



# THE SHERIFF'S POST

APRIL 2021



Indian River County Sheriff's Office  
4055 41st Avenue  
Vero Beach, FL 32960

Date: March 3, 2021

Pay to the Order of Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches \$ 58,000.00

Fifty eight Thousand <sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub> Dollars

Eric Flowers, Sheriff





## HI EVERYONE,

Welcome to our first issue of the Sheriff's Post. It has been nearly three months since I was sworn in as your Sheriff. In this time, our agency has been busy with a number of changes, including staff positions, hours of operations, and the soon-to-come greater security on our campus.

Earlier in March, many of our staff members in Patrol and Corrections switched to 12-hour shifts. The feedback has been positive, especially from those who had worked in Patrol when the agency previously utilized 12-hour shifts. While we are still in an adjustment period with this new schedule, I am confident it will enhance the service we provide to our community.

Over these last few months, offices have been moved, staff reassigned, promotions awarded, additional positions created, and several new members have been hired. I again want to thank everyone for their patience and assistance in making these transitions as smooth as possible.

The changes occurring here at the Sheriff's Office have come about and will continue to develop by gathering input from our members. One such change involves the use of a multi-disciplinary approach to policy formation. When certain general orders are to be created or updated, representatives from various components throughout the agency will be asked to participate on a committee for that very purpose. The committee will be tasked with advising on general

orders with an eye on the agency's overall goals of better serving the public.

Along with a number of internal changes happening at the Sheriff's Office, we are making a few changes that will directly affect the public, as well as staff who now are working 12-hour shifts.

One of these changes rolled out in March with Family Friendly Tuesdays. Every Tuesday, certain divisions will remain open until 7 p.m. to serve members of the public who work traditional 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. jobs.

The Records and Human Resources Divisions will be available to the public, while I.T., Fleet Services, and the Warehouse will be able to assist our employees who might not otherwise be able to access the agency's services during their shift.

Another change that will be underway soon calls for the installation of a perimeter fence around our campus and establishing a single point of entry at the main entrance. This will greatly improve security within our facility. We want to thank The Board of County Commissioners for recently approving our request for funding to harden our campus. We plan to get started with the fence and gate installation soon. Please pardon our upcoming dust.

These last couple months have been packed with many changes, some visible to the public and many others behind the scenes. As we continue through the year, more changes will be coming and we will keep everyone up to date here, in the Sheriff's Post.

**YOUR SHERIFF, ERIC FLOWERS**



DEPUTY MERICLE AND CORPORAL GODINA DISH UP DELICIOUS BBQ.

# BBQ SERVES UP TON OF FOOD, FUN FOR YOUTH

The 27th annual Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches Barbecue dished up more than a ton of food and a whole lot of fun in early March, raising a record-breaking amount of money to benefit the children and families the ranches serve.

Sheriff Eric Flowers presented a \$58,000 check to Bill Frye, the executive director of the Youth Ranches.

Frye told the crowd that when he met with then-Sheriff-elect Flowers, the soon-to-be-Sheriff told him this year's barbecue would be bigger and better.

"You kept your word," Frye said.

The Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches was founded in 1957 by a group of Sheriffs from around the state who saw a need to provide better services to

children, helping them get back on path before they strayed too far.

"We couldn't do it without this kind of support," Frye said.

Generations of children have now passed through the Ranches, many of whom now give back to the organization that helped them avoid trouble in their older years.

Sheriff Flowers said that he was committed to going forward with the barbecue this year – with Covid-19 safety in mind.

"This is a big deal," he said, adding that he's already thinking ahead to next year's barbecue.

Due to changes that will be made to the Sheriff's Office campus between now and then, Sheriff Flowers is looking to relocate the event to the Indian River County Fairgrounds and make it an even bigger event.

The Youth Ranches is one of several charitable organizations the Sheriff's Office supports and is perhaps the most important to Sheriff Flowers.

He has visited the Ranches and stayed the night.

