THE TIME TO BUILD, NOT TEAR DOWN

Summer turmoil opens doors for boosting trust, proving value of police

When a cop puts on the badge, it is an act of courage—an act that accepts the risks of the job, that promises to place the good of the community above his or her own welfare.

To support the defunding of local law enforcement, people must choose to ignore that basic fact and believe several things that are simply not true: that officers regularly shoot unarmed people, wantonly discriminate and gas protesters—and that they delight in doing so.

“I’ve known many more officers and deputies who have arrested child abusers, murderers and traffickers than cops who have ever had to fire their weapon in the line of duty,” said Attorney General Dave Yost, who readily acknowledges that “defund” campaigns tick him off.

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As we talk about police reforms, it's important to recognize that we don't have a police problem; we have a societal problem with a law enforcement component.

— Attorney General Dave Yost

**For training & accountability**

These plans were pitched by Attorney General Dave Yost and Gov. Mike DeWine in June. Most would need to be passed by the General Assembly.

**Oversight board**

Purpose: To build accountability and prevent bad cops from simply moving to another agency

- Would establish professional standards and a code of conduct for law enforcement
- Would require that law enforcement officers adhere to code or risk license

**Independent use-of-force investigations**

Purpose: To build public trust in the results of investigations of officers

- Would require a neutral third party, such as the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), to conduct officer-involved critical incidents
- Would mandate that outside prosecutors also be assigned to shootings and in-custody deaths

**BCI officer-involved shooting investigative unit**

Purpose: To aid in independent investigations of officer-involved critical incidents

- Would establish a specialized response team at BCI established by the AG

**Advanced training**

Purpose: To create a regular funding stream to pay for advanced training for LEOs

- To build public trust in the results of investigations of officers
- To build accountability and prevent bad cops from simply moving to another agency

**Body cameras**

Purpose: To make police body cameras more widespread

- Would provide funding for equipment and video storage
- By governor’s order, OSHP troopers will be outfitted with the cameras.

Ohio isn’t allocated money for police training since 2017, so the decision on whether officers get training depends on local budgets, which often are tight. Calls for de-escalation training and the like ring hollow when there is no money to pay for it.

Yost sees this reality as unfair. He believes that officers putting their lives on the line to keep communities safe deserve regular training on best practices, regardless of the Ohio community they serve. Still, he said, an even more essential step should be taken to strengthen the law enforcement ranks.

“At the end of the day, what we really need to do is get rid of the few bad cops who are acting out and giving law enforcement a bad name.”

To do so, Yost and DeWine propose creating a state licensing board, similar to those in Ohio and for barbers, construction-industry contractors, lawyers, medical workers of all kinds, social workers and teachers.

The plan would essentially add an oversight and accountability board to the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission and Academy. The board, which would include active law enforcement officers, would work with law enforcement veterans and experts to set professional standards and a code of ethics.

Priorities would be fairness, due-process safeguards and transparency — not penalizing officers for imperfect knowledge at the time of an incident. Violations could result in a license being suspended or revoked, which would disqualify those unfit for the job from policing in Ohio, instead of allowing them to move to another unsuspecting department when they run into trouble.

Yost wants officers and deputies to know “bad cops are making your job and your mission harder. Those few bad cops are making you less safe on the street and why you’re being painted with the same broad brush.”

In fact, protests this summer came at a time when police agencies are the most professional in history. More training than ever is required to become a certified officer, including more than 100 hours that deal with different types of de-escalation.

Also, many law enforcement agencies in the state have been working hard to improve community policing — in some areas, after officer-involved shootings and/or U.S. Justice Department involvement in the past.

“We know we can do better because we already are doing better,” Yost said. “And there’s no limit to how good we can become.”

**Training**

Three days before George Floyd died in Minneapolis, the attorney general moved to increase funding for OPOTA.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the timing. The training facility had come to rely on casino proceeds, and empty casinos meant a payment 13 times smaller than usual.

