



**OSSA  
AWARD  
RECIPIENTS**

**2024**

## **PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL AWARDS**

Sheriff Gary Bettencourt

Sheriff Matt English

Sheriff Shane Nelson

Undersheriff Bill Elliot

Administrative Division Manager Stephanie Wilson

## **LIFE MEMBERS - RETIRING SHERIFFS**

Life members are retired or past Oregon Sheriffs, that have been selected by the OSSA board to receive this designation. This year's Life members collectively have over 175 years of law enforcement experience and over 54 years as Sheriffs. Their combined years of knowledge and experience will be missed in their respective jurisdictions and throughout the entire state.

**Sheriff L. Shane Nelson – Crook County Sheriff's Office**

**Sheriff Chris Kaber – Klamath County Sheriff's Office**

**Sheriff Mike Taylor – Lake County Sheriff's Office**

**Sheriff Brad Lohrey – Sherman County Sheriff's Office**

**Sheriff Mike Smith – Wheeler County Sheriff's Office**

## **COUNCIL CHAIR RECOGNITION**

Each year, the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association honors the dedicated efforts of its Command Council Chairs. These councils focus on specific disciplines and essential services that fall under the purview of the Sheriff's Office in Oregon. Chairs are elected by their peers from across the state and serve in these leadership roles for 1 or 2 year terms. In their capacity, Council Chairs are responsible for organizing and leading all related meetings and conferences. Additionally, they act as a critical link between the Council and the OSSA Board of Directors, ensuring clear communication and collaboration.

## **COUNCIL CHAIR RECOGNITION**

### **Civil Command Council:**

Senior Deputy Mike Beach - Marion County Sheriff's Office

### **Concealed Handgun License Subcommittee:**

Civil Clerk Kelsey Morrison - Linn County Sheriff's Office

### **Emergency Managers Command Council:**

Emergency Manager Bryan Lee - Benton County Sheriff's Office

### **Enforcement Command Council:**

Commander Jim Wheaton - Washington County Sheriff's Office

### **Tactical Subcommittee:**

Captain Paul Garrison - Deschutes County Sheriff's Office

### **Jail Command Council:**

Lieutenant Tom Teague - Clatsop County Sheriff's Office

### **Parole and Probation Command Council:**

Director Fritz Bachman- Wasco County Sheriff's Office

### **Search and Rescue Advisory Council:**

Sergeant Shawn Richards- Jackson County Sheriff's Office

## **COMMAND COUNCIL AWARDS**

Command Council awards are based on nominations submitted by Sheriff's Offices throughout the state. The winners of these awards are selected by the members of the respective Command Councils. As I announce each award and the winner's name, please come forward to accept your award, I kindly request the Sheriff from their office to step forward and accept the award on their behalf.

### **CIVIL COMMAND COUNCIL AWARDS**

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#### **Civil Support Staff of the Year**

Administrative Specialist Jennifer Weston - Washington County Sheriff's Office

Since joining the Sheriff's Office in 2022, Jen has quickly become an invaluable asset to the Civil Unit. From day one, she demonstrated eagerness to learn and mastered civil law, ORCP, and related ORS at a highly proficient level. Jen seamlessly manages multiple roles, including Alarm Permit specialist, CHL Unit specialist, and serving papers in the field. Her willingness to assist and her ability to multi-task in a fast-paced, stressful environment have made her a critical resource. Jen's exceptional customer service, problem-solving skills, and dedication to WCSO's core values make her an outstanding team member and deserving of recognition.

### **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMAND COUNCIL AWARDS**

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#### **Emergency Manager of the Year**

Emergency Manager Bryan Lee - Benton County Sheriff's Office

Bryan Lee has been a vital force in preparing Benton County for disaster, with his influence reaching far beyond county lines. His contributions to the emergency management profession across Oregon have been significant. Bryan has supported wildfire management efforts at the Linn County Emergency Operations Center and have played a key role in coordinating a local Multi-Agency Coordination group to provide assistance to rural counties in Eastern Oregon. His dedication to bringing advanced training and professional development opportunities to Oregon's emergency managers has made a lasting impact. Bryan's leadership, kindness, and tireless work ethic make him truly deserving of this award.

## ENFORCEMENT COMMAND COUNCIL AWARDS

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### **Deputy of the Year**

Deputy Evan Nafie - Multnomah County Sheriff's Office

Deputy Sheriff Evan Nafie has served Multnomah County for over ten years, bringing exceptional dedication to his role as a Field Training Officer. His expert coaching has transformed struggling recruits, ensuring both their success and the safety of the department. As a SWAT team member, Nafie responded to 27 callouts this year and teaches tactical operations in post-academy training. He also provided critical support when K-9 Deputy Rudy fell ill, staying by the handler's side throughout the ordeal. Deputy Nafie's unwavering commitment and compassion make him a standout member of the Sheriff's Office.

### **Supervisor of the Year**

Sergeant Chad Rogers - Lane County Sheriff's Office

Sergeant Chad Rogers, with nearly 28 years of service, became the supervisor of Lane County Sheriff's Criminal Investigations Section (CIS) in 2023. Overseeing a team of seven detectives, he expertly manages Measure 11 crime investigations and collaborates closely with Oregon State Police to lead the Interagency Deadly Force Investigation Team. During an intense period in April 2024, his leadership was crucial as the team handled multiple high-profile cases, including two homicides and an Officer-Involved Shooting within 24 hours. Known for his dedication, Rogers works tirelessly to ensure thorough investigations and is deeply committed to the success of his team and the safety of Lane County residents.

### **Commander of the Year**

Lieutenant Mitch Maden - Crook County Sheriff's Office

Lt. Mitch Madden has proven to be an exceptional leader during Crook County's unprecedented wildfire season, managing multiple wildfires simultaneously with limited resources. His professionalism, resilience, and humor under stress have been remarkable, even as he sacrificed personal time with his family. In addition to his role as patrol division commander, Lt. Madden has enhanced the agency's technology, improving field reporting and communication during crises. His use of live video feeds provided critical real-time updates to citizens, easing community anxiety. Lt. Madden's leadership extends beyond emergencies, with contributions to the Sheriff's Office Citizens' Academy and the launch of a successful Junior Deputy Academy for local youth. His dedication has made him a pillar of the agency and the community.

## JAIL COMMAND COUNCIL AWARDS

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### **Jail Deputy of the Year**

Deputy Guadalupe Torres - Lane County Sheriff's Office

Deputy Guadalupe Torres exemplifies the highest standards of dedication and professionalism within the Lane County Sheriff's Office. Her exceptional work ethic and positive attitude set a gold standard, inspiring colleagues to strive for excellence. As the only female member of the Special Operations Response Team and Crisis Negotiation Team, she plays a pivotal role in managing high-risk situations and mental crises. Additionally, she co-founded the Corrections Crisis Intervention Team and is bilingual in Spanish, frequently assisting with translation needs across the agency. Deputy Torres' lifesaving actions during a critical event further demonstrate her commitment, earning her a nomination for a lifesaving award. Her dedication, leadership, and willingness to serve make her an invaluable asset to the agency.

### **Jail Supervisor of the Year**

Sergeant Andre Scott - Multnomah County Sheriff's Office

Sergeant Andre Scott has been an exemplary leader in the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office since 1991. A Portland native and graduate of Benson Polytechnic and Clackamas Community College, Scott quickly established a reputation for excellence. After completing his training, he became a Field Training Officer, instilling accountability and professionalism in new deputies. In 1996, Scott was part of the team that formed the Corrections Emergency Response Team (CERT), where he developed training programs and led as a team instructor. Promoted to sergeant in 2001, Scott has been a vital force in shaping deputies, promoting sound decision-making, communication, and officer safety. In 2023, he became Officer in Charge of the Inverness Jail, managing operations with energy and dedication, serving as a mentor to new sergeants, and setting the standard for leadership within the agency.

### **Jail Commander of the Year**

Captain Josh Aldrich - Jackson County Sheriff's Office

Captain Josh Aldrich has served the Jackson County Sheriff's Office for 24 years, with significant contributions to the Corrections Bureau. Over his career, he has held various leadership positions, including Deputy, Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Captain, and has been the jail commander for the past six years. He has expertly navigated the challenges of operating a correctional facility during the pandemic, social justice reforms, and increased public scrutiny. Known for his collaborative approach, he has been instrumental in enhancing services for adults in custody, establishing partnerships with peer support groups, and facilitating access to medication-assisted treatment. A respected leader, Capt. Aldrich has also contributed at the state level, aiding in the creation of HB 2002 and chairing the Oregon State Jail Command Council. His dedication has positively impacted corrections locally and statewide.

