

##For Immediate Release##

In May, the Lancaster Newspaper published a report concerning the processing of sexual assault kits in the County. Unfortunately, that article contained factual inaccuracies and as a result, a citizen voiced concern about the unprocessed kits. The article did, however, discuss three key factors that should help to alleviate any concerns from our citizenry. Firstly, although two-thirds of the County departments did not complete the report, the Mount Joy Borough Police Department (MJBPD) did so in the name of transparency. Secondly, the article discusses the fact that some police departments over reported increasing their totals by using a more rigorous criterion. Thirdly, the article provided a series of legitimate reasons in which a SAFE kit would not be processed. In revisiting the report and dialoguing with state officials, it was discovered that MJBPD did over-report. It is our understanding that using current definitions related to unprocessed cases MJBPD's backlogged cases would total zero.

It is important to note that the Mount Joy Borough Police Department adheres to all regulations set forth by the rules of criminal procedure, the Lancaster County District Attorney's office, and guidelines set forth by the state of Pennsylvania. The MJBPD takes sexual assaults very seriously and assists victims of these heinous crimes in accordance to the policies set forth by the Lancaster County Special Victim's Unit.

The public is advised that the MJBPD is 100% compliant per state regulations and Act 27 related to the submission, storage and use of sexual assault kits in prosecutions. Over the past three years, under the direction of leadership, the police department has developed a series of policy updates to include those related to the organization of sexual assault cases. Officers' work together to prosecute or close these cases quickly so the victims receive closure as soon as possible. Specialized training has been attended by police personnel regarding proper evidence procedures and constant communication between police and the Lancaster County District Attorney's Office is critical. All sexual assault cases are up to date and accounted for. All current "SAFE kits", in custody, are from closed cases and/or cases where the victim refused to cooperate in the investigation therefore making each case compliant with all regulations set forth by the state.

The Mount Joy Borough Police Department is always available to answer questions that remain in the scope allowed by privacy regulations and looks forward to serving the community.