

Quarterly Report of the HIGHLANDS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INTEGRITY QUALITY SERVICE PROFESSIONALISM

Sheriff Susan Benton



July-Sept 3rd 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.

Sheriff's Office Announces Radio Frequency Shift

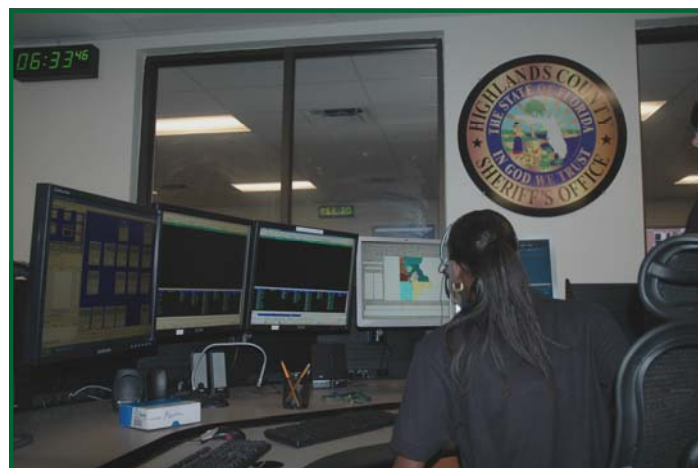
On September 4th at 6:30AM, all first responder radios in Highlands County switched from the previous UHF analog system to the new P-25 Digital 800 megahertz (MHz) trunk system. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has reserved 700 – 800 MHz bands for public safety to insure critical communications can be carried on uninterrupted. In addition to accessing this public safety frequency, the new system brings with it many advantages for communications within the county.

First, the new system will allow for complete interoperability with both Polk and Hardee Counties, as well as between agencies within Highlands County. In addition, the analog capability will eliminate the “dead spots” in the county which have been a problem for deputies and first responders alike. As personnel travel around the county there will be seamless roaming for the signals from tower to tower creating a larger range of communication and clearer levels of reception.

Most privately owned radio frequency scanners currently in the market are tuned to receive UHF analog signals. By switching to 800 MHz, digital signals, radio traffic will not be picked up by these conventional scanners.

Sheriff Benton explained, “This new system will greatly improve the safety of our deputies, firefighters, and emergency medical folks. Additionally, the system will provide for seamless transmissions greater distances throughout the State of Florida. Further, our ambulances will be able to communicate with the hospital emergency rooms from the scene rather than just before they arrive at the hospital. This could truly improve the level of medical treatment for our residents while enroute to the hospitals. Thank you to all of the hard working folks at Motorola, the County project manager Chris Benson, and all of the technicians at EMS, Fire and the Sheriff's Office. A special and loud shout out goes out to our

dispatchers, who again without complaint, had to move from the new communications center to the EOC while this upgrade was taking place; they are amazing and never missed a beat in answering your calls for help and then dispatching the help to you.”



Disasters: Is your family prepared?

Families may become separated during the chaos of a disaster, especially when evacuation is required. It is important to plan for your family's safety.

Safety tips for families

Review these recommendations in case your family is ever impacted by a disaster.

- Know where your children are at all times.
- Stay together.
- Take photos of your children with you when evacuated.
- Give your children identification information to carry with them, including his or her name, date of birth, address, phone numbers, etc. If your child is too young or otherwise unable to speak for themselves, consider writing their name, date of birth, parents' names and phone numbers somewhere on his or her body in indelible marker.
- Email digital photos of all family members to extended family members and/or friends.
- Photocopy important documents and mail to a friend/relative in a safe location.
- Make a plan with your children, so they know what to do if your family becomes separated during an evacuation. Remind them of adults they can go to for help, such as a uniformed law enforcement officer or person with a nametag.

...www.missingkids.com/Disasters



S.W.A.T. Team Has Successful Competition



On September 14, 2013, members of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT) team participated in the 11th Annual Southwest Florida Region 6 SWAT Challenge. The competition was held at Knights Trail Park and Gun Range in Nokomis, Florida and was sponsored by the Sarasota Sheriff's Office. A total of 14 teams participated in the event from Sarasota, Manatee, Collier, Charlotte, Lee and Highlands Counties. The event included activities that required teamwork, competitive shooting and tactical skills. The event winner was the Gold team from the Sarasota Sheriff's Office followed by Cape Coral Police Department, one point behind,

in second place. Highlands County Sheriff's Office's team finished a respectable 6th in the event.