## PAROLE AND PROBATION COMMAND COUNCIL AWARDS

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### Deputy of the Year

Deputy II Daniel Smith - Clatsop County Sheriff's Office

Deputy Smith is a dedicated Parole and Probation Deputy known for his exemplary character, work ethic, and commitment to service in both his professional and personal life. In 2024, he helped launch the Clatsop County Veteran's Treatment Court Program, providing justice-involved veterans with access to substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and veteran-specific benefits. As a veteran himself, Smith is deeply passionate about supporting veterans through recovery. He also oversees the county's Drug Court and Mental Health Treatment Court programs, demonstrating compassion and dedication to participants. Beyond his work, Smith coordinates a yearly fundraising motorcycle ride, serves as FOPPO union president, and is a competitive kettlebell athlete, placing 3rd at the 2024 WKSF World Championship

### Supervisor of the Year

Lieutenant Anna Jefferson - Marion County Sheriff's Office

Lieutenant Jefferson has over 20 years with the Marion County Sheriff's Office and is known for her unwavering commitment to her team. She takes the time to celebrate staff milestones, organizes events like potlucks, and ensures staff well-being by regularly checking in and remembering personal details about their lives. Her thoughtful leadership is exemplified by creating a private space for new mothers at the Transition Center. Additionally, her strong relationships with partner agencies, like Bridgeway Community Health, highlight her dedication to addressing substance use disorders. Jefferson's leadership in programs like SOAR and TJC reflects her passion for rehabilitation and supporting positive change, both for her staff and those under supervision.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE COMMAND COUNCIL AWARDS

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### Region 1 Volunteer of the Year

Willy Crippen - Union County Sheriff's Office

Since joining Union County SAR in 2021, Willy Crippen has brought a wealth of experience as an incident commander and emergency responder. In just a short time, he has contributed hundreds of hours to advanced training in search management, mapping, lost person behavior, swift water and rope rescue, cell phone data analysis, and UAV operations. As the Team's equipment manager, Willy works tirelessly behind the scenes to maintain and enhance SAR equipment, often at his own expense. His mentorship and teaching abilities make him a valuable resource for new volunteers, and his friendly, welcoming demeanor is felt throughout the team. The Union County Sheriff's Office deeply appreciates Willy's dedication and contributions.

## **Region 2 Volunteer of the Year**

Becky Irving - Columbia County Sheriff's Office

Over the past year, Becky Irving has dedicated nearly 600 volunteer hours to the Columbia County Search and Rescue K9 Team while working full-time as a lead veterinary technician. Her contributions include field training, classroom sessions, and participating in 31 missions involving missing persons and evidence searches in Columbia and neighboring counties. With nearly 30 years of experience in Search and Rescue, including notable missions like the Oklahoma City bombing, Becky has played a vital role in saving lives and assisting in key investigations. As the K9 team lead, she also mentors others, serves on the planning and training teams, and organized a highly praised booth at the Columbia County Fair. Becky's selfless dedication makes her an invaluable asset to the community.

## **Region 3 Volunteer of the Year**

Nick Wedmore - Lane County Sheriff's Office

Nick Wedmore has been a dedicated volunteer with the Lane County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue (SAR) team for many years, beginning his service in the mid-1960s with Explorer Post 178. After a break to pursue other endeavors, Nick returned to Lane County SAR in 2001, where he quickly became a key advisor and leader. Over the past 22 years, he has played a vital role in hundreds of search operations, including high-profile cases like the Kyron Horman and Shawn Higgins searches and the 2020 Labor Day Fires. Since 2015, Nick has volunteered over 5,000 hours, and his calm demeanor and extensive experience have made him one of the few trusted to manage search operations independently. Nick's positive attitude and dedication have had an immeasurable impact on SAR, earning the respect of the Sheriff's Office Command Staff.

## **Region 4 Volunteer of the Year**

Monica McFadden - Josephine County Sheriff's Office

Since joining Search and Rescue in 2005, Monica has shown unwavering dedication and versatility in various roles, including K9 handler, ground searcher, team leader, and Search Manager. She has extensive experience in Search Management and has been a crucial member of the CORSAR Planning Team, contributing to many large-scale searches in Southern Oregon and Northern California. As Training Coordinator for Josephine County, Monica ensures her team maintains OSSA certification while mentoring new recruits through the SAR Academy. Her impact extends beyond the county, serving as an OSSA Ground Search Management Instructor, conducting classes across Oregon and California. Monica's leadership, resilience, and nearly 20 years of service exemplify the highest standards of Search and Rescue.



## **Deputy of the Year**

Deputy Daniel Tague - Lake County Sheriff's Office

Daniel's commitment to Search and Rescue (SAR) has been remarkable, displaying unwavering dedication throughout his many years in law enforcement. His leadership has helped shape his regional SAR team, CORSAR, into a cohesive unit that is highly regarded across the SAR community. Known for his calm and level-headed demeanor, Daniel excels in critical and high-stress situations, consistently making sound, well-thought-out decisions.

One of Daniel's standout contributions has been his innovative use of the SAR tool, "SARTOPO," for real-time tracking during wildland fire events. This forward-thinking approach has not only enhanced SAR operations but also set a standard for other counties to follow during evacuation planning for fire emergencies.

His willingness to support other SAR teams, leadership, and exceptional management skills make him an excellent candidate for this award. Daniel embodies the true spirit of SAR, prioritizing the safety of others and consistently going the extra mile. His work with the local fire department further underscores his deep commitment to his community and helping those in need.

## **Coordinator of the Year**

Sr. Deputy Brian Belnap - Malheur County Sheriff's Office

Brian has been with the Malheur County Sheriff's Office for nearly 20 years and has served in many capacities. As the Search and Rescue (SAR) coordinator, Brian has been instrumental in modernizing the program, particularly over the past year. His efforts in implementing new technology, such as Caltopo and Starlink, have significantly improved search efficiency. Brian has also spearheaded fundraising efforts, helping to secure vital resources like a side-by-side and trailer for the team. Despite his full-time patrol duties and personal commitments, Brian's dedication to SAR and the community is unwavering. His commitment to high-profile missing persons cases and supporting the families involved exemplifies his dedication and compassion.

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## **OSSA AWARDS**

OSSA awards are based on nominations submitted by Sheriffs from across Oregon. These nominations are thoroughly reviewed by the OSSA Awards Committee, which carefully evaluates each submission against the award criteria. After deliberation, award winners are selected based on the merits of their nominations. The OSSA Awards Committee includes Sheriff Travis Ash, Sheriff Mark Garton, Sheriff Cliff Harrold, Sheriff Nick Hunter, OSSA Executive Director Tim Svenson, and myself.

## **MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD**

The Meritorious Service Award is given in recognition of continued and dedicated service over a significant period to either a Sheriff's Office or the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association. This prestigious award honors individuals who demonstrate an unwavering commitment to public safety and their respective organizations, exemplifying the highest standards of service and dedication.

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### **Tillamook County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Paul Fournier**

In Tillamook County, Deputy Paul Fournier's return to the Sheriff's Office marked the continuation of a career dedicated to public service. After originally being hired full-time in 2001, Fournier retired following 17 years of service as a criminal deputy, marine deputy, and detective. Additionally, he served as a volunteer firefighter in his local community. In 2021, Fournier rejoined the Sheriff's Office as a part-time deputy and Public Information Officer, bringing with him a blend of law enforcement experience and media expertise that has transformed the office's communication strategies.

Fournier's work has been instrumental in expanding the Sheriff's Office's digital presence, growing its Facebook following from 10,000 to over 25,000 followers, with posts generating high levels of engagement. His timely updates during significant incidents, such as a recent officer-involved shooting in south Tillamook County, provided real-time, critical information to the public, including updates on a highway closure that lasted for several hours.

Fournier also played a key role in organizing the office's mass messaging system during the pursuit of a potentially armed homicide suspect. His effective use of the system allowed the public to be updated instantly upon the suspect's capture, leading to an outburst of cheers during the local parade attended by thousands.

In addition to his media work, Fournier has utilized his experience to mentor younger deputies, building strong relationships within the Sheriff's Office and the community. His dedication to improving public communication has reshaped the way the Tillamook County Sheriff's Office connects with its citizens, ensuring transparency and trust.

## **Klamath County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Steve Leslie**

For the past 23 years, Deputy Steve Leslie has served as both a Reserve Deputy and Forest Contract Deputy for the Klamath County Sheriff's Office, while simultaneously holding the rank of Captain at Fire District #1. Balancing these two high-stress roles may seem impossible, but for those who know Leslie, it's a testament to his character and dedication. His ability to seamlessly manage both professions has earned him widespread admiration in Southern Oregon.

Deputy Leslie's contributions are vast. He serves as a Forest Deputy, tactical squad member, fire cause investigator, armored vehicle operator, drone operator, and marijuana spotter. His technical skills and quick response during medical emergencies make him an indispensable resource to other deputies. Leslie's deep understanding of public safety, coupled with his unwavering commitment to his community, has made him one of the most respected figures in both law enforcement and firefighting.

His service extends beyond local boundaries. Federal partners such as the Forest Service, BLM, and Parks Service frequently commend his efforts. Particularly during wildfire season, Leslie is known for his reliability, often responding day or night to assist with evacuation decisions. His expertise and dedication have been crucial to the Sheriff's Office and the community during these critical moments.

Steve Leslie's exemplary service has not gone unnoticed. The Sheriff, deputies, Fire Chief, District Attorney, and his peers all agree—Leslie is deserving of recognition for his unparalleled dedication to public service.

## **Jackson County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Ben Fazio**

Since 2017, Detective Ben Fazio has been a cornerstone of the Jackson County Sheriff's Office, dedicated to advancing forensic investigations as a Medicolegal Death Investigator within the Medical Examiner's Office. With over 24 years of service, including a decade as Union President and Field Training Officer, Detective Fazio exemplifies leadership and unwavering commitment to public safety and justice.

