By Chris Lee

Holyoke Police Department is now back to a full staff with the addition of a fourth officer, Larry Drake.

Drake joins the force after spending 12 years in Aurora as a full-time farrier (horseshoer). He owned his own business where he specialized in lameness and therapeutic shoeing.

Drake grew up in “the high country” in Nederland.

In 2010, Drake was asked by a good friend of his, who was running for sheriff of Gilpin County, to become a deputy for the sheriff’s office should he win the election. Drake said his friend lost the race by two percent so he was thrown out into the regular field of law enforcement.

“I knew I wanted a smaller community to be a police officer in,” Drake said. His wife, Dorothy, attended school at Northeastern Junior College in Sterling so she was familiar with the area and encouraged her husband to apply for the opening in Holyoke.

Drake graduated from the police academy at Community College of Aurora in June 2011 and has been actively searching for a job since. He began in Holyoke last Thursday, March 1.

“So far I love it,” the officer said of his new home. He is really looking forward to the community interaction portion of the job.

Drake and his wife have two daughters, Michalla, 14 and Anastasia, 7. Drake felt it would be

unfair to take the girls out of school with only a few months left so they will remain in Aurora until school is out and will move to Holyoke this summer with their mother.

In his free time, Drake enjoys cycling. He has completed such events as RAGBRAI in Iowa and Ride the Rockies.

Police Chief Doug Bergstrom said it's nice to be back to a staff of four. It's been nearly a year since the department was at full staff.

"He (Larry) is going to be a good addition to the police department," Bergstrom said.

Drake and the other newly hired officer, Dwight Thompson, will be at Community Night Monday, March 12 to meet community members.

Holyoke Enterprise March 8, 2012