


# The Agenda for Excellence – Part II



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Before beginning my message for this month, I'd be remiss if I didn't say "Thank you" to all of you who exercised the greatest privilege we Americans have by voting in the March 20th city election.

On behalf of my family and me, the men and women that I am honored to lead, the many elected and volunteer leaders who support the

mission of public safety, and the citizens whose trust we work to earn and keep every day: THANK YOU.

The next four years are going to be as exciting and successful as have the last four years. We've accomplished much – but a lot remains to be done.

## Prevention and Intervention are the keys

You've previously read right here in this column how enforcing the law is our "core competency," and that can never change. Solving crime and punishing lawbreakers is what we were called to do, and it's what the public demands of us.

But...if there is one thing sheriffs and police chiefs all over the country know, after watching murder rates climb in almost every mid-sized and large city around the country, there are a large number of illegal guns that are in the hands of those who are willing to use them to settle the most minor disputes – or they are used by those taking property that does not belong to them.

The JCCI Murder Study that I commissioned highlighted this fact: We cannot stem the tide of gun violence in this or any other community until we have banded together to raise a city of young men (and women) who do not solve disputes violently and use weapons illegally.

Our agency is going to continue to partner with other organizations, like our own Police Athletic League (PAL), and we're going to be a catalyst for creating change by bringing awareness and solutions to this issue.

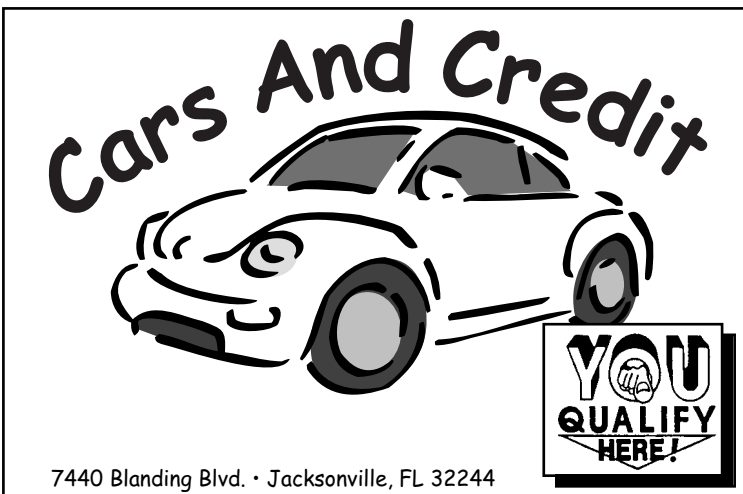
There will be more community-based efforts that draw on the expertise and commitment of our non-profits, our faith-based organizations, schools, scouts, grandparents, business community, elected officials – everyone. We need more mentors. We need more help for overwhelmed parents. We need to teach our children the importance of character and personal responsibility and hold each other accountable for our actions. Before big

mistakes are made.

## Dismas

In late March/early April we'll announce our Offender Re-Entry program. The name, Dismas, might sound familiar to some of you. It is a biblical character, one of the two men crucified with Jesus. They were both convicted thieves. Dismas was the one who took responsibility for his actions, and asked forgiveness. He is called "the penitent thief."

Specifically designed for some of the most violent offenders in our city, this program may be their last chance to return to society and become productive, law-abiding citizens. The resources from every imaginable agency will be available. The encouragement and support of the entire criminal justice system will be there for them. By stepping up and making changes, the opportunity to alter the course of their lives will be available. Like everything in life – there will be tough choices. And consequences.



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