In his primary role as a Medicolegal Death Investigator, Detective Fazio has revolutionized death investigations across the county, collaborating with diverse community partners to enhance practical training and investigative techniques. A notable achievement includes leading a Clandestine Graves training exercise in rural Jackson County, which brought together state, county, and city agencies to improve inter-agency cooperation and response.

Detective Fazio is also instrumental in mentoring new recruits, conducting comprehensive training programs for neighboring agencies, and educating Deputy District Attorneys on the critical role of MDIs in homicide investigations. His initiative to partner with Rogue Community College's EMT/Paramedic Program has expanded his training outreach, emphasizing the importance of evidence preservation at crime scenes. Additionally, his presentations for local fire departments have strengthened collaborative efforts, ensuring that critical evidence is meticulously handled in major investigations.

Beyond his professional duties, Detective Fazio contributes to the community as a compassionate support for grieving families and as a dedicated coach for the Eagle Point High School varsity baseball team. His involvement with Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams (DMORT) showcases his readiness to assist beyond Oregon, highlighting his expertise and altruism.

Detective Fazio's blend of technical prowess, empathetic leadership, and community engagement makes him an invaluable asset to Jackson County. His relentless pursuit of excellence and dedication to training the next generation of investigators ensure that his legacy of service and integrity will endure for years to come.

## **Lane County Sheriff's Office – Communications Network Coordinator Brian Greig**

During his six years with the Lane County Sheriff's Office, Brian Greig has exemplified exceptional dedication as a radio network coordinator, playing a vital role in ensuring continuous communication for emergency responders. Brian's contributions extend beyond routine duties, as he has been instrumental in maintaining and improving the county's radio system, ensuring its reliability during critical incidents like the 2017 snowstorm, the 2020 Holiday Farm Fire, and the 2024 ice storm.

Brian transformed the Sheriff's Office's radio system from a patchwork of verbal agreements to a robust, sustainable network, a change that has been crucial in emergencies. His commitment to keeping emergency responders connected is evident in his readiness to respond at any hour, often sacrificing personal time with his family to prevent communication failures. Whether it's assisting the Lane Regional Interoperable Group (LRIG) or troubleshooting complex system issues, Brian is the go-to expert for technical questions, underscoring his deep understanding of this complicated system.

A prime example of Brian's extraordinary service occurred on January 14, 2024, during an ice storm that knocked out power to a crucial radio site. Brian's quick thinking and action—working with public works teams to clear roads and coordinating with technicians to restore power—prevented a catastrophic communication failure for emergency personnel across Lane County, Eugene, Springfield, and beyond. Brian's tireless dedication and expertise have saved the radio network multiple times. His strong relationships with state agencies, including ODOT, further illustrate his value, as he was trusted to fix their equipment and restore statewide communications.

## **Douglas County Sheriff's Office – Undersheriff Jeff Frieze**

Undersheriff Jeff Frieze has dedicated 27 years to law enforcement, with the past 22 years at the Douglas County Sheriff's Office. Throughout his career, he has served as a patrol deputy, narcotics detective, Tactical Response Team (TRT) member and commander, Drug K9 handler, and patrol sergeant. He was promoted to undersheriff in 2016. Notably, he led the Winchester Bay Dunes Patrol and developed a diversion program for ATV riders, enhancing public safety in the sand dunes.

As Undersheriff, Frieze has managed the daily operations of the Sheriff's Office, including Patrol, Corrections, Investigations, Civil, Search and Rescue, and 9-1-1 Communications. He has been responsible for building a fiscally responsible budget and ensuring its adherence across all divisions. His leadership style is defined by approachability, making difficult decisions when necessary, while maintaining harmony with the Sheriff and his vision for the department.

His engagement extends beyond his official duties. He has served on the North Douglas School Board, Oregon Parks & Recreation ATV advisory committee, and the North Douglas Sports and Rec Board, and he has coached youth sports.

He has spearheaded efforts to remodel the office, building a sense of pride that improved morale and professionalism within the office. His leadership following the tragic Umpqua Community College shooting in 2015 further solidified his role as an irreplaceable figure within the Sheriff's Office, earning him respect throughout the community and law enforcement.

Undersheriff Jeff Frieze has demonstrated a career-long commitment of dedication to serving the public and providing outstanding mentorship and leadership to both the Douglas County Sheriff's Office and the community he serves.

## **DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**

The Distinguished Service Award is presented to an individual who, in the course of their duties, performs an act of outstanding or especially meritorious service. This award recognizes acts that go above and beyond, demonstrating exceptional selflessness, devotion to duty, and a commitment to serving others with distinction. Recipients of this award have shown an extraordinary dedication to their role, often putting the needs of their community and colleagues ahead of their own and exemplifying the highest ideals of public service.

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### **Marion County Sheriff's Office – Detective Bob Evarts**

In February 2024, Detective Evarts began an innovative approach to tackling Organized Retail Theft for the Sheriff's Office. He developed a new system to streamline how local retailers could report cold shoplifting incidents, collaborating with the office's records team to create a more efficient process. Retailers now use an online reporting system to file reports, which are then shared with Detective Evarts, who compiles the evidence, including internal reports and video footage, into a centralized folder. This new method not only saves staff time but also allows the office to present more detailed and comprehensive cases to the District Attorney's Office.

For over seven months, Detective Evarts led these retail theft investigations, working with various agencies along the I-5 corridor and partnering with large private retail companies. His investigation revealed that dozens of "boosters" from multiple counties were stealing items and selling them to a single "fence" location for cash. After extensive surveillance and information gathering, Detective Evarts identified this fence location and coordinated the execution of search warrants, leading to the recovery of approximately \$500,000 worth of stolen merchandise, including Legos, toys, DVDs, and vinyl records.

Detective Evarts played a critical role in cataloging and sorting the thousands of items, with plans to return them to the original retailers after case adjudication. His diligence and innovative approach were crucial to the success of this unprecedented investigation for the Sheriff's Office, resulting in the suspect's confession and ongoing criminal justice proceedings.

## **Curry County Sheriff's Office – Sergeant Jared Gray and Lieutenant David Denney**

On the afternoon of May 22, 2024, Curry County Sheriff's Dispatch received an urgent 911 call reporting multiple juveniles in distress and possibly drowning in the Rogue River near Huntly Park, located about six miles east of Gold Beach, Oregon. Emergency services, including Curry County Sheriff's Deputies, Gold Beach Police Officers, and Gold Beach Fire Department personnel, were quickly dispatched to the scene, along with medical personnel from Cal-Or Ambulance and helicopters from Reach.

Upon arrival, first responders found seven individuals, including two teachers and five juveniles, clinging to rocks or struggling in the water. In a heroic attempt to help, two Gold Beach Police Officers and a Sheriff's Deputy swam across the river, but one of the officers was swept downstream along with a teacher and a student.

At approximately 3:45 p.m., Sgt. Jared Gray and Lieutenant David Denney arrived in the Sheriff's marine patrol boat and observed three individuals, including the officer, in critical distress. They rescued the officer, who had gone underwater several times and was close to losing consciousness, along with two females (one teacher and one juvenile), and safely transported all parties to shore.

Through a coordinated, multi-agency effort, all individuals were accounted for and brought to safety. The swift actions of Sgt. Gray and Lieutenant Denney undoubtedly saved lives, particularly the officer, who had nearly drowned before being pulled from the water. The heroic rescue effort showcased the collaboration between various local agencies, ensuring a tragic situation was averted.

## **Columbia County Sheriff's Office – P&P Officer Megan Bubar**

In February 2023, Columbia County Parole and Probation Officer Megan Bubar faced a critical situation when a client, on post-prison supervision for attempted murder and probation for assault, missed a scheduled appointment. After reaching out to the client, Megan learned they had relapsed into substance abuse and later fled the state with a female companion. Maintaining regular contact, Megan quickly noticed signs of erratic behavior, paranoia, and hallucinations—similar to the behavior the client exhibited before a past attempted murder.

Through consistent communication, Megan determined the client was in a city in northern Nevada and contacted local law enforcement, though they had already moved the client out of the area. Despite this, Megan remained dedicated, staying in contact with the client on and off duty, and eventually convinced them to check into a Nevada hospital. However, the client soon fled, and their mental state continued to deteriorate, escalating to dangerous levels of psychosis.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, Megan collaborated with law enforcement and utilized phone pinging technology to locate the client in the Lake Tahoe area. She worked with the Oregon Parole Board to secure a nationwide warrant, which led to the client's capture by local authorities.

Megan's quick thinking, persistence, and proactive efforts likely saved the female companion's life, while ensuring the safety of the community. Her dedication went far beyond her normal duties, highlighting her commitment to protecting others and maintaining public safety.



**Multnomah County Sheriff's Office – Captain Lance Hemsworth, Sergeant Matt Ferguson, Deputy Ryan Burkeen, Deputy Pete Read, Deputy Jarrett Miller, Deputy Kevin Jones, Data Analyst Marceline Myers, Gresham Police Department – Officer Nate Hibbs, FBI – Special Agent Kurt Czerwien, Multnomah County Dept of Community Justice – Parole and Probation Officer Joshua Sandberg, Oregon Army National Guard – Staff Sergeant Gianluca Paparo, Oregon Air National Guard – Master Sergeant Chad Danner**

Between September 1, 2023, and August 31, 2024, the Multnomah County Sheriff's Dangerous Drug Team worked in collaboration with federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to significantly disrupt drug trafficking organizations in the Portland Metro area. Over the year, the DDT conducted 146 investigations, leading to the seizure of large quantities of narcotics, firearms, and bulk cash. As one of the last full-service light tactical units in Multnomah County, the DDT balanced various agency priorities while making a substantial impact on the region's drug trafficking.

