

# Career Tech Matters

by Dennis Franks • March 13, 2015

There are a lot of Pickaway-Ross alumni on our staff and the tally just grew by one with the addition of Deputy Rex Cockrell as our school resource officer.



Rex, a Unioto graduate, completed the carpentry program in 1993 – being named Student of the Year – and spent more than 20 years in the field.

But a lifetime love of public service couldn't be stopped and he's also worked as a firefighter, EMT and a special deputy for the Ross County Sheriff's Department.

Before finishing high school, Rex took Pickaway-Ross Adult Education's firefighter program and in 1992 joined the Union Township Fire Department.

"My dad was a member and the whole department was like a family," Rex said. "I love the fire department and I love helping people."

Rex continued in the fire department by returning to Adult Education for the professional firefighter course and EMT-Basic and today is assistant chief.

Along the way he added rescue diver to his skills and became involved in fire investigation, which had him working alongside sheriff's



Deputy Rex Cockrell gets to know students during a lunch period. Rex started as Pickaway-Ross' school resource officer this month.

deputies.

That relationship reinvigorated a lifelong interest in criminal justice.

"It was a struggle between (the) criminal justice and carpentry (programs)," Rex said of his visit as a sophomore to Pickaway-Ross.

But the influence of several uncles who were involved in carpentry moved him in that direction.

He spent 22 years in carpentry, moving from working construction sites to management. In 2012, Rex decided it was time to pursue his other dream and he entered the police academy, working full days in construction and attending the academy at Ohio University at night.

"The academy was mentally and physically challenging," Rex said. "It was very tough but I had it in my head I was going to make it."

He finished in June 2013 and in

January 2014, he was commissioned as a special deputy by the Ross County sheriff.

When the construction company went out of business last December, Rex was ready to embark on his next career.

Rex is happy to be back at Pickaway-Ross and is spending his first days learning the job and getting to know the students. He hopes that students will come to see him as someone they can talk to.

"I'm very easy-going and approachable," Rex said. "But there are rules to follow." Rex's rules, he tells students, are simple: Be polite, courteous and cooperative.

"I tell them if they follow those rules, we'll all have a good day."

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*Dennis Franks is superintendent of Pickaway-Ross Career & Technology Center. He can be reached at [dennis.franks@pickawayross.com](mailto:dennis.franks@pickawayross.com).*