

**For Immediate Release**

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**Kentwood Police Department Introduces Body Camera Program**  
*Outfitting All Officers with Cameras Part of KPD's Commitment  
to Accountability and Transparency*

**Kentwood, Michigan, March 22, 2021** – In an effort to enhance accountability and transparency, the Kentwood Police Department is introducing a body camera program that will include the training and outfitting of all officers with the new technology.

The department has had in-car cameras since 2000 and some body cameras since 2016. The Kentwood City Commission recently approved a five-year contract with Axon, the largest body camera provider in the U.S., for the needed equipment and technology. The annual cost for the equipment and technology will be \$117,000.

KPD has 71 sworn officers who serve a growing community of approximately 51,000 residents through a variety of programs and community engagement efforts. The body camera program is part of the department's longtime commitment to accountability and transparency in order to achieve its mission to reduce serious crime, increase traffic safety and serve the community with excellence.

The department uses resident satisfaction surveys and continually reviews its policies, procedures, tactics and techniques to ensure all align with federal and state legal standards, as well as best practices in the profession. These include trainings several times a year on multiple tactics and techniques for various types of interactions with community members, annual review of agency practices and ongoing community engagement, among others.

“The Kentwood Police Department has consistently placed great emphasis on community engagement, accountability and transparency,” Kentwood Police Chief Richard Roberts said. “With the implementation of this technology, we can build on those efforts to continue to serve our community with excellence and grow trust. We know the trust of our community can only be earned by impartiality and fairness in daily policing functions and outreach to engage and educate the community.”

The department plans to get all the department's officers through the training and issue them body cameras by the end of May.

“This technology is beneficial for our community and our police officers,” Roberts said. “It serves as another tool to ensure the safety and security of our community and the residents we serve.

“The Kentwood Police Department appreciates Mayor Kepley and the city commissioners in supporting the department's goal in implementing this technology.”

KPD joins eight other Kent County agencies that have implemented or are in the process of implementing body cameras.

KPD has long utilized a variety of programs and engagement efforts to strengthen relationships with the community, address immediate needs and ensure safety. Those efforts include:

- A data-driven approach to crime and traffic safety [program](#) that integrates location-based crime and traffic data to establish effective and efficient methods for deploying law enforcement and other

resources. The goal is to reduce the incidence of crime, crashes and traffic violations in the community.

- An interactive crime mapping [portal](#) that further fosters awareness of crimes and builds trust through transparency. Data is automated daily, allowing residents to stay up to date with incidents that occur in their neighborhoods.
- A school resource officer [program](#) that is a partnership between KPD, the community and schools to reduce crime, increase security and promote a positive role model between youth and law enforcement. KPD has three dedicated certified police officers assigned to specific school districts in the city.
- [Operation P.R.I.C.E.](#), which stands for Preventing Retail Theft Through Initiative, Collaboration and Enforcement. It has had a proven track record in helping local businesses decrease incidents of retail fraud since its launch in 2014.
- Drug Take Back [program](#), which provides community members with a free and secure location to safely dispose of unused and/or unwanted prescription medications. This reduces potential accidental poisoning, misuse and overdose.
- Participation in [community events](#) such as National Night Out, Touch-A-Truck and Trunk-or-Treat to build meaningful relationships with residents. Officers also attend Neighborhood Watch meetings to provide crime and safety information and strengthen community relations.

More information about the Kentwood Police Department is available at [kentwood.us/police](http://kentwood.us/police).

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