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Brun retires from heading law enforcement academy

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Photo by Ed Kosmicki

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by Mike McKibbin | 0 comments

Kevin Brun worked on a lot of cars and changed many tires while he oversaw the training of more than 600 law enforcement officers. It was just a small part of his behind-the-scenes duties over nearly two decades.

The program director of the Colorado Law Enforcement Training Academy, or CLETA, at Colorado Mountain College Spring Valley at Glenwood Springs for the past 17 years is retiring this December.

CMC's CLETA is a Colorado Police Officers Standards and Training-accredited basic academy, seven miles south of Glenwood Springs. The program began in the mid-1970s in the Eagle/Vail area and moved to Spring Valley in the late 1980s. Since CLETA's beginnings, more than 1,400 officers have graduated and joined over 100 Colorado law enforcement agencies.

Brun has directed the program since 2001. During that time, he oversaw 45 academies, or cohorts, of students.

"He did a great job teaching police policies that fit well in our mountain communities," said Stu Curry, assistant program director, who is succeeding Brun as program director. "Things like having good verbal skills, treating people with respect and all the things that go into community policing."

More than a job

Brun was a 20-year member of the Rifle Police Department before leaving as a sergeant to take over CLETA. His retirement will end a 38-year law enforcement career. Brun, who received a special plaque during his last graduation ceremony on Dec. 15, started teaching part-time at the academy in 1995.

Kevin Brun retires

Kevin Brun, who has directed CMC's Colorado Law Enforcement Training Academy for 16 years and retired at the end of December, is given a standing ovation at the academy's May 2017 graduation ceremony. Among those honoring him are, from left, Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper (50th anniversary commencement speaker), CMC President Carrie Besnette Hauser, CMC Board of Trustees Chairman Glenn Davis, and, behind Brun, CMC West Garfield County Trustee Mary Ellen Denomy.

"I knew the director at the time, John Goodwin, was going to take another job at CMC, and he said I should apply," Brun recalled. "It came along when I was thinking it was time to move on to something different. And it was something I was prepared and qualified for."

He said he was surprised at the attitude of some of the young students who entered the program. "They seemed to be all about 'me, me, me' and had a very different work ethic than you need to be a police officer," he said.

He explained the adrenaline-fueled duties of an officer do not mesh well with those who want a more regular 9-to-5 job.

"We did our best to overcome that (attitude) by trying to send the message that this isn't the type of job you want if you're focused on the beginning and end of your shift and the softball game or whatever you do on your time off," he said. "Most of the time it's just go, go, go and

beginning and end of your shift and the softball game or whatever you do on your time off," he said. "Most of the time it's just go, go, go and you don't get home at a regular time many days."

Graduates get jobs

Most of the officers who now protect and serve the state's central mountain jurisdictions are CLETA graduates. More than 90 percent of the college's CLETA alumni land their first policing job with one of those agencies, Curry said. State or federal agencies hire others.

And many walk from the academy right into a career.

Dane DeVoy was in the Dec. 15 graduating class and works for the Chaffee County Sheriff's Department in Buena Vista and Salida. He called the academy a "fantastic program."

"All of us scored very high on the POST test and I think it's because they have great instructors," he said. "That's due to Kevin having great relationships with many of the agencies and officers that come talk to us."

Active duty officers teach between 60 to 70 percent of the curriculum. The program helps serve the needs of those agencies, with a focus on rural issues, Spanish language, and interpersonal and intercultural communication.

David Glidden also graduated from CLETA on Dec. 15 and now works for the Avon Police Department.

"It is an incredibly well-put-together program," he said. "Both Kevin and Stu have a wealth of knowledge, and all the other adjuncts are great, too. It is just an awesome program."

"Kevin would give about 10 minutes of a lecture, then five minutes of these awesome, hilarious stories about his years with the Rifle Police Department," Glidden said. "He's just a really good guy. I'm sure he'll be missed, but Stu is just as incredible and I'm sure he'll run a program that's just as good."

Brun feels pride when he recognizes a CLETA graduate who has become an officer in uniform at a traffic stop.

"I'm proud of all the over 600 graduates during my time. Many have gone on to be very successful officers, police chiefs and sheriffs," Brun said. "It's certainly been my passion to teach what it means to be an officer."

Curry said he does not plan major changes to the program.

"We have to focus on the basic certification requirements, so there's not much more we can add," he said.

Curry noted CMC recently began offering an Associate of Applied Science degree in criminal justice, something he helped establish "to create a pathway to our program for those under 21" who cannot yet enter CLETA.

With his retirement, Brun plans to spend more time with family, including a granddaughter.

"I'll also work part-time as a valet at Valley View Hospital in Glenwood Springs," Brun said. "But mostly just be something different than a police officer. Just a normal citizen."



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