"You see the lives being changed," he said. "It's almost impossible not to support this charity."



NICKI BERGINC, 18 MONTHS

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(CONT.) BBQ SERVES UP FOOD, FUN

The Sheriff's Office team of volunteers dished up 1,500 meals – a third of which were delivered via the drive-thru.

"It was totally successful," said organizer Emilie Enzmann. "It blew us all out of the water."

She had expected to serve 300 meals in the drive-thru, but planned for more just in case.

Guys Quality Meats provided 1,200 pounds of chicken and 1,400 pounds of pork butt, cutting the agency a good deal to better support the fundraiser, according to Enzmann.

The meals were a definite crowd-pleaser.

"That was the first thing to go," said Jen Berginc of her barbecue pork. Her young daughter enjoyed a hot dog.

The Sebastian residents took advantage of the beautiful weather and fun event to get outside and meet the local law enforcement.

Beside the barbecue itself, the Berginc family enjoyed watching the K-9 demonstration.

"We love dogs," Berginc said.

Todd and Sandy Enderson, too, came out to the event to grab some tasty food and watch the demonstrations.

"I just like to see what's going on," said Mrs. Enderson.

Both the agency's K-9 and SWAT teams gave demonstrations to the delight of the crowds sitting in the bleachers.

"There's a little bit of testosterone flying," Deputy Brian Reimsnyder said, nodding over at a couple of canines barking at each other.

K-9s from other agencies, including Vero Beach,



VOLUNTEERS FROM FLEET MAINTENANCE TEND THE GRILLS

Sebastian and St. Lucie County attended and participated in the demonstration. Each of the agencies stands ready to assist the others when the need arises, according to Dep. Reimsnyder.

"They're all alpha-males and want to show off," he said of the dogs. They, and their handlers, undergo 485 hours of training before they become official K-9s.

Along with the live demonstrations, numerous departments, divisions, agencies and organizations were on hand with their own static displays and information.

Indian River County Fire Rescue's Fire Prevention division handed out plastic firefighter helmets and coloring books to the kids. "It's a great community event," said Chief Rich Marini.



SAM SPEECHLY RECEIVES HIS BBQ MEALS AND CORN.



# PROMOTIONS AND RETIREMENTS

## MOVING ONWARD AND UPWARD



### **Major Selby Strickland**

*July 29, 1991 - Jan. 15, 2021*

During his 29 years of service, he rose through the ranks in Corrections and earned numerous awards and commendations, including Corrections Deputy of the Year.



### **Lt. Mark Buffington**

*Oct. 14, 1991 - Feb. 5, 2021*

In his 29 years of service, he transferred from Patrol to Community Services and received the Exceptional Duty Award, as well as many commendations.



### **Shelley Wright**

*May 7, 1985 - Feb. 24, 2021*

In her 35 years of service, she became the Public Safety Dispatch training coordinator and supervisor and earned 4 Going the Extra Mile awards and other commendations.



### **Lt. Jim Hyde**

*Nov. 9, 1988 - March 31, 2021*

During his 32 years of employment, he served in a number of departments, ending in Special Operations, and received the Going the Extra Mile award, among others.

## PROMOTIONS

**Kent Campbell** - Captain Law Enforcement Operations Division

**James Dixon** - Lieutenant Uniform Operations Section

**Angela Jones** - Acting Captain Corrections Support Division

**Kyle King** - Captain Criminal Investigations

**Thomas Raulen** - Undersheriff

**Lonnie Rich** - Deputy Chief Department of Law Enforcement and Investigative Services

**Milo Thornton** - Deputy Chief Department of Corrections, Judicial Services and Community Affairs

**Melissa Stewart** - Acting Captain Corrections Operations Division

- James Dixon, Lieutenant Uniform Patrol
- Christian Yanchula, Sergeant Forensic Services
- Christian Mathisen, Lieutenant SIU
- Ryan Eggers, Sergeant SIU
- Leanette Tillis, Lieutenant Corrections
- Michael Raia, Lieutenant Corrections
- Roderick Smith, Sergeant School Resource
- Greg Stanley, Sergeant School Resources

