



MISSOULA

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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U.S. Department of Justice Conference Call
May 15, 2013

Today I join my police chief and the United States Department of Justice in announcing an agreement that ends a year-long investigation into our response to sexual assaults against women in our community. More importantly, this agreement reaffirms our commitment to be an example for the rest of the nation. We are a city that addresses this complex issue with conviction and compassion and employs a community approach to prevention, investigation and prosecution in cases of violence against women.

I want to thank Chief Mark Muir and his staff for their efforts in ensuring the justice department had all the information it needed while continuing our independent efforts to improve our policies and training around sexual violence. The women and men of the Missoula Police Department are committed professionals, and their response to this investigation and their continuing efforts to protect and serve our citizens as we put this agreement into action are clear evidence of that fact. I'm proud to work with them, and they have my complete confidence.

Our theme today is about moving forward, being innovative and recognizing that only through community partnerships can we achieve our goals. We look forward to working more closely with the University of Montana, the Missoula County Attorney's Office, advocates, concerned citizens, trainers and our independent reviewers to ensure that we're employing best practices in taking care of victims and bringing perpetrators to justice.

In short, the agreement calls for improved policies and better training, particularly around cases involving non-stranger assaults and those involving alcohol or other drugs; reviews of policy and training by an independent party; a renewed concentration on serving victims; additional internal oversight and close supervision; better coordination with law-enforcement and community partners; better data collection and reporting; and external reviews of our response by an independent reviewer and a community team.

We've always known we are not perfect and can always improve. Today we have another instrument to help us get there.

Our colleagues at the justice department have described the issues we're attempting to address as "complex and common," but we agree that Missoula is a place that's anything but common, and our approach will be exceptional. This agreement is unique to Missoula, and I want to thank the justice department for recognizing our strengths while we all acknowledge our weaknesses.

The City of Missoula is absolutely committed to this agreement and to our citizens, women in particular, and we're confident that it will serve our community well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Engen".

John Engen
Mayor