Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office Press Release

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Organization: Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office
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Minnehaha County Unified Academy

Sioux Falls, South Dakota - Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office is proud to announce the launch of the Unified Academy on 9/12/2026, a specialized community police academy designed exclusively for individuals with disabilities. Our initiative aims to build mutual trust, educate on law enforcement operations, and equip participants who have disabilities with real-world safety tools.

Invited attendees will get an inside look at how officers handle calls for service and process crime scenes. They will also participate in hands-on exercises, including defensive tactics, handcuffing, and simulated building searches.

The Unified Academy provides participants with a firsthand look at the split-second decisions law enforcement officers make every day, while giving our department a chance to learn directly from them.

A major highlight of the academy is a cutting-edge technological partnership with Axon. Participants will use virtual reality headsets to step into an officer's shoes, experiencing the complex decision-making process behind deploying a Taser on a suspect. In addition to immersive "shoot/don't shoot" judgment simulators, the academy will feature training on the Blue Envelope Project—a vital initiative that enhances communication and safety between officers and drivers with conditions like autism or anxiety during traffic stops.

Media representatives are invited to attend. For further information contact Sgt. Munkvold (mmunkvold@minnehahacounty.gov).