

# Quarterly Report of the HIGHLANDS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INTEGRITY    QUALITY SERVICE    PROFESSIONALISM

*Sheriff Susan Benton*



4th Quarter 2012

## 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.

## Public Safety Telecommunicator Training Program

Highlands County Sheriff's Office Consolidated Dispatch Center received approval from the State Department of Health as a training site for the State mandated 911 Public Safety Telecommunicator Training Program. July 1, 2010, legislation became law which required all public safety telecommunicators to become certified by October 1, 2012. The certification requires taking a course of 232 hours and passing a state exam. There is also a recertification process every two years that requires an additional 20 hours of approved in-service training. All of our members serving in the Consolidated Dispatch Center have been certified with the exception of the most recent trainees. The annual 911 report required by the State revealed that we have a "jam up TEAM". There were 224,732 calls into the center for the year and 43,868 emergency 911 calls. The State of Florida tracks and provides data for call answer time; of the total calls, our center answered 95% of the center calls within the excellent or above category. The State data indicates that each call was answered within 10 seconds. Accordingly, 911 calls were answered 94% of the time within 10 seconds. These numbers speak volumes about the capable and dedicated members of the Communications Center. Remember answering phones is just one part of the job; telecommunicators are listening, keeping victims calm, typing, talking into the radio and tracking all of the activity for every unit that they are responsible for during the shift. Thank you for your outstanding service to the citizens of Highlands County.



## SWAT Roundup



The Highlands County Sheriff's Office Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT) team participated in the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary SWAT Roundup International held at the Orange County Sheriff's Office Range December 2 – 7<sup>th</sup>. The event featured 51 teams from across the globe and included education, training, a trade show and competition. The Orange County Sheriff's Office, Orlando Police Department, Florida SWAT Association, Winter Park Police Department, Maitland Police Department and the Criminal Justice Institute at Valencia Community College collaborated to present this event. Along with several teams from across Florida and the United States, teams from Sweden, Bosnia, Hungary, Jamaica, St. Maarten, Brazil, Switzerland and Romania took part.

The competition was made up of six individual challenges: Hostage Rescue, Two Man-Four Gun Challenge, Pricher Scramble, Officer Rescue, Tower Scramble and Obstacle Course. The Marion County Sheriff's Office team won the overall title with San Antonio (TX) Police Department finishing second. The Highlands County Sheriff's Office team finished a commendable 25<sup>th</sup> in the competition which included an 11<sup>th</sup> place finish in the Two Man Four Gun Challenge and a 15<sup>th</sup> place in the Obstacle Course segment.

HCSO Lieutenant Jack Bailey, SWAT Team leader, was very pleased with the performance of the team. "For some of the teams in this competition, SWAT is their only duty where our team members are full time deputies and participate in SWAT on a part-time basis. Taking this into consideration, I feel we did an exemplary job and I'm very proud of the performance of our team." According Sheriff Susan Benton, "We should be so proud of our Team, not just for their performance but for their readiness and willingness to serve our citizens at this advance level in these dangerous situations".

For complete results of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary SWAT Roundup International, you may visit [www.swatroundup.net](http://www.swatroundup.net).

## Large Animal Technical Rescue Operations



### Graduating Class

November was a quantum leap forward for southwest Florida's animal technical rescue capability. During the week of November 5<sup>th</sup>, the University of Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine's "VETS" Disaster response team, conducted two, two day Large Animal Technical Rescue Operations Level courses. With the help of Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences (FDACS), law enforcement received two caches of equipment for technical rescue.

The first of the two day trainings was conducted at the Polk County Sheriff's Office, which has a large contingent of deputies specializing in large animal issues, and animal cruelty investigations. The second was coordinated by the Lee County Sheriff's Office, which has developed a multi-agency/multi-county Regional Domestic Security Task Force (RDSTF) Region VI "Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue Team". These deputies come from Lee, Highlands, Glades, Desoto, Collier, Charlotte, Sarasota, Hendry, and Okeechobee. This may well serve as a model for the other RDSTFs as these caches of equipment are deployed around the state. Highlands County Agricultural Deputy Fred Tagtmeier attended and was certified as a team member. Both Polk and Lee counties have already secured the assistance of veterinarians to assist in sedation, medical evaluation in the field, and other services. Veterinarians participated in both classes.

