

WINTER  
2023-2024

# THE MISSOURI Sheriff

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE MISSOURI SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION



## TECHNOLOGY

# Taking to the Air

## TRUE HEROS

Deputy and Trooper Get  
Well-Deserved Recognition

## KEEPING KIDS

# Safe

# Shared Oath

Hickory, St. Clair, Polk, Adair County  
Sheriffs, each committed to protecting their  
communities, stand united in their pledge to  
uphold the law and serve their citizens.



## Our Story

After 15 years in the corporate mobile technology industry, our founders, Mike and Dana Southard, noticed something was missing -- honest, long-term business relationships with customers in the public sector. In 2004, they founded Turn-Key Mobile in the basement of their home in Jefferson City, MO, where they focused on providing mobile technology products and unmatched loyalty to public sector agencies. The company has since outgrown the Southard basement and has expanded into an 18,000 sq. ft. campus that includes an installation shop in Jefferson City.

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- ✓ We provide our customers with the highest level of accountability and integrity in the industry.
- ✓ We value ourselves on building and maintaining trusting relationships with our customers.





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# President's Message

from Christian County Sheriff Brad Cole

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## UNITED WE STAND

As president of the Missouri Sheriffs' Association my responsibility to the sheriffs of Missouri and the staff of the Missouri Sheriffs' Association is to continue to move the association forward and be present for sheriffs who continue to work on daily issues. My goal is to bring unity to our endeavors. This is what makes us strong, we stand together as professionals and protectors. We are committed to our communities and providing the best service possible.

The MSA continues to provide quality training in many different formats to include continuing education and online training. We are unique when it pertains to basic law enforcement academies. We conduct several regional academies in the state designed for anyone who may be working a full-time job during the day but desires a career in law enforcement. This allows opportunities to recruit staff for our agencies. The MSA has started taking continuing education training regionally in the state as well and the online training system has more than 94 classes available to law enforcement that are POST certificated. The association conducts five conferences a year to allow sheriffs and their staff an opportunity to stay on top of the duties required of them.

Communication with our citizens and other law enforcement is very important to us. Our quarterly magazines, The Missouri Sheriff and Missouri Jails, provide stories about the work of sheriffs in their communities, recognize employees for their dedication, offer a glimpse into law enforcement history, and much more. Our website, [www.mosheriffs.com](http://www.mosheriffs.com), provides information about classes and conferences, as well as news about what is happening in today's world. We are excited to announce that in January 2024 we will be doing podcasts with sheriffs (Sheriffs Talk) that will provide information that you want and need to know. Please stay tuned.

We know 2024 will be a busy year for the sheriffs. It is election year, legislation will be starting in January, and over twenty sheriffs will be retiring. The MSA has plans to further their services to assist sheriffs and their staff. Get to know your sheriff and make it known that he or she has your support.

In closing, I encourage you to look at how the office of sheriff is authorized in the State of Missouri. You may find it interesting that the office of sheriff is only authorized by state law and not as a constitutional position. As sheriffs, this brings great concern, as a state representative or senator could introduce legislation at any time to abolish the office of sheriff and institute a state



*"Communication with our citizens and other law enforcement is very important to us."*

police agency. As you know, the sheriff is the only elected law enforcement officer in each county and the only law enforcement officer that will have the citizens' best interests in mind. We, as sheriffs, must move forward with legislation to secure the office of sheriff and make it a constitutional position. In doing so this allows the sheriffs of Missouri to continue to protect your rights and be the last line of defense against an overreaching government. I encourage you to talk to your sheriff and understand the importance of the constitutional sheriff movement. The state of Missouri is one of only a few states left that does not have the office of sheriff protected by its constitution.





# MISSOURI SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

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**The Missouri Sheriff magazine is the official publication for the Missouri Sheriffs' Association.**

MSA is dedicated to providing informative and timely information to enrich the lives of the dedicated men and women providing county law enforcement, jail, court security and judicial services throughout the state of Missouri, and the public they serve.

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# Serving and Protecting

News from Missouri  
Sheriffs' Offices



## Greene County

Sheriff Jim Arnott thanked Fox + Hound K9 Foundation for their generous donation to the Greene County Sheriff's Office K9 Unit and Deputy McCall and his K9 partner Ghost. The Fox + Hound K9 Foundation is a 501c3 K9-focused organization that assists K9 Teams by providing funding, equipment, supplies, medical expenses, K9 Handler education, and specialty training, for active and retired K9s. The working K9 programs are primarily funded by private donations. For more information visit [foxandhoundk9foundation.org](http://foxandhoundk9foundation.org) or their Facebook page.



## Clay County

Clay County Sheriff Will Akin welcomed a new member to the sheriff's office. Deputy Carmichael took his oath of office in mid-November, and he will be assigned to the Detention Division.



# TurnKey

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# Serving and Protecting



## Oregon County

"Behind every successful law enforcement officer is a substantial amount of coffee!" So says Oregon County Sheriff Eric King. That's why he and others decided to start a fall morning with Coffee with a Cop. But this one had a twist. Instead of meeting at a local coffee shop or restaurant, Sheriff King and other law enforcement officers met with students at Alton Elementary School.

According to school officials, the faces of their students "lit up as they walked into the cafeteria to be greeted by several heroic officers in uniform. Thank you to all of the officers who took time out of their demanding schedules to spend the morning with our little comets."



## Callaway County

Deputy John Nielsen with the Callaway County Sheriff's Office was honored with the G.W. Law - Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award by the Fulton Rotary International Club. This award, established in 1998, serves to commemorate the exemplary service and ultimate sacrifice of former Callaway County Sheriff George W. Law. Deputy Nielsen's unwavering commitment to the community, consistent adherence to the Rotary ideal of "Service above Self," and dedication to upholding the law made him a standout choice for this prestigious award.

Presenter Charles Anderson said the award is a testament to Deputy Nielsen's dedication and leadership within the sheriff's office, adding, "Fellow deputies and the community at large recognize him as a role model for law enforcement professionals and as a symbol of the highest standards of service."



## Nodaway County

In a ceremony at the Maryville City Council Meeting, Director of Public Safety Ron Christian and Sheriff Randy Strong presented Life Saving Awards to Maryville Police Officer Josh McMillen and Captain Austin Hann with the Nodaway County Sheriff's Office.

On the afternoon of August 31, Captain Hann and Officer Josh McMillen responded to Mozingo Lake for a call of a man in the lake who was threatening suicide by drowning. On his arrival Captain Hann could see the man's head above the water. While attempting to talk the man out of the lake, he continued to speak of ending his life. It became apparent that he was not going to keep his head above water. Captain Hann and Officer McMillen entered the lake together and they reached the man and brought him to shore. The man was taken to MOSIAC Hospital in Maryville for treatment.

Sheriff Strong said he believes in recognizing deputies when their outstanding actions and efforts serve the community and fellow deputies, adding, "Capt. Hann's actions qualify him for this Life Saving Award. It's bestowed upon him with much appreciation."

This is Captain Hann's second Life Saving Award in 2023.



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# Serving and Protecting



**“We couldn’t have done it without the support of the city of Adrian and its public works department. Many man hours were given by the deputies and the Sheriff’s Posse, and the Adrian Fire Department, Adrian Police Department and the EMS crew from the Bates County Hospital to bring this free community event to Adrian.”**



## Bates County

No bull — everyone who attended and participated in the Bates County Sheriff’s Office and Posse Rodeo had a rip-snortin’ good time. The event included bareback riding, calf roping, barrel racing, bull riding and more and Sheriff Chad Anderson said that it all went off without a hitch.

“First, we would like to recognize the most respectful and appreciative attendees and contestants ever. This year’s rodeo was estimated to have doubled in size with cars parked clear to the highway. We’d also like to thank our co-sponsors — the Adrian Optimist Club along with Rodeo Gold Productions — for putting together one of the best rodeos of the year,” the sheriff said.

Sheriff Anderson said more than 25 local businesses and sponsors also partnered with them to help make the event successful.

## Osage County

Osage County Sheriffs from Missouri, Oklahoma, and Kansas, met for the first time last week. On Friday, November 3rd, Sheriff Mike Bonham met with Sheriff Eddie Virden of the Osage County, Oklahoma Sheriff’s Office, and Sheriff Chris Wells of the Osage County, Kansas Sheriff’s Office, to exchange ideas and discuss differences between state laws.

