

THE MISSOURI Sheriff

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE 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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President's Message

from Franklin County
Sheriff Steve Pelton

STRIVING TO UPHOLD THE COMMUNITY'S TRUST

Missouri Citizens,

As your elected sheriffs, we take this opportunity to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to serving and protecting our communities. Today, I want to speak not only about our roles as law enforcement officers but also about the vital responsibilities we hold as defenders of your rights and freedoms. We are dedicated to upholding the Constitution and ensuring that justice prevails for all.

Missouri's history of sheriffs is rich and storied. From the early days of our state's founding, sheriffs have been entrusted with the monumental task of maintaining peace and order in their communities. In the frontier days, sheriffs acted as the primary law enforcement agents, often facing challenges that tested their resolve and commitment. They were the first line of defense against lawlessness, working tirelessly to ensure the safety and well-being of their neighbors.

As we reflect on this legacy, we understand that our role is not just about enforcing laws; it's about embodying the values of justice, integrity, and community service that have defined sheriffs throughout our history. Each of us is honored to carry forward this tradition, continually striving to uphold the trust placed in us by the citizens we serve.

Today, I stand before you not just as an individual sheriff, but as a representative of the 115 sheriffs of Missouri who stand united in our mission. Together, we form a powerful collective, committed to the principles of justice and the protection of our communities. This unity reflects our shared belief in the importance of constitutional law and

the rights of every individual we serve. Our alliance allows us to address challenges more effectively, share resources, and foster a culture of support and accountability among our ranks. By standing united, we reaffirm our commitment to protect the rights of all citizens and to uphold the Constitution without compromise.

Being a constitutional sheriff means we are more than enforcers of the law; we are staunch defenders of the principles upon which our great nation was founded. Our commitment is to uphold not only the letter of the law but also the spirit of liberty and justice for every individual. We recognize that the rights guaranteed by the Constitution are the foundation of our democracy and the cornerstone of our duty.

We recognize the profound trust you place in us. We are not just enforcers of the law; we are your neighbors, your friends, and your allies. Our mission is to foster safety, security, and peace while respecting the rights guaranteed to every individual. We believe that a strong partnership with the community is essential to effective law enforcement.

To that end, we are committed to transparency, accountability, and open communication. Our doors are always open, and we encourage you to engage with us. We want to hear your concerns, your suggestions, and your ideas. Together, we can build stronger, safer communities where everyone feels valued and heard.

As we look to the future, we understand that the landscape of law enforcement is continually evolving. New challenges arise, from emerging technologies to



"Our mission is to foster safety, security, and peace while respecting the rights guaranteed to every individual."

societal changes. However, our dedication to the principles of justice, liberty, and respect remains steadfast. We will adapt and innovate while holding true to our core values, ensuring that our actions reflect the trust you have placed in us.

In conclusion, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your support and trust. We are honored to serve as your sheriffs, and we pledge to work tirelessly on your behalf. Together, let us honor the legacy of those who came before us and continue to uphold the principles that make Missouri a beacon of justice and liberty.

As we move forward, know that the 115 sheriffs of Missouri stand united, committed to serving you and defending your rights. Thank you for your time, your trust, and your partnership in building a brighter future for our communities.

*In Service,
Franklin County Sheriff Steve Pelton on
behalf of the Sheriffs of Missouri*

Serving and Protecting

News from Missouri Sheriffs' Offices



Franklin County

1 Franklin County Sheriff Steve Pelton was named Hometown Hero for the Union Chapter of Modern Woodmen of America. Pictured with him are Richard Gentry of Modern Woodman (left) and Dennis Neville of Dave Sinclair Automotive, who said that Sheriff Pelton was selected due to his and his department's dedicated service. "Sheriff Pelton, we truly appreciate all that you and your department do for our community."

2 At their September Commission meeting, Corporal Michael Dean was recognized for 10 years of service with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Steve Pelton said they were "blessed to have him as part of our team, and we are thankful for his dedication to our community."



Camden County

Animal Control Officer Mike Stoufer (left), who served with the Camden County Sheriff's Office for 17 years, recently retired. Chief Deputy Jim Brashear said that during his tenure, Stoufer helped initiate periodic rabies vaccine clinics, provided input and insight to the Camden County Commission on animal control ordinances, developed excellent working relationships with area animal shelters and veterinary offices, and was instrumental in the design and construction of the new animal control building. "Mike was an important part of our family for many years, and he will be missed," Col. Brashear said.



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Warren County

The Warren County Sheriff's Office recently added a new K9 Unit. Sheriff Kevin Harrison said this addition underscores their continued commitment to ensuring the safety and security of the community and builds upon the goals set out during their Prop P campaign in 2018.

Sergeant Josh Malin, who has been with the sheriff's office since early 2015, will be the handler. The dog's name is Melvin. He was named in honor of former Warren County Sheriff Melvin Twiehaus, who served as sheriff from 1961 to 1984, making him the longest-serving sheriff in the history of Warren County. Melvin is trained to detect narcotics, track and apprehend suspects, and conduct search and rescue missions, and he will engage in community outreach.

The K9 unit trained at the Boone County Sheriff's Office K9 Training Center in Columbia. Sheriff Harrison said the team should be finished with their training and be on the road towards the end of December 2024.



Linn County

1 Sheriff Carrie Melte and fellow law enforcement officers from Missouri and Illinois recently completed the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Academy in Jefferson City. Sheriff Melte said the two-week program provided her with valuable knowledge and experience that she can now apply to Linn County schools and strengthen relationships with other law enforcement agencies.

2 In July, Sergeant Stacy Walton was presented with an Award of Recognition by the Tri-Counties Mothers Against Drunk Driving for joining the "25 DWI Club." Law enforcement officers receive this award when they issue 25 or more DWI citations within a year. Sheriff Melte congratulated Sgt. Walton on becoming a member of the club, adding, "Keep up the good work!"



Cole County

The Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives (AMEC) annually presents its Distinguished Service Award to someone who "selflessly and tirelessly devotes themselves to the progress of rural electrification." This year, the award was presented to John Hemeyer (right), a director for Ralls County Electric Cooperative in New London and a former sheriff of Cole County.



"Bestowing this honor on John Hemeyer is most appropriate because he has been an advocate for rural people throughout his cooperative career," said Caleb Jones (left), CEO of the association and the son of former Moniteau County Sheriff Kenny Jones. "As a cooperative leader and public servant, John worked diligently to improve the quality of life for rural people in Missouri."

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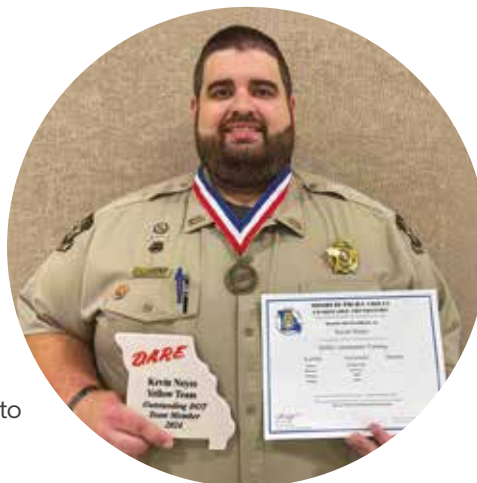
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Macon County

Deputy Kevin Noyes recently graduated from the two-week D.A.R.E. Academy held in Jefferson City. Sheriff Kevin Shoemaker congratulated Deputy Noyes, thanking him for his dedication and service to Macon County and its youth.



