

Quarterly Report of the HIGHLANDS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INTEGRITY QUALITY SERVICE PROFESSIONALISM

Sheriff Susan Benton



October-December 31, 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.

Citizen On-Line Reporting



The Citizen's On-Line Reporting option is currently up and running. As of Wednesday, December 9, 2015, citizens who want to report lost property, criminal mischief or vandalism, petit theft, harassing phone calls or identity theft can do so on-line. The system is being provided by Sheriff Benton as a convenience to Highlands County residents for these select group of offenses. Instead of waiting for a deputy to respond, now victims can make their own report and submit it to the Sheriff's Office right from their home computer. To make a report go to (www.highlandssheriff.org). To get into the reporting option, simply click on "CITIZEN ON-LINE REPORTING" and work through the screens. Once all the information is entered, the report is submitted to the Sheriff's Office by simply clicking on the "Submit Report" button. At that time a deputy at the main office will review the information and determine whether the report will be assigned an offense number, require additional follow up or simply an incident number.

Christmas Dinner

Under the generous direction of Major Booker Johnson, his wife Shirley, Mr. Larry Shoeman of the Avon Park Housing Authority and the Olympic Restaurant, deputies served meals on Christmas Day to many residents in the Avon Park area. More than 200 meals were delivered to folks who would have otherwise been without dinner on Christmas Day. Deputies from both Law Enforcement and Detention participated in this special delivery!



North District Deputies Ready Delivery



Detention Deputies Visit Home Bound



Major Johnson and Crew Provide Pizza Party to Family When Food Ran Out

**1st Annual Lake Placid Cheer
Booster Flag Football
Tournament**



Flag Football Team

On November 07, 2015, members of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office participated in the 1st Annual Lake Placid Cheer Booster Flag Football Tournament. This event was to Honor Alex Barajas, Dragon Football player #24, in which portions of proceeds went to benefit the Alex Barajas Foundation. Detective Jason Mulligan organized the team with each member contributing a \$10.00 entry fee. The Sheriff's Office team consisted of Detective Mike Parker (Co-Captain), Detective Jody Stowers, Detective Jason Mulligan (Team Captain), D/D Lazama, Lt. "KJ" Johnson (Quarterback), Detective Kevin Gentry, D/S Neal, D/S Marley, Jeremiah Mulligan (Det. Mulligan's son/Team Manager) who won the Tournament and went un-defeated throughout the event. Congratulations to these HCSO members and way to represent the Highlands Count Sheriff's Office.



Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Workshop

On Thursday, December 3, 2015, members of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) met with Highlands County Sheriff Susan Benton and other local law enforcement officials to discuss enhancing Florida's ability to monitor and track sexual offenders and predators. Historically, Florida's Sexual Offender Predator Registry has served as a general repository of registration related information that is accessible by both the public and criminal justice officials. The primary goal of this meeting, and others being held throughout the state, is to begin to bridge the gap between the management of registrant information and the monitoring of sexual offenders and predators that occurs in the field. In 1997, with the implementation of the Public Safety Information Act, Florida became the first state to provide an online registry that allowed the public to identify sexual offenders and predators living in their neighborhood. Since that time, Florida has continued to lead the nation in legislating strong sexual offender registration and monitoring laws. Effective implementation of these laws has come about through the dedicated efforts of criminal justice partners across the state. As registration laws at the state and federal level have changed, so too have the responsibilities of local law enforcement, particularly those of the Sheriff's Offices. Florida's Sheriff's Offices are not only tasked with registering sexual offenders and predators. Additional duties include physically verifying addresses and registration information, monitoring the movement of registrants within their county, notifying community members of registrant relocations, enforcing the registration laws, and managing the information provided by registrants so that it can be made available to the public in a timely manner. With a total registration population of over 68,000, enhancements are needed to the state registry system to better facilitate the work of local law enforcement. FDLE is currently reaching out to local law enforcement agencies in each of the seven state regions through a series of eighteen meetings. Through these meetings FDLE is striving to identify and evaluate the recommendations of local agencies so that future updates and changes to the state registry system address specific needs of field personnel while continuing to offer enhanced levels of service to Florida residents.