Sheriff Bonham said, “There are only three Osage Counties in the United States, so this was a special historical meeting for all of us.”



From left to right: Sheriff Eddie Virden of Osage County Sheriff’s Office, OK and Sheriff Chris Wells of Osage County Sheriff’s Office, KS, and Sheriff Mike Bonham, Osage County, MO.

Osage County, MO, founded in 1841, is the smallest of the three counties with a population of 13,900 and covering 610 square miles. Osage County, KS, founded in 1859, has a population of 15,658 and covers 720 square miles. Osage County, OK was founded in 1907 and is the largest of the three counties with a population of 48,818 and covering 2,304 square miles.

## Ste. Genevieve

When Sgt. Joshua Prest observed a co-worker choking and in distress, he took immediate action and performed life saving measures to save the co-worker’s life. “His quick actions exemplifies the professionalism the sheriff’s office is very proud of,” said Sheriff Gary Stolzer. “Great job Sgt. Prest!”







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# Serving and Protecting



## Jasper County

Larry and Sharon Newman recently donated \$15,000 to the Jasper County Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Randee Kaiser said he is very grateful for the support. "This incredible contribution will enable us to purchase a cutting-edge BRINC Drone, designed to enhance our ability to serve and protect our community," he said. "The BRINC Drone is not just any drone; its advanced technology provides tools that prioritize peaceful resolutions, making our community safer for everyone."



## Newton County

Deputy Peter Yang was named the Newton County Sheriff's Office Deputy of the Second Quarter. Deputy Yang responded to 648 calls for service, completed 55 incident reports, cited 10 drivers for traffic violations, and made eight custodial arrests.

Deputy Tomlinson was named Deputy of the Third Quarter. He responded to 425 calls for service, issued eight citations to traffic violators, arrested two subjects for driving while intoxicated, made 22 arrests, and took 32 reports.



## Caldwell County

"Amazed and thankful." Those are the words of organizers who put together the Caldwell County Sheriff's Office 2nd Annual K9/ Shop with a Cop Fundraiser Golf Tournament. Sheriff Mitch Allen he appreciated everyone who donated and helped out at the October 7 event, which brought in a total of \$10,000.



## Dallas County

Dallas County deputies have a new look, thanks to Sheriff Scott Rice who implemented Longmire days for the month of November. Employees donated \$30 to participate. All funds will be donated to Dallas County Shop with Hero.



## Stone County

Sheriff Doug Rader recently recognized Corporal Kyle Stults (top photo) and Corporal Caleb Leimkuehler (bottom photo) for their 10 years of service at the Stone County Sheriff's Office.



# Get to Know Us

## Who is Turn Key Health Clinics?

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**Wood County Sheriff's Office**

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We understand every detention facility's operational and budgetary structure is unique. Therefore, Turn Key Health Clinics will never push a generic cookie cutter program onto any client. Instead, we will work with each client, to provide appropriate, cost-effective health services customized to the needs of their facility.



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## How do we add value for our clients?

Turn Key Health Clinics continues to be unmatched, even during the recent nursing shortage related to Covid-19, with our ability to recruit dependable personnel in our region. With such an emphasis on local recruiting, Turn Key Health Clinics has established a strong record of providing dependable and professional staff.

# Serving and Protecting

## Schuyler County

Since 2015 the Schuyler County Sheriff's Office has been very active in pursuing grants. Sheriff Joe Wuebker said that as of early September, they had already secured more than \$93,000 in grant funding. Most of the money will be used to purchase equipment.

"Law enforcement equipment is not cheap. For instance, radios and mobile data terminals are \$5,000 to \$6,500 each. Bulletproof vests are approximately \$1,000 each. The body cameras and in-car cameras are around \$5,000 per set. The list of equipment we need goes on and on. Without being able to secure grant funding we wouldn't be able to afford the good equipment that we have," he said, adding that they also received a grant for nearly \$27,000 for jail improvements and another \$20,000 grant that will be put toward the purchase of a 2023 Chevrolet Tahoe patrol vehicle. "We plan to try and secure another grant that will cover 100 percent of the cost to replace one of the older Explorers that have almost 160,000 miles on it." Sheriff Wuebker said anyone with any questions is invited to call his office at 660-956-9493.

## Phelps County

Deputy Mickey Boles III recently completed the two-week Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) instructor training, held at the Missouri Training Center in Jefferson City.

Participants spent countless hours during the two weeks working on their classroom presentations and speaking skills. To better prepare them to be presenters, the officers also had an opportunity to teach children at Jefferson City area schools. Graduation from the class qualifies the officers to teach the DARE curriculum in their local schools. Deputy Boles will teach in Newburg and Edgar Springs schools.

## Andrew County

Andrew County Sheriff's Office K9 Harry has received a bullet and stab protective vest thanks to a charitable donation from Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. K9 Harry's vest was sponsored by the National Police Association and embroidered with the sentiment "Gifted by NationalPolice.org."

Vested Interest in K9s, Inc., established in 2009, is a 501(c)(3) charity whose mission is to provide bullet and stab protective vests and other assistance to dogs of law enforcement and related agencies throughout the United States. This potentially lifesaving body armor for four-legged K9 officers is U.S. made, custom fitted, and NIJ certified. Since its inception, Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. has provided over 5,289 vests to K9s in all 50 states at a value of \$6.9 million, made possible by both private and corporate donations.

Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. accepts tax-deductible contributions in any amount, while a single donation of \$985 will sponsor one vest. Each vest has a value of \$1800.00, weighs an average of 4-5 lb., and comes with a five-year warranty. For more information, or to learn about volunteer opportunities, please call 508-824-6978. Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. provides information, lists events, and accepts donations at [www.vik9s.org](http://www.vik9s.org), or you may mail your contribution to P.O. Box 9, East Taunton, MA 02718.



## Vernon County

Four Life-Saver awards were presented by Vernon County Sheriff Jason Mosher as the result of actions taken after a motor vehicle accident on August 20, 2023. According to Sheriff Mosher, multiple agencies were dispatched to a report of a possible motor vehicle accident on I-49 north of Nevada. However, no vehicle could be found. A short time later, dispatch advised they were on the phone with the victim who stated she was in some trees but did not know the exact location. Vernon County Deputy Tristen Foster along with Officer Calvin Gish with the Nevada Police Department continued to search for the vehicle while Vernon County dispatchers traced the phone call. After more than an hour of searching, the vehicle was located in a wooded area off I-49 with a female victim trapped inside. Additional units were dispatched, and the victim was transferred to the hospital.

Sheriff Moser congratulated each of the award recipients and thanked them for their hard work and dedication to the citizens of Vernon County.

Pictured are Dispatcher Jadean Highley, Chief Deputy Travis Cole, Sheriff Jason Mosher, Deputy Tristen Foster, Nevada Police Officer Calvin Gish and Nevada Police Captain Josh Westerhold. The fourth dispatcher wished to remain anonymous.



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# Serving and Protecting



## Jefferson County

The team at the Capt. David Dorn Foundation stopped by the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office in late September to bring gear bags for all the new hires to make sure deputies have everything they need and even a few extras while they're on the job. Sheriff Dave Marshak said those who support law enforcement should consider supporting the foundation. Visit [dornfoundation.com](http://dornfoundation.com) for more information.



## Nodaway County

Sergeant Seth Rucker successfully graduated from the Missouri Sheriffs' Association Firearms Instructor Training. The week-long class, which class covers pistols, revolvers, and shotguns, requires after hours study and research. Trainees must qualify the first day to stay in the class. Those who make the cut are expected to design a course of fire and successfully run fellow students through the course. This week long class in the extreme heat made everything more difficult. Sheriff Randy Strong congratulated Sgt. Rucker adding, "You make us proud."



## Greene County

Sheriff Jim Arnott recently congratulated several of his deputies and presented them with rings recognizing their 15 or more years of service.

"They have served the Greene County community well and continue to serve on a daily basis. Congratulations and thank you to each one," the sheriff said.



## SHARE YOUR NEWS

Announce your special event or award recognition with MSA.

