

Quarterly Report of the HIGHLANDS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INTEGRITY QUALITY SERVICE PROFESSIONALISM



Sheriff Susan Benton

Jan-March 1st Qrt

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.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Present Officer of the Year Award Detective Nathan Coogan



VFW Post 4300 Commander Mike Norris presents HCSO Detective Nathan Coogan with the VFW Officer of the Year Award last Tuesday as Sheriff Benton looks on. From left are VFW representatives John Geddes, Rick Macool, Joyce Abel, and Lee England.

When the Highlands County Sheriff's Office Human Resources member contacted Detective Nathan Coogan to let him know he was receiving the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Officer of the Year Award, he was total shocked! "I never dreamed I would be getting anything like this," he said.

On Tuesday, March 25th, Mike Norris, Commander of VFW Post 4300 in Sebring presented Detective Coogan with the Officer of the Year award and a check for \$100. Accompanying Commander Norris were Rick Macool, Junior Vice-Commander, John Geddes, Senior Vice-President of the Men's Auxiliary and Honor Guard member, Lee England, Quartermaster and Joyce Abel, President of the Ladies Auxiliary.

In his letter of nomination, Highlands County Sheriff's Detective Sergeant Tyrone Tyson, Detective Coogan's immediate supervisor, said that Coogan has an exceptional work ethic, a "never say quit" attitude and is a great team player. He also mentioned that Detective Coogan goes out of his way to assist new detectives and is always ready to assist in any investigations as needed. Sergeant Tyson also indicated that he consistently demonstrates the Highlands County Sheriff's Office's core values of integrity, quality service and professionalism.

Detective Coogan has investigated many high profile crimes including the attempted murder of two Federal Marshalls in Sebring. In addition he has been the lead detective on several abduction, home invasion and robbery cases during the past year.

Detective Coogan was a member of the United States Air Force from 1999 - 2005. In 2006 Coogan was hired by the Avon Park Police Department where he rose to the rank of Detective Sergeant In October, 2012 Coogan became a member of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigations Unit as a result of the transfer of law enforcement services for the City of Avon Park to the Highlands County Sheriff. Detective Coogan is currently assigned as a Persons Crimes Detective in the Criminal Investigations Unit of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office

We congratulate Detective Coogan on being chosen for this distinguished award!



Human Trafficking Educational and Prevention Initiative

Florida's Attorney General Pam Bondi has spearheaded an educational and prevention initiative against Human Trafficking. In a press release on the Attorney General's website, Attorney General Bondi was quoted saying, "January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness Month, and we must all do our part to raise awareness about this horrific crime and to find ways we can combat it." In coordination with this initiative, Sheriff Susan Benton is launching a local effort to educate the public on the local impact of this crime. In the coming weeks, deputies will be making personal visits to local pediatrician offices, hospital emergency rooms, shopping malls and other places frequented by youth, distributing posters and other materials designed to bring awareness of the ways they may become victims of human trafficking. "Human traffickers recruit victims through various means, especially social media. They prey on our youth who are vulnerable and seek attention and approval. We need to use every tool at our disposal to keep our children safe from these predators," said Sheriff Benton.

Information on Human Trafficking prevention can be found on the Attorney General's website, www.myfloridalegal.com. Some of the tips for parents listed there include the following:

- Talk to your children about sex trafficking and sexual abuse
- Restrict use of the computer to areas of the house where other family members are present
- Know your child's screen names and passwords so you can know who they have been communicating with online
- Use the parental control settings on your computer to check Internet history and to control the sites your children have access to
- Let your children know they can talk to you about anything that makes them uncomfortable

In addition to tips, the site also has a pledge that the child can sign as a reminder of their commitment to online safety.

Some of the signs that a person may be a victim of sex trafficking are unexplained signs of physical and sexual violence, behaviors indicating fear, anxiety or depression, evidence of controlling relationships or unexplained possession of expensive clothing, jewelry or other items. If you suspect that a child is a victim of Human Trafficking you may call the Department of Children and Families at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873), as this is considered a form of child abuse. Depending upon the nature of the case, this phone call may initiate the process for investigation from both DCF and the Highlands County Sheriff's Office Special Investigations Unit. "The most important thing is that we become aware of this threat to our children and that we are willing to make the call and get assistance for these unsuspecting victims," Sheriff Benton concluded.

