

TO PROTECT AND SERVE

Our monthly recognition for the best of the best



Police Officer of the Month

KEVIN GUTHRIE

Currently assigned to the Emergency Preparedness Unit, Kevin Guthrie is instrumental in JSO's All Hazards preparation and handling of all disasters, natural and man-made. He is dedicated to maintaining the highest level of knowledge and ensures the JSO is fully prepared - whether it's hurricane season or implementation of a special event such as the Florida-Georgia game.

Prior to the 2009 Hurricane Season, Kevin organized a Community Hurricane Awareness Expo at the Town Center Mall, attended by hundreds of citizens. Representatives from the Jacksonville Fire/Rescue Department's (JFRD), Urban Search and Rescue Team, the Red Cross, Duval County Health Department, Animal Care and Control, and the Duval County Emergency Operations Center (DCEOC) attended the event, working to educate citizens about what to expect and how to protect themselves in the event of a hurricane.

Kevin also reviews Homeland Security and Incident Command plans from other agencies and groups who coordinate with JSO. He addresses any issues that could impact the JSO's management of an emergency. He must also evaluate the Duval County Disaster Recovery Plan, City of Jacksonville Points of Distribution sites, Department of Health Strategic National Stockpile points of dispensing sites, the JSO traffic evacuation plan, community shelter assessments, and also maintain a functional, informative Emergency Preparedness Intranet site for our employees.

Kevin is a Department of Homeland Security certified Incident Command System (ICS)/National Incident Management System (NIMS) Instructor and Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Instructor. He has completed more than 50 courses in Incident Management; Emergency Management, Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Mitigation as well as earning a Graduate Certificate in Homeland Security from Eastern Kentucky University. Recognized as one of the most highly trained law enforcement officers in the field of emergency management throughout NE Florida, Kevin is an appointed liaison and point of contact between the JSO and City and public service entities such as the Duval County Health Department, JFRD, DCEOC, City of Jacksonville Special Needs Council, First Coast Disaster Council, Red Cross, United States Marshall Service, FEMA and other emergency preparedness and mutual aid groups.

Additionally, Kevin took the initiative to train the JSO Mobile Emergency Response Support Team (MERST) - approximately 100 police, corrections and community service officers and civilians who are among our first responders. JFRD Division Chief Martin Senterfitt said, "I know of no other officer in the State who has trained and worked to his level." High praise from the Duval County Emergency Manager about a man dedicated to ensuring that Jacksonville is as prepared for an emergency as possible.



Corrections Supervisor of the Month

DAISY PEOPLES

Sgt. Daisy Peoples is a 20-year veteran of the JSO Department of Corrections. Assigned as the Administrative Property Sergeant at the Pre-Trial Detention Facility, she supervises the daily operations of the inmate property room and mail delivery system. She is vigilant in identifying the possibility of any fraudulent, gang-related and criminal activity within

the facility. She recently brought to a halt a scam hatched by an inmate - an investigation that is still in progress.

Daisy has been an expert witness in several court cases involving property room procedures. In March 2009 she testified against inmate Jamail Zeigler, who was charged with possession of a firearm by a convicted felon that resulted in the inmate receiving 30 years in state prison.

The DOC implemented the Resident Merge Program, which is the collection of old debt from inmates upon re-entering the facility. This process occurs in the booking area once the inmate receives a JSO ID#. Daisy spent three days training staff members - six sergeants and 26 officers - assigned to the Property Room and Classification areas. This procedure has minimized hours of manpower and retrieved a greater portion of old debts owed by the inmate population.

Lt. Toni Owens wrote in her nomination form, "Daisy has given a stellar performance in her dedication to the department and her commitment to excellence."



Corrections Officer of the Month

EDWIN R. HERNANDEZ

A 14-year veteran of the JSO Department of Corrections, Edwin Hernandez has worked hard to establish himself as a professional, both on-duty and off. He is being recognized for his response to an incident that occurred last May.

Edwin was inside the Hess Station on West Ramona Blvd when a woman approached him. Visibly upset, she said her husband had armed himself with a shotgun and fired the gun in the house in her presence. She had run to the Hess Station to get out of the home and find help. As they were talking, her husband entered the gas station. Seeing the man was unarmed, Edwin ordered him to have a seat, place his hands on the table and NOT MOVE. The man obeyed and waited until on-duty officers arrived to arrest him.

Edwin was under no obligation to help the victim or involve himself in what could potentially become a dangerous situation, yet he successfully detained the man, helping to ensure the safety of other citizens in the store.



