

Quarterly Report of the HIGHLANDS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INTEGRITY QUALITY SERVICE PROFESSIONALISM



Sheriff Susan Benton

July 2nd Qtr

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.

Sheriff Susan Benton President - Florida Sheriffs Association



Sheriff Susan Benton surrounded by her parents; Jack and Betty Coxe, her sons Kelly and Charles, and sister and brother-in-law Linda and Brock Cooney

The Florida Sheriffs Association recently announced that they have chosen Highlands County Sheriff Susan Benton to be the next President of their organization. Sheriff Benton will be taking the reins from previous President Sheriff Ben Johnson of Volusia County. She will work with the Florida Sheriffs Association staff and Board of Directors as head of this 118 year old non-profit organization and its 67 Sheriffs. Previously Sheriff Benton was chair of the Board of Directors and has held offices of Treasurer, Secretary and most recently, Vice-President.

FSA Executive Director Steve Casey was quoted on the Florida Sheriffs Association website as saying, " Sheriff Benton was selected for this position because of her extensive experience in various roles within law enforcement. She brings nearly 40 years of experience, a highly successful tenure as a leader as well as multiple honors and awards."

Commenting on her new office, Sheriff Benton said "I am humbled to serve as President of such a historic Association. The Florida Sheriffs Association is the oldest law enforcement organization in the state of Florida and the largest in the nation. The FSA serves the Sheriffs of Florida and more than 40,000 of our office members. The Florida Sheriffs collectively provide for the safety and security of the citizens of the great state of Florida. I am proud to be a part of this great history. More information on the Florida Sheriffs Association may be found on their website:

www.flsheriffs.org.

Citizens Academy 2012

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office recently completed its second Citizen's Academy Class. During the ten week time frame the participants enjoyed the chance to tour multiple areas of the Sheriff's Office, to include the jail facility, experience demonstrations by the SWAT Team and K-9 teams and also had the opportunity to shoot multiple firearms and take turns riding and driving in our training vehicles on the track. The ultimate goal is to hold two to three of these classes a year giving the citizens of Highlands County the opportunity to learn and experience firsthand how the Sheriff's Office operates and functions on a daily basis. Class Participants are as follows:

Allen Altvater, III, Rebecca Brownell, Ronnie Carter, Lea Curry, Brenda Gray, Kelli Jackson, Dr. Joni Jones, Colleen Rafatti, Gene Reese, Kris Schmidt

If you or someone you know may be interested in participating in an upcoming Citizen's Academy class please contact Michael Durham at 863-402-7230 or Catie Gunter at 863-402-7374 for more information and to obtain an application.



Citizens Academy Participants
at the Firing Range



FSYR Summer Camp

Twenty five Highlands County kids with our School Resource Deputies returned from summer camp recently. The Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches conducts many sessions of summer camp at each of its two locations, the Youth Camp in Barberville and Caruth Camp in Yanketown. Its purpose is to provide a wholesome atmosphere and positive camping experience for Florida's youth ages 10-15. The camp also provides an opportunity for Deputy Sheriffs and other Law Enforcement volunteers to get personally involved with the youngsters to form positive, healthy relationships. Campers live among their peers, learning how to share and function properly within a group setting. Each youth has job responsibilities. Every day contains a healthy balance between work and play, proving a valuable lesson for maturing youth.

"These kids have a great time; many of them would never have this opportunity if not for the donations made to the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches", says Sheriff Benton. The Youth Ranches are funded solely on donations and our young kids attend this awesome camp at no cost to the families. Throughout the school year school deputies look out for kids who could benefit from this positive experience and work with the parents to complete applications and set up the entire trip. Camp is for five days and our deputies attend with our kids. Camps run throughout the summer and the Youth Ranches assigns the Highlands County week. Go to www.youthranches.org and donate for next year!