Douglas County

In October, Sheriff Degase and Deputy Three-Eagles delivered more than 175 coats to students at the Ava R-1 Schools, Plainview School, and Skyline Schools as a part of the Coats for Kids Program. This is the 16th year for the program, which has provided nearly 2,000 coats for children. This year, they had help from sponsors Sonic, Jim's Body Shop, Eds Towing, PC Express, Copeland, and Cash Gas. The following day, Sheriff Degase delivered stocking caps and mittens to Head Start students.



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Andrew & Buchanan Counties

In October, several members of the Buchanan County Sheriff's Office (right), the Andrew County Sheriff's Office (left), the St. Joseph Police Department and the Missouri State Highway Patrol attended the FBI LEEDA Supervision Course.

The FBI LEEDA Supervision Course is the first of the three-part LEEDA Trilogy, and, according to Sheriff Bill Puett, it is essential for both current and future leaders of the sheriff's office. "The better we are the better we can serve the citizens of Buchanan County."

The Northwest Missouri Law Enforcement Foundation paid all costs associated with the training. Sheriff Puett said he appreciates the Foundation for the tremendous amount of support they give to the sheriff's office, as well all law enforcement in Northwest Missouri.



Jefferson County

1 In August, the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office lost a dear friend and long-time member of the Sheriff's Alumni Volunteer Echelon, Jerry Dandridge. Sheriff David Marshak said while the hole left by his passing can never be filled, acts of kindness and generosity in his name reflect his character. In that spirit, the S.A.V.E. group, including Jerry's widow, Stephanie, made a \$500 donation to the Sheriff's Office Canine Division in Jerry's honor. "We're so grateful for the memories we have of Jerry and to have this group as part of the Sheriff's Office family," Sheriff Marshak said.



2 Corporal Chris Gearon was recently presented with the Above and Beyond the Call of Duty award by the St. Louis Chapter of ASIS International. He's pictured here with Mike York, chairman of the St. Louis Chapter of ASIS International, and Captain Moore. The award stems from Cpl. Gearon's quick actions earlier this year that ended with the arrest of a dangerous suspect who allegedly severely assaulted a woman, stole two vehicles, forced his way into a home, and threatened children inside.



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Osage County

1 Sheriff Mike Bonham attended the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) Instructor Course. This specialized training, known as Inland Boat Operations & Marine Patrol Fundamentals (IBO-MPF) Train the Trainer, is designed to equip law enforcement officers with essential life-saving boating skills and recovery techniques. The course aims to improve the proficiency of marine patrol personnel, ensuring they are well-prepared to respond effectively to emergencies on the water.

“By enhancing our capabilities in marine operations, we can better protect our citizens and ensure their safety while enjoying our waterways,” said Sheriff Bonham. “This training will allow us to respond more effectively to boating incidents and improve our overall emergency response efforts.”

2 The Osage County Sheriff’s Office, Chamois Fire Department, and the Missouri Department of Conservation recently conducted an educational session for the Mid Missouri Sea Cadet program, focusing on water safety and the vital role of law enforcement on Missouri’s waterways. The briefing provided the Sea Cadets with hands-on experience; practical knowledge, including how to properly wear life jackets, identify potential hazards, and respond in case of an emergency; and insights into water safety procedures essential for navigating Missouri’s rivers and lakes. Officers from the Osage County Sheriff’s Office and representatives from the Missouri Department of Conservation demonstrated how law enforcement ensures public safety on the water, enforces regulations, and conducts search-and-rescue operations. Chamois Fire Department’s team highlighted the importance of fire safety and emergency preparedness in aquatic environments. Osage County Sheriff Mike Bonham said the partnership with the agencies gave the cadets a comprehensive look at both prevention and response.



Clark County

1a&b Deputy Shannon O’Day recently joined the Clark County Sheriff’s Office. During the school year, Deputy O’Day will serve as the school resource officer. Sheriff Shawn Webster said that adding an SRO to the roster has been a goal for several years, “and I want to thank the Clark County School Board and the Clark County Commission for helping us achieve this goal.”

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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.

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Jasper County

The Jasper County Sheriff's Office came together with friends and family to recognize new hires and celebrate the promotions of others.

New employees are Trevor Browning, Nancy Chonay, Trevor Frost, Ivory Lee, Jennifer Russow, Alexis Smith, William Stone, Allen Purcell, Timothy Lenze, and Michael Moore. Promotions went to Sgt. Eric Adkins, Corporal Hannah Burton, Det. Chris Calvin, and Det. Gage Bloomer. The Sheriff's Commendation was awarded to Det. Trenton Greene and Det. Dave Lewis and the Sheriff's Letter of Appreciation was given to Kylie Shember, Jennifer Russow, Joseph Deras, and Matthew Leek.

"It's moments like these that remind us of the strength, commitment, dedication, and unity within our team," Sheriff Randee Kaiser said. "Congratulations to all."



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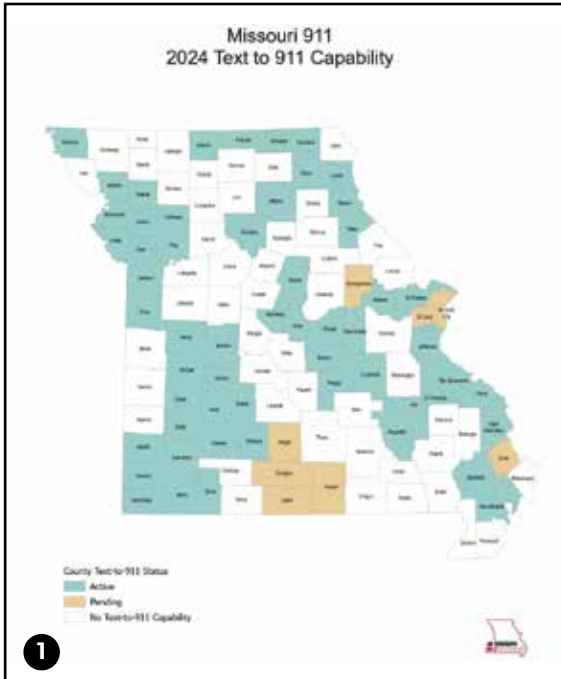
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2 In September, law enforcement officers from Missouri and Illinois completed the classroom lesson portion of their D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) training at Blair Oaks Elementary and Intermediate Schools in Jefferson City.

The 80-hour training course taught the officers how to teach drug resistance and education to students in their communities. The curriculum focuses on helping kids learn how to resist peer pressure and make informed decisions regarding not just drugs but also alcohol and violence. Students learn the harmful side effects of drugs as well as healthy habits that will help them avoid substance abuse as they grow. In addition to teaching important life skills, the program also plays a crucial role in connecting law enforcement with the community.

3 The Missouri 911 Service Board recently named Scott M. Cason as its new executive director. In this role, Cason will continue driving the implementation of life-saving Next Generation 911 (NG911) technology across Missouri, enhancing emergency response capabilities. "Scott's knowledge of Missouri and the trusted relationships he has built over the past 18 months provide the foundation needed to keep the state on the path toward innovative, effective emergency response solutions," said Alan Wells, chairman of the board.