- Doug Mackenzie, Sergeant Traffic
- Brian Reimsnyder, Sergeant K9
- Fletcher McClellan - Lieutenant Training/LE Administration
- Joanna Fricke - Sergeant Training
- Huston Goodrich - Lieutenant Uniform Patrol
- Ross Partee - Lieutenant Uniform Patrol
- Kevin Jaworski - Sergeant Road Patrol
- Luke Keppel - Sergeant Ag/Marine
- Eric Brashears - Corporal FTD
- Samuel Earman - Corporal FTD
- Ryan Hartmann - Corporal FTD
- Nickolas Hatton - Corporal FTD
- Jason Pollacek - Corporal FTD
- Romeo Santana - Corporal FTD

### **Civilian**

- Stephanie DeAquir, Customer Service Manager
- Melissa Gerry PSD Training Coordinator
- Carrie Gielow, PSD Shift Supervisor
- Rilonda Smith, HR Manager
- Charles Williams, Maintenance Unit Supervisor





THE AGRICULTURE AND MARINE UNIT STANDS READY TO ASSIST THOSE IN NEED.

# AG AND MARINE UNIT WE LIVE TO CATCH POACHERS

There are those who are satisfied patrolling the roads, the neighborhoods, the communities, waving to residents as they pass by. And there are those whose calling is perhaps a touch more wild – a bit more remote – where there is more land and animals than there are people.

It's those in the Sheriff's Office Agriculture and Marine Unit who spend more of their time in the outdoors on ATVs, boats, and trucks than they do in traditional patrol cars.

"I love my job," said Dep. John McNeal, who's been with the agency 25 years. For him, the best time of year is hunting season – but he's not hunting the animals.

Instead, the Ag/Marine unit hunts the illegal hunters, the poachers.

"You thrive to catch the poachers," McNeal said.

They are also the ones who respond when livestock is slaughtered. McNeal recounted a time years ago when they were called out to veterinarian's place on 66th Avenue. The horses on the property had been shot dead.

"There was very little evidence,"

McNeal recalled – beer cans and truck tracks. It took two months, but they nabbed a suspect who ended up spending a dozen years in prison.

"He just had him a big ol' night," McNeal said.

Fortunately, cases such as that are uncommon. The team works to build relationships within the rural communities, getting to know the residents as well as the land – that way, when someone is in need of help, they know where to go.

Sgt. Luke Keppel, who started out in the Road







quick,” Luther said of the waters at the inlet.

The newest piece of equipment the agency procured for the Marine Unit is a 2021 31-foot Life Proof boat, funded through a grant from the federal government. Among the tasks the boat will undertake are stopping human smuggling and drug trafficking.

“It will come in handy,” Keppel said.

While the division is keen on catching poachers and others who mistreat animals, the team also works to educate the public, especially on the waterways.

“We could sit there (at the Sebastian Inlet) all day long, writing tickets,” Keppel said. Instead, they take the time to talk to the boaters and help them understand why what they’re doing isn’t right.

For Deputy Bobby Gage, serving in the Ag/Marine Unit is the best of both worlds. He grew up in the outdoors, enjoying fishing and hunting, even farming. He paired that love with law enforcement and it became a win-win.

“It’s no different from patrol,” Luther said – just the response time and perhaps the vehicle used to get to the scene.



Division, transferred to Ag/Marine, due to his love of the woods. “The boat gets old,” he said.

The best part, for him, is seeing the surprise on a suspect’s face after having followed his tracks and clues.

The challenging part is that, too often, there is scant evidence to work with. Keppel said they might have a game camera and a small piece of track – and from there they get to work.

McNeal and Keppel worked a case some time ago involving the poaching of a cow from a pasture. McNeal found a blood trail on the road, one that led him right to the truck that had hauled the taken cow. Every time the truck stopped at an intersection, blood dripped and pooled on the road.

