

Skamania County Sheriff's Office

Partnering with the Community to Continually Improve Public Safety.

DECEMBER 2019



From the Sheriff's Desk

As we near the end of another calendar year I must ponder where we are here at the Sheriff's Office and where we are going. This year we saw the departure of a 30-year veteran law enforcement officer in the retirement of Sgt. Monty Buettner. The institutional knowledge and expertise that walked out the door with him will be fully recognized at the onset of the next major case investigation.

Yet, I look at the entire group of remaining deputies and realize we have done well to methodically and carefully select the brightest, most energetic and driven group of patrol, corrections/dispatch and civil deputies we have ever had.

So, where are we? We are significantly better staffed today than we have been over the past 5 years. We are fortunate to now have two deputies assigned to the detective division to

address major crimes. This will allow us a greater opportunity to free up our patrol staff for the day to day calls for service. A luxury we have not had since 2014.

Our patrol teams are at full staffing for the first time since 2012. While I view this as a milestone as it relates to budgetary progress in the county, I also must offer gratitude to our County Commissioners for the support of law enforcement and for recognizing the value of our services. With that said, we are nowhere near the patrol staffing levels we experienced in the late 2000's up through 2011. Without consistent and sustainable funding, I have little expectation that we will rise to those levels anytime soon.

I believe our county government has been persistent in the message that we are a natural resource county and our best hope for sustainability of county services will be realized through responsible management of our national and state forest systems. Our efforts moving forward must be doubled down with the help of the voices of the county. A constant barrage directed to our state and federal representatives must occur in the effort to highlight our long-term concerns regarding the lack of responsible management of our forest.

Where are we going? We are striving toward a more global concept of mass training in specific areas of expertise. While maintaining high levels of training in a few deputies, we continue to seek training opportunities that will enhance

the day to day skills of the entire agency. These areas are focused on crimes against children, basic homicide investigation, search and rescue coordination and many others. By providing these opportunities now, we will be better prepared to transition deputies from one assignment to another in the future.

I have always held a great deal of pride in working at the Sheriff's Office and even more in serving all of you as your Sheriff. That pride is multiplied when I consider the entire cadre of deputies, corrections/communications and civil deputies who serve all of you daily.

We are blessed to know that they are committed to our mission and bring a wealth of knowledge, training and expertise to a more challenging profession each day. ■

— Dave Brown, Sheriff
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Inside

Search and Rescue	2
Hazard Mitigation Plan	2
K-9 Aria	3
Mission Accomplished	3
Team Members of the Year	4
Firearms Training	5
911 Location	5

Search & Rescue: Fact or Fiction

— By Undersheriff Pat Bond

When you hear the words “Search & Rescue” perhaps the obvious comes to mind.... A lost hiker or hunter.

This term also covers people injured or sick in a known or unknown location or trapped by natural or man-made disaster, maybe a stranded motorist, camper, or hiker in bad weather.

In our very rural, rustic, and beautiful county we have almost 1700 square miles for people to literally become lost and or injured, and on a routine basis they do! The causes are many whether it be lack of familiarity of the area, not prepared for current or changing weather conditions, unforeseen injury or illness, or simply overestimating ability. Much like the Farmers insurance commercial, “we know a thing or two cause we’ve seen a thing or two.”

On any given weekend the Sheriff’s Office may receive and or respond, to three or more SAR related calls for service. It’s not uncommon to receive more or several during the weekdays as well. Here is a fun fact, less than 1% of those calls involve a county resident.

Unfortunately, the other calls for service don’t stop when someone becomes lost or injured. See the dilemma?



Let’s break it down, shall we. The Skamania County Sheriff’s Office responds to an average of 105 SAR related calls a year. That number does not take into account medical calls in which a SAR Deputy responds to coordinate.

The silver lining... yes, we handle an immense amount of calls, the majority with a positive outcome. Recently, we have been working with Wind River Search and Rescue to fold the team under the umbrella of the Sheriff’s Office. While

still maintaining their identity, this change provides the team with a solid base of support from the Sheriff.