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Sheriff is Surprised with a Well-Deserved Award

By Nancy Zoellner



For 47 years, Platte County Sheriff Mark Owen has been serving the public by serving in law enforcement. Throughout his career, he has strived to build relationships with the community through a multitude of projects and partnerships.

In August, the Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (LECC) for the Western District of Missouri recognized his commitment by presenting him with the Distinguished Service Award for Lifetime Achievement. This is the first time the LECC has presented this award, making Sheriff Owen the inaugural recipient.

Les Kerr, law enforcement coordinator for the LECC, said it was an easy decision.

"We received a nomination, signed by all of the commanders from Platte County, asking us to consider Mark Owen for the Morelock award, named after Sullivan County Sheriff Enoch Morlock, who was the first recorded line-of-duty death in the Western District of Missouri," he said.

Kerr said that while reviewing the nomination, the committee quickly determined that Sheriff Owen was "way over-qualified" for that award, based on what he had done during his career and most recently as sheriff.

"While we were trying to decide how we might honor him, we decided to do something we had never done before and create the Lifetime Achievement Award. There wasn't one outstanding thing that he did, but it was what he gives back to the community - things that he doesn't necessarily have to do as the sheriff, but instead, they're things that he has chosen to do, a lot of it on his own free time," Kerr said.

To get him there, Kerr said they told Sheriff Owen that he would be presenting an award to someone else.

Les Kerr (right), law enforcement coordinator for the LECC, presented the award to Sheriff Mark Owen.

"I was about halfway through my presentation speech when it dawned on him that I was talking about him — that he was the recipient," Kerr said. "It was great!"

Sheriff Owen said that while he didn't think he had done anything special to be recognized, it was still quite an honor and a wonderful way to wrap up his career. He'll be retiring at the end of his term this year.

He said he had always wanted to be a policeman, but when he finished his stint with the Marine Corps, there weren't any openings in law enforcement, so he took a job with the fire service. Then, in July 1977, he got a chance to fulfill his dream by taking a reserve position with Weatherby Lake. Over the next 35 years, he worked in law enforcement as a police officer, then a patrol deputy, patrol sergeant, lieutenant over Platte County's Emergency Services Division, and captain over road patrol. On January 1, 2013, he reached the pinnacle of his career when he was sworn in as sheriff of Platte County. He's been reelected each term with no opposition. He credits that to his community involvement.

"I do Coffee With the Sheriff once a month at the senior center and at several other spots around the county, and we're always getting asked to judge competitions like chili cookoffs. A couple retirement homes hold a Wii bowling contest, and the winners bowl against the sheriff and his team. We've yet to win any of them, but we have a lot of fun," he said, laughing. "We also play baseball cornhole at a couple of the centers, with the same luck."

The sheriff and his deputies also try to attend every school fair and festival, and during warm-weather months, they coordinate with Scott Lamaster and Taking it to the Streets to hold street parties in low-income neighborhoods.

"Those are really my favorite. We set up bounce houses, and we take a big pull-behind grill and we cook hot dogs and hamburgers for everybody. Sometimes, we have music going, and the SROs will dance with the kids. To me, those events are so important," Sheriff Owen said. "The kids in those areas haven't had positive interactions with law enforcement, but these events give us the opportunity to show them that there's a good side — a positive side — to law enforcement. That's been one of my goals since I've been here, and I have no doubt that they will carry on after I leave."

His community involvement has been noticed.

In 2016, he was also honored with the Clarence Kelly Award, which has been presented annually since 1980 to the outstanding law enforcement administrator in the Kansas City metropolitan area. And in 2017, he was presented with the Mid-American Regional Leadership Award, which recognizes individuals, organizations, and initiatives that have made exceptional contributions to the region. Recently, he was named a Distinguished Honoree at the Kansas City Shepherd's Center's 2024 70 Over 70 Celebration.

And it's no wonder.

Over the years, he's been heavily involved in a long list of law enforcement organizations dedicated to improving law enforcement, decreasing crime, and increasing safety. He currently serves as a commissioner on the Missouri



Sheriff Owen and members of his staff regularly met with citizens at Coffee With a Cop events all around the community.



Sheriff Owen, along with other law enforcement officers, had the honor of hanging medals on the winners of the Winter Special Olympics at Snow Creek. Sheriff Owen said it was one of the many blessings of his job.



Lots of kids, free food, games and deputies street dancing with the kids all added up to another great event with Scott Lamaster's Taking it to the Streets.



On Thursday, August 22, 2024, the Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (LECC) for the Western District of Missouri presented Sheriff Mark Owen (center) with the Distinguished Service Award for Lifetime Achievement. From the left, Nodaway County Sheriff Randy Strong, Buchanan County Sheriff Bill Puett, Andrew County Sheriff Grant Gillette, and DeKalb County Sheriff Kasey Keesaman were on hand for the presentation.

Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission, he is a 22-year member of the International Association of Emergency Managers, and he chairs the Kansas City Metro Squad Board, the Kansas City MOWIN Narcotics Task Force, and the FBI Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory. He's also the co-chair of the Kansas City Area Regional 911 Communications Committee Board and a member of the Kansas City Regional Homeland Security Committee, the Northland Alternative Service Program, the Kansas City Regional Law Enforcement Committee, and the Kansas City Metropolitan Emergency Management Committee.

His list of past involvements is just as long and impressive. In fact, as the chairman of the Coast Guard Maritime Security Committee, he was responsible for establishing a security port for Kansas City and obtaining millions of dollars in grant funding to purchase dive suits, trucks, and a helicopter, and create a command post.

"But I didn't get involved in these groups to get a pat on the back — I did it because it needed to be done," he said.

Although Sheriff Owen is happy with the changes and improvements made over his years as sheriff, he said he's probably happiest about the growth they've seen in their Shop With a Cop program.

"This will be our 29th year. Back in 1995, the Missouri Sheriffs' Association gave grants of \$500 each to five departments with the understanding that from then on, we had to raise our own funds. That first year, we took 10 kids shopping and gave them \$50 each. The following years, we raised money, and we're now up to around \$10,000," he said.

They now take around 40 kids shopping and give them \$250 each — but they have to spend 70 percent on things to wear. The rest can be spent on gifts for the family or toys.

"It's another way to build trust with our youth. One year, we had a young boy ask for tennis shoes. The shoes he was wearing were hand-me-downs, and the toes were stuffed with



Congressman Sam Graves, who submitted a Congressional Record in honor of Sheriff Owen, said the sheriff has 'honorably served Platte County with integrity and devotion for 45 years. He's had a distinguished career in law enforcement, and I've thoroughly enjoyed working with him throughout the years. I wish him all the best in his well-deserved retirement.' The resolution was delivered to Sheriff Owen by Christian Holferty, field representative for Congressman Graves.

newspaper because they were too big. Another year, a boy said he wanted his own underwear - that fit. He had been wearing underwear that had to be safety pinned to stay up. Sometimes they ask for coats or socks," Sheriff Owen said. "It can be very hard on your heart to know that they've been going without the most basic things. That's why I'm so thankful we have citizens who care about our kids and who are willing to help us fill that void."

Kerr said that's just Sheriff Owen's nature.

"They say we get hardened the longer we're in law enforcement, but I'm not sure that's true with Mark. After 47 years in law enforcement, he can be tough — I wouldn't want to make him mad or get on his bad side — but he is really very soft-hearted. He has compassion and empathy for people who are struggling — people who are having issues. He cares very much for his community."

