

November 18, 2009

Pete Gerken, President
Board of Lucas County Commissioners
One Government Center, Ste. 800
Toledo, Oh 43604

Dear Commissioner,

I am writing to share with you my retirement as the Lucas County Dog Warden, effective January 31, 2010.

Since 1987, I have had the privilege of serving the community of Lucas County as its Chief Dog Warden. I've spent my whole life around animals, having worked since an early age, at the Toledo Zoo, where my grandfather Frank Skeldon and father Phil Skeldon were both former directors. I have trained a variety of animals including many dogs. I trained dogs for four years for the US military including a tour in Vietnam.

I've taken my job as Dog Warden very seriously, knowing my first and foremost priority was keeping the public safe. During my tenure as Chief Dog Warden, the Dog Warden Department has set a high standard thanks to the efforts of the staff. We built and maintained critical relationships over the years with the local Police and Sheriff Departments, meter readers, utility workers, block watch organizations and especially letter carriers. These relationships have enabled us to do an excellent job protecting public safety with a small staff.

The various Boards of County Commissioners that I've worked with over the years have been made up of a variety of interesting personalities who have allowed me to operate this department as I saw fit and according to the Ohio Revised Code.

I am especially grateful to the dog owners of Lucas County who buy licenses for their dogs on an annual basis even at the highest rate of any County in the State. They also take better care of their dogs and this can be seen in the continued reduction of the numbers of dogs that are euthanized every year by the Lucas County Dog Warden Department.

For the good of the community I believe that the time has come to announce my retirement. My leadership of the Dog Warden Department has become an increasing distraction to this community and there are many more important issues that we all need to focus on. People have lost their jobs, families are in distress, and there are children that need to be adopted.

I want to personally thank each of you and all of the Commissioners that I've served under since 1987 when I was hired by Jim Holtzmer when he was President of the board of County Commissioners.

My greatest source of strength, not only during my career, but during my entire life has been my large family; wife Fanny, daughter Danielle, and brothers and sisters too numerous to mention. This collection of strong individuals has always tended to view an attack on one of us as an attack on all of us. These recent unjustified attacks have been difficult for us to endure.

Any successes that the Lucas County Dog Warden Department has been able to achieve are because of the hard work and efforts of a dedicated staff. I wish to thank them publicly and will be thanking them for their efforts daily from now until I retire. Problems, real or perceived, with the difficult daily decisions that had to be made should leave when I do. The new Chief Dog Warden will inherit a well-trained staff that can do the job and a Department that gets by without a general fund, tax payer subsidy.

Therefore it is with a great deal of pride in the Skeldon family and the role we have played in Lucas County and the City of Toledo that I tender my resignation and ask that you give consideration to the public servants that do difficult jobs in our community every day.

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas G. Skeldon
Chief Dog Warden