The two day course covers getting everyone up to speed on basic knots, moves into mechanical advantage systems for lifting and hauling, basic safety, animal behavior and animal first aid. Deputies used lifting systems, rescue glide and webbing patient movement systems; they performed a mud rescue, and in Lee County, they were able to stage a trailer accident and horse extrication (all using

mannequins for safety). All of the equipment used for the rescue scenarios was equipment in the RDSTF caches. To complete the training, both teams were given a rescue scenario requiring the use of their equipment, to appoint a leader, use Incident Command System to organize themselves, and perform the rescue without the assistance of the instructors. According to evaluations, both teams did well.

The next course and cache of equipment will be delivered to RDSTF 1, Walton County Sheriff's Office in January 2013, which will be followed by the delivery of the final two caches and training to Martin and Volusia Counties the week of Feb 25<sup>th</sup> 2013. Volusia County Fire Rescue Service recently had a horse mud rescue, so they will significantly benefit from the cache and training.

Contact John Haven ([haventj@ufl.edu](mailto:havenj@ufl.edu)), Director of the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, and leader of the VETS team, for any questions about animal technical rescue training or response.

Sheriff Benton says, "This equipment and technical assistance will be most valuable with the large animal cases that we face locally; we will be able to call on our regional team when need arises."



Equipment Trailer Available to Region VI Team

# Highlands County Sheriff's Office *CRIME PREVENTION NEWS*

January 2013



## Neighborhood Watch Becomes Official in Sebring Lakes



Residents of Sebring Lakes gather for their third meeting and celebrate their Neighborhood Watch status, September, 2012.

Look at all those bright, shining faces! They're the members of Highlands County's newest Neighborhood Watch in Sebring Lakes. Sebring Lakes is located west of US 27 in the vicinity of Josephine Creek and is a lovely community consisting of residents living on the streets of Grand Concourse and Sebring Lakes Boulevard. Connie Burton and William Rissmiller were the driving forces behind the initiation of this enthusiastic group but it's evident they have great support from their neighbors to make their area safer. Welcome to everyone in the Sebring Lakes community and we encourage ALL of the residents in this area to get involved in the group!

## Adelaide Shores Honors the Dedication of Neighborhood Watch Captain Donna Capone

She may be small but she's dynamite and dedicated. Donna Capone has been Captain of the Adelaide Shores Neighborhood Watch Group for the past two years and during that time she has regularly patrolled the manufactured home / RV community in both summer and winter. She can be seen in her golf cart, usually accompanied by her faithful dog, and always with cell phone at hand, anytime day or night! Yes, Donna has very faithful "Block Captains" however, she is the driving force (pun intended!) behind the eyes and ears of her community. To honor her dedication to safety in the park, Recreation Director David Greenslade presented Donna with a Certificate of Appreciation plaque at the November 26th Morning Coffee. In addition, Highlands County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Specialist Nell Hays gave Donna a gold Neighborhood Watch coffee cup. We thank you Donna, for your efforts to promote crime prevention in Adelaide Shores!



David Greenslade, Donna Capone, Nell Hays

## Crystal Lake Club in Avon Park Reorganizes and Revitalizes Neighborhood Watch



Frank Seitz has taken over the reigns as Neighborhood Watch Captain in the Crystal Lake Club. While it has an Avon Park address, Crystal Lake Club is located on Memorial Drive just south of Lakeview Memorial Gardens. It is a manufactured home community with its own 18 hole executive golf course. Established in 1987, Crystal Lake has been participating in Neighborhood Watch in some way since 1990. Predecessors of Mr. Seitz include Earl Tietsworth, Barbara Frances, Bob Zebig, Arlyn Fisher and Ed Trainor, to name a few. Frank is from Canada and enjoys living in Florida during the winter months. In November he presented the Neighborhood Watch concept once again, to the Crystal Lake homeowners and received an enthusiastic response to his request for Neighborhood Watch participants. Highlands County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Specialist Nell Hays gave a training presentation to the group on December 4th and everything seems to be in place for a great working group. Best wishes to Frank Seitz and the Crystal Lake Neighborhood Watch!

