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## HPD Expands Animal Control Services

Harrisonburg, VA – The Harrisonburg Police Department (HPD) is excited to announce the expansion of its Animal Control Services. Officer Geoffrey Bechtel was selected to serve as a dual role position and will work part time as an Animal Control Officer (ACO) and part-time patrol officer. The city is currently served by one civilian animal control officer.

During the period July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016, HPD responded to 783 animal related calls for service. Of these, approximately 48% were handled by police officers. With the creation of this dual position, specialized animal control services will be extended into the evening hours, with some weekend coverage.

Officer Bechtel will compliment his civilian counterpart as a sworn police officer and will be available to assist in all police matters as part of the special operations division. He started his career with the department in January 2012 and is a certified Police Officer II. He is presently assigned to the patrol division.

On November 4, Officer Bechtel Graduated from the Rappahannock Regional Criminal Justice Training Academy and is certified as an Animal Control Officer (ACO). The ACO program is administered by The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Offices of the State Veterinarian.

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