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# A Life of Service to His Community

**Adair County Sheriff Eldon Grissom can still recall the day he knew law enforcement would be his life's work.**

**"I know it sounds crazy, but I honestly remember it well. I was in kindergarten, and different agencies were there - the police department, the fire department, the ambulance — and they all said that their goal was to provide protection and to care for and help others. That stuck with me because my parents had always taught me to think of others first," he said. "Then, one day, I met a trooper and was very impressed with how sharp he looked and how professionally he carried himself. I already knew I wanted to work in law enforcement. That day, I decided I would do that as a Missouri state trooper."**

After graduating from high school, he continued working odd jobs. But in 1988, when he was almost 21, he saw an ad in the paper saying LaPlata, a small town south of Kirksville, wanted to change from a night watchman to a full-time police department. He thought that might be the open door he'd been looking for. So he applied, was hired, and the city sent him through the academy to get the mandated 120 hours of training, all that was required at the time to be POST certified.

"Troopers would stop in the police department when I was working, and I was just in awe. So when they had an opening, I applied, went through the process, and became a trooper in 1990."

He stayed 28 years and nine months, working his way up the ranks until retiring as a master sergeant in August 2018.

"I had lived in this area all my life. So when Sheriff Hardwick announced he was retiring, several people who knew me both as a trooper and a resident of the county asked me to run. At first, I didn't take it seriously, but as more people contacted me, I decided they were asking for a reason. So I decided to run — and I won," Sheriff Grissom said.

After taking office, he was most surprised by the number of working parts sheriffs must oversee.

"As master sergeant, I was a manager — I had subordinates — but in the sheriff's office, you have civilians, and you have POST certified deputies, and they're filling numerous different positions in numerous different divisions," Sheriff Grissom said. "The jail has been my biggest challenge because it's always full, and not everyone plays together well. Staffing the jail has also been challenging because it's difficult to be exposed to that environment day in and day out."

He made several changes after taking office. He increased the pay for detention officers to encourage them to stay and provided them with training that included de-escalation, CIT, and mental health awareness. Every staff member must now sign a sexual harassment under-

standing clause acknowledging the conduct will not be tolerated. Sheriff Grissom made annual OC spray and taser training and recertification mandatory "because if you don't use it, you lose it." Policies were updated to keep abreast of changing legislation and simplified for better understanding. He implemented an open-door policy to maintain communication with the community. Sheriff Grissom also pushed hard for crime deterrents like visible patrols.

"I tell my deputies that when they're driving a county road at night, they might not see the bad guy, but the bad guy sees them and takes off. They just deterred a crime and didn't even know it. I also updated the process to gather statistical information and added traffic crash investigations to a deputy's job expectations. As a trooper, I went to several calls at night where somebody had hit a deer and waited up to two hours for a deputy, then a trooper to get there when that crash could have been worked, and they could have been on their way in 20 minutes," he said.

He also bought Stop Sticks to eliminate the threat when pursuits begin with Adair County or other agencies. Equipment like jumper cables, floor jacks, four-way lug wrenches, basic tools, and traffic cones were added to deputies' vehicles "because motorist's cars break down. It might be as simple as a loose battery cable, but the people don't have the tools to fix it. Well, now my deputies do. I'm not trying to turn them into mechanics, but if they can do something simple to help our citizens get on their way, they will be better prepared to do that."

Sheriff Grissom's wife Mindy and their three children have always been his biggest supporters, but because the job requires so much dedication to duty, he didn't get to see his kids grow up like he wanted to. "It's a sacrifice, so the message I'd like to send to my community is to appreciate your law enforcement. Try to understand their hard work and dedication to their oaths of office and how much they give up to be there when you need them."

By Nancy Zoellner





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# Living and Loving a Life Unexpected

**Greg Burke grew up in Hickory County, cattle ranching. All he wanted to do was ride broncs and chase cows. Then he joined the U.S. Navy and ended up as the duty master at arms — the Navy's equivalent of military police. "That's where I got my first taste of law enforcement. When you're in port, you have duty days where you spend 24 hours on board the ship. The master at arms is law enforcement for that duty section," he explained. While stationed at Pearl Harbor, he worked patrol and physical security.**

"After I got out of the service, I made my living on horseback 12 to 18 hours a day for a few years. Then, I went to work for the state of Kansas. I started out as a livestock inspector, then a brand inspector, then a special theft investigator, covering 54 counties. I was the highest-paid cowboy in western Kansas," he quipped. "I specialized in agricultural and livestock theft but ended up working everything — drugs, homicides, thefts. I enjoyed it, but I was gone from home a lot. When I woke up on Christmas morning working a case in Arkansas, and I had a 10-year-old boy at home, I decided it just wasn't worth it. I moved back to Hickory County and started ranching again. It wasn't long before I was talked into challenging POST. I had attended the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center and got my POST certificate for Missouri."

He took the assistant chief/detective job with the Humansville PD, later moving to the Hickory County Sheriff's Office as an investigator under Sheriff Ray Tipton. He left law enforcement for a couple of years, then ran for sheriff with the full support of his wife, Stephanie.

"When I was a special investigator, I was gone for weeks at a time. I work a lot of hours now, but I'm in county, and I'm home with my family every night," he said.

Sheriff Burke was met with a bit of surprise after taking office. In all his years in law enforcement, he worked as an investigator or on the road — not in administration — so budgets, scheduling, and submitting paperwork on time was challenging — for a minute.

"Until I ran for sheriff, I had never gone out looking for a job. So I was either made for this job, or this job was made for me because I love it! There are days that drag by, but the months have gone by quickly," he said.

He and his office also met with heartbreak. Just three months into the job, his chief deputy was killed in a motorcycle accident, and in 2023, one of his deputies committed suicide.

"Those are the things they don't teach you about in the academy, but we worked through it," Sheriff Burke said. "I have a great office administrator, a great jail administrator, and a great staff. I

cannot brag on them enough. They do a good job for Hickory County. My chief administrator also does an excellent job. I come into the office in the morning, go through everything, then I'm in the county backing up my deputies or handling calls."

His office handles their own dispatching, and they're just now getting 9-1-1 capabilities.

"We're all cross-training in case we have someone on maternity or sick leave. I'm very fortunate to have great commissioners who back and support us. We have Pomme de Terre Lake and Lucas Raceway, and last year saw 1.8 million visitors in the county. I have a couple part-timers and nine full-time deputies who also handle the jail. We're the only law enforcement in the county so we stay very busy," he said, emphasizing, "very."

Since taking office, Sheriff Burke has added training including training he provided on drug investigations.

"Our first year, we handled over 100 cases, mostly methamphetamine. Not from local labs but from the Mexican cartel," he said, adding that they've also updated policy manuals for both the office and the jail, purchased additional uniforms for the deputies, added in-car laptops, body cameras and dash cameras, and purchased new vests for all the full-time deputies, thanks to a grant. They've also updated their fleet. "I have to commend the commission on that. We hadn't gotten new cars for two or three years, and in the last two years, we've gotten four and have three coming next year."

They're now exploring the possibility of expanding the office and updating the jail. Improvements would include adding a sallyport to improve safety when moving detainees between vehicles and the jail, building an enclosed walkway to move detainees from the jail to the courthouse, expanding the 5-foot-by-10-foot area deputies share with booking, and adding offices so the sheriff, chief administrator, chief deputy, and patrol sergeant won't have to share a space.

Sheriff Burke, who plans to run one more time, said he wants his community to know they shouldn't put off calling when they need help. "That's what we're here for. That's why you elected me. We're problem solvers."

By Nancy Zoellner





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# Being a Good Steward

Stepping into the office of sheriff was easy for Polk County Sheriff Danny Morrison. All he had to do was take the ball and run with it.

"I was fortunate to have several great sheriffs before me that laid a good foundation to build on. They all tried to leave the office better for the next guy and I'm going to try to do the same because the office of sheriff will be here long after I'm gone. You're holding a seat and doing your job while you're elected to do it," he said. "You owe it to your community to leave it good for the next guy that takes over."

Getting elected was kind of a dream come true for Sheriff Morrison.

"Even as a young child I always wanted to work in law enforcement or join the military. My dad was in the Navy and several other family members also served," he said. "Right out of high school I worked on a dairy farm and I worked in construction with my dad, but I really wanted to attend the law enforcement academy. With encouragement from my wife and family I finally enrolled."