## Town 'N Country Holds Annual Neighborhood Watch Meeting



Board of Directors (left) & residents listen attentively to the annual Neighborhood Watch statistics presentation.

On December 3rd the homeowners and residents of Town 'N Country Mobile Home Park invited Nell Hays to speak at their morning coffee and conduct their annual Neighborhood Watch meeting. Nell presented property crime statistics for the past year and updated attendees on the latest frauds and scams. Town 'N Country is a community on Cooper Road just north of Leisure Acres. Neighborhood Watch Chairperson Hal Johnson and Assistant Chair Mark Sims apparently do a fine job of coordinating

this group because there were NO property crimes reported in this community over the past 12 months. Thanks to everyone for their vigilance in reporting suspicious persons, vehicles and activities and keeping their community safe!



## Neighborhood Watch Response Aids Deputies

*From the Highlands County Sheriff's Office News Release November 13, 2012*

Members of the Fairmount Mobile Estates Neighborhood Watch were on the lookout this morning and their information assisted deputies in apprehending a suspicious person with an active warrant. At approximately 8AM Monday, November 12th, a resident of Fairmount Mobile Estates called the Highlands County Sheriff's Office Central Dispatch to report a suspicious person in the vicinity of a vehicle parked at an unoccupied home. While deputies were en route to the area, numerous other calls came in essentially detailing the path of the subject. When the suspect ran, deputies set up a perimeter, however the subject continued eluding deputies. Undeterred, residents continued to call Dispatch and relay information regarding the subject's location. After tracking the subject for approximately 45 minutes, deputies took the subject, Donald Black, Jr. into custody at the Publix Shopping Plaza at the corner of US 27 and Schumacher Road/Sebring Parkway. Black, who lists his address as 3623 New York Ave., within Fairmount Mobile Estates, had an active warrant for his arrest stemming from a vehicle theft which occurred at the Alan Jay Dealership in October. He was arrested on that warrant and transported to the Highlands County Jail where additional charges are expected from this morning's incident. Patrol Sergeant Jamie Davidson credits the alert and continuous response from the Fairmount Mobile Neighborhood Watch participants for the timely apprehension of Donald Black, Jr. "If it wasn't for these calls, we might not have been able to find this person," Davidson commented, "They certainly helped us today!" Sheriff Susan Benton emphasized the value of the community in this situation, "As stated by Sir Walter Peel, the founder of modern policing, the police are the public and the public are the police. It is imperative that we operate together; thank you

Fairmount Mobile Neighborhood Watch." Fairmount Mobile Estates Neighborhood Watch Captain Bernie Rupert said "I'm glad we were able to assist the deputies this morning. We just did what we are trained to do, and I'm happy it worked out."

*Fairmount Mobile Neighborhood Watch Block Captains meet the first Monday of the month at Homer's Restaurant in Sebring.*



**QUARTERLY INFORMATION—ADMINISTRATION & COURT**

<b>New Member Hires:</b>		<b>Court Related Services:</b>	
Civilians Full/Part-time	4/1	Cases In Court	6,680
Sworn Full/Part-time Sworn	16/0	Inmates Taken to Court	946
Applications Received	54	Arrests by Bailiffs	91
Applications Processed	50	Persons thru Security Station	30,197
Payroll Transactions Processed	2,409	<b>Judicial/Civil Process Services:</b>	
Payable Checks Processed	495	Received/Processed	2,042
P-Card Purchases	475	Served	1,916
Citizens Fingerprinted	458	Active	126
Information Services Requests	602		

**QUARTERLY INFORMATION—LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Administrative Calls	52,025	Items into Evidence	3,517
911 Calls	11,444	Evidence Items Disposed	1,891
Computer Aided Dispatch	34,393	Crime Scene Lab Cases	170
<b>HCSO (64%)</b>	21,983	Criminal Investigation Unit Cases	237
<b>SPD (15%)</b>	5,311	Special Investigations Unit Cases	225
<b>LPPD (4%)</b>	1,410	SVU Cases Received from DCF	362
<b>FIRE (6%)</b>	1,988	Crime Victims Served	125
<b>EMS (11%)</b>	3,701	Victim Advocate Services	559
Offense Reports	3,050	Safe Neighbor Team Arrests	229
Traffic Citations Issued	962	SIU Narcotic Arrests	95
K-9 Searches	278	Number of Arrests By Patrol	776
<b>Warrant Numbers:</b>		DUI Arrests	25
Received/Processed	652	Business Security Surveys/residential	0
Served	590	Neighborhood Watch Presentations	32
Active	3,391		