Civilian Employee of the Month

JOSEPH M. MESS

Security Officer Joseph Mess is Civilian Employee of the Month because of his teamwork, attention to detail and compassion for others.

Last March, Elsa Fernandez called the JSO Missing Persons Unit requesting assistance in locating her sister, Zolia Maria Del Castillo, who suffers from mental illness and whom she had not seen or heard from for many years. Although this situation did not meet the criteria for a missing persons report, Elsa was assured JSO would make every effort to find her sister and have her call home. A flyer was created and distributed around the Police Memorial Building, the Missing Persons Unit and the patrol division. Executive Secretary to the Investigations Division Doris Denno suggested that the flyer also be sent to the Security desk at the PMB.

Mess saw the flyer and thought the woman resembled a transient who regularly sat on the bench near the Forsyth entrance to the PMB, so he approached her, asked if she was Maria Castillo, and she said YES. When he asked if she had a sister named Elsa, she again said yes, so Mess told her Elsa has been looking for her and wanted her to call. He walked with Maria to a payphone, assisted her in making the call and the sisters spoke for the first time in more than seven years.

Elsa told Mess it would be a week before she could come to Jacksonville to get Maria, and he promised to relay messages to her. SO Ferguson became the point of contact for the two sisters during the day shift. Elsa emailed pictures of her and her family, and he printed them out at home so they would be in color. When he gave Maria the pictures, she recognized her sister right away. After the family was reunited, Elsa again called the JSO to thank them for bringing her sister back into the family. Through teamwork and dedication to the Core Value of being "Community Focused" the search for a beloved family member came to a successful conclusion.



Reserve Officer of the Month

JAMES MERRIHEW

A Reserve Officer for 27 years, James Merrihew makes himself available to work events at the Florida Times Union Center for Performing Arts, Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Arena, Jacksonville Baseball Grounds, Jaguars games, Jacksonville Landing and the Kingfish Tournament. One of the highest producing officers in the unit, he responds to calls for assistance related to crime

scene protection, traffic control at accident sites, weather related incidents, and numerous other incidents as needed.

Merrihew is a retired veteran of the U.S. Army Chemical Corps.



Police Supervisor of the Month

DONALD "DONNIE" E. SMITH

In August 2008, Sgt. Donnie Smith received a complaint about transients who were affecting the quality of life for residents and business owners in Zone 4. While investigating that complaint, he learned some of the issues that foster criminal homeless activity and that transients build safe havens in the form of homeless camps.

To address the criminal transient population issue on the Westside, Donnie created a program called Homeless Outreach through Monitoring and Enforcement (HOME) to reduce the impact of the homeless involved in drug use, theft, panhandling and trespassing on business and residential property. Homelessness is not a crime, but if you commit a crime, whether you are homeless or not, that's JSO's business. Helping prevent some of these homeless criminals from preying on others who may be down on their luck, but are not criminals, is also JSO's job. The key points of HOME identify the locations of transient camps, utilize inmate labor to dismantle them, and conduct routine inspections to reduce reoccupation.

Although the goal of the HOME program is to eliminate homeless camps, there is a focus on providing assistance to the transients to help them find safe shelter and assistance. To this end, Donnie met with Audrey Moran, CEO of The Sulzbacher Center, to research possible solutions and get their assistance. He also formed partnerships with local businesses (such as The UPS Store) that print trespass warnings and assist property owners in completing the Law Enforcement Trespass Authorization Form.

Donnie also used other divisions, such as the Montgomery Correctional Center (MCC), Code Enforcement and Florida Department of Transportation, to accomplish the program's goal of cleaning up the camps. Under his supervision, HOME has spread throughout the entire city. Complaints of homeless camp sites and large trash dump sites are now investigated by the HOME Team.

The impact of this program is significant. To date approximately 209,500 pounds of trash and debris have been removed with a savings of \$72,000 by using inmate labor. Currently, the team is working on the clean up and removal of 35 homeless camps. Some of them are abandoned but are still filled with trash. Two of the active camps were actually on the property of San Jose Elementary School and were recently removed.

The ingenuity, dedication and persistence displayed by Donnie and his team are impressive. His actions have brought recognition from Sheriff's Office staff members as well as Mayor John Peyton through the Keep Jacksonville Beautiful award. Sgt. Smith is commended for addressing the issues of homelessness and working to create a solution while enforcing the law and helping to keep our neighborhoods safer, but also showing sensitivity to the issues surrounding homelessness.