Of primary concern is developing a proposal for the State Legislature that lays out the functional requirements for creating and maintaining a database of registration information that incorporates both public dissemination features as well as an enhanced data management component for law enforcement officials. As these meetings occur throughout the state, a comprehensive list of best practices and procedures will be put together to allow for the determination of which capabilities can be provided by FDLE's registry system and which components may be



better served by seeking assistance from outside vendors. FDLE hopes to find more cost effective and efficient methods to support the day to day work of local law enforcement officials and significantly reduce the amount of time it takes for officials to manage sexual offender and predator information. Meeting attendees were encouraged to discuss recommended enhancements to the registry system that would better allow for the effective management of the ever-growing offender population. All suggestions were well received by FDLE. Meeting participants particularly focused on how FDLE could take advantage of new technology that was unheard of when the registry was first developed in 1997 to better facilitate the duties of local law enforcement officials. FDLE Special Agent in Charge Donna Uzzell made special mention of Highlands County Sheriff Susan Benton for being so passionate about sexual offender and predator issues. Sheriff Benton has indeed been a driving force for registration and monitoring enhancements in the past. Through Sheriff Benton's support, the leadership of other agency heads throughout the state, and FDLE's continued partnership with local officials Florida will forever remain a leader in the field of offender registration.

Highlands County Sheriff's Office CRIME PREVENTION



Neighborhood Watch Groups Growing!



Venus residents unite for Neighborhood Watch

Having seen an increase in suspicious people and incidents, residents of the Venus Florida area recently contacted Crime Prevention Specialist Nell Hays about setting up a Neighborhood Watch

in their area. Beginning in late September, Diana Feo and Bob Bohanon, both Henry Drive residents, organized the series of three meetings to complete their Neighborhood Watch Group status. Due to the rural nature of this group, Agriculture Deputy Fred Tagtmeier stepped in and conducted the second training sessions along with a representative from the Florida Wildlife Commission. In addition, Environmental Deputy Donovan Cooper chimed in with information via email on how to report illegal dumping in the area. On November 10th the third meeting was held and official Neighborhood Watch status was granted to the group.



David Wood, Dianna and Tony Feo and Bob and Niki Bohanon receive one of the new Neighborhood Watch signs given to the Venus area upon completion of their Neighborhood Watch organizational meetings.

Spring Lake Neighborhood Watch Participates in Picnic



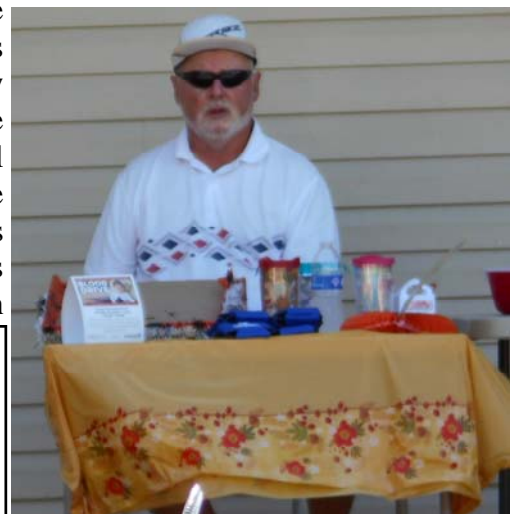
Spring Lake Neighborhood Watch Captains (from left) Pat David and Charlie Kerr join Chairperson Mary Kestner at the Spring Lake Community Picnic on November 7th.

Members of the Spring Lake Neighborhood Watch group participated recently in the Spring Lake Community Picnic held November 7th. Chairperson Mary Kestner and block captains Pat David (left) and Charlie Kerr take a moment from the festivities to pose for the picture at left.

