

Operation Showdown: Results are dramatic



From the Sheriff's Desk

Sheriff
John
Rutherford

It has been well over one year since we began Operation Showdown. This initiative is aimed at increasing neighborhood pride, keeping children safe from crime and stopping the revolving jail door. Since January 2004, we have targeted neighborhoods in Jacksonville that are hit hardest by crimes involving guns, drugs and prostitution. Neighborhoods of greatest concern become visible "hot spots" and it is in these areas that we partner with the community and engage the criminal elements.

Springfield was selected as the first area that would benefit greatly from Operation Showdown. This decision was based on cutting-edge technology that enables members of my Crime Analysis Unit to track crimes by using the latest in geographic information systems technology. This software "maps" a region of crime activity and is capable of integrating data identifying trends and patterns with geographic identifiers. Police officers can better do their jobs using this technology as an intelligence resource.

After four months of aggressive enforcement by the Operation Showdown Task

Force, the results were dramatic. Utilizing a variety of unconventional tactics, the patrol-based task force was responsible for a 17 percent increase in arrests, which decreased violent crime in Springfield by a remarkable 32 percent. It became apparent that paying specific attention to

drug traffickers and prostitutes in the area would noticeably improve the lifestyle of the citizens living in the area. Comparing our progress from 2003 to the present, we are seeing a decline in prostitution-related activity in Springfield and its surrounding neighborhoods.

The Operation Showdown task force moved from the Springfield area to the neighborhood bordering Shands Hospital. After eight months of even more aggressive enforcement, there has been a 54 percent increase in arrests. This neighborhood has also shown a sustained and

measurable decline in violent crime and prostitution.

My administration is committed to achieving excellence in the way we do our jobs. Operation Showdown is just one example of our ongoing commitment to improving the quality of life for the citizens of Jacksonville.

Sheriff receives Golden Rule Award

Congratulations to Sheriff John Rutherford who was recently honored by Character Counts! in Jacksonville, an organization dedicated to strengthening the character of Jacksonville's youth and adults. The Golden Rule Award is presented annually to a person who displays the core ethical values (called the "Six Pillars of Character") of the organization: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship.

John Falconetti, President of Drummond Press who spoke at the luncheon, said, "The Character Counts! Board applies the very highest level of criteria and standards during their selection process, and Sheriff Rutherford certainly embodies all those traits.

"What you see with Sheriff Rutherford is not only an effort to bring solid procedures and policies that build structure for the JSO, but also a dedication to weaving his ethical code into this structure. It's not enough to have a sheriff who is dedicated to the highest moral standards, but every police officer, on and off the street, must be dedicated to the same."

Falconetti quoted Walter Lippman who wrote an article entitled *A Preface to Morals*: "A person has honor if he holds himself to an ideal of conduct though it is inconvenient, unprofitable, or dangerous



(l to r) John Falconetti; Bishop Vaughn McLaughlin, The Potter's House; Sheriff Rutherford; Renee Naughton, Executive Director of Character Counts! In Jacksonville.

to do so.' We need examples of men and women like John Rutherford in our lives."

In accepting the Golden Rule Award, Sheriff Rutherford talked about his 30 years with the JSO and about his family crest, "Nec Sorte, Nec Fate," which translates into "Not by chance, not by fate," and he added "but by the grace of God."

He pointed out that ethics is a way of life, not a program. "There are three universal questions we answer every day

by the way we conduct ourselves and do business:

"1) Can I trust you? Always do the right thing, whether or not it is expedient, easy or popular. I will always do what I believe in my heart is the right thing to do.

"2) Are you committed to excellence? Always give 110%; do your best as God has given you the ability.

"3) Do you care about me? Live by the Golden Rule; treat others as you would have them treat you. It's just that simple."

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