“I love cases, good cases,” he said.

Lt. William Luther noted that the county itself is 522 square miles, of which more than 200 square miles lies in the unincorporated portion of the county, under the Sheriff’s Office’s purview.

They patrol the marshes and the woods, making use of airboats, ATVs and even helicopters when the need arises. They also respond to calls for service on the waterways, including the Sebastian Inlet.

“It gets dangerous,





# ★ STAR SCENE



K-9 HANDLER DEP. RYAN HOLLY AND RUCKUS SHOW OFF THEIR ABILITIES DURING THE ANNUAL FLORIDA YOUTH RANCHES BBQ.



JOANNA KATHMAN, 9, A STUDENT AT ST. HELEN'S DELIVERS THANK YOU NOTES TO SHERIFF FLOWERS FOR THE DEPUTIES.



CPL. MICHAEL DILKS (LEFT IN BLACK SHIRT) AND DEP. JAKE OREHOSTKY (MIDDLE IN BLACK SHIRT), WITH FLORIDA SWAT ASSO. MECHANICAL AND BALLISTICS BREACHING SCHOOL INSTRUCTORS, RECEIVE FIRST PLACE AWARD.





DEPUTY DANIEL HOFFMAN RECEIVES THE LIFESAVING AWARD FROM OLIVIA, 6, AND HER FATHER, WHO WERE IN AN AUTO ACCIDENT.



MEMBERS OF THE INDIAN RIVER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SHOW OFF THE GEAR THEY USE DURING THE ANNUAL YOUTH RANCHES BBQ.



PUBLIC SAFETY DISPATCHER LU OWENS RECEIVES A THANK YOU FROM A GRATEFUL FAMILY.



DISPATCHERS TAKE CALLS AND ROUTE INFORMATION IN THE 9-1-1 DISPATCH CALL CENTER.

# ★ PUBLIC SAFETY DISPATCH

## THE CALM VOICE IN THE CHAOS

“It’s a job like no other,” said Lu Owens, a 36-year veteran of the Indian River County Sheriff’s Office Public Safety Dispatch.

No two days are ever the same – though the stress, the need to multitask, the call for compassion and empathy are a constant.

“We never know what is going to come on that phone call,” said 5-year veteran Robert Millar. “It’s up to us to

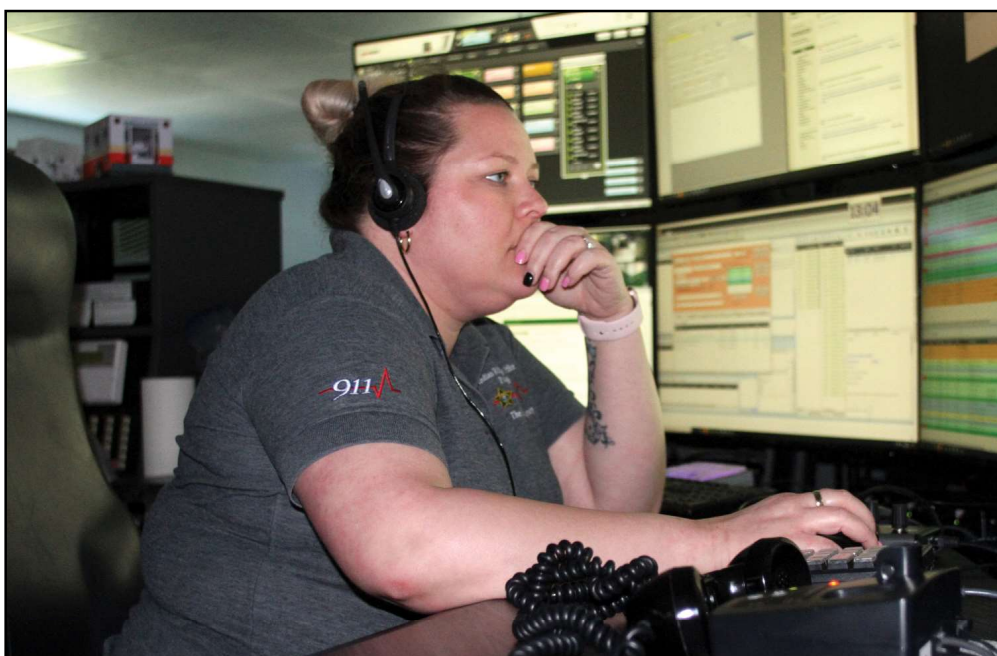
get accurate information in a timely manner and get them help.”

