

Message from the Sheriff

Despite another year with massive budget cuts, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) remained a leader in the law enforcement community. Loss of budget monies in no way deterred the brave men and women who proudly wear the LASD star from overcoming whatever obstacles lay in the way of fighting crime, nor did the loss cause professional staff to falter in their duties. In fact, flying in the face of financial adversity, the Department began many new community outreach and safety programs, continued several popular existing programs, further prepared Department members in antiterrorist scenarios, opened new satellite stations and service centers, and even began a campaign of hiring new personnel to fill vacancies in the ranks.

Our Department joined forces with a number of government agencies to promote a selection of community policing programs. For example, along with the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the Los Angeles City Council, LASD announced the "Not Even for a Minute" child safety care partnership. This program was initiated to educate the public on the dangers of leaving children alone in parked cars during the summer.

The pursuit of knowledge continued for Department personnel, and to that end, the LASD University propagated the higher education of several hundred sworn and professional staff.

The Rowland Heights Service Center was opened late in the year to better serve that community. The Center was the result of an outcry from community members and will provide crime prevention materials and classes to both English and non-English speaking community members. The site will also increase patrol time in the area as deputies will spend less time driving to and from Walnut Station to file crime reports.

Another community sharing the benefits of a new satellite station is the Athens area of Unincorporated Los Angeles (patrolled by Lennox Station). Ground was broken for the satellite station in early 2004 and it opened for business October. Community members can now travel a relatively short distance to the satellite station to make a police report instead of driving to the main Lennox Station.

Several hundred deputies and professional staff attended antiterrorism education and training programs. Two of the major exercises held this year were "Operation Blue Sky" and "Operation Talavera." In each scenario, the County suffered a mock attack from terrorists and personnel were taught to respond quickly, efficiently, and with the right resources to minimize damage and eradicate the problem. Both exercises were held as multi-jurisdictional actions, with several Federal, State, County, and municipal agencies involved.

Emblematic of most any large metropolitan police agency, we have experienced moments of great joy along with moments of extraordinary grief. In January 2005, we lost Deputy James Tutino and Senior General Maintenance Worker Manny Alcala. Midyear, Deputy Jerry Ortiz paid the ultimate sacrifice while on-duty, protecting the residents of Los Angeles County. Their spirit is with us today and will always be remembered. We've lost so much with their departure, yet conversely, their loss has renewed our strength and conviction in our duty to prevail over those who would harm innocent victims; good will triumph and we will remain steadfast to our cause.

In September 2005, personnel from Aero Bureau, Emergency Services Detail, Emergency Operations Bureau, and a Transit Services Bureau's K-9 Unit, along with the Air-5 rescue helicopter, arrived in New Orleans and assisted with the rescue efforts for victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Also, during the Summer, seventeen sworn Department members received awards for heroism at the annual Medal of Valor Awards ceremony.

We continued to increase the number of applicants with the Deputy Sheriff Trainee on-line application program.

This resulted in the hiring and graduation of Academy Class numbers 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, and 344.

The personnel from these seven classes have entered their custody assignments, promoting movement throughout the Department. With the reopening of the North Academy at College of the Canyons in Valencia, the graduation of four additional Reserve classes, and the graduation of one Explorer class, we expect this trend to continue. An additional benefit of the personnel increase is the Department's ability to restart innovative and worthwhile social programs like Vital Intervention and Directional Alternatives (VIDA).

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is the largest sheriff's department in the world, and the country's only sheriff's department responsible for protecting more than ten million citizens. Both sworn and professional staff members, assisted by the citizenry, attempt to keep crime rates at bay, allowing for a better quality of life for productive members of the community. Working together, cops and community members are putting the squeeze on criminals and their ilk in Los Angeles County.

Lee Baca, Sheriff