Despite additional duties, including jail overdose investigations, homicide cases, and stolen vehicle and fugitive missions, the DDT achieved key successes in drug enforcement. The team investigated 146 criminal drug cases, made 197 arrests, and executed 52 search warrants. Their efforts led to the seizure of nearly 50 kilograms of cocaine, over 54,000 fentanyl pills, 48 kilograms of fentanyl powder, and 157 firearms, with a total narcotics value of over \$11 million. The DDT also confiscated \$1.8 million in cash, highlighting their effectiveness in disrupting organized crime.

A particularly notable investigation involved a drug trafficking organization storing large amounts of cocaine and methamphetamine in a Portland-area stash house. After gathering intelligence through informants and using electronic surveillance, controlled buys, and financial forensics, the DDT and FBI executed five simultaneous search warrants in July 2024. This resulted in the seizure of nearly 44 kilograms of cocaine, over 18 kilograms of methamphetamine, and \$516,000 in cash.

The accomplishments of the DDT over the past year, particularly this high-profile case, exemplify their dedication and service to the law enforcement community, bringing great credit to their work and improving public safety.

## **Coos County Sheriff's Office – Sergeant Adam Slater, Deputy Shawn Starr and Hannah Francis**

On December 22, 2023, in rural Coos County, Sergeant Adam Slater, Deputy Hannah Francis, and Deputy Shawn Starr were conducting an enforcement action when they were approached by a concerned citizen. The citizen reported a young girl at a nearby location who had been exposed to fentanyl and was living in dire conditions. Alarmed, the deputies initiated an immediate investigation.

The investigation uncovered that the child had not been bathed and was living in unsanitary, hazardous conditions that posed a significant safety risk. Through their diligent research, the team learned that the Department of Human Services (DHS) had visited the residence several times due to concerns of neglect and abuse. Acting swiftly, Sergeant Slater applied for a search warrant, ensuring the child's protection was a priority by including a provision to take the child into protective custody and place her in DHS care.

Upon executing the search warrant, the deputies discovered the child standing in garbage, filthy, and wearing a duct-taped diaper that had not been changed for hours, possibly days. The trailer was uninhabitable, with no running water, garbage everywhere, no functioning toilet, and drugs and paraphernalia in plain sight. Homemade explosives were also found on the property. The child, who exhibited signs of methamphetamine exposure and sexual abuse, was suffering from cognitive and developmental issues, including seizure activity likely caused by drug ingestion and trauma.

Thanks to the decisive and compassionate actions of Sergeant Slater, Deputy Francis, and Deputy Starr, the child was rescued from further trauma and likely saved from a tragic fate. Their efforts exemplify the highest standards of law enforcement, bringing great credit to the Coos County Sheriff's Office and the State of Oregon.



**Washington County Sheriff's Office – Sergeant Nicholas Jones, Deputy Jacob Koch, Lieutenant Mitch Coley, Posse Members: Gil MacGregor, Marlene Thomas, Hope Flint, Diane Carlson, Bob Hubble, Mike Constantine, Bethany Valachi, Judy Gillette, Paige Smith, Laurie Lux, Linda Friday**

The Lee Falls Fire on August 8, 2024, posed a severe threat to the Cherry Grove community, ultimately consuming 238 acres and triggering a Level Three evacuation order. In response to this immediate danger, the Washington County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) Posse displayed extraordinary courage, commitment, and community spirit. Faced with the rapidly spreading fire, Posse members bravely entered the evacuation zone using their personal vehicles to rescue at-risk livestock, ensuring the safe evacuation of an alpaca, four horses, 34 goats, 13 cattle, three sheep, 25 poultry, and nine ducks.

Once the animals were safely transported to the Washington County Fairgrounds, other Posse members had shelters and pens ready. The team worked around the clock for four days, providing food, care, and shelter to the animals until they could be safely reunited with their owners. Their efforts not only alleviated the stress of residents under evacuation but also prevented potential economic losses by safeguarding valuable livestock. After the evacuation order was lifted, Posse members diligently coordinated the reunification process, ensuring that every animal was returned to its rightful owner.

The WCSO Posse's actions during the Lee Falls Fire go far beyond standard volunteerism. Their heroism, demonstrated through over 260 hours of dedicated service in life-threatening conditions, protected both lives and livelihoods. Their extraordinary commitment to the community exemplifies the mission of law enforcement: to protect and serve.

## **DISTINGUISHED ACTION AWARD**

The Distinguished Action Award is presented to individuals who have performed an act involving personal danger in the line of duty or achieved a highly credible and uncommon agency accomplishment under adverse conditions. This award recognizes exceptional courage and leadership in the face of significant risks or challenges, honoring those who have displayed extraordinary bravery and professionalism while serving their community.

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### **Tillamook County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Terrance Watters and Oregon State Police Trooper Tom Mayne**

On September 7, 2023, Deputy Terrance Watters responded to a highly volatile situation in Rockaway Beach, where a man was threatening his mother. OSP Trooper Tom Mayne arrived as backup. Upon arriving at the scene, the male subject charged at Deputy Watters' patrol vehicle, breaking its window with a rock and brandishing a pipe while shouting aggressively.

The suspect, known to local law enforcement for prior disturbances, had been causing significant concern throughout the day with threatening behavior. The original 911 call was made by the suspect's mother, who had locked herself in a bathroom in fear for her life, repeatedly stating that if her son entered the house, he would kill her.

Deputy Watters and Trooper Mayne both made extensive efforts to de-escalate the situation. They used their training, verbal commands, and non-lethal tools in attempts to subdue the suspect, but none were effective. Despite deploying a taser, the suspect continued to act aggressively, even throwing a rock that struck and injured Trooper Mayne.

As the situation intensified, the suspect broke a window and began entering the house, shouting that he was going to kill his mother. With the imminent threat to the mother's life, both Deputy Watters and Trooper Mayne fired their duty weapons to prevent the suspect from advancing further into the home. Tragically, despite immediate resuscitation efforts, the suspect succumbed to his injuries on the scene.

Deputy Watters and Trooper Mayne demonstrated exceptional restraint, professionalism, and courage in a life-threatening situation, making every effort to protect the victim and uphold public safety. Their actions, while difficult, ultimately prevented further harm to the suspect's mother and those nearby.

## **Jackson County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Edgar Valdovinos and Deputy Brian Murphy**

On the night of May 5, 2024, at 11:15 PM, deputies responded to a report of a shooting in White City, Oregon. Dispatch indicated that the suspect was still in the area, armed, and being pursued by witnesses. Amid chaotic radio traffic, Deputies Valdovinos and Murphy arrived at the scene from opposite directions. Deputy Valdovinos quickly identified a male suspect being chased and retrieved his patrol rifle, advancing toward the situation. At the same time, Deputy Murphy spotted the suspect approaching from another angle. He exited his vehicle, confronted the suspect, and swiftly took him into custody without incident. Meanwhile, Deputy Valdovinos detained another individual nearby to determine if he was involved.

With the suspect secured, Deputy Valdovinos shifted his focus to the victim, who was lying on the sidewalk bleeding heavily from gunshot wounds. Acting quickly, Valdovinos applied a tourniquet to the victim's left arm, which had been shot with a 9mm round. After assessing the situation further, he applied a second tourniquet to the victim's right arm, also wounded by a gunshot. His prompt medical intervention was crucial in controlling the bleeding before medical personnel arrived to transport the victim to the hospital for treatment.

Deputies Valdovinos and Murphy displayed remarkable professionalism and composure in a dangerous and rapidly evolving situation. Their swift actions not only led to the apprehension of an armed suspect without the use of force but also saved the life of the shooting victim. Their bravery, calmness under pressure, and dedication to both public safety and providing medical assistance highlight their commitment to protecting their community.

## **Linn County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Dan Graybill**

On July 14, 2024, Marine Patrol Deputy Dan Graybill was on the Rogue River in Curry County as an instructor for the Oregon State Marine Board's jet boat training when he encountered a life-threatening emergency. While navigating the river with a fellow marine deputy from another agency in a Linn County Sheriff's Office jet boat, Deputy Graybill was flagged down by recreators who reported that a 41-year-old male had slipped under the river's surface while swimming and had not resurfaced.

Acting swiftly, Deputy Graybill and the other deputy initiated a search, locating the man submerged under six feet of water moments later. Without hesitation, Deputy Graybill dove into the river, pulled the unconscious man onto the boat, and immediately began CPR. Other marine deputies and paramedics, who were nearby for training, quickly joined in the lifesaving efforts. Despite their relentless attempts to revive him, the man was flown to Curry General Hospital where, tragically, he was pronounced dead.

Although the victim did not survive, Deputy Graybill's actions demonstrated extraordinary courage and quick thinking. His willingness to dive into turbulent waters and attempt a rescue under extreme conditions showcased not only his bravery but also his expertise in water rescue and recovery, honed through years of service on the Marine Patrol and the Linn County Sheriff's Office Dive Team. Deputy Graybill's heroism in this situation underscores his dedication to public safety and his readiness to act selflessly, even in the face of grave danger.

