



# The Sheriff's Report

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

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*From the Sheriff's desk*

## Voters' decision acknowledges strides made



**Bob White,  
Sheriff**

**“Pasco County’s historic vote that gives me a third term deeply humbles me.”**

I would like to thank everyone for their support during the past eight years I have had the pleasure serving as your sheriff. Pasco County’s historic vote that gives me a third term deeply humbles me but I believe also demonstrates that citizens understand the outstanding job being done by our men and women everyday.

We have come a long way in improving the service and professionalism of the Pasco Sheriff’s Office, and have done this as one of the most fiscally responsible agencies in the state. This prepares us well for the challenges ahead as we continue to operate in a growing county with shrinking resources.

Some of the goals we will be focused on over the next four years include:

- Continuing the fight against both street

level and mid-level drug dealers, which can reduce our overall violent crime and property crime;

- Continuing our enhanced enforcement effort against organized criminal groups, be it an actual named gang or a loosely associated group of thugs;

- Growing the ranks of our volunteer units, which provide excellent service at virtually no cost to taxpayers;

- Working on the completion and manning of the addition to the Land O’ Lakes Detention Center, to handle our growing inmate population.

With your continued support, we will continue to improve the service provided to our community and make Pasco a better place for all of us to live.

### In this issue:

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Sheriff Bob White is interviewed by ABC Action News reporter Carson Chambers after his historic third term re-election.

# Technology enhances PSO patrol capabilities

Pasco Sheriff's Office dispatchers and road patrol supervisors have a new capability that enhances the coordination of assigning deputies to citizen calls for service.

This capability is based on a technology that the military and then civilians have been using for years: Global Positioning Satellites, or GPS. An automatic vehicle locator (AVL) is a device that makes use of GPS technology to enable the agency to remotely track the location of its vehicle fleet. Sheriff's Office patrol cars are now equipped with the devices, which displays the locations of the cars in real time on interactive maps on large LCD terminals in the Communications Center, and on supervisor's laptop computers in their cars.

"One of my campaign promises eight years ago was to reduce the time it takes our deputies to respond to citizens' calls," Sheriff Bob White said. "We have cut in half the response times to our highest priority calls for service, but we continue to strive to reduce all response times, and this is our latest endeavor in that area."

In 2005 and 2006, the Pasco Sheriff's Office was awarded more than \$330,000 from two federal grants to purchase 320 AVL units. An AVL system is able to pinpoint the longitude, lati-

tude, ground speed, and course direction of a given vehicle. The primary use of the AVL system is for dispatchers to see where the deputies are located in relation to incoming calls for service. This allows more efficient dispatching of deputies to those calls, where a timely response could be a matter of life or death.

Another use of the AVL system is for road patrol supervisors to have an accurate, real-time snapshot of where their squads are in relation to holding calls, which also allows them to assist dispatchers in deploying deputies. They can view the AVL map from the computer laptops in their vehicles or from their office computers.

A third use for the system is for individual deputies to map out which roads will lead to their destination the quickest, a common use for civilian GPS systems. A fourth use is for deputies to see each other when setting up a perimeter, as in a search for a missing person or a criminal on the run. A fifth use is for deputy safety. In case of trouble, dispatchers and supervisors can find the last known location of a deputy's vehicle. For example, this could be vital information if a deputy had to leave his vehicle for a foot pursuit of a suspect. A sixth use would involve a worst-case scenario, such as a hurricane. Normal



landmarks might be moved, destroyed or obstructed, but deputies would be able to determine exactly where they are located by using the system. Pasco deputies saw this used during Hurricane Katrina relief operations when they were deployed to Mississippi in 2005.

"I have no doubt that this new enhancement to our deployment strategies will have a profound impact on our ability to provide even better service to Pasco citizens," Sheriff White said. "Best of all, it was implemented using federal grant money, saving local tax dollars."

## Holiday Food Basket Drive underway

The PSO annual Holiday Food Basket drive is underway. We are gathering food donated from both Sheriff's Office members and Pasco citizens to build a food basket with a frozen turkey and all the trimmings to provide some less fortunate families a complete holiday meal. This year our goal is to help 400 families across the county.

We ask for your support to help us in this important drive. The items we need include non-perishable food items, such as canned vegetables and fruits, instant mashed potatoes, etc. We do NOT need liquid beverages or toys. We can also accept monetary donations to purchase any food items that we are lacking for a complete food basket. Please make checks out to Pasco Sheriff's Charities and note that it is for the Holiday Food Drive.

Donation boxes are placed in the

lobbies of our main offices, including Dade City, New Port Richey and Land O' Lakes. We can accept donations until Monday, December 15, and the baskets will be delivered to the families on Monday, December 22. If you can help in any way, please contact the Citizen Support Services Office at 1-800-854-2862, extension 3376. With your assistance, we can help make this holiday season a memorable one at the dinner table for some Pasco families.

# Backup Comm Center improves emergency preparedness

When Hurricane Charley raged ashore in Punta Gorda, Florida in August 2004, one of the casualties of the powerful storm was the Charlotte County Emergency Operations Center. Members of that EOC had to evacuate as the building began to crumble around them during the height of the storm.

For that reason, Pasco County and Sheriff's Office leaders decided to have a back-up plan if the worst-case scenario happened at the 911 Emergency Communications Center in New Port Richey, mere miles from the Gulf of Mexico. That back-up plan includes a new backup communications center.

Members of the Pasco Board of County Commissioners and the Pasco Sheriff's Office viewed the new 911 Communications Back-up Center located at the Land O' Lakes Detention Center on October 22, 2008.