When someone in distress calls into 9-1-1 Public Safety Dispatch, they are greeted with a calm but firm voice. They are that calm voice in the caller’s chaos.

“If I’m completely honest, you have no clue what you’re getting into until you’ve actually sat down and done the job for a while,” said Kasey Bailey, who’s served in dispatch for more than three years.

“You leave everyday knowing you made a difference,” she said.

Public Safety Dispatchers do so much more than merely answer phones and plug data into a computer system. The moment they answer the call, their gears beginning turning – figuring out what the caller needs, who the caller needs, and if there is anything the dispatcher can tell the caller to do while waiting for law enforcement, fire rescue or medical response teams arrive.



JOANNA HAU



“I truly believe we are the first responder,” Owens said. “We can change the outcome of the call.”

Brooke Rollando learned that lesson the first day she was released on phones. She took a call from someone having difficulty breathing while eating a taco. Over the phone, she successfully instructed the caller to perform the Heimlich Maneuver and the patient was “healthy, happy and able to live another day.”

For Ashley Rose, one of three dispatchers to receive the Dispatcher of the Year Award in 2020, her best calls are those that come from scared children. A mother of young children herself, she’s able to calm the young callers down and get them the help they need.

She’s grown up with Public Safety Dispatch; her mother and aunt both work in Dispatch. And it’s a legacy she hopes to continue on. “I know the challenges and the struggles,” Rose said.

Bailey said there are days when the dispatchers cry – tears of joy, of frustration, sadness.

“You get through your best and worst days with the people in that room,” Bailey said.

Public Safety Dispatch is currently looking for new recruits, those steely-nerved multi-taskers willing to tackle about a year’s worth of training before become a full-fledged dispatcher.

With several retirements and transfers, the department has about five openings. The starting salary is \$31,000, which increases to \$40,000 upon completion of training.

“People think we just answer phones and talk on the radio,” Bailey said. But the job is so much more than that.

Rose explained that one dispatcher takes the call, another routes the information to law enforcement and another dispatches fire rescue.

“We have to be a strong team,” she said.

Public Safety Dispatchers are responsible for screening, entering and relaying/routing information for emergency and non-emergency

calls for service in the 9-1-1 dispatch center.

Applicants for this position must have excellent computer skills and must be capable of working under stress or in high pressure situations. They must be able to react quickly and calmly and make sound decisions in emergency situations.

