

# Quarterly Report of the HIGHLANDS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INTEGRITY    QUALITY SERVICE    PROFESSIONALISM

*Sheriff Susan Benton*



2015 Jan-Mar 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.

## New Traffic Homicide Unit



Deputy Mike Weed, Deputy Kevin Gentry, Deputy John Steffner and Detective Jon Wilkinson.

When a serious accident occurs where there is a confirmed fatality or a possibility that a victim may die as a result, a specially trained traffic homicide investigator is called upon to conduct the investigation. Working with the Florida Highway Patrol, the Sheriff's Office began training a volunteer group of deputies for this type of investigation. According to Sheriff Benton, "our deputies are now fully certified and can work traffic homicides independent of FHP". To this end, Detective Jon Wilkinson, Deputy John Steffner, Deputy Mike Weed and Deputy Kevin Gentry volunteered for this duty and as such they must be available for call out at any time. This specialty comes under the supervision of Law Enforcement Bureau, Uniform Patrol Captain Jeff Barfield and will respond to all traffic fatalities in Avon Park and will be available to assist FHP and other local law enforcement agencies. All of these deputies have now completed the three required classes which included 240 hours of classroom training with an

additional 80 hours of training with HCSO equipment on the streets. Detective Jon Wilkinson is the lead deputy on the team. He was previously trained in Traffic Homicide and was a former instructor in this field when he was employed by the Coral Springs Police Department. As you might imagine, specialized equipment, is required for traffic homicide investigations such as the Vericom which assists in crash zone diagramming and accident reconstruction. Other tools include surveying equipment to complete diagrams of the scene and the vehicles involved. There are analytical mapping programs as well, along with physical tools such as a drag sled. Sheriff Benton says, "These deputies are very enthusiastic. While we hope we don't have much need for these investigations, in the event we have a traffic homicide, we'll be ready! I would also like to thank the FHP for their assistance in letting us tag along on their cases to get the necessary street training that was needed."

## Lake Placid Elementary Second Graders Name HCSO Robot

During Law Enforcement Appreciation Week, the second grade classes at Lake Placid Elementary School made thank you cards for the Deputies of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. To show their gratitude for this gesture and in keeping with the tradition that agencies that own robots, name them, the Highlands County SWAT team decided to ask these students to name the robot. From the many names submitted, 10 names were selected as finalists. From this list, members of the HCSO SWAT team voted to choose the name Ranger. Brandon Pratts, who submitted this name, added that he chose Ranger because US Rangers lead the way! The second place name was TRAMM which was an acronym for Tactical Response Active Mobile Monitoring. There was a tie for third between Chopper and Echo. At a special presentation before all the second grade students at the school on April 10<sup>th</sup>, SWAT team leader Lieutenant Jack Bailey and robot operator Deputy Luis Pratts-Martinez honored all ten finalists by dubbing them Junior Deputies as signified by their Junior Deputy badges. In addition the three top winners received gift bags provided by ICOR, the company who makes the robot, and the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. Contest winner Brandon Pratts also received a shirt and cap from ICOR in addition to the gift bag. Congratulations to Brandon, and to all who participated in this contest!



## Crime Scene Members Attain Certification



Jon Wilkinson and Kathy Perez

Following in the footsteps of Highlands County Sheriff's Office Crime Scene Sergeant Jeff Fennell, two more members of the Crime Scene Unit attained their Certified Crime Scene Investigator designation last month. Detective Jon Wilkinson and Crime Scene Technician Kathy Perez both completed the course work and examinations for their certification by the International Association for Identification. Requirements for this certification include being actively employed as a crime scene investigator, a minimum of one year in crime scene, 48 hours of specialized training within the past 5 years, several continuing education courses, and

successful completion of a 200 question test based on the above courses plus two textbooks covering crime scene photography, processing and investigation. Detective Wilkinson has over 30 years in law enforcement, most recently being employed with the Coral Springs Police Department before joining the Highlands County Sheriff's Office in 2010. Kathy Perez became a member of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office in 2007 after a successful career as an emergency medical technician. She attained her certification in crime scene technology from St. Petersburg College in 2003, prior to coming to Highlands County. Crime Scene Sergeant Fennell is very pleased at the accomplishments of these team members. He commented, "The IAI is the most widely recognized forensic and crime scene investigator association in the world. The standard of being certified in Crime Scene Investigation is spreading rapidly throughout the forensic community and is encouraged by both the scientific and legal groups. I commend them for their efforts, and for the support the Highlands County Sheriff's Office has provided them to complete this certification." Sheriff Benton also complimented Wilkinson and Perez on their accomplishment, saying "these folks are often called upon for testimony in the prosecution of very serious crimes, it is our responsibility to our victims to have the best prepared deputies on their cases."

