

A new officer will be added to the ranks of the Scottsburg Police Department, thanks to a \$125,000 U.S. Department of Justice grant which was announced this past week.

Joe Hogsett, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, declared the grant "...a real plus for the Scottsburg department and City of Scottsburg. This is the only department to receive a COPS (Community Oriented Policing Service) grant south of Kokomo. I am exceptionally pleased that Scottsburg is getting one of only six grants awarded in Indiana."

Only 221 such COPS grants were awarded nationally. Of the six in this state, five were given to communities in the north and northwest sections of Indiana, it was learned.

Scottsburg Assistant Chief/Major Scott Zellers said the successful grant application was written by Lt. Richey Barton of the department. Those officers hired under the COPS grant must be military veterans with at least six months of active duty since September 11, 2001. The grant's money will cover 75% of an officer's salary over a 36 month period. The municipal or county law enforcement agency which hires an officer under the program must pay the 25% difference.

After employing the officer under COPS for three years, the department must retain him/her for at least another year. Maj. Zellers said he wants to see that officer remain a permanent part of the department's staff. Zellers is stepping up to the Chief of Police job on July 4, the date on which the current chief, Delbert Meeks, is retiring.

He reported recently at a Scottsburg Board of Works meeting that he will appoint Lt. Barton to the Assistant Chief's position, and that the department will be hiring a current Austin police officer, Lt. Shawn Hurt, to fill the empty slot left by Barton's promotion.

Maj. Zellers and Lt. Barton will be sworn in to their new positions by Mayor Bill Graham at the July 2 Scottsburg City Council meeting.

The officer to be hired under the COPS grant will be selected from recent applicants who applied for the department's open slot, explained Maj. Zellers.

The successful applicant will be chosen based on the results of written, physical and mental tests.

Law enforcement agencies which applied for the COPS grant this year had to have applied for the same grant last year. The Scottsburg department did submit an application in 2011 but was not among agencies successful in getting a grant.

Maj. Zellers said, "We are extremely happy to have been selected this year. It's a very competitive grant. I can't wait to get the new officer hired and get him out patrolling and helping the citizens of Scottsburg."