

# Nassau County Sheriff's Office



## Behind the Badge Newsletter



January - March  
2015

### SHERIFF'S MESSAGE

We have had many projects going on all at once with the two construction projects (911 Center and Administration Building), the New World CAD System Implementation, again trying to develop the ESS time keeper system with MUNIS, as well as working on the next fiscal's year budget. Once these projects are done, we should be a more efficient and professional law enforcement agency.

The Nassau County Sheriff's Office was the host for the Florida Sheriff's Association Winter Conference held at the Ritz Carlton on Amelia Island. There were over 500 registered guests for the event.

A new bloodhound puppy will soon be on watch in Nassau County. The 9-week-old canine cop was donated to the K-9 unit at the Nassau County Sheriff's Office Jail and Detention Center. We held a "Name Our Puppy" Contest and the winner was Kansas Hogan who named her "Angel".

We have signed an MOU with the City of Fernandina Beach Police Department to provide dispatch for their agency. This will save time dispatching in emergency situations since we already receive all 911 emergency calls. This will alleviate us



transferring the call to FBPD and also allow both agencies to know what is happening for better communication and coordination. We have already been dispatching for FBFR for several years.

Please stay safe!

*Sheriff Bill Leeper*

## Florida Sheriff's Association Winter Conference

The Florida Sheriffs Association completed their Winter Conference at the Ritz Carlton, Amelia Island, which was held from Sunday, February 1st until Wednesday, February 4th. Sheriff Bill Leeper and the Nassau County Sheriff's Office served as host for the event.



Twice each year, once in the winter and once in the Summer, Sheriffs and law enforcement professionals gather together to learn and discuss the current trends and legislative issues which impact their organizations and their communities. Sheriff's also attend training seminars to earn educational credits. During the conference

Sheriffs work together and engage in valuable discussions in addressing the prevalent topics throughout our state and nation.

At the conference, sheriffs attended classes on managing change within their respective agencies, how to utilize crime analysis and information sharing to enhance Intelligence Led Policing efforts, legal



grandchildren and himself. Sheriffs also developed core legislative principles in regards to medical marijuana use.



Honorable Rick Scott, Governor of Florida, spoke on current issues affecting the state of Florida during lunch on Monday February 2nd.

Over 100 vendors also were on hand to display their company's latest law enforcement technology and products.



updates, the challenges of dealing with sovereign citizens, and lessons learned during the incident which occurred in Gilchrist County where an individual killed his daughter, six



## New Bloodhound Named



Picture: Kansas Hogan, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student at Callahan Intermediate School, and Sheriff Bill Leeper present NCSO's new bloodhound "Angel"

A new bloodhound puppy will soon be on watch in Nassau County. The 9-week-old canine cop was donated to the K-9 unit at the Nassau County Sheriff's Office Jail and Detention Center.

The female pup will be trained to search for missing and endangered children and adults. But, since this little guy didn't have a name yet, so the sheriff's office held a "Name our Puppy Contest."



Sheriff Leeper and his K-9 Team reviewed over 1,200 names that were suggested and finally selected a winning submission.

**Kansas Hogan**, from Mrs. Bullard's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class at Callahan Intermediate School, was chosen as the winner. She suggested the name *Angel* because the canine "is an angel

looking for those who are lost in order to bring them home safe and sound."

*Angel* was donated to the Sheriff's Office by the Jimmy Ryce Foundation — a non-profit organization created and named after a 9-year-old South Florida boy who was abducted from his bus stop, sexually battered and killed as he tried to flee his attacker in 1995. Jimmy's parents, Don and Claudine Ryce, started the foundation less than a year after the boy's death because they believed their son would have been found sooner, and possibly lived, if their local law-enforcement agencies had access to a bloodhound.

Since 1996, the foundation has donated more than 400 AKC certified bloodhounds to law-enforcement agencies all over the country.



## Farewell to Remington

On January 17, 2015, the Nassau County Sheriff's Office said a sad farewell to one of the bloodhound K-9 Unit veterans, **Remington**.

Remington was born on November 30, 2007 and belong to a family in Boca Raton. The family donated Remington to NCSO in 2011. Lieutenant Terry Nye said that he was a great dog and showed a lot of interest in tracking from day one. The family remained in contact and would



receive updates on how he was doing.

Remington made many contributions while serving on the Bloodhound K-9 unit. He was responsible in helping track a runaway who was successfully returned to his family.

