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For immediate release

Oh captain: Longtime deputies Budin and LaRoche promoted

Rice County Sheriff Jesse Thomas has expanded his office's leadership team, promoting a pair of longtime deputies to captain.

The new captains, Nathan Budin and Paul LaRoche, were sworn in earlier this week. Both were born and raised in the area, and both have years of experience with the Rice County Sheriff's Office, serving in a variety of positions while moving through the ranks.

Both Budin and LaRoche are well respected and have an excellent work ethic, Thomas said of the appointments.

"If (Chief Deputy) Joe (Yetzer) and I are out of town, I know that everything will be taken care of with Capt. Budin and Capt. LaRoche in charge," he said.

Budin, who grew up in Greenvale Township, just west of Northfield, graduated from Northfield High School. While contemplating career choices, Budin connected Joe Yetzer who grew up on a neighboring farm. At the time Yetzer was a Lonsdale police officer, and was happy to answer the teenage Budin's questions about law enforcement and even took him on a ride along.



The Rice County Sheriff's Office has two new captains, Nathan Budin, second from left, and Paul LaRoche, second from right. The positions flesh out the office's leadership structure. Also pictured are Sheriff Jesse Thomas and Chief Deputy Joe Yetzer. (Rice County photo)

Yetzer's positive outlook on his career cinched the deal for Budin, who has a degree in law enforcement from Alexandria Technical & Community College. Budin was anxious to get his start in the field, by his second year in college he was working as a part-time officer for the Lonsdale PD.

He began with the sheriff's office in December 2000, starting as a corrections officer in the jail before heading up the county's water patrol a few months later. That was soon followed by a full-time deputy post.

Budin, who served as a K-9 officer with his former partner Ronin for six and a half years, was also a member of the region's tactical team for about six years and served as RCSO's field training officer. In 2011,

he was promoted to sergeant. While he spent the last year as a patrol sergeant, the prior six years he headed up the Investigations Unit.

Budin and his wife, Kirsten, have two teenage sons, Brady and Carson.

In his new role, Budin will oversee the office's Investigations and Courthouse units, water patrol, Rice County Sheriff's Office Dive Team, civil processes and internal affairs complaints.

"I'm very honored," said Budin, "very appreciative of the opportunity. I've been fortunate to have been mentored in my career by current and former administrators. Now it's my turn to help others develop and be successful in their careers."

Paul LaRoche was raised in Faribault, graduating from Faribault High School before completing his bachelor's in criminal justice at Bemidji State University and obtaining his Law Enforcement Skills certificate from Alexandria Technical & Community College.

LaRoche was hired in fall 2007 as an officer by the Faribault Police Department. By the following spring then-Sheriff Richard Cook offered him a position as a deputy with the Sheriff's Office.

He's not only served RCSO as a patrol deputy, but as an instructor in several use-of-force topics. He was also a field training officer for new deputies and a member of two regional tactical teams for nearly 10 years. From 2014-18 he worked in Investigations, focusing on complex, in-depth cases. In January 2018, he was promoted to sergeant. He worked patrol for a short time before returning to investigations.

From the fall 2018 to December 2021, he was the commander of the Cannon River Drug and Violent Offender Task Force, a collaborative effort of Faribault and Northfield Police departments and the Rice and Le Sueur County Sheriff's offices.

In late 2021, he became the office's administrative sergeant, a job that includes overseeing patrol operations, scheduling, training, purchasing and up fitting squad cars, handling of forfeitures, and other various administrative duties.

In addition to those duties, LaRoche will also handle internal affairs complaints and serve as Rice County representative on the South Metro SWAT board.

He and his wife Kiera, a nurse with Rice County Public Health, have two young children, ages 9 and 6.

LaRoche said it was his commitment to serving the community that led him to apply for the captain's position.

"We truly have great staff who work hard to serve the residents of Rice County each and every day," he said.. "I feel very fortunate to have worked with and learned from all of the individuals that I've worked with in the past 15 years. I look forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead."

The two captains' jobs won't increase the number of positions at the Sheriff's Office. They replace a lieutenant's and sergeant's position, said Thomas.

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