Lt. Jack Bailey, HCSO's SWAT Team leader, commented on the team's performance saying, "Competition like this allows us to develop skills that make us more effective in the field. It also helps us network with other SWAT teams so we can get to know them and help each other when the time comes that we may need to work together jointly."

The SWAT team is supervised by Captain Jeff Barfield. The competitive team included the following members: Lt. Jack Bailey, Team Leader, Sergeant Dave Stewart, Sergeant Kyle Albritton, Sergeant Mike Delaney, Deputy Ernie Gelinias, Deputy Wayne Gunn, Deputy Mike Brod, and Detective Chris Gunter. Additional team members are Sergeant Mike Abell, Deputy Mike Ahrens, Deputy Juan Delgado and Deputy Dwayne Proctor.

Excellence in Risk Management and Loss Control Award

Sheriff Susan Benton and the Highlands County Sheriff's Office has been awarded the Florida Sheriffs Risk Management Fund (FSRMF) Loss Control Annual Safety Award in 2013 for their "**Excellence in Risk Management and Loss Control.**" The Florida Sheriffs Risk Management Fund provides the award to Sheriffs' Offices that have demonstrated over the various FSRMF programs a serious commitment to risk management and loss control efforts. There are two components used to determine the recipients of this award. First, their losses over the most recent three year period are reviewed and compared with other FSRMF



Kathy Fluharty, Sheriff Susan Benton and David Harvey

members, giving due consideration to the size and geographical location of the agency. Second, their responsiveness and cooperation with regard to adopting recommendations and efforts of the FSRMF Loss Control staff is evaluated. David F. Harvey, Executive Director of FSRMF said, "This award is significant in many ways." He went on to say, "Not only does it show efficiency of operation, but substantial savings of taxpayer's dollars. The prevention of claims and the mitigation of losses through good managerial and operational practices are paramount in saving life, property, and productivity in all endeavors. Safe practices and procedures are extremely important in the operations of a Sheriff's Office where life and death decisions are made daily. Resources saved in preventing and mitigating losses are resources that can be used in other areas to increase productivity and efficiencies and add to the general safety of a county, its citizens and the members of a Sheriff's Office. The winners of the Excellence in Risk Management and Loss Control Award have shown their dedication and commitment to safe practices and procedures."

Highlands County Sheriff's Office *CRIME PREVENTION*



Neighborhood Watch



This quarter we had two Neighborhood Watch groups come back to active status after being dormant for a few years. Orangewood Acres in Avon Park has re-organized under the leadership of Steve Daggett and has been very active! Steve has an excellent plan in place for keeping an eye on the neighborhood but he'll need more volunteers as the season moves forward and the northern residents return. Contact Steve at 586-567-1299 for information on how to join the ranks!

Also Hidden Acres in the area of Lorida near the Kissimmee River has gotten together after a series of thefts in the area revitalized interest in Neighborhood Watch. Chairperson Jim Rowland has organized three meetings to date and the response has been fabulous! To take part in this effort residents can contact Jim at 863-447-3689.

Please remember to schedule your annual Neighborhood Watch meeting as soon as possible.

Crime Prevention Specialist Nell Hays has a busy schedule so be sure to get your meeting confirmed before all the prime dates are gone! Contact Nell at 863-402-7369. Thanks!

