, Ada, to get the 128 hours needed to be certified by Oklahoma as a law enforcement officer.

Though his duties will not be on a full-time basis, Judge Myers also said he will be available to town residents when they need his services.

He, Mrs. Sullivan and Barraza will be responsible for doing paperwork necessary to get the new municipal court going.

Currently, Myers said, it looks as if a court session will be needed in Dickson at least once a week due to the many traffic violators picked up along U.S. 70.

Mrs. Sullivan explained hiring a marshal, establishing a court system and appointing a municipal judge are part of the continuing "success story" of Dickson.

The town was incorporated in 1968, but ran its government strictly on donations until the 1970 census was conducted.

"We could get no state aid or money from taxes and licenses until after the census," Mrs. Sullivan said.

In 1970, the town constructed its combination town hall-fire building, which houses the Dickson fire truck and where public meetings are held.

In the future, the town's board of trustees hopes to establish sanitary sewer and solid waste disposal systems in Dickson, she said.

The board of trustees also is "toying" with the idea of calling an election to consider levying a one-cent town sales tax, the clerk reported.

(Note: A picture of Ora May Sullivan, Mayor Dennis Myers, and Town Marshal Barraza appear in the paper with the article.)