

A new era in law enforcement training: Officials break ground on police academy complex at NCCC

NCSO, NFPD to continue partnership at new training center

BY TERRY DUFFY
Editor-in-Chief

Tuesday marked an exciting beginning for the future of local law enforcement. Amid summer rain, county and state officials gathered with visitors from the law enforcement community to break ground for the new Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy training facility at Niagara County Community College.

To be located on the northern end of the campus, the new academy is a partnership of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, Niagara Falls Police Department and NCCC. Funding for the project comes from the legislature and state resources.

"It's my honor to welcome you today for the ceremonial groundbreaking of the Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy," Niag-

ara County Legislature Chairwoman Becky Wydysh said. "We're very excited about this project. It is truly exciting to see this - moving forward on this state-of-the-art building for training women and men in our law enforcement community."

Wydysh called the project "a great example of partnerships across the community working together for a common goal (that) can make things happen."

Niagara University previously hosted the academy. The NCSO and NFPD opted to relocate the law enforcement training academy (NCLEA) back to the NCCC campus, where it all began in 1974.

"When we relocated the NCLEA a few years ago, we did so with a vision to create a modern, dynamic academy to train our future law enforcement personnel, and

The future home of the Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy. (NCCC image).

today's groundbreaking is the first step in that direction," Sheriff Michael J. Filicetti said. "It's a great day and (a) very much anticipated day. I'm very excited to see this, the groundbreaking behind us, where this law enforcement academy is going to be. This building means so much to the law enforcement community, and the community that we serve here in Niagara County. It's great to have all the police here, our state and federal partners, I thank you for your support."

"We're just feet from where I went to the police academy in that very building (nearby). It's a great location."

Of the new, nearly 15,000-square-foot complex, Filicetti said the training facility will feature two floors of class space with moveable walls; a reality-based training cen-



ter with a use-of-force simulator; men's and women's locker rooms; and office space.

"The academy building will be the hub of training for new recruits, preemployment recruits, current law enforcement officers, correction officers, and criminal justice students attending NCCC," he said. "This would provide state-of-the-art training for the new additions that we currently do not have available to us. On the first floor, you'll find four classrooms with the latest technology. A designated room will house a use-of-force simulator; this is cutting-edge training that we currently do not have. This is critical in developing (police) abilities in multiple scenarios - when to use force; de-escalation; communication skills; and dealing with mental health issues."

"On the first floor will be expanded officer space for our academy directors ... and ample locker room space. On the second floor a moveable wall simulation room will be constructed. Multiple configurations will be available to test response to various shooter situations. There will also be a mat room to learn defensive tactical skills. These are critical skills necessary when responding to high-risk law enforcement events, like an active shooter or combative subject."

"Again, this is going to be our one-stop shop for all of our law enforcement training needs here in Niagara County. ... It's a great partnership with Niagara Community College, President (William) Murabito and so many others. I want to thank you for all your efforts in moving this project forward."

Filicetti said the training center would continue to function in partnership with the NFPD as it's done since 1974.

"The law enforcement academy is something that is critically important to this county and to society," City of Niagara Falls Mayor Robert Restaino said. "The men and women that go through that academy protect all our communities. We are especially proud to be a co-director, to provide some of personnel there to train tomorrow's law enforcement leaders."

Restaino said Niagara Falls would provide funding via its relationship with Seneca Gaming Corp. "for a variety of different *SEE NCCC, continued on Page 3*



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