After graduating in 1999, he took a job as chief of police for Fair Play. Then in 2000 he was hired by former Polk County Sheriff - now Governor Mike Parson - as a patrol deputy. He worked the road for several years, then took a school resource officer position with Dallas County. He later returned to Polk County, continuing to work as an SRO until he was elected sheriff and took office in 2017.

Sheriff Morrison said he decided to run after learning that former Sheriff Kay Williams was retiring. Although he knew the job would come with difficulties, he never dreamed that working through a pandemic would be one of them.

"That created a lot of challenges. I tried to keep the staff healthy so they could answer calls. I tried to keep inmates separated and sick inmates isolated so Covid wouldn't spread through the jail. Quite a few staff members got sick so everyone who wasn't sick was working long hours to cover shifts. We were running out of supplies - we couldn't get gloves, we couldn't get medical supplies. It was quite a struggle but we came out on the other side a little tougher and a little wiser," he said.

Staffing has been a challenge ever since. He's six or seven short and with a staff of just 40, that's significant.

"When I started, there was always a stack of applications. A lot of people wanted this job. Today there doesn't seem to be as many people interested in law enforcement so we had to get creative," he said. "We have both civilians and commissioned officers in our jail so we're putting two to three of our civilian jail staff through the academy each year if they sign a contract to

work for us for three years. It's a good deal for everyone. We get to see what kind of employee they are to determine if we want to invest in them and they get an idea of what law enforcement is all about so they can decide if they want to invest their future with us."

Sheriff Morrison made a few other changes after taking office. He brought school resource officers and D.A.R.E. officers to the outlying schools. The sheriff's office joined Facebook and updated the website, adding an inmate roster and press releases so the community can be more informed. He also changed the roles and responsibilities of some of his staff members.

"But even before I took office I talked to those working here. I shared my vision and told them I wanted them to stay so they'd feel comfortable," he said.

Future plans include renovating the jail at no cost to taxpayers, thanks to a large grant recently received. "We will add a medical room, an isolation room, new doors, new technology, cabinets in the control room, and a security fence around the parking lot with automatic gates," the sheriff said. "Our jail is older but we're taking care of it the best we can."

Knowing that his office is doing a good job for the citizens has been most rewarding.

"We're fortunate that in this part of the country our people respect and support law enforcement. I'm very thankful for the relationships I've built in the community and I hope they feel the same way because I'd like to continue serving as their sheriff until it's time to retire," Sheriff Morrison said, adding that he's running again with the full support of his wife Becky and his children. "My wife has helped me tremendously. She's respected and well known in the community for the work she does. My parents and family are also very helpful and encouraging. I appreciate them and I appreciate our community and everything they do for our office. I will always do my best for them."

By Nancy Zoellner



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# Making Every Effort to Make a Difference

Before being elected, St. Clair County Sheriff Lee Hilty had worked 29 years in law enforcement. Nearly half were spent undercover.

"Meth labs were the big thing when I started with the West Central Missouri Drug Task Force, and we shut down hundreds. We also did undercover work buying illegal narcotics and even working murder-for-hire cases. When the state task force ceased operating in 2008, a federal agent and I started a task force focusing on violent criminal activity and gang-affiliated crimes, again in west-central Missouri. And I loved every minute of it," he said.

Growing up, he never imagined he'd work in law enforcement.

"My friend's uncle was a DARE officer, and he talked me into applying for a dispatcher job when I turned 21. I was interested but didn't think it was something I'd even be able to do because I was kind of an ornery kid," he said. But he was hired by the St. Clair County Sheriff's Office in 1992. Then, in 1993, after he decided he'd found his calling, he enrolled in a 120-hour part-time academy at Missouri Southern while continuing to dispatch. Soon after graduating, he switched from taking calls to handling them.

He left St. Clair County in 1996 and went to work for Henry County Sheriff Kent Oberkrom in 1997. Thirteen of the next 16 years were spent undercover. He said throughout that time, his wife Tracy was "awesome — very, very supportive. After I stopped working undercover, she said she would prefer that I never do it again, but at the time, I had no idea she felt that way. She was and is fantastic."

He returned to the St. Clair County Sheriff's Office in 2014 but quit in 2020 to campaign. After winning the election and taking office on January 1, 2021, having worked for sheriffs for 29 years, he expected the first year to be a little crazy.

"As with any change in command, some people quit, and new people come in, but we worked through it. In our second year, we added a lot of training, and now I'm pretty much on track with where I thought we'd be in three years. Everything has leveled out, and everybody is on board with the plan," Sheriff Hilty said, adding that over the last two years, he worked with his commissioners to increase pay by more than \$4 an hour. "We're almost fully staffed — currently, we're five short throughout the entire agency, and I employ around 75 people."

To create a more professional appearance, he decided to change the uniform, bringing in several samples and allowing the staff to have a say in what it would look like. They selected an all-black uniform and continue to get compliments from the public.

Drawing on his background, Sheriff Hilty added a narcotics unit and trained members to do things differently than they had done in the past to make the unit more effective. "In doing so, we immediately knocked our burglaries down 50 percent, and we've been able to maintain that drop," he said. "We also adopted the Textcaster system, which allows people to sign up for text notifications from our office. That's also been very successful. With the public's help, we've found people who fled and were hiding from us. It's also allowed us to inform the public if there's a crash or hazard to avoid."

As they purchase vehicles, he's adding spotlights outfitted with thermal imaging cameras that send the images to the in-car computers. The sheriff said they've been a great help in locating lost people and fleeing suspects.

In 2021, he increased revenue over \$600,000 by renegotiating the federal inmate contract and plans to do the same next year.

"In this county, the federal inmate program pretty much funds the sheriff's office and jail as well as the courthouse. With the changes in the economy, our budget is getting very tight, so we're also looking into other ways to increase revenue for the county," Sheriff Hilty said.

He also added an important new member to the roster — an apprehension K-9 — and she's doing a fantastic job. They also have two other dogs that are used for narcotics and tracking.

"One of the K-9s" is mine and is safe to pet, so I take him to the schools as often as I can. I care about our kids and want them to know they can trust us. He's a great 'icebreaker.' If I could send one message to my community I would stress the importance of teaching our kids the difference between right and wrong and to be kind to others," Sheriff Hilty said. "I'd also thank them for electing me. The most rewarding part of this job is knowing that we're making a difference and seeing how those changes are benefitting the community. My career goal is to continue improving our agency to make it the best it can be and to retire as sheriff."

By Nancy Zoellner





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# NABHOLZ

# Editorial

by Benton County  
Sheriff Eric Knox



## Insights

The Missouri Sheriffs' Association will soon be posting a podcast on our website, where sheriffs or their staff members will discuss different topics that affect their offices and the people of Missouri. Audrain County Sheriff Matt Oller will kick it off. Other sheriffs to be featured include Jasper County Sheriff Rande Kaiser and Perry County Sheriff Jason Klaus.

## THE SHERIFF SPEAKS

I have an admission. I quit watching the news for several months and withdrew from the garbage we call media. I am talking about the big news outlets, not our local news. I find them to be fair and accurate. They have always treated me well and reported the truth, with no spinning of the story.

However, I found myself physically ill as I watched some of today's current events on network news. As the television faded on, I wanted to turn it off, but that is one of the problems in today's America — even here at home. We shouldn't turn it off. We as Americans have "turned off," tuned out and ignored what's going on around us. It's easy to lose yourself in the daily grind. We are all busy working, running the kids to practice, meetings and doing all the other hundreds of things that keep our heads down.

In my humble opinion, we, the American people, have allowed our government to run amuck for too long. We have not held our federal government accountable. Everyone can see the double standard that is practiced in the political arena, and the waste of taxpayer dollars. The list of national concerns is long, and it appears to go on with contempt.

The sheriff is the chief law enforcement officer within each county, and the only constitutional law enforcement in America. Let me explain that statement. City law enforcement is usually governed by a board made up of city council members or aldermen. The chief is under the direction of that board and/or the mayor, so he or she is managed by city government. The Missouri State Highway Patrol is managed by the Department of Public Safety — a branch of our state government. All the alphabet agencies FBI, CIA, ATF, the list goes on, are run by the federal government.

The sheriff's office, however, is governed by the people and for the people. This is your office, just like all county offices should be.

I am Constitutional, an oath taker many times over. September 17, 1787 was the date that most important document — the United States Constitution — was signed. It states, "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

I am worried about our America and its current lack of justice, domestic tranquility, defense, and concern about our general welfare.

