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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **VBT Public Safety increasing efficiencies, decreasing response times** Implementing innovative practices when every minute counts

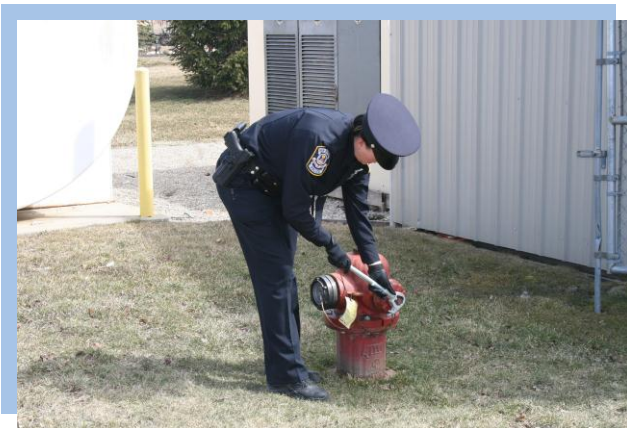
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Van Buren Township, Michigan—

Historically, Van Buren Township Police and Fire Departments have worked well together to provide a superb level of public safety to the community. Recently, under the guidance of Interim Public Safety Director Greg Laurain and Fire Chief Dan Besson, these Public Safety Department employees are collaborating like never before. The Police and Fire Departments are implementing innovative practices to provide an even more efficient level of comprehensive service.

A few of the newly implemented practices of cooperation include:

#### **Hydrant Preparation**



Police officers have been trained on fire hydrant preparation. Officers now carry hydrant wrenches in their police cars, so if they arrive at the scene of a fire before the fire engine and fire fighters, police officers assist fire personnel by preparing the hydrant. When fire personnel arrive, precious minutes can be saved, and fire fighters can immediately get to work.

## Directing Traffic



The Public Safety Department is committed to keeping the traveling public and its personnel safe when it is working on incidents on or near public highways and roadways. When an incident requires fire fighters to concentrate on life safety, police officers will handle routing traffic around the incident until fire fighters become available. Similarly, and as incidents allow, fire fighters will transition into positions to relieve the police officers from traffic control points. Doing so assists police officers, so they are able to get back to their investigation, the issues of a serious car crash, or other law enforcement duties.

Van Buren fire fighters are well-versed in traffic control techniques based on the recommended guidelines of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and interdepartmental Standard Operating Procedures. *Utility 2*, a support vehicle housed at Fire Headquarters, is well-equipped with barricades, traffic cones, safety flares, and signs to help warn and direct approaching drivers. Both fire fighters and police officers comply with the Federal Highway Administration's law on wearing conspicuous traffic vests while directing traffic in high speed zones in order to gain the driver's attention.

## Immediate Response



Also, on duty officers trained as fire fighters now carry their fire gear in the trunks of their police cars. While on duty as a police officer, if there is a need to respond in the capacity of a fire fighter, an immediate

response is now available. This new practice represents the best use of resources available, while an added bonus is fiscal conservation: If a cross-trained police officer transitions into a fire responder, no blended-rate hourly cost increase is incurred. Instead, these employees are serving in the capacity of a public safety officer.

This collaborative effort to implement these new practices enhance police and fire services and provide an even more efficient and comprehensive level of safety and service to residents.

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