

State Conservation



The speaker at the Treynor Optimist Club on January 3 was Richard Price. He is the State Conservation Officer for Pottawattamie and Mills County. He was born in Red Oak and moved to Council Bluffs, going to Jr. and Sr. High School in Council Bluffs and graduating from Abraham Lincoln High School. He attended ISU for 2 years in Electrical Engineering and deciding that was not what he wanted to do. He left and went to Northwest Missouri State and studied Wild Life Conservation, graduating in 1990.

During this time he was in the National Guard serving two times in Afghanistan. While in the Guard he was an NCO then received a commission and is now a Captain. His duties were food service, chemical supplies, and environmental concerns on a number of bases.

The primary responsibility of conservation officers is to enforce laws related to hunting, trapping, fishing, navigation, commercial fishing, snowmobiling, and all-terrain vehicles. They also investigate incidents involving outdoor recreation. Conservation officers inspect game breeders, taxidermists, bait dealers, and other commercial users. They educate adults and children through hunter education, outdoor skills workshops, and other courses. They communicate with schools and community groups through public programs, and the media, using TV, newspaper, and radio shows.

Like other peace officers in the state, conservation officers can make arrests for speeding, drug violations, DWI or other infractions of the law. They are peace officers and telling the truth is important, since issuing tickets is at the discretion of the officer. They have many ways of finding the truth.

The busiest time of the year is during the fall hunting season. It is important that people call in infractions to the law when they see them. Conservation officers only catch about 1% of the violators. Richard works long hours during the hunting season. Conservation officers are given comp time for the long hours. Their vehicle expenses are paid by license fees.

During the summer, part of Richard's duties are to patrol the Missouri River. He finds many types of violations, such as people hiding from the law, fishing with nets illegally, intoxicated boaters, and lost boats. He has searched for many bodies and is aided in the searches by radar type devices on the boat. His latest search was the drowning in Lake Manawa.

Richard also expressed the importance of registering ATV's. Registration is \$17.50 and can be obtained at the County Recorder's Office. It is the law to have ATVs registered, and it aids in recovery from theft.

Youth education is important through workshops and mentor programs.