

**News Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Thursday, May 21, 2026**

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**City of Atwater Announces the  
Upcoming Appointment of Lieutenant William Novetzke  
as the next Chief of Police**

**Atwater, CA** - The City of Atwater is pleased to announce the upcoming appointment of Lieutenant William Novetzke as the next Chief of Police with the Atwater Police Department. The anticipated ratification of his agreement by the City Council will be at the May 26, 2026, City Council meeting. Chief Richard McEachin, who is retiring after a 22-year law enforcement career, previously announced his last day with Atwater will be August 31, 2026.

“I am very pleased that Lieutenant Novetzke has been chosen as Atwater’s next Police Chief”, said Chief McEachin. “He is well-respected within the department and the community, and I have confidence that he will continue to provide the high level of service the Atwater community deserves.”

Lieutenant Novetzke attended the San Joaquin Delta College Police Academy in 1999. Upon graduation, he served as a Police Officer for the Stockton Unified School District Police Department and the Modesto Police Department prior to joining the Atwater Police Department in 2005. He was promoted to Corporal in 2013, and to Sergeant in 2015. He became the Department’s Lieutenant in 2021.

Novetzke holds a bachelor’s degree from Union Institute and University, as well as the California Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Management Certificate. He completed the Sherman Block Supervisory Leadership Institute (SLI) course in 2020. Lieutenant Novetzke graduated from the Los Angeles Police Department Leadership

Program in 2022 along with completing his Executive Leadership Certification Program from the California Police Chiefs Association in 2025. Lieutenant Novetzke was also awarded the Trilogy Award from the FBI-LEEDA (Law Enforcement Executive Development Association) in 2022 for completing the required curriculum for the Supervisory, Command, and Executive Leadership Institute.

“Lieutenant Novetzke has consistently demonstrated professionalism, integrity, and a strong commitment to public service throughout his career with the Atwater Police Department,” said Atwater City Manager Chris Hoem. “His leadership experience, dedication to the community, and collaborative approach have prepared him to serve as the City’s next Police Chief. We look forward to working with him as he continues to strengthen public safety and build positive relationships throughout Atwater.”

Novetzke will assume his new position September 1, 2026.

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