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Gathering Admissible Evidence

BY NANCY ZOELLNER

Driving after drinking or using drugs can be deadly.

According to current statistics, in 2023, approximately 10,511 people - which equates to 28 to 30 people a day - died in traffic crashes involving drunk drivers. Although drug-involved driving testing and reporting procedures vary, data suggests that around half of all fatally injured drivers who are tested for drugs tested positive.

Missouri has armed itself with a tool to combat impaired driving and lower those numbers: law enforcement phlebotomists.

Through Missouri's Law Enforcement Phlebotomy Program (LEPP), officers who qualify are trained to safely draw blood to obtain evidence of alcohol or drugs in a suspected impaired driver's system.

Blood tests are generally more accurate

than breathalyzers for measuring blood alcohol content (BAC) and are considered a more reliable source of evidence in court. That's because blood tests directly measure the amount of alcohol in a person's blood, where breathalyzers indirectly measure BAC by analyzing the alcohol in a person's breath. The residual alcohol in someone's mouth from mouthwash and breath freshener - even burping or eating food cooked with alcohol - is known to have produced false positives. In addition, blood tests can identify drugs like opioids, stimulants, or hallucinogens in a person's blood. Breathalyzers cannot.

Dr. Joanne Kurt-Hilditch, the senior director of the Missouri Safety Center, said Missouri's LEPP was a long time coming.

"The program research actually began around 2014. However, it didn't come to fruition until 2020, when the state received grant funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)," she said, adding that after receiving the funding, a task force comprised of representatives from the Missouri Safety Center, law enforcement, prosecuting attorneys' offices, the Moberly Area Community College and highway safety professionals was formed.

Dr. Kurt-Hilditch said they began by surveying a number of law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

"We found that while some agencies have phenomenal relationships with their hospitals, fire departments, and ambulance districts, who make law enforcement blood draws a priority, they also found that doesn't happen everywhere, especially in communities without hospitals. In those cases, law enforcement officers might have to travel a few hours to take an individual for a blood draw. By

having trained law enforcement phlebotomists nearby, agencies can get blood draws done more quickly so they're not losing out on evidence," she explained.

To develop a program manual, the task force met with officials from Arizona, where law enforcement phlebotomy was pioneered more than 25 years ago; Idaho, which put a program in place in 2005; and traffic safety officials and prosecutors from several other states that already had a LEPP in place.

Finally, after nearly a decade of planning, in 2023, nine law enforcement officers chosen for the program went to Arizona - three at a time - and successfully completed training. They were accompanied by task force members and Darinda Mast, director of Health Sciences at the Moberly Area Community College, where the program is being taught.

Today, Missouri has 30 qualified law enforcement phlebotomists working at 23 different agencies, including five sheriff's offices.

Dr. Kurt-Hilditch said there are a number of benefits to the program. One of the biggest is the time it saves, which is responsible, in part, for lowering the refusal rate.

"In the past, the refusal rate in Missouri was relatively high. For our phlebotomy draws, it's around 27 percent, we believe because they don't have to wait. And there's no coercion involved," she added. "If they refuse, law enforcement must still go through the process of obtaining a search warrant just like they would for any other blood draw."

The program was recently awarded another round of funding for 2025. Dr. Kurt-Hilditch said she hopes it will continue and that they will get more participation from agencies in rural communities,



Everyone got to pose with the award. Here, left to right, Sgt. Tom Taulbee and Deputy Jordan DeClue with the Platte County Sheriff's Office, which was onboard from the start, were part of the group recognized at the 2024 Law Enforcement Traffic Safety Advisory County Conference for their participation in the Missouri Law Enforcement Phlebotomy Program. With them are Dr. Joanne Kurt-Hilditch and Deputy Ryan DeVost, a phlebotomist with the Lawrence County Sheriff's Office. Deputy DeClue was also recognized by the Missouri Division of Highway Safety for his 107 DWI arrests in 2023. This is Dep. DeClue's third year receiving the award.

which tend to lack nearby hospitals.

“We feel that the more we do to get the impaired drivers off the road, the better off we’re all going to be,” she said.

Dr. Kurt-Hilditch said while there is no guarantee of funding, if the program continues, it will likely be set up similarly to the Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) program, with centralized statewide oversight of initial training, re-training, and continued qualification.

The next round of training will take place in 2025 in two separate classes. Individuals accepted into the program must participate in six weeks of online training assignments, travel to Mexico, Missouri, for three to four days of on-site training at the Moberly Area Community College, and complete 100 successful blood draws during on-site clinical assignments. Those are typically arranged closer to the participant’s home. Approved clinical sites can include a VA hospital, local hospital, labs, or clinics.

Grant funds will cover all travel expenses, including lodging, per diem, and travel. Background checks and drug tests, which are required, are also covered through grant funding. Vaccinations may be required for clinical sites, but they are not covered through grant fees and are the responsibility of the individual or the participating agency. Salaries are also the responsibility of the participating agency.

Everyone who successfully completes

the program gets a phlebotomy chair, purchased with grant money, and a backpack full of supplies – items like tourniquets, gauze, and butterfly needles.

“We provide the phlebotomy chairs and supplies so that they can set up in an actual room. Sometimes they do the blood draws where their breath alcohol instruments are kept so they are working in a clean, safe environment,” Dr. Kurt-Hilditch explained. “The sheriffs have been hugely supportive. For instance, they’re getting a new jail in Lawrence County, and Sheriff Brad Delay is providing a space just for the phlebotomist.”

Candidates will be selected by the task force and must meet certain qualifications to be considered:

- Missouri POST commissioned peace officer for a minimum of two years
- Proof of current first aid/CPR certification or the ability to obtain it by the start of training
- No known Brady-Garrity issues on file
- No sustained formal complaints with in the last two years
- Good rapport-building and communication skills

Dr. Kurt-Hilditch said candidates must also have approval from their sheriff, chief of police, or designated command staff supervisor, as well as support from the county prosecutor and other elected officials. In addition, they must be willing to respond when needed and request-

ed by other agencies in or around their counties.

Although preference is given to licensed EMTs, paramedics, or DREs, she said they are required to go through the training just like everyone else, “and the reason for that is we want everybody and everything to be consistent.”

Contact Dr. Joanne Kurt-Hilditch at 660-543-4213 or kurt-hilditch@ucmo.edu for more information.

Six deputies were recognized at the conference for their efforts in making Missouri’s roadways safer:

Deputy Taylor West
Livingston County SO
Officer of the Year

Deputy Zackary Craft
Buchanan County SO
127 DWI arrests

Deputy David Creamer
Camden County SO
101 DWI arrests

Deputy Zachary Reed
Jefferson County SO
123 DWI arrests

Deputy Nick Gamm
Jefferson County SO
103 DWI arrests

Deputy Jordan DeClue
Platte County SO
107 DWI arrests



The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Region 7 presented the Missouri Safety Center with the People Saving People Award in recognition of its Missouri Law Enforcement Phlebotomy Program. The public safety award is given to the organization that advocates safety and has a positive effect on transportation safety. Because it was a team effort, the photo, taken at the 2024 Law Enforcement Traffic Safety Advisory Council (LETSAC) conference, includes Task Force members and phlebotomists.



The Lawrence County Sheriff’s Office was one of the agencies involved in starting the pilot program. Sheriff Brad DeLay (left) and Deputy Ryan Devost are pictured with Dr. Joanne Kurt-Hilditch, director of the Missouri Safety Center who was instrumental in getting the program off the ground and running.

