



The Sheriff's Report

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

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www.PascoSheriff.com



**Bob White,
Sheriff**

"I believe that public safety should be our community's top priority."

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From the Sheriff's desk

Budget cuts painful for our efficient agency

On June 1, I presented the 2008-2009 Sheriff's Office budget request to the Board of County Commissioners. Key elements of the \$85 million budget request include no new positions, no raises for any employees, no capital outlay requests, and an overall decrease from last year's budget of almost **\$1.1 million**.

Combined with an approximate **\$1.5 million reduction in expenditures this year**, the total estimated reduction in Sheriff's Office funding this year and next is expected to be about \$2.6 million. It is important to note that this budget calls for no layoffs of any PSO personnel, which could change if the Pasco Board of County Commissioners requires additional cuts to our funding. Keeping all of my dedicated employees is a top priority and vital to maintaining a professional level of service to our citizens.

The Pasco Sheriff's Office continues to provide the most cost-effective law enforcement services of any Florida agency we have examined, large or small, rural or urban. Thus, any additional cuts would have a much more significant impact on public safety in our county than other public safety agencies facing similar funding reductions.

The Pasco Sheriff's Office law enforcement jurisdiction covers the seventh largest population in the state. However, the PSO law enforcement budget has the low-

est per capita costs of the 12 largest agencies (by population) in the state.

For example, the 2007-2008 PSO law enforcement budget translates into a cost of \$143 per Pasco citizen, which includes the Penny for Pasco sales tax, part of which is used to purchase agency vehicles and the laptop computers that deputies use in those vehicles. The state average for the 12 largest agencies is \$333 per person. The Polk County Sheriff's Office has the next lowest per capita law enforcement costs, \$201 per person, for the same budget year. The Pasco Sheriff's Office is even more cost effective than smaller agencies such as the Hernando or Citrus County Sheriff's Offices!

I am committed to working with the county commission over the summer to hammer out the best budget for citizens. As I have stated in years past, I believe that public safety should be our community's top priority and I am committed to providing the best and most efficient law enforcement services possible with whatever resources I have at my disposal.



Artist's rendition of the Land O' Lakes Detention Center addition -- Sheriff Bob White joined county commissioners, detention deputies, and construction supervisors for the ceremonial groundbreaking on May 9. Final completion is scheduled for next summer.

Red Cross offers important summer safety tips

Water Safety

- Learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim. Always swim with a buddy; never swim alone. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. To enroll in a swim course, contact your local Red Cross chapter.
- Swim in areas supervised by a lifeguard.
- Read and obey all rules and posted signs.
- Children and inexperienced swimmers should take precautions, such as wearing a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD) when around the water.
- Watch out for the dangerous “too’s” – too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.
- Set water safety rules for the whole family based on swimming abilities (for example, inexperienced swimmers should stay in water less than chest deep).
- Be knowledgeable of the water environment you are in and its potential hazards, such as deep and shallow areas, currents, depth changes, obstructions and where the entry and exit points are located. The more informed you are, the more aware you will be of hazards and safe practices.
- Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts. Stop swimming at the first indication of bad weather.
- Use a feet-first entry when entering the water.
- Enter headfirst only when the area is clearly marked for diving and has no obstructions.
- Do not mix alcohol with swimming, diving or boating. Alcohol impairs your judgment, balance, and coordination,

affects your swimming and diving skills, and reduces your body’s ability to stay warm.

Beach Safety

- Protect your skin: Sunlight contains two kinds of UV rays — UVA increases the risk of skin cancer, skin aging, and other skin diseases. UVB causes sunburn and can lead to skin cancer. Limit the amount of direct sunlight you receive between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. and wear a sunscreen with a sun protection factor of at least 15.
- Drink plenty of water regularly and often even if you do not feel thirsty. Your body needs water to keep cool.
- Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine in them. They can make you feel good



- briefly but make the heat’s effects on your body worse. This is especially true with beer, which dehydrates the body.
- Wear eye protection.
 - Sunglasses are like sunscreen for your eyes and protect against damage that can occur from UV rays.
 - Be sure to wear sunglasses with labels that indicate that they absorb at least 90 percent of UV sunlight.
 - Wear foot protection. Many times, people’s feet can get burned from the sand or cut from glass in the sand.
 - Watch for signs of heat stroke. Heat stroke is life-threatening and occurs when the person’s temperature control system, which produces sweating to

cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly.

