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Career public servant Joe Tucker named next HPD Police Chief

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Joe Tucker always knew his would be a life of public service. Volunteering at his local fire house and helping coordinate youth league games at his community's recreation department quickly grew into being named to the International Association of Chiefs of Police Top 40 Under 40 list, being recognized as Officer of the Year by two organizations and receiving the Lynchburg Police Star for extraordinary bravery.

Now, that dedication and drive to make communities better for all is on the way to The Friendly City.

Tucker, the East Division Lieutenant and Crisis Negotiation Commander for the Lynchburg Police Department, has been selected as the new chief of the Harrisonburg Police Department. His first day with HPD will be Feb. 2. When he arrives, Tucker will bring with him a commitment to sustainable community engagement between the department and those it serves and a desire to work closely with the people of Harrisonburg to proactively address crime and other quality of life community needs for many years to come.

"During my first few months here, I want to listen, observe and be present," Tucker said. "I want to be respectful of the organization's culture and focus on ways to professionally develop and grow the people who are part of this department. And I want to focus on continued, impactful community engagement – not just one-offs – where we have a relationship with our community in which we can have honest, tough conversations and hold each other accountable in making Harrisonburg a better place for all."



(Above) HPD Chief Joe Tucker

Tucker's career in law enforcement is studded with testaments to his belief in community-oriented policing, whether that be his role in founding Lynchburg's first Violent Crime Response Team – which worked directly with community leaders and stakeholders to address needs of locals through proactive policing efforts – or his community services roles with the City of Lynchburg Safe Driving Task Force, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives and other noteworthy appointments to local and state-wide boards. In addition to recognitions such as the Top 40 Under 40 Award and the Police Star, he was named the Lynchburg Police Department Officer of the Year in 2020 and the Veteran of Foreign Affairs Officer of the Year in 2024 and received the Lynchburg Meritorious Service Medal.

But it's not the recognitions bringing Tucker to Harrisonburg. It's his commitment to the values cherished by HPD, his belief in leading by example in demonstrating integrity and his desire to be approachable and communicative with his officers and those he serves.

"We had an incredibly competitive pool of candidates who wanted to bring their vision and experience to Harrisonburg and lead this organization forward – and time and again, whether it was in multiple interview panels or one-on-one conversations, Joe

constantly stood out as a person who would continually be visible and engaged, who would unflinchingly advocate for the needs of his department and our community, and who desired to lift this department up not only in his first month or his first year but for many years to come,” Harrisonburg City Manager Ande Banks said. “I saw a leader who had to be part of this City and this law enforcement agency.”

Banks saw the next chief of the Harrisonburg Police Department – someone who embodied the values of a community that pledges to be A City For All and the vision of an organization that wants to continue to make this a place all who call it home can be proud of. Now Tucker and his family are on their way to Harrisonburg as the new chief continues a path that started as a teenager.

“I have been in public service since I have been 16 years old and I always knew I wanted to pursue a career in law enforcement,” Tucker said. “The fact that every day is something new and different excites me, and the fact that you can have a significant impact in your community in law enforcement inspires me.”

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 56,879 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.

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