



Mayor John Bell, state Sen. Bruce Tarr and Police Chief James Marr chat after the dedication of the billboard against domestic violence Saturday.

Bart A. Piscitello photos

Sign of the times on Cape Ann

• New billboard shows where local men stand on domestic violence

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Bruce Tarr, Mayor John Bell and City Councilor Sefatia Romeo all stressed how Gloucester was out in front, taking a different type of step toward ending domestic violence.

Rather than treating domestic violence as a women's issue, Gloucester has acknowledged it is a community issue that needs the support and involvement of men to end it.

"We need to take this issue seriously," said Willie Greenbaum who organized Gloucester Men Against Domestic Abuse several years ago and has been pushing the message hard ever since.

"We need to talk about it and the difference is men and women are starting to talk

about it."

And those on the front line of fighting domestic violence agree.

"I think this sign sends a strong message that men are in support of stopping domestic violence against women," said Police Chief James Marr. "It's another healthy message."

Police Lt. Joseph Aiello agreed the sign was an important show of support from the community, particularly for Lt. Michael McLeod and Sgts. Michael Crippen and Cathy Auld who were repeatedly mentioned for their years of work in fighting and preventing domestic violence.

"The sign raises awareness and you need to do that with any problem," said Aiello. "It takes a whole village to raise a child."

Many who spoke described the impor-

tance of changing the message adults send to younger men about how to treat women and children.

Gloucester High Football Coach Terry Silva who has had decades of experience dealing with young men described how the sign reinforces a message he's been delivering for years — character counts.

"You need to treat people the way you want to be treated," Silva said. "It all boils down to character. I've been in a lot of super bowls but I am most proud of the character of the players. We are a special school, a special city. We are a very proud people. I totally supported this message 21 years ago when I started, and I support it now."

Special guest Jeff O'Brien of the Mentors in Violence Prevention, a group based at

Northeastern University described how men often grow up with confused messages about what it means to be a man.

O'Brien travels the country working with different sports teams on issues of violence and men's attitudes toward fighting and abuse.

O'Brien said the sign sends a message about the types of behavior that will and will not be tolerated from men and he praised Gloucester for taking a big step in changing the way society looks at the issues of manhood and violence.

"This is a unique situation and something I'll talk about as I travel around the country," said O'Brien referring to the billboard. "I'll tell everyone, 'You should see what they're doing in Gloucester.'"