

# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



## School safety

As we progress further into the year, we are once again reminded of our 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 make our communities safer, especially 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 regarding active shooters, similar to fire drills. The NTOA is working to establish minimum school safety standards to achieve this goal. These standards are derived from after-action analysis of five of the most notorious active shooter events. Each step will help reduce the potential for human failure and loss of life.

No doubt this effort will take time to create and implement. Few are as qualified as each of 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 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.

## CRI-TAC update

The NTOA, in conjunction with eight of the nation’s most influential specialized law enforcement leadership membership organizations, is steadfast in its commitment to harness their collective experience, subject matter expertise, and extensive reach in the field to establish the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Collaborative Reform Initiative Technical Assistance Center (CRI-TAC). This unique program, now in its sixth year, has been instrumental in benefiting over 1,000 agencies through the partners’ expertise. The significance of the CRI-TAC program cannot be overstated, and I urge you to actively engage and participate in its initiatives.

The NTOA believes external support for law enforcement is most effective when it respects local control and account-

ability, while still delivering important, tailored resources to local law enforcement. The CRI-TAC is built around the philosophy of providing quality, customized technical assistance by the field, for the field, and for the community. The NTOA, along with partner organizations and their subject matter experts, are ready to serve their peers. These leading law enforcement practitioners come from state, local, tribal and territorial agencies of all sizes and are skilled in providing training and technical assistance on all topics relating to community policing, crime reduction and public safety. The partner organizations include:

- International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)
- International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy Associates (FBINAA)
- National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE)
- Fraternal Order of Police (FOP)
- National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)
- Major City Chiefs Association (MCCA)
- International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA)

The CRI-TAC program is unique in its approach, offering cutting-edge innovation and evidence-based practices. It fosters a collaborative, supportive approach to serving law enforcement and the communities they protect. The program provides tailored, scalable solutions delivered by subject-matter experts, all at no cost to your agency. The services offered include resource referral, web-based and/or in-person training, virtual mentoring, meeting facilitation, and on-site consultation. The program covers a wide range of topics, including active shooter response, gun violence reduction and prevention, mass casualty response, officer safety and wellness, and modern police performance management. If you’re interested in learning more about how CRI-TAC can benefit your agency, please don’t hesitate to reach out to us.

With progress comes change. As we move forward, you will see some visible changes in the NTOA as we continue to grow, yet it is our goal to ensure that the service you receive remains exceptional. We are committed to supporting you in your efforts, and we value your feedback. Please let us know if there is anything that we can do to assist you.

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

Thor Eells  
Executive Director