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# News Release

## **HPD Chief of Police Announces Retirement**

**Dec. 20, 2011**

On behalf of the City Manager's Office and the Harrisonburg Police Department, Colonel D.G. Harper has announced his upcoming retirement.

March 31, 2012 will mark a milestone within the Harrisonburg Police Department. Col. Harper will wrap up his career and celebrate his tenure as the 17<sup>th</sup> Chief of Police with the Harrisonburg Police Department.

Col. Harper's law enforcement career began in 1964 with the Fairfax County Police Department, where he later retired at the rank of major with 20 years of service. In Fairfax County, Col. Harper was one of the founders of their Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams.

From 1984 until 1992, he served as chief of police in the town of Vienna.

In April of 1992, Col. Harper headed to the Shenandoah Valley to assume the rank of chief with HPD.

He has been a guest lecturer for the FBI, CIA, and other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and academies on response to hostage/barricade incidents, incident scene command, hostage negotiations, and crowd management. Col. Harper's extensive background and training in SWAT and critical incident management has proven beneficial for HPD.

Canines, mountain bikes, motorcycles, evidence technicians, computer forensic investigations, Internet Crimes Against Children taskforce, and polygraph examiners have been established and developed at HPD under Col. Harper's leadership.

“My personal career goal was to actively serve with a law enforcement agency until I reached the age of 70, which I will accomplish in February,” said Col. D.G. Harper. “My tenure with HPD has been rewarding in many different ways and I’m thankful to have served the citizens of Harrisonburg.”

Upon his retirement, Col. Harper will have dedicated a total of 48 years of service to law enforcement and the communities in which he has served.

“Don is leaving behind big shoes to fill,” said City Manager Kurt Hodgen. “He has been a great leader for our department and a tremendous asset to the law enforcement community in general. We wish him well on his retirement, and know he will continue to be an involved member of the greater Harrisonburg community.”

The position of chief of police will be advertised starting Wednesday, December 21. The City Manager’s Office will handle the hiring process and the search for a new police chief will begin after the first of the year.

An interim chief of police will be announced at a later time.

**Note to media:** Col. Harper and Mr. Kurt Hodgen will be available for interviews and questions today from 1 p.m. until 2 p.m. Please coordinate with Mary-Hope Vass or Miriam Dickler if you wish to meet with either person.