## **Washington County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Roxsee Huff and Deputy Hannah Keeton**

On March 25, 2024, Deputies Roxsee Huff and Hannah Keeton responded to a critical emergency at the Westview Terrace Apartments in unincorporated Washington County, where a large fire had engulfed the west side of the building. Upon arrival, they found flames consuming the structure, with panicked residents gathered outside. Without hesitation, the deputies acted swiftly, directing the crowd to a safe area and rushing toward the blazing building to assist those still inside.

They urgently alerted residents, evacuating them from their apartments. In one particularly dangerous situation, they encountered an apartment across the hallway from the fire. Unsure if it was occupied, they knocked and verbally announced their presence. When there was no immediate response, they attempted to force open the door. Moments later, a resident, who had been completely unaware of the fire due to being in the bathtub, finally answered. By this time, thick smoke had begun to fill the stairway, and the fire was only a few feet away, spreading rapidly.

Despite the growing danger, the deputies remained focused on ensuring that all residents, along with their pets and family members, were safely evacuated, allowing fire personnel to concentrate on extinguishing the blaze. Their swift and fearless actions under such hazardous conditions likely saved lives and prevented further tragedy.

Their courageous and decisive response exemplifies the highest standards of public service.

## **Tillamook County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Sean Ahlers**

On December 31, 2023, Deputy Sean Ahlers, along with OSP troopers, a Manzanita Police officer, and other deputies, responded to a report of menacing with a firearm in Rockaway Beach, OR. The caller reported that a male suspect had pointed a gun at her husband. Descriptions of the suspect and the weapon, reportedly concealed in a sock, were provided, along with details that the suspect was acting erratically, barking like a dog.

Deputy Ahlers located the suspect walking along the beach and recognized him from previous encounters. The suspect, clearly in a mental health crisis, was defiant and uncooperative. While maintaining a safe distance, Ahlers followed the suspect, awaiting backup. Officers repeatedly tried to engage the suspect, who was making unusual gestures and barking. At one point, the suspect removed a knife and pointed it at the officers, further escalating the situation. He also brandished what appeared to be a gun-shaped object inside a sock, intensifying concerns for public safety as bystanders were present nearby.

Deputy Ahlers, displaying exemplary coordination and quick thinking, retrieved a ballistic shield and formulated a plan with his fellow officers. As they approached, the suspect continued to manipulate the object in the sock, which was aimed at the officers. Demonstrating controlled precision, Deputy Ahlers deployed his taser and successfully subdued the suspect, allowing for his safe arrest. Upon searching the sock, officers found a loaded firearm with a round in the chamber that had failed to discharge.

Thanks to Deputy Ahlers' leadership, composure, and effective use of de-escalation tactics, the situation was resolved without injury to the suspect, officers, or bystanders. His actions exemplify professionalism and dedication to public safety.

## LIFE SAVING AWARDS

The Life Saving Award is presented to an individual who has performed an active, distinctive, and successful act in saving another person's life. The critical criteria for this award include that there was a strong possibility the person would have died without the individual's intervention. Importantly, the actions leading up to the event must not have been carelessly caused by the nominee, and the act itself must go beyond the typical duties expected in their day-to-day responsibilities. This award highlights acts of extraordinary heroism and selflessness in life-threatening situations.

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### **Jackson County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Brian Murphy, Sergeant Will Shopp & Deputy Jordan Towe**

In the early evening of Sunday, January 28, 2024, Deputy Brian Murphy, Deputy Jordan Towe, and Sergeant Will Shopp responded to an urgent call regarding a shooting at 8262 29th St. in White City, Oregon. Upon arrival, they found the victim, Casey Helmka, lying on the front lawn with multiple gunshot wounds to his chest and abdomen. Even though the scene was not secure and the suspect's location was unknown, the team acted without hesitation, immediately administering life-saving first aid.

The deputies swiftly cut away the victim's clothing, applied seals to his chest wounds, and kept the victim alert by speaking with him to protect his airway. These quick and decisive actions were critical in stabilizing Helmka's condition before paramedics arrived. Once Mercy Flights paramedics and FD3 Fire personnel arrived, they took over life-saving measures and transported the victim to Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center. Due to the severity of his injuries, Helmka was later airlifted to Oregon Health Sciences University in Portland.

In the days following the incident, Mercy Flights supervisor Larry Bingham and FD3 Battalion Chief Brian Cohee both praised the deputies' exemplary efforts. Bingham noted that the deputies had performed nearly all the necessary interventions that paramedics typically handle at the scene of a gunshot wound, leaving little for the medical team to do except transport the victim. Chief Cohee also emphasized that the high level of care provided by the deputies was something FD3 has come to expect from their partnership with the Sheriff's Office.

Had the chest seals not been applied correctly or if the victim had lost consciousness, the risk of a pneumothorax (collapsed lung) would have been significantly higher, potentially costing Helmka his life. The rapid, professional actions of Deputy Murphy, Deputy Towe, and Sergeant Shopp played a vital role in ensuring the victim's survival and reflected their unwavering commitment to protecting the community.

## **Washington County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Brandon Toney, Corporal Hunter Smith, Deputy Dylan McArthur, Deputy Brad Johannessen and Deputy Steven Burgard**

On April 17, 2024, Deputy Brandon Toney was on duty at the Washington County Jail, working in Pod 2, when an emergency unfolded. Around 4:30 p.m., while assisting with diabetic checks, an Adult in Custody attempted to jump from the upper tier of the pod. After the AIC bypassed medical to climb the railing, Deputy Toney quickly recognized the imminent danger, called for backup, and ran to provide care after the AIC jumped and fell headfirst to the cement floor below.

Within minutes, Corporal Hunter Smith and Deputies Dylan McArthur, Brad Johannessen, and Steven Burgard arrived to assist. Despite the chaotic scene, they remained calm, assessing the AIC's severe injuries, including possible fractures and a skull injury. Their quick decision not to move the AIC, understanding the risk of further injury, showcased their professionalism under extreme stress.

Emergency medical personnel arrived nine minutes later, and deputies worked with them to stabilize the AIC before transport to a regional trauma center. Due to the deputies' timely, decisive actions, the AIC survived the critical injuries. The professionalism displayed by Deputy Toney, Corporal Smith, and the responding deputies during this life-threatening event brings great credit to the Washington County Sheriff's Office and the law enforcement profession.

## **Lane County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Bradley Kaye, Deputy Jason Guilford and Oregon State Police Sergeant Justin Lindquist**

On August 8, 2024, the Sheriff's Office received a distressing 911 call from a woman at her residence in Mapleton, who had discovered a suicide note from her husband and feared he was deceased in their garage. Deputies Jason Guilford and Brad Kaye, along with Oregon State Police Sgt. Justin Lindquist, promptly responded to the scene. Upon entering the residence, they found a note on the door leading to the garage that read, "I love you, please do not enter, toxic gas."

When firefighters arrived, Deputy Guilford and Sgt. Lindquist, equipped with SCBA breathing apparatuses provided by the fire department, entered the garage. Inside, they found the man semi-conscious on the ground, lethargic from the gas exposure. Acting quickly, the deputies lifted the man and carried him out of the garage, placing him into the care of paramedics who transported him to a nearby hospital, where he made a full recovery.

Inside the garage, deputies discovered a dangerous setup: a seven-gallon propane tank was connected to a cook stove with its valve open, allowing propane to fill the room. A towel had been placed under the door to prevent ventilation, increasing the risk of a fatal incident. The propane posed not only a severe asphyxiation threat but also an extreme risk of explosion, as even a small spark could have ignited the gas.

Thanks to the swift, selfless actions of Deputies Guilford, Kaye, and Sgt. Lindquist, the man was saved from almost certain death. By putting themselves at risk, the responders prevented a tragedy, averting both asphyxiation and a potential explosion that could have endangered everyone nearby.



## **Crook County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Aaron Ondracek, Deputy Ben Adair and Citizen Vicki Waldo**

In the early morning of August 14, 2024, a grandparent made a desperate call to Crook County 9-1-1, reporting that their grandchild had been severely injured in a go-cart crash. The child was bleeding profusely, drifting in and out of consciousness, and struggling to breathe. Fortunately, a neighbor, Vicki Waldo, was already at the scene, applying pressure to the wound. The situation was critical, and the child's condition was rapidly deteriorating.

Deputies Ondracek and Adair, along with officers from the Prineville Police Department, arrived on the scene before Crook County Fire & Rescue. Upon assessing the situation, Deputies Ondracek and Adair quickly recognized the severity of the injury: the child had been impaled in the groin, and significant blood loss was occurring. Without hesitation, Deputy Ondracek, immediately applied a tourniquet high on the child's leg, followed by a second tourniquet applied by Deputy Adair. Their quick and decisive actions slowed the bleeding and stabilized the child's condition.

Crook County Fire & Rescue medics arrived shortly after and took over the lifesaving efforts. Officer Dunn from Prineville PD noted that upon the deputies' arrival, the child had been pale and barely conscious, but the application of the tourniquets had immediately improved his color and awareness. The medics later praised the deputies for the precise placement of the tourniquets, given the location of the injury.

The child was transported to St. Charles Medical Center-Prineville and then airlifted to St. Charles Medical Center-Bend for emergency surgery. It was later confirmed that the child had suffered a broken femur, severing the femoral artery, a life-threatening injury. The trauma doctor informed Deputy Ondracek that the child would have "100% bled to death" without the prompt and proper application of the tourniquets.