Recruiting has improved and the quantity of volunteers is on the rise. I believe we have the best SAR program in the state.

The SAR groups we work with are well trained, eager, and willing to respond day or night. They work tirelessly to bring a positive resolution to any SAR call.

If there is a short message to the 99% from outside the county who come to recreate, it would be to enjoy the beauty and opportunities Skamania County affords but, please don’t come unprepared.

Know where you’re going, check the weather reports, prepare for the unexpected, tell someone your route, where you’ll park, estimated time you’ll return, bring a cellular phone, (but don’t rely on the phone to save you) SPOT device, or a trusted communication device, food, water and wear bright colors.

I could go on and on, but I’m not the common-sense police.

If you choose not to follow some of the advice above, we will have more suggestions after we find you! ■

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Hazard Mitigation Plan

Skamania County has recently been awarded a Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Grant after a lengthy application process.

From the State’s Emergency Management website: *“FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant programs provide funding to protect life and property from future natural disasters. The grant program is designed to implement a sustained pre-disaster natural hazard mitigation program to reduce overall risk to the population and structures from future hazard events, while also reducing reliance on Federal funding in future disasters.”*

This grant will allow the county to hire a contractor to lead the plan updating

process to include assembling a Local Planning Team (LPT), conduct public meetings throughout the county and compiling the findings into updating our Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Central to this planning process is the community meetings, as it is the Citizens whom makes the decisions as to what hazards are of concern to them for planning purposes.

Skamania County had it’s first Hazard Mitigation plan drafted and approved in 2010 with six geographic areas aligned with existing Fire Districts. Each area identified hazards, prioritized those haz-

ards and formulated potential mitigation projects to address the hazards based on the communities input and direction.

Having the plan in place opens up potential grant funding to mitigate the identified hazards, should grant funding be made available.

More importantly the planning process helped communities come together with a greater understanding of the challenges they face and effective mitigation actions to reduce the impact of disasters. ■



K-9 Aria

End of Watch 2019



This past year we lost our K-9 Aria.

Arai served as a patrol K-9 for the past 10 years along with his handler deputy Russ Hastings. The decision to acquire a patrol dog many years ago was made after realizing that not only did we have a need locally but there were no patrol dogs in any agencies throughout the Columbia Gorge region.

Once the dog was fully-trained we began to realize how high the demand was on both sides of the river.

Deputy Hastings and his first patrol dog Ezra were utilized on a regular basis in the adjoining Oregon Counties as well as in Klickitat.

When Ezra was retired, we brought Aria on board and continued the longstanding agreement within the Mid-Columbia region in providing patrol K-9 services when necessary.

The relationship between a handler and their dog is an indescribable bond. The Skamania County Sheriff's Office lost a tremendous part of our family.

There can be no question that Arai proved to be an invaluable asset to our law enforcement mission and he will be missed. ■

Mission Accomplished

— by Officer Ben Childs



Ben Childs

Shayne Cross

Often people have specific reasons why they enter the law enforcement profession. These reasons can vary quite a bit. However, one reason why many people enter law enforcement is because they want a rewarding career where they can, in some way, help others.

For me, my reasons were similar. I knew that I wanted to have a fun and exciting career all while having the opportunity to serve something more than myself. However, when I first began, I did not put much time into thinking much about my reasons; I just knew it was what I wanted to do.

Now, working in my fourth year here as a corrections and communications officer, I am thinking of a few more things I might want to consider in the law enforcement profession. Things such as what kind of department I really want to work for, and what kind of people do I want to serve with? To answer these questions, I find myself looking towards the Sheriff's Office mission statement.

To be honest, when I first began, I didn't pay much attention to the mission statement. It wasn't until I had to recite the whole thing in the academy that I decided to learn it. There is one phrase in our mission statement that stands out to me. "We accomplish our mission by providing high-

ly-trained dedicated professionals." Highly-trained and dedicated is exactly how I would describe the men and women I work with.

