



Message from the Sheriff

For as many years as I have held the position of Sheriff of Los Angeles County, my annual "Message from the Sheriff" has always focused on the daily challenges presented to this Department: the challenges inherent in operating a law enforcement entity concerned with protecting the life and property of over ten million diverse residents in a 4,752-square-mile area. What's more, those challenges include providing housing and security to 17,000 inmates, manning the courtrooms to insure that the wheels of justice within Los Angeles County run smoothly, and answering the call whenever crime and criminals try to take advantage of innocent civilians. Factor in the difficult economic time we have experienced in 2007, and you have some idea as to the extent of our challenges.

However, each challenge derives an opportunity, and taking advantage of these opportunities seems to be the cornerstone of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. A larger population requires a larger policing presence, and to that end we have seized the opportunity to hire some of the best and brightest recruits from throughout the country to fill our ranks. Due to the hard work of the Recruitment Unit, Backgrounds Unit, and the Training Bureau, we are well on the way to a new milestone of 10,000 fully-manned sworn positions, supported by 8,000 professional staff that should occur in the near future. We continue to have personnel called up to active military duty and deployed overseas. We take this opportunity to increase the scope of the Military Activation Committee, to assist the families of our brave Department members serving their country. The Los Angeles County Jail inmate population continues to grow, so we embark on new procedures, facility upgrades, and new technologies to ensure deputies' safety while they watch over their charges. We research and improve our tactics, training, and equipment in response to violent crime, and when met with criminal action or public dissonance, members of our sworn staff take the opportunity to arrest and deter crime, upholding their oath to serve the public against all threats.

The brave men and women who make up our Department have always taken the opportunity to face challenges head on, including the extremely difficult challenge of pressing on after losing a Department member to a violent crime or accident. We cannot reverse time and bring back Deputy Raul Gama, but we can take this opportunity to come together in tribute to fallen heroes, pray for their family and friend's comfort, remember their best qualities, and use their excellent examples to guide us as we continue down the road of life.

This year provided our Department with varied and difficult challenges, but once again, you have rewarded my faith, continued to exemplify the very heart of the Core Values, and kept this Department at the forefront of law enforcement throughout the world. I could not possibly be more proud of each and every one of you and the incredible job you have performed over the past year.

Thank you.

Leroy Baca, Sheriff