We thank *Remington* and his original family for letting him serve the citizens of Nassau County. He will be missed!



**RIP – Remington**

## Fleet Update

Our military surplus Humvee, which was obtained to assist us in the event we have a bad storm or flooding conditions in order to help reach citizens in areas where our regular



patrol vehicles can't go in search & rescue operations, was recently wrapped and emergency lighting installed. I'd like to thank Motorola for donating the wrap, Hasty's Communications for donating the emergency lighting and First Coast Paint & Body for donating the labor to paint the vehicle before being wrapped.

It will now allow us to utilize the vehicle in other capacities, such as public relations activities, recruiting, parades, etc. It can also function as a fully equipped emergency vehicle.

We are testing out a new license plate recognition system, which is installed on the Dodge Charger, which was donated by FDOT to be utilized to combat aggressive



driving. The license plate reader searches the tag registrations on vehicles around the system to see if they are stolen. The system works by capturing digital images of license plates as they pass one of the three cameras mounted on the patrol car. The plates are cross checked on a server which is in the trunk. If a plate matches a wanted vehicle, the system will take a picture of the car, plate, and provide its GPS coordinates.

## Construction Update

The construction of our new 911 Call Center is moving along. If you drive by the Emergency Operations Center, you will see the construction as it progresses. You should also see more activity where our new Sheriff's Office will be located in the next few weeks as well.



## Special Olympics Law Enforcement TORCH RUN

The signature event of the law enforcement community's year-round support is the annual Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics Florida.

Every year, the Flame of Hope™ has traversed Florida in an intrastate relay of simultaneous routes throughout the state, covering countless thousands of miles. The torch is carried by local and state law enforcement officers all the way to the Opening Ceremonies of Florida's annual State Summer Games.

Nassau County Sheriff's Office personnel will participate in the Torch Run and hope to surpass the amount of money collected last year. The money collected stays in Nassau County to help our local special needs population.



The 2015 Law Enforcement Torch Run will be on April 10, at West Nassau High School at 1 PM.

## School Crossing Guard Appreciation Day

Governor Rick Scott issued a proclamation designating Friday, February 6, as “School Crossing Guard Appreciation Day.” Every year the Governor declares a day to show appreciation for the hard work and dedication of the school crossing guards throughout the state. NCSO staff celebrated Nassau County crossing guards with a light lunch, cake, presentation of certificates, and a drawing for a gift basket. “Our school crossing guards are a special and unique group of people and they are truly dedicated and hard working as they protect our children at school crossings throughout Nassau County” said Sheriff Bill Leeper.



## New Public Safety Software

The Nassau County Sheriff’s Office continues to build and train employees on the new Public Safety Software (PSS), *New World*. This system will be an effective and efficient service to not only all employees, but most importantly the citizens we serve.



## Missing Person Day Ceremony

Dozens of families of missing loved ones joined the Justice Coalition, law enforcement officers, and the John Rowan Jr. Foundation for a Missing Persons Day ceremony at the Jacksonville City Hall Atrium on Friday, February 20, 2015. They were fathers, daughters and loved ones and then they vanished.

Nassau County Sheriff Bill Leeper spoke about the importance of this day for adult victims and their families. He assured the families that law enforcement had not forgotten their loved ones; detectives continue to search for and follow every lead.

“We must remain vigilant in our efforts to ensure the safety of our young people, and work together to provide law enforcement and volunteers the necessary resources and tools needed to bring these people home safely”, said Sheriff Leeper.

A photographic exhibit of 13 Missing Persons was created by their loved ones, and a long stemmed yellow rose was presented to each family member present.

A photo of Nassau County missing person Jackie Markham, who was last seen on December 14, 2000 in Callahan, was displayed prominently at the ceremony to remind everyone to keep searching for her.



At least 2,000 people go missing every day and about 90 percent of them are children.

If you have any information you can report immediately to First Coast Crime Stoppers at (866) 845-TIPS.

## Read A Book Day 2015

Sheriff Bill Leeper and deputies from the Nassau County Sheriff's Office had the opportunity to read to students at the Callahan Head Start pre-school on Thursday, March 12, 2015. Students listened attentively as each deputy read a book of interest to the kids. Afterwards, all the children went outside to look at and sit in a patrol car. Some talked over the PA system and some even turned on the siren. The kids and deputies all had a great time interacting with one another.



