



The Sheriff's Report

Official newsletter for citizens served by the Pasco Sheriff's Office

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**Bob White,
Sheriff**

“My Deputy Sheriff’s took quick, decisive action that I believe saved lives that morning..”

In this issue:

- Club drugs illegal, dangerous
- Beware telemarketing scams
- Deputies spread holiday cheer

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From the Sheriff's desk

Sheriff's Office quick to clean up after tornado

As you well know, one person cannot be everywhere at one time. That is why as Sheriff, I rely heavily on my deputies and command staff to keep the citizens of Pasco County safe. Sometimes they have to make a split second decision on my behalf, decisions that can result in saving the lives of our citizens. Never was that more true than last month, on Sunday, December 16, 2007 when a tornado had a

on radar provided by local news outlets. Between that information, warnings from the Pasco Emergency Operations staff and National Weather Service bulletins, my Deputy Sheriff's took quick, decisive action that I believe saved lives that morning.

After receiving information about the storm's direction, sleeping inmates were awakened by Detention Deputies who started moving the 184 inmates into the relatively safe confines of the permanent jail facility made out of brick and mortar. This quick action, in my belief, was about as perfect as you can get. Even more remarkable, not one person was injured in the evacuation.

This wasn't the first time an evacuation like this took place. Deputies and inmates train for such events and obviously were well prepared to carry out the plan. Imagine the possible problems that could result from evacuating both male and female inmates in the early morning hours with budget-stretched staff. But the plan worked, and lives were saved.

The tornado hit Land O'Lakes on December 16th and by the end of this month (*January 2008*) a new temporary structure is expected to be ready to house the inmates like it did on the morning of the tornado. This fast action will save taxpayers thousands of dollars that would have to be spent housing the displaced inmates in other counties.

The deputies and supervisors who made the call to evacuate the temporary structure on December 16 rose to the occasion and should make us all proud to have such professionals working to protect the citizens of Pasco County. To me, they are all heroes, whether they work in the jail or patrol our neighborhoods to keep us safe. As your Sheriff, my hat is off to all of them who put on their badge everyday. Job well done!



Tornado destroys temporary structures.

direct hit at our temporary jail facility in Land O'Lakes. The facility was completely destroyed. (*See pictures at www.pascosheriff.com*)

The tornado was spun from a line of thunderstorms that moved off of the Gulf of Mexico into Pasco County shortly after 4 a.m. that Sunday morning. While most people slept, the National Weather Service issued Severe Thunderstorm Warnings and eventually Tornado Warnings. Also sleeping at the time in two temporary structures were 184 male and female inmates housed outside the main Land O'Lakes jail facility. Little did they know, they would be in the direct path of a tornado in a matter of minutes.

But my commanders, both at the jail and outside the jail were on alert, watching the storm

Teens: Know dangers of illegal club drugs

Pasco County is similar to most other American communities and thus has its problems with illegal drug use. Unfortunately, this use is often glorified in youth culture through song and other forms of mass media entertainment, such as television and the cinema. The following information is provided by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. For more information, please visit their website at www.health.org.

Club drugs

The term “club drug” refers to a wide variety of drugs often used at all-night dance parties or “raves”, nightclubs, and concerts. The most common club drugs include **Ecstasy** (slang: E, X, XTC), **GHB** (Liquid Ecstasy, Liquid X, Grievous Bodily Harm, Georgia Home Boy) **Ketamine** (K, Special K, Ket, Vitamin K, Kit Kat) and **Rohypnol** (Roofies, R-2).

Club drugs affect your brain. Club drugs can damage the neurons in your brain, impairing your senses, memory, judgement, and coordination.

Club drugs affect your body. Different club drugs have different effects on your body. Some common effects include loss of muscle and motor control, blurred vision, and seizures. Club drugs like ecstasy are stimulants that increase your heart rate and blood pressure and can lead to heart and kidney failure. Other club drugs, like GHB, are depressants that can cause drowsiness, unconsciousness, or breathing problems.

Club drugs affect your self-control. Club drugs like GHB and Rohypnol are used in “date rape” and other assaults because they are sedatives that can make you unconscious and

immobilize you. Rohypnol can cause a kind of amnesia -- users may not remember what they said or did while under the effects of the drug.

Club drugs are not always what they seem. Because club drugs are illegal and often produced in makeshift



laboratories, it is impossible to know exactly what chemicals were used to produce them. How strong or dangerous any illegal drug is varies each time.

Club drugs can kill you. Higher doses of club drugs can cause severe breathing problems, coma or even death.

Before you risk it

Know the law. It is illegal to buy or sell club drugs. It is also a federal crime to use any controlled substance to aid in a sexual assault.

Get the facts. Despite what you may have heard, club drugs can be addictive.

Stay informed. The club drug

scene is constantly changing. New drugs and new variations of drugs appear all of the time.

Know the risks. Mixing club drugs together or with alcohol is extremely dangerous. The effects of one drug can magnify the effects and risks of another. In fact, mixing substances can be lethal.

Look around you. The vast majority of teens are NOT using club drugs. While ecstasy is considered to be the most frequently used club drug, less than 2 percent of 8th to 12th graders use it on a regular basis. In fact, 94 percent of teens have never even tried ecstasy.

Know the signs

Sometimes it's tough to tell if someone is using club drugs but there are signs you can look for. If your friend has one or more of the following warning signs, he or she may be using club drugs:

- Problems remembering things they recently said or did
- Loss of coordination, dizziness, fainting
- Depression
- Confusion
- Sleep problems
- Chills or sweating
- Slurred speech

Some of these problems have been reported weeks after taking the drug.

What can you do to help someone who is using club drugs? Be a real friend. Save a life. Encourage your friend to stop or seek professional help. If you are using them, stop! For information and referrals to a program, contact the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 1-800-729-6686.