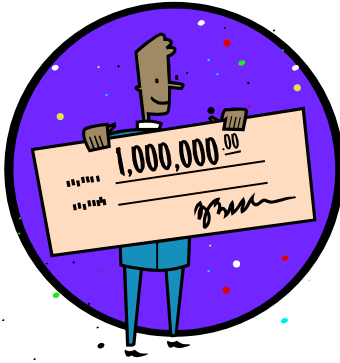


Halloween Trick or Treat Night Safety

This year Trick of Treat night will be held in Avon Park and Sebring on Saturday, October 26th from 6PM—9PM. Lake Placid will celebrate on the traditional date, October 31st from 6PM—9PM. Other school or church sponsored costume events will also be occurring from time to time so please be watchful for children, aka goblins, wandering the streets anytime from October 26th through the 31st. Parents, please be sure to supervise your children as they go about their Trick or Treating venue. Make sure their costumes have reflective tape and that they carry a flashlight so they can be seen. Also please check their treats before allowing them to consume any candy or goodies. If anything looks suspicious, please don't take a chance and remove those items from your children's bags. For more information on Trick or Treat safety, please go to the Highlands County Sheriff's Office website, www.highlandssheriff.org, and click on the **Offender Watch** square at the bottom of the home page. Once into that site, go to the **Safety Tips** tab and click there. The next screen to come up will have a box that says **Community Awareness Fliers**. Click on this and you will find a wide range of valuable informational fliers, one of which is titled Halloween Safety Flier. This flier can be printed out and copied for your use. Let's take that extra few moments and insure that our children have a wonderful Halloween experience!



Don't Be A Victim of Check Fraud!



The Highlands County Sheriff's Office has been made aware of several instances of check fraud recently. While each case is different, the underlying theme is the same: You make arrangements with someone to sell an item, do a job or take advantage of an offer. The "bad guy" will send you a check in an amount larger than the agreed upon price with instructions to deposit that check and send a portion of it back. The problem is the check itself is fraudulent so when you send money back, it's your money that's going out! In addition, your account number will be on the check you send and of course your account is then compromised.

Just think for a moment. Why would someone send you MORE money than you agreed upon? There is no good reason for this, other than to get you into a scam.

We have seen this method of operation under the guise of renting an apartment, selling an item, contracting for services, winning a vacation....the list goes on and on. Some fraudsters will send you a check and ask you to deposit it and send money back under the premise that they are testing you to be sure you can follow instructions. Really?

The bottom line is this – no one will send you more money than you ask for an item or service unless they're up to no good. Even if you receive a check in the proper amount, wait a good three weeks for that check to clear before you ship the item or complete the task. Be absolutely certain that the money is there to cover the check before you send anything. Also please don't send money for any reason, in return for a check you have received. Highlands County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Specialist Nell Hays is at your service to discuss any suspicious circumstances that you may encounter. You may call her at 863-402-7369, and if she is unavailable please feel free to leave a message. She will call you back as soon as possible. Please don't become a victim of this fraudulent check scam!

Holiday Shopping



Oh yes, those really ARE Christmas decorations you see, right next to the Halloween candy and the Thanksgiving foods. It seems each year our merchants begin the holiday season earlier and earlier. As you go about your holiday preparations, please remember to stay safe along the way. First of all, don't leave valuables and purchases in plain view in your vehicle. Secure packages in the trunk where they're out of view. For an added measure of safety, you may consider moving your car to a different side of the mall as you go through your shopping routine. Just remember where you parked last! It's a good idea to jot down the store nearest your car



and maybe even the department within the store where you entered because many times a store will have more than one exit into the parking area. This will keep you from



wandering aimlessly through the parking lots looking for your vehicle. Also it's a good idea to have a meeting place for your family or friends to re-convene every hour or so. This way you can keep in touch and be sure everyone is still on task. Exchanging cell phone numbers is also recommended however cell service can be spotty in some large shopping malls so an actual meeting place may be the best idea. For more holiday shopping tips, please go to the Highlands County Sheriff's Office website, www.highlandssheriff.org and click on the **Offender Watch** box at the bottom of the home page. Once there, go to **Safety Tips**, then **Community Awareness Fliers** and scroll down to **Holiday Safety**. Best wishes for a safe and blessed Holiday season!

QUARTERLY INFORMATION—ADMINISTRATION & COURT

New Member Hires:		Court Related Services:	
Civilians	3	Cases In Court	7,665
PT Civilian	2	Inmates Taken to Court	1,053
Sworn	4	Arrests by Bailiffs	77
Applications Received	68	Persons thru Security Station	28,424
Applications Processed	65	Judicial/Civil Process Services:	
Payroll Transactions Processed	1,969	Received/Processed	1,436
Payable Checks Processed	516	Served	1,309
P-Card Purchases	484	Active	127
Citizens Fingerprinted	457		
Information Services Requests	744		