But Yost had started looking at OPOTA’s costs and found a $2 million hole.

“When I was running for office, one of the things I heard was, ‘Hey, we legalized casinos, and we were supposed to get 2% of the money for training and where is it? Because we’re not seeing it,’” he said.

“We found out that money was going to fund state institutions.”

Yost also learned that many police agencies preferred training offered closer to home by private companies, community colleges or larger police departments. Such classes meant an officer didn’t have to travel all the way to London, Ohio, and the department didn’t have to cover as many shifts.

In fact, attendance in some OPOTA classes had fallen to five people.

Large-scale changes made sense.

“What some people think is that when all of the changes happened, OPOTA permanently closed,” said Dwight Holcomb, OPOTA’s executive director. “That’s not the case at all.”

As physical classes reopen (after the break forced by COVID-19), Holcomb said, OPOTA will initially focus on a handful of courses.

- Classes for teachers, in which instructor-level courses will certify people, such as police department’s training officers, to teach advanced training classes at or outside law enforcement agencies (which haven’t been directly taught by OPOTA for years)

- AnyTHING required by Ohio law: Such as the 40-hour course for new police chiefs.

- Driving, traffic stops and related courses: OPOTA has the state’s only large-scale driving track for law enforcement training and the popular courses draw officers from across the state and nation.

- Firearms: Two full-time instructors remain on staff and will teach such classes as firearms safety.

Still, he said, an even more essential step should be taken to strengthen the law enforcement ranks.

“By governor’s order, OSHP troopers will be outfitted with the cameras.”

“Basically, we are identifying the classes that will be most valuable to front-line officers, and then we’ll go out and find the best people to teach them,” Yost said.

OPOTA’s two training coordinators are tasked with finding those high-quality partners, a priority both to make the training cost effective and so that experts in their fields can share the newest methodologies and most up-to-date real-world experience. For example, for the new police chiefs course, OPOTA is working with the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police to bring in talented current chiefs to lead the classes.

“Police chiefs are so valuable,” said Dwight Holcomb, OPOTA’s executive director. “That’s not the case at all.”

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In law enforcement, it’s a long, slow process. We are communicators, we are here to talk to those who you want to vote for you. The window for completing vulnerability assessments at K-12 school buildings, and getting paid $500 for it, runs through the end of June.

Police officers or deputy sheriffs who have received a certificate for taking the threat assessment training can edit to the vulnerability assessments, the forms for which can be found on the Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway (OHLEG). The assessments must be completed in coordination with the school, and law enforcement agencies should submit grant applications for all school vulnerability assessments completed within their jurisdiction in a single batch. (Keep copies of each assessment.) For more details, contact Mark Potter, the attorney general’s school safety coordinator, at mark.potter@ohioattorneygeneral.gov, 614-726-1173 (work phone) or 614-955-8847 (cell phone).

Law enforcement officers are good grassroots people. They keep it every day and they could probably have some good solutions for us as well.

Q: Could you give an example of a bill that is stuck?
A: House Bill 1, which deals with getting people’s records expunged or sealed. Drug addicts, when they get into treatment and they do what they’re supposed to do, then let’s clean their records up and get them back in the workforce to be productive citizens. Because if you don’t have a job, you’re not going to go back to using and the street life that they know. That’s a very important bill.

Q: Is there anything you wish more legislators knew about law enforcement officers?
A: I wish they knew more about the criminal justice system as a whole. It’s too convoluted. So I found a program developed in Boston that involved putting mentors on street corners to engage with these young men and assist them in getting their lives back on track. The Greater Cincinnati Foundation gave me two years of seed money, and when that ran out, I went to the Cincinnati City Council. Well, they said, “The city’s back to normal now. We’re not going to fund your program.” I was so upset that I decided that I would run for City Council. And I won a seat. The Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence has been funded to this day, and the state liked the program so much, it’s been rolled out to other cities, too.

