

Quarterly Report of the HIGHLANDS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INTEGRITY QUALITY SERVICE PROFESSIONALISM

Sheriff Susan Benton



July 1-September 30, 2015

VISION

Our vision is a safer Highlands County where citizens and law enforcement are joined together; the rights of all persons are respected; and community values are reflected.

MISSION

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office is committed to protecting life, property, and individual rights while maintaining peace and order.

Goal 1:

Create safer neighborhoods by reducing criminal activity and conditions that foster crime and fear within the community.

Goal 2:

Enhance vehicular and pedestrian safety of Highlands County roadways through education and enforcement.

Goal 3:

Assure accountability by effective and efficient use of personnel, equipment, and technology.

Goal 4:

Provide a professional work environment that attracts and retains a diverse group of quality applicants, rewards employee excellence, and promotes leadership through education and training.

Goal 5:

Assure effective Judicial and Detention processes and services.

Florida Sheriffs' Association Scholarship Winner Announced



Kasey Starling accepts the 2015 Florida Sheriffs' Association Scholarship from Sheriff Susan Benton

Highlands County Sheriff Susan Benton is proud to announce that Highlands County resident Kasey Starling was selected to receive a \$1000 college scholarship from the Florida Sheriff's Association. One of 10 scholarships available statewide, Ms. Starling, 18 years of age, recently graduated with honors from Avon Park High School with a 4.8 grade point average. She is pursuing a career in criminal justice, enrolling at South Florida State College this fall.

Ms. Starling's father, Lieutenant Keith Starling, has been a member of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office for 25 years. When asked by Sheriff Benton what got her interested in the criminal justice field, Kasey responded, "I am always excited for new adventures and am looking forward to helping others in somewhat of a different way. I want to help others feel safe like I do when my dad is working. When he's on the street, I know I'm safe. I want others to have that same feeling." Responding to this comment, Lieutenant Starling said, "She doesn't have to be out working midnight shift to be helping people in the law enforcement field."

Sheriff Benton was excited to know that Kasey will be pursuing her criminal justice

aspirations right here in Highlands County. "It's great that our young people can get a four year degree in criminal justice now, just up the road at South Florida State College. They don't have to go away in order to meet their educational goals anymore."

Beginning in 8th grade and throughout high school, Kasey Starling has been active in Future Farmers of America, (FFA), showing hogs and more recently heifers. She has been successful in these endeavors, saving all her winnings toward college expenses. Dad Starling was thankful for the FFA experience. "The challenge of raising an animal is just one more aspect to learning responsibility. When they have to tend to the animal twice a day, feeding, grooming, and then showing these animals on weekends throughout the state; it's a huge commitment."

When asked what led her to choose criminal justice, Kasey said she originally was tending towards the medical profession and possibly veterinary school having had experience with animals growing up. "When dad explained the wide array of positions associated with criminal justice, not just patrolling the streets, I began to see how broad this field is and how there were many ways to be involved that were not part of uniform patrol. This is when I decided to pursue criminal justice with an eye toward forensics or possibly profiling or crime scene."

Sheriff Benton thanked the Florida Sheriff's Association for their foresight to invest in our youth by providing them with opportunities to pursue criminal justice degrees that they would otherwise not be able to afford. Additionally, Sheriff wished Kasey the best of success in her new endeavor and looks forward to tracking her progress and providing her a working laboratory toward her goals.

Congratulations Kasey Starling!

2015 SWFL Region VI SWAT Challenge September 12, 2015



Sgt. Mike Brod, Sgt. Mike Delaney, Sheriff Susan Benton, Sgt. Chris Gunter, Capt. Jeff Barfield

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team participated in this year's Region VI SWAT Challenge. There were a total of nine teams from various locations throughout Central and South West Florida. The Highlands County team consisted of the following eight members:

- Lt. Jack Bailey
- Sgt. David Stewart (Sniper)
- Sgt. Christopher Gunter
- Sgt. Michael Brod
- Sgt. Michael Delaney
- Det. Alfredo Campos
- D/S Ernest Gelinias (Sniper)
- D/S Calvin "Wayne" Gunn

The challenge consisted of five events that required five team members to participate. Each event was designed to test the team's accuracy, physical, and mental prowess. Highlands County SWAT placed in each event as follows:

- 2nd Place
- 7th Place
- 8th Place (equip. malfunction)
- 3rd Place
- 6th Place

The fifth and final event was a three mile run negotiating water, mud, and barrier obstacles as well as physical challenges.

Highlands County SWAT finished 5th place overall and received a trophy and prize pack worth \$1500 in equipment and gift certificates. Sgt. Dave Stewart was the most outstanding member for the Highlands County Team. As the team's sniper, Sgt. Stewart hit all of his designated targets.