Callahan Head Start is located in Callahan, FL. It is a preschool that serves children ages 3-5 and offers instructional programs in reading and math.



Head Start is a federally funded school readiness, Pre-K program that serves the neediest families in Nassau County. The school is always looking for donations like art supplies, clothes, food, books, or someone to help plant a garden on their playground. During the school year students take field trips, participate in a fall festival, put on a Christmas play, and hold an end-of-the-year graduation & celebration ceremony.

## Special Operations Events

The Special Operations Unit recently participated in the Boots & Badges Event held at Whataburger in Yulee.



The Sheriff's Office participated with bringing Sheriff's office vehicles, such as the Humvee, the new Charger, the Motorcycle unit, as well as the Agriculture/Marine unit vehicles.



The unit also participated in Faith Christian Academy's Career Day. The students got a hands on experience of the different vehicles and equipment that the Nassau County Sheriff's Office has to serve the citizens of Nassau County.



## Distracted Driving Awareness Month

There are more than 15 million licensed drivers in Florida and millions of other who visit the state each year. In 2014, there were over 42,000 distracted driving crashes in Florida resulting in more than 200 fatalities and over 35,000 injuries.

“Distracted driving is a real problem on our roadways,” Sheriff Bill Leeper said. “Too many people think it is okay to text, talk on the phone, or play with their mobile devices while driving, but doing so may lead to real consequences and unnecessary tragedies.”

According to the Florida Department of Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles, drivers between the ages of 20-29, who represent 18 percent of all licensed drivers in Florida, were responsible for 31 percent of all distracted driving crashes last year.

“While anything that takes your eyes off of the road, hands off of the wheel, or mind off of the task of

driving is a hazard, there is a heightened concern about the risks of texting while driving because it combines all three types of distraction – visual, manual and cognitive,” Leeper said. “It’s best to turn off your phone or mobile electronic device and put it in the trunk, glove compartment or back seat where you won’t be tempted to look at it or use it.”

Distracted driving, especially among young people, has become recognized by safety experts and the public as one of the biggest risks on our roads and highways. The Nassau County Sheriff’s Office, along with other police agencies throughout the U.S., will be extra vigilant by enforcing laws that prohibit texting and use of cell phones while driving, under the banner of the “U Drive, U Text, U Pay” campaign.

“Although texting and talking on cell phones gets the major public attention, there are other causes of distraction that can divert a driver’s attention from the road,” said Leeper. One of the biggest causes of distraction, especially for new teen drivers, is having other teens in the car.

In addition to cell phone use, distractions while driving can include eating and drinking, talking to passengers,

grooming, using a navigation system, watching a video and adjusting a radio, CD player, or MP3 player.

Here are some safety tips to prevent distracted driving:

- Always buckle up.
- Keep your hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road.
- Don’t let a phone call distract you from driving safely.



- Allow voice mail to handle your calls and return them at your convenience.
- Pull off the road to a safe area or ask a passenger to make or take a call for you.
- Position the phone in easy reach.
- Use a hands-free device if available.
- Suspend conversation during hazardous driving conditions.
- Do not engage in stressful or emotional conversations while driving.
- Never take notes or look up numbers while driving.
- Talk to your kids about how to be safe while driving.
- Remind kids to follow traffic signals and laws, make eye contact with pedestrians, and enter and exit driveways and alleys slowly and carefully.
- Let your actions speak as loud as your words.
- Set a good example for kids by putting devices down when you're driving.
- Teach kids to put cell phones and other distractions in the back seat or out of sight until their final destination.

## Third Citizen Academy Graduates

Sheriff Bill Leeper has announced the graduation of the 3rd Law Enforcement Citizens Academy at the Nassau County Sheriff's Office.

NCSO's Citizen Law Enforcement Academy is an educational and informative program that allows Nassau citizens the opportunity to learn about the issues that face law enforcement in our community. The program also helps citizens better understand police work in their community, and develops stronger ties between our community and the Sheriff's Office.

"The Citizen Academy program is yet another mechanism for law enforcement to inform the public of what we do, improve communication, and obtain citizen input, assistance, and support throughout the community by sharing information" said Sheriff Bill Leeper.

The 9 week program gives adults a behind the scenes look at Sheriff's Office operations through hands-on participation and expert speakers. It's conducted in a classroom setting, as well as "in-the-field" utilizing instructors from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines.