For more information on this subject or if you would like to schedule a presentation on Human Trafficking, please contact Nell Hays, CPS at 863-7369

- Director:**
Heather Miller-Carr
- Comm. Training Officer:**
Josh Cordero
- Telecommuciators**
- Tekesha Augustine*
Wykimia Battle
Crystal Brackett
Jeanette Braddock
Rhonda Brockwell
Heather Chapel
Nancy Duvall
Deanna Flowers
Krystal Garza
Faith Hammortree
Barbara Hart
Theresa Henderson
Victoria Jackson
Sonya Johnson
Jillian Kingery
Crystal McGann
Deborah Morris
Alicia Peters
Beverly Reyes
Jillian Reyes-McCarthy
Sarah Richardson
Falicia Roth
Melissa Shawver
Ashley Shotts
Shane Smith
Alycia Tate
Danielle Thomlinson
Lowanda Thompson
Jeffrey Villone
Kimberly Ward
Mellanie Williams

Sons of the American Revolution Present Awards to the Crime Suppression Team



Association Secretary George Frey, Public Safety Awards Chairman Rod Dilling, President O.W.

Three officers of the Highlands Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution came to the Highlands County Sheriff's Office to present Law Enforcement Commendation Medals to 6 members of the Crime Suppression Team. The Commendations came as a result of the pro-active and successful operation in Avon Park recently.

In an effort to stop the numerous robberies of migrant workers in Avon Park, Highlands County Sheriff's Deputies initiated an under-cover operation where one of the teams members posed as a migrant worker. The deputy soon became a victim of the robbers and actually sustained minor injuries as the suspects pulled a chain from his neck during the crime. Two suspects were arrested in the "sting" and were charged with robbery and resisting an officer without violence.

The Sons of the American Revolution are an organization made up of people who are direct lineal descendants of members of George Washington's Army and who fought in the American Revolution in the 1700's. They are non-political and not for profit group that encourages patriotism and national values. The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution have approximately 28,000 members nationally and they have chapters in all 50 states and 6 foreign countries. Florida hosts 33 chapters and about 2000 members, 38 of which are in the Highlands County chapter. The group meets the third Saturday of the month in Lake Placid.



K-9 Teams Compete Successfully



On February 22, 2014, two Highlands County Sheriff's Office K-9 Teams travelled to Boynton Beach to compete in the South Florida Police K-9 Competition. The event was designed to raise money for the Boynton Beach Police Department's K-9 Unit and it hosted approximately 36 officers from across the state. Organizers set up an obstacle course on the Boynton Beach High School football field complete with walls to scale, buildings to search and bad guys to catch. HCSO Deputy Cory Tomblin and his K-9 partner Remco along with Sergeant Kyle Albritton and his K-9 partner Mico participated in the obstacle course and the apprehension, both finishing in the top ten. Sergeant Albritton and Mico placed second in both the obstacle course and fastest dog events, missing first place by mere hundredths of a second. Deputy Tomblin and Remco finished 6th in the obstacle course event.

Competitions like this afford the opportunity for the public to view the K-9 members in a positive light. "We like to compete to show people that K-9's are not bad dogs, and also to practice our skills" said Sergeant Albritton. "People enjoy watching the dogs work, and it helps them

to realize what an asset they are to a law enforcement agency." The Highlands County Sheriff's Office has 8 K-9 teams utilizing both Bloodhound and Belgian Malinois breeds.



K-9 Unit Receives Donation



Employees at Dr. Jeff Saunders' Office

Sometimes we take our good health and well-being for granted! And while an integral part of a deputies equipment is an up to date first aid kit, until recently there were no supplies readily available if a K-9 partner was injured during his tour of duty. On Wednesday, March 26th, Dr. Jeff Saunders, of the Saunders Veterinary Clinic in Sebring,



First Aid Kit

donated first aid kits for each member of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office K-9 Unit. Dr. Saunders is the veterinarian who takes care of these dogs and he and his staff take an above-and-beyond approach to keeping our K-9's in great shape. From now on, each K-9 Deputy will be outfitted with a first aid kit for his K-9 partner. In the kit are things like gauze, eye wash, antiseptic spray, antibiotic ointment, a splint, medical tape, hydrogen peroxide, alcohol, karo syrup for dehydration, kwik stop for

bleeding, and other useful items. We certainly appreciate the generosity of Dr. Saunders and his staff, and as always, we thank him for the professional services and loving care he provides for our dogs.

STEM Scholars Learn Crime Scene Techniques



CSI Detective Jon Wilkenson

The Florida Learns STEM Scholars initiative is a multi-faceted, three-year project funded in 2011 by the Florida Department of Education. The purpose of the \$4.5 million award is to create and implement a model STEM high school system for gifted and talented students in 27 of Florida's small and rural school districts. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Once a month students participating in the STEM Scholars program receive hands-on experiences in some area of science or technology. On Saturday, February 22nd, approximately 100 students gathered at Hill-Gustat Middle School to learn about crime scene investigations. The Highlands County Sheriff's Crime Scene Unit presented stations covering basic crime scene investigation, blood spatter and other evidence

evaluation, fingerprint techniques and comparison, molding tire tracks and footprints and computer and cell phone technology. Students were given an opportunity to see the crime scene technicians and deputies in action as well as participate in each area. Sheriff Benton was very excited to see the enthusiasm demonstrated by the students' participation in the activities. "We enjoy setting this up each year and interacting with these young scholars as they see opportunities for their STEM skills in the field of law enforcement and crime scene investigations," she said.