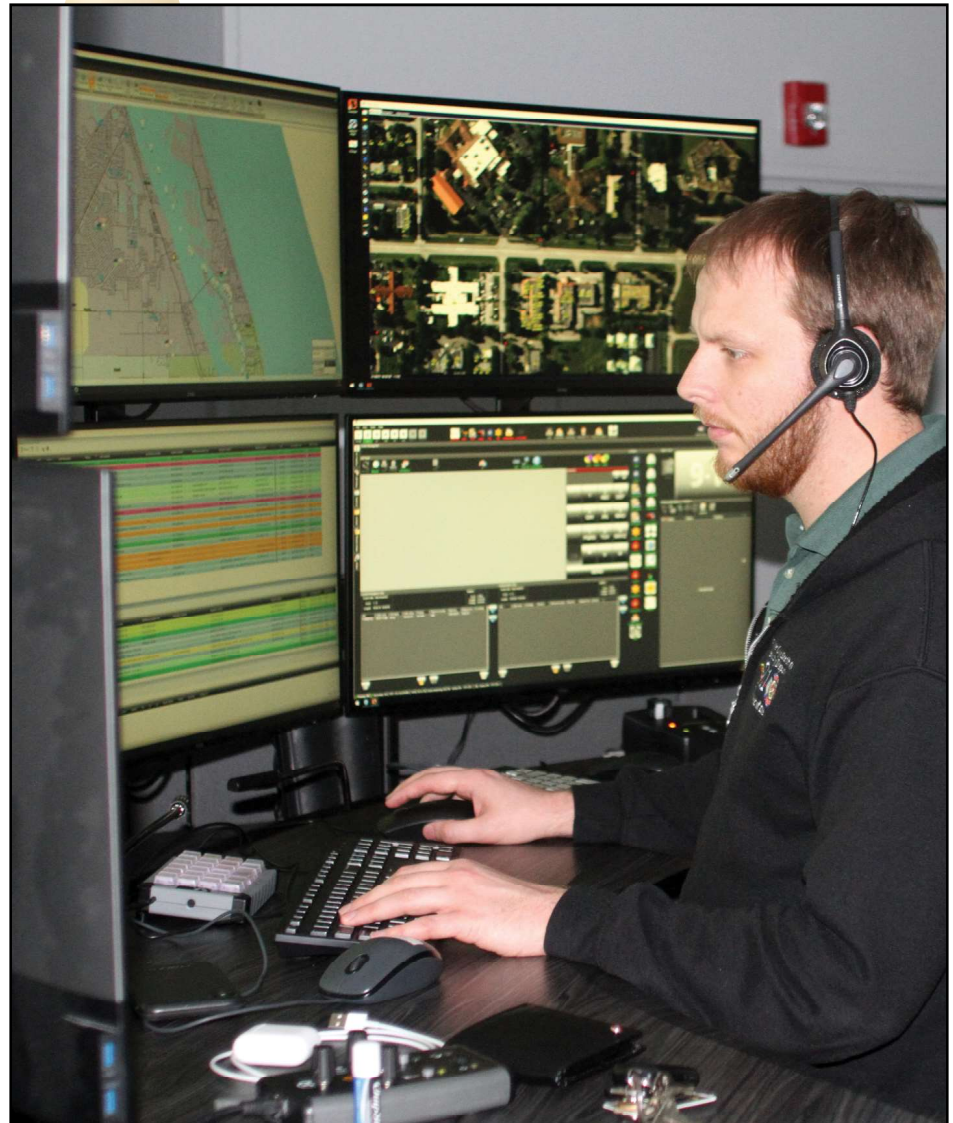
More information about the job openings can be found on the Sheriff’s Office website, [ircsheriff.org/job-openings](http://ircsheriff.org/job-openings) – scroll to Telecommunicator.

“We are the calm voice in the dark room,” Owens said. “We need good employees. We need people who want to make a change in their community.”

It’s a complex and rewarding career, the dispatchers agreed.

“It’s rewarding on some days,” said Millar. “And it’s agonizing on others, but everyday is exciting.”

“Every once in a while you get to go home and say, ‘Hey, I helped save a life today,’” Bailey added.



ROBERT MILLAR

# BEST OF THE BEST IN 2020

## YEARLY AWARDS

Under a bright blue sky at the Jackie Robinson Training Complex, formerly Historic Dodegertown, Sheriff Eric Flowers bestowed upon dozens of employees awards they earned during what could be considered one of the most challenging years in the agency's history – 2020, the year of the pandemic.

In years past, the agency held quarterly award ceremonies within the auditorium, gathering those recognized employees and their families. But, due to Covid-19 and the need for social distancing and other safety measures, the Sheriff's Office took the ceremony to the training complex.

Sheriff Flowers kicked off the ceremony recognizing that all the award winners were nominated and selected under then-Sheriff Deryl

Loar, who was in attendance.