Children and adults alike attended this community event which is held each year at Spring Lake. Vendors selling everything from cotton candy to crafts and displays of public safety entities as well as other non-profit groups kept everyone entertained throughout the day. Let's not forget the fabulous food too! Hot dogs, beans, cole slaw and oh those cookies!! Everyone seemed to be having a great time all the while learning more and more about their neighbors in this sprawling community in Highlands

County. Spring Lake features 10 Villages, each of which have their own Neighborhood Watch Block Captain. These people work closely with Chairperson Mary to keep up with the activities in the community.

Past Neighborhood Watch Chairman Michael Smith takes a turn selling tickets for the many prizes given away at the Spring Lake Community picnic.



Sebring Lakes Neighborhood Watch

Residents of the Sebring Lakes Neighborhood met on Saturday, November 7th for their annual Neighborhood Watch meeting. Bringing their own chairs, residents enjoyed a great afternoon of Florida weather while they discussed activities in the area. Fortunately there had been few incidents over the past 12 months with the exception of numerous four wheeler complaints. Chairperson Connie Burton has widened the scope of this Neighborhood Watch group which now includes people living in the eastern section of the subdivision. Connie welcomed the new members and encouraged people to be sure to call in any suspicious vehicles, persons or activity that they observe. Thanks to the citizens of Sebring Lakes for all you do!



Orangewood Acres Neighborhood Watch



On November 17th Orangewood Acres held their annual Neighborhood Watch meeting at their clubhouse. Approximately 30 residents were in attendance at the meeting where they were happy to hear that no property crimes had been reported in this subdivision during the past year. CPS Nell Hays applauded the attendees for their dedication to Neighborhood Watch however the group is looking for a new chairperson. Previous chairperson Steve Daggett is looking for someone to take over the chairperson responsibilities but he has agreed to stay on until a replacement can be found and trained. Anyone interested in this position is requested to contact Steve.



S.A.L.T. Widens Scope of Membership

Have you heard of S.A.L.T.? No, not the condiment that you put on popcorn! S.A.L.T. is an acronym standing for Seniors And Law enforcement Together. This is a union, formed under the umbrella of TRIAD, that encompasses the senior citizens of a community pledging to work together with the local law enforcement agencies to help reduce crimes against the elderly. TRIAD consists of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), and the National Sheriff's Association (NSA) who agreed in 1998 to work together to reduce criminal victimization and unwarranted fear of crime affecting the older population. These three national organizations agreed that police chiefs, sheriffs, older leaders, and those who work with seniors, working together could devise better ways to reduce crimes against the elderly and enhance law enforcement service to older persons. This, they believe, is true community policing, by providing better service to a population which appreciates, respects and supports the efforts of law enforcement. The goal of the partnership between the Highlands County TRIAD/S.A.L.T. Council, the Highlands County Sheriff's Office, the Avon Park, Sebring and Lake Placid Police Departments, is to continue to provide the very best crime prevention techniques and education for our Seniors. The Highlands County T.R.I.A.D./S.A.L.T. COUNCIL meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month, September through May, at 10:00 A.M. Locations vary. If you are interested in becoming a member or representing your association at these meetings, please contact the Highlands County Sheriff's Office Public Information and Crime Prevention Unit 863-402-7369. Make a difference in Highlands County by working with law enforcement and other seniors to improve the quality of life for the senior citizens in our community!

QUARTERLY INFORMATION—ADMINISTRATION & COURT

Children As Victims



New Member Hires:		Court Related Services:	
Civilian	4	Cases In Court	6,792
Sworn	1	Inmates Taken to Court	843
PT Sworn	0	Arrests by Bailiffs	66
Applications Received	36	Persons thru Security Station	25,869
Applications Processed	38	Judicial/Civil Process Services:	
Payroll Transactions Processed	2,338	Received/Processed	2,099
Payable Checks Processed	565	Served	1,946
P-Card Purchases	684	Active	153
Citizens Fingerprinted	212		
Information Services Requests	679		

In order to help protect children from online sexual predators, it is important that parents and guardians understand how children's vulnerabilities may make them susceptible to manipulation by these predators.

