

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



As we progress into the new year, we are once again reminded of the need to remain vigilant and be prepared. Active shooter incidents continue to haunt law enforcement even as we work to improve our capabilities. Many so-called experts have offered “solutions” that are divisive and don’t improve safety. I strongly encourage each of you to take an active role in examining proactive measures that really do improve safety, especially in our schools. This includes “hardening” schools, school staff training, and legislation to establish standards.

I think we can agree that we need a national standard on school safety as it pertains to active shooters, similar to fire drills. No doubt this effort will take time to create and implement. Few are as qualified as you to play a part in establishing a local standard as we work toward a national plan. Reach out to local school districts, parent/teacher associations and command staff to identify ways to work collaboratively to create plans that assist schools in improving their capabilities to “self-help” prior to law enforcement arrival. Too often we continue to re-evaluate our response to active shooter incidents at the expense of focusing on the time before the response. This gap between time of call received and arrival is where we need to improve. Please use this “good” time to make a difference.

Like all of you, we at the NTOA have been busy. A long process of researching and relocating to a new headquarters finally occurred. In early March we moved from Doylestown, Pennsylvania, to Colorado Springs, Colorado. This move will help us to better serve our membership and allow for future growth.

In addition to our move, the NTOA has a new logo, as you can see on our cover. On our 35th anniversary, we have adopted a bold new logo which also memorializes our past. With great respect for all the hard work that has been done to get to this point, the new logo was designed keeping in mind the historical aspects of the first drafts of the NTOA logo, but also with an eye

(and design) for the future. To help this move into the future, we have been working on projects designed to help our members and their respective agencies.

The NTOA has joined eight of the nation’s most influential specialized law enforcement leadership professional organizations to establish the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services’ (COPS) Collaborative Reform Initiative – Technical Assistance Center (CRI-TAC). The center combines our experience, expertise and influence to provide effective, tailored support for law enforcement.

The CRI-TAC will provide quality, customized technical assistance by the field, for the field, and for the community. The NTOA, partner organizations, and their subject matter experts are ready to serve and provide training and technical assistance on all topics relating to community policing, crime reduction and public safety.

Led by cutting edge innovation and evidence-based practices, the CRI-TAC will embrace a collaborative, supportive approach to serving law enforcement and the communities they protect. It will feature tailored, scalable solutions delivered by experts from the field, at no cost to the requesting agency. The agency will be a resource for referrals, training, virtual mentoring, meeting facilitation and on-site consultation. Many topics will be addressed, including active shooter response, gun violence reduction and prevention, mass casualty response, officer safety and wellness, and modern police performance management. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions regarding CRI-TAC and how it may be useful to your agency. (See page 7 of this issue for more information on CRI-TAC.)

With progress comes change. As we move forward, you will see changes in the NTOA. It is our goal to ensure that the service you receive remains outstanding. Please let us know if there is anything that we can do to assist you in your efforts. Stay safe and Godspeed. ■

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thor Eells".

Thor Eells
Executive Director