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Sheriff finds solace in overwhelming and broad support

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In the wake of the fatal shooting of Berks County Deputy Sheriff Kyle D. Pagerly, Sheriff Eric J. Weaknecht said he took some solace in the outpouring of support from law enforcement and government officials, local businesses and the community.

Pagerly was fatally shot June 29 while working with a fugitive task force trying to serve a warrant on a suspect in Albany Township.

Weaknecht said the response to the tragedy was almost immediate.

"I got a call from Philadelphia police Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey," Weaknecht said as he stood in the blazing sun Wednesday in his dress uniform waiting Pagerly's memorial service in the Sovereign Center.

Ramsey told the sheriff he was dispatching his contingent of officers responsible for organizing and officiating at memorial services for slain police officers.

"He told me, 'Unfortunately we get to do this too much,'" Weaknecht said.

Lancaster deputy sheriffs worked a night shift Tuesday, learning the ropes in the 24-hour, seven-day-a-week Berks Central Processing Center so they could relieve their colleagues during Wednesday's memorial service, Weaknecht said. Suspects brought in Wednesday were taken to the holding cells, where Reading police watched them until the Berks deputies returned to work Wednesday night.

Deputies from other counties and police from other municipalities directed traffic in the morning so as many Reading police as possible could attend the ceremony.

Weaknecht said he regretted being unable to thank everyone for their offers of assistance.

"My focus has been on the (Pagerly) family," he said.

Philadelphia police may have become all too familiar with police memorial services, but Weaknecht said he hopes he and his deputies never do.

"This is our first," he said. "And, God willing, our last."

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