



# **CITY OF MOUNT VERNON**

## **Mount Vernon Police Department**

Office of the Chief of Police  
5 North Gay Street  
Mount Vernon, Ohio 43050-3241



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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### Mount Vernon Police Department Hosts Second Annual Awards Banquet

Mount Vernon, OH – The Mount Vernon Police Department (MVPD) held its second annual Awards Banquet on February 1 at the historic Woodward Opera House. The event celebrated the dedication and achievements of MVPD officers throughout the past year, recognizing those who have gone above and beyond in their service to the community.

One of the evening's most prestigious honors, Officer of the Year, was awarded to Patrolman Jason Payne. This award, determined by a vote of his peers, recognizes an officer who exemplifies professionalism, dedication, initiative, and continuous self-improvement. Patrolman Payne, a 19-year veteran of the department, was presented with the award by Patrolman James Coffey, who described him as “someone who shows up to work, does his job, doesn't get wrapped up in the drama, and is just good to work with.”

Chief Robert K. Morgan presented several officers with the Bartlett Award, which honors officers who have demonstrated outstanding instincts, investigative skills, and dedication to duty, often at great personal risk. This year's recipients included:

- MVPD Detective Division – Recognized for their exemplary work in swiftly solving a double homicide case. Within 24 hours of the crime being reported, the detectives successfully apprehended the suspect, who later pled guilty and received two consecutive life sentences without parole. The award was presented to Lieutenant Detective Beth Marti, Sergeant Detective Justin Willis, Patrolman Detective Matthew Haver, and Patrolman Detective Timothy Arnold. Chief Morgan commended their diligence, extensive follow-up investigations, and unwavering commitment to justice.
- Patrolman Andreas Cotter and Patrolman John Cox – Honored for their exceptional work ethic and proactive policing efforts in 2024. Together, they made an impressive 64 OVI (Operating a Vehicle Impaired) arrests. Additionally, their proactive patrols led to significant drug seizures, including 300 grams of methamphetamine and 135 grams of cocaine. Their efforts resulted in hundreds of arrests and felony indictments, significantly impacting public safety.

- Patrolman Josh Perry – Recognized for his swift response and investigative skills that led to the immediate apprehension of a dangerous rape suspect. Thanks to his quick thinking and ability to gather crucial information, the suspect—later found to be linked to unsolved cases in multiple states—was taken into custody, ensuring justice for the victim and enhancing community safety.

The evening concluded with a special recognition from the Mount Vernon Association of Police Chaplains, who presented an award to Chief Robert K. Morgan for his unwavering support of the chaplain program and its mission. The award inscription praised his exceptional leadership, steadfast support, and dedication to the well-being of officers and the community.

The City of Mount Vernon commends all award recipients and expresses deep appreciation for the dedication and professionalism of the Mount Vernon Police Department. These officers exemplify the highest standards of law enforcement and continue to make a positive impact on the community they serve.