We, as a sheriff's office, are peacekeepers first and law enforcement officers second. I afford my deputies the latitude to use heart and common sense, along with the Missouri State statutes. I am not a fan of ticket writing. I do not believe in taxation through citation, but if you do need corrective action after a warning, you may get one.

The sheriff's office is the only thing standing between you and the federal government. I will not take your guns, I did not and will not support the forced masking and unconstitutional mandates associated with Covid. I believe in the power of the people and freedom of choice.

I beg of you, please lift your head up. See what is going on around you. GET INVOLVED! Hold your office holders accountable, all of them. Ask questions, demand answers. Your elected officials work for you, not the other way around. As always, stay vigilant, get to know your neighbors and be aware.



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Deputy Blankenship and Cpl. Terry Bible with Lt. Governor Kehoe.

# HEROES

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# Highest Honor

By Nancy Zoellner

On the afternoon of September 10, 2022, Lawrence County Deputy Shane Blankenship was at the scene of a motorcycle crash on eastbound Interstate 44 in Lawrence County when he heard a vehicle stopping suddenly. When Deputy Blankenship looked to the west, he could see flames from another crash a few hundred yards down the road. As Corporal Terry Bible with the Missouri State Highway Patrol arrived at the first scene, Deputy Blankenship directed him and Sarcoxie Fire Department firefighters to the second scene.

There, Cpl. Bible found two crashed tractor-trailers; thick smoke billowed from one of them. A motorist ran to Cpl. Bible and told him the truck was on fire and the driver was trapped. Cpl. Bible grabbed his fire extinguisher and sprinted to the truck's cab. There, he found the driver's legs pinned by the seat and the rear and outside of the cab in flames. With the fire department not yet on the scene, Cpl. Bible directed others to bring their fire extinguishers to the truck. Inside the cab, Cpl. Bible tried to force the seat away from the driver's leg as the flames intensified.

Cpl. Bible knew every second mat-



tered. Once the fire department arrived, he exited the cab, instructed the crew to bring the Jaws of Life hydraulic rescue tool, and then helped pull a firehose to the burning truck. Cpl. Bible then covered the driver with an extra set of firefighter's bunker gear to protect him from the growing flames.

Deputy Blankenship arrived, and the two applied pressure to the driver's seat as the fire department used the Jaws of Life to try to free the driver. With tires blowing up and flames moving into the cab, the fire department began spraying water on all the people inside to protect them. Cpl. Bible and Deputy Blankenship continued to try to calm and reassure the driver, who remained conscious throughout the ordeal.

Eventually, the driver was freed with the Jaws of Life and transported to medical treatment.

MSHP Master Sgt. Steven Jones, who nominated them for the award, wrote that although they both had the hair singed off their arms and head, "under the most harrowing circumstances, Cpl. Bible and Deputy Blankenship remained calm and resolute in their heroic determination to risk their own lives to save the driver, responding in the manner most officers can only hope they would be able to in a similar situation. Their efforts were nothing short of heroic. Both are worthy of commendation."

In his statement, Sarcoxie Fire Chief Berry West described the scene.

"There were a bunch of people yelling, and they all had fire extinguishers. Corporal Bible ran up and said, 'We need water.' He even helped pull the hose out... As I got the spreader out, Corporal Bible and Deputy Blankenship jumped right back in the truck. They were awesome... The guys were soaking us with water and those two were great. They never budged. Definitely one of the scariest calls I have ever been on. Tires were blowing up, and the cab was on fire while they were inside. The flames were coming over the top of us. They were awesome," he repeated.

Because of those heroic actions,

Deputy Blankenship, who has been with Lawrence County since April 2022, and Cpl. Bible were awarded the Medal of Valor from the Missouri Department of Public Safety. But in a later interview, Deputy Blankenship said it was just part of the job.

"Bible and I were focused on doing everything we could to get him out. I learned they were soaking us down because the fire was close enough to catch us on fire. But at the time, I was getting frustrated, thinking, 'Quit putting water on me.' It wasn't until we got him out that we realized the danger we were in," Deputy Blankenship said.

Sheriff Brad DeLay said this is just another example of the dedication of the men and women of his office, not only to the citizens of Lawrence County but to complete strangers who travel through the county every day.

"We could not be more proud of Deputy Blankenship and his bravery, not just in this incident but in so many more. Just a few short months ago, Deputy Blankenship was nearly killed when a tractor-trailer skidded out of control, crushing his patrol vehicle and nearly severely or fatally injuring him while working another crash," the sheriff said. "We are also proud of the partnerships we have with our emergency service agencies. Cpl. Bible and Deputy Blankenship are true heroes. Without their quick actions, this crash could have ended in tragedy for the driver. Well done."

Deputy Blankenship just recently returned to work after being off five months with a concussion and damage to his lower back, knee, and shoulder from the recent crash. "The job can be a little tough some days," he said, laughing.

With two master's degrees in psychology, Deputy Blankenship said he originally planned to work as a counselor.

"My biggest goal has always been to make a difference before I leave this world. I worked in counseling for a while but decided I could have more of an impact in law enforcement," he said.



## The Award

Missouri's Medal of Valor is the highest award a law enforcement officer, firefighter, or EMS worker can receive. The Medal of Valor was created in 2004 by Senate Bill 972 during the 92nd General Assembly. The first medals were awarded for acts of bravery performed during 2007.

The Medal of Valor is awarded annually after recommendations are submitted by the Medal of Valor Review Board, which includes representatives from Missouri's public safety disciplines and the general public. Sixteen other first responders were also honored at a special ceremony, six of them posthumously. Four civilians were also honored for their bravery in assisting first responders. The awards were presented in September at a ceremony in Jefferson City. To read the stories of all the award winners, visit [Itgov.mo.gov](https://itgov.mo.gov), click on the "News" link, then scroll down the page.

Nominations are now open for heroic acts performed during 2023 and must be received by February 29, 2024. The nominating form is available on the Missouri Department of Public Safety website at <https://dps.mo.gov/medal/>.



**Law Enforcement  
is Working to**

# **Keep Children Safe**

By Nancy Zoellner



**T**he CyberTipline receives reports from the public, but the majority are reported by online electronic service providers (ESPs).

Tracy Perkins is a detective with the Boone County Sheriff's Office, an affiliate office with the Missouri Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force. She explained how that information is collected and then used to prosecute offenders.

"All U.S.-based ESPs — platforms like Google, Facebook, TikTok, and Snapchat — are legally required to monitor all activity that takes place on their platforms on every device that receives and sends information via the internet. It's very technical, but basically, it relies on software that trolls their servers looking for what we call 'hash values,' which is a string of characters that help identify data," Perkins said. "Another program developed by Microsoft looks for skin, then uses another method to determine if it's an adult or a child. When an ESP's system alerts them to child sexual abuse material (CSAM), they basically put eyes on it and confirm that it is explicit images of children being raped or molested."

Once confirmed, the ESP is required by law to report "apparent child pornography" to the CyberTipline, which is managed by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

When the National Center gets the files, they uncover the online user's geographic location based on the IP address of their computer or mobile device. Next, they forward the files to the regional office of the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC), a network of 61 nationwide task forces funded by the United States Department of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice, and Delinquency Prevention, to investigate those cyber tips.

Missouri's regional office is based in the Saint Charles County Police Department. Perkins said once the reports are received in the St. Charles unit, they are sorted and sent to the supervisor of the appropriate affiliate agency, who assigns them to the individual investigator.

Today, more than 80 affiliate agencies, including the Boone, Franklin, and Phelps county sheriffs' offices, work with MO ICAC to ensure that online child exploitation issues are addressed quickly by local jurisdictions. Missouri is one of only a few states that provide additional funding to assist ICAC in fighting the battle.

"When we first started, there were only three agencies. By July of the next fiscal year, ten agencies across the state of Missouri had applied. To be eligible, the task force must be multijurisdictional, so although we're in Boone County, we work cases in all the counties that touch Boone County," Perkins said.

As a unit, they conduct proactive and reactive investigations. Proactive investigations involve going undercover online, looking for individuals attempting to engage in sexual relationships with children. Boone County has been doing that since 2007.