Q: What would you tell a law enforcement officer considering whether to run for office?
A: I would tell them that it’s a calling. It’s a challenge. Once you get into the seat, everybody’s going to tell you what you’re doing wrong, what you’re doing right — everybody else could do it better. You’ve got to be a strong person and you’ve got to stand for your values.

Q: What would you tell a police officer, or deputy or sheriff?
A: Well, being the sheriff, I was the executive branch, so I was able to call my own shots. If I’m responsible for the laws, then I make the laws and the judges sit down and execute them. As a legislator, it’s a long, slow process. It’s frustrating; I don’t think I’ll ever get used to it. We have great bills pending that will help quality of life issues, but they haven’t moved due to various reasons. I don’t deal with that very well. I’m trying to stay low my expectations, but it’s just not in my DNA.

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Q: What would you tell a law enforcement officer considering whether to run for office?
A: Do it, and go all in. In the process, do not stray from your moral compass. In life and especially in politics, it is impossible to make everyone happy, even though you will feel pressure to do so. What makes a strong leader is someone who can stand firm in their values and beliefs. If you consistently do what you truly believe is best for the people you serve, people will see that and respect you for it.

From cop to politician

On the job, a police officer taught me many skills that I still utilize today. In both roles, the days are busy so you must stay organized and take one thing at a time, whether that is a meeting on legislation or a radio run. Each day is different. But as a legislator, there is a larger scale, as we hear testimony on a wide variety of topics and make decisions that will affect 11 million people.

Q: How does your law enforcement experience affect how you legislate?
A: Communication is the key to both professions. I will always hear both sides of an issue and learn as much as I can before making a final decision. Even if I have a pre-existing opinion or stance, I firmly believe it is important to have all of the facts and to deeply consider both sides of an issue before acting.

Q: Is there anything you wish more legislators knew about law enforcement officers?
A: Both professions have the same goal: to serve the people. As a legislator, I work to reform laws and give them a high quality of life. We can achieve that goal by working together, as a team. I think many law enforcement officers would agree and be happy to collaborate in working toward that goal.

Q: Is there anything you wish more law enforcement officers knew about legislators?
A: As communicators, we are here to listen. We want to hear your opinions, especially those that directly impact you and your profession. I highly value the boots-on-the-ground perspective and will always appreciate your open and honest feedback.

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The Harley Dilly search: the good, bad, ugly

Before COVID-19 and summer protests, Port Clinton feels heat of second-guessing when social media, backseat Sherlocks and holiday schedules complicate hunt for teen

Port Clinton Police Chief Robert Hickman grew up two blocks from the home of Harley Dilly, the 14-year-old who went missing just before Christmas last year. Young Robert attended church next door to where Harley would live with his family, across the street from the empty summer residence where the teenager would be found dead on Jan. 13, the result of trying to slide down the chimney to get inside.

In the 23 days preceding that grim discovery, Chief Hickman and his department faced social media-fueled protests and baseless accusations of inexperience, corruption and even complicity in Harley's supposed murder.

The angry speculation came as the officers were working night and day, Christmas included; specifically trained canines; drones and helicopters, dive teams and water, both on foot and with the aid of specially trained canines.

Seven months after the Harley Dilly case was closed, the chief still struggles with the outcome.

“Did we mess up, or did we not? I don’t know. I can’t give you that answer,” he said. “But my biggest recommendation for any agency that experiences a case like this — don’t be afraid to ask for help.”

The truth, according to the autopsy, is that Harley had suffocated inside that narrow chimney before his parents even realized he was missing. There’s nothing the Port Clinton Police Department, or any other law enforcement agency, could have done to save him.

Yet that fact doesn’t bring peace to Chief Hickman, for whom the case was personal from the start. Hickman’s wife, Roseann, lost a child in 1988, and a decade later, the chief lost his only biological child in a stillbirth.

“Id like to say it gets easier. It doesn’t,” he said. “But at least the family has closure, and that means more to me than anything. We don’t have that unanswered question, ‘Where’s my child?’”