Thanks to the heroic actions of Deputies Ondracek and Adair, the child's life was saved. Their quick thinking, calm demeanor, and exceptional skill in an incredibly tense situation prevented a tragic outcome.

## AWARD FOR VALOR

The Award for Valor is given to a Sheriff or Deputy who, in the line of duty, sacrifices their life or performs an act of exceptional courage, knowingly placing themselves in immediate danger. This award recognizes individuals who go above and beyond the call of duty, demonstrating bravery in the face of significant risk to their own life. The recipient of this prestigious award must have acted selflessly, with full awareness of the peril involved, making their actions a true testament to valor.

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### **Clackamas County Sheriff's Office – Detective Jesse Unck and Beaverton Police Department Officer Charles Wujcik**

#### **Distinguished Action Award: Clackamas County Special Weapons and Tactics Team, Clackamas County Crisis Negotiation Team, Washington County Tactical Negotiations Team, Washington County Crisis Negotiation Unit**

In the late evening of Monday, April 29, 2024, several 911 calls were made reporting a domestic disturbance involving a weapon in Happy Valley, Oregon. The situation escalated when it was revealed that a 45-year-old man in severe mental distress had barricaded himself in the house with his wife and two children, threatening their lives. The man, armed with a knife, had poured gasoline inside the home and was flicking a lighter, creating a highly dangerous scenario. Family members, after receiving a desperate plea for help from the man's wife, called authorities.

By 8:35 p.m., deputies from the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office arrived to perform a welfare check. Despite their attempts to de-escalate the situation, the man refused to let his family leave and continued to fortify the house with furniture and other items. The presence of gasoline and the barricaded entry points made it a high-risk hostage scenario. The Clackamas County Crisis Negotiation and SWAT teams, along with Washington County's Tactical Negotiation Unit and Clackamas Fire personnel, were called in to respond.

For over four hours, negotiators attempted to calm the man, but his behavior worsened. He began threatening to kill his family, using them as human shields under a blanket while armed with a knife. At 12:49 a.m., he gave a five-minute countdown to harm his family, prompting tactical teams to take immediate action.

At 1 a.m., officers breached the house and encountered the man holding his wife down with a knife to her throat. Within 11 seconds of entering, Detective Jesse Unck and Officer Charles Wujcik used lethal force to neutralize the threat, saving the woman and her children from potential harm. Their quick, decisive actions were later deemed justified by a grand jury.



**Linn County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Jackson Soto, Deputy Preston Mayer, Lieutenant Ryan Keys, Oregon State Police Sgt. Donald Rummer, Lt. Christopher Phillips, Trooper Dylan Rossman, Trooper Cody Miller, and Trooper Treyse Reber**

On April 28, 2024, the Lane County Sheriff's Office responded to a report of gunfire in Coburg, where one person had suffered a gunshot wound to the head. The suspects fled the scene in a stolen black Honda Civic, triggering a BOLO alert for the armed and dangerous individuals, who were also linked to a previous shooting near Portland in August 2023. Law enforcement agencies, including the Oregon State Police, Linn County Sheriff's Office, and Lane County Sheriff's Office, coordinated their efforts to locate the vehicle.

At around 6:00 PM, the black Honda Civic matching the BOLO alert was reported speeding and driving dangerously on Interstate 5, reaching speeds of 100 mph. Officers quickly located the vehicle on Diamond Hill Road near Harrisburg. Upon attempting a traffic stop, the suspects fled, leading law enforcement on a high-speed chase, at times reaching 120 mph and passing over 100 vehicles, including dangerously maneuvering between two semi-trucks.

Spike strips were successfully deployed, causing the vehicle to lose control and crash into a culvert along the shoulder of Interstate 5. As officers surrounded the vehicle and created a barrier between the suspects and the highway, they observed quick movements inside the car. Despite repeated warnings to show their hands, a gunshot was fired from inside the vehicle toward Interstate 5. Law enforcement officers immediately engaged, returning fire to neutralize the threat and prevent any further gunfire.

This incident exemplifies the bravery and courage of the law enforcement personnel involved. Despite the risks, they pursued and apprehended dangerous individuals who had just shot someone, putting their own safety on the line to protect the public. Their decisive actions prevented further harm and safeguarded the community, demonstrating remarkable heroism in the line of duty.

**Josephine County Sheriff's Office – Corporal Aaron Porter, Deputy Gerald Bayard, Deputy Kyle Wolfe, Grants Pass Police Department Officer Lucas Six, Corporal Nathaniel Tracey, Oregon State Police Sergeant Erik Fisher, and Lieutenant Rich Gay**

During the week of December 11, 2023, Josephine County Sheriff's Deputies, alongside Grants Pass Police, Oregon State Police (OSP), and the U.S. Marshals Service, were actively pursuing a fugitive wanted on numerous felony charges, including second-degree murder. The search intensified on December 15, 2023, when Deputy Gerald Bayard spotted the suspect's vehicle traveling inbound on Redwood Highway near milepost 11.

Deputy Bayard began following the vehicle but held off on making a traffic stop, coordinating with OSP SWAT to prevent a dangerous situation. As the suspect, identified as Mason, neared Grants Pass, additional law enforcement units converged. Corporal Aaron Porter joined the pursuit as the second vehicle in line. To prevent the suspect from entering the more populated areas of the city, Deputies Bayard and Porter decided to conduct a high-risk stop near Dowell Road and Redwood Highway.

As soon as Deputy Bayard activated his lights and siren, the suspect accelerated, weaving through traffic and driving on the shoulder. Corporal Porter then executed a successful PIT maneuver, bringing the suspect's vehicle to a stop on the shoulder near Allen Creek Road. Due to the positioning of his patrol car, Corporal Porter was unable to exit his vehicle, and the suspect's windows, heavily tinted, made it difficult for law enforcement to assess the situation inside the car.

Moments later, Corporal Porter shouted, "Hands, hands, hands!" followed by gunfire erupting from the suspect's vehicle. Both Deputy Bayard and Corporal Porter's vehicles were hit, with glass and bullet fragments injuring Corporal Porter. Despite these injuries, Porter and six other officers – including Deputy Bayard, Deputy Wolfe, OSP Lieutenant Rich Gay, OSP Sergeant Erik Fisher, GPPD Corporal Nathaniel Tracey, and GPPD Officer Lucas Six – returned fire. After an intense exchange, the suspect, who was armed with an AR-15 rifle and wearing body armor, was neutralized.

Corporal Porter was treated for minor injuries and released from the hospital later that day. The suspect's vehicle was found to contain a loaded AR-15 and a magazine labeled "Don't die first," a chilling reminder of his violent intent.

Thanks to the swift and courageous actions of all involved law enforcement officers, the suspect was stopped without any harm to civilians. Their bravery and decisive response prevented what could have been a far more dangerous outcome.



## **Marion County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Caleb Mott, Oregon State Police Trooper Andrew Tuttle and Salem Police Department Officer John Parmer**

On the morning of November 24, 2023, 911 calls flooded in from the Four Corners neighborhood of Marion County, reporting an active shooter. Callers described a male suspect armed with two handguns, randomly firing shots, which could be heard by the 911 call takers. The suspect was seen walking up and down the street, alternating between pointing a gun at his own head and threatening to “kill everyone around him,” while firing at neighbors, bystanders, and vehicles. Prior to law enforcement's arrival, the suspect fired a round into a passing vehicle after engaging with its driver.

Multiple agencies, including the Marion County Sheriff's Office, Salem Police Department, and Oregon State Police, immediately responded. As officers arrived, it was unclear where the suspect was located, raising concerns about a potential ambush. Law enforcement began searching the area, and eventually located the suspect standing in the middle of the road, holding a gun to his head and shouting for someone to "kill him." Despite verbal attempts to de-escalate the situation, the suspect remained non-compliant.

The situation escalated as the suspect engaged with passing motorists, putting both law enforcement and civilians at risk. Officers worked quickly to contain the scene while minimizing danger to innocent bystanders. The suspect, still holding his firearm, dropped to his knees and refused to comply with commands to surrender. After several unsuccessful efforts to verbally de-escalate the situation, the suspect rose to his feet, advanced toward the officers, and leveled his firearm at them.

In response to the immediate and deadly threat, Deputy Caleb Mott, Trooper Andrew Tuttle, and Officer John Parmer acted decisively, firing their weapons and stopping the suspect. Despite their immediate efforts to provide medical care, the suspect died at the scene.

Their bravery and quick action prevented a tragic situation from becoming worse.



## **Linn County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Andrew Peterson**

### **Distinguished Action: Linn County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Mykal Dekanu & Sergeant Jordan Kirskey**

On May 30, 2024, the Linn County Sheriff's Office received a 911 call from a terrified woman residing off Speasl Road, east of Lebanon. She reported that her husband had threatened her life, putting a pistol to her head and stating that a shotgun would leave more "splatter." Initially trapped inside the house, she managed to escape and hid behind trees near the property, calling for help.

As deputies rushed to the remote area, dispatch updates indicated that the woman, crying uncontrollably, had heard two gunshots—one from a shotgun and another that sounded like a rifle. The situation was tense, and the isolated location left deputies with only one route of access to the suspect's residence.

