

Chamber of Commerce awards Chief Dennis L. Butts and Chief Deputy Mark Whittaker

Riffle named Tourism Citizen of the Year

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Greenville Police Chief Dennis L. Butts and Darke County Chief Deputy Mark Whittaker (center) were honored by the Darke County Chamber of Commerce Friday. Butts received the Chamber's Lifetime Achievement Award while Whittaker was named Citizen of the Year.



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DP&L President and CEO Tom Raga was the keynote speaker at the Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting held Friday at Romer's Catering in Greenville.



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Daryl Riffle (right) was named Darke County Visitors Bureau Tourism Citizen of the Year at the Darke County Chamber of Commerce annual meeting Friday. Shown presenting the award is Visitors Bureau Director Matt Staugler

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GREENVILLE — Two law enforcement officers and the former manager of the Darke County Fair were honored by the Darke County Chamber of Commerce during that organization's annual meeting held Friday at Romer's Catering in Greenville.

Greenville Police Chief Dennis L. Butts was awarded the Chamber's Lifetime Achievement Award, while Darke County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Mark Whittaker was named the chamber's Citizen of the Year.

Former Darke County Fair Manager Daryl Riffle was awarded the Darke County Visitors Bureau Tourism Citizen of the Year award.

Chamber of Commerce President Sharon Deschambeau presented Butts with his award, saying "One man can make a difference."

"He has spent 30 years living the mission of the City of Greenville Police Department, which is to create a safe and comfortable community in which all people can live, work and visit," she said. "He has provided the highest quality of law enforcement possible and has held his officers accountable to the community and national professional standards. He has exhibited excellence in his career, commitment to the community, and leadership as a citizen of Darke County."

Chief Butts, who will be retiring his position later in 2017 after 30 years on the force, thanked his wife and family, the City of Greenville, as well as those with whom he works.

"From the emergency communication operators at the dispatch center, to my officers who work the streets, my detective section, my much appreciated administrative staff — I'm only here because of the work that they do."

Greenville Mayor Steve Willman said Butts has served the city "wonderfully well."

"He's always been a good friend," he added. "I've known him for years and years. I wish he was going to stay a few more years. He's definitely a community-minded person."

Chief Deputy Whittaker was presented his award by 2016 Chamber Citizen of the Year John Marchal, Sr.

"Our recipient has effectively facilitated communication among law enforcement, citizens and business by promoting a closer relationship with the Sheriff's Office and Sheriff Toby Spencer," Marchal said.

He added, "Today we honor not only the individual, but the work of law enforcement, realizing its critical role in the orderly operation of commerce and communities. We offer our continued

appreciation and gratitude to all of the men and women who put their lives on the line every day to defend against any threat to our safety and security.”

Accepting the award, Whittaker thanked his colleagues, including Sheriff Toby Spencer, saying, “I’m just one person and it takes a team to run the Sheriff’s Office.”

He also expressed his thanks to his wife and family.

“They’ve been putting up with calls in the middle of the night, and the disruption sometimes doesn’t bother me as much as it bothers them,” he said, “But they never give me any hard times about it, they accept the service I provide to the community without complaints.”

Sheriff Spencer said, “Mark has put his heart and soul into helping the community and the county as a whole. He takes it very sincerely. He’s a great addition to my office and I just appreciate everything he does for me and the county.”

Matt Staugler, Darke County Visitors Bureau director, called Riffle, who resigned in March, “a recognizable staple in our community.”

“Under his leadership, the [Darke County Fair] has seen much success, and has grown to one of the most popular county fairs in the State of Ohio,” said Staugler. “[He] has demonstrated a life committed to serving the public good, and working to make our county a better place.”

“It’s an honor, it’s a privilege,” said Riffle upon accepting the award, saying he was thankful for the talents God had blessed him with and the opportunities to use those talents.

Butts, Whittaker and Riffle also received commendations from the offices of Ohio Gov. John Kasich, Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor, Ohio Sens. Bill Beagle and Matt Huffman, and Ohio Reps. Keith Faber and Steve Huffman.

Chamber members also heard from Dayton Power and Light (DP&L) President and CEO Tom Raga, the function’s keynote speaker, who spoke about the company’s efforts to connect with the community to provide safe and reliable electricity.

Raga said the utility company was proud to partner with Darke County businesses.

“Our success is completely tied to your success,” he said.

This year's Chamber annual meeting was sponsored by Greenville National Bank and DP&L. Other sponsors included BASF, Dave Knapp Ford, Family Health, Fram, GTI, Mercer Savings Bank, Ramco, Reid Health, Second National Bank, Walmart, and Walls Bros.

The writer may be reached at 937-569-4314. Join the conversation and get updates on Facebook search Darke County Sports or Advocate 360. For more features online go to dailyadvocate.com