Immediate complications

By the time Marcus Dilly reported his son missing at 11:50 p.m. on Dec. 21, the teen hadn’t been heard from in 40 hours.

“We’re always working at a disadvantage in cases of missing children,” said a BCI agent who requested anonymity because she also works undercover. “The clock starts ticking before that Missing Child Alert or Amber Alert ever goes out, even when it’s immediate.”

Given Harley’s history of anger issues and problems at home, officers suspected that he had run away.

“Harley had stayed away before, spending the night here, night there,” Hickman said in a recent interview. “We had over 500 years of experience here every day, and we were all looking at each other saying, ‘What did we miss?’”

But the truth, according to the autopsy, is that Harley was the cause of his own disappearance.

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we brought in other agencies that deal with this on a daily basis and they were just as stumped,” the chief said in a recent interview. “We had over 500 years of experience here every day, and we were all looking at each other saying, ‘What did we miss?’”

After reaching into a chimney vent hole (left), BCI investigators carefully removed a plaster wall and chimney bricks to recover Harley, concluding the complex case.
night with friends when he got up. He’d come home when he calmed down,’ Chief Hickman said about the teen, who had Asperger’s syndrome, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and oppositional defiant disorder. “Most of our missing cases in Port Clinton, usually the kids go for a night or a weekend because he’s mad at Mom and Dad.”

That’s more true than not statewide. In 2019 in Ohio, of the 24,292 people reported to the Missing Children Clearinghouse, less than a third of 1% had been abducted or kidnapped. So Chief Hickman and Port Clinton officials began their investigation by interviewing Harley’s parents, as well as friends he had known previously. They gathered surveillance tape from a recovery home next to Harley’s house (the former church the chief attended) and nearby Magruder Hospital.

“We had to watch almost a week’s worth of video in real time,” the chief said. “I spent Christmas Eve and Christmas Day at Light House Sober Living, right next to the Dilly’s house, watching video. So did some of our officers, some of the drug task force. Everybody jumped in.”

But with the video providing no answers and Harley still missing on the holidays, Chief Hickman and his department turned to organizing a massive search, seeking community help, drones with infrarad and other specialized trained dogs. The chief called in, among other agencies, BCI and the U.S. Marshals Service, State Highway Patrol, FBI, Ohio Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Could Port Clinton have sought help sooner?

Yes. It’s impossible to ask for help too soon in such cases. But BCI Special Agent-in-Charge Jimmy Ciotti, who helped work Harley’s case, doesn’t fault the chief for making time for those initial steps.

Ciotti cited parsimony, the practice of starting an investigation by focusing on the most obvious angles. “It’s a common-sense approach,” the chief said. “You want to make sure you choose your own adventure story. The wannabe sleuths set up private groups in which they can, and do, post theories and congratulate one another on connecting dots that police ‘failed’ to.”

But there’s an evident segment of social media users who follow missing cases as if they were a soap opera or an ardent adventure story. The wannabe sleuths set up private groups in which they can, and do, post theories and congratulate one another on connecting dots that police “failed” to.

“Many of the people Harley interacted with online, or who followed him or ‘liked’ his posts, lived far from Port Clinton. And some, who had problematic histories, were people the teen would have refused to talk to in person.

The social media platforms were slow to respond to subpoena, in part because of the holidays, which hindered the investigation.

In fact, because of vacations, some of the law enforcement agencies that partnered with Port Clinton initially sent teams with qualified investigators but not necessarily in the roles they were used to playing, Ciotti and others said. Chief Hickman, whose department has 17 sworn officers, called those who hadn’t left the state back from holiday vacations. Port Clinton’s senior detective was in Florida with the city’s Boy Scout troop, so Detective Ron Timmons, a Marine veteran who has been with the department since 2012, was assigned the case.

“Ron did phenomenal,” Chief Hickman said. “He’s a young detective, and I hope I’m alive to see him in my position someday.”