## Veterans of Foreign Wars Present 2015 Officer of the Year Award

On Monday, March 23, 2015, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 4300 Commander Jim Van Houten presented Highlands County Sheriff's Detective Barbara Hair with the VFW 2015 Officer of the Year award. Accompanying Commander Van Houten to the presentation were VFW Ladies Auxiliary President Donna Thomas, Coordinator of Special Events Judy Love, and Men's Auxiliary President John Geddes. Originally hired in 1992 in a civilian position, Detective Barbara Hair became a sworn member in 2000 and began a 7 year stint on patrol. In 2008 Detective Hair was promoted to the Criminal Investigations Unit where she has worked in both criminal and special investigations. She is currently assigned to the Special Victim's Unit handling investigations involving the abuse, neglect and exploitation of our children and seniors, missing persons and other special cases. In his letter of nomination for Detective Hair, Special Victims Lieutenant Greg Pearlman cited her initiative, dependability and availability as the key components to her nomination for this award. In particular he mentioned one sexual abuse case where two juvenile females were abused by a family member. This case ultimately resulted in charges of sexual battery and capital sexual battery

which carries a life sentence. Sheriff Benton was also very complimentary of Detective Hair's work, in particular her lead detective assignment on the Aaron Doty murder investigation. "Detective Hair worked endlessly on this case and it was an extremely violent and traumatic investigation with a heavy emotional burden for this mother and grandmother. Barbara was very appreciative of the award and thanked the VFW members for their recognition.





## TELECOMMUNICATOR WEEK - APRIL 12, 2015—APRIL 18, 2015

### *A day in the life of a dispatcher*

Looking back on almost three decades of being a dispatcher, I can say that it's gotten a lot more stressful and hectic than it used to be when I started almost 28 years ago. When I first got hired, we didn't even have 911 in Highlands County, we got it about a year and a half after I started. Probably the biggest part of this job is 911. People abuse it so much, that its gotten so much less useful than it's meant to be. Not even counting the dozens of accidental pocket dials and children playing on the phone—all of which we have to try and track down or call back—people call for the most insane reasons. We really hate power outages, because usually 911 gets inundated with calls from people wanting to know when the power is going to be restored, what's going on, etc. They don't understand when we try to tell them that we're not the power company and have nothing to do with it. Probably the most ludicrous 911 call we've gotten recently was someone who called us from the restroom at a local fast food restaurant to complain that they needed toilet paper in there. The dispatcher who took the call actually called the manager of the restaurant for him and asked them to bring him some toilet paper, which is more than I would have done! I don't think people understand the mental stress involved. It never fails that if you have something major and stressful going on—a shooting, robbery, or accident with fatalities, that's when you'll start getting angry people calling in about much less important issues, and you have to deal with both at once. It's not unusual to have to listen to someone's anguished call about a family member not breathing, try to assist with CPR, get the proper units dispatched, have an officer request you to run several things through the computer, have another officer request you make a phone call, then before you can catch your breath, you answer another phone call to listen to someone screaming at you because their neighbor's radio is too loud. You're still mentally involved in trying to get help in a life or death situation, and have to treat this loud radio or dog barking complaint like it's equally important. Some people actually believe that their neighbor's sprinklers being on at the wrong time is just as important as that call you have about a child not breathing, and they expect you to treat it that way. It's a fine line to balance. You don't have time to decompress right then. While your hands are still shaking from a call spent listening to a woman screaming while her husband or boyfriend beats her, and you can only listen helplessly while the officers are enroute, you have to immediately take the next call, which might be someone complaining that their car was scratched in a parking lot. We don't often get closure on calls we take, either. We listen to the callers and dispatch help, but oftentimes we never hear the outcome. You also learn not to take abuse personally. We get called profane names by angry callers quite frequently, as people will take their anger about whatever they're calling about out on the dispatcher who answers the phone. You quickly learn to compartmentalize everything and just get the job done. One of the first and most frustrating things you'll learn, though, is that dispatch is usually completely invisible until someone makes a mistake....**Melissa Shawver**

