



Township of Belleville *New Jersey*

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Belleville Fire Department's Bike Patrol Helps Keep Residents Safe

BELLEVILLE, NJ – September 29, 2021 – Among the 1,000 or so residents who attended the township's inaugural Green Fair last weekend was one young man who scraped his leg.

Help arrived quickly despite the heavy crowds, and the boy's wounds were soon cleaned and dressed.

It didn't take long for the Belleville Fire Department's new bike patrol to demonstrate that it can be a nimble, fast-responding service at fairs, concerts, sporting events or other public venues where highly trained personnel are required.

The department has launched its new program with two EMT-trained firefighters, Dat Khong and Manny Antonio.

Khong, Antonio and their Fuji brand mountain bikes will surely become a familiar, welcomed presence around Belleville – especially at outdoor events this fall.

“The Belleville Fire Department has always been committed to the safety and well-being of our residents,” Chief John Olivieri said. “Our new bike patrol just gives us a new and innovative way to provide that service.”

Battalion Chief George Del Grande was inspired to form a bike patrol for Belleville's bravest during a 5K charity run in the township.

Members of the Belleville Police Department's bike patrol were able to closely follow the runners and join in the festivities. Fire department personnel, who only had large vehicles such as ambulances at their disposal, were nowhere near as nimble.

Olivieri agreed that a bike patrol could help the fire department better serve the community, but the question soon became: How do you start one?

Few fire departments deployed bike patrols, so Del Grande couldn't count on getting much guidance. One great advantage, however, was the fact that Belleville's Police Department was running a 40-hour program to certify riders.

After Khong and Antonio had finished their training, they were ready to debut at the Green Fair at Belleville High School last weekend.

Atop of their bikes, which were assembled by Borderline Bikes, a locally owned business, Khong and Antonio pedaled around the fair and remained vigilant in case emergency assistance was needed.

The public's positive response to the bike patrol only reinforced plans to train more firefighters for this growing corps.

"Our bikes are equipped with almost everything you would have on an ambulance in terms of life-saving equipment," Del Grande explained. "They have equipment such as a defibrillator, oxygen, Narcan and trauma kits. They can respond to emergencies ranging from a broken leg to a drug overdose to a heart attack."

"The bike patrol's presence at the Green Fair let everyone know that they would be in good hands in the event of a medical emergency," Mayor Michael Melham said. "They were welcomed with open arms, and certainly compliment the tremendous work of our police department and other emergency responders.

"We are fortunate to have such dedicated and creative men and women in the fire department, looking out for our safety."

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