AVON PARK POLICE CONSOLIDATION



The contract between the Sheriff and the City of Avon Park has been signed for the Sheriff to provide primary law enforcement services to the City. This simply means that residents of the City will see deputies in green and white patrol vehicles. These changes are taking place incrementally while police personnel are applying to the Sheriff's Office and beginning to train with deputies. There are many elements in the 90-day transition such as the technology, equipment and human resource issues, including the entire comprehensive hiring

process for the Avon Park Officers who apply to the Sheriff's Office. We are ensuring that all transitional matters are taken into consideration to provide for the highest level of efficiency during this timely process. The Sheriff's Office is currently training five officers at a time through the field training program and will hire them when the applications requirement are complete. With this process we hope to have their field training completed before the final formal transition date.

For the city's property tax dollars, the citizens of Avon Park will continue to receive a higher level of service compared to the county. The Avon Park Police Department currently has two patrolmen and a sergeant on duty every shift, twenty-four/seven, we will maintain that level of service, using existing supervision within the Sheriff's Office. We intend to utilize the Avon Park Police Department facility to provide for a north district sub-station which will house the services for the city as well as the northern end of the county. The office will be open to the community 8 - 5 Monday through Friday with members who can assist anyone with public records requests or requests for service. Command supervision will be present and will provide liaison with the City Council and City Manager. We are looking forward to the opportunity to work more closely with the residents within the city limits.

Highlands County Sheriff's Office *CRIME PREVENTION*



National Night Out Reaches New Heights



Seven communities in Highlands County participated in National Night Out this year—a record once again! In all over 650 people attended events at Reflections on Silver Lake, Tanglewood, Oakridge Mobile, Veranda Breeze, Leisure Lakes, Tomoka Heights and Tropical Harbor combined. Each location had a law enforcement cook, Command staff presenters and K-9 deputies to provide entertainment and information.

At Reflections, Major Booker Johnson monitored the cooking while Reflections Activity Director Pam Fifeita and Manager Brenda Richards actually attended to these duties. Major Johnson was joined by Chief Deputy Mark Schrader, Deputy Mike Parker and his K-9 partner Maverick for the presentations. Tanglewood was host to Chief Deputy Schrader and Deputy Dan Danley with his K-9 partner Varick. Lieutenant Darin Hood and Detective



Sergeant Kramer and Lieutenant Hood prepared hot dogs for over 200 people at Tanglewood—our biggest turnout!



Tomoka Heights residents listen intently to Deputy Fort and K-9 Zeus

discussed pertinent issues with residents. At Veranda Breeze this same group of presenters along with chief cook Captain Paul Blackman interacted with residents at this new apartment complex on Youth Care Lane. In the Lake Placid area, a surprising turnout of approximately 60 people from Leisure Lakes enjoyed the cookout at the new firehouse in that community. Chef Sergeant Mike Delaney provided the hot dogs and Lieutenant Sean Casey and Deputy Scott Williams and his K-9 partner Cain informed the group.



Captain Blackman watches as residents enjoy their hot dogs at Veranda Breeze

Also in Lake Placid, Tomoka Heights was host to Captain Bobby Green who cooked the hot dogs and Captain Tim Lethbridge and Deputy Tom Fort and his K-9 partner Zeus. Captain Lethbridge also spoke to approximately 75 people at Tropical Harbor Mobile Home Community along with Deputy Jake Riley and his K-9 partner Wyatt. Captain Jeff Barfield was responsible for the wonderful hot dogs at this location. We would like to thank all the Neighborhood Watch communities that participated in 2012's National Night Out. We are happy to be able to provide this social event and to be able to meet informally with our eyes and ears on the street and thank you for your service throughout the year!

Florida Crime Prevention Association Educational Opportunity

Southern States Crime Prevention Conference Offers Community Track Again This Year



The Florida Crime Prevention Association is excited to announce their 2012 state crime prevention conference; Southern States Crime Prevention Conference. The Conference will be held October 15th– 19th at the Royal Palm Resort at Disney, Lake Buena Vista. Once again the FCPA is inviting members of the community to join the Conference in their own educational track. This three-day community track, running October 17th– 19th, will highlight crime prevention topics of interest to community association presidents, neighborhood watch participants, police volunteers, condominium boards, community and school leaders. This community

conference track will provide tips on how law enforcement and members of your community can work together to help fight crime and how to understand what tools are at your disposal to help safeguard your community. **There are a limited amount of spaces available for citizens interested in attending the community section of the conference. Attendance will be awarded on a first come, first-served basis.** There are two ways to register for this education: **On the Web at www.conference.FloridaCrimePrevention.org or Fax Registration to 772 220-7159 Attn: Laura Passanesi. The cost to attend the conference is only \$50 which includes the Lunch 'N Learn on Wednesday and the Thursday Night Awards Dinner (NOTE: attendee is responsible for hotel accommodations which can be booked through the website and will be available at the discounted conference rate.)** For further information, please call FCPA Region 6 Board Representative Nell Hays at 402-7369.

