

PRENTICE: Good morning, I'm George Prentice. This week, law enforcement reminded us to be, well, a bit more aware of our surroundings as we head to the Boise Greenbelt, telling someone where and when we're going. Making sure our phones are charged before we go. And of course, always wanting us to report suspicious activity. All of this coming in the wake, unfortunately, of two attacks, one of them a fatal stabbing, another an alleged kidnapping and assault of a woman walking alone on the greenbelt. Public safety is part of an ongoing conversation that we've had for many years with Boise Mayor Lauren McLean, and that's why we've asked for some time with the mayor on this, Madam Mayor. Good morning.

MCLEAN: Good morning, George.

PRENTICE: This week, BPD reminded us to be super aware of our surroundings. But what is new is a response of a shift in resources. Let me ask you first about that is, do you see this shift of resources as a response to public perception, or is it increased risk or is it somewhere in between?

MCLEAN: George, I appreciate the the question and the time to talk with you and to our community this morning. I know we've had some terrible things happen in the last week, and our community is shocked from it. And we've got families and individuals that are really hurting. And I want to acknowledge that that hurt and impact. And these were as real as they are for all of us. Um, unique and unusual circumstances. And our community is safe. We remain a safe place to live and to enjoy our parks, open space and the greenbelt. That said, you know, our residents deserve both to feel safe and to be safe. And so our officers are responding to this moment in time when folks want to know that we will be okay with additional presence in areas throughout our throughout our community.

PRENTICE: And the fact is that a lot of people move to Boise because of the greenbelt. The stories are countless of the people who were here on a job interview, and they. They took a break and walked along the greenbelt. And that was the factor that that got them to move here. And, uh, and also the fact is, is that thousands of parents are about to ship their sons and daughters our way to start another semester at Boise State. And of course, the students will be using the greenbelt on a regular basis. Can I ask you to maybe speak to them right now as far as how safe those folks should feel?

MCLEAN: Yeah. You know, it's funny, George, that you talk about how so many people move here because of the greenbelt. Um, and that story that you referenced, the generic story was mine. Really? I mean, Scott and I, when we were 22 of walked along the

greenbelt when we visited this community and have continued to do that for nearly 30 years to as a parent, you know, I want to know that my kids, you know, my daughter's visiting right now with friends. I want to know that she's safe when they go float the river this weekend and they'll go by bike and my son, the same thing. So the to parents who are sending their young adult children here for school in the fall, we are a safe city. And I want to say this though, George, it's not just on residents to protect themselves. I am so proud of our police department and the work they do day in, day out to keep our residents safe, to respond when called to bad situations, but to prevent more from happening. Crime has gone down year over year for the last 25 years in the city and on the green belt we've continued to make in safety investments. We're widening it in places. We've identified much trafficked areas that need more lighting, and we're investing in lighting. You. We've got bike cops and ambassadors along the greenbelt, greenbelt throughout the day and night. And as we reference at this moment in response to the community's needs, we have more officers that are down there patrolling along the greenbelt.

PRENTICE: And the new budget, I think, also commits a fair amount of funds for extra overtime for Boise Police. If I remember.

MCLEAN: The the the men and women in uniform serving at BPD. Yes. Uh, worked to the extent that they need to, to meet this community needs our, our current budget that we're actually, um, working through right now continues in ensuring that we have adequate resources, the people where they need to be, the hours they need to be.

PRENTICE: I want to talk a little bit more about a different type of perception, um, perceptions getting inflated to the point that we become fearful of simply walking along the greenbelt or even fearful of people who may not have a home, people who are law abiding. But there is that risk of marginalizing men, women who may not have a home but may be near the green belt, and all of a sudden they get tagged because of a suspect who may have been homeless that was connected to one of these attacks. There's there's always a risk here, right? Of over marginalizing the homeless. When. When someone who may not have a home becomes a criminal suspect.

MCLEAN: You know, George, I in response to that, I want to. Bring attention to the fact that in Boise, we put people first.

PRENTICE: Mhm.

MCLEAN: And I don't want to and nor will I minimize people's concerns right now. Um, because of the crime that happened along the greenbelt. I also want to acknowledge that we continue to invest in services that the most marginalized among us need in order to get on their feet and thrive. We've invested in permanent supportive housing with the community coming right alongside us to help us build nearly 250 homes for folks exiting homelessness and in raising \$15 million to fund through donations, the services folks need to get on the road to self-sufficiency and thrive. We have ensured and worked with homeless shelters to make sure that we've got shelter beds in this community. We take the approach that every city has needs, and we have to do all that we can as well as we can, with the limited resources that we have to meet the needs of everyone in this community. So whether it be folks that are concerned on the greenbelt right now, and you're going to see more officers doing patrols, we continue to invest in public safety with 34 new officers since I was elected, a new substation out State Street, mental health support and teams on the ground that can meet people in crisis. We're also investing in long term solutions to get folks off the street into homes and on the road to self-sufficiency.

PRENTICE: Okay. And this is where this becomes a little bit more uncomfortable. Something a number of people weren't expecting. And that was for this to become political. Some members of the legislature made this political this week. Representative Bruce Skaug, who lives in Nampa, insisting that the fatal stabbing, in his words, may have been prevented. Skaug and House speaker Mike Moyle, who lives in Star, insisting that Boise has not been keeping people from public camping the so-called Galloway Law. And Moyle says that the Boise police have not been enforcing that law. It is difficult to ask the Boise Police to defend themselves when they are challenged like that. But the buck does stop with you. So here's an opportunity for you to maybe set the record straight on this.