Deputies Andrew Peterson, Mykal Dekanu, and Sergeant Jordan Kirksey arrived at the scene, strategically positioning their vehicles to block off the road and protect the public. Deputy Dekanu quickly located the woman and drove her to safety further up the road, before returning to assist Deputy Peterson and Sergeant Kirksey near the suspect's residence.

As the deputies attempted to make contact with the male suspect, he emerged from the house, armed with a handgun, and began yelling profanities, demanding that the deputies leave. Despite their efforts to de-escalate the situation, the male retreated into a shop on the property, where Deputy Peterson heard the distinct sound of a round being chambered. The male reemerged with an AR-15 rifle, rapidly advancing toward Deputy Peterson, who ordered him to drop the weapon. When the suspect continued to advance, Deputy Peterson was forced to fire multiple rounds to stop the imminent threat to his life.

Despite the life-threatening danger just moments before, they immediately began life-saving efforts on the suspect. Sadly, the trauma was too severe, and the male was pronounced dead at the scene.

## **Washington County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Chris Schroeder, Deputy Samantha Burkhead, Civil Deputy, Chuck Dozé, Tigard Police Department Detective Sergeant Luis Rivera**

**Distinguished Action: Washington County Sheriff's Office Deputy Cory Hoffman, Tigard Police Department Detective Nelson Massey, Detective Jordan Welch, Tualatin Police Department Officer Alan Balam, Officer Matt Randolph, King City Police Department Officer John Kazimeerski**

### **Distinguished Service: Washington County Sheriff's Office Deputy Kevin Mitcham**

On the morning of July 26th, 2023, what was expected to be an eviction with no risk factors executed by the Washington County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) at a Tualatin apartment complex quickly devolved into a life-changing event. This incident demonstrated the volatile nature of police work and the outstanding bravery of the deputies and officers.

Patrol Deputy Chris Schroeder and Civil Deputies Chuck Dozé and Samantha Burkhead were tasked with carrying out the eviction when they were met with a barricaded entrance. The situation intensified drastically after they forced entry and were immediately met with gunfire from an armed individual inside the apartment. In a moment that challenged their skills and determination, Deputy Dozé sustained critical, life-threatening injuries, being shot seven times. Positioned riskily on a second-story landing with minimal cover, the deputies were in a dire situation.

Reacting quickly, Deputy Schroeder exhibited exceptional bravery, maneuvering Deputy Dozé to a safer area amidst continuous gunfire. This fight was fierce and dangerous, with Deputy Burkhead courageously confronting the assailant at close quarters, narrowly escaping harm while defending and shielding her colleagues. Both deputies returned fire determined to keep Deputy Dozé and themselves alive.

The shooting and call of an officer down resulted in a quick response from local agencies. An immediate call for support prompted a rapid assembly of law enforcement officers, including Tigard Police Detective Sergeant Luis Rivera, who led a strategic rescue effort. Alongside him were Deputy Cory Hoffman, Tualatin Police Officers Alan Balam and Matt Randolph, King City Police Officer John Kazmieerski, and Tigard Police Detectives Jordan Welch and Nelson Massey.

This team effectively coordinated its advance toward the apartment, using shields to secure their route. This well-executed tactic led to the successful extraction of Deputy Dozé, showcasing exemplary teamwork and heroism. Once Deputy Dozé was in the ambulance, Deputy Kevin Mitcham was instrumental in this operation. Amidst high traffic, he facilitated an ambulance escort, ensuring that Deputy Dozé was promptly transported to a trauma center.

This incident demonstrated the volatile nature of police work and the outstanding bravery of the deputies and officers. The courageous actions of Deputies Dozé, Schroeder, Burkhead, and their colleagues reflect the highest ideals of bravery, commitment, and cooperation.

Their quick-thinking and decisive actions undoubtedly saved lives, earning them high praise and recognition from WCSO as heroes and as a representation of the dedication and spirit that define their profession. This incident underscores the risks faced by those in law enforcement and highlights the significant impact of inter-agency collaboration in crises. The bravery and professionalism displayed have earned widespread admiration and respect, highlighting them, their agencies, and the broader law enforcement community.

## **LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

The Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes an individual who has made lasting contributions through their committed and dedicated service over the course of their career. This prestigious award honors individuals whose exceptional leadership, dedication, and impact have left a lasting legacy in their organization and the communities they serve. The recipient of this award embodies a career of sustained excellence, demonstrating unwavering commitment and an extraordinary level of service that has significantly shaped and improved their agency or field over time.

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### **Jackson County Sheriff's Office – Lieutenant Jeremy Whipple**

Lieutenant Jeremy Whipple began his distinguished career with the Jackson County Sheriff's Office in 2000 as a Corrections Deputy. From the outset, he proved himself as a hardworking and dedicated member of the team, earning a recommendation to become a Field Training Officer after his first evaluation. In 2001, he transferred to the Patrol Division, where his leadership skills continued to shine. As a core skills instructor, he played a crucial role in shaping the careers of countless law enforcement professionals in Jackson County and beyond.

Promoted to Sergeant in 2005, he returned to the Corrections Bureau, where he supervised veteran jail deputies and gained valuable leadership experience. During this time, he was also tasked with developing and leading JCSO's first SWAT team, a responsibility he took on with great skill and dedication. In 2006, he returned to the Patrol Bureau as a shift supervisor, balancing front-line duties with expanding responsibilities, including supervising the FTO program, the Defensive Tactics Training Program, and continuing as SWAT team leader.

In 2017, he was promoted to Lieutenant, leading the Patrol Division and later overseeing professional standards, training, personnel matters, and the Criminal and Civil Records Division. He remained an integral part of the Jackson County SWAT team leadership. Sheriff Sickler praised Lt. Whipple for his calm demeanor, insight, and commitment to duty, calling him a significant contributor to JCSO's success.

Lt. Whipple's impact extended beyond Jackson County. As a key member of the OSSA Tactical Advisory group, he helped develop the statewide Basic Tactical Operations School. His dedication to ensuring the highest level of tactical training earned him praise from law enforcement leaders across the state, including Marion County Sheriff Nick Hunter and Deschutes County Undersheriff Paul Garrison, who credited him with the program's success.

Lt. Whipple's contributions have left an indelible mark on law enforcement in Oregon. His leadership, professionalism, and commitment to mentoring and training others are a testament to his lifelong dedication to public safety.



## **Lane County Sheriff's Office – Sergeant Tami Molony**

Sergeant Tami Molony's 30-year career with the Lane County Sheriff's Office began as an explorer in 1987, and she was hired as a Deputy Sheriff in 1994. Early in her career, she served in Security, became a member of the Communication Team, and worked as a Field Training Officer. In 2004, she joined the Defendant/Offender Management Center, where she handled offender classification, special reviews, and alternative program placements, becoming a leader and subject matter expert.

In 2006, Sgt. Molony made history as the first Deputy in Oregon with release authority through the Circuit Court's Pre-Trial Services office, helping create a groundbreaking program to manage jail populations that remains in use today. Promoted to Sergeant in 2013, she returned to Jail Security and later began overseeing the Corrections Division's Alternative Programs, including the Sheriff's Work Crew and Electronic Monitoring. Her leadership strengthened relationships with community partners and ensured quality service.

Throughout her career, Sgt. Molony has received multiple citations, contributed to preventing escape attempts, and amassed over 2,100 training hours, including a supervisory certification from DPSST. She has mentored countless colleagues and played a key role in recruiting female staff into law enforcement.

Sgt. Molony's dedication, leadership, and commitment to excellence have made her an invaluable member of LCSO, and her impact on the department will be felt for years to come. She is known not only as a leader and mentor but as a caring and dependable colleague.

## **Marion County Sheriff's Office – Chief Civil Deputy Brian Wallace**

From 2012 to 2024, Marion County Sheriff's Office Chief Civil Deputy Brian Wallace served as Oregon's representative on the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Advisory Policy Board, contributing significantly to public safety and data management nationwide. Wallace's role was instrumental in developing policies, improving data collection, and enhancing data sharing between Oregon and national law enforcement agencies. His leadership extended to multiple national-level committees and work groups, reflecting his dedication to advancing law enforcement capabilities across the country.

In this position, Wallace held several prestigious roles, including 2nd Vice Chair of the Western Working Group, Chair of the NCIC Subcommittee, and First and Second Vice Chair of the Advisory Policy Board. He was also a founding member of the Use of Force Task Force, played a key role in policy discussions on wanted persons, and contributed to several task forces, including the NCIC 3rd Generation Task Force and the Tribal Task Force. His work helped shape policies crucial to officer safety, law enforcement suicides, and the collection of data on officers killed or assaulted.

Wallace's efforts went beyond national collaborations; his work strengthened Oregon's voice in federal discussions and brought valuable training to local law enforcement agencies, particularly for non-sworn personnel. His leadership in OSSA, including multiple terms as Chair of the Civil Command Council, led to significant advancements in the professional development of civil law professionals. He assisted in the OSSA Civil Manual revision and was a key educator at various training conferences, promoting higher standards within the field.

Though he recently decided to step back from his national commitments, Wallace's legacy continues in his local mentorship efforts and leadership at the Marion County Sheriff's Office. His contributions to Oregon's law enforcement landscape and his expertise in policy development have left an indelible mark, ensuring that his work will benefit the state for years to come.