We walk in everyday not knowing what type of calls we will receive. Some days are good with minimal calls, and then there are days that are brutal with all sorts of calls. We answer the calls of upset parents, sick grandparents or an injured child. I've been told that it takes a strong person to do this job and it's true. We all have our strengths when it comes to answering the everyday calls. I've never worked with a better group of people. Some calls we never know the outcome of because once we hang up we pass the torch whether it be to the deputy, EMS or fire crews. We work like a well-oiled machine. Some days we go home praying for the families we deal with that day. Some days we walk out and it's a sigh of relief that we got our men and women home safe. There are days I ask myself why I chose this job, but helping that one person or helping calm a distraught grandmother while you walk her through the steps of CPR on her grandchild. That's why I do what I do every day. It's definitely not the easiest job, but it's a rewarding and selfless job. I truly enjoy what I do every day and wouldn't change the last 5 ½ years for anything. ...**Ashley Shotts**

It is very rewarding. I love helping people in their time of need. Being that calm voice for people when they need it most. We are forgotten a lot but I don't do this job to get recognized. I do this job because I want to help people. I've only been a dispatcher for two years and it has been two very rewarding years. If you are ever in need of assistance just remember, stay calm a dispatcher will always be there to help you anytime of the day!! ...**Danielle Tomlinson**

Who knew 30 years ago when I told my mother for my job, I wanted to talk on a radio. She introduced me to Mrs. Emily Hopson of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office dispatch center. Who knew that I would be talking on the radio for this long? I have been through three sheriffs with my stint here at the Sheriff's Office. I would not trade my job for anything. A lot of people have come and gone and I have learned a lot. Every day is a new adventure; you never know what you're going to deal with. I love helping people and that's what I feel I have done all of these years. I have seen a lot of good but mostly bad calls. At first I was a dispatcher for years now I have the pleasure of being a supervisor. I always tell new people you can learn something new every day. When you come in for your 12 hour shift you never know what you are going to face. You're answering calls one after the other, while making sure that your men and women on the road for law enforcement, fire and EMS are safe. When you pick up the phone it could be anything from a baby being born to a cat in a tree. Your emotions go up and down because dispatchers hear it all. We get any call you could imagine, and some you can't even fathom. Dispatchers have to deal with sickness, death, births, fights, animal issues, gun fights, family fights, fires etc. Dispatchers have to stay calm to get the job done and move on to the next call even if you are upset from what you're hearing on the 911 line you suck it up and move on. You do it to help with whatever needs to be done. Dispatchers are a unique group of people and yes it takes a certain kind of person to do this multitasking job. We do this because you have to care even though it's not a pretty job. It's an awesome feeling to help your community. You never know who you are going to be helping; it can be your family. The best feeling in the world is to go home and know you have done the best you could. And also know that your squad of men and women on the road have made it home safe. I wouldn't trade my experience for anything in the world. I have enjoyed being a dispatcher and would do it all over again. I still have compassion after all these years and still love my job. This is a hard long hour job and takes a lot out of you but we all love what we do. Our dispatchers are a wonderful group of people. ...**Rhonda Bass Brockwell**

Dispatchers are unique people. They put others above themselves. They work long hours for pay that is way below what value they are. This is unmeasurable to those that are reaching out to them for help. They are there 24/7 365 days of the year, holidays, weekends, always. Answering the calls from their community everything from; dogs barking, auto accidents, burglaries in progress to a child not breathing; all in a matter of an hour. And let's not forget the times when there are no calls just the waiting for something to happen, which always does. It takes a very special person to be a 911 telecommunicator, not everybody is cut out for this career. And it is a career, as once it has permeated into your soul, it's unshakable!

Note: Three things everyone should know when calling 911

- Know where you are, address, current business name and phone number
- Attempt to stay calm, it's easier to understand someone that is not hysterical
- Understand that the person that is taking your information on the phone is not the one jumping in the vehicle and coming to you, we dispatch out the help requested

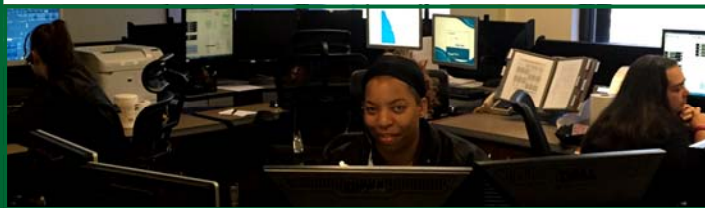
*Thank you for allowing us to serve you...Jeanette Braddock*

