



Community Update

News and topics of interest for the Citizens of Orange County

Summer, 2009

A MESSAGE FROM SHERIFF DEMINGS

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *Community Update*. We hope to use this publication to keep you up to date and informed on items of interest, issues of community concern, and timely public safety topics. It will be produced as a .pdf document and, if you choose to receive it, e-mailed directly to you on a regular basis. The articles will be brief, hopefully informative, and intended to keep you updated on some of the great things being accomplished by the men and women in this agency who serve you. Your *Community Update* will also include live links to active websites where, if you choose to read the publication on your computer, you will be able to read more about a topic simply with a click of your mouse key. I sincerely hope you enjoy your monthly updates as much as we enjoy sharing the information they offer with you. We appreciate your continued support in our ongoing commitment to maintaining the safety and security of our community. Be safe.



Jerry L. Demings
Sheriff of Orange County

HAVE YOU VISITED OCSO.COM RECENTLY?



HOME OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES OPERATIONAL SERVICES

You are here: HOME

- Active Warrants
- Agency Directory
- Child Safety Village
- Civilian Academy
- Crime Information
- Criminaline
- Crime Prevention
- Disaster Preparation
- Downloads
- Employment Info
- En Espanol
- Explorer Post 81
- FAQ's
- File a police report
- Media Relations
- Missing Persons
- Prostitution Arrests
- See Offender Info
- Tourist Tips
- Unsolved Homicides
- Useful Links
- Volunteer Services
- Contact OCSO

A few words from Sheriff Demings



Welcome to the Orange County Sheriff's Office Website. It is my privilege to command one of the finest and most well equipped law enforcement agencies in America staffed by some of the most highly trained and dedicated law enforcement professionals in the business of serving and protecting their community. I take great pride in the fact that Orlando, Florida is my home and that I grew up in the very same community that I have committed 27 years of my life in the realm of public safety and service to the community. And because this is my home I will do everything necessary to maintain the quality of life that makes Central Florida, not only one of the world's premier tourist destinations, but one of the finest places in the United States to live, work, and play. I trust you will enjoy your visit to our web site and I invite you to check back often. Thank you.

Jerry L. Demings

Skip the intro and take me to the Daily Briefing page

Goals of the Orange County Sheriff's Office

- Reduce crime and the fear of crime
- Be fiscally responsible
- Work cooperatively with community and government partners
- Value accountability
- Suppress and prevent juvenile crime
- Embrace technology for improved service
- Value diversity
- Value fellow agency members
- Protect the rights of citizens
- Provide excellent service



The Sheriff's Office has been quietly working on creating a new and more user friendly agency website. We are happy to report that the new site has been up and running for about two weeks and, judging by the early reviews and user comments, it appears as though or effort is a success. While ocso.com is and always will be a work in progress we have endeavored to provide you with a site that is easy to navigate and one that provides you with useful and timely information. You will be greeted by a brief welcoming video from Sheriff Demings when you first come to the new site. From there you will be directed to a Daily Briefing page that offers announcements, breaking news, and brief and informative articles. You can skip the Daily Brief and take off on your own by clicking on the navigation buttons at the top and left hand margins of the site. Among the offerings on the new site are disaster preparedness tips, crime information, the ability to file some police reports on line, and a page where you can download a myriad of crime prevention and safety brochures. What are you waiting for? Take a look at www.ocso.com today.



SENIOR CITIZEN SCAM ALERT

TRAVELING THIEVES TARGET SENIOR CITIZENS

We have, in recent weeks, seen increasing activity in distraction-theft crimes being committed by traveling scam artists or what are commonly known as criminal gypsies. While there is a long list of variations to the way these particular criminals operate their most common activities involve “great deals” in unsolicited home repairs and distraction thefts where a member of their group will confuse or distract their victims while another member of the team steals from them.

In two of Orange County’s recent cases both victims were elderly females living alone. The suspects would come to the victim’s home pretending to be engaged in some type of work that required access to the victim’s back yard. While one suspect took the victim in the back yard to explain what they would be doing the other would quickly enter the victim’s bedroom and steal jewelry or other valuables.

