

# *The Cedar Falls Times*

## **UNI grad, veteran deputy runs for sheriff**

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**Tony Thompson Black Hawk County Deputy and Communications Director**

A UNI grad and a veteran of the Black Hawk County Sheriff's Office is gearing up to become the top law enforcement officer in the county.

Tony Thompson, a 14-year deputy with the department, a spokesperson and a community services coordinator, says his experience in the sheriff's office and his 19 years of service as a military police officer in the Iowa National Guard have

prepared him to lead the 100 deputies in the agency, which serves about 130,000 residents.

On Monday, the 38-year-old father of two kicked off his campaign and became the first candidate to throw his hat in the ring in what promises to be a contested race, following the retirement of long-time Sheriff Michael Kubik in December.

Thompson says he has a comprehensive platform, which he hopes will capitalize on the wave of political awareness generated during the caucuses.

Were he to receive the confidence of Black Hawk County voters, Thompson, a Democrat, says he will aim to reduce the 90 percent recidivism rate by reevaluating the jail operation.

"People will come here [at the jail] and just be very comfortable," he says, "because our jail is very professional and clean and the atmosphere is very cordial. We go far above and beyond. The operation needs to be reevaluated in such a way that benefits our budget and staffing rather than the inmates."

Thompson says that paring down such privileges as three-times daily exercise sessions would have the desired effect of discouraging

prisoners from returning to the jail.

As a leader, he said, he plans to generate about a 10 percent increase in cases involving narcotics, a measure he believes will have a speedy and dramatic impact on the crime rate in the county.

"About 80 percent of the crime in the county is related to narcotics. You have to tackle the root cause," he said. "There will be a change of philosophy. The sheriff has established a foundation that is very solid and effective, but it can be improved and this is what I am looking to do."

Thompson, who holds a degree in communications from UNI, says he is a dedicated and patient leader, one whose initiatives have reached far beyond the department.

Among his accomplishments, he says he launched a campaign raising private funds to secure anhydrous ammonia tanks, an initiative which prompted sheriff's departments around the country to secure federal funding for the implementation of this program.

"I want to be able to do more of that," he says. "For me, it has nothing to do with money or prestige. The doors that the position would unlock for me will allow me to have greater impact on the citizens of Black Hawk County. My goal is to make the transition as easy as possible. We have a fantastic agency, now we have a chance to make it even better."