Connecting With Kids in a Time-Honored Way

BY NANCY ZOELLNER

Deputies in at least two Missouri counties are using trading cards to build a positive image with the youth in their areas.

Sgt. Megan Blackburn with the Clay County Sheriff's Office Community Interaction Unit said the cards are a big hit in her area.

"The kids have been so excited about our new cards – especially the one with Bingo and Bluey. I always tell them that when they see a deputy, they need to ask for a card so they can collect them all. Even the adults have been getting into collecting them," she said. "KC Wolf is a hit for all ages! I plan to add to the collection this coming year."

Scott Archer, the lieutenant in command over their School Resource Unit, started Clay County's trading card program a few years ago. He photographed all the school resource deputies, who were featured on the cards, and the Print Shop in Johnson County, Kansas, printed them. This year, Sgt. Blackburn

designed the cards, but instead of featuring SROs on the cards, she used pictures of patrol vehicles that they already had on file. In fact, the

only person to appear on a card is Sheriff Will Akin, so all the deputies can hand them out.

And they've been doing just that. After the cards came back from the printer, Sgt. Blackburn filled a small box – the size playing cards come in – for each deputy so they could easily carry them in their vehicles.

"I planned a few that were kid-friendly and then created a back to the card that can be personalized. I usually just sign mine, although they could always be made out to the individual they give it to," she said. "I had my own personal card when I was in the school resource unit, and the kids loved getting them. The Royals used to give them to us to hand out, but that stopped over the years, so these cards have been great."

And they were surprisingly inexpensive. She said she checked with a local company – Action Mailing and Print Solutions, "and they quoted me \$375 for 20,000 cards, which was a phenomenal deal, so we went with them. The sheriff's office covered the cost."

Deputies with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office Canine Division also have trading cards to give away, but theirs are personalized with their pictures and pictures of their K9 partners.

Grant Bissell, public safety information coordinator for the sheriff's office, said the first set of cards was printed in 2007 and the cost was covered by a donation from Pawstoppers. In 2016, the canine handlers took the photos themselves or had help from volunteers, and the cards were printed by custom-trading-cards.com.

"In 2020, Jim Heidorn of Heidorn Photography, who happens to be the father-in-law of one of our canine handlers,



donated his time to take the photos. We have a great relationship with the UPS Store in Festus, MO, and they printed the cards free of charge," Bissell said. "This year, Faith Over Fear Photography volunteered to take photos of our newest dog, and the UPS Store printed them for free again."

He said each deputy usually starts with 300 cards, but they go fast.

"The cards are always a hit. Our canine handlers keep them in their patrol cars and bring them to community events," Bissell said. "It's always great to see a shy kid's face light up when they get to meet the deputy and the dog and then get to take home a trading card of the pair to show to their friends. It's almost like bragging rights for them."



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Preparing New Sheriffs for the Job

BY NANCY ZOELLNER

In the 1800s, when counties were formed from the Missouri Territory after the Louisiana Purchase, the governor appointed sheriffs. At that time, the sheriff was required to take an oath of office pledging allegiance to the United States of America and to post a \$4,000 bond. That bond was to ensure that he would be faithful in discharging the duties of the office, which included not only keeping the peace and serving the court, but also acting as county collector, compiling a list of taxable properties in the county and collecting taxes.

Today, the Office of Sheriff is not a department of county government. It is an independent office and no individual hires or fires the sheriff, nor does anyone have the authority to interfere with the operations of the office. Elected sheriffs are accountable directly to the Missouri and United States Constitutions, statutes, and the citizens of their county.

While a Missouri State Statute that was revised in 2001 and that went into effect in 2003 requires candidates to be licensed by POST when they file for office, newly elected sheriffs are not required to obtain any additional training before they are sworn in on January 1. However, to help those new sheriffs to “hit the ground running,” in December the Missouri Sheriffs’ Association (MSA) is offering a two-week new sheriff training conference.

In a letter to the new sheriffs, Kevin Merritt, executive director of the MSA, explained its importance.

“There are over 550 Missouri statutes directly referencing the ‘sheriff,’ with an additional 35 using the phrase ‘chief law enforcement officer’ and 19 using ‘jailer,’ all pointing to you. And that’s not all! There are over 122 statutes that apply when you act as county coroner, and another 134 dealing with public governmental agency records. Federal laws add another layer of complexity, covering employment and discrimination issues, jail operations, and inmate rights.”

Merritt said the conference will not only equip new sheriffs with need-to-know information, but it will also provide them with an opportunity to network with fellow new sheriffs and to learn from seasoned veterans who will be there to mentor and provide support.

Jeanne Merritt, marketing director and training coordinator for the MSA, worked with Buchanan County Sheriff

Bill Puett to establish the curriculum and then line up instructors, nearly all of whom work in Missouri’s sheriffs’ offices and jails. The agenda is lengthy and jam-packed.

In addition to hearing about the importance of ethics, integrity and keeping the promises made during their oath of office, the new sheriffs will hear about the value of transparency and community engagement, the Sunshine Law and dealing with the media, as well as how the Missouri Funeral Assistance Team can help with line-of-duty deaths.

They’ll also learn about the internal workings and responsibilities of the office – things like the laws governing human resources and employment, maintaining the sex offender registration, developing policies and procedures, the responsibilities that come with CCW Permits, and proper evidence and property room management.

The instructors will address handling statutorily designated funds, creating a budget, processing purchasing contracts and service agreements, applying for federal and state grants, and properly

overseeing mandatory state and federal funds.

And the new sheriffs will spend hours learning about the jails – a sheriff’s biggest liability. Topics will include jail operations and accreditation, intake and booking issues, inmate in-custody deaths, mental health issues, inmate rights, staffing, preparing for emergencies, and more – a lot more.

“Their heads will be full when they go home,” Jeanne said. “It’s a lot to learn, even when you spread it over two weeks, but every bit of it is important. The MSA has held new sheriffs training every four years for as long as I can remember, and over and over again we hear how helpful it has been, especially to those who come from an outside agency.”

The MSA also extended invitations to vendors, offering them an opportunity to set up at the back of the training room for one or two days so they can talk to the sheriffs on their breaks and at lunch.

Jeanne said some will have products and services and then others, like CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) and Mo-DEX, an automated program that allows law enforcement agencies to share information, will provide resources – “again, things that will help them in their new jobs.”

Congratulations to all the newly elected sheriffs.

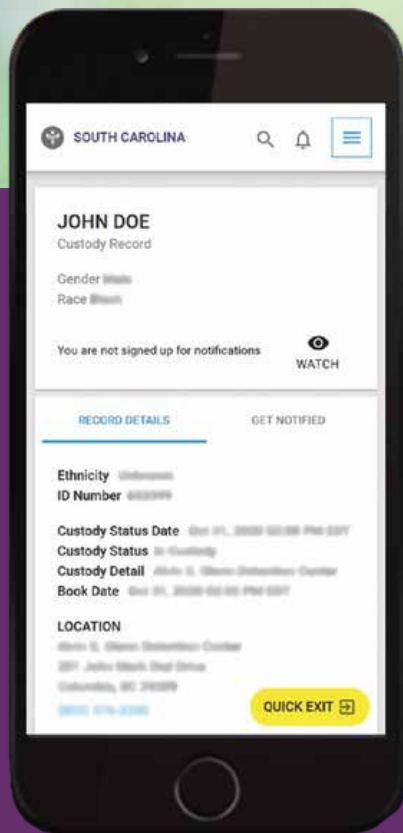


New sheriffs face over 550 statutes—and the MSA’s training helps them hit the ground running.