"Reactive investigations are conducted when Mom or Dad is looking at their child's phone and finds something, or something happens at school and gets reported to law enforcement or when we get cyber tips, which is where we've seen an uptick since 2020, the year Covid started," Perkins said. Prior to 2020, detectives with the Boone County Task Force were investigating an average of 70 to 80 cases per year. Since 2020, that number has steadily grown to the point where investigators are now seeing 140 to 160 cases annually.

Boone County's team includes two full-time investigators, a full-time forensic specialist, a part-time forensics specialist provided through the University of Missouri, and one person who will split his time between investigations and forensics. An FBI agent assists them when needed. Perkins said they get assistance from agencies in the counties when it's needed to make arrests.

Perkins said reports of CSAM possession are a lower priority. Cases where children are being molested are high priority and get investigated immediately, "and we get an answer or figure out a direction within a day or even hours." The time it takes to work a case from beginning to end varies, based upon the magnitude.

"So let's say we get a cyber tip from Google. We cross-check sources and then get a subpoena to get the subscriber records of whoever is leasing the IP address on a certain date from the internet provider. It's going to come back to the account and address of whoever is paying the bill. It doesn't mean that the person paying the account is responsible for the activity, but now we have the physical address. Once we do a workup, we apply for a residential search warrant," Perkins said. "We handle cases in both state and federal courts and get some really good convictions. Cases involving an already-convicted sex offender go to federal, and

## the numbers

In 2022, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's CyberTipline took:

**31,901,234**  
reports of child pornography (possession, manufacture, distribution)

**80,524**  
reports of online enticement of children for sexual acts

**35,624**  
reports of unsolicited obscene material sent to a child

**18,336**  
reports of child sex trafficking



## the reports

Since 1998, ICAC, comprised of 61 task forces of 5,230 federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies throughout the 50 states, have reviewed 7 million reports of online child exploitation, resulting in the arrest of more than 134,000 people.

Although more than 1,500 ESPs are registered to make reports, in 2022, only 236 actually submitted them. Five ESPs accounted for more than 90 percent of the reports received.

According to the NCMEC, millions of CyberTipline reports every year, mostly submitted by a handful of companies, is evidence that what they know about the extent of child sexual exploitation online is just the tip of the iceberg.

we usually get a minimum of eight to 10 years. The longest sentence I've gotten on a case that I worked from start to finish was life plus 20 years when a father was sexually abusing his 5-year-old and 2-year-old."

Perkins said she didn't set out to become an investigator. She was working as a school resource officer when, in 2002, she had her first child. In 2003, she decided to start on her master's degree.

"My whole study was about kids — the Columbine shooting, why kids do what they do, why kids kill people. As my capstone project, I wrote a huge paper on the sexual exploitation of children," she said. "This would have been in 2005. Two years later, the task force was born and I applied, as did six other candidates. My research and study helped me get the job and here I am, 16 years later."

Because of her background, she didn't allow her first child to have a cell phone until he turned 15. He had to wait longer to get social media.

"I didn't worry about him too much because the technology wasn't anything like it is today. But I got pregnant again in 2009, so there's a six-and-a-half-year difference between them and a huge difference in technology. I allow my second child to have a phone, and she's on some social media. But I frequently look at her device and her accounts, and she knows she can lose it all very quickly," Perkins said.

**"I think some of the problems exist because younger and younger children are getting phones and social media, and not all parents are monitoring their children's usage like they should."**

Perkins said she believes some parents don't stop to think that when they allow their 8 or 9-year-old to have apps like Snapchat, they're sending that child into the same territory as

adults — some of whom are sex offenders and regularly exploit children through sextortion, a crime in which kids, mostly young teens, are tricked into sharing explicit photos of themselves and then threatened by offenders that they will share the images with the child's friends, family, or others if they don't give the blackmailer money.

The Internet Watch Foundation reported receiving 191 reports of suspected sextortion in the first half of 2023. In previous years, sextortion offenders were more likely to target young girls with the goal of obtaining additional explicit images. In 2022, the NCMEC saw a large increase in boys being blackmailed for money instead of images. Several cases have resulted in panicked children taking their own lives.

"My advice to parents would be if the app says you have to be 15, then don't allow a child younger than 15 to have it. Also, keep an eye on gaming sites, which are becoming pedophile breeding grounds. If you don't know how to use your child's phone, learn how, then check it frequently, not just to see if a bad person is talking to your child but to also see how your child is handling himself or herself on social media. Uninstall the app if they're doing things they shouldn't," she advised.

In addition to apprehending online offenders, through partnerships with NetSmartz, Missouri KidsFirst, and Crisis Aid International, MO ICAC trains law enforcement officers, child advocates, and other professionals to give Internet safety presentations to parents and students. Perkins said that when talking to schools, they tell children it's not always a creepy old guy that's trying to get them.

"Sometimes it's an 18-year-old, so tell your children they are not obligated to talk to anyone if that person makes them feel uncomfortable. Tell them it's okay to turn off the phone if someone wants something from them and they don't know how to say 'No.'"





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# The Beginning of a New Story

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**From 2017 to 2021, 137 drivers involved in fatal crashes on Thanksgiving Eve were alcohol impaired. In 2021 alone, 36 drivers in fatal crashes on Thanksgiving Eve were alcohol-impaired.**

**H**ello, everyone, and thank you for allowing me to be a part of your organization by writing these articles. For those of you who don't know me, I'm Art Amato, the current East Region Law Enforcement Liaison (LEL) for Missouri. I've held that position for a little longer than seven years now.

My career began more than 40 years ago as a high school kid working in a gas station. I had no idea what I ultimately wanted to be or wanted to do — I was just basically working day to day and living the teenage life. Fortunately for me, officers with the local police department (Osage Beach) frequently came through on rotation to get fuel for their patrol cars. I had quite a few conversations with them, sharing that my family had some law enforcement background. After several good talks with the patrol sergeant, who was later promoted to chief, he invited me to come to the police department as a reserve.

Little did I know that his request was based on a bet he'd made with the current chief that he could come up with a better reserve candidate than the chief

could. So, in the end, my career started with a bet.

Since I wasn't old enough to work the street, I started in the radio room — although the chief did come in one night and offer to let me drive a patrol car around. That offer was quickly withdrawn when the full-time dispatcher reminded him I was only 18! Ultimately, I worked as a patrolman, field training officer (FTO), administrative assistant, and Type II instructor, maintaining and training officers on the breathalyzer. I left Osage Beach in 1990, and after leaving law enforcement for a short stint, I returned in 1992 as a reserve for the Union Police Department. I was later hired full-time. There, I got to pursue my passion for impaired driving enforcement. I became a Standard Field Sobriety Test (SFST) instructor, a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) instructor, and got involved in several other programs that I'll highlight in future articles. I retired early to take the LEL position I'm currently in.

Okay, now that you know a little more about me, I'll get to the article's subject matter.

As we all know, the upcoming holidays are loved by many.

Although I don't remember much from my high school days, I do remember that the week or two before the holiday break was pretty much a wash, and not much got accomplished. After I joined Osage Beach, I quickly learned that the pre-holiday attitude may have been the norm "back in the day," but it could no longer exist because, unfortunately, tragedy doesn't take holidays.

All too often, we lose innocent victims to senseless crashes caused by impaired drivers, speeding, and hazardous driving. In fact, throughout my career, I always tried to pick up the pace of my enforcement around the holidays. Maybe that was because I worked too many needless accidents where I saw wrapped presents that would never get opened in the crashed vehicles.

Some of the most hazardous times to drive on our roadways start before Thanksgiving and continue through the end of the year. The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) is once again funding a "Holiday Impaired Driving Campaign." The campaign started November 22 — the Wednesday before



Thanksgiving — better known as "Blackout Wednesday," which refers to binge drinking on the night before the holiday.

From 2017 to 2021, 137 drivers involved in fatal crashes on Thanksgiving Eve were alcohol-impaired. In 2021 alone, 36 drivers in fatal crashes on Thanksgiving Eve were alcohol-impaired.

Unfortunately, the problem doesn't end there. Instead, it continues through the rest of the year into the December holidays. During the 2017-2021 December months, more than 4,500 people were killed in crashes involving an alcohol-impaired driver. In December 2021 alone, 1,103 people died in impaired driving crashes.

That's why MoDOT's campaign continues through January 1, 2024.

