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Homewood police pull over driver with surprise results: a gift card

By **ERIC CRUMP**
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Jackie Harding, a registered nurse, was on her way home from work at a local hospital on April 26 when she was pulled over by a Homewood police officer. One of her headlights was out.

If she was annoyed, her mood soon changed.

"Instead of this officer giving me a ticket for the traffic stop, he gave me an Advance Auto gift card in the amount of \$25, said 'Nurses rock,'" she posted that night on Facebook. "My heart is filled. This is so awesome to see them doing something good in the neighborhoods!"

Harding was a beneficiary of a program sponsored by Advance Auto Parts in partnership with the police department. When the company held its grand opening in March at its Homewood location, 18026 Halsted Street, store manager Mandy Lewis and district manager Dean-

na Layne provided HPD with 60 of the \$25 gift cards, according to Police Chief Denise McGrath.

Layne said at the time that the company had provided gift cards at locations in other states, but Homewood is the first community in Illinois to benefit.

McGrath said the response had been all positive.

"It helps us build a partnership with a new business in town. It helps us connect with the community. To me it's a win-win for everybody," the chief said.

Motorists certainly prefer a little help with minor vehicle repairs over a ticket for an infraction.

McGrath said she does not expect the program to continue, but officers will turn to new community engagement projects.

The department staff regularly does charitable work and has raised money for the Cancer Support Center, Special Olympics and other local causes.

Indoor shovel of fun



Eric Crump/H-F Chronicle

Kennedy Etienne, 2, of Homewood, shovels sand during the Homewood Public Works Open House on Saturday, May 21. The threat of rain forced the event into the cavernous public works garage where staff set up many of the same activities that typically take place outdoors, including lift bucket rides, the sand pile and a chance to climb into the cabs of trucks, backhoes and other equipment.

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