Next year Sheriff Benton has agreed to host the 14th Annual Region VI SWAT Challenge. The planning stages have already begun for what promises to be an exciting event.

Florida Sheriffs' Association Legislative Champion Award



Chief Deputy Mark Schrader, Senator Denise Grimsley, Sheriff Susan Benton and D/S Brian Giguere

Each year the Florida Sheriffs' Association recognizes state legislators who have made significant contributions to criminal justice and public safety through their leadership. During the 2015 legislative session, there were a number of key legislators the Sheriffs counted on to ensure a successful session. Sheriff Susan Benton, on behalf of the Florida Sheriffs' Association, presented Senator Denise Grimsley with the 2015 Legislative Champion Award at a ceremony held at the Highlands County Sheriff's Office on August 18th. For the second year in a row, Senator Denise Grimsley sponsored a FSA priority that creates efficiencies for sheriffs' deputies all over Florida. SB 528 affords deputies the ability to notarize work-related documents electronically, saving time and resources. Senator Grimsley also spoke out in the committee and protected Florida's strong asset forfeiture laws.

Senator Grimsley said, "I am proud to stand with our state's law enforcement community and the agencies working daily to provide professional, community oriented policing. We can be proud of the work they do, the sacrifices they make and the safety they ensure."

The Florida Sheriffs' Association has identified Florida legislators who gave critical support to Florida's Sheriff's for bills we supported, as well as who worked through bills of concern and helped us to defeat the bills that were just not good for

Florida. "Senator Grimsley is the most responsible legislator I have ever had the privilege to work with," said Sheriff Susan Benton, "She doesn't make decisions lightly; she studies the issues and seeks input from those with knowledge and those who will be impacted by the action. Senator Grimsley is the real deal, what a legislator should be all about, the people of the State of Florida and not special interests or herself. I am proud to present this Legislative Champion Award on behalf of the Sheriffs of Florida!"

Hardee county Sheriff Arnold Lanier, who also attended the presentation, said "I appreciate Senator Grimsley's hard work in Tallahassee, and thank her for the interest she takes with law enforcement issues that are changing every day. It's with this understanding and concern that we in law enforcement can continue to protect and serve the citizens of our communities. We are fortunate to have her as one of our voices."

"The Florida Sheriffs' Association is honored to recognize Senator Grimsley for her tireless work to support Florida's Sheriffs and all law enforcement across the state," said Polk County Sheriff and FSA Past-President Grady Judd. "FSA applauds our partners in the Capitol for their continued support in protecting all Floridians."

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office and the Florida Sheriffs' Association will continue to work with our state representatives and senators on legislation geared toward keeping the state's citizens and visitors safe.



Sheriff Arnold Lanier, Senator Denise Grimsley, Sheriff Susan Benton

Highlands County Sheriff's Office CRIME PREVENTION



Neighborhood Watch News










Welcome back everyone! We've had a nice, hot summer and are ready for the Neighborhood Watch meetings to start up once again. For those groups who continued to meet during the summer months, good news! You're about to have more people in your ranks and some of you who have been carrying the brunt of responsibility this summer can look forward to some much-needed respite. Thank you for your dedication to crime prevention in your neighborhoods!

Please remember to schedule your annual meeting with Crime Prevention Specialist Nell Hays as soon as possible. You can have the meeting whenever you choose, but it's always a good idea to get it on my calendar so she can prepare, and so that your preferred date is not already taken. To retain active status, each Neighborhood Watch group must meet with a representative of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office at least once a year so that contact information can be updated and the "state of the community" can be discussed. Thanks in advance for planning this meeting in advance! To schedule your meeting, call Nell at 863-402-7369 or email her at nhays@highlandssheriff.org.

Halloween Safety Tips

You know it's October when you start to smell that pumpkin spice coffee, see the pumpkin muffins in the store and find announcements for pumpkin patches throughout the county! And of course, at the end of the month—HALLOWEEN! This year Halloween falls on Saturday and fortunately, as far as we have heard, all of the Trick or Treat events will occur on that day. Most neighborhoods will be prepared for goblins from 6PM—9PM. In Lake Placid there is a trick or treat alternative event taking place downtown which should see over 5000 children in attendance, based on last year's turnout.

In preparation for this great adventure, here are some tips so you can enjoy a safe night out:

-  *A responsible adult should accompany children under age 12 when trick or treating.*
-  *Ensure costumes fit well, are flame retardant and never obscure the ability to see or pose a trip hazard.*
-  *Wear reflective clothing or carry a glow stick or flashlight.*
-  *Children age 12 and older who are going without an adult should stay in groups, follow an agreed upon route and watch for cars.*
-  *Teach all children to never enter any home and only approach homes that are well-lit.*
-  *Remind the children to never take shortcuts or go into isolated areas. Teach them to say NO and GET AWAY from any person or situation that makes them feel scared, uncomfortable or confused.*
-  *Let your children know to tell you or a trusted adult about anything that made them feel scared.*



To check for sex offenders or predators in your neighborhood, visit our website, www.highlandssheriff.org and click on the **Offender Watch**® icon on the front page. You can search for offenders in your area from that page, or click on Safety Tips for more information on how to stay safe.



HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

Seniors And Law enforcement Together—S.A.L.T.



Have you heard of S.A.L.T.? It is the public outreach arm of TRIAD which is made up of the National Sheriff's Association, the International Chiefs of Police and the American Association of Retired Persons. Serving citizens in Highlands County for over 20 years, S.A.L.T. holds monthly information forums from October through May on the third Tuesday of each month at 10AM. Locations vary throughout the county to make it easy for citizens to attend. In addition to these meetings, S.A.L.T. participates in a majority of the health fairs that occur in the county presenting a display of crime prevention materials targeted to seniors.

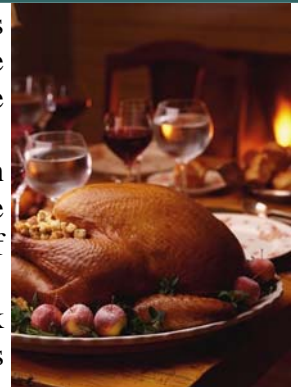
Pictured here is an example of the S.A.L.T. display being tended by Treasurer Peg Pierce. President Larry Pierce is close by as well as Highlands County Sheriff's representative Nell Hays. The Vice-President of S.A.L.T. is Bill Earle and his wife Darlene Earle is the Secretary. All four law enforcement agencies in Highlands County participate in S.A.L.T.—you should too! The first meeting for this year will be held on October 20th at 10:00AM at the Nu Hope Conference Room, US 27 across from the Ag Center in Sebring. The speaker this month will be Lisa Rodriguez, an independent dementia consultant. She will be telling us about the Dementia Friendly Highlands County program which will be coming during the next 12 months. There is no R.S.V.P. necessary however if you would like any additional information please contact Nell Hays at 863-402-7369 or any S.A.L.T. officer. See you there!

Holiday Safety

Of course, right after Halloween comes Thanksgiving, Hanukkah and Christmas holidays. Can you believe it? There are already decorations for sale in the stores! Shopping and travel are two of the things that take up our time during the holidays, and of course, eating! Here are a few tips for safety while you shop:

- Pay attention to where you park your car and try to park in well-lit areas. In shopping malls, make note of a department or display near the door you enter the mall. That way if you become dis-oriented you can simply ask for the location of that department and people will not know you are confused.
- If it is dark, or you feel uncomfortable about walking to your car, ask a store clerk for a security officer to walk you out to your car. They are happy to provide this service, but you do have to request it.
- If shopping with others, always establish a meeting place and time. Exchanging cell phone numbers is also important so if someone doesn't show up as planned, you can attempt to contact them.
- Always keep your purse closed and your wallet secure. Do not leave valuables unattended.
- If you want to drop off packages in your car, put them in the trunk. Then move your car to another parking place in a different area of the mall. Thieves often lurk in parking lots to check for shoppers who drop off packages in their cars. If you move your car, they will think you have gone!

Also holidays are a key time for travel. If travelling by air, be sure to have your picture ID ready. Many airlines offer boarding passes on line which really speeds up the check in process at the airport. Take advantage of these services to make your travel smooth and safe!



1-800-226-TIPS (8477)

HOTLINE

Webtips

Submit a tip On-Line



QUARTERLY INFORMATION—ADMINISTRATION & COURT

Predators



New Member Hires:		Court Related Services:	
Civilian	2	Cases In Court	7,039
Sworn	6	Inmates Taken to Court	1,029
PT Sworn	0	Arrests by Bailiffs	68
Applications Received	46	Persons thru Security Station	30,067
Applications Processed	41	Judicial/Civil Process Services:	
Payroll Transactions Processed	1,978	Received/Processed	1,989
Payable Checks Processed	467	Served	1,778
P-Card Purchases	685	Active	211
Citizens Fingerprinted	249		
Information Services Requests	840		

Online predators do not fit any one mold or stereotype, seemingly up-standing citizens have been caught enticing children for sexual acts.

Grooming

Predators take advantage of children's natural vulnerabilities, such as their desire to appear adult or their need for attention. "Grooming" is the process through which predators play on these vulnerabilities by offering children gifts and attention.