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The Changing Seasons

BY ART AMATO, MISSOURI EASTERN REGION LEL

I woke up this morning to a light rain - finally, 64-degree temperatures and the realization that fall is fast approaching and, before long, winter will be here. Although the fall and winter months offer many challenges, like dealing with falling leaves (my most hated job in the world) and driving through snow and ice, it's also one of the greatest times of the year because of all of the holidays and times we'll get to spend with friends and loved ones.

Thanksgiving gives us an opportunity to gather with family to give thanks, share a meal and conversation, reminisce about the past, and create new memories for the future.

The Christmas holiday is celebrated by many with friends and family, and we share the joy of giving as we try to select the perfect gift for that special person - something that will be cherished and enjoyed for the rest of their lives.

Unfortunately, this time of the year is also one of the most hazardous on our roadways.

In an article published by News Press, "The Wednesday before Thanksgiving has long been known as 'Blackout Wednesday,' according to the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA), and depending on your local bar's drink specials, it might be called 'Drinksgiving,' 'Black Wednesday,' 'Thanksgiving Eve,' 'Wacky Wednesday,' 'Whiskey Wednesday,' or 'Awkward Wednesday.' Not coincidentally, it's also one of the deadliest days of the year for drunk driving."

Sadly, this trend continues nationally through the winter holidays.

From 2018 to 2022, crashes occurring during the Thanksgiving holiday (6 p.m. Wednesday to 5:59 a.m. Monday) involving at least one driver with a .08 BAC or higher took 833 lives. During just the Thanksgiving 2022 holiday, accidents involving one or more drivers who had a blood alcohol level of .08 or higher caused 184 deaths.

During the 2018 to 2022 December months, 4,759 people were killed in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. In December 2022 alone, 1,062 people died in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. Tragically, 25 percent of those crashes involved young drivers ages 21 to 34.

Statistics also show that nighttime driving in December 2022 was significantly more dangerous than daytime driving. Thirty-one percent of the fatality crashes involving impaired drivers occurred between 6 p.m. and 5:59 a.m. Almost half (45 percent) of the drivers involved in fatal crashes between the hours of midnight and 2:59 a.m. were drunk.

One of the loudest messages I try to get across in my various trainings is that impaired driving is 100 percent preventable since it requires an individual to ingest some sort of impairing substance and then make the conscious decision to operate a vehicle under that level of impairment. In today's world, there are so many other options, including ride-share programs, or simply calling family or a friend for a ride since almost everyone has a cell phone. In addition, many restaurants and bars offer free rides home. Sadly, too many impaired people don't take advantage of those options and instead choose to drive.

Few other things that we do in law enforcement will directly impact the public more than sustained traffic enforcement.

The other message I try to convey, especially to the recruit classes I address, is that when we're conducting enforcement and removing impaired drivers from the roadways, we're doing exactly what we promised to do when we took that oath of office - we're

saving lives. Few other things that we do in law enforcement will directly impact the public more than sustained traffic enforcement. I've worked many fatal crashes during the holidays. It's always heartbreaking to look into a vehicle and see toys and wrapped packages that will never be delivered by the deceased driver, knowing that the memories that could have been will never be created.

Many resources are available to highlight the need for impaired driving enforcement and to let your community know that you'll be out there protecting them by removing impaired drivers from their roadways. Some administrators believe impaired driving enforcement may upset their residents, but statistics show just the opposite. Most people truly support enforcement and want us out there taking those impaired drivers off the roads.

In 1997, John Whetsel was elected sheriff of Oklahoma County, Oklahoma, an agency that did not conduct any traffic enforcement at that time. Sheriff Whetsel began an aggressive traffic enforcement program and instilled a culture within the agency that traffic enforcement was important. Not only

was he re-elected six times, but those efforts were responsible for more than an 80 percent reduction in crime and an over 90 percent reduction in traffic crashes within unincorporated areas of Oklahoma County.

It's also important to keep in mind that the life you save by removing impaired drivers may be your own or one of your co-workers. Tragically, two agencies in Missouri recently lost officers due to traffic incidents; in one, the at-fault driver was showing signs of impairment at the scene of the crash.

A variety of funding is available to agencies to cover overtime and provide the equipment necessary to successfully conduct enforcement.

Contact me for an application for the Special Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP Grant). Starting this year, MoDOT has approved double-time pay if your agency policy allows it.

You can also reach out to me to get contact information for your regional Coalition for Roadway Safety representative, who can provide you with information about their equipment grants. In addition, there are many free educational programs covering traffic safety and impaired driving for all ages that you can present to your community.

Enjoy the holiday season, and please be safe out there!



DATA AND MEDIA THAT CAN BE SHARED ON YOUR AGENCY WEBSITES AND IN COMMUNITY FORUMS.

- **NHTSA Traffic Safety Marketing Campaign:**
www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/#10961
- **Missouri Holiday Campaign:**
www.savemolives.com/mcrs/holiday-impaired-driving-campaign
- **News Press Article:**
www.news-press.com/story/news/2023/11/21/black-wednesday-thanksgiving-november-drunk-driving-alcohol-deaths/71664332007/

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HEROS Among Us

BY NANCY ZOELLNER

THEY DESERVE — **AND HAVE** — OUR UNENDING GRATITUDE



DEPUTY CHRIS COLEMAN (LEFT) AND GOVERNOR MIKE PARSON (RIGHT)

Not many people would risk their lives to pull an unconscious man from a truck entangled in live wires, but that's exactly what Franklin County Deputy Chris Coleman did. In September, he was awarded the Governor's Medal of Valor for his heroic life-saving actions, extraordinary bravery, and quick thinking that resulted in saving a life.

On May 21, 2023, Deputy Coleman responded to a motor vehicle crash on Highway T near the intersection of Fiddle Creek Road. Deputy Coleman shut down Hwy T due to downed power lines, and while directing traffic, he saw that an Ameren UE truck had arrived on the scene. A short time later, he saw smoke coming from the truck. Deputy Coleman immediately grabbed a fire extinguisher from his patrol unit, and as he ran to the truck, which was on fire, he saw that the driver was in contact with the truck and the truck was in contact with live wires.

Deputy Coleman extinguished the fire, then grabbed the lineman by the pants leg and pulled him away from the truck. Deputy Coleman immediately summoned medical assistance. Paramedics arrived on the scene and began rendering aid to the lineman. Deputy Coleman observed that the truck was again igniting and extinguished the flames while paramedics

were within feet of the vehicle, tending to the victim. The victim was transported by helicopter to the hospital, and although he had serious injuries, the lineman survived the incident.

Sheriff Steve Pelton said that through his attentiveness and immediate actions on the scene, Deputy Coleman exhibited bravery and upheld the highest tradition of service to others by putting himself in harm's way to save the life of another.

"Deputy Coleman exemplifies the highest standards of bravery and selflessness. His quick response and unwavering commitment to saving a life not only reflects his exceptional training but also his profound dedication to our community," the sheriff said. "It is an honor to see him recognized for his heroism with the Medal of Valor."

Corporal Travis Sanders with the Greene County Sheriff's Office also exhibited extraordinary bravery and selflessness when he jumped into water to save a man who was drowning. He, too, was presented with the Medal of Valor.

