

Candidate Questionnaire

Name and title?

Eric Barden – Chief of Police, City of Zion

How long have you been in law enforcement?

22 years. I began my career in 2002 with the City of Zion and have spent my entire career there. I have fulfilled nearly every position within the ZPD, I was appointed to the rank of Chief of Police after serving as the Lieutenant of the Investigations Division. I am closely approaching the 3rd year of my Chief tenure.

What position are you running for?

3rd Vice President

How have you benefited from being an ILACP member?

Personally, I have benefited from the ILACP in a few ways. First, has been the networking and friendships developed over the years. I have had exposure to different methods and mindsets of my fellow Chiefs and hope to continue to develop myself and knowledge through the mentorship and guidance of top professionals from around the State. Second, I feel very lucky these last few years that the ILACP has been a part of the ongoing discussions with the Illinois legislature, as a profession these haven't been the easiest waters to navigate however the diligence and professionalism displayed is second to none. I look forward to the opportunity to advocate and work directly with State legislators to continue to promote the Law Enforcement profession in the proper way. The ILACP has been instrumental in helping to craft many of the new bills into workable laws. While nothing is perfect, I can't imagine what things would look like if the ILACP hadn't been as involved as we were.

If elected, what would be your top 3 priorities?

- 1. Officer Wellness. It is my position that if we start with addressing the root causes of many of the issues we see within our ranks, we will see an increase in morale, purpose and esprit de corps.**
- 2. Retention and Recruitment. Without a doubt this is the most pressing and immediate need in Illinois law enforcement. Not only is hiring more difficult today, but so too is retaining our best and brightest, we need to emphasize retention. We need to find creative yet realistic ways to keep our police departments sustainable in the long-term. I have addressed this issue within my own department by examining the statute governing the hiring process. By addressing the testing cycle process, we have gone from creating and exhausting an entry list to having a constant "living" list with available candidates at the ready.**
- 3. Training. We can set the tone and encourage each department to develop and share training opportunity with neighboring agencies. I feel the ILACP can become a leader**

in the state for professional development. The association can be proactive and seek out the best training programs, best trainers, and best examples of leadership in the State.

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the ILACP?

Status Quo. I hate the thought of doing something the same way because that's the way we have always done it. Are we evolving with the world around us at a rate that allows us to be nimble and competitive in the job market or in the rules of law. Do we demand the law makers to hear our needs and the "why" behind the request? And how often do we have legislators complete ride-a-longs or complete simulated training to expose them to the reality of the difficult job of policing. The Illinois Chiefs of Police Association works hard to educate and train law enforcement officers, of which we have some of the best in the country, but also we need to put the same effort into the training of the legislators who set the vision. I would love to be able to be a part of this endeavor.