

Search

CONTACT US

LINKS

FAQS

EMPLOYMENT



HOME

LAW ENFORCEMENT

COMMUNITY SERVICES

CORRECTIONS

OPEN GOVERNMENT

ADMINISTRATION

MAIN MENU

- HOME
- LAW ENFORCEMENT
- COMMUNITY SERVICES
- CORRECTIONS
- OPEN GOVERNMENT
- ADMINISTRATION

AREAS OF INTEREST

- COALITION FOR YOUTH
- MISSION STATEMENT
- COMMUNITY CALENDAR
- EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
- CIVIL PROCESS AND WARRANTS
- RECORDS
- KEEP WAKULLA BEAUTIFUL
- COMMUNITY TRAFFIC SAFETY TEAM
- TIPLINE
- PHOTO GALLERY
- DRIVING DIRECTIONS
- CAREERS WITH THE WCSO
- LOGIN
- SEXUAL OFFENDER SEARCH
- NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS
- INMATE SEARCH
- SEXUAL OFFENDER EMAIL NOTIFICATION
- HURRICANE PLANNING
- PROPOSED LEGISLATION
- WAKULLA TIMES ARTICLES

Wakulla Times Article--Aug. 2010-SRO and JJD

E-mail

School Resource Officers and the Juvenile Justice Division

Wakulla High School graduation was conducted without weather difficulties over Memorial Day weekend and the high school hosted the summer school session in June. But just as many students get the summer off from the classroom, the Wakulla County Sheriff's Office's School Resource Officers (SRO) get away from the classroom and hit the streets.

As many of you know, the sheriff's office recently obtained a Juvenile Justice Division grant that allows us to keep Captain Chris Savary, Lt. Ray Johnson and Deputy Scott Rojas stationed as SROs at the high school along with Program Specialist Lisa Russell. But they are just part of the overall operation.

Students sometimes require a little extra attention at the middle school level as well. Deputies Carl Allen and Mitch Revels are stationed at Wakulla Middle School and Riversprings Middle School respectively and we also have Sgt. Joe Page working out at the Sopchoppy Second Chance School.

School may have ended for 2009-2010, but we have been very active with our SROs. With school out we use them in a number of other capacities. With the available manpower we work "saturation patrols" which allow the WCSO to provide a little extra protection in areas that have experienced a jump in crime. We have found that the extra visibility in certain areas is an excellent deterrent to crime being committed by individuals who may have a little extra time on their hands.

Wakulla County has a population estimate of approximately 33,000, but we estimate that our population soars above 90,000 people during the summer months when you factor in part-time residents and individuals who are passing through our county on their way to other coastal locations.

During a week in June, the SROs were involved in a weeklong training program for Explorer's Post # 999. Six new students joined the post to bring the total up to between 12 to 14 youths who have an interest in law enforcement activities. The training activities for high school students took place at the Sheriff's Office Training Range in the Otter Creek community.

The Explorer's Post members participate in parades and help with traffic and crowd control under the supervision of our SROs.

The SROs also took part in the annual Project Graduation event at Fun Station in Tallahassee. For several hours during the day before graduation, WHS seniors played games, ate and drank beverages and took part in a number of activities geared toward their final day together as the Class of 2010.

The program was created by the sheriff's office as a way for Wakulla High School seniors to enjoy their graduation, but make them aware of the dangers of drinking and driving. The overnight party allowed the students to have fun on their big day without consuming alcohol or drugs.

We are excited about the creation of a new GREAT program. GREAT stands for Gang Resistance Education and Training and is similar to our SAVE program which is offered to all of our fifth graders before they leave the elementary schools. The SAVE program is an

excellent way to address substance abuse and violence with youths before they arrive in the middle school environment.

The national GREAT program is a school-based, law enforcement officer instructed classroom curriculum with the primary objective to address delinquency, youth violence and gang membership with the slightly older middle school age group. The program will be introduced during the 2010-2011 school year. Deputies Carl Allen and Mitch Revels attended special GREAT training in Nashville in June. But they are not the only officers in training.

Captain Chris Savary and Sgt. Eddie Wester attended federal grant training in Phoenix related to the Juvenile Justice Division (JJD) grant and narcotics.

Captain Savary said the Juvenile Justice Division function at the high school went well during the first full year of operation.

In July, the Sheriff's Office JJD hosted a summer firearms safety and outdoor skills program at the Otter Creek training facility. Classroom time was limited as teaching took place "onsite" in an outdoor environment. Students received training in a variety of areas that introduced them to the lifetime sport of hunting including: how to use a map and compass; observation of wildlife and reading wildlife signs; developing outdoor survival skills; field first aid; hunting skills and the safe use of rifles, shotguns and archery equipment.

Deputy Carl Allen uses his time off from school to lead the Marine Unit which can be a useful tool during search and rescue operations, educational activities related to the operation of boats and boat safety checks. The Bicycle Unit is also active as deputies patrol areas like St. Marks and Shell Point where the use of automobiles is less effective. Deputy Allen often brings his patrol bicycle on the marine unit vessel to have even more options for patrol.

The Bicycle Unit is a community oriented policy approach where deputies meet families on a one-on-one basis. Bicycle deputies familiarize themselves with neighborhoods and check on speeders, suspicious activity, noise and reckless drivers.

SROs and other officers have been eligible to take part in BP claims center security duties thanks to the efforts of our Finance Director Mary Dean Barwick who helped negotiate a financial arrangement between the petroleum company and our staff. BP requested the security details to protect their staff and sub-contractors while in Wakulla County.

When we first implemented the SRO programs in our schools, we discovered that our officers were able to build a strong rapport and trust with students. The program also gave deputies a chance to work hand-in-hand with school district staff to provide a safe and enriching education for our young people. We have excellent support from the school district because in reality our officers serve as a law enforcement peacemaker, a counselor and an educator. The safe learning environment has resulted in academic improvement as students have one less thing to worry about while they get their education.

Everybody at the sheriff's office wears three or four hats and willingly does whatever task is necessary to Keep Wakulla Safe. It is a very large team effort.

The 2010-2011 school year is just around the corner. Be careful of our children when operating a motor vehicle and be aware of the reappearance of school buses picking up and dropping off students now that August has arrived. Have a great school year!

[[Back](#)]