The Pasco Sheriff's Office, 8700 Citizen Drive, New Port Richey, FL 34654, is both state and nationally accredited in corrections and law enforcement operations. For questions or comments, please contact Public Information Officer Doug Tobin, at 1-800-854-2862, extension 7732, or dtobin@pascosheriff.org

Elderly often a target of telephone scams

If you are age 60 or older, you may be a special target for people who sell bogus products and services by phone.

It's easy enough to fall prey to their many sales pitches. Telemarketing fraud is a multi-billion dollar business in the United States. Every year, thousands of consumers lose from a few dollars to their life savings to telephone con artists.

That's why the Federal Trade Commission encourages you to be skeptical when you hear a phone solicitation and to be aware of the Telemarketing Sales Rule, a law designed to help you protect yourself from abusive and deceptive telemarketers.

Older citizens beware

Fraudulent telemarketers try to take advantage of older people on the theory that they might be more trusting and polite toward strangers. Older women living alone are special targets of these scam artists. Here are some reasons older people may become victims:

- Often it's hard to know whether a sales call is legitimate. Telephone con artists are skilled at sounding believable -- even when they are telling lies.
- Sometimes telephone con artists reach you when you are lonely. They may call day after day -- until you think a friend, not a stranger, is trying to sell you something.
- Some telephone salespeople have an answer for everything. You may find it hard to get them off the phone -- even if they're selling something you're not interested in. You don't want to be rude.
- You may be promised free gifts, prizes, or vacations -- or the "investment of a lifetime" -- but only if you act "right away." It may sound like a really good deal. In fact, telephone con artists are only after your money. Don't give it to them.

Common telephone scams

Con artists never run out of scams. Some of the most common include:

- **Prize offers:** You usually have to do something to get your "free" prize -- attend a sales presentation, buy something, or give your credit card number. The prizes generally are worthless or overpriced.
- **Travel packages:** "Free" or "low-



cost" vacations can end up costing a bundle in hidden costs. Or, they may never happen. You may pay a high price for some part of the package -- like hotel or airfare. The total cost may run two to three times more than what you'd expect to pay or what you were led to believe.

- **Vitamins and other health products:** The sales pitch also may include a prize offer. This is to entice you to pay hundreds of dollars for products that are worth very little.
- **Investments:** People lose millions of dollars to "get rich quick" schemes that promise high returns with little or no risk. These can include gemstones, rare coins, oil and gas leases, precious metals, art, and other "investment op-

portunities. As a rule, these are worthless.

- **Charities:** Con artists often label phony charities with names that sound like better-known, reputable organizations. They won't send you written information or wait for you to check them out with the proper agencies.
- **Recovery scams:** If you buy into any of the above scams, you're likely to be called again by someone promising to get your money back. Be careful not to lose more money in this common practice.

Phone fraud tip-offs

Telephone con artists spend a lot of time polishing their lines to get you to buy. You may hear this:

- You must act now -- or the offer won't be good.
- You've won a "free" gift, vacation, or prize -- but you pay for "postage and handling" or other charges.
- You must send money, give a credit card or bank account number, or have a check picked up by courier -- before you've had a chance to consider the offer carefully.
- You don't need to check out the company with anyone -- including your family, lawyer, accountant, local Better Business Bureau, or consumer protection agency.
- You don't need any written information about their company or their references.
- You can't afford to miss this "high-profit, no risk" offer.

If you hear these -- or similar -- lines from a telephone salesperson, just say "no thank you," and hang up the phone.

**Next month:
The Telemarketing Sales
Rule and what you can do
to protect yourself**

Pasco Sheriff's Office spreads holiday cheer

Last month, the Pasco Sheriff's Office helped out hundreds of Pasco residents with two very special events, the annual Holiday Food Drive and the Bike Rodeo. Each event helped Pasco county families who might otherwise have a difficult time making ends meet during the Christmas season.

Every year the Pasco Sheriff's Office collects food and monetary donations from agency members and Pasco citizens to provide families in need throughout the community.

The annual Sheriff's Office Holiday Food Drive got underway at 7:30 a.m., December 21, with deputies and civilian volunteers distributing hundreds of holiday food baskets throughout Pasco County.

Volunteers delivering baskets to east Pasco residents loaded up their vehicles at the Captain Bo Harrison Building located at State Road 52 in Dade City. Volunteers delivering baskets to west Pasco residents loaded up their vehicles at the Publix Shopping Plaza located at the corner of Ridge and Regency Park Boulevard in Port Richey.



Santa Claus supervising the loading of food baskets in New Port Richey.

Santa Claus supervised the volunteers to make sure their vehicles were packed full. Families were pre-selected by various units in the agency who helped identify those in need. Each volunteer delivered the food baskets with non-perishable canned and boxed goods, a frozen turkey, and a loaf of bread. The box contained enough food to provide a family with a nice

Christmas meal they might not otherwise enjoy.

The 2007 effort was coordinated by the Citizen Support Services Unit, which utilizes volunteer resources at the Sheriff's Office including Chaplains, Citizen Academy Alumni Association members and Citizen Support Unit.

This year the agency handed out 392 Holiday Food Baskets.

Sheriff Bob White and his Community Policing Team hosted the 15th Annual Bicycle Rodeo on Saturday, December 8, 2007, to benefit Pasco County children. The goal of the event was to help lift the holiday spirits of Pasco youth who may otherwise not have the means to get a bicycle at Christmas.

The Rodeo was highlighted by Santa Claus arriving by patrol car and assisting the Sheriff in presenting the children with a brand new bicycle and helmet. Donations by businesses and citizens allowed 55 Pasco County children to receive bicycles and safety helmets.



Sheriff White greets Santa at Safety Town.