## TELECOMMUNICATOR WEEK A TRIBUTE TO DISPATCHERS

By Joshua Cordero, Communications Training Officer

What does it mean to be a dispatcher? I wracked my brain trying to put the right words down; to write something that did a morsel of justice to the work these individuals do every day. You may think that you know what these people do, but unless you've been there, you really don't. The dispatcher is the first unit on every scene. Before the Firefighter, EMT or Officer arrived, the dispatcher held the victim's hand, reassured them, kept them calm and provided instructions until units arrived. Once help arrives, the caller is released and the phone rings again, and the process repeats, time and

competent voices in the night that provide the pillars for the bridges of sanity and safety. They are expected to gather information from highly agitated people who can't remember where they live, what their name is, or



time again through a long 12 hour shift. Each call is unique, each caller is different. The responder, EMS Firefighter, or Deputy, wants to know more information and right now! The dispatcher is struggling; using everything they have been taught, every bit of experience they have, to keep the caller on the line and answering questions, and then relaying the information to the responders. They hear the terror, the fear, the emotion, the anguish but they can't allow that to affect them. No, they must remain calm, relay information and hold on until help arrives. For a moment, the dispatcher wonders if the units arrived in time, but never mind, the

what they just saw. And then, they are to calmly provide all that information to the officers, firefighters or paramedics without error the first time and every time..." Dispatchers are

men and women of all shapes and colors, as varied and different as the stars in the sky, with one thing in common. They are there to answer when you call. They are there for each and every one of us, every minute of every day. Again referring back to Chief



Wagoner, "...Dispatchers have two constant companions, other dispatchers and stress. They depend on one (other dispatchers) and try to ignore the other (stress). They are chastised by upset callers, taken for granted by the public and criticized by the officers. The rewards they get are inexpensive and infrequent, except for the satisfaction they feel at the end of a shift having done what they were expected to do."

After writing this and truly thinking about what it means to be a dispatcher, I hope to have scratched the surface of what these amazing ladies and gentlemen do every day. THANK YOU for being there, every day and every night!



phone is ringing again and the process starts all over. Chief Thomas Wagoner of the Loveland Colorado Police Department put it well when he said, "I have found in my law enforcement career that dispatchers are the unsung heroes of public safety. They miss the excitement of riding in a speeding car with lights flashing and sirens wailing. They can only hear of the bright orange flames leaping from a burning building. They do not get to see the joy on the face of worried parents as they see their child begin breathing on its own again after he has been given CPR. They are the





# Highlands County Sheriff's Office CRIME PREVENTION



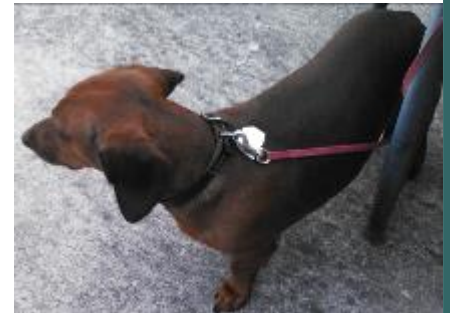
## New Neighborhood Watch Groups



We are pleased to announce a new Neighborhood Watch group has met their three meeting quota and are now "official" ! Calling themselves the Kerry/Killarney Group, Chairperson Steve Pickleseimer and Assistant Chairperson Fran Lynch are geared up to be a very active watch group. One thing for sure, I can attest that they sure can bring on the food! While serving refreshments at all three meetings, the final hurrah was really a feast! On Saturday afternoon, March 28th, approximately 40 people gathered at Steve's house for

the third required meeting and training. After learning how to describe suspicious persons, vehicles and activities, participants availed themselves of the fabulous buffet consisting of foods brought by all the attendees. Even the canine components ate well that day! We congratulate the residents of Kerry and Killarney Streets for their diligence in getting this group together and look forward to further interactions with them!

*At left, participants gather for the group photo having completed their three meeting quota and training. At right, the canine components! These dogs were more than willing to welcome everyone to the event and show everyone where the food was! Cheers to our newest group!*



## It's time to prepare for those great HOT DOGS!

National Night Out will be here before you know it! Please start planning now! If your Neighborhood Watch group would like to host our cooks and partake of our famous, quarter pound hot dogs on Tuesday, August 4th, please contact Nell Hays at 863-402-7369. We can handle about 8 groups, depending on the size. Some groups have discussed having this event but to confirm, please call me as soon as possible. As in the past, we will provide hot dogs, buns, the cooks and the K-9 units for demonstrations. In addition we will update your attendees on crimes in your neighborhood, if any. This event is to reward those of you that keep the home fires burning while your neighbors go up north for the summer, so let us hear from you!