Polygraph Certifications

Use of a polygraph test during criminal investigations has been around for a long time. In recent years the polygraph has also been a key factor in pre-employment screening especially in the fields of law enforcement, banking, securities, pharmacies and other high security professions. Until now, the Highlands County Sheriff's Office contracted out were polygraph services that may be needed however within the past month two members have completed International Polygraph Certification and are now able to conduct these tests within the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. Detectives Bob Neale of the Criminal Investigations Unit and Mike Huften in Internal Affairs went to two different schools in very different parts of the country but received the same training.

Huften's school consisted of 480 hours of training over a 12 week period and was conducted at the Northeast Counter-Drug Training Center in Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. This was a federally funded school conducted on a National Guard base and included housing. Neale attended the Academy of Polygraph Science in Fort Myers. His training consisted of 400 hours of training over 10 weeks. Closer to home, Neale attended the Academy of Polygraph Science in Fort Myers and completed 400 hours of training over 10 weeks. Both detectives received their international certification as polygraphists. The certification requires an additional 40 hours of continuing education in polygraph every two years in order to maintain the certification. Detective Huften will now be able to conduct the pre-employment polygraphs that the Sheriff's Office previously had to contract out. With regard to his new certification, Detective Neale commented "I am glad to be able to provide detectives another tool to use in their investigations." Both detectives were very pleased to have completed this certification and look forward to bringing their new skills to use in the Highlands County Sheriff's Office.



Testing the machine
Lt. Darin Hood

Three Groups Reach Active Neighborhood Watch Status



This quarter we were exceptionally busy with Neighborhood Watch! Of the three groups that reached “active” status, two were completely new groups and one was a re-start. I am pleased to report that Camp Florida in Lake Placid (above) has returned to the Neighborhood Watch fold. Former chairperson Joanne Schilling is returning in an assistant role and John Simms is taking the helm. They have established a great support system which includes both a winter and a summer telephone communication tree. We are so happy to have you back!



Liz Orr, of Sunbird 2 in the Thunderbird Hills area, has organized a great group of enthusiasts of which Herman Rogers will be the chairperson. In addition to the residents, Sunbird is now the second Neighborhood Watch group with a mascot! “Samantha”, the cute puppy in Liz’s lap, will be keeping everyone under control with unconditional love! We welcome these residents to the Neighborhood Watch community.



Finally, in the far south of the county, residents at Kissimmee River Estates have organized a great group of people who want to make their neighborhood safer. Many years ago Marion Pope did a fine job of keeping eyes on the streets in KRE. We appreciate his service and look forward to his participation in the newly re-organized Neighborhood Watch. This group will be under the leadership of Bonnie Kaplan during the seasonal months and Rich and Carol Staten in the summers. They too have set up both water and summer communication trees to accommodate the seasonal residents.

TELECOMMUNICATOR WEEK OF APRIL 13, 2014—APRIL 19, 2014



In 1991 Congress passed a resolution designating the second full week of April each year as National Telecommunicator Week. This year the dates are April 13 – 19th. Public safety agencies nationwide will be recognizing dispatchers, communication operators and radio control personnel for the important role they play in public safety. Dispatchers receive and provide critical information to law enforcement, fire and EMS personnel responding to calls from our citizens each and every day of the year, 24 hours

a day 7 days a week. According to Sheriff Benton, “they are the first contact you have when you need us; a family member not breathing, someone breaking into your house, your business on fire, when a loved one goes missing, or even when you just don’t know what to do about something. These men and women are often times the unsung heroes. You never see them; they sit behind a huge console with three computer keyboards, five monitor screens, several telephones, with headsets on, feet pushing pedals on the floor taking to the caller and often time a deputy at the same time. They help save lives every day!” “Please join with me in thanking them for their unwavering efforts and willingness to serve in the stressful job. The 9-1-1 dispatcher is an invaluable member of our TEAM.”

In honor of our telecommunicators in Highlands County, on Tuesday, April 15th the Highlands County Board of County Commissioners adopted a proclamation honoring the pivotal role these members play in keeping the public and our first responders safe.



In addition, members of the Highlands County Sheriff’s Office, (Central Dispatch, K-9, Crime Suppression Team), Sebring Police Department, Fire and EMS visited the Kindergarten Learning Center on Tuesday, April 15th from 8:00AM – 10:00AM to teach the children about calling 911.



