



January 2008

As we start the New Year, please remember how important it is to supervise children around the water. An accidental drowning of a child is one of the most tragic kinds of cases we work in law enforcement. And unfortunately, we have had several children die needlessly in Polk County in November and December in bath tubs, pools, and ponds.

Some of these death investigations are still ongoing, so we don't know yet if child neglect played a role. What we do know is that for some reason, children were unsupervised by an adult around a water source. It only takes a few minutes for an infant or a child to drown in a pool, bath tub, or any water body. Please help us by getting the word out to your friends and family to remind them of the potential danger of unsupervised children and water.

Here are just a few important reminders based upon common sense: 1) Parents and guardians must be vigilant with safety precautions regarding infants and bathtubs-infants must be supervised by a competent adult. 2) No infant or toddler should be left in the care of other children in a bathtub. 3) All children must be supervised when they are near water or there are water sources nearby. 4) All children should be taught how to swim at the earliest age possible. 5) Pools should be fenced or enclosed and a water-motion alarm installed if children have access to the pool.

From our Sheriff's Office family to yours, please have a safe, healthy, and happy 2008!

Grady Judd, Sheriff



PCSO Members in the Classroom

Did you know that 39% of Polk County Sheriff's Office members have higher educational degrees? Over 600 members possess an associate, a bachelor, a masters or doctorate degree.

Sheriff Grady Judd encourages and supports continuing education for all agency members. "A formal education helps give our members additional tools in their tool belt," said Sheriff Judd. "Formal classroom instruction teaches professionalism, accountability and work ethic - - these are all critical elements in law enforcement."



Sworn, certified and civilian members possess degrees in criminal justice, mass communications, political science, public administration, theology, accounting and finance, and education to name a few.

D/S Jon Burcham, Ashley Provenza, D/S Lyle Tripp, and D/D Derico Nelson at their recent graduation.

Reminders for the New Year

The Polk County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit continues to remind residents of tried and true methods for displacing and deterring crime. With that in mind, here are a few reminders regarding mail theft.

Unfortunately, mailboxes located on the side of the road are often a target of theft and vandalism. Suspects have been

known to cruise selected neighborhoods in search of mailboxes with the flag up signifying outgoing mail. **The raised flag is an invitation to thieves.**

In order to prevent and discourage mail theft residents are encouraged to use the Post Office, whenever possible, to mail parcels that contain items that would be attractive to thieves, especially gift cards, checks, currency and bill payments.

Residents may consider purchasing a mailbox with a lock. Locking mailboxes are available at most local hardware stores and home improvement centers.

Ensure that your mailbox is in good condition to prevent the mail from being exposed to theft as well as bad weather.

Remember to have a trusted neighbor or friend pick up your mail if you plan to be away. And most important, return the favor and be a trusted friend your neighbors may call upon to return the favor!



Fort Meade Transition Going Smoothly



December 4, 2007, the Polk County Sheriff's Office began the initial transition process of providing law enforcement services to the city of Fort Meade.

The smooth transition has included former Fort Meade officers, and support staff. Residents have been supportive and have been a valuable crime fighting tool for deputies.

A recent burglary trend was halted as a result of information gathered from the community.

"We're excited about working with the residents of Fort Meade," said Sheriff Grady Judd. "Neighbors watching out for one another is exactly how it should be, and Fort Meade is a great example of that philosophy."

As a direct result of community involvement, on December 27 and December 29, 2007, three juveniles and one adult were arrested and charged Burglary of an Occupied Dwelling and Grand Theft in connection to a Christmastime Burglary.

Great Job Team Fort Meade!

Third Annual Media Roundtable

Friday, January 4, 2008, Sheriff Grady Judd hosted the Third Annual Polk County Sheriff's Office Media Roundtable discussion at the Burnham McCall Training Center, 2201 Old Bartow/Eagle Lake Road.

Members of the media met with Sheriff Judd and discussed ideas for ensuring the community continues to get accurate and timely news about the cases PCSO works.



After a positive interaction with Sheriff Judd, reporters and news representatives donned special gear and became deputies in an Active Shooter Scenario. Participants "responded" to a building where an "armed gunman" had run into and was firing at bystanders.

Participants remarked on the intensity of the scenario and how they gained a new insight into what deputies face on a day to day basis.

"We enjoy a professional and positive working relationship with the news media," said Sheriff Judd. "It is important that they have an opportunity to learn and experience what deputies face in real-world situations."

Poinciana Substation Open for Business in January



The Poinciana Sheriff's substation, located on Myakka Road off of Lake Marion Creek Road in Poinciana, will be open for business Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., by the end of January.

The station will be staffed with a full-time Sheriff's Service Officer and will serve as a fully functional office for deputies patrolling in the area.

The phone number to the substation is 863-427-6002.

What Others Are Saying



Detectives Ivan Navarro & Matt Newbold,
I know I've repeated myself so many times, but I'm so, so appreciative of everything you guys did. A lot of times, actually I think 90% of the time, people always state justice is never served, but you guys proved otherwise.

This state needs more dedicated detectives like you guys. I know for a fact that if that was the case, it would be a better place to live.

Thank you - have a Merry Christmas and a safe New Year.

Ivelisse Correa

-written in a Christmas card sent on behalf of the family of homicide victim Solymarie Roman

December Crime Stoppers Statistics

From December 1 through December 31, 2007, Heartland Crime Stoppers, which serves Polk, Hardee, and Highlands counties, received 178 tips, with information about:

50 Fugitives from justice - 10 arrested

42 Narcotics cases

42 Homicides

7 Robberies

11 Thefts

4 Others (burglary, auto theft, animal cruelty, etc.)

6 Campus Tips and rewards from Crime Stoppers in the schools

16 Jail Tips



And you can help! Anyone with information who wants to remain anonymous and be eligible for a **CASH REWARD** is asked to call HEARTLAND Crime Stoppers at 1-800-226-TIPS, or forward an email to

www.heartlandcrimestoppers.com.

Anonymity is Guaranteed!