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The mayor says regional policing is the "wave of the future." Few reasonable people can argue with that. With the exception of Victory Gardens, 38 of the 39 Morris County towns have their own police departments. Irrespective of size, all departments have a chief and other top brass making six-figure salaries, or at least close to it. As it is now, Mount Arlington and some of the county's other smaller departments are not 24-hour a day operations. Call the Mount Arlington police number at night or on a weekend, and the phone is answered by a dispatcher employed by the Morris County Sheriff's Office. This small example of regionalization has been around for years. Ondish is merely talking about the next, logical step.

There is nothing logical, however, in eliminating a town police department. Opponents argue that eliminating police robs a town of both identity and safety. Employment is another issue.

"I have a lot of friends on the force, and I don't want them to lose their jobs," says Dave Rubenstein, who designed the web site dedicated to saving the Mount Arlington force. Rubenstein says he understands a need to cut costs, but that the borough should look elsewhere.

On the site, Rubenstein, writes, "I think town identity is defined by the beliefs of its residents, school system, police force, etc. Unlike elected officials, the police officers often remain in the same town for the duration of their careers. I believe Mt. Arlington will lose a large part of its town identity if we disband our police department in lieu of a shared service agreement with another town."

And this is only the beginning. Rubenstein, who grew up in Mount Arlington, but now lives in Roxbury, plans a fundraising drive to help police supporters fund whatever campaign they'll need. He said he plans to sell baseball caps and T-Shirts urging that the public support saving the borough's police force.

Ondish understands.

"We've got a great department; they do a great job," he said. "I know it feels like a kick in the teeth to them to see this, but what choice do we have?"

## Don't get rid of Mt. Arlington's own cops

A smiling photo of a friendly neighborhood police officer waving from a squad car greets visitors to [savemapd.com](http://savemapd.com), a Web site put together by a supporter of the Mount Arlington Police Department.

The smiling man is Lt. Keith

Licata, and he says on the site that he has all the confidence in the world that the drive to save the Mount

### Morris Politics



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Arlington police force will be successful.

The police department's future is unknown. The borough council has commissioned a study to examine whether the borough should abolish its police force and contract with a neighboring town — Roxbury and Jefferson are likely candidates — for coverage.

Mayor Art Ondish, who doesn't mind treading in dangerous waters, says the borough's 13-member police force costs an estimated \$1.1 million a year, about a quarter of the municipal budget.