MCLEAN: Look, George, how could anybody expect something like this to become political? There's a family that is hurting, a community that is reeling. And we need real solutions, compassion, care, putting people first and real solutions. So of course, it was a shock last night to see that a press release was issued, rather than an offer to support and invest in the needs of our city and other cities have today and into the future. Our police officers are doing their job. We've said from day one that we would follow the law. We changed our ordinances. I sat down with the attorney general to talk with him about the Galloway Law. I've met with Senator Galloway on multiple occasions, both in person and in phone, since that law was passed, because we want to get it right. Our police officers are enforcing the law. They know these folks on the ground. They're cleaning up encampments as they found them. We have never tolerated encampments. They will

continue to do the work they're called upon to do to keep our community safe and to put people first. And I'm so proud of the job that they have done and the quick response work that they did immediately after Mr. Harbst was killed to find the suspect and to bring him into custody.

PRENTICE: Boise Mayor Lauren McLean, thanks for giving me some time this morning.

MCLEAN: Thanks so much, George. Take care.

PRENTICE: Now, let us bring Boise Police into our conversation. We are pleased this morning to welcome Deputy Chief Tammany Brooks. 26 years in law enforcement, all in Deputy Chief Brooks. Good morning to you.

BROOKS: You're welcome. It's glad to be on the show.

PRENTICE: So police reminded us to obviously report suspicious activity. Tell someone where and when we're going and to keep our phones charged before we head to the greenbelt. I think it's fair to say that some of those precautions have been out there. What is new, though, is a response from Boise Police with resources. What might we notice if we're on the greenbelt?

BROOKS: Great question. So one of the things we've done, let's talk about the resources that already exist. Our police officers are strongly encouraged to provide patrol on the greenbelt when they are available outside of their regular patrol duties. Now, we do have our bike team, and we have eight dedicated bike officers, as well as two sergeants whose primary responsibility is to be around the downtown core, and especially the green belt, so that they can provide any assistance to people when they need it and be available for any calls for service in a timely manner. So we have those eight officers who normally work, and then during the summertime, we actually have a team of school resource officers because school is out of session. Some of them are bike certified. And so we have them working on the bike team as additional resources as well. And I think we have 4 or 5 of those who are also providing patrol services on the green belt. Now, in addition to that, however, we have directed our patrol teams that when they have available time to provide extra patrol in the various areas of the green Belt so that we can be more accessible to the public, answer any questions that they might have, but also be additional eyes and ears, and provide a sense of safety and security to the people who are using the green belt right now.

PRENTICE: Quick question on the shift of some of the resources, the extra resources. Is it a temporary shift.

BROOKS: At this time? It is, but it's also based on calls for service. So, you know, our patrol officers are responding to calls for service. That's their primary responsibility. But we're asking them to, when they have available time downtime where they're not handling calls for service, to just take those extra few minutes to go out there and make themselves present in those areas. And so that happens throughout an officer's career, and it's not uncommon for officers to do that on a regular basis anyway. We're just asking for more of that in the near future.

PRENTICE: These can be trying times, certainly for the general public. I also want to acknowledge that indeed these are these can be trying times for police officers. As if we didn't already expect so much for Boise police that we lean on law enforcement. Even more things can become hyper charged. Social media erupts. Every other person is an amateur detective with their own interpretations of the law. Is it fair to say that you keep a pretty close pulse of your officers and how they're doing in these times?

BROOKS: Very much so. You know, the the wellness component, I think, not only from the standpoint of our profession in general, but really the Boise Police Department has taken a strong interest in the wellness of all of our employees, not just our police officers, but our professional staff as well. But we recognize that, you know, there is a lot of trauma and sometimes vicarious trauma that occurs through dealing with a lot of the incidents that occur within our community, you know, seeing people sometimes at their absolute worst, but many times also seeing people at their absolute best. But we recognize that we have to take care of our people so that they can be better equipped to take care of our community.

PRENTICE: What we did not expect was a political element to this. This week, there was a press release issued by two members of the Idaho legislature who insisted that the fatal stabbing, the July 6th stabbing on the Green Belt may have been prevented. In their words, if Boise Police had better enforced Idaho's Anti-camping law to that. Do you have any comment?

BROOKS: I'm not going to speak to talking points that are made by our elected officials or get political in any way. My focus is really representing the dedicated men and women of the Boise Police Department who are committed to protecting our community, and we will continue doing that with everything in our power to keep Boise a safe place to live, work and raise a family.

PRENTICE: One last question. If we see something suspicious. What's the most effective way to alert BPD? Wave someone down. Call. Text. What's. What's most effective?

BROOKS: Well, if they see an officer out on the green belt or one of the green belt ambassadors obviously flagg them down. If it's something concerning or suspicious, we ask that they contact our non-emergency dispatch line. And if it is something that's dangerous or an emergency, please call 911.

PRENTICE: Excellent. Tammany Brooks is the deputy chief of police for the City of Boise and for what you do every day. Thank you. And thanks so much for giving me some time this morning.

BROOKS: Absolutely. Thank you very much for having me.