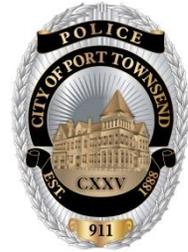


PORT TOWNSEND POLICE DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Incident No.: N/A

Port Townsend Police Department introduces new patrol cars

PORT TOWNSEND – Three new patrol cars are hitting the streets of Port Townsend, replacing police vehicles that are more than a decade old.

The new vehicles are 2014 Ford Police Interceptors, and they feature the latest in safety standards and fuel efficient technology.

For years the Port Townsend Police Department, like many law enforcement agencies, relied on the venerable Ford Crown Victoria as the patrol vehicle of choice. But the Crown Victoria, a platform nearly 20 years old, went out of production in 2012. The vehicles being retired were from the 2003 and 2004 model years.



The new Police Interceptors get 20 percent better gas mileage than the vehicles they replace and are all-wheel drive. Better traction is expected to prove safer in the rain and other adverse weather conditions of the Pacific Northwest. Officers found the heavy, rear-wheel drive Crown Victorias handled poorly in snow and ice conditions, which resulted in delayed responses to emergencies.

The new cars have twice the cargo volume of the Crown Victorias; allowing up to six people to be carried in situations such as natural disasters. It also makes it more comfortable for prisoner transport, and in animal control incidents allows for the safe transportation of dogs.

The police department is reintroducing a navy blue paint scheme for the vehicle fleet as the new cars arrive. Port Townsend patrol vehicles were navy blue until 2006, when white cars were reintroduced. The unique blue color scheme fits in with the maritime history of our community, and makes Port Townsend cars easily distinguishable from other police agencies. Reflective lettering on the sides stands out at night, but blends in

during the day. Lighting on the cars was moved inside the vehicle for additional fuel savings. Not having an external light bar on top of the car saves between 5 and 7 percent in annual fuel cost.

The Police Interceptors, known as the utility model, were selected after two years of analyzing patrol vehicles from three manufacturers. Agencies that purchased patrol vehicle models other than the Police Interceptor utility reported the cars were difficult to maintain, too small for officers and detainees, used too much fuel, and were made overseas. The utility selected by Port Townsend is an American-made crossover built on a car chassis but offers more room inside similar to a sport utility vehicle. The same model is being adopted by other agencies such as the sheriff's offices in Jefferson and Kitsap counties, the Sequim and Bremerton police departments, and the Washington State Patrol.

Since Port Townsend is a small police agency, officers are required to carry a large amount of equipment to carry out their duties responding to a wide range of calls from vandalism, to collisions, and crimes of violence. Many smaller patrol vehicle offerings on the market now don't offer enough room to replace the large trunk of the Crown Victoria.

Each Police Interceptor, fully outfitted with a computer, dash cameras, and lights and siren, costs just under \$50,000. The funding for each comes from the equipment repair and replacement fund, a budgeted expense the department pays annually for repair and eventual replacement of every fleet vehicle. Replacement of other Crown Victoria police cars in the fleet, some of which are now approaching 12 years old, is anticipated in coming years.

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