

UPD community policing program offers housing incentive for new officers to live in The Village

COURTNEY EDWARDS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The A-State University Police Department (UPD) is offering an incentive to hire new officers. New hires can apply to live on campus for free and attain a free meal pass for the Acansa Dining Hall.

Most of the officers will live in The Village apartments along with graduate and non-traditional students. Public Information Officer for UPD, Dr. Bill Smith said police departments are always looking for an advantage to offer their employees. Housing happens to be an advantage A-State can offer.

"There's a little bit more to it than just simply providing housing because it also really feeds into our community policing aspect," Smith said. "We really like to have the officers living on campus among the students, so they can perform those traditional community policing functions of getting to know students and being visible."

Having officers live on campus also provides UPD with an exceptional response time. When an incident requiring action from UPD happens, especially in the middle of the

night, having available officers live on campus rather than even in the city limits results in much quicker response times.

Corporal Takeem Bowman has been with UPD for three years. He currently lives in The Village apartments with his fiancé.

"Living on campus is pretty much ideal," Bowman said. "I can't really say anything negative about it. Being able to interact with students and them knowing there's an officer living beside them or close by. If anything was to happen, I can respond quickly."

Natalie Eskew, the director of University Housing, said she really sees no negative side in having officers live on campus. She said the officers do a great job with the community policing aspect.

"(The officers) really do a good job, in some of our first-year areas especially, about building relationships with our resident assistants," Eskew said.

Eskew said the UPD officers help out the RAs, especially during fire and safety inspections. Sometimes, the RAs find contraband, and rather than have an underage RA confiscate it, it can be easier to have UPD do it instead.



Photo by Courtney Edwards | Editor-in-Chief
Corporal Takeem Bowman lives in The Village apartments with his fiancé.

For the newly hired officers applying for the positions with the housing incentive, it will be part of that officer's duty to live on campus. Smith said A-State would offer free housing to officers and make it part of their assignment to live on campus, so the incentive wouldn't be a tax issue for them.

Chief Financial Officer, Russ Hannah said the officers don't pay for the housing since

it's a requirement of their position, but Residence Life isn't asked to bear the cost either.

"This is considered to be an institutional cost and is charged to the University's operating budget in a manner similar to the other costs associated with UPD," Hannah said.

"There are other slots in UPD where (living on campus) is not part of the duties assigned," Smith said. "In

that sense of these new hires that we've received, they were hired with the expectation that they would live on campus."

Smith said it was not unusual for a police department to require its officers to live in a certain area. He said some departments may require officers to live within the county limits.

Smith said the incentive had been successful so far as of Sept. 27. UPD has hired five new officers. Three are already-licensed officers and two are potential officers going through training. He said they had offers out to potentially four more officers for the program.

Some residence halls on campus fill up more quickly than others when renewal or housing applications are due. Smith said The Village apartments typically have vacancy throughout the year, so officers shouldn't take any housing opportunities away from students.

Last year, University Housing moved students in self-isolation due to COVID-19 to The Village apartments because of the frequent vacancy. This year, they have discontinued the self-isolation procedure, so the vacancy is beginning to fill with UPD officers and other faculty/staff members.

University Housing offers housing to faculty/staff members regularly based on availability. Faculty and staff can choose to live in The Circle apartments or The Village apartments.

"While our occupancy level is up at The Village this year, we still have a lot of vacancies there," Eskew said. "With our faculty and staff living there, at this point, it's not taking away from any other student that wanted to live there because we still have several vacancies."

Bowman said he enjoys living on campus because it gives him the chance to interact with students and serve them to the best of his ability. He said he hopes his neighbors in The Village feel more secure knowing there's an officer nearby.

"I think my neighbors enjoy (living close to an officer)," Bowman said. "I've interacted with them. It's nice for them to see that we're human beings also. Anything that they need, they come and interact with me whether it's to complain or just have an ear to listen."

USPS, CONTINUED

These vehicles will include advanced safety and comfort features and can be equipped with modern drivetrain technology, contributing to our organization's commitment to environmental sustainability," stated the 10-year plan.

From changes to ground transportation to delivery time, what does this mean for our postal workers? Cissy Elam, A-State's post office Sales and Service clerk said, "It's a whole new process. The postmas-

ter general's new plan has so many factors in it and they are bringing in a little bit at a time."

Mail delivery has already slowed down in the past year. A report from National Public Radio (NPR): "Mail delivery is about to get slower and pricier just in time for the holidays" stated, "In August, the Postal Service announced its standard for first-class mail delivery was met 83.6% of the time throughout the quarter ending June 30, in comparison to

its 88.9% performance during the same period in 2020."

In a report from CBS: "Mail delivery slowdown: USPS to slow delivery starting October 1," Paul Steidler, a senior fellow at the Lexington Institute and an expert on the postal service said, "mail delivery will be slower than in the 1970s."

RACE, CONTINUED

"I just enjoy seeing women, men, kids and families come together all for the same cause," Fowler said. "It just goes to show that they support their moms, sisters, aunts, grandmas and everybody. I just like to see everybody come together."

St. Bernard's Breast Health Services use the funding from this event to support programs such as their mobile mammogram unit, which provides mammograms to uninsured or underinsured individuals across 23 counties in Northeast Arkansas and Southeast Missouri. St. Bernard's Breast Health Services also provides payment

for hospital stays if an individual is diagnosed with breast cancer, and even provides gas cards to help individuals travel to receive a mammogram.

"The funds are going towards helping our neighbors, moms, friends and cousins. This race is helping (women and men diagnosed with breast cancer) access the care that they need," Owens said.

Owens said 60% of the proceeds from this event support St. Bernard's Breast Health Services, while 40% is distributed as grants to other health care providers across Northeast Arkansas.

"I have had family members who have battled breast cancer," Owens said. "So, to me, seeing all of these people supporting this cause and knowing that the funds go to women and men who may not have access to the care that my mom and my family had access to is what makes this race important to me. I've seen the results of women and men getting access to this care, and it's life changing."

VEO Scooters and Bikes will not return to campus

JONATHAN SCHAUFLE
NEWS EDITOR

The VEO scooters and bikes often found around campus totally disappeared with the beginning of the fall semester. "(VEO) fulfilled their contract. Their contract was running out and they let us know towards the end of the spring semester they were making changes in how they operated nationwide.

Smaller markets like ours that weren't to their definition profitable were going to be dropped," Dr. Bill Smith, Chief Communications Officer said. As of this time, VEO will not be returning to campus. Once VEO completed their contract they stated they were moving out of the bicycle business and only carrying scooters. According to Smith, A-State students wanted both. Therefore, Smith

does not predict that VEO will return to campus anytime soon. As of right now, A-State does not have any plans to replace VEO with another company. Currently there is no outlet to rent bikes or scooters on campus and it seems as though there may not be one in the coming future.

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Questions?
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courtney.edwards@smail.astate.edu

Corrections

In last week's edition, photos on pages 2B and 3B should have been credited to Arkansas State Athletics