

NASSAU COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



*Behind the
Badge
Newsletter*

January - March
2018



NASSAU COUNTY CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS MEETING

Nassau County Constitution Officers Tax Collector John Drew, Property Appraiser Mike Hickox, Supervisor of Elections Vicki Cannon, Clerk of the Court John Crawford, and Sheriff Bill Leeper met at the Property Appraiser's Office to discuss ways to improve their organizations and save taxpayer dollars. The topics of discussion included ways to improve moral and production, rising employee health care cost, cyber security, sexual harassment training, ways to reduce cost through inter-local agreements and cost sharing between offices.



BITCOIN RELEASE

NCSO receives \$1.044 million of forfeited funds from Homeland Security

On Wednesday, January 17, 2018, United States Attorney Maria Chapa Lopez, along with U.S. Immigration and Homeland Security Investigations Special Agent in Charge James Spero, distributed more than \$1.7 million in civilly forfeited funds to three law enforcement agencies at the Jacksonville Office of Homeland Security Investigations. These awards are the result of a federal civil forfeiture of more than \$4.5 million in funds obtained fraudulently through the hacking of bitcoin accounts. The funds were distributed to the Nassau County Sheriff's Office (\$1,044,550.05); the Florida National Guard (\$627,487.74); and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (\$209,162.58).

In November 2013, Homeland Security Investigations Special Agents learned of the theft of approximately 5,400 bitcoins from Sheep Marketplace, an illicit online marketplace that has since been shut down. Sheep Marketplace was used predominately for the illicit sale of narcotics. Jacksonville residents Sean Mackert and Nathan Gibson determined that the Sheep Marketplace had a single online "wallet" that contained the bitcoins earned by individuals using the marketplace. They devised a scheme that tricked Sheep Marketplace's "wallet" into transferring the bitcoins of others into "wallets" they controlled. During the investigation, investigators determined that Mackert and Gibson had routed the bitcoins through multiple online "wallets," then wired them to a licensed money service business. At their direction, the money service business exchanged the bitcoins for United States currency, then wired the funds to bank accounts in Jacksonville that were controlled by Mackert and Gibson. Mackert and Gibson both have plead guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud and are awaiting sentencing. Each faces up to 20 years in federal prison.

During the criminal investigation, Homeland Security agents, with the assistance of the Nassau County Sheriff's Office, the Florida National Guard, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, and the United States Attorney's Office, seized the funds along with two vehicles. The United States commenced a civil forfeiture action against the funds, alleging that they were proceeds of fraud. The district court of Florida ultimately ordered the forfeiture of the funds and the two vehicles. The Nassau County Sheriff's Office provided valuable investigative assistance to their Homeland Security partners by tracking the money trail and money laundering process.

"Taking the profit out of crime is important in disrupting and dismantling illegal enterprises, deterring crime, and restoring property to victims," said Sheriff Bill Leeper. "It is also an effective way to have criminals help fund law enforcement efforts."

Through the Equitable Sharing Program, law enforcement agencies receive resources to supplement their law enforcement mission. Asset forfeiture and equitable sharing are valuable law enforcement tools that send a clear message that crime does not pay.



EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR 2017

NCSO Employees of the Year for 2017 honored

Yulee, Fla. – On Wednesday, March 28, 2018, Sheriff Bill Leeper recognized 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. Several individuals were recognized as employees of the year for 2017 and some were presented life-saving awards.

"Our community is in good hands with all those who serve our citizens day in and day out" said Sheriff Leeper. "Whether they are sworn or non-sworn our employees are the very best and it is an honor for me to be able to work with them each and every day."

The Nassau County Sheriff's Office is the largest and most visible county agency and answer more calls for service than all other departments combined. No other agency or Constitutional Officer within Nassau County has that unique responsibility.

We need to make sure we have the necessary tools, equipment, personnel and resources available in order to do the job and keep all of us safe and secure. 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, stated Leeper.



