

Madison County's New Sheriff Is Trying To Arrest Sigma Of Recent Scandals

By JERRI STROUD
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Emil J. Toffant took over as Madison County sheriff in December, but he's still waiting for a badge.

It's on order from a police supply company, a belated reminder that things are changing in the scandal-plagued department where the sheriff used to receive a decorative star as a gift from political supporters or employees. When Toffant took office, he ordered his own badge, the standard \$35 model.

Toffant, a former state trooper and professional baseball scout, ran as an independent, law-and-order candidate to replace indicted sheriff John Maeras. Toffant took over a department torn by the scandal, in which Maeras and others were accused of collecting kickbacks on donations to the Madison County Deputy Sheriff's Association.

Morale was abysmal. And the new sheriff discovered that the department had no specialized training for deputies, no detectives working nights or holidays

and only enough cruisers for one shift. He has given himself two years to straighten things out.

Already local police departments, who used to be suspicious, have started cooperating with the sheriff's office, says one deputy who left in disgust in 1976 but has returned.

Toffant has pledged to cooperate in the Maeras trial, scheduled to begin Feb. 5 in Alton on a 21-count indictment for racketeering and mail fraud. Toffant is trying to get a patrol car for every

deputy and has started a training program. He also wants new uniforms.

He has hired former Police Chief Fred Bright of East Alton as director of operations and Ewin Knezevich, a former deputy, as director of information. Both were on a committee of police officials who urged Toffant to run. He was elected by an 11,000 vote margin.

Toffant, 64, brings 31 years of law enforcement experience to the job. He began as a part-time policeman in Madison, in 1949, he joined the Illinois State

Unemployment Rate Rises In Missouri

JEFFERSON CITY (UPI) — The number of unemployed persons in Missouri rose by 1,900 in December to 104,700, says the Division of Employment Security.

The unemployment rate increased one-tenth of 1 percent to 4.7 percent, said J.E. Dietrich, division director. The rate

in December 1977 was 5.7 percent, he said Friday.

But Dietrich said the number of employed persons also increased, rising by 21,500 during the year. Total employment in December was estimated at 2.1 million.

Police and was district commander in East St. Louis when he retired 25 years later.

He only went as far as eighth-grade in school, but is a 1959 graduate of the FBI Academy.

Toffant turned down a minor league baseball career in the 1930s because he needed to support his widowed mother in Madison. After he retired from the State Police in 1974, he went back to baseball career as a scout for the Cincinnati Reds.

"Pete Rose got me the job," he says, launching into a favorite topic. He has definite opinions about the future of the Reds without manager Sparky Anderson but won't disclose them on the record. He wants to keep scouting.

He says he has no such worries about the future of the Sheriff's Department, which he sometimes directs from his 1974 cruiser, with 60,000 miles on the odometer.

"It runs good," he says. "And it takes me where I want to go."

Pete Barty works for Madison County Sheriff's Office

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