The wild world of social media

A YouTube search for “Harley Dilly” turns up dozens of videos in which people accuse his parents, Heather and Marcus Dilly, of killing their son.

BCI’s entire interview with Heather Dilly, obtained by a Toledo TV station via a public records request, was posted to YouTube, where dozens of people stepped into her in the comments section, accusing her of lying because she doesn’t say what they think she should say. Similarly vicious were the responses to the one interview she gave to a TV reporter.

Never mind that the investigation had included a thorough look at Heather and Marcus Dilly, their backgrounds, the days Harley went missing, whether their home and the garbage truck that the father had driven on Dec. 20. The facts of the case eliminated both parents as suspects.

“I’m not going to judge the parents because I didn’t raise Harley,” Chief Hickman said. “They cooperated fully from Day One. Once we started talking to them, I was at their home every day. And if I’d asked, ‘Could I remove Harley’s bedroom wall?’ They would have said, ‘Yes, by all means.’

But there are an undeniable segment of social media users who follow missing cases as if they were a soap opera or an ardent adventure story. The wannabe sleuths set up private groups in which they can, and do, post theories and congratulate one another on connecting dots that police “failed” to.

“Another tactic we adapted from Federal Emergency Management Agency recommendations was telling the public how they could help with the case and what they shouldn’t do,” Irwin said. “So the chief would say: ‘We’re going to do this and you can volunteer, but don’t go search on your own. Or don’t spread rumors about the case. If you have information, call police.’

The latter recommendation came after authorities had spent 10 hours chasing down a lead in Washington, state, where a man had posted online that Harley was alive but hurt. Officers learned that the man had no insider knowledge but instead read those details in a national news story that had used that bit of online speculation as fact.

“So you can see how giving people who care about the case a constructive way to help can benefit the investigation,” said Irwin, who complimented the chief for maintaining his composure under trying circumstances.

The communications team at the Attorney General’s Office, Irwin said, can help with any case in which BCI takes part — and Chief Hickman said he would recommend that other Ohio law enforcement agencies adopt the same methods.

“Right, wrong or indifferent,” the chief said, “the single daily briefing worked for us.”

A LOOK BACK: MISSING CHILD CASE

A case of a teenager missing at Christmastime generates intense media interest.

News outlets want to post a story every day to feed their curious readers and reveal case details before competitors do. Those investigators try to avoid sharing facts that could color interviews they anticipate having — or tip off a kidnapper about how to avoid detection.

Those dosaging goals naturally set media and law enforcement at odds.

Early on in the Harley Dilly case, Port Clinton Police Chief Robert Hickman determined that he was best positioned to deal with the media. His boss, the city manager, had recently left town for a new job, and Port Clinton’s limited number of officers needed to devote their time to investigating and to meeting other daily policing needs.

“It was the right decision,” BCI Special Agent-in-Charge Jimmy Ciotti said. “He was the right person to do it.”

The day after Christmas, during massive public searches for 14-year-old Harley, the chief gave three news conferences. The experience was clearly frustrating for answers that the chief wanted to have but didn’t.

“I remember watching, and there were several times when he was overwhelmed and defensive as he said, ‘I don’t understand,'” said Steve Irwin, a social media platform with which he was comfortable.

“The media wasn’t happy that I wasn’t answering their phone calls,” the chief said. “But I still say you give them just what they need because if you give them too much, how much are you going to risk exposing your family?

“But they don’t like to take ‘no’ for an answer.”

Besides taking a frustrating daily effort off the chief’s plate during an already-complicated investigation, Irwin said, the regular online update yielded an additional benefit.

“Assuring the media — especially for the national outlets that were there — that we’re not going to put out any information outside of this one time helped build trust so they know they’re not going to miss anything,” he said. “And Chief Hickman proved to them that he was reliable.”

The chief’s update would come to include a list of the agencies helping with the case, assurances that Harley’s family was cooperating; and in some instances, warnings, such as when an independent search agency started passing itself off as part of the official investigation.

