

## Officer of the Year 2022

Officer Derek Hokkanen has been named Officer of the Year for 2022. He was selected as Officer of the Year for his personification of our Mission Statement, *To Protect with Courage and Serve with Compassion.*

Officer Hokkanen started his professional life as an automotive technician for over 20 years and owned his own repair shop. However, Officer Hokkanen decided to pursue his dream of becoming a police officer and made the leap by attending the Law Enforcement Academy. Officer Hokkanen started his career in law enforcement with the River Falls Police Department in April 2019, while he was still attending Academy.

He quickly earned the respect of his fellow officers and supervisors through his diligent work and calm demeanor. An officer recently wrote that, "his reports have been detailed, accurate, and extremely well thought out." Officer Hokkanen's case work has resulted in two federal cases, one of which is pending and the other resulted in a guilty plea in federal court.

In 2022, Officer Hokkanen was recognized numerous times by individuals outside the police department. The following quote is taken from an email the department received, which perfectly describes Officer Hokkanen as an individual and an officer.

*"I just have to say that I was extremely impressed with Officer Hokkanen. He was incredibly great to work with, he was understanding, compassionate, and professional."*

Furthermore, Officer Hokkanen continues to seek out additional responsibilities in support of the police department. He was selected as a Field Training Officer and a Taser Instructor and immediately demonstrated his leadership by transitioning the department to updated Taser 7 devices.

Officer Hokkanen spends his free time with his two children, hunting, fishing, and working on automobiles.

Congratulations to Officer Derek Hokkanen, the River Falls Police Department's 2022 Officer of the Year!

