



Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Paul Penzone, Sheriff

October 2, 2023

Today, I am publicly announcing that I will not be pursuing a third term as Sheriff of Maricopa County. I will be stepping down from my role in early 2024 to pursue other opportunities, but will work with my colleagues at Maricopa County and the incredible team at the MCSO to ensure a smooth transition that puts the continued safety of the public first and foremost as I have always done during my time as Sheriff.

To the people of Maricopa County, please know this, my time as Sheriff has been the greatest privilege of my professional career. It has been an honor to serve this community and work alongside the brave men and women of the MCSO. I have been inspired each and every day I have had the privilege to wear the MCSO uniform.

Thank you to those who believed in me, supported, and inspired me. First and foremost, I am blessed with an incredible wife whose belief in me as a person and as a professional was the foundation for this pursuit and any success I have had. Thank you, Veronica, for challenging me to do more.

Additionally, thank you to our boys, Austin and Paul, who have been courageous and supportive. Their unconditional love for our family is immeasurable.

There are far too many individuals responsible for the overwhelming successes we had in the 2016 and 2020 elections. In 2016, the work of many led to a historical victory, unseating a 24-year incumbent by a 13-point margin of victory. But it was not only historic, it also served as the impetus for a reputation change across our state. In 2020, Maricopa County supported my reelection by casting the highest number of votes for any candidate in Maricopa County history with over one million total votes. In two election cycles your support of me led to the most votes for any candidate on the ballot, to include both elected Presidents. I am forever grateful to everyone who contributed to our pursuit to restore integrity and accountability to the MCSO. I promised to lead with ethics, integrity and humility and I have endeavored each day to fulfill that promise for everyone in Maricopa County regardless of how they cast their ballot.

In the past seven years we restored trust and confidence to the community. Not only to the community we serve, but to the community of men and women in the MCSO who had been an afterthought of the previous administration. Their reputations had been hindered and damaged due to the abuse and neglect of prior leadership. But they are the lifeblood of the organization, and their sacrifices deserve gratitude and recognition. Over the course of my two terms, I could see the change in public perception, and it led to community appreciation. I am glad Maricopa County residents finally see the men and women of MCSO for who they are - selfless public servants.

As I move towards the next stage of my life, I reflect on all we've accomplished together the last seven years and know that moving into the future the MCSO is in a fundamentally better place to serve and protect our community. During my tenure I shut down "Tent City" and got away from the nonsense of pink underwear. The acceptance by prior administrations of missing MCSO firearms was addressed and corrected with a comprehensive auditing system. We established a "Wellness Division" to care for our own employees and worked to increase the pay scale for the entire organization by no less than 30%.

The last seven years brought many unexpected challenges. We faced relentless public protests and were able to protect civil rights while protecting people and our community. We combatted a public health pandemic, providing care for our own employees and resources for the public

Paul Penzone
Sheriff
550 West Jackson Street
Phoenix, AZ 85003
Phone (602)876-1000
www.mcso.org



Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Paul Penzone, Sheriff

inside and outside the jail walls. The MCSO stood strong in the face of dishonest leaders attempting to sow distrust in elections and when the threat of civil disorder attempted to breach and destroy our democracy, we were immovable.

And maybe most importantly, I led my colleagues in an effort to pass the most aggressive police related legislation. The newly created and legislatively required Officer Involved Shooting Division at DPS will be a statewide program heightening transparency and accountability in all use of deadly force by law enforcement incidents across Arizona. This bipartisan effort should be a model for the nation in accountability and transparency.

As the leader of the MCSO, I am proud to say we reduced lawsuits and liability to the county and our taxpayers. I came in under budget every year of my tenure, returning over \$90 million to the county general fund. I take pride in my record of fiscal responsibility.

There are also many other accomplishments that likely went unnoticed but had a considerable impact on our operations and our organization. I created the Fugitive Apprehension Tactical Enforcement Unit (FATE) to crack down on unserved felony warrants prioritizing the apprehension of dangerous criminals. The recreated and expanded Community Outreach Division trains students at local high schools, delivers Community Academies four times a year, and provides resources for student and parents while promoting all that is great about the MCSO. I created an internal auditing system to ensure all cases involving potential crimes against children are properly tracked and investigated. I also worked with community leaders to establish a statewide School Safety Conference that is now becoming a national model. The safety of our children have and will always come first.

Most challenging and perhaps most crucial is the progress we have made complying with the federal court orders that resulted from the unconstitutional actions of the previous administration. Under my leadership, we have reached 100% compliance in two of the four mandated sections, and are at 93% and 82% compliance in the remaining two.

Inheriting these considerably complex federal court orders has changed the way we are able to do our jobs. In some ways for the better, but in many ways, it has been an obstacle to the detriment of our public's best interest. The abuses of the past administration required lawful intervention, but the ongoing requirements placed on the MCSO are unlike any faced by any other law enforcement agency in the nation, inhibiting our ability to move forward under new leadership. Due to the court's obligations, we have a more robust, complex, and overstaffed Compliance Division than we have a General Crimes Division. That means the court feels internal oversight should be a bigger part of our organization than public safety, and I firmly believe they're wrong.

There is unequivocally a void in appropriate accountability on the monitor team who is empowered to hold the MCSO accountable. The debt of the past has been paid by the present, with interest.

I was elected to restore integrity, trust, and accountability to the Office of the Sheriff, and I have delivered on that promise. Since being elected Sheriff in 2016, I committed to remove politics from policing at MCSO and I have never wavered on that promise. I kept my head down, focusing on the work, and I only spoke when it was appropriate for a Sheriff to speak. When other leaders acted inappropriately, I called them on it and got back to work. I always tried to lead by example, with respect.

Paul Penzone
Sheriff
550 West Jackson Street
Phoenix, AZ 85003
Phone (602)876-1000
www.mcso.org



Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Paul Penzone, Sheriff

I leave fulfilled by the privilege of serving Maricopa County as Sheriff for the past seven years. Stepping down as Sheriff will conclude my over 30-year career in public safety. I am blessed by the opportunities, friendship, support, and trust given to me by this amazing community. The next stage of my life will include public service as that is the only true purpose in life. The Office of Sheriff is bigger than one person. It is about each and every person who takes an oath to protect and serve and put your life ahead of their own. I have trust and faith in the good men and women of the MCSO to build upon the work we have accomplished together.

Thank you, God bless you, and Godspeed.

Sincerely,

Paul Penzone

Sheriff

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Paul Penzone
Sheriff
550 West Jackson Street
Phoenix, AZ 85003
Phone (602)876-1000
www.mcso.org