

SE police detective goes back to school

Friedl attends police leadership college; says what he learned will benefit residents

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By Jeff Piorkowski

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SOUTH EUCLID — Going back to college was a little harder than what one detective thought it would be, but now that he's graduated, he's glad he went.

This was not your typical college or university, however. SEPD Det. Rick Friedl attended the Police Executive Leadership College in Columbus.

The actual time spent in Columbus totaled three weeks, one week each in September, October and November. In between going to classes, Friedl was reading extensively and writing several reports, in addition to working his full-time job.

"I hadn't been to school since 1988," said Friedl. "It was tough."

PELC's stated mission is to "foster the values of good citizenship, to enhance the prospects of secure communities and to brighten the future through constructive social change within Ohio communities."

Friedl was one of 30 officers, chiefs and other law enforcement officials from the region who graduated from PELC Nov. 20. He was the



Friedl.

first SEPD member to attend PELC in 15 years, since former chief Thomas Lucha went to the college.

"They (PELC) brought in top instructors from all over the country," Friedl said. "There were former FBI agents, high-ranking FBI agents, college professors and former chiefs.

"Each instructor had a topic to cover about leadership, such as ethical and character driven leadership and effective written communication."

Friedl said SEPD Chief Kevin Nietert wants the department's members to be as edu-

cated as possible in the ways of police work.

"He's a firm believer in an educated staff," Friedl said.

"Leadership is about change. You never want a stagnant police department. The chief has a vision for the department, and this is helping him meet that vision."

Friedl has been with the SEPD 17 years and has hopes of someday becoming a lieutenant or perhaps even chief.

Speaking about PELC, he said, "They want you to use your knowledge. I'm going to use it by trying to make every individual officer here better.

"I'd like to bring a better understanding of the department's vision and mission. To help every officer understand their mission as a police officer."

Through the knowledge he has gained, and which other SEPD officers will attain in coming months by learning at

PELC, Friedl said the city's residents will be better served.

The PELC course also demanded public speaking from its students, something Friedl said he had no problem with, as he is an instructor at the Cleveland Heights Police Academy.

Friedl's wife, Diane, is completing more than four years of schooling and is about to become a registered nurse.

"I'm very proud of her," he said. By going to school, he also learned what she had been going through, something his wife let him know often during his time with PELC.

"Oh yes, I heard a lot of that kind of talk," he said with a laugh.

But, Friedl knows going back to college was worth it — for him, his department and the city's residents.