"There are so many incredible awards," Sheriff Flowers said – awards for actions that saved a life, awards for going the extra mile, for honorable service, "grand cordon" – a team award, and many more.

Also during the ceremony, Sheriff Flowers announced a number of promotions - some effective in January and others that went into effect in March (*see page 5 for list*).

The following are those Best of the Best – the ones who, selected from the quarterly winners, were given their category's Award of the Year.

"Let's make 2021 a good one," Sheriff Flowers said, concluding the ceremony.

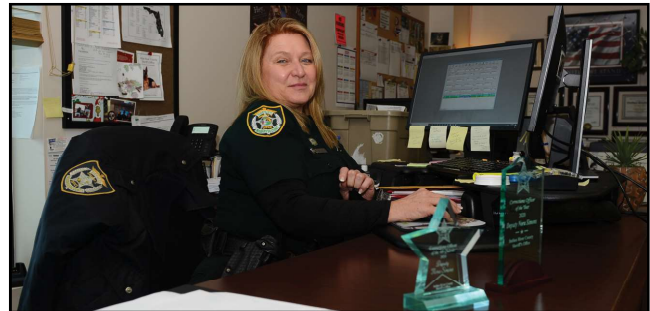


### Law Enforcement: Cpl. David Flores

Cpl. Flores received a Combat Cross and a Medal of Honor after putting an end to a violent shoplifter at the Vero Beach Wal-Mart last June. Cpl. Flores responded to the store along with Deputies Eduard Gast and Daniel Whittington. The deputies engaged with the shoplifter, who opened fire on them, and then attempted to carjack a family of four.

During the exchange of gunfire in the Walmart parking lot between the shoplifter and deputies, Cpl. Flores pursued the suspect into the Auto Zone parking lot. The suspect then turned his gun on Cpl. Flores, who opened fire from the driver's seat of his patrol vehicle, striking and killing the suspect.

Deputies Gast and Whittington also received the Combat Cross for their efforts.



### Correction Deputy: Dep. Nora Simons

Due to unforeseen staff shortages in the Classification Unit, Deputy Simons has been faced with extenuating and challenging circumstances daily. She not only continues to perform her position tasks in her usual exemplary manner but has been able to complete tasks of two (and sometimes three) other staff members competently.

She arrives early each day and stays well beyond end of shift to get all the work done. She classifies inmates for housing, oversees multiple ZOOM courtrooms throughout the day, takes on extra duties of absent staff, including those of the Unit Supervisor when needed, all while conducting herself in a professional manner.

Deputy Simons' daily work ethic is to be commended and the Corrections Division is lucky to have her knowledge and level of competence.





### Civilian: Jennifer Gelesky

Gelesky was working in Public Safety Dispatch, covering an open seat, on March 22 when she took a call from a man threatening to commit suicide. Her calm and compassion kept the man talking until deputies could arrive on scene. The man had taken every precaution in preparation of his suicide – having packed his clothes into suitcases and writing a good bye note to his friends.

Deputies were able to take the man into custody and transported him to Cleveland Clinic under the Baker Act. Gelesky was instrumental in keeping the caller on the phone until law enforcement was on scene and able to intervene.

She is the volunteer coordinator within Community Affairs and often helps within the 911 call center.



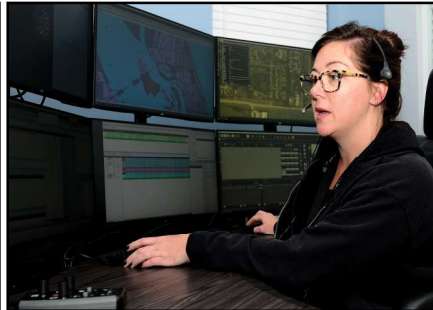
### Volunteer: Michael Sherwood

Sherwood was on patrol in the area of Barber Bridge the day a fatal crash involving an out-of-state rowing team occurred. He was the first on scene and the first to call it in.