Signals of heat stroke include:

- Hot, red, and usually dry skin, but in some cases such as during athletic activity while wearing a helmet, the skin may be moist
- Changes in consciousness
- Rapid, weak pulse, and
- Rapid, shallow breathing.

If you suspect someone is a victim of heat stroke:

- Call 9-1-1 or your local EMS number.
- Move the person to a cooler place.
- Quickly cool the body by wrapping wet sheets around the body and fan it. If you have ice packs or cold packs, place them on each of the victim’s wrists and ankles, in the armpits and on the neck to cool the large blood vessels.
- Watch for signals of breathing problems and make sure the airway is clear.
- Keep the person lying down.

Boating Safety

- Learn to swim. See Water Safety above.
- Alcohol and boating don’t mix. Alcohol impairs your judgment, balance, and coordination -- over 50 percent of drownings result from boating incidents involving alcohol. For the same reasons it is dangerous to operate an automobile while under the influence of alcohol, people should not operate a boat while drinking alcohol.
- Look for the label: Use Coast Guard-approved life jackets for yourself and your passengers when boating and fishing.
- Develop a float plan. Anytime you go out in a boat, give a responsible person

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Volunteers help keep neighborhoods safe

The Pasco Sheriff's Office's all-volunteer Citizen Service Unit has been conducting a nighttime operation to prevent burglaries at county mobile home parks. Dubbed Operation Dark House Patrols, CSU members have been keeping tabs on suspicious activity in these parks that are often targets of criminals.

"We have gotten wonderful feedback from the residents and have helped put their minds at ease," said Sgt. Troy Ferguson, CSU supervisor.

A recent success story came from a husband and wife team who were patrolling the area in Florida Estates Mobile Home Park on Saturday, May 31. Don and Joan Gammill advised while doing residence checks they found the north door of a residence unlocked. Don said he yelled into the residence with no response.

They notified their supervisor, Sgt. Ferguson, who contacted a Pasco Sheriff's Community Policing Team deputy to respond. When Dep. Dean Yingling arrived, he did a walkthrough

of the residence and found that the door had simply been left unlocked.

He then made phone contact with the homeowner and advised him what had taken place. The homeowner advised us that his neighbor was watching his place for him but there was no one



home at the neighbor's residence.

Dep. Yingling advised the homeowner that he secured his residence and it appeared to be fine inside.

Our response was one of surprised relief for the homeowner – he was grateful we found this before a burglar did. This type of support is why the CSU was created.

Individuals interested in joining the Citizens Service Unit must pass a back-

ground check and successfully complete the basic training academy to qualify. Candidates must be at least 18 years of age with a valid driver's license to apply. There are no age caps on applying; the average age of our VIPS volunteer is currently 63 years old.

The CSU Training Academy is approximately 70 hours long and meets weekly. There is a field training program that follows the basic academy training. Field training is goal-driven and tailored to the individual volunteer's skill level and availability. CSU members attend quarterly in-service training, similar to that of our certified deputies, to learn additional skills and new policies.

Prospective applicants should note that the next Academy is not scheduled until the Fall. Interested citizens can pick up an application for the Citizen Service Unit at the Pasco Sheriff's Office Human Resources Office located at 8700 Citizen Drive in New Port Richey. To receive an application, call toll free 1-800-854-2862, extension 7791.

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details about where you will be and how long you will be gone. This is important if the boat is delayed because of an emergency or becomes lost.

- Find a boating course in your area (the Pasco Sheriff's Office, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, etc.) that teaches navigation rules, emergency procedures and the effects of wind, water conditions, and weather.
- Watch the weather: Know local weather conditions and prepare for electrical storms. Watch local news programs. Stop boating as soon as you see or hear a storm.

Home Pools

- Learn to swim. See Water Safety above.

