

From the Office of the Sheriff:

Often I am asked why citizens see state troopers on county highways and sheriff's deputies on state highways. The answer is simple – Teamwork. The Wisconsin State Patrol (WSP) assigns a certain number of troopers per county. We are fortunate to have seven assigned to work Dodge County. Their main emphasis is traffic enforcement, highway safety, and public assistance. They do this very well. Additionally, they conduct all the mandatory school bus inspections, motor carrier (truck) enforcement and inspections.

Dodge County is known in WSP circles as the county with the most positive relationship between deputy and trooper. Several counties do not, nor strive to have such a close relationship. In Dodge County, we are partners and if not for different uniforms and squad cars you would think we were the same agency. We use troopers as we need them, often the first sent to traffic crashes or motorists assistance. We can also use them as back up for criminal calls and major cases.

The WSP brings great capability in the areas of knowledge and professionalism. During those nights when we have just three or four deputies working, that one trooper really enhances our ability to respond to calls for service. Our 911 Center communicates with the troopers direct and can assign them as needed. We work very well together and provide a seamless service to the customer.

With that being said, even though troopers provide the backbone of enforcement upon our state highways they are not limited to just that. Troopers have jurisdiction throughout the entire state to include any and all roadways/streets. Similarly, sheriff's deputies are the backbone of our county highways and township roadways; however, they are not limited to that. Very often you will see both sheriff deputy and state trooper at the same traffic crash scene assisting one another to get the job done.

Last week I spoke about redundant services and the costs associated with layers of resources that do the same thing. The WSP is not one of those layers. The WSP has several areas of responsibilities that relieve Sheriff's Departments from those requirements. If it would not be for the WSP we would need several more deputies to fill the gap. The WSP also provides troopers educated in motor carrier enforcement and inspections that require very significant training. We just can not afford to send our deputies to those courses. Though the WSP does not act as a primary investigator into a crime, they do have that capability and authority.

In your eyes it may appear that we are duplicating services, it is not the case. Our relationship and partnership with the WSP is solid and performing well. This allows us to draw additional troopers from adjacent counties should we have a major traffic event or special events like our county fair. The WSP provide these services to us at no cost. This is important for various reasons but one in particular. When we use the WSP we do not have to "mutual aid" them. They have the necessary authority and need no more. If we need a police officer from any other agency or city we must "mutual aid" them. When we do that that mutually aided officer become an employee of the Sheriff's Department and we must cover him/her should there be an issue. For example should the officer strike a deer responding under mutual aid, the county replaces that squad.

Bottom line - The WSP is a necessary and appreciated agency that is a full partner in Dodge County. Thanks for listening nehls@co.dodge.wi.us.