

# Participants Sought Across IL for Blessing of the Squad Cars

by Nicole Gusentine  
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**ILLINOIS** - Participants are being sought for the annual tri-state Blessing of the Squad Cars scheduled for Sunday, April 28 at the Bald Knob Cross of Peace in southern Illinois' Union County. The gates open at 10 a.m., the blessing will be performed at 12:30 p.m., and the event will conclude at 2 p.m. Lunch will be provided.

All of the police and sheriffs' departments throughout Illinois, Kentucky and Missouri are encouraged to send at least one squad car, motorcycle, SUV, van or other official vehicle from the department. The April 28 ceremony will feature a special interfaith ceremony during which the officiants will bless the law enforcement vehicles and the officers who drive them. Lunch will be served to the participants.

“Now more than ever, the men and women who protect and serve us need all of the help they can get to remain safe on the job and return home each day to their families,” said Nicole Gusentine, President of the Southern Region Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) Auxiliary, the organization sponsoring the event. “This tradition dates to the blessing of the fleet during historic times, and in recent years many police agencies have picked up on the ceremony as a way to show support for our law enforcement officers.”

Departments that wish to participate should respond through the Southern Region FOP Auxiliary Facebook event page and include the number of vehicles that will participate so the proper arrangements can be made to accommodate everyone.

The Southern Region FOP Auxiliary was formed three years ago to help support the men and women of law enforcement and corrections. The organization has conducted a community coat drive, provided and delivered Thanksgiving dinners to local police departments, and sponsored local families in need for Christmas.

The Fraternal Order of Police, founded in 1915, is the largest organization of sworn law enforcement officers in the United States. With a proud tradition of officers representing officers, the FOP is the most respected and most recognized police organization in the country. The Illinois FOP, chartered in 1963, is the second largest State Lodge, proudly representing more than 34,000 active duty and retired police officers - more than 10 percent of all FOP members nationwide. Visit [www.ilfop.org](http://www.ilfop.org) for more information.