



March 4, 2014

Gordon Eden Jr., Chief of Police
Albuquerque Police Department
400 Roma NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

RE: APD Open Space SAR Team

Dear Chief Eden:

I would first like to congratulate you on your new role as Chief of the Albuquerque Police Department. The NMSP District 5 SAR teams based in Albuquerque are happy that you are in place and know you will do a wonderful job for this city.

The current Board Members of the New Mexico SAR Council were all present during your key note speech at our annual ESCAPE conference held back in May 2012 at Buffalo Thunder Resort and Casino. We know you understand the work we do for the community and all the selfless hours our volunteers put into it.

This past Sunday (March 2, 2014) we had a mission to rescue a 23 year old female who was not dressed appropriately for winter conditions hiking on the La Luz. The APD Open Space SAR team assisted us along with members of the AMRC (Albuquerque Mountain Rescue Council), Cibola SAR, NM SAR Support Team, and Sandia Search Dogs in the rescue of this individual.

I had the pleasure to speak with a few members from the APD Open Space SAR team while we hauled litter equipment up to the Hasty Team that was with the subject. They enlightened me that their service as a SAR team was being looked at as being possibly eliminated. I truly hope this is not so.

This letter is in support that the APD Open Space SAR team stays intact as another SAR resource that can be utilized within District 5 (or when needed outside of district). These men have participated in trainings hosted by the local SAR teams and have taken time out of their busy schedules to study and become NM SAR Field Certified. They not only serve and protect the community as law enforcement; they serve the community by working alongside those SAR volunteers who selflessly give their time for the benefit of public safety. We continue to look at cross training with each other to maintain consistency of value based skills and unifying the teams.

Having a SAR team that is also professionally trained in law enforcement only adds value to the SAR community. Our teams that respond to calls may not recognize inherent dangers that those trained in law enforcement would while out in the field. As you know when a call comes in requesting SAR resources we only get a portion of the story. As teams are assigned tasks and deployed out into the field having someone with law enforcement training can identify flags that could possibly go un-noticed by the volunteer responder. Again cross training would assist in this, but knowing we have a resource with this professional training on site out in the field with us allows us to be confident in accomplishing our assigned tasks at hand.

I would like to recognize the following responders that participated in this past Sunday's mission for their continued community service:

Sgt. Mike Meisinger
Anthony Martinez
Chad Melvin
Mark Dietz
John McDaniel
Pat Hernandez
Jake Gassel

I hope this letter encourages you to keep in mind how much the SAR community appreciates the APD Open Space SAR team while you make any future decisions regarding them. The more we work together out in the field (and training) the more we become a stronger unit. Once deployed out in the field we become one team focused on one goal and that is so others live.

If you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

Karon A. Avery, President
NM SAR Council Board
Team Leader, WFR, Cibola SAR
505-350-8411