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KEEPING IT BETWEEN THE GUARDWALLS



Captain Emmitt McGowan
Commander/Deputy State Director
Michigan State Police and Emergency
Management and Homeland Security

Captain McGowan truly embraces giving back to the community, even in his love of the American muscle cars. “Motor City” is a livelihood. Motown is a fashion. The Spirit of Detroit is the grit that lives in Michiganders everywhere, and this Detroit-raised Captain does not disappoint – from his public service to his humorous yet realistic share of lessons learned from drag racing.

Why NEMA; how does the association most benefit you as a director?

My experiences in emergency management began in 2003 while being assigned to the MSP Hazardous Materials Training Center. Every MSP State Director has been a member of NEMA as I remember. As a new State Director, the various sessions providing direction as well as networking have been a great help with my acclimation as well as my new assistant, Inspector James Grady.

What is one thing that makes you proud of your agency?

The Michigan State Police has “A Proud tradition of Service through Excellence, Integrity, and Courtesy.” The MSP has given me the opportunity to serve the citizens of Michigan in various roles and responsibilities as well as the opportunity to give back to the communities where I’ve lived.

With over two decades of experience, what does public service mean to you?

Public service to me means providing equal and fair treatment to individuals and situations encountered. I had the opportunity to serve as the Equal Employment Officer for the MSP. During this tenure I was able to help department members, both civilian and enlisted, by being a voice when they felt they otherwise did not have one. I was also responsible for investigating civil rights complaints internally and externally. I

resolved many internal matters and directed corrective action when complaints were made against members that were ultimately sustained.

You were responsible for the start-up of the Detroit and Southeast Michigan Information and Intelligence Center (fusion center for metro Detroit). What did this effort mean for Detroit and the surrounding area?

This may have been the most rewarding accomplishment in my career. I was given the task of standing up the DSEMIIC with the support of MSP Command, the Michigan HIDTA, and the UASI Region. Together we were able to provide an intelligence and information sharing environment to Southeast Michigan (UASI Region) that supports criminal investigations, provides threat assessments to the public and private sector, partner with FBI, DEA, ATF, DHS, TSA, CBP, and the city of Detroit Police Department. This collaborative effort greatly assists with keeping Michiganders safe.

I subsequently became the commander of the Michigan Intelligence Operations Center.

Are you originally from Michigan?

I was born in Alexandria, Louisiana at the England AFB and raised in the city of Detroit.

What inspired you to not only build fast cars and motorcycles, but to participate in drag racing?

I have always had an affinity for classic cars – specifically American muscle. I also worked in a machine shop in my younger days where I assisted with assembling cylinder heads. This experience put me in contact with many customers with custom hotrods and motorcycles and ultimately lead to the drag racing experience.

What is your favorite build so far and why?

I have built several cars, but I would say my favorite would've been my Factory Five Roadster which is a replica of a 1965 427 Cobra. It took me almost three years to complete this build with the highlight being it placing 3rd in the Detroit Autorama, hand-built class.

What are a few lessons you learned with drag racing?

I can think of few lessons learned with drag racing:

- Never Never drive beyond my capabilities
- Make sure all my safety equipment is functional
- Inspect my vehicle before and after a race
- Don't drive my vehicle beyond its capabilities (blow-ups are expensive 😊)

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