

Police Chief Gregory Alexander – Town of Yemassee

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Police Chief Gregory Alexander of the Yemassee Police Department has dedicated his life to community service and protecting the people of Yemassee. However, the path to becoming Chief of the Yemassee Police Department not only requires dedication, but the willingness to wake up each morning and put on a uniform that represents the people of Yemassee and the surrounding areas.

A Varnville, South Carolina native, Alexander first realized that he had a love and profound appreciation for law enforcement at a young age. Chief Alexander and his friends spent their youth admiring the work that law enforcement officers did for the community, and it quickly became apparent to Gregory that he would one day pursue a career in criminal justice.

He recalls, “Of the group of three friends that I had, there were two of us that would go on to become police officers. We would spend our days working at Love’s Kitchen, and then at night we would go on a ride-along with police officers in Varnville. We just couldn’t get enough of it.”

After his first attempt at joining the local police department in Varnville was stopped by his father (who encouraged him to pursue military service and seek higher education), Alexander joined the Navy after graduation. He would then go on to spend the next three years as a sailor before eventually returning to Yemassee.

While on holiday leave one day, he was able to visit with a friend who was working as a patrolman with the Yemassee Police Department. Upon seeing the excitement of his friend’s career, he immediately applied for a police officer position in Yemassee.

Chief Alexander fondly remembers his transition from the Navy to the police department saying, “I can remember walking into the offices in my all-white Navy uniform, and the Chief of Police at the time and one of the administrators were so impressed that they nearly hired me right on the spot.”

Originally joining the police force in Yemassee in the year 2000, he spent time working for several other law enforcement agencies, such as the Colleton County Sheriff’s Department and the Cottageville Police Department, before once again returning to work for the police department in Yemassee. Alexander was then promoted to Sergeant after he was rehired by Yemassee, followed by Captain, and then was appointed the Chief of Police in 2014.

Since his appointment to police chief, he has implemented and overseen numerous administrative and operational changes to the Yemassee Police Department. Programs such as “Coffee with a Cop” were started as part of his goal of getting the local community to be more engaged in the functionality of the police department, and to bridge any disconnect between the Yemassee residents and the local law enforcement.

Not only are members of the Yemassee community able to directly vocalize their concerns through the morning coffee program, the zoning program implemented by Chief Alexander has also had a dramatic effect on reducing crime in the community. The Zone Fellowship Program is intended to divide the geography into four individual sections overseen by a community leader that would act as a liaison to the local law enforcement agencies. This program was designed to involve more of the townspeople in the prevention of crime and allow a conduit of communication to exist between the police department and the community. The resulting success of the program has led to Yemassee having a significantly lower rate of unsolvable crimes compared to years before the program was instituted.

Chief Alexander feels that the program has greatly improved the ability of his officers to adequately carry out their duties saying, "This program has been a blessing, it really has. I first went to the local ministries and churches to find individuals and community leaders who would act as representatives within the community, and now there's even a Facebook page that has been set up so that the people from the different zones can communicate. For example, if one person from Zone A saw a crime being committed, someone from Zone B might be able to concur this information and give a more accurate description to help us out."

Despite the landmark accomplishments the Yemassee Police Department has achieved while under his leadership, Chief Alexander still has high expectations for what his department can accomplish in the future. He hopes to soon open a citizen's academy to help familiarize the residents of Yemassee and the surrounding areas with the way law enforcement officers operate, and to further bolster the relationship between the people and the police department for an even more mutually beneficial relationship.

Apart from a citizen's academy, Chief Alexander's landmark goal for this year will be to achieve national accreditation for the Yemassee Police Department through the Commission of Accreditation on Law Enforcement Agencies. He says, "This is something that would set the department above and beyond the standards of law enforcement. It's something that we've been trying to achieve for a while now, and now we have the opportunity to do it."

For more information please visit:

<https://www.townofyemassee.org/yemassee-police-department>.