QUARTERLY INFORMATION—LAW ENFORCEMENT

Administrative Calls	45,139	Items into Evidence	3,187
911 Calls	11,027	Evidence Items Disposed	1,756
Computer Aided Dispatch	33,971	Crime Scene Lab Cases	151
HCSO (66%)	22,548	Criminal Investigation Unit Cases	210
SPD (15%)	5,045	Investigations Open (Total)	213
LPPD (4%)	1,355	SIU Cases	48
FIRE (5%)	1,668	SIU Narcotic Arrests	15
EMS (10%)	3,353	SVU Cases Received from DCF	338
Offense Reports	2,808	SVU Cases Open	49
Traffic Citations Issued	1,059	Business Security Surveys/residential	210
K-9 Searches	302	Neighborhood Watch Presentations	33
Warrant Numbers:		Crime Victims Served	156
Received/Processed	652	Victim Advocate Services	734
Served	542		
Active	3,315		
Number of Arrests By Patrol	230		
Number of DUI's	20		

QUARTERLY INFORMATION—DETENTION

Inmates Booked into Jail	1,024	Average Daily Population	399
Inmates Released from Jail	958	Net Commissary Earnings	\$6,349.17
Instructional Program Hours	1,617	Medical Fees Charged	\$138,490.58
Inmate Transport Miles	30,549	Medical Fees Collected	\$13,789.00
Transports to State Prison	71	Subsistence Fees Charged	\$56,000.00
ICE Picked Up	8	Subsistence Fees Collected	\$15,225.69
Detainer's Placed	12	Inmate Per-Diem Charged	\$18,182.00
CMP Participants	13	Inmate Per-Diem Collected	\$7,481.55
Dollars Saved in Labor	\$9,301.52	Labor Hours by Inmates S/O	35,456
Dollars Collected in Fees	\$745.00	Labor Hours by Inmates -Other	1,449
Inmate Meals Served	111,510	Dollars Saved in Labor	\$289,607.11
Avg Food Cost per Day Per Inmate	\$1.96		
Alcohol Breath Tests	41		

Child Identification Program (ChIP)

The ChIP is a blood sampling program that gives parents or guardians the option of having their child's blood sample available in an emergency. In the event of your child's disappearance, his or her DNA would be available, from that blood sample to law enforcement. In addition to providing information in the case of kidnappings or parental abductions, the sample could help with identification in cases of accidents or natural disasters.

This program is administered by a number of hospitals with birthing centers and county health departments in Florida. Please visit the ChIP website at (www.fdle.state.fl.us/Chip) to see if your area hospital or health department is participating in the ChIP program.

This concept is similar to programs in which children are fingerprinted. Storing a blood sample taken from your child allows you to have one more piece of information you could give to law enforcement in the event of an accident or the disappearance of your child. In a situation as terrifying as a missing child, you would want to provide all the information you possibly could. Participation in the ChIP allows you, the parent or guardian, to store your child's blood sample from which DNA could be taken when required. By storing the blood sample yourself, you can be best assured that no one else will have access to it.

Please be advised, this is only a blood sample. The blood sample DOES NOT need to be analyzed for DNA unless it is required for investigative purposes. If analysis is required, law enforcement will do one free of charge.

For Additional Information please contact the FDLE Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse toll-free number at 1-888-356-4774.

Excerpt from: Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse

Sheriff's Office Welcomes New Canine Member

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office has a new member on the force! Canine *Lady*, a 19 month old Belgian Malinois, will start patrolling the streets of Highlands County by the end of September. Lady's handler, Deputy Sheriff Jose Molina, will retire his current canine partner, Ringo, on September 30th.

Ringo, also a Belgian Malinois, is approaching his 9th birthday, having proudly served with the Avon Park Police Department from 2006 through 2012 and subsequently with the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. Upon his retirement, Ringo will remain under the care of Deputy Sheriff Molina.

Canine Lady is a single purpose, drug detection canine. She and Deputy Sheriff Molina are currently certified as a canine team in the detection of illegal narcotics through the American Detection Canine Association. To further enhance their proficiency, this team will seek certification in drug detection with the United States Police Canine Association (USPCA) and the Florida Law Enforcement Canine Association, by the end of December 2013.



D/S Jose Molina, "Lady", Sheriff Susan Benton



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**