Those honored were:

Volunteer of the Year – Emily Baumgartner

Civilian Employee of the Year – Crime Analyst Angela Conboy

Communications Officer of the Year – Danielle Rubio

Detention Deputy of the Year – Deputy Jonathan McCracken

Patrol Deputy of the Year – Deputy Brad Knight

Investigator of the Year – Detective Mark Murdock

Supervisor of the Year – Sergeant Cedric Arline



Life-Saving Award certificates & pins were given to Detective Jeremy Hyers, Detective David Douglas, Deputy Lizandro Deleon, Deputy Bill Quick, Deputy Mark Hunter, and Deputy William Morgan.

Special recognition was given to Detective Thomas Kelley for his actions during Hurricane Irma.

JUST DRIVE...THAT'S IT

All of us at the Nassau County Sheriff's Office want to see you arrive at your destination safely. That's why we are launching a traffic safety campaign called, "Just Drive - that's it." The best way to partner with us is to focus your full attention on driving every time you're behind the wheel of a vehicle. That way you are not only driving safely, you have a better chance to spot nearby distracted drivers and avoid them. Nassau County is known around the globe as a tourist destination. It's an enviable designation, but it brings with it more traffic. In addition, people are moving to Nassau County every day, which puts even more cars on our roads. These are important reasons we must all do our part to leave plenty of time to reach our destinations and focus on the task at hand: Just drive — that's it.

Don't text. Don't call. Don't e-mail. Don't eat. Don't groom. Don't read. Just drive. That's it. The campaign encourages motorists to avoid distractions while driving — especially cell phone use — in order to pay full attention to the road. Texting, talking, using a map — basically anything other than driving — is dangerous because it takes your attention away from the road. "No text message or e-mail is worth the risk of endangering your life or the lives of others on the road," Sheriff Bill Leeper said. "By just driving, you are keeping yourself and others on the road at a lower risk for crashes."

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). These types of distractions include texting, using a cell phone or smartphone, eating and drinking, talking to passengers, grooming, reading, using a navigation system, watching a video, and adjusting in-car audio. Five seconds is the average time your eyes are off the road while texting. When traveling at 55 mph, that's enough time to cover the length of a football field blindfolded, according to the NHTSA.



Drivers who text are 23 times more likely to be involved in a crash, according to studies by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute. Teenagers are among the drivers most likely to be distracted. A 2016 study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that 60 percent of teen crashes are caused by distracted driving. The top distraction for teens is other passengers, accounting for 15 percent of teen driver accidents, compared to 12 percent caused by texting or talking on a cell phone.

NCSO offers these safety tips to help remind motorists to make all activities secondary to driving:

Leave your house with plenty of time to make it to your destination.

Before you depart: - Put on any accessories you may need such as sunglasses - Adjust seats and seat belts - Enter an address in the navigation system or review maps and written directions.

Once you are driving, do not eat or drink, groom or apply makeup, text or e-mail with a mobile device.

If you must make a call, use a hands-free device.

Yulee Elementary Guest Reader

SHERIFF LEEPER PARTICIPATES IN LITERACY WEEK AT YULEE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

On Thursday, January 25, 2018, Nassau County Sheriff Bill Leeper participated in Celebrate Literacy Week Florida! Sheriff Leeper read a book titled “Bad Day at Riverbend” to 5th grade students at Yulee Elementary School. Sheriff Leeper spent time with the students and spoke to them about the importance of education and being good role models. Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida! is a weeklong celebration aimed at raising awareness of the programs and projects offered by the Department of Education’s Just Read, Florida! office and its partner agencies and organizations. The Department of Education actively works with community groups and volunteer organizations throughout the state to make reading a priority in students’ lives.



FIRST FEMALE INMATE OBTAINS GED

First female inmate obtains high school diploma through Sheriff's Office GED Program

Yulee, Fla. – The Nassau County Sheriff's Office Inmate GED Program at the Nassau County Jail/ Detention Center has graduated their first female inmate.

Inmate Devonna Deshae Williams, who is from Fernandina Beach and was arrested and convicted of Sale Manufacture or Deliver Cannabis, obtained her high school diploma on February 20, 2018. She was presented her diploma by Sheriff Bill Leeper and GED Coordinator Tracey Barnes.