## **Jackson County Sheriff's Office – Sergeant Shawn Richards**

Sergeant Shawn Richards began his law enforcement career in 2000 with the Klamath County Sheriff's Office, where he quickly took over Search and Rescue (SAR) and Marine Program responsibilities in 2001. He served in that capacity for 11 years before joining the Jackson County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) in 2012, where he continued to lead SAR and Marine Programs for 12 years. Over his 23-year career, Sgt. Richards has exhibited exceptional leadership, dedication, and a commitment to public safety.

Under Sgt. Richards' guidance, Jackson County SAR has become a state leader in professionalism and efficiency, conducting 1,591 missions and locating over 1,900 individuals since 2012. His tireless dedication is evident in his personal response to 894 of those missions, often at night or on weekends. He also serves as a liaison to fire personnel, coordinating evacuation notifications during wildfires and helping save thousands of lives during critical incidents such as the 2020 Almeda and S. Obenchain Fires.

Sgt. Richards' leadership extends beyond Jackson County. He has played a pivotal role in Oregon's Search and Rescue community, serving as Chair or Vice-Chair for both the CORSAR and SARAC organizations for the past 10 years. He also contributed to the success of the annual drift boat school in partnership with the Oregon State Marine Board.

Sgt. Richards' unwavering commitment to his team, especially the 136 SAR volunteers he leads, has fostered a family-like atmosphere where volunteers are motivated to go above and beyond.

## **Lake County Sheriff's Office – Sheriff Michael Taylor**

Sheriff Michael Taylor began his law enforcement career in the late 1970s with the Fife Police Department in Washington, later joining the Tacoma Police Department, where he served for 32 years. Throughout his career in Tacoma, Sheriff Taylor held various positions, starting as a Patrol Officer and Traffic Motor Officer before being promoted to Sergeant. In his role as Sergeant, he worked in multiple assignments, including Patrol and Detectives, before advancing to Lieutenant and later Captain/Commander. His leadership and dedication were pivotal during his long and successful career in a high-stress, urban policing environment.

After retiring from Tacoma PD, Sheriff Taylor moved to the rural town of Adel, Oregon, where he assisted with his wife's family's cattle ranch. However, his commitment to public service led him to run for Sheriff of Lake County, Oregon, in 2014. Elected to office in 2015, Sheriff Taylor took on the challenge of modernizing the Lake County Sheriff's Office. When he took office, the agency lacked policies, had outdated equipment, and was short-staffed. Under his leadership, the department transformed into a professional, well-respected law enforcement agency that the community is proud of.

Sheriff Taylor's innovation and dedication to improving the lives of Lake County residents have made a lasting impact on the community. After serving in law enforcement for over 42 years, Sheriff Taylor plans to retire in January 2025, leaving behind a legacy of public service and commitment to the communities he served in both Washington and Oregon.



## **LEUPOLD COMMUNITY HERO AWARD**

The Leupold Community Hero Award recognizes an individual who demonstrates the Leupold core values of: iconic passion-serving-serving something greater, faithful companion-reliable commitment to ourselves, those we serve and those we lead, true collaboration-together anything is possible, thoughtful stewardship-leading with purpose and intent, through community involvement or engagement. This award is the pinnacle of the OSSA award ceremony event as it highlights a Sheriff's Office professional who (through demonstration of these core values) is making their community a stronger and better place.

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### **Multnomah County Sheriff's Office – Corrections Deputy Kim Stidum**

There can be no one who better epitomizes the Leupold core values of having iconic passion - serving something greater; and being a faithful companion - reliable commitment to her peers, to those we serve, and those we lead, than MCSO Corrections Deputy Kim Stidum. Every Thanksgiving, Deputy Kim Stidum prepares and serves meals for about 150 people in her community that are in need. Despite the ever-increasing demands of public safety work, and extremely long hours, Deputy Stidum finds a way to perform this feat of extraordinary generosity and dedication.

The planning and preparation are daunting. Deputy Stidum buys all the food herself, and even throws in winter clothing essentials. She cooks a huge feast for the people in her community who are in great need and who might otherwise be alone on this holiday. When people leave, they not only have had a hot meal, but Deputy Stidum packs them a boxed meal to take away, a set of socks, gloves and a hat, and the 'Kim Stidum Special': a hug. This deputy is compassion in action.

Deputy Stidum has been doing this for the past fifteen years, but in her typical humble fashion, nobody at the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office had any knowledge, until last year when The Fox12 'Surprise Squad' heard about Deputy Stidum's extraordinary long-running endeavor and featured her on their news broadcast. Her story clearly moved the presenters, and they were astonished that she accomplishes this feat in addition to the increasingly long hours she works as a corrections deputy. You can watch this feature here:

<https://www.kptv.com/2023/11/22/fox-12-surprise-squad-helps-woman-who-makes-thanksgiving-meal-people-need/>

Deputy Stidum says that she "wants to put a little sunshine in everyone's life". She absolutely does that, and more. Kim Stidum is a pastor at her church, involved with her local congregation and leading with thoughtful stewardship and a true spirit of community engagement. As an integral member of the MCSO Peer Support team, Deputy Stidum cares for her MCSO community. At MCSO, members must be nominated by their coworkers to be a Peer Supporter, and then successfully pass a panel interview. Deputy Stidum has the trust of her coworkers and upholds standards of uncompromising integrity and confidentiality.

For unparalleled generosity, unwavering compassion and dedication to her community, Deputy Kim Stidum for the Leupold Community Hero Award. Please recognize Deputy Stidum for making her community a stronger and better place both on and off duty.

## **SHERIFF OF THE YEAR**

The Sheriff of the Year Award recognizes a Sheriff who has made outstanding contributions to the objectives and efforts of the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association (OSSA) during the current year. This prestigious award is not limited to committee chairmanship but highlights exemplary service that goes above and beyond regular duties. It acknowledges the Sheriff's active participation, leadership, and significant impact in advancing OSSA's mission and enhancing public safety across Oregon. The recipient of this award demonstrates exceptional dedication, innovation, and service that positively affects the association and the communities they serve.

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### **Sheriff Clifton Harrold**

This sheriff has devoted his life to serving his community, beginning his law enforcement journey as a cadet while still in high school. Demonstrating early commitment, he convinced his high school to allow him a work-study program to gain hands-on experience. He later worked as a 911 dispatcher, all while volunteering as a cadet and attending Community College with a focus on criminal justice. In 1995, on his 21st birthday, he was hired as a Deputy Sheriff.

Throughout his nearly 30-year career, he has served in numerous roles, including Corrections, Patrol, SWAT Operator, Drug Recognition Expert, and Traffic Safety Team Member. He advanced through the ranks, serving as Patrol Sergeant, SWAT Commander, Patrol Lieutenant, and Corrections Captain before being appointed Sheriff in 2019. He was elected to the position of sheriff in 2020.

Facing a significant budget deficit, he worked tirelessly to secure the renewal of the county's public safety levy, which funds 70% of the County Jail's operations. Over several weeks, he held over 40 town hall meetings, explaining the importance of the levy to residents across the county. His dedication and clear communication helped secure nearly 80% voter approval, the highest in the levy's history.

He has made staff wellness a central focus of his leadership. He created the Health and Wellness Center which provides resources for the physical, mental, financial, and spiritual well-being of his staff. Additionally, he has supported alternative work schedules, such as a 4-10 shift for the Corrections Division, reducing overtime and sick leave while allowing more training and wellness opportunities.

Known for his personal connection with his team, he prioritizes a family-like atmosphere at his office. His leadership has strengthened relationships with county leaders, secured funding for additional deputies, and ensured that his Sheriff's Office continues to provide exceptional public safety to the community.

## **Sheriff Dave Daniel**

With over 28 years of law enforcement experience, this sheriff has held various roles, including Traffic Officer, Major Crimes Detective, SWAT Team Instructor, and Patrol Officer. Throughout his tenure, he has earned a reputation for leadership and dedication to public safety, particularly during his county's significant financial challenges at one point facing a major budget crisis, impacting law enforcement services. Recognizing the need for stable funding, the Sheriff committed to securing long-term financial solutions for the department.

When he took office in 2015, the Sheriff inherited an office reeling from years of budget shortfalls and staffing cuts. At that time, only operating with two patrol deputies. For two years, he worked relentlessly to pass a five-year jail levy, which freed up general fund dollars to bolster staffing in the patrol division. This effort allowed the Sheriff to rebuild the department's capabilities. His leadership helped ensure the renewal of the jail levy four years later, securing further resources for the department.

In 2023, after years of strategic planning and hard work, the Sheriff achieved what had been elusive for decades: the establishment of a permanent service district. This accomplishment provided stable, long-term funding for the county's Patrol, Dispatch, and Property/Evidence divisions, marking a turning point for law enforcement in Josephine County. The Sheriff's ability to rebrand the office and demonstrate its professionalism to the public resulted in overwhelming voter support for the new service district.

This remarkable progress was achieved by Sheriff Dave Daniel, whose leadership and dedication to securing sustainable funding have transformed the Josephine County Sheriff's Office into a respected and efficient law enforcement agency.

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**Thank you for joining us at the 2024 Oregon State Sheriffs' Association awards banquet. Once again, congratulations to all of this year's deserving award recipients. I would also like to extend my deepest gratitude to our 36 Sheriffs and their dedicated teams for their unwavering commitment and service to our communities throughout the state. Your hard work truly makes a difference.**