On April 23, 2023, Cpl. Sanders responded to an isolated rural area in Greene County after a man wearing an ankle monitor left a note for his family saying he intended to kill himself rather than go back to prison.

The subject was tracked to his location through the ankle monitor.

CORPORAL TRAVIS SANDERS (RIGHT)
AND GOVERNOR MIKE PARSON (LEFT)

Cpl. Sanders located the subject as he appeared to be drowning in Pickerel Creek close to its confluence with the Big Sac River. He was in three to four feet of water, bent forward into floating brush with his head in the water. He was sucking in water as he breathed, gasping and vomiting.

From the creek bank, Cpl. Sanders attempted to keep the subject's head out of the water without success, so he removed his duty belt, entered the chilly water, and pulled the subject to the bank, where a civilian helped pull him out of the water. Fire and EMS radios did not work in the isolated area, and the ambulance could not traverse the woods and fields to the creek, so a helicopter was requested. To get the patient to the helicopter's landing area, Cpl. Sanders and another officer had to secure the patient to a stretcher and carry him across the creek and up a steep embankment. The patient was then transported to a hospital, where he received life-saving treatment.

The nomination stated, "With a man's life in grave risk, Cpl. Sanders thought creatively and acted decisively, overcoming many obstacles."

Greene County Sheriff Jim Arnott echoed that sentiment, stating, "A person's life was saved that day due to Cpl. Sanders' bravery and quick thinking. This is a well-deserved honor."

The Missouri Public Safety Medals were presented in September at a ceremony also recognizing other heroes.

The Medal of Valor is Missouri's highest award, recognizing public safety officers who exhibit exceptional



courage, extraordinary decisiveness, presence of mind, and unusual swiftness of action, regardless of his or her personal safety, in the attempt to save or protect human life.

"This ceremony is yet another important reminder of the tremendously courageous and committed first responders who selflessly protect Missourians year-round," Governor Mike Parson said. "We honor and thank them and their families for their heroic service to our communities and are proud of the exceptional work they do for our state. We can never fully repay the debt we owe our brave men and women in blue, but they have our never-ending gratitude."

"This ceremony is yet another important reminder of the tremendously courageous and committed first responders who selflessly protect Missourians year-round."



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Community Puts Care and Concern **into Action**

BY NANCY ZOELLNER

“We are not put on this earth for ourselves but are placed here for each other. If you are there always for others, then in time of need, someone will be there for you.”

No explanation could be found as to what prompted professional wrestler Jeff Warner to make that statement, but the Bates County Sheriff's Office and community put that philosophy into motion when they provided assistance to the sheriffs of the flood-ravaged counties of Buncombe, Yancy, and Madison in North Carolina.

According to Sheriff Chad Anderson, the effort came from the heart.

“My wife and I sat and watched the devastation from the comfort of our home. As the days went by, we kept feeling a weight on our hearts and a calling from God to do something. In 2018, while my family and I were attending the Missouri Sheriffs' Association Conference, our house had an electrical short and burned completely down. We lost everything we owned,” Sheriff Anderson said. “We lived in a rented camper for a couple months before finding a rental house. We eventually rebuilt our home and moved on.”

Because they understood what the people in North Carolina were going through, he and his wife felt they should do something - they just didn't know what since they didn't know anyone from those areas.

“We were standing in our front yard when my wife looked at our camper and said, ‘We could take someone our camper to use.’ That night, I made a Facebook post on my personal page asking if anyone had family or first responders in the area that could use a



camper that could sleep seven to nine people. We offered to deliver it as soon as we could,” Sheriff Anderson said, adding that while no one took them up on their offer, members of the community who saw the post started asking if they could help by sending donations when he made the trip. “With our community begging to help and God placing the delivery of our camper on our hearts, I decided to have our dispatch center send each agency a message offering to deliver our camper and supplies for staff at any sheriff's office.”

The Buncombe County, North Carolina Sheriff's Office was the first to respond. They requested hygiene products, socks, shirts, and law enforcement gear to replace items lost when homes were destroyed. They also took the sheriff up on the offer of his camper.

As soon as the sheriff reported that they had a location and a wish list, donations began pouring in.

“Our neighboring sheriff's offices of Cass County and Henry County and local police departments began bringing duty gear, uniforms, handcuffs, and body armor. Shortly after, our second agency, Madison County Sheriff's Office, gave us a list of requested items for their staff who had lost or damaged homes. And then our third agency, the Yancey County Sheriff's Office, had a specific request for propane stoves, cold weather clothes, flashlights, and batteries,” Sheriff Anderson said.

The Bates County community, as well as surrounding communities, responded. Thousands of dollars worth of supplies, gift cards, and cash to purchase needed items were delivered to the sheriff's office

warehouse within three days of the Facebook post.

He said his staff didn't blink an eye, and everyone, including communication officers, detention officers, patrol division, investigation division, and administrative staff, pitched in to help receive, organize, and load trailers, "and we had a lot to load! The donations filled the camper, a 20-foot car hauler, and a 16-foot enclosed trailer, which had been loaned by community members."

"Locally, I have received a lot of praise and recognition for putting this together, but the people who need the recognition are the ones who donated and paid for all the stuff, the people who worked on their days off and a holiday to get it organized by county, loaded and delivered in three days," he said. "While we took 12 people to make the delivery, I have almost 70 employees who worked hard to make it happen."

The sheriff praised the employees who didn't go but who worked extra shifts to cover those of the employees who did, the dispatchers who took the calls and carefully kept the lists of requested items, the command staff who worked patrol shifts, and his chief deputy, who used his personal vehicle to pull the camper the sheriff loaned to the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office. He also praised members of the community who donated money to cover hotel and food expenses for the trip and even baked snacks for them.

After community members showed



up to pray for their safety, they left Butler at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, October 15. The delivery crew consisted of members from the Bates County and Cedar County sheriff's offices, the Butler Police Department, and Adrian Public Works. They drove 11 hours, stopping in Crossville, Tennessee for the night. They were back on the road by 8 a.m. for their first drop-off at the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office in Asheville. They arrived at 2:30 p.m.

"While there, we met some amazing people who had an unbelievably positive attitude. I know that they had worked nonstop for three weeks and had to be tired. I learned that five of

their deputies without a place to live would be using the camper. After unloading supplies, we headed off to our second location - the Yancey County Sheriff's Office. Our next stop was the Madison County Sheriff's Office, where we made our final drop off," he said.

There, they met Sheriff Buddy Harwood, who had lost a member of his staff, Major Michelle Quintero, in the flood waters as she was attempting to get to the office to help others.

"His major had worked for him for 16 years, and while he held his composure, I could see the pain he had in losing her," Sheriff Anderson said. "And to prove the world is small and





that we were doing God’s work, Sheriff Harwood asked us how far Bates County was from Joplin, Missouri. He shared that in 2011, he took two 53-foot tractor-trailer loads of supplies to Joplin to aid in the recovery after the tornado ripped through town.”

Sheriff Anderson said they both agreed that it was truly God’s work that Missouri was sending supplies back to his community.

In a later interview with Sheriff Harwood, he said he was overcome by emotion when he learned that Bates County was only a few counties north of Jasper County and that Sheriff Anderson had also gone to Joplin to help with cleanup.