**QUARTERLY INFORMATION—DETENTION**

Inmates Booked into Jail	1,115	Average Daily Population	409
Inmates Released from Jail	979	Staff Meals Purchased	\$1,795
Instructional Program Hours	1,761	Net Commissary Earnings	\$7,188.85
Inmate Transport Miles	31,134	Medical Fees Charged	\$167,238.08
Transports to State Prison	44	Medical Fees Collected	\$9,026.55
ICE Picked Up	21	Subsistence Fees Charged	\$57,976.94
Detainer's Placed	22	Subsistence Fees Collected	\$16,448.31
CMP Participants	13	Inmate Per-Diem Charged	\$20,026.93
Dollars Saved in Labor	\$9,121.84	Inmate Per-Diem Collected	\$8,220.12
Dollars Collected in Fees	\$770	Labor Hours by Inmates S/O	37,280
Inmate Meals Served	112,642	Labor Hours by Inmates -Other	902
Avg Food Cost per Day Per Inmate	\$1.93	Dollars Saved in Labor	\$293,860.70
Alcohol Breath Tests	31		

**Missing and Exploited Children's Program (MECP)**

*Keeping Kids Safe and Resilient*

Many children across our country face tremendous adversity—at home, at school, or on the street. Their far-from-ideal living conditions put them at high risk for becoming the “perfect victim” of predators who seek out and target vulnerable children. For this reason, it is imperative that we equip our children with the tools they need to be aware of their surroundings and protect themselves from victimization. Understanding which factors put a child at risk for exploitation and which serve to protect them will allow us to develop and implement the most effective prevention and intervention programs—programs that can be customized to meet the needs of individual communities.

This month's Missing and Exploited Children's Program (MECP) newsletter looks at the research on child and youth safety and resiliency, and describes some of the programs currently available to the juvenile justice field. The goal is to provide parents, educators and juvenile justice practitioners alike with a wide variety of resources that will assist them in the work of protecting children from harm and supporting victims and their families.

*For information on training and technical assistance opportunities on missing and exploited children's issues, contact MECP at 1-888-347-5610 or [mecptraining@fvtc.edu](mailto:mecptraining@fvtc.edu).*



## Highlands County Sheriff's Office Member Attains International Certification



**Detective Jeff Fennell**

The International Association for Identification is the world's oldest and largest forensic science/identification association. This organization certifies crime scene personnel in areas of bloodstain patterns, crime scene investigator, analyst and reconstructionist, footwear, forensic art, photography and video, and latent and ten print fingerprints. In November, Highlands County Sheriff's Detective Jeff Fennell, pictured above next to his Highlands County Sheriff's Office Crime Scene vehicle, attained the Certified Crime Scene Investigator designation. This requires a minimum of one year in crime scene related

activities and a minimum of 48 hours of approved instruction in crime scene related courses. In addition the applicant must pass a written test with a minimum score of 75% for the 200 questions, without supporting texts or internet access.

CSD Fennell has been a member of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office for 14 years and served as a Road Patrol Deputy and Evidence Technician prior to moving into the Crime Scene Unit.

"It is imperative that our members stay current on all matters related to their profession. Crime scene investigation is such a specific element in crime solving and our members are so dedicated to this community that they take seriously their training and certifications. Thank you Detective Fennell for your willingness to serve our community at this advanced level," said Sheriff Susan Benton.

Chief Deputy Mark Schrader added that "Jeff's experience, training, expertise, education and certifications in the area of crime scene investigations makes him a valuable and respected resource within the Sheriff's Office, in assisting our deputies and in particular our detectives in solving crimes."



## **HIGHLANDS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

**Sheriff Susan Benton**

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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)**