

MIDDLETOWN

Remembering Officer Chris Jones

Shuttle service will be provided to take mourners to the route of the horse-drawn caisson and the fallen officer's viewing today.

STAFF REPORTS

Want to pay tribute to fallen Middletown Officer Chris Jones? Police want that, too. That's why they'll have a shuttle bus, and plenty of police officers at strategic locations throughout Middletown and Pennel today to deal with what they expect will be a very large crowd.

Jones died last week after being pinned beneath his police cruiser during a crash in the northbound lanes of the Route 1 Superhighway near the I-95 interchange.

A public viewing is planned from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. today at Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church off Bellevue Avenue in Pennel.

Warminster Lt. James Donnelly was in charge of setting up the route in which the officer's body will be taken via a horsedrawn caisson to the church and said if you don't need to be in and around Pennel today, please stay away.

"We want everyone to have a chance to mourn the officer, but please use common sense and pay attention to the police officers and fire police at various checkpoints throughout the caisson route.

Tracy Giambone, 28, of Northeast Philadelphia is a coworker and friend of Jones' wife, Suzanne. She said she and at least 50 people she knows plan on attending the viewing.

"Suzanne has been so incredible, and her family has been so amazing and friendly and we're there to support her," Giambone said. "Chris was fun loving and just cared about so many people."

Those living on affected streets along the route can get to and from their homes provided they show an officer a valid driver's license with their address, Donnelly said.

"It may take awhile, but we should be able to get those folks to and from their homes, but we ask if homeowners do not have to travel by vehicle Wednesday afternoon, to stay home," he said.

HORSE-DRAWN CAISSON ROUTE

The caisson will begin its journey at 1:30 p.m. from James J. Dougherty Funeral Home, 2200 Trenton Road in Middletown, head south on Trenton Road, pause at Herbert Hoover Elementary School, where his youngest child attends, and take a right turn on Bellevue Avenue in Hulmeville. The caisson then will head west on Bellevue Avenue to Woodland Avenue, and travel north to Durham Road, Donnelly said.

Once on Durham Road, the caisson heads west to south Business Route 1 (Lincoln Highway) and then east on Bellevue Avenue, where it will stop in front of Our Lady of Grace Church.

To help with traffic and parking, Donnelly suggests parking at the University of Phoenix, which has a large parking lot at Lincoln Highway and Veterans Highway. A shuttle service will take mourners to the caisson route, he said. Donnelly said parking also will be available at Our Lady of Grace Catholic School and District Judge Daniel Baranoski's court on Centre Street.

The following intersections will be closed in Pennel during the viewing today, according to Pennel police:

Bellevue Avenue at Lincoln Highway, Hulmeville, Joyce and DeHaven avenues

Woodland Avenue at Centre Street and Madison Avenue

Monroe and Durham avenues

Crescent Avenue at Lincoln Avenue and Centre Street

Additionally, Our Lady of Grace Catholic School off Hulmeville Avenue will close at 11:30 a.m. today and Pennel borough hall will close at noon.

All streets in the vicinity of Our Lady of Grace Church and borough hall will be closed at 3 p.m. today and "No Parking" will be enforced from noon to midnight today, police said.

FUNERAL SET FOR THURSDAY

Officer Jones' body will be taken before dawn Thursday morning from Our Lady of Grace to

the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul in Philadelphia.

A viewing at the basilica is scheduled to begin at 7:30 a.m. and last until 11 a.m. A funeral Mass will follow at noon.

Jones, a 1989 Bensalem graduate, will be buried at Resurrection Cemetery in the township following the Mass in Philadelphia.

Bensalem schools will close early on a staggered basis Thursday because of scheduled road closures in the afternoon for the funeral procession, officials said Tuesday.

Bensalem High School students will be dismissed at 11 a.m., middle school at 11:45 a.m. and elementary school kids at 12:30 p.m., a district spokeswoman said.

Morning kindergarten students will be dismissed at 12:30 p.m. The kids are asked to either bring a packed lunch or \$2.50 to purchase a midday meal, the spokeswoman said.

Afternoon kindergarten is canceled Thursday, as is the district's twilight school and all afternoon activities, she said. Evening activities will take place as scheduled.

More information about early dismissal is posted on the district's Web site, .

St. Ephrem Catholic School, located across from the cemetery, will dismiss students at 11:45 a.m.

BENEFITS PLANNED FOR JONES FAMILY

Following Jones' burial, Philadelphia's Fraternal Order of Police will hold a fundraiser at its lodge at Broad and Spring Garden streets from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. The price is \$15 at the door. All proceeds go to Jones' family.

Another benefit is being organized for Feb. 20 at King's Caterers on New Falls Road in Middletown. Police are trying to gather door prizes and are asking anyone interested in participating or donating to contact them at 215-750-3866.

Staff writers Matt Coughlin, Joan Hellyer, George Mattar and Ben Finley contributed to this report. They can be reached at .



Officer Chris Jones



