

Wienclaw honored by Legion



The American Legion's Policeman of the Year Sgt. Rob Wienclaw displays his plaque outside the Coeur d'Alene Tribal Police Dept. in Plummer. - Rebecca Thomas

By Rebecca Thomas

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Rob Wienclaw might not want anyone to know it, but he has a shiny new plaque.

The longtime officer with the Coeur d'Alene Tribal Police Department was recently named Policeman of the Year by the Idaho American Legion.

"I was kind of embarrassed," Wienclaw, a sergeant going on his 13th year with the department, said. He thought some of his coworkers deserved the award more than he did.

Coeur d'Alene Tribal spokesman Marc Stewart did some talking for Sgt. Wienclaw.

"It definitely shows that the best law enforcement officers in the state are working right here on the reservation," he said.

Mr. Stewart added that he hoped Sgt. Wienclaw's honor would allay the idea that tribal cops aren't trained. "They are," Mr. Stewart said. "They all take the same classes at the academy."

Sgt. Wienclaw, a longtime resident of the Worley area, graduated from the Idaho POST Academy in 1997 after the newly formed tribal police department offered to pay his way at the academy if he would work for them.

He said of his choice to become a cop, "I was young and wanting some adventure. And I wanted to help people."

Thirteen years later, communication is his professional policy, he said. Allowing people to say their piece often helps dissipate a tense situation on the job.

"It helps you make your decisions as a whole," he said.

He said he has been in dangerous situations as a police officer, but his training helped him through it.

Sgt. Wienclaw accepted the award at the American Legion Commander's Banquet July 11 in Mountain Home. He said he was nominated by the Plummer Legion, Post #69.

Today, Sgt. Wienclaw balances his job at the police force with his family—he and his wife

Amanda have five children ages 3-14 and running his own business, Southlake Services.

He said he does find time to sleep, though, "On occasion."