In the few short years I have worked here I have

seen countless times how the men and women have sacrificed and dedicated themselves to their co-workers, the community, the Sheriff's Office and therefore, the mission.

There are other words in the mission statement that could be used to describe my co-workers. However, from my experience there is no better way to depict the men and women of the Skamania County Sheriff's Office. They consistently sacrifice their own lives and put the mission first.

Now when people ask me why I want to continue working in law enforcement, my answer is a little bit longer. Now, it might include something to the effect of, because I get to work with some very devout, experienced, professional men and women. I know that without highly-trained and dedicated professionals, like the men and women who serve Skamania County, the mission would not be accomplished.

I want to give a shout out to Officer Cross for being my inspiration behind this article, being an amazing corrections officer and an all-around great guy. ■

Mission Statement

It is our mission to consistently earn the public's trust by providing the highest quality law enforcement services possible within the resources provided to us.

We accomplish our mission by providing highly-trained dedicated professionals in the areas of patrol, investigations, corrections/jail, dispatch and selected other services which meet or exceed the expectations of residents and visitors to Skamania County, Washington.

We are committed to demonstrating pride in our profession and in the Sheriff's Office, to effective communication with the people we represent, to treating everyone fairly, and to adapting rapidly to changing circumstances.

2019 Deputy of the Year

The 2019 enforcement division Deputy of the year is Detective Jeremy Schultz.



He has been with the Skamania County Sheriff's Office since May of 2008. His accomplishments are many, but this year he has been especially busy. He was transitioned into the Detective division in January of 2019.

He was almost immediately assigned a homicide investigation near Mt. St. Helens. He took this opportunity to excel and ran with it. His investigative skills led him from the USFS 83 Road to Yamhill County, Oregon. In short order he was able to network with the Yamhill County Sheriff's Office, Newberg Police Department, and McMinnville Police Department, identify a suspect, and successfully work to get him into custody.

In August of 2019, Detective Shultz responded to and directly assisted with a home invasion robbery in which the victim was savagely beaten. He assisted patrol with the crime scene processing, suspect identification, and subsequent confessions from both suspects, leading the recovery of critical evidence and getting 2 violent offenders off the street.

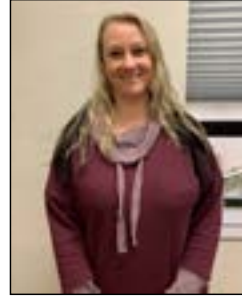
In November of 2019, he again responded to assist with another Robbery. He worked with numerous agencies in Clark County to establish the identity of 2 of the suspects. He seized 2 vehicles associated with the crime and within 2 weeks had two suspects in custody on a variety of charges.

These are just a few of the 2019 highlights for Jeremy, it does not include the numerous criminal investigations he has on-going, as well as his revamping of our SAR unit with Sgt. Clifford.

Detective Schultz has shown himself to be invaluable within our office. His dedication to this office and its mission is an example for all of us. ■

Civil Deputy of the Year 2019

Choosing a civil deputy of the year is a hard decision to make.



With only three deputies in the division, all of whom do a terrific job in serving the public and those who rely on Sheriff services, picking one to be deputy of the year is tough.

You must look at the little things that stand out like punctuality, confidence with your duties and dedication and commitment in the work you do. Not only do these characteristics speak to the mission of the Skamania County Sheriff's Office, but they are the qualities that this year's civil deputy of the year brings with her to work every day.

This particular deputy begins accomplishing her tasks for the day and fulfilling her job duties immediately upon arriving to work, which is early most days. She takes it upon herself to stay late if necessary when a protection order or priority warrant comes in at the close of business.

This deputy takes her work seriously yet enjoys finding the humor in some of the things we do. She takes pride in doing a good and thorough job. She shows a genuine concern and caring attitude for those who come to us in need of assistance or require the civil services the sheriff's office offers.

She is willing to speak up and provide valuable input on policy and procedures and is open to and accepting of change. This civil deputy's work is appreciated and respected.

This year's Civil Deputy of the year is Nancy Allen. ■



2019 Corrections/Dispatch Deputy of the Year

There are a number of individuals deserving of this award this year.