They presented “How to properly use 911” to 375 students with the help of “Cell Phone Sally” and her video “9-1-1: Getting Help is Easy.”

Here’s a video link for your reference and use which is a sample of what was presented to the kindergarten students:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyJNSDLPHxY>.



QUARTERLY INFORMATION—ADMINISTRATION & COURT

New Member Hires:		Court Related Services:	
Civilians	7	Cases In Court	7,086
PT Civilian	0	Inmates Taken to Court	1,084
Sworn	3	Arrests by Bailiffs	94
Applications Received	13	Persons thru Security Station	30,775
Applications Processed	13	Judicial/Civil Process Services:	
Payroll Transactions Processed	1,975	Received/Processed	2,443
Payable Checks Processed	547	Served	2,294
P-Card Purchases	555	Active	149
Citizens Fingerprinted	706		
Information Services Requests	438		

Children as Victims

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 if for fear of being punished.

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

QUARTERLY INFORMATION—LAW ENFORCEMENT

Administrative Calls	45,363	Items into Evidence	2,643
911 Calls	12,452	Evidence Items Disposed	1,400
Computer Aided Dispatch	33,458	Crime Scene Lab Cases	152
HCSO (62%)	20,893	Criminal Investigation Unit Cases	152
SPD (16%)	5,052	Investigations Open (Total)	175
LPPD (4%)	1,454	SOU Cases	81
FIRE (6%)	2,027	CST Narcotic Arrests	43
EMS (12%)	4,031	SVU Cases Received from DCF	320
Offense Reports	2,801	SVU Cases Open	54
Traffic Citations Issued	741	Business Security Surveys/residential	0/1
K-9 Searches	278	Neighborhood Watch Presentations	70
Warrant Numbers:		Crime Victims Served	131
Received/Processed	569	Victim Advocate Services	639
Served	515		
Active	3,281		
Number of Arrests By Patrol	838		
Number of DUI's	17		

QUARTERLY INFORMATION—DETENTION

Inmates Booked into Jail	1,024	Average Daily Population	404
Inmates Released from Jail	918	Net Commissary Earnings	\$8,148.68
Instructional Program Hours	2,010	Medical Fees Charged	\$56,196.00
Inmate Transport Miles	29,760	Medical Fees Collected	\$11,513.85
Transports to State Prison	41	Subsistence Fees Charged	\$56,196.00
ICE Picked Up	16	Subsistence Fees Collected	\$19,283.12
Detainer's Placed	25	Inmate Per-Diem Charged	\$18,080.00
CMP Participants	9	Inmate Per-Diem Collected	\$9,896.08
Dollars Saved in Labor	\$2,347.28	Labor Hours by Inmates S/O	40,352
Dollars Collected in Fees	\$185.00	Labor Hours by Inmates -Other	1,868
Inmate Meals Served	109,330	Dollars Saved in Labor	334,804.96
Avg Food Cost per Day Per Inmate	\$1.80		
Alcohol Breath Tests	40		

Sheriff's Office Hosts Interns from Webber International University



Dr. Pete Barone, Coleman O'Gara, David Gladding,
Sheriff Susan Benton and
Chief Deputy Mark Schrader

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office is providing internship opportunities for two students in the Criminal Justice Management Program at Webber International University. The three credit internship allows students to experience actual duties of officers in various facets of law enforcement. During their internship the students have the opportunity to see operations in various areas of responsibility such as detention, judicial process, patrol, criminal investigations, dispatch, and others. This gives the students a real feel for the day-to-day responsibilities of law enforcement and can help to confirm their career choice.

This semester the Highlands County Sheriff's Office is pleased to host David Gladding from Loxahatchee, Florida and Coleman O'Gara from Tampa. Mr. Gladding was pursuing a pre-law degree when he decided to join the Criminal Justice Management program. He will obtain his degree from the program in the first graduating class this May. Mr. O'Gara was in the security management track and decided to transfer to the Criminal Justice Management program. He is slated to graduate from the program this fall. Dr. Peter Barone has been the driving force behind the development and implementation of this four-year degree track. This is the first official internship with the program, which will graduate its first class in May 2014. Sheriff Benton was pleased to have the interns on board. "Programs like this allow us to interact with young people who want to be involved in the law

enforcement profession. We are happy to provide this opportunity for them and we appreciate their interest in criminal justice." Chief Deputy Mark Schrader, an adjunct instructor at Webber International University, said "This really gives the students an opportunity to see if they want to be in law enforcement as a career. Taking criminal justice classes is one thing; experiencing the job is another and the internship can let the students know if they really want to continue in this field."

For more information on Webber International University, please visit their website at www.webber.edu. For more information on the Criminal Justice Management Program please contact Dr. Pete Barone at BaronePA@webber.edu.



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**