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Police picked up Harley’s coat from the floor, photographed it and hung it on a door in the home where the teen was found, igniting conspiracy theories.

Media strategy evolved as case did

After that day, the chief decided on a briefing format consisting of one daily update with the same information going to every media outlet, whether local or national, and no sidebar comments.

“Because of the way the case went,” Ciotti said, “Hickman really couldn’t say a whole lot beyond, ‘Yeah, we’re still working on it and you thank you very much kind of thing.”

For that reason, Irwin said, the first time he talked to Chief Hickman, he recommended moving the daily update to Facebook, a social media platform with which I was comfortable.

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“Assuring the media — especially for the national outlets that were there — that we’re not going to put out any information outside of this one time helped build trust so they know they’re not going to miss anything,” he said. “And Chief Hickman proved to them that he was reliable.”

The chief’s update would come to include a list of the agencies helping with the case, assurances that Harley’s family was cooperating; and in some
Given the ground they needed to cover, using cadaver dogs and live-find dogs. They double lot on which the house sits, sometimes out the summer house across from the Dillys' posed a fateful question: Had anybody checked the search that would happen the beginning. The second-to-last puzzle piece were driving from the landfill, where we were our new analyst," Chief Hickman said. "We gotten back from the holidays and became gotten back from the holidays, and the community has always on your side, except for a handful of them. My neighbor still thinks I had something deal with protesters) because your community colleagues. "Start thinking outside the box (to this is prolonged," Chief Hickman advises. 

Also, Hickman's department arrested protesters for trespassing on the property where Harley's body was found and reported a Sandusky resident who had used Facebook to arrange a protest even though she was a Tier III sex offender barred from the social media platform. "Be ready for protests, especially if a case like this is prolonged," Chief Hickman advises colleagues. "Start thinking logically (to deal with protesters) because your community is always on your side, except for a handful of them. My neighbor still thinks I had something to do with it, which is crazy."

The chimney flue, often described as blocked between the first and second floors, actually didn't extend to the first floor. The home had no fireplace, and plaster walls on the second floor encased the chimney. 

The only suggestion that the chimney was there was a pair of 6-inch-diameter holes, one each in the rooms flanking the chimney — these vents whose covers were found on the floor. Those elements were like puzzle pieces that refused to come together to form a single picture. 

BCI Special Agents Dave Hammond and Megan Roberts had seemingly hit a dead end, but they refused to leave until they solved the mystery of how Harley's clothes had come to be in the chimney.

If it hadn't been for their outstanding work, I don't believe Harley's body would have even been found," said the BCI agent who requested anonymity. "Those agents raked their brains over the evidence presented before them, which was incredibly odd.

The thiefs turned out to be the key. After a camera sent into the chimney returned nothing useful, the agents reached into the holes. 

"Hammond called me over and said, I think I felt a boy's head or a large animal that's dead," Chief Hickman said. "So he goes, I don't want anyone in here because we're going to surgically remove the chimney."

That's how the agents found Harley, a mini-flue at his feet. 

"Harley's outcome - it is tragic and almost unbelievably," the anonymous BCI agent said. "I know when I first heard, I had more questions just based on its absurdness..." The strangeness fed the online speculation, but people have died in chimneys: In 2017, 14-year-old Robert Thompson went missing in Los Angeles. Twenty-eight years later, his body was found in a chimney at a house just blocks from where he had lived. In 2001, the remains of 27-year-old Calvin Wilson were found in a chimney in Natchez, Mississippi. The man had gone missing 15 years earlier. In 2008, 18-year-old Josh Maddux was found in Colorado Springs inside a chimney in a cabin a mile from his parents' home. He had gone missing seven years earlier. 

"He'd be honest with you, had Harley not locked his jacket out of that chimney flue, we would have never known he was there," Ciotti said. Years might have passed before his body was discovered, as happened in the earlier cases. "Because those crime scene agents are smart individuals who care about people and don't give up, they found him," the anonymous BCI agent said. "I was never prouder of BCI than when I heard."