Completion of the backup center was a joint effort by Pasco County and the Sheriff's Office. In 2006, about a year after the Pasco Sheriff's Office collocated with the 911 Emergency Communications Center, it was determined that there was not a viable back-up site for this mission critical function. Sheriff's Office and Fire-Rescue personnel set out to find a suitable site. While completing plans for the newly remodeled Juvenile Assessment Center at the Land O' Lakes Detention Center, Sheriff's Office jail administrators agreed to downsize the JAC to make room for a communications backup center.

The completion of the back-up center was the first goal Elmer Holt, 911-Operations Manager, was directed with completing when he was hired in November 2007.

"In the case of man-made or natural disasters that may disrupt the operations of the 911 Center it is imperative that we have the technology in place to provide a seamless transition to the back-

up site in order to avoid any loss of 911 calls," Holt said. "We are prepared to provide the same level of professional service to the community even with the loss of our primary site."

The County's Information Technology Unit supplied the staff to furnish and connect the computers. Interior construction was completed using inmate labor. The Sheriff's Office and the County Emergency 911 Communications Unit worked jointly to oversee the project. Networking and installation of computers was done jointly by Pasco County and Pasco Sheriff's Office IT staffs. Sheriff's office and Pasco Fire-Rescue personnel assisted with putting the finishing touches on the center to ensure that their particular emergency communication needs were met. Compared to the costs of building an entirely new center, considerable tax dollars were saved by using the available space at the Land O' Lakes Detention Center. Inmate labor saved another \$25,000 in construction costs. The main cost of the backup center was the \$160,000 needed to refurbish the specialized computer equipment from the old Sheriff's Office communication center in Dade City that routes incoming 911 calls. The cost of new equipment would have been about \$1 million. In the end, the total cost of the backup center came to about \$250,000, a fraction of what a new center would cost to be built from the ground up and furnished with new equipment. The project was funded with 911 fees that telephone users pay as part of their service.

Elmer Holt explains that the Backup Center is just the first in many improvements planned for the county's emergency communication capabilities. His unit has been awarded a grant for more than \$819,000 to upgrade its current 10-year-old computer system that routes incoming 911 calls. The goal is

to purchase an IP-enabled Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) system able to adapt rapidly to new technology and support new devices. Holt is also pursuing an additional grant of \$900,000 that would provide enough funds to complement this state-of-the-art equipment by developing a 911 IP network



**Refurbishing the PSO router saved more than \$750,000. The router is the main computer system for directing incoming emergency calls for service.**

in Pasco County. The highest priority will be to provide a system that allows the hearing impaired to access 911 systems via text messaging, no doubt an ADA requirement in the near future.

The Backup Center can be used anytime that a problem occurs with the county's regular, full-time 911 operation. This can include technological issues with computers and other equipment, problems with the actual building in New Port Richey, or with the extreme case of a natural or man-made disaster. In addition, the Backup Center can be used for the needs of the four city police and fire departments if there is a problem with their emergency communications.

# TIPS targets automobile burglaries in central Pasco

A Pasco Sheriff's Office auto burglary suppression task force that was formed in September has quickly produced impressive results.

During the month of September, auto burglaries in the Land O' Lakes

**During the month of September, auto burglaries in the area fell to 42 from the 151 that occurred during the previous month.**

and Wesley Chapel fell to 42 from the 151 that occurred during the month of August. This area is near multiple major highways that thieves often use to quickly move in and out of neighborhoods. To date, the team has made or assisted PSO detectives with over 93 arrests for 117 felonies and 43 misdemeanor offenses.

The task force, dubbed the Tactical Intelligence Policing Squad, or TIPS, is comprised of four road patrol deputies, one Property Crimes Unit detective, and one sergeant. Part of the team's success comes from forging partnerships with community groups and schools to identify crime patterns and target criminal groups active in these areas.

This proactive approach allows the team to quickly identify, locate, and arrest elusive and habitual offenders, thereby preventing their criminal activity from escalating. Since the task force is patrol-based, it also provides a rapid response to citizen generated tips, such as suspicious person and vehicle calls. These types of calls often lead to the identification and arrest of multiple burglars and ultimately clear several

crimes in the area.

An example occurred last month when an off-duty Pasco Sheriff's deputy was walking his dog and noticed a suspicious vehicle in the Grand Oaks Subdivision. The task force, along with patrol units, was able to quickly locate the vehicle and subsequently arrest the five occupants for auto burglaries in the subdivision. Through further investigation of this group, the team has learned of more than 50 other crimes they committed throughout East Pasco and Hillsborough County, including vehicle thefts, residential

crimes that night, committing burglaries in subdivisions along Interstate 75. Stolen property found in their vehicles has assisted with investigations in multiple jurisdictions.

Besides stolen vehicles, the team has recovered guns, computer game consoles, collectibles, GPS devices, radios, DVD players, and purses.

The team reminds citizens to follow simple prevention measures in protecting their valuables:

1. Lock your vehicle's doors at all times, even for short stops, since



burglaries, and an arson. Additionally, a stolen checkbook, found in the suspects' vehicle, linked the group to three other subjects who were responsible for committing 17 auto burglaries in the Fox Ridge Subdivision.

This month, a similar tip from a resident in the Lexington Oaks Subdivision allowed the task force to capture two auto burglary suspects as they were leaving the subdivision. The suspects had traveled through sev-

eral counties that night, committing most auto burglaries involve unlocked doors;

2. Remove any valuables, such as purses and electronics, as thieves look for vehicles that have such items in plain view;

3. Contact the Pasco Sheriff's Office if you observe suspicious people or vehicles in your neighborhood. Try to obtain as much information about the subject(s), including a clothing description and vehicle make, including a license plate number.