The Citizen's Academy is designed to provide members of the community with the opportunity to gain specific knowledge about the workings of the Nassau County Sheriff's Office and a general insight into the field of law enforcement. The program is informational only and does not train or promote citizens to act in a law enforcement capacity.

Classes include a tour of NCSO's facilities and virtually every aspect of a deputy's job including patrol operations, traffic enforcement, hostage negotiations, vice & narcotics, crime scene investigations, corrections and 9-1-1 communications dispatch. Students also watch a K-9 demonstration and visit the Firearms Range to take part in weapons safety training. Participants learn what takes place behind the badge at the Nassau County Sheriff's Office.

The Citizen's Law Enforcement Academy is free of charge and is held on consecutive Thursday evenings from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and one Saturday morning from 8:00 a.m. until noon at the Nassau County Sheriff's Office, located at 76001 Bobby Moore Circle, Yulee, Florida.

Class size is limited and all applicants will be screened through a routine criminal background check prior to their acceptance into the program. Deadline for applications is two weeks prior to the beginning of the class.

The 4th class will be starting in August. For further information, contact the Nassau County Sheriff's Office Human Resources Department or Larry Boatwright (Volunteer Coordinator) at (904) 548-4027 or [lboatwright@nassauso.com](mailto:lboatwright@nassauso.com).



*Seated left to right are: Jessica Styers, Christine Miceli, Kimberly Richardson, Linda Adams, Janice Mote, Emily Baumgartner*

*Standing left to right are: Gloria Stephens, David Park, James Brooke, Paul Stephens, Michael Broussard, George Ashbaugh, Michael Pikula, Dwight Braddock*

## Citizen's Advisory Team News

The Citizen Advisory Team (CAT) meets in the five major geographical areas of the county, to advise the Sheriff's Office on community concerns with crime.

The five geographical areas that have a Sheriff's CAT are: **Hilliard, Callahan, Bryceville, Yulee, and Amelia Island**. The teams meet once a month to discuss issues pertaining to their area of the county and to plan solutions with the Sheriff's Office staff.

If you are interested in joining one of the CAT teams in the **Hilliard, Callahan or Bryceville** area, please contact Mitch Kinsey at 904-548-4056 or email him at [mkinsey@nassauso.com](mailto:mkinsey@nassauso.com).

For the CAT teams for **Yulee or Amelia Island**, contact Larry Boatwright at 904-548-4027 or email him at [lboatwright@nassauso.com](mailto:lboatwright@nassauso.com)



*Guest speaker at Yulee Citizens Advisory Team Meeting*

*Susan Woodford from the Community Coalition Alliance.*



## Battle of the Badges

The Nassau County Sheriff's Office participated in the First Annual *Battle of the Badges* Basketball game held on March 28, 2015, to benefit the Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run.



The game was a fired up competition between the Sheriff Deputies and Firefighters that thrilled the packed stands at West Nassau High School Gymnasium.

The Special Olympic Athletes played a pre-event game to get the crowd motivated. SRO Deputy Doc McDonald stated that the group of West Nassau High School Chick-Fil-A Leadership Program students organized the event and did a fantastic job. A lot of hard work and time went into the project and the results showed it. The students were led by their Sponsor Teacher – Mrs. Tommy Roberts.



Chick-Fil-A is filming an Impact Project video of the Leader Academy and chose West Nassau High School students to be a part of it. The film crew was shooting portions of the student's organization of the event and parts of the game, which will be included in the video. This film will be shown when the Chick-Fil-A Leader Academy awards other schools. This is such a distinct honor for the students at West Nassau High School and they should be proud of their accomplishments. These are the future leaders for Nassau County. The Nassau County Sheriff's Office is proud to support our community and to be involved in such a great organization as the Special Olympics.

## New Employees Sworn In

The Nassau County Sheriff's Office swore in new employees in Patrol, Corrections and Dispatch.



*Pictured from left to right:*

*Daniel Jones, Alexandra Creel, Trevor Zittrower,  
Joshua Courchene (transfer from Corrections)*



*Deanne Campbell was sworn in as  
a Detention Deputy in Corrections.*

*Alexis Curtright  
was sworn in as  
a Dispatcher.*



## Welcome!!

The Nassau County Sheriff's Office welcomes our new employees to the organization!