This year's recipient was chosen based on the level of energy, dedication, initiative and ambition he put toward his duties.

Taking on the duties of Field Training Officer, division Training Officer and defensive tactics instructor all over the course of the last 12 months are a testament to his commitment to the corrections division and the agency.

He brings a positive attitude to the office each day and exhibits genuine care and concern for those he works with.

He has gained the respect of his co-workers and those in the patrol division based on the manner which he conducts himself daily.

The 2019 Corrections/Dispatch deputy of the year is Ben Childs. ■



A Note of Thanks

I approached local cartoonist Gordon Carlson about 12 days from the date of publication of this newsletter and asked if he would draw up something for this edition. Gordon came through in the nick of time and produced the cartoon you see above.

I am grateful for his work and look forward to more humor in the future. ■

Skamania County Corrections Firearms Training

by Chief David Waymire



In November of 2019 the Skamania County Corrections staff began extensive firearms training.

This will allow the entire Corrections staff to carry a firearm while out in the field. While this is not the first time the Corrections staff has been armed, it has been handled on an as needed basis in years past. We anticipate completion of this training in the spring of 2020.

There have been several discussions over the years on the merits of arming the corrections staff.

Much of our corrections staff are increasingly being pulled from the facility for jail transports, court security and other outside work details, the need for enhancing the safety of the officers has increased.

This added level of training will increase the safety and security of our entire staff and the community. The long-standing policy of not allowing firearms in the inmate housing areas will continue to be strictly adhered to.

The training will follow the curriculum of the 80-hour Washington state Criminal Justice training center guidelines for basic law enforcement firearms training.

The benefit of having our own certified firearms instructor on staff eliminates the need to send the corrections officers out of county for this extensive training. ■

New Technology to Help with Location Identification

by Chief Jason Fritz



Knowing your location in an emergency is crucial to getting life saving first response to you.

However, we realize there are times when you may not know exactly where you are at. Traveling through unfamiliar territory, weather related happenings and the emotional toil of an emergent event all may be factors in you not knowing your current location.

For years 911 call takers have been utilizing the existing enhanced 911 technologies available to them through our 911 phone system and the emergency services integrated network. Automatic Number Identification (ANI) and Automatic Location Identification (ALI) are technologies that were developed in the 1970's and became part of a required "Enhanced 911" network in the late 1990's.

The technology was developed for landline telephones and works with a legacy, tabular addressing system, to provide a precise location based upon the address information provided by the local exchange carrier. Obviously with technological advances in the wireless industry and the increased use of cellular over landline telephones, the current location technology used by 911 has become antiquated.

You may say, "But Uber can find me. The pizza place is able to locate me." Don't confuse phone providers (Apple, Samsung, LG, etc.) with wireless carriers (Verizon, AT&T, Sprint, etc.)

Phone providers utilize applications and data that the phone itself provides to locate you. They utilize Hybridized Emergency Location (HELO) Data which is a combination of data information the

phone is able to gather from Global Navigation Systems, Wi-Fi, network access points and the like, and fuse them together to

pinpoint phone location.

Wireless service providers, who are required by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to provide callers' locations to 911 systems, often are using data from different, sometimes less precise sources than your phone uses to pinpoint a location.

Enter RapidSOS.

RapidSOS is a company that has taken the HELO provided by phone providers and extended the functionality of that location information by capturing the information in their Next Generation 911 Clearing House.

The data, now known as Enhanced Emergency Data (EED,) is then delivered to the call center through an alternate data path. The data that is delivered to the call center is; Mobile Telephone Number, Latitude and Longitude in decimal degree's, uncertainty in meters.

Uncertainty is a confidence rating of the location noted by a circle around the caller on a map.

A lot of times the RapidSOS data is more accurate than what is received through ANI and ALI.

However, RapidSOS does not replace ANI and ALI it is an enhancement of all of our location tracking technologies.

And nothing, nothing replaces you the caller knowing and verbalizing your location. ■