Curiosity

Children are naturally curious about sex. By acting as guides, predators can exploit this curiosity and gradually lure children into sexual activity. Adolescents questioning their sexuality are even more at risk, as they may go online with the intent of finding support and companionship. Instead, they may find adults looking to take advantage of this vulnerability.

Need for Attention

Even if children receive ample attention from their families, they still crave it from others, especially those they perceive as older and more mature. Predators may offer children affection and flattery in order to coerce them into sexual acts.

Rebellion

Children may become rebellious when they reach adolescence, and predators can use this to their advantage. A child who is victimized while disobeying parental rules may be reluctant to admit it for fear of being punished.

QUARTERLY INFORMATION—LAW ENFORCEMENT

Administrative Calls	53,334	Items into Evidence	2,505
911 Calls	13,616	Evidence Items Disposed	2,286
Computer Aided Dispatch	33,873	Crime Scene Lab Cases	49
HCSO (58%)	19,631	Crime Scene Call Outs	88
SPD (16%)	5,371	Criminal Investigation Unit Cases	85
LPPD (7%)	2,527	Investigations Open (Total)	99
FIRE (7%)	2,253	SOU Cases	103
EMS (12%)	4,091	SOU Narcotics Arrests	158
Offense Reports	2,512	CST Arrests	129
Traffic Citations Issued	748	SVU Cases Received from DCF	387
K-9 Searches	189	SVU Cases Open	21
Warrant Numbers:		Business Security Surveys/Residential	2/0
Received/Processed	456	Neighborhood Watch Presentations	37
Served	467	Crime Victims Served	145
Active	1,694	Victim Advocate Services	641
Number of Arrests By Patrol	861		
Number of DUI's	16		

Respect for Adults

Because children are taught to obey and respect adults, they may be less likely to disobey directions given by an adult, even those which make them uncomfortable. An adult looking to harm children can exploit this to influence a child's behavior.

...www.netsmartz.org



Inmates Booked into Jail	954	Average Daily Population	367
Inmates Released from Jail	851	Net Commissary Earnings	\$15,033.22
Instructional Program Hours	1,372	Medical Fees Charged	\$105,989.69
Inmate Transport Miles	24,536	Medical Fees Collected	\$3,444.51
Transports to State Prison	54	Subsistence Fees Charged	\$50,392
ICE Picked Up	2	Subsistence Fees Collected	\$10,950.10
Detainer's Placed	0	Inmate Per-Diem Charged	\$19,460
CMP Participants	12	Inmate Per-Diem Collected	\$9,603.55
Dollars Saved in Labor	\$12,236	Labor Hours by Inmates S/O	17,520
Dollars Collected in Fees	\$950	Labor Hours by Inmates -Other	1,927
Inmate Meals Served	101,433	Dollars Saved in Labor	\$156,548.35
Avg Food Cost per Day Per Inmate	\$1.95		
Alcohol Breath Tests	22		

Florida Leadership Academy Graduation



**Capt. Paul Blackman, Sgt. Michael Brod, Sgt. Michael Morse,
Sgt. Chris Gunter, Major David Paeplov**

Training Complex-Indian River State College. Graduates learned skills necessary to support the needs of their agency and the community as they prepare for future challenges.

The goal of the Florida Leadership Academy is to prepare first-line supervisors in criminal justice organizations to exemplify the character and integrity expected of criminal justice professionals and to examine the various components necessary to being an efficient leader.

The Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute, established within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and affiliated with the State University System, was established in 1990 by the Florida Legislature to address the need for an innovative and multi-faceted approach to the education and training of criminal justice professionals. Major David Paeplov, Capt. Paul Blackman and Capt. Tim Lethbridge attended their graduation.

On December 11, 2015, Sgt. Michael Brod, Sgt. Michael Morse and Sgt. Chris Gunter graduated along with 34 fellow graduates from the Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute's Florida Leadership Academy. The graduates represent criminal justice agencies from across the state and serve in a leadership role within their agency. Graduates met for four weeks at the Indian River - Treasure Coast Public Safety



HIGHLANDS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Susan Benton, Sheriff

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