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Media Release

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Part Cop, Part Social Worker: Historic First: NJ Parole Recruits Graduate from Police Academy *20 State Parole Officer Recruits Graduate from Somerset County Police Academy; Class Trained Alongside Municipal Police Officer Recruits*

SOMERVILLE – In a historic first for New Jersey, the State’s newest class of parole officer recruits graduated today from Somerset County Police Academy – the first time in New Jersey history that a parole officer recruit class trained in a police academy, alongside municipal police officer recruits.

The 20 recruits will now be deployed statewide. They will work to fulfill the State Parole Board’s public safety mission of supervising parolees, aiding in their successful reentry, and helping them become law-abiding citizens.

“With their role as ‘part cop, part social worker,’ New Jersey’s parole officers have one of the toughest jobs in law enforcement,” said State Parole Board Chairman Peter J. Barnes Jr., himself a 26-year FBI veteran and former director of two municipal police departments. “These recruits now join our staff of parole officers statewide who have distinguished themselves with their professionalism and commitment to public safety and reentry.”

This was the first class of parole officer recruits to attend the prestigious Somerset County Police Academy, the only regional police academy in New Jersey. During the 24-week course – 10 weeks longer than that undergone by the previous recruit class at a correctional officers’ academy – the recruits trained alongside municipal police officer recruits from departments in Middlesex, Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren counties.

The intensive training included such essential police skills as securing crime scenes, transporting evidence, testifying in court, emergency motor vehicle operations, unarmed self-defense, firearm safety, water safety, homeland security, and street gang awareness. Current parole officers receive these skills during in-service trainings.

Parole officers hold parolees accountable to strict standards of supervision. They help parolees succeed in reentering society and turning away from crime. They also connect parolees with community-based rehabilitative programs. Programs include job training, addiction counseling, and others provided in day-reporting or residential settings.

(more)

The expanded training at Somerset County Police Academy reflects State parole officers' expanding law enforcement role in New Jersey. These responsibilities include:

- Sex offender supervision. The State Parole Board is New Jersey's lead agency for sex offender supervision, and employs Global Positioning System (GPS) monitoring, polygraph testing, and intelligence sharing with law enforcement and psychological treatment providers in the Containment Approach to sex offender supervision.
- Street gang suppression. The State Parole Board supervises about 500 parolees across New Jersey who are known gang members. Parole officers develop street-level intelligence about gang activities, and share this information with the FBI and other law enforcement agencies.
- "Police-Parole Partnerships." Through formal partnerships with the municipalities of Camden, Irvington and Trenton, and new partnerships to be launched with other cities, parole officers work closely with municipal police officers on joint patrols, parolee home visits and intelligence sharing.
- Fugitive apprehension. The State Parole Board is an active member in the US Marshals Service New York/New Jersey Fugitive Task Force. Several parole officers have been deputized by the US Marshals Service with the authority to seek and arrest fugitives who have fled New Jersey. They work with the task force to apprehend parole absconders, and fugitives wanted by other agencies.

Today's graduation ceremony, held at The Theatre at Raritan Valley Community College in Somerville, included a keynote speech delivered by Weysan Dun, Special Agent in Charge of the Newark Division of the FBI; and remarks by Somerset County Prosecutor Wayne J. Forrest.

The New Jersey State Parole Board (SPB) is New Jersey's lead reentry agency, and works to ensure ex-prisoners return to society as law-abiding citizens. As required by law, appointed Parole Board Members and staff conduct more than 20,000 hearings per year, solicit input from victims and decide parole matters. SPB sworn parole officers supervise more than 15,000 offenders statewide. In addition, SPB is New Jersey's primary law enforcement agency responsible for sex offender supervision. SPB officers are also active partners with multiple Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies and task forces. Finally, SPB's Community Programs Unit partners with government, non-profit and private agencies to connect ex-prisoners with vocational, mental health and related services, targeted to break the cycle and risk of crime.

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