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HPD Launches New Program to Strengthen Communication with Citizens

Harrisonburg, VA - On Wednesday, February 19, Chief Stephen Monticelli and other officers from the Harrisonburg Police Department and community members will come together in an informal, neutral space to discuss community issues, build relationships, and drink coffee.

The event will be held from 9 to 10:30 a.m. at The Artful Dodger restaurant on Court Square. All community members are invited to attend.

Coffee with a Cop will provide a unique opportunity for community members to ask questions and learn more about the department's work in Harrisonburg's neighborhoods. The program is part of the department's expanded outreach to citizens as officers implement HPD's Community Policing philosophy.

The majority of contacts that law enforcement officers have with the public happen during emergencies, or emotional situations. Those situations are not always the most effective times for relationship building. *Coffee with a Cop* will help break down barriers and allow for a relaxed, one-on-one interaction.

"We hope that community members will feel comfortable to ask questions, bring concerns, or simply get to know our officers," Monticelli says. "These interactions are the foundation of community partnerships."

To that end, the HPD plans a series of *Coffee with a Cop* sessions in various parts of the city over the next several months.

Coffee with a Cop is a national initiative that aims to advance the practice of community policing through improving relationships between police officers and community.

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