A team van carrying the Holy Cross college women’s crew team collided with a pickup truck at Indian River Boulevard and Barber Bridge. The van held 11 crew members, including a 20-year-old Grace Rett, who was killed in the crash.

Sherwood relayed valuable information regarding several injuries, as well as the fatality. He also directed traffic around the crash site until other units arrived on scene.

He maintained his composure, and his calm voice – captured on the radio – was broadcast nationwide via media coverage.



### Public Safety Dispatch: Kimberly Emmons, Ashley Rose, and Lilian Santana

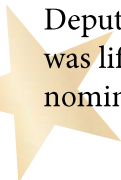
The three dispatchers’ teamwork is credited with saving a life when they decided not to let a hang-up go. They heard a male subject trying to speak, though his speech was slurred.

When the call disconnected, Santana could have let the call go and not follow up – but she didn’t. She used the tools at her disposal to plot the call to an area in southern Indian River County. Emmons and Rose dispatched deputies to the general area. All three dispatchers worked

together to zero in on the location – a house hidden behind another in a heavily wooded area.

Deputies located the home and found the male subject who was talking but in an altered mental state. The man was taken to an area hospital for treatment.

“Dispatch did a great job assisting the Deputies in quickly locating the house, which was lifesaving,” Deputy Barcaro wrote in her nomination of the trio.







# STARWORTHY MILESTONES

The Indian River County Sheriff's Office congratulates its slate of employees who have served this agency with honor and dignity for at least 15 years.

An organization benefits from the longevity, stability and

wealth of knowledge and skill accumulated by its employees.

These are the Indian River County Sheriff's Office longest serving employees of the First Quarter. Thank you for your continued service.



Cathleen Reimsnyder, 33



Kimberly K. Emmons, 32



Michelle L. Jones, 32



Douglas Mackenzie Jr., 32



Ella E. Goodman, 30



Michael L. Pierce, 30



Roger Harrington, 25



Michael Belfield, 20  
Robert A. Newman, 20



Donnella Dorsett, 15  
Michelle Greenlaw, 15  
Cornelia A. Harris, 15  
Melissa D. Hield, 15  
Justin A. Knott, 15  
Willie Lewis III, 15  
Marquis M. Morgan, 15  
Larry Nusser III, 15  
Cliff Sanders Sr., 15  
Mathieu Zincir, 15





# STARWORTHY FEATS

## Making a child's day

It's not often enough the men and women of law enforcement get praised for the good things they do. So much negativity and it's sad.

Today (Feb. 13) I came across an Indian River County Sheriff's officer at the post office. My 2-year-old daughter was smiling at him and said hello to the gentleman. After we had finished, he met us outside and talked to her and gave her the cutest Unicorn. She was so happy, she has yet to put it down.

It's the small things that make a child's day. His interaction with her was great!

I really just wanted to say Thank You to All of the Indian River Sheriff officers, thank you for everything you do to keep our community safe. Stay safe and Blessed. Thank you!

Signed,  
Leeann Christ

## Helping a mother in need

Monday (Jan. 13) afternoon, I was privileged to watch one of our unsung LEO's, change the tire of a mother with a baby on her hip, who had no clue or not enough hands nor strength to do it herself.

He was having trouble getting the lug nuts off himself. Of course, first he had to unpack the trunk, just to get to a wind up jack.

VERY PROUD of our local LEOs making someone's day. Good luck and keep up the good job.

Signed,  
Gloria Pfund

## Glowing review for deputy

Deputy Kevin Jaworski earned high marks from a citizen via the general survey in January. He was described as courteous and helpful. He displayed a positive attitude toward the citizen and others.

The citizen said she is confident with the Sheriff's Office's ability to prevent crime and apprehend criminals, and that she feels safe and secure in the community in which she lives.

The citizen shared we need "more officers like Kevin! He was wonderful and helped keep me calm during an accident. He reassured me and handled the incident very professionally."

Reviewer - Caitlin Kennedy





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