MoDOT offers "STEP" grants for this and other campaigns, and as of 2023, if an agency policy allows, MoDOT allows double-time reimbursement for participating in the campaigns. If you are interested in applying for funding (it's the easiest grant I've ever filled out), reach out to me and I'll send you the application.

Sadly, impaired driving is 100 percent preventable. All it takes is for an impaired individual to make a conscious decision not to get behind the wheel. In today's world, with ride-share programs, cabs, cell phones, etc., there are too many alternative transportation methods to get home safely. MoDOT has

received funding from Uber for a \$10 discount by simply using the code "SoberMO23" when requesting a ride. The link to download media for the campaign is <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rrh5pUnsWINcbeuhtLRYwnLEE-gVhusGH>

If you have a social media page or an agency website, please visit the "Traffic Safety Marketing" or the "Save-MOLives" website to download electronic media that you can post about impaired driving.

One final point: as many of you know, we lose entirely too many law enforcement personnel to car crashes. The life you save by removing an impaired driver from the road may be your own or one of your fellow

deputies. I know it's an uphill battle, but it's a battle worth fighting because it does exactly what we all signed up to do when we took the oath — and that is to save lives.

Thank you, and I'm looking forward to the next article.



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**During the 2017-2021 December months, More than 4,500 people were killed in crashes involving an alcohol-impaired driver.**



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# Eye in the Sky

TECHNOLOGY HELPS KEEP EVERYONE SAFE



By Nancy Zoellner

**D**rones offer new ways for law enforcement to gather intelligence, respond to emergencies, handle hostage situations, and keep the public safe. According to Montgomery County Sheriff Craig Allison, one of the primary benefits of using drones for law enforcement is to enhance situational awareness. They can quickly and easily provide a bird's eye view of a situation, allowing law enforcement officers to assess the scene from a safe distance. Drone technology is also helpful for search and rescue operations — and it's the least expensive and fastest way to get eyes in the air.

Even with the \$15,000 price tag for their newest drone, Jasper County Sheriff Randee Kaiser knows firsthand just how true that is.

"I think it was 2014. We had gotten into a pursuit with a guy who was a murder suspect out of Lawrence County. He ditched his car and took off running. We got a pretty good perimeter set up, but it was a big perimeter — like a mile square — and night was setting in," Sheriff Kaiser said. "We got more cars on the perimeter, and we really felt good about the fact that he was inside this perimeter, but it was huge, so we called the Highway Patrol for their helicopter."

He said it took an hour and a half for the helicopter to get to Jasper County, and when it arrived, it had to fly straight to the airport to fuel up.

"They finally got on scene, and this helicopter literally made one lap around the perimeter and the guy stood up and gave up," Sheriff Kaiser said. "We spent two hours waiting on the helicopter and

within the first five minutes of it being there, he just stands up and walks to the nearest officer on the perimeter and gives himself up! That got me thinking. Between the man hours of all those people standing on the perimeter — because we probably had 50 officers out there — plus the cost of the helicopter, we spent so much money that night. I knew drones — especially those with infrared cameras — were really expensive. But when I stopped to think about how much money I spent on that one event — and we typically have a couple situations like that every year — it makes it worthwhile. So we got a drone. In fact, we were one of the first counties in Missouri to use a drone and infrared has been a game changer."

Jasper County's newest acquisition, a BRINC Drone, made possible through a donation by Larry and Sharon Newman, promises to be an even bigger game changer. The drone can break windows to gain entry into buildings, and two-way communication capabilities allow law enforcement to talk with individuals inside the building. An onboard sensor creates a map of its surroundings in real-time, and if the drone gets knocked down, it can upright itself.

"We're very thankful for the donation. Larry Newman has been a businessman in the community for a lot of years and was also in law enforcement a lot of years. He approached us about making a donation to the sheriff's office, we visited about the needs we had and settled on the drone," Sheriff Kaiser said.

The sheriff said they also have a couple of other drones they use for investigations and searches. And the department has several pilots: Jason Kent, Dylan Stoller, Sgt. John Hicks, Keith Maggard, Chris Corbett, and Gage Bloomer.

Corporal Brian Maskey is the drone pilot for Montgomery County.

He grew up surrounded by family members who flew airplanes. In fact, his grandma even had a family runway behind her house. After graduating high school, the young man decided he too wanted to take to the air. So, he signed up for flight lessons at Wehrman Aviation in Montgomery County and got his pilot's license in 2008.

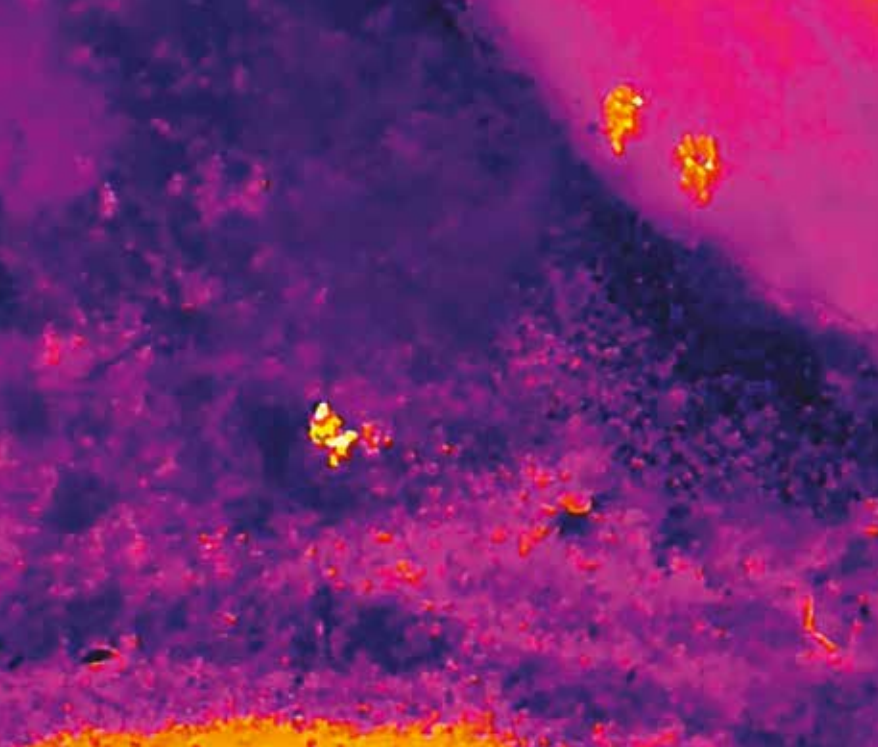
"Unfortunately, flying as a hobby is very expensive, so I got away from it when I started raising a family," he said. "Then, several years ago, my wife Michelle bought me a drone for Christmas to get me back up in the air again. It let me have that bird's eye view that I had missed so much."

When Sheriff Allison had an opportunity to get a drone earlier this year, he said that with his experience, Cpl. Maskey was the obvious choice for pilot. In July of this year, the corporal traveled to an FAA Testing Center in southern Missouri and passed the exam, certifying him as a remote unmanned aircraft pilot.

"You're not required to have a pilot's license to get drone certified, but it helps because the FAA treats this just like you'll be flying a plane," Cpl. Maskey said. "You need to learn aviation weather, you need to learn aviation maps, you need to learn aviation airspace. There are so many rules and regulations on this test, so anyone thinking about getting certified needs to be prepared to study."

But the studying pays off. Montgomery County's drone is equipped with a thermal imaging camera. It can help quickly locate fugitives, lost children, or elderly people who have walked away from home — and it can help find them in fields, wooded areas, or on rough terrain. Drones also help





with officer safety.

"We can put the drone in the air over an area where a suspect is hiding, locate him, then share that information with deputies," Cpl. Maskey said.

Their drone, a Mavic 2 Enterprise Advanced, also has another safety feature. It is equipped with flight avoidance technology that alerts the operator when planes or helicopters are close by. It also alerts the pilots of those aircraft so they can see the drone.

Cpl. Maskey said he hopes next, drone engineers will find a way to increase battery capacity.

"Drones go through batteries very quickly, so for anyone starting out, I suggest buying extras as well as a charger that plugs into a cigarette lighter. Hopefully, as more law enforcement and other emergency personnel get drones, they'll develop a battery that lasts longer," he said.

Detective Andy Femrite is the drone pilot for the Audrain County Sheriff's Office. He's flown drones for five years. However, for the last year and a half, his time in the air has been mostly job-related.