- Never leave a child unobserved around water. Your eyes must be on the child at all times. Adult supervision is recommended.
- Install a phone by the pool or keep a cordless phone nearby so that you can call 9-1-1 in an emergency.
- Learn Red Cross CPR and insist that babysitters, grandparents, and others who care for your child know CPR.
- Post CPR instructions and 9-1-1 or your local emergency number in the pool area.
- Enclose the pool completely with a self-locking, self-closing fence with vertical bars. Openings in the fence should be no more than four inches wide. The house should not be included as a part of the barrier.
- The gate should be constructed so

- that it is self-latching and self-closing.
- Never leave furniture near the fence that would enable a child to climb over the fence.
- Always keep basic lifesaving equipment by the pool and know how to use it. Pole, rope, and personal flotation devices (PFDs) are recommended.
- Keep toys away from the pool when it is not in use. Toys can attract young children into the pool.
- Pool covers should always be completely removed prior to pool use.
- If a child is missing, check the pool first. Go to the edge of the pool and scan the entire pool, bottom, and surface, as well as the surrounding pool area.

Sheriff White recognizes citizens for support to agency

Sheriff Bob White recently presented two citizens with special awards for recognizing their efforts in assisting the Sheriff's Office or their actions that assisted others.

Citizen Service Award

On November 21, 2007, Jeffrey Gonzalez noticed a vehicle with people inside behind his neighbor's residence in the Dade City area. Believing that something wasn't right, he continued to monitor the individuals. Jeffrey then watched as two male subjects exited the rear of the residence carrying a large, flat screen TV.

As the suspects loaded the stolen equipment into their vehicle, Jeffrey hid behind the hedges and wrote down the license plate number, as well as a description of the suspicious individuals.

He later identified two of the three suspects as being the same individuals observed at the victim's residence. All three individuals confessed to this burglary, as well as 31 other burglaries. All total, the Pasco Sheriff's Office

Property Crimes Unit and the Dade City Police Department cleared approximately 90 cases in the Dade City, St. Joe and San Antonio areas, thanks to the diligence of Mr. Gonzalez.

For his efforts, Jeffrey Gonzalez was presented with the Pasco Sheriff's Citizen Service Award.

Special Service Award

On March 9, 2008, 12-year-old Emma Greenman woke up at 5 a.m. to the sound of a smoke alarm in her home. As she walked through the laundry room, she came across a small fire inside the garage. Emma immediately grabbed the fire extinguisher and put out the fire. Believing the fire was out, Emma woke her father, who got out of bed to investigate. By the time he made it to the garage, the fire had reignited and engulfed the garage.

The family ran out of the home as it suddenly filled up with smoke. Unfor-

tunately, Emma's family watched their home and all of their possessions go up in flames, but her parents realized that their daughter's quick thinking had saved all of their lives. Even several



Pasco Fire Rescue personnel advised that had Emma hesitated even for a moment, the result could have been grave for her family.

For her efforts and bravery that morning, Emma Greenman was presented with the Pasco Sheriff's Special Service Award.

Changes to Sheriff's Office citizen services

The Pasco Sheriff's Office is offering two additional services at their location in the Gulf View Square Mall, 9409 U.S. 19.

Project Childsafe gun locks are available free of charge to anyone who has both guns and children in their home. The cable-style gun lock makes a gun inoperable and can prevent the tragedy that can occur when a child finds a loaded gun. A firearm safety brochure is included with the gun lock and explains the importance of safe handling and secure firearm storage in the home.

Individuals who need fingerprint cards made in West Pasco will now have to go to the Sheriff's Office mall location. The times for fingerprinting are

Tuesday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. These services will no longer be available at the Sheriff's Office Administration building located in the government complex on Little Road.

For additional information about these services, please call 1-800-854-2862, extension 3376.

The Pasco Sheriff's Office substation located at 21300 State Road 54 in Land O' Lakes closed in April.

Individuals who need fingerprint cards made in Central Pasco can now have these made at the Central Support Services building, 20105 Central Boulevard, located next to the Land O' Lakes Detention Center on U.S. 41, about one mile south of State Road 52.

The times for fingerprinting are Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For additional information about what is required for fingerprinting, please call 813-235-6116.

For fingerprint cards in East Pasco, please visit the Pasco Sheriff's Office East Operations Center, 34609 State Road 52, in Dade City. Times for fingerprinting are Wednesday from 9 to 11 a.m. and 2 to 4 p.m. Call 352-518-5000 for more information.

Note: You **MUST** provide a picture identification card (driver's license preferred) and your own fingerprint card!