Back To School—Already!!



School Resource Officer David Lightsey and Sheriff Benton are ready for school!

Can it be that the summer is already behind us and our children are going back to school? Yes, it's that time of year. Most schools in Highlands County begin on August 20th. In preparation for this event, here are a few things to remember:

It is required by law that you stop for **any school bus going in the same direction** as you when they have illuminated their flashers and put out the STOP signs. On divided highways with at least 5 feet of unpaved surface between directional lanes, or with a physical barrier or a raised median, it is not necessary to stop if you are going in the opposite direction of the bus. Regardless of whether you are required to stop or not, please be especially alert for children boarding or getting off the bus as sometimes they are not paying attention! Imagine that!

Also be prepared for additional traffic on major thoroughfares and residential streets in the vicinity of schools. Those school speed

limits will be in effect as well so be looking for the flashing yellow lights as you proceed around these areas. Traffic fines are enhanced if you are ticketed in a school zone. Finally, if your children walk to school or have a long walk to the bus stop, it is suggested that you walk with your child either ahead of the first day of school or on that day. During your walk, be alert to danger zones such as untrimmed bushes which could be hiding places for criminals. Also be aware of safety issues such as broken sidewalks or no sidewalks where you may have to identify safe routes for your children to take. You may have to take a less direct route which may be safer. By all means, let's keep our children safe as they go to and from school. **Thanks for helping us protect our kids!**



Highlands County fifth graders enjoy last year's D.A.R.E. celebration. The D.A.R.E. program will be presented again this year in elementary schools.

QUARTERLY INFORMATION—ADMINISTRATION & COURT

New Member Hires:		Court Related Services:	
Civilians Full/Part-time	8	Cases In Court	8,069
Sworn Full/Part-time Sworn	1	Inmates Taken to Court	986
Applications Received	67	Arrests by Bailiffs	105
Applications Processed	65	Persons thru Security Station	36,834
Payroll Transactions Processed	2,306	Judicial/Civil Process Services:	
Payable Checks Processed	581	Received/Processed	2,305
P-Card Purchases	643	Served	2,224
Citizens Fingerprinted	431	Active	81
Information Services Requests	668		

QUARTERLY INFORMATION—LAW ENFORCEMENT

Administrative Calls	48,771	Items into Evidence	2,379
911 Calls	11,669	Evidence Items Disposed	1,958
Computer Aided Dispatch	35,924	Crime Scene Lab Cases	128
HCSO (50%)	17,360	Criminal Investigation Unit Cases	184
SPD (15%)	6,176	Special Investigations Unit Cases	95
LPPD (4%)	1,614	SVU Cases Received from DCF	380
APPD (17%)	5,495	Crime Victims Served	155
FIRE (5%)	1,781	Victim Advocate Services	692
EMS (9%)	3,498	Safe Neighbor Units Arrests	88
Offense Reports	2,392	SIU Narcotic Arrests	34
Traffic Citations Issued	1,115	Number of Arrests By Patrol	622
K-9 Searches	223	DUI Arrests	38
Warrant Numbers:		Business Security Surveys/residential	0/2
Received/Processed	693	Neighborhood Watch Presentations	39
Served	627		
Active	3,465		