It does not happen overnight. Grooming can be a long process that a patient, tenacious predator has planned and perfected to gain a child's trust. This grooming may lead to the child's willingness to meet the person with whom he or she is chatting. Offenders will often entice a child into a face-to-face meeting by:

- Exploiting a child's natural curiosity about sex
- Lowering the child's inhibitions by gradually introducing explicit images and child sex abuse images
- Using his or her adult status to influence and control a child's behavior
- Offering attention and affection
- Betraying a child's trust by manipulating his or her emotions and insecurities

Guarding Against Predators

Children who experience online victimization may not share personal details with their parent or guardian right away, but there are warning signs that can help identify a child who has faced a situation of online victimization. Parents and guardians should keep in mind that not all children are being groomed by older predators; children may have sexual encounters with peers and older teens. However, any adult seeking a sexual encounter with a minor is considered a predator. If a child comes to you with a disclosure of exploitation, reassure him or her that talking to an adult is the right action to take and divert any blame away from the victim.

Warning Signs of Grooming or Exploitation in your Child

- Spends an excessive amount of time on the computer
- Becomes angry when he or she cannot get on the computer
- Withdraws from family and friends
- Minimizes the screen or turns off the monitor when you come into the room
- Inappropriate images or websites on the computer
- Strange phone numbers on your telephone bill
- Gifts in the mail from someone you don't know, such as webcams or cell phones.....www.netsmartz.org

QUARTERLY INFORMATION—LAW ENFORCEMENT

Administrative Calls	52,521	Items into Evidence	2,703
911 Calls	13,071	Evidence Items Disposed	2,130
Computer Aided Dispatch	33,546	Crime Scene Lab Cases	179
HCSO (60%)	20,253	Crime Scene Call Outs	66
SPD (15%)	4,879	Criminal Investigation Unit Cases	185
LPPD (7%)	2,338	Investigations Open (Total)	81
FIRE (7%)	2,253	SOU Cases	57
EMS (11%)	3,823	SOU Narcotics Arrests	34
Offense Reports	2,447	CST Arrests	88
Traffic Citations Issued	954	SVU Cases Received from DCF	338
K-9 Searches	180	SVU Cases Open	46
Warrant Numbers:		Business Security Surveys/residential	0/0
Received/Processed	563	Neighborhood Watch Presentations	28
Served	493	Crime Victims Served	153
Active	2,739	Victim Advocate Services	676
Number of Arrests By Patrol	726		
Number of DUI's	13		

Inmates Booked into Jail	923	Average Daily Population	384
Inmates Released from Jail	870	Net Commissary Earnings	\$13,018
Instructional Program Hours	1,447	Medical Fees Charged	\$195,509
Inmate Transport Miles	30,971	Medical Fees Collected	\$4,192
Transports to State Prison	69	Subsistence Fees Charged	\$47,616
ICE Picked Up	1	Subsistence Fees Collected	\$8,502.89
Detainer's Placed	1	Inmate Per-Diem Charged	\$5,560
CMP Participants	16	Inmate Per-Diem Collected	\$2,407.53
Dollars Saved in Labor	\$20,608	Labor Hours by Inmates S/O	21,775
Dollars Collected in Fees	\$1,600	Labor Hours by Inmates -Other	2,206
Inmate Meals Served	102,235	Dollars Saved in Labor	\$192,987
Avg Food Cost per Day Per Inmate	\$2.03		
Alcohol Breath Tests	28		

Florida Sheriffs' Youth Ranches Summer Camp

Fifty-one campers and two Leaders-in-Training returned on August 7th from attending the Florida Sheriffs' Youth Camp Caruth. This is a special opportunity for these young people as they have a chance to participate in canoeing, bike riding, group activities, and in general enjoying the outdoors while making new friends! Campers left August 2nd from the Highlands County Sheriff's Office in downtown Sebring with a law enforcement escort provided by the D.A.R.E. and school resource officers who accompanied the kids to camp.

Highlands County Sheriff's Office School Resource Sgt. Mike Brod attended the camp along with his daughter. He said, "This is the greatest group of School Resource Officers we've ever had! We had a fabulous time with the kids at camp." School Resource Deputy Ross Porter echoed the Sergeant's sentiments saying, "The kids did great and really enjoyed themselves. Yes the weather wasn't the greatest and the grounds were really wet but they had fun. Especially the last two days when the weather cleared, they had a great time."

Sheriff Susan Benton was also on hand to welcome the kids back from camp. "We are so glad to be able to do this for our young people each year, through the generous

donations of folks to the Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranches. They always come home really worn out but happy for their experiences at camp," she said. "We hope to be able to continue to provide this opportunity each year for the youth of Highlands County. I also want to thank the School Resource Officers from the Sheriff's Office and Sebring Police Department for taking their time to go to camp with the kids and interact with them throughout the week. They are a very special group of law enforcement officers."



2015 Summer Campers



HIGHLANDS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Susan Benton, Sheriff

434 FERNLEAF AVENUE
SEBRING, FL 33870
OFFICE: (863) 402-7200

For tips on how to keep our kids safe see the Florida Sheriffs Association Child Safety Page
@ www.flsheriffs.org/child-safety