

Chris Hughes Named Keytesville Chamber of Commerce Member of the Month
By Janet Weaver

Chris Hughes, the Juvenile Officer for the 9th Judicial Circuit has been named Keytesville Chamber of Commerce's Member of the Month for October. This is the second time Hughes has been the Juvenile Officer for the area. The first time was before his 19 year stint as Sheriff of Chariton County when he served as Juvenile Officer from 1993 to 1997. The second time he assumed the duties of the Juvenile Officer began September 2016 so he has been in the office now for slightly over a year.

Hughes serves as Juvenile Officer for the following counties: Chariton, Linn, and Sullivan. When he was asked if much had changed relating to the job from the time he did his first time in that capacity in the 1990's to the way things are done today, he said they certainly had. The first thing that made an impression on him was that in the 1990's, there was only one computer for his use in the 9th Judicial Circuit, whereas now there are many computers, everyone has laptops and smart phones so technology has taken a giant leap forward. In addition, during the first time he was Juvenile Officer he actually was employed by the 9th Judicial Circuit, however now the Juvenile Officers are employed by the State of Missouri.

One of the main aspects of his job entails assisting getting children in need of foster homes out of harm's way and into a more stable environment. According to Hughes right now approximately 150 children in the 9th Judicial Circuit are in foster homes. When asked how this compared with other Judicial Circuits throughout the State of Missouri, Hughes indicated that he was unsure how our district compares throughout the entire state, but he did know that the Ray and Carroll Circuit has only 12 individuals in foster care. When asked what seemed to be the precipitating factor for the disproportionate number in our area in foster care as opposed to neighboring Ray and Carroll, he said that meth was a huge factor in causing children to be removed from their homes. Linn Co. seemingly has a higher number of people who are meth users than the other two counties which makes the numbers larger for the 9th Judicial Circuit.

When questioned about what aspect of the job Chris liked the best, he was quick to reply that he liked to be able to assist kids who are powerless to fend for themselves and get them out of bad situations that they do not need to be in but which they are subjected to through no fault of their own.

Chris said he finds the job of being Juvenile Officer much less stressful than being Sheriff. In what spare time he has, he said he "enjoys playing on his farm." Chris Hughes is married to the former Rhonda Duff Brand. They have two sons: Dalton age 10 and Michael age 9. Chris is step-father to Kayla (Clayton) Hewitt and Kayla (Tyler) Breshears and step-grandfather to Maverick Hewitt. The Keytesville Chamber of Commerce would like to congratulate Chris Hughes as its October Member of the Month.