Inmate Williams was sentenced to the Nassau County Jail for six months after her drug conviction and worked very hard over the past four months to study and pass several exams to complete her diploma. "I thank my mother for supporting me even when I didn't make her proud. I hope she's proud of me now" said Williams.

In talking to Sheriff Leeper about her future plans, she said it took this experience in jail to open her eyes and thankfully the GED program allowed her to obtain something that once seemed impossible. Williams plans to continue her education at Florida State College at Jacksonville and eventually join the military or open up her own business.



WOMEN'S SELF DEFENSE CLASS

Women's Basic Self-Defense & Personal Safety Class

Yulee, Fla. – The Nassau County Sheriff's Office is now offering a Women's Basic Self-Defense & Personal Safety course.

The NCSO will be offering the *Women's Basic Self-defense Class* four times a year with a class limit size of 12 participants. "The course, which is offered at no cost to students, will provide the knowledge and hands-on experience to reduce the chances of becoming victimized during an attack" said Sheriff Bill Leeper.



The sheriff's office will also provide safety plans while traveling locally and abroad, which includes entering and exiting your home, as well as other frequented places such as parking lots, retail stores, and restaurants. The Women's Basic Self-defense & Personal Safety Class is a basic self-defense, and safety awareness program that covers various topics including daily personal safety practices and basic self-defense tactics



To be eligible for participation you must meet the following requirements:

Be a female resident of Nassau County at least 13 years of age (All participants under the age of 18 must have a signed waiver of liability by their parent / guardian)

Wear appropriate attire (Workout type clothing, shorts, jogging pants, t-shirts, and tennis shoes. No skirts, dresses, low cut shirts, flip-flops, or heeled type footwear will be allowed)

All participants regardless of age will be required to sign a waiver of liability form to participate. Those participants under the age of 18 must have a signed waiver of liability by their parent or guardian.

All classes will be held at Nassau County Sheriff's Office Training Room, located at 77151 Citizens Circle in Yulee and each class is two hours long. For additional information or questions contact NCSO's Training Division at 904-548-4031.



WATER RESCUE

Three juveniles (13 year old male, 15 year old male and 15 year old female) were floating on the below raft and were caught by the 15-20mph west wind and blown off shore. A bystander and a lifeguard paddled out to them on a paddle board. Both reached them approximately 500 yards off shore. Due to the strong wind they were unable to paddle back in with the juveniles. The Nassau County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit arrived as they were approximately 800-1000 yards off shore. NCSO deputies placed all of the subjects in their boat and took them back to the beach where lifeguards assisted them the rest of the way - approximately 25-30 yards.



The bottom picture is the NCSO Marine Unit bringing them back to shore.



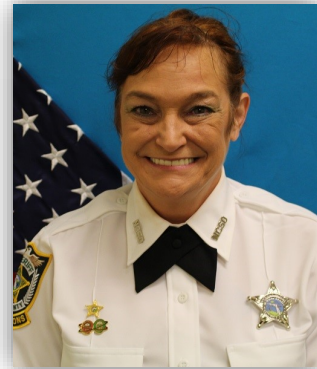
Welcome **OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS**



Ramona Bennett
Dispatcher



Marion Cuttino
Dispatcher



Lisa Hogan
Dispatcher



Donnell Hood Jr.
Detention Deputy



Spencer Lloyd
Patrol Deputy



Darren Lorenz
Detention Deputy



Michael Morris
Patrol Deputy



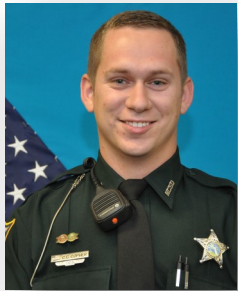
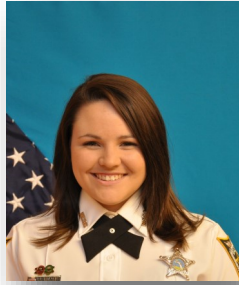
James Ray
Emergency Operations