Harley had apparently climbed a rigid metal TV-antenna tower outside the house and climbed into the chimney’s only opening — on the roof. He likely intended to explore the chimney or find a hiding place while he skipped school.

An autopsy determined that Harley died within a few hours of going down the chimney, the result of compressive asphyxia inside the 9-by 13-inch-flue. The teen had no other injuries and had apparently shimmied out of his clothes while inside in an effort to get more room to breathe. "My heart still mourns for Marcus and Heather," Chief Hickman said. "No child should have to die like that so close to your house."

Officers who care 

The discovery of Harley's body finally brought clarity to the case. "Harley had such a large social media presence, and he just went radio silent that Friday," Chief Hickman said. "This made perfect sense when nothing else up to this point had..."

Having an answer, however, didn't ease the disappointment for the officers and agents who had been searching for the teen or for the community that cared about him — all of whom had endured 23 days of hell.

BCI investigators and the Port Clinton police held a debriefing so that the agents and officers could share their interpretation of the case, learn from the experience and, hopefully, move on. "In today's day and age, you need closure — you need to get everything out," Chief Hickman said. "We needed that, whether everyone believed it or not.

"I actually, I had a couple of officers come up and thank me for doing that because that did everything we could and it just stinks that Harley was 100 feet from his house. But there were 23 days of it..."

Five weeks after Harley's body was found, Chief Hickman wrote a letter to the resident of Port Clinton. "Words cannot express the gratitude we have for the care and concern that was received from this wonderful community," he wrote.

Because even as the online trolls howled, members of the community cooked meals for the officers, sent them cards expressing their appreciation, and put up pink lights and ribbons to support the search for Harley. That is the Port Clinton that Chief Hickman knows as home, and the reason he sticks with it — a job that can seem crazy and undervalued day after day.

Amid the turmoil and protests that have roiled the country this summer, too many have forgotten the passion and determination of the officers and agents who work them," Attorney General Dave Yost said. "Make no mistake — they are law enforcement-careers."

For departments facing a complicated case not unlike the one involving Harley Dilly, Port Clinton Chief Robert Hickman and BCI agents offer this advice:

• Get all the resources you can as soon as you can. Other agencies want to help. "All the agencies that were here were phenomenal," Chief Hickman said. "There were no egos, and that was really pleasant to see." The extra manpower also helped the Port Clinton officers cover both the usual daily business and the special investigation, and built connections among officers and agents who work throughout the state.

• Record and preserve everything. Take extensive notes about what has been checked, including buildings and people, to help coordinate with other agencies that join the investigation.

• Immediately get all the camera and surveillance footage possible. You have to review the evidence, but the camera-forward video footage that records over itself once a day. You don't have to review everything right away, but it might help later.

• Take care of your people, as they’re your best assets. For example, when Chief Hickman’s wife, Roseann, noticed that officers weren’t getting any sleep, she reached out to their family members to ask what they needed. "It was truly a family effort," the chief said.

• Be aware that the public is watching everything you do. But also remember: Your community has your back, even if they’re not as loud as your critics.

• Remember that hindsight is always better than what you know at any time.
411 for LEOs

Website compiles useful updates

Keep up-to-date on Attorney General Dave Yost’s work for law enforcement officers at www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/PoliceIssues.

The new webpage offers useful information for officers across the state including:

- Updates on the 2020 Law Enforcement Conference, set to be a virtual experience that will feature workshops on building community trust and investigating unsolved homicides and sexual assaults; 2020 award winners in categories such as lifetime achievement, community service and valor; and more.

- Reforms proposed by the attorney general and governor, measures from state legislators and the status of all such efforts.

- Details on the Bureau of Criminal Investigation’s Critical Incidents Team, which can be called on 24/7 to provide a neutral, third-party investigation of officer-involved use of force, such as shootings.

- Online versions of all the stories from this newsletter.