Alexis Curtright

Dispatcher/Communications



Deanne Campbell

Detention  
Deputy/Corrections



Alexandra Creel

Patrol  
Deputy/Operations/Patrol



Daniel Jones

Patrol  
Deputy/Operations/Patrol



Trevor Zittrower

Patrol  
Deputy/Operations/Patrol



## Fourth Quarter Awards

Congratulations to our employees of the 4th quarter (October to December 2014):

Deputy of the Quarter

*Monty Wettstein*  
Patrol Deputy



Civilian of the Quarter

*Dell Hodges*  
Property Clerk



Dispatcher of the Quarter

*Linda Ottinger*  
Communications Dispatcher



Supervisor of  
the Quarter

*Lt. Hank Martinez*  
Patrol



Detention Deputy of the  
Quarter

*Joshua Courchene*  
Corrections Division



## Employee of the Year Awards

The Nassau County Sheriff's Office held their annual Employee of the Year ceremony on Wednesday, March 25, 2015 at Florida State College at Jacksonville Nassau Campus.

Sheriff Bill Leeper recognized those members of the Nassau County Sheriff's Office, who through their dedication and commitment to our community, have placed themselves in harm's way to keep innocent citizens from being harmed; who through their experience, have saved a life of a citizen; or through their exceptional and outstanding service, ensure the quality of life all of us have come to expect living in Nassau County.

Those honored for their outstanding efforts during 2014 were:

**Volunteer of the Year – William Patterson**

**Civilian Employee of the Year – Dorothy "Dell" Hodges**

**Communications Officer of the Year – Linda Ottinger**

**Detention Deputy of the Year – Charles Gander**

**Investigator of the Year – Donald Brewer**

**Patrol Deputy of the Year – William "Monty" Wettstein**

**Supervisor of the Year – Lieutenant Renee Braddock**



*Pictured left to right: Detention Deputy Charles Gander, Deputy Monty Wettstein, Investigator Don Brewer, Lt. Renee Braddock, Communications Officer Linda Ottinger, Volunteer William Patterson and Civilian Dell Hodges*

"Our employees are our most valuable asset and we must do all we can to make sure they are appreciated and rewarded for their hard work," said Sheriff Leeper.

Others who were also recognized were:

**Detective Ray Rhoden,** for being nominated by NCSO for the *Florida Retail Federation Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award*.



**Sergeant Scott Gearis, Deputy Ken Clements and Deputy Thomas Kelley** for being recognized by the Florida Sheriff's Association as a finalist for the *FSA Law Enforcement Officer of the Year*.



**Deputy Kellam Paolillo and Deputy Dallas Palecek** for their efforts in traffic safety.



*Sheriff Leeper with Deputy Paolillo*



*Sheriff Leeper with Deputy Palecek*

## Happenings at NCSO

The Journey Church brought an Easter basket filled with sweets by our office just to say thanks for what you all do for our community.



Picture: Paula Sellek presents Marley Zodel and Sheriff Leeper the basket.

## Leadership Nassau Visit

Leadership Nassau Group toured the Sheriff's Office on March 17th, 2015. Sgt. Jon Slebos, Training Coordinator, gave a presentation of gun safety and a tour of the gun range.



Participants also were given the opportunity to try to navigate through the cones with the special cycle and goggles that simulate the effects of driving while impaired.



## Communications News



Pictured left to right: Communications Manager Ricky Rowell, Dispatcher Grace Mason, Supervisor Lisa Jones and Sheriff Leeper

The STEMI (ST elevation myocardial infarction) Team at UF Health Shands held a "Celebration of Life" recognition day at their hospital in Jacksonville to thank all of the 911 operators, first responders, nurses, and doctors from several counties who were involved in saving the life of another. **Nassau County 911 operators Lisa Jones and Grace Mason** were on duty January 29, 2014 when someone called needing help for heart attack symptoms. Their quick response in getting Nassau Fire/Rescue to the individual was instrumental in saving the man's life.



Communications Dispatcher Lisa Sharkey was recognized for her efforts in assisting CID and Patrol with a Spanish speaking citizen.

Communications Supervisor Lisa Jones was recognized for her professionalism in handling a difficult situation while performing her duties as Duty Supervisor.



# Behind the BADGE

*Newsletter*

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We hope that you have enjoyed this issue of the Nassau County Sheriff's Office *Behind the Badge* Newsletter! If you have articles or information for the next newsletter, please contact Diana Crigger at 904-548-4063 or by email at [dcrigger@nassauso.com](mailto:dcrigger@nassauso.com)

**As always, please stay safe!**