Ryan Sandifer
Patrol Deputy

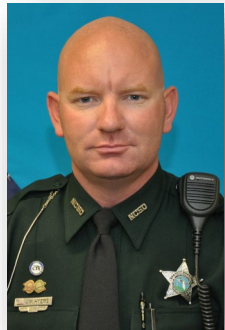
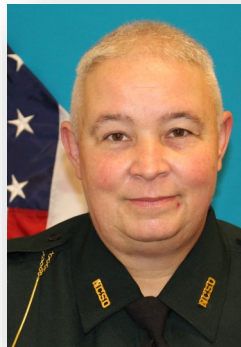
FIRST QUARTER AWARDS

SUPERVISOR OF THE
QUARTER
BRIANNA CREWS



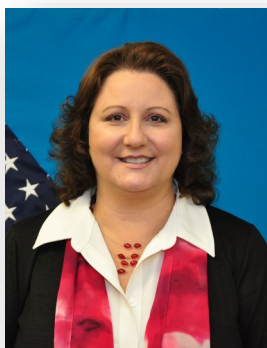
DEPUTY OF THE QUARTER
CHRISTIAN COPHER

DETENTION DEPUTY OF THE
QUARTER
DEANNE CAMPBELL



INVESTIGATOR OF THE
QUARTER
JEREMY HYERS

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
OF THE QUARTER
BRITTANY O'BERRY



CIVILIAN OF THE QUARTER
KATHY HALL

FIRST QUARTER SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

20 YEARS

SGT. JONATHAN HOOPER

10 YEARS

DETECTIVE RAY RHODEN

SGT. PAUL HINSON

DEPUTY SCOTT KELLY

5 YEARS

SHERIFF LEEPER

UNDERSHERIFF LUEDERS

DIRECTOR HENDERSON

DIRECTOR EDWARDS

DIRECTOR JOHNSON

MARY MERCER

EMPLOYEE BIRTHDAYS

April

May

Gwen Jones	04/01	Ramona Bennett	05/02
Traci Belz	04/03	Kathrine Hall	05/04
Jeffrey Witt	04/05	James Drury	05/07
Darren Lorenz	04/09	William Morgan	05/08
Paula Taylor	04/09	Leecie Dennard	05/10
Jerry Cockerham	04/10	Christian Copher	05/10
Kayla Golden	04/11	Kimberly Malott	05/11
Matthew Morgan	04/16	Martha Oberdorfer	05/14
Hope Herrin	04/20	Sara Winkle	05/14
Scott Gearis	04/25	Kenneth Davis	05/18
George Lueders	04/26	Merrill Reynolds	05/20
Sidney Beckom	04/26	Ronnie Jewell	05/20
Ryan Schmidt	04/27	Spencer Kelly	05/20
Kenneth Norton	04/29	Jimmy Goodbread	05/23
		Beth Bell	05/24



EMPLOYEE BIRTHDAYS

June

Larry Wyant	06/01
Austin Cone	06/03
Cassandra Floyd	06/05
James Ennis	06/05
Brandon Austin	06/05
Joshua Patterson	06/12
Spencer Lloyd	06/18
James Ray	06/19
Jesse Shook	06/19
Asa Higgs	06/21
Donald Brewer	06/22
Connie Johnson	06/22
Thomas Crowder	06/27
Michael Rowe	06/28
Nathan Hilliard	06/28
Michael Reynolds	06/29
Deshonna Bagwell	06/29



NCSO Blood Drive

Thanks to all you have come out and given blood! Your donation matters! You are saving lives! For those who didn't get a chance to give this last time, please come out next time and donate! Your donation can save up to 3 lives!

Thank you!



Even the Sheriff gets some love on Valentine's Day. NCSO Bloodhound Angel gives Sheriff Bill Leeper a Valentine's Day kiss.







BEHIND THE BADGE

Newsletter



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 Ashleigh Harris at 904-548-4012 or by email at awharris@nassauso.com

As always, please stay safe!

