



ST. HELENS POLICE DEPARTMENT

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIRST THURSDAY OPIOID OVERDOSE PRESENTATION

ST. HELENS, OR -- Over the last 20 years, drug overdose deaths have increased sharply in the United States. The “opioid epidemic” has been prominently featured in state and national news as federal departments and state legislatures attempt to create regulations to combat the crisis. According to the US Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), approximately 130 people died every day in the United States from an opioid overdose in 2016 and 2017.

In March 2017, the St. Helens Police Department launched its Naloxone (Narcan) program. Naloxone is a lifesaving medication used to counteract the effects of an opioid overdose. This will be the topic of the St. Helens Police Department’s next First Thursday community meeting. The meeting will be held in the Columbia Center Auditorium, 375 S. 18th Street, on Thursday, February 7 at 7 p.m.

Each St. Helens officer carries Narcan on his or her person in case they encounter an individual experiencing an opioid overdose. St. Helens Detective Dustin King developed and implemented the Department’s Narcan program. Officers are required to be recertified every three years in the medication’s use. Since its implementation, St. Helens officers have responded to multiple opioid overdose calls and used Narcan four times. Detective King will be the presenter at the February 7 First Thursday meeting.

First Thursday is a monthly community meeting with the St. Helens Police Department held on the first Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. A new topic is presented at each meeting by a police officer or police staff related to community safety, crime prevention, police services, or seasonal-specific safety information. After a brief presentation, participants have the opportunity to ask St. Helens officers questions, find out what’s happening in St. Helens neighborhoods, and discuss any topics of concern with fellow community members and police.

The goal of First Thursday is to bring the St. Helens community and local law enforcement together once a month for meaningful conversation about the community. The meetings are an opportunity to make connections in the community, not just between police officers and residents, but also between neighbor and neighbor.

The vision of the St. Helens Police Department is to provide professional police services that will secure public trust and keep our neighborhoods safe and free of crime. Our mission is to work

with all citizens to make our city a place where people live safely and to promote individual responsibility and community commitment.

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For further information regarding the St. Helens Police Department's First Thursday program, please contact Communications Officer Crystal Farnsworth at crystal@ci.st-helens.or.us or 503-366-8215.