

## Cedaredge welcomes new police chief, Joe Roberts

The Town of Cedaredge is pleased to welcome Joe Roberts as the new Chief of the Cedaredge Police Department. Chief Roberts began his duties on April 13, and brings over 38 years of law enforcement experience to the department.

Chief Roberts came to Cedaredge most recently from Log Lane Village, Colo., which is a small suburb of Fort Morgan, with a population of about 1,100. He served as Chief there as well as in Simla, Colo. He spent several years in law enforcement in Fort Carson, working his way up from working in the emergency operations center up to serving that agency as Chief as well. Before that, Chief Roberts served in the U.S. Army for over 20 years as a military police officer. He has been to every continent except for Australia and Antarctica, and was deployed 16 times in his Army career. Currently, Chief Roberts serves as the secretary/treasurer for the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police, in order to lend the small, rural perspective to statewide policing initiatives.

His military career and training definitely shapes how he leads a police department. “When I was in leadership school in Washington, D.C., the instructors told me I was like an M&M - hard on the outside but all soft on the inside,” he laughed. “I equate that to all my time in the military. There are times to be tough and times when you don’t need to be. I believe in treating everyone fairly and in treating everyone the same. I don’t care if you’re the wealthiest person in town or the person living in a box under a bridge, the law applies equally to both of them, and they need to be treated the same. That’s my philosophy.”

In each community he’s worked, Chief Roberts has strived to do more than simply police the community – he likes to be actively involved. “I love working as a chief in a small community where I am also able to become part of the community,” he said. In his past agencies, he has hosted Thanksgiving potlucks at the police department, Christmas activities for kiddos, and even the occasional Super Bowl party at the police department. He already has plans for the staff and officers of the Cedaredge Police Department to construct and stage a haunted house for kids at Halloween. “I’ve worked in a lot of rural communities, and I know we have to provide safe, low-cost activities for our kids,” Chief said. When he and his team staged a haunted house in Simla, the event grew from 50 kids his first year to over 300 by year three – pretty impressive in a town with a population of just over 600! “I had families drive over an hour just to bring their kids there,” he said. He said he also loves to attend high school sporting events, and has a soft spot for both football and volleyball. “I love to walk around and talk to people, but I really love to watch a good game!” he said.

Of course, it’s more than just a haunted house or a volleyball game – it’s all part of Chief’s methodology behind community building and community policing. “To me, if you get to know the kids and the elderly in the community, then everybody in the middle comes along. Those are the two groups that are most vulnerable to almost everything, and if you work with those groups, they quickly see the value of good law enforcement officers, and their friends and family respect the way their loved ones were treated.”

Just a few days on the job in Cedaredge, and Chief Roberts has already been working with officers to stop while they're out patrolling and speak with people. "It's all about community interaction," he said. "I've already told the guys, stop and talk to people. Be friendly. You don't always have to be the tough cop." Of course, Chief Roberts and all officers of the Cedaredge Police Department are working hard to maintain appropriate social distancing measures while they're out patrolling and working with the community, and encourage the community to do so as well. "Wear your mask when you go out!" Chief said.

Other than that, Chief Roberts is taking his time to learn what works well with the Cedaredge Police Department and has no sweeping change of plans in the works. "My plan right now is to review everything," he said. "I don't make changes just for the sake for changing. A change either has to be for the betterment of the officers or for the community."

One thing he does not plan to change is the commitment to ongoing training for officers. "I'm impressed with the department's well-trained officers and the training program already in place," Chief said. "Knowledge is power, and we want well-trained officers who are up to the correct level. Cedaredge should be proud of their officers." Including Roberts, the Cedaredge Police Department has five officers on staff. Roberts will be a working chief, handling both administrative duties as well as picking up patrol duties, which, he said, suits him just fine. "I hate sitting in an office!" he said.

When he isn't working, Chief Roberts loves to be in the outdoors. He grew up around the water and loves boating and fishing. He also likes to take his two dogs, Inky and Lulu, for walks and hikes. "One of the first things I fell in love with of Cedaredge is just how beautiful it is," he said. "Since I got here I've been driving around saying, "Let's see where this road goes," and each road I turn down is prettier than the next. This place is a dream.

"I'm really looking forward to learning more about Cedaredge and getting to know the people," Chief Roberts said.

Instead of a traditional meet-and-greet with Chief Roberts, the community is invited to join an online video call to meet him. That call will take place on Wednesday, April 29 at 4 pm. In order to join the call, please email Town Clerk Kami Collins for login credentials at [kcollins@cedaredgecolorado.com](mailto:kcollins@cedaredgecolorado.com).