"Our drone program started a couple years ago under another deputy, and when he left, it was given to me. Initially, when we were in the testing stage, we used our personal drones. Then, two years ago, we bought an older model that wasn't being used from an agricultural school. This year, we were fortunate enough to acquire a drone with thermal imaging capabilities through grants," he said.

Because he's the only certified drone

pilot in the sheriff's office, he's always on call. So, he keeps the drone charged up and ready to go. And he goes quite frequently.

"I'm used for any investigation in the county. We'll take overhead photos, especially when there's crop damage, which, unfortunately, seems to be a common theme for most rural deputies. Using a drone in crime scene documentation is pretty big in rural counties because we have much larger areas to document," Detective Femrite said.

He's also used the drone in search and rescue and for fugitive apprehension after people have fled from traffic stops.

"I've even used it to find lost cattle! We'll get a call that someone has stolen their cattle, so first, we'll see if they're just missing. Sure enough, I'll find them down in the back 40 in a creek bed where the farmer hadn't looked," he said, laughing.

In September, Detective Femrite spoke about drone use in law enforcement at the Missouri Sheriffs' Association Deputy Training Conference.

"It was kind of the nitty gritty on how to put a drone program together and what's required to stay within FAA guidelines. My goal was to get the deputies interested and provide enough information so they could go back to their sheriffs and say why a drone would be beneficial to their office," he said. "Sheriffs have a lot of different options. Drones with FLIR, Forward-Looking Infra-Red cameras, use thermal imaging to see people, vehicles, and animals in the dark. Some drones have cameras that



**(Top left)** Teamwork and technology helped ensure a safe outcome for a woman who threatened to take her own life. A drone was used to guide deputies with the Clay County Sheriff's Office to her location so she could be transported to the hospital. The woman is in the center of the photo; deputies are in the upper right.

**(Top right)** Corporal Brian Maskey is the drone pilot for Montgomery County.

**(Bottom right)** Detective William Femrite is the drone pilot for Audrain County.

can zoom in on license plates over a mile away. Others can pick up and carry a few hundred pounds. As technology advances, there will be even more uses. I shared quite a bit of information. But ultimately, I wanted to get across that drones can save lives and avoid putting deputies in danger unnecessarily."

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**Daryl Davis performed with all the "greats." However, his greatest accomplishment was convincing more than 200 members of the KKK to leave the organization.**

# MSA Conferences

## Train Those Who Protect & Serve

By Nancy Zoellner

All Missouri peace officers who make traffic stops are required by state statute to receive training concerning the prohibition against racial profiling, "and such training shall promote understanding and respect for racial and cultural differences."

In 2023, the sheriffs got that — and more — when Daryl Davis spoke at their summer training conference.

Davis is an internationally known recording artist, actor, and leader of the Daryl Davis Band. He is considered one of the greatest blues-and-boogie-woogie and blues-and-rock'n'roll pianists of all time, having played with the Legendary Blues Band (formerly the Muddy Waters band) and Chuck Berry. Davis has also performed as an actor on stage, in film, and on television.

However, he was invited to be the keynote speaker at the conference because he is recognized as a race relations expert. Davis, a black man, told the sheriffs how, as a child, he was prohibited from playing with other children in his neighborhood and bullied because the color of his skin was different. He told sheriffs that he made it his life's goal to find out why skin color made a difference — and then he shared how he went about setting up surprise meetings with Ku Klux Klan members who were unaware of his skin color and how he attended Klan rallies — one in Missouri — in an effort to better understand racism.

His efforts resulted in more than 200 KKK members rescinding their beliefs and leaving the Klan after coming to know him.

Ironically, many years ago, while still a deputy, Madison County Sheriff Katy McCutcheon got a call to respond to a Klan rally Davis was attending. During the question-and-answer portion of Davis's presentation, she told the sheriffs she

didn't know what she'd be walking into, "but I was pretty sure somebody was going to get shot that night — and thought it might be me. But when I arrived, they said it was cool — that he was invited in. It was a night that I'll never forget," she said.

When Davis finished speaking, he played a variety of songs, wrapping up the performance by inviting the "MSA Sisters" — Marketing Director Jeanne Merritt, Administrative Assistant Donna Arney, and Office Assistant/Membership Coordinator Gina Kaufman — up on stage to sing background on a couple of songs.

The sheriffs had nothing but praise for the training. Nodaway County Sheriff Randy Strong said Davis was "absolutely the best speaker I have ever had the pleasure to hear!" Audrain County Sheriff Matt Oller said he found Davis's story very interesting, adding, "He's a man that should receive a peace prize."

That wasn't the only training offered at the summer conference. The 174 sheriffs and their staff members also heard presentations on use-of-force analysis and investigation, effective courtroom testimony, and the Aurora Colorado shooting. Will Summers also shared the



**Hickory County Sheriff Greg Burke shared insights on livestock branding and theft investigation.**



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account of a small band of Special Forces soldiers who secretly entered Afghanistan following 9/11 and rode to war on horses against the Taliban.

The opening day of the four-day conference included an expo with 109 vendors offering products and services for law enforcement. And because all work and no play gets old, sheriffs were also invited to participate in a golf tournament, and they got to enjoy a barbecue that included live music and a cornhole tournament.

Marketing Director Jeanne Merritt said the MSA staff and board members were all pleased with how the conference went.

"We always do our very best to make sure our conferences provide top-quality training for our sheriffs and their staff.

We're also pleased that we have the support of so many vendors who attend our conferences and provide the sheriffs and the other key decision-makers the opportunity to explore products and services that will help them as they serve their communities. Conferences are also a great opportunity to network and share issues they deal with daily," Merritt said.

The MSA also offers training throughout the year to administrative professionals, jail administrators, and deputies.

The Deputy Training Conference, held this past September, offered three different tracks — Deputy, Investigation, and Management — with specialized information presented during each session.

The track for road deputies included classes on livestock theft and brand

laws, 1st Amendment auditors, domestic violence response and case building, courtroom testimony, and the civilian response to active shooters (train the trainer).

Investigators heard a presentation from the FBI on the Color of Law, and they learned about social media and electronic crime investigation, overdose death investigations, recognition of illegal weapons, drone use in criminal investigations, and homeland security investigations.

The track for management provided training on leadership and motivation, mental wellness, grant writing, peace officer bill of rights for management, and employee discipline issues.

The weeklong training, which drew 106 attendees, also kicked off with a vendor expo, and it too included a BBQ with cornhole. Training wrapped up with a presentation on outlaw motorcycle gangs by Steve Cook, an international expert on the subject.

"These last two conferences are going to be hard to top because of the great presenters we were able to bring in — but we're going to try," Merritt said. "We've already started working on 2024."



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**The conference wrapped up with a presentation by Steve Cook, a detective with a Kansas City area law enforcement agency and an international expert in the area of outlaw motorcycle gangs. Cook has appeared in several TV series including History Channel's Gangland program; on the Biography Channel's "Gang World: One Percenters," and on Gangsters: America's Most Evil, a documentary series that airs on Reelz.**

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The MO CIT Council is a network of representatives from each established local CIT council across the state, Community Behavioral Health Liaisons (CBHLs), state agencies and associations, and those with lived experience. The MO CIT Council provides direction and support on the CIT curriculum, training expansion, and implementation of the program.

## FRPN

The MO CIT Council has identified a list of trained behavioral health professionals who specialize in helping first responders who are struggling with depression, anxiety, relationships, post-traumatic stress symptoms and more. The providers on this network understand our unique professional culture and are trusted and vetted by first responders.

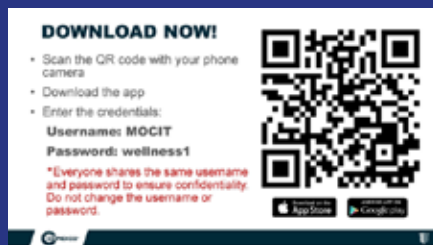
A list of these providers can be found at:  
[www.missouricit.org/first-responders](http://www.missouricit.org/first-responders)



*The FRPN is considered a self-referral source.*

## WELLNESS APP

The MO CIT Council has made available a free, confidential and anonymous wellness app for all current and retired law enforcement and their significant other, which includes self assessments, a wellness toolkit, and a therapist finder.



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