POLICE-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



## What a Show Stopper! 911 Training Popular Topic



*Communications Training Officer Joshua Cordero conducts a 911 training at Lakeside Mobile in Lake Placid recently. Thanks Josh, for your timely information!*

He's been the most popular speaker we've ever had! After a dynamic 911 presentation at the Annual Neighborhood Watch Group meeting last November, Highlands County Sheriff's Office Communications Training Officer Josh Cordero had numerous requests for his presence at individual Neighborhood Watch Group meetings. Being the accommodating person he is, Josh went to all those meetings! He gave speeches at Whispering Pines, Oak Ridge Mobile, Lakeside Mobile, Fairmount Mobile Estates, Buttonwood Bay and Camp Florida, just to name a few, and he still has some remaining on his schedule! Always a dynamic speaker, Josh adapted to very different audiences and venues ranging from over 300 people in a large auditorium to 30 people in a small clubhouse. Everyone loved him! I'd like to thank Josh for taking the time to educate our Neighborhood Watch participants -You're the best!

## IRS Tax Scams

**A**t the April Suncoast Crime Prevention Association\* meeting, IRS Investigator Chris Hall spoke about the alarming number of IRS tax scams that are prevalent in the Florida market. He relayed that the IRS will always send a letter prior to any delinquent tax collection and they will definitely NOT warn people that deputies are enroute to make an arrest. The phone numbers that scammers use are often from overseas, yet other scammers use Voice Over Internet (VOIP) phones which are very difficult to trace.

Here are five things scammers often do but the IRS will not do: (1) Call to demand immediate payment, (2) Demand that you pay taxes without an opportunity to appeal, (3) Require you to use a specific form of payment, (4) Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone and (5) Threaten to have you arrested.

Investigator Hall also indicated that identity theft relative to income tax scams is finally on the decline. To this end the IRS has made some significant changes to their refund policies. First, a maximum of 5 refund checks may be mailed to the same mailing address. Second, only three refunds will be sent to any one green dot or prepaid Visa card. Third, filters have been set up to catch obviously fraudulent returns and refunds will not be made on these returns.

Due to the large number of people in Florida, Georgia and the District of Columbia who have become victims of tax fraud, these three areas have been designated as test sites for Individual Pin (IP) numbers. Anyone who has been a victim of identity theft from their income tax return or tax fraud can request an IP number however all residents of Florida, Georgia and the District of Columbia are being allowed to get an IP number. In order to get a number, you have to go to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) to start the process. If this test market is successful, the opportunity to get an IP number will be offered nationwide next year.

*\*The Suncoast Crime Prevention Association is made up of representatives from eight counties in the Tampa Bay area, including Highlands. The Highlands County Sheriff's Office has been an agency member of this association for over 15 years., attending monthly educational meetings and events.*



1-800-226-TIPS (8477)

HOTLINE

Webtips

Submit a tip On-Line





**QUARTERLY INFORMATION—ADMINISTRATION & COURT**

<b>New Member Hires:</b>		<b>Court Related Services:</b>	
Civilian	3	Cases In Court	8,346
Sworn	3	Inmates Taken to Court	1,148
PT Sworn	0	Arrests by Bailiffs	104
Applications Received	58	Persons thru Security Station	31,541
Applications Processed	44	<b>Judicial/Civil Process Services:</b>	
Payroll Transactions Processed	511	Received/Processed	1,648
Payable Checks Processed	1,930	Served	1,581
P-Card Purchases	519	Active	67
Citizens Fingerprinted	276		
Information Services Requests	408		

**QUARTERLY INFORMATION—LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Administrative Calls	52,030	Items into Evidence	2,541
911 Calls	13,808	Evidence Items Disposed	2,687
Computer Aided Dispatch	33,523	Crime Scene Lab Cases	108
<b>HCSO (58%)</b>	19,579	Crime Scene Call Outs	81
<b>SPD (17%)</b>	5,841	Criminal Investigation Unit Cases	174
<b>LPPD (7%)</b>	1,897	Investigations Open (Total)	49
<b>FIRE (5%)</b>	1,941	SOU Cases	63
<b>EMS (13%)</b>	4,265	SOU Narcotics Arrests	42
Offense Reports	2,452	CST Arrests	150
Traffic Citations Issued	855	SVU Cases Received from DCF	357
K-9 Searches	142	SVU Cases Open	47
<b>Warrant Numbers:</b>		Business Security Surveys/residential	4
Received/Processed	576	Neighborhood Watch Presentations	56
Served	543	Crime Victims Served	147
Active	2,707	Victim Advocate Services	688
Number of Arrests By Patrol	722		
Number of DUI's	13		