QUARTERLY INFORMATION—DETENTION

Inmates Booked into Jail	1,222	Average Daily Population	444
Inmates Released from Jail	1,058	Staff Meals Purchased	1,815
Instructional Program Hours	1,698	Net Commissary Earnings	\$8,934.05
Inmate Transport Miles	22,234	Medical Fees Charged	\$124,124.59
Transports to State Prison	65	Medical Fees Collected	\$10,479.90
ICE Picked Up	15	Subsistence Fees Charged	\$62,904.00
Detainer's Placed	27	Subsistence Fees Collected	\$18,743.46
CMP Participants	24	Inmate Per-Diem Charged	\$21,560.00
Dollars Saved in Labor	\$12,762.88	Inmate Per-Diem Collected	\$8,790.66
Dollars Collected in Fees	\$1,040.00	Labor Hours by Inmates S/O	37,664
Inmate Meals Served	120,675	Labor Hours by Inmates -Other	618
Avg Food Cost per Day Per Inmate	1.68	Dollars Saved in Labor	\$288,882.88
Alcohol Breath Tests	44		

Cell Phones

When you think about your children's online activities, do you consider their cell phones? Children can send and receive images, e-mails, texts and instant messages from their phones, which many parents and guardians do not monitor. However, you should consider cell phones an extension of the Internet and employ the same safeguards.

Enabling Cyberbullies

Cell phones make it easy for children to talk with their friends, but they also make them vulnerable to cyberbullying. Cell phones can be used at anytime and anywhere, giving cyberbullies unlimited access to their victims. Children may send and receive mean-spirited phone calls, text, and picture messages at any hour.

Enabling Predators

Predators also know and take advantage of the fact that cell phones let them talk with their victims at anytime. They are also aware that parents and guardians often forget to monitor children's cell phones. While some predators ask children for their cell phone numbers after meeting them online, there have been some cases where predators try to connect with willing children by sending texts to random numbers.

Enabling Sexting

"Sexting" is a term used to describe the sending of sexually explicit text or picture messages of minors by minors. What most young people do not realize is that the production, possession, and distribution of explicit photos of minors, even if they are self-produced, may be illegal. Furthermore, if these explicit photos end up on the Internet, children risk embarrassment and could jeopardize scholastic, athletic, and employment opportunities.

Sheriff's Office Earns National Certification As A Child Abduction Response Team (CART)

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement has a certification process by which teams of law enforcement agencies across the state combine resources and form teams to immediately mobilize and provide assistance when a child goes missing. These teams are called Child Abduction Response Teams (CART). The Highlands County Sheriff's Office is a part of the Fort Myers CART team, along with personnel from Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Sarasota, Manatee, Glades, Hendry, DeSoto and Okeechobee counties. State and federal law enforcement officers are also a part of the team.

Last month the Fort Myers Child Abduction Response Team became the fifth team in the state to obtain national CART certification from the United States Department of Justice. The certification process included a mock exercise in which a child was abducted in Sarasota on February 23, 2012. According to FDLE, "...This exercise tested the Fort Myers Child Abduction Response Team's communication capabilities, leads tracking systems, command post operations and search and rescue efforts." The exercise resulted in the successful recovery of the victim role player, a 12 year old girl.

Personnel from the Highlands County Sheriff's Office who participated in the training exercise were Lieutenant Darin Hood, Detective Sergeants Brian Kramer and Jamie Davidson, Detectives Barbara Hair, Roger St. Laurent, Michael Huften, Robert Neale and Anthony McGann of the Criminal Investigations Unit and Detective Robert Livesay of the Special Victims Unit.

Francisco Hidalgo, Special Agent in Charge, FDLE Ft. Myers, complimented Highlands County personnel by saying "Thanks to the commitment and resources your agency provided to CART, we were able to obtain this prestigious certification. ...The Florida Department of Law Enforcement looks forward to your continued support of this critical initiative."



Sheriff Benton said, "As a member of the Florida Endangered Persons Clearing House Board, this has been a priority for our victim families all across Florida. To know that agencies are fully prepared and have adequate resources to call upon should a child go missing in this state is critical. This TEAM approach captures all areas of response and improves the chances of finding a child unharmed. Thank you FDLE for providing leadership in this extremely important investigative tool. "Florida's first CART teams were assembled in 2005. There are currently seven teams in the state. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement states that the CART initiative has become a national training model and is taught to states across the nation by the U.S. Department of Justice.



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**