“Knowing that someone had traveled from that far away to help us was overwhelming. Joplin was one of the first storms that I worked after coming here in 2009. I still remember the devastation those folks had and how much help they needed to recover. I never thought in a million years that we would find ourselves in a similar situation and be on the receiving end. It was such a blessing to see a community and a

fellow sheriff still doing what communities do,” he said.

Sheriff Anderson said they both agreed that it was truly God’s work that Missouri was sending supplies back to his community. After praying with Sheriff Harwood’s staff, they headed home, arriving in Bates County around 10 p.m. the following night.

Sheriff Anderson said it was a trip he’ll never forget. It also made quite an impression on his son, Cameron Anderson, who accompanied the group on their mission.

“This was such a humbling experience to help people you don’t know,” the young man said. “It just helps my drive to follow in my dad’s footsteps in law enforcement and one day hopefully be the sheriff of Bates County.”

The sheriff said he understands his son’s passion. Major Quintero’s daughter was there to help them unload the trailers.

“We left Madison County, our hearts filled with pride from what our community put together in three days, and at the same time, we left with our hearts heavy for the communities who lost so much. We felt pride to see our fellow law enforcement and first responders, who had no homes to go home to, putting their communities first and working without days off. We got to see firsthand “Appalachia Strong” in action,” he said.

“Our community is small, with only 17,000 people, but we sure do have big hearts. We will truly never know how far and wide our donations came from. We just know that every four hours we were being told that our lobby was full and we needed to transfer the stuff to our warehouse. I am proud of this community – the greatest community in the world – and the communities that surround us. While it was just a few trailers of supplies, we knew we were doing God’s work.”





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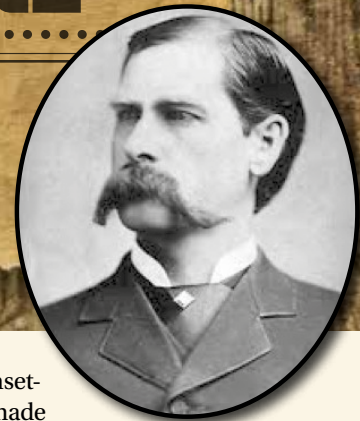
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THE
LIFE & LEGEND
of
LAWMAN
WYATT EARP

BY MICHAEL FEEBACK



Before tense card games in the gambling halls of dusty western towns, before long nights of trying to keep liquored-up cattle drovers from wrecking those towns, before a gunfight that would become synonymous with the brutality and romance of the frontier, and before the stories grew into enduring legend, Wyatt Earp was a Missouri lawman.

In 1854, the town of Lamar was established on the grasslands of what have been called Missouri's prairie counties - the counties that run along the Kansas border where the Ozark trees suddenly stop and give way to open ground. In that same year, the prairie counties saw the killing, burning, and looting of what would become a national civil war - a war that began with cross-border neighbors possessing differing opinions on human bondage. Barton County, where Lamar would grow into a sizeable town, was in the middle of the internecine warfare that would start half a decade before Fort Sumpter and end long after Appomattox.

Grudges, disputes, and unsettled business from the war made the prairie counties - and Missouri in general - a violent place in the last decades of the 19th century. Lamar seems to have been a relatively quiet farming community where the return to civil society was making good headway by the time Earp got to town in 1868.

Wyatt S. Earp was born in 1848 in Monmouth, Illinois. Named Wyatt Berry Stapp Earp to honor his father's Mexican War commander, he was the fifth of 10 siblings. He would later drop the Berry and become known to history as Wyatt S. The family patriarch, Nicholas Porter Earp, was a restless man and moved his brood around the Midwest before heading out for California

Wyatt Earp, born on March 19, 1848, died on January 13, 1929, 47 years after surviving the Gunfight at the OK Corral, from chronic cystitis at his home in Los Angeles, California. He was 80 years old.



Orilla Earp



The good, the bad and the notorious all gathered together for a once in-a-lifetime authenticated photo op.

when the Civil War broke out. Teenaged Wyatt, who inherited both a stern visage and wanderlust from his father, worked as a freight hauler and grading track for the Union Pacific Railroad.

Nick grew restless again and headed for Missouri in 1868, taking up farming on 240 acres near the growing town of Lamar. Twenty-one-year-old Wyatt put down his shovel and followed the family east. When Earp got to Lamar, it was a settled place, recovering from a couple of raids by William Clarke Quantrill. Nick Earp quickly became a city father, elected constable, and then moved on to take over as justice of the peace. Wyatt arrived and took over as constable, his first job in a long law enforcement career. The Earps were, then, the law in Lamar. Among their duties were levying and collecting fines. The good folks of Lamar seemed satisfied with Earps.

Wyatt, as young men will, began to think of a partner for his new life in Missouri. He courted,

then wed, Urilla Sutherland, the daughter of the town's hotel owner. Justice of the Peace Nick Earp performed the ceremony. The couple set up housekeeping at the edge of town, and Wyatt continued keeping the peace.

Lamar law enforce-

ment was pretty tame compared to the towns that would make Wyatt famous - Dodge City, Wichita, Abeline, and Tombstone. He rounded up a couple of drunk brothers and hauled them to the stone jail, where his father fined them \$5 and sent them on their way. The next policing crisis involved a herd of pigs roaming the dirt streets. There was some question whether this was the constable's problem. Nick took up the cause of free-range pork, was elected to the town board on that platform, and the herd was allowed to root around unmolested.

As any law officer knows, when you deal with the public, odd things happen. In that vein, an irate butcher accused Wyatt of taking his pencil and demanded it be returned. The newspaper reported that Wyatt said the pencil was at the jail, and when the butcher got there, he locked him up. The matter was resolved when the butcher escaped through a hole in the roof and lit out for parts unknown, never to return.

And then tragedy struck. Wyatt's new bride suddenly died of causes that are lost to history, although speculation is that typhus or childbirth was to blame. His once quiet life started to take on some of the ambiguity that colors so much of his story.

Things got less friendly in town. Wyatt and his brothers got involved in a knock-down, drag-out brawl with the brothers of his late wife for reasons that, again, are lost to history. Then, a few months later, Wyatt got on the wrong side of the legal system. He was sued in March of 1871 for \$4,500 in today's money for having collected school taxes and not turning the money over to the county. In April, a citizen filed a complaint alleging that the constable had erased and rewritten a dollar figure on a court document in another case and pocketed a significant amount of money.

Before any of this got to court, Nick and Wyatt had sold their Lamar properties and headed West. Wyatt ended up in Indian Territory accused of stealing horses, a federal offense. He jumped bail and headed off into history. He was later exonerated.

The rest of Wyatt Earp's story is well known, made famous in print and film. His legend endures. It is an interesting side note that in all the tales that Wyatt spun in later life to biographers and stove-side whittlers, he never mentioned Lamar. His time in Missouri remains obscured, as he apparently planned.

Grudges, disputes, and unsettled business from the war made the prairie counties – and Missouri in general – a violent place in the last decades of the 19th century.



"The Dodge City Peace Commission" in 1883, one of the most famous photos in Old West history.



Wyatt Earp Image Clip -Extracted from the "Dodge City Peace Commission" photograph of 1883.



The Last Known Photograph of Wyatt Earp, 1929 from History of America Facebook page



For a time, Wyatt Earp lived in this building (a brothel listed as a female boarding house) in Peoria at the corner of Washington and Hamilton in 1872. From the Peoria Public Library Local History Collection.

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