**QUARTERLY INFORMATION—DETENTION**

Inmates Booked into Jail	850	Average Daily Population	389
Inmates Released from Jail	788	Net Commissary Earnings	\$21,460
Instructional Program Hours	1,798	Medical Fees Charged	\$150,813
Inmate Transport Miles	26,127	Medical Fees Collected	\$5,093
Transports to State Prison	66	Subsistence Fees Charged	\$48,092
ICE Picked Up	1	Subsistence Fees Collected	\$11,689
Detainer's Placed	1	Inmate Per-Diem Charged	\$16,740
CMP Participants	10	Inmate Per-Diem Collected	\$7,941
Dollars Saved in Labor	\$9,209	Labor Hours by Inmates S/O	47,992
Dollars Collected in Fees	\$715	Labor Hours by Inmates -Other	2,488
Inmate Meals Served	104,979	Dollars Saved in Labor	\$406,364
Avg Food Cost per Day Per Inmate	\$1.71		
Alcohol Breath Tests	24		

**Tips**

**Help protect children against inappropriate content**

Before your children use the Internet, you should talk to them about what content they are allowed to access. Above all, it's important to open the lines of communication about online material that makes your child feel uncomfortable. Often, children are afraid to tell a parent or guardian about something they have seen because they are afraid that their Internet privileges will be taken away. The best solution is to openly discuss the situation before a problem arises.

- Know where children may access to the Internet—at school, friends' houses, community centers or libraries—and where the computers may not have blocking and filtering mechanisms
- Encourage your children to come to you or another trusted adult if he or she encounters inappropriate material
- Install blocking, filtering, and monitoring software in order to block pop-ups, restrict access to sites with adult content, and see which sites your children visit.
- Discuss your family values with your children and be clear about how online content aligns with those values. Clarify values and discuss how much of what is readily available may not support healthy values.
- Use the NetSmartz Internet Safety Pledges to set clear guidelines for going online.
- Report the sexual exploitation or online enticement of a child to [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com)

## Science Technology Engineering Mathematics

On Saturday, January 24, 2015, approximately 70 students from Highlands, Hardee, Glades, Hendry, DeSoto and Okeechobee counties gathered at Hill Gustat Middle School in Sebring to take part in the S.T.E.M. program. The Florida Learns STEM Scholars program involves some of the most talented high school students who have an interest in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). John Varady of the Heartland Educational Consortium, is the driving force behind this program, partnering with the Highlands County Sheriff's Office and the Highlands County School Board. Members of the HCSO Criminal Investigations and Crime Scene Units along with Hill Gustat School Resource Deputy Mike Helms coordinated this training which included fingerprint analysis, crime scene and blood spatter evaluation, making shoe print casts, understanding the equipment carried in a crime scene vehicle and a lecture on computer and cell phone analysis. Each area of expertise had its own display and hands-on experiences for the students, demonstrating the link to math, science, technology and engineering. Led by Sgt. Fennell, the fingerprint section begins with a lecture on how to analyze fingerprints and is followed by hands on experience where students lift prints from a crime scene. A staged homicide scene, presented by Technician Kathy Perez created an opportunity for students to calculate the angles on blood spatter and understand the collection and evaluation of evidence at the scene. Detective Stacey Andrews had a great time helping students make casts of their shoes and explaining the value of this evidence in a crime scene investigation. There is a great deal of specialized

equipment carried in the Crime Scene truck.. Detective Jon Wilkinson demonstrated many of these tools and afforded the students an opportunity to use them in crime scene scenarios. Always a popular section, Computer Specialist Jason Dionne spoke to students about the information that can be gleaned from computers and cell phones. Even deleted photos and files can be recovered, which is always a surprise to the tech-savvy students! Sheriff Benton has been very excited about providing the learning experience for our students over the past several years. "These students are our future! We are happy to participate and to demonstrate the many specialty fields that require STEM skills involved in law enforcement. Hopefully some of them will decide to follow this career path!"



## 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](http://www.flsheriffs.org/child-safety)