Law enforcement strongly cautions you to never engage in any type of business or unsolicited dealings with a business or service provider you did not call. When at all possible do not answer a knock on your door by someone you don’t know. If an unknown person that you did not initiate the call for service with makes contact with you and offers some type of repair or any other home improvement you did not request at an unbelievable price refuse their offer and, if possible, get the license tag number of their car or truck, a description of the vehicle, and call the Sheriff’s Office.

Under no circumstances should you allow or invite a stranger into your home if you did not request the good or service they are offering. Always deal with businesses you know and trust and never allow a stranger who just shows up at your door unannounced into your home.

SENIOR CITIZEN SCAM RESOURCES

Download a copy of our Senior Citizen Crime Prevention brochure. [CLICK HERE](#)

En Espanol, click [HERE](#)

The FBI’s web site offers a great deal of information on senior citizen scams. [CLICK HERE](#) to review it.

To learn more about services provided by the Sheriff’s Office for senior citizens please call Laura Lang, our Senior Citizens Program Director at 407.254.7375 or email her at laura.lang@ocfl.net.

- Crime prevention made simple-

If an offer appears to be too good to be true... it probably is.

In today’s electronic, internet driven world any one of us could become the victim of a scam. However, if you follow the golden rule of scam and rip-off crimes you will dramatically reduce your chances of becoming a victim of the scam artists.

COMING TO A PUBLIC BOAT RAMP NEAR YOU!



Did you know that Orange County has over 1,000 lakes and navigable waterways? And did you know that there are over 40,000 registered boats and personal watercraft in Orange County alone? That’s more than you will find in Key West!

The Sheriff’s Office has always been a leader in promoting boating safety and



enforcing the state and county boating laws and, thanks to a \$65,000 grant from the Florida Boating Industry you are very likely to see the agency’s new interactive boating safety display at a county boat ramp near you! The mobile display will be staffed by members of the Orange County Sheriff’s Office Marine Unit and feature interactive displays, video presentations,

and just about everything you or a family member need to know to safely enjoy your boat or wave runner!

WHAT'S UP AT AVIATION?

Recently retired Captain Randy McKendree, former commander of the agency's Aviation Unit, has enhanced the operational effectiveness of this already top-notch unit... and it didn't cost the Sheriff's Office a cent! Working closely with our Homeland Security Unit Capt. McKendree was able to secure three federal grants totaling \$145,000. The grant money will be used to purchase a portable video downlink receiver that will enable on-scene critical incident commanders to view real time, airborne television pictures of the incident they are trying to resolve, a state of the art aircraft radio system, and a sophisticated Global Positioning Satellite System to replace a unit for which no current software is available. All of these items are about increasing the effectiveness of the Sheriff's Office, the enhancement of officer safety, and to better serve you.



To learn more about OCSO Aviation [CLICK HERE](#)

VOLUNTEERS ARE VITAL TO AGENCY'S MISSION

CITIZEN'S ON PATROL ARE THE EYES AND EARS OF DEPUTIES ON PATROL!

Citizens On Patrol, or COP, was formed in 2000 by the Orange County Sheriff's Office. The all volunteer organization is comprised of homeowners from 20 subdivisions who give their time to the Sheriff's Office to patrol their communities and essentially serve as some "extra eyes and ears" for the deputies on the street.

All COP volunteers have gone through the rigorous background screening, just as all employees of the Sheriff's Office do. They must pass an initial driver test and every two years retest through the United Safety Council Driver Performance Analysis System in order to operate an agency vehicle. COP volunteers are issued scanners to listen to police activity in their sector and cell phones to communicate with the Communications Center and must notify the sector patrol supervisor when they are on and off duty.

Don't confuse COP volunteers with the agency's Neighborhood Watch program. While the two programs are equally essential to and consistent with Sheriff Demings' philosophy that law enforcement and citizens must work together as a team to make combat crime, the programs are entirely different.

COP volunteers take to the streets and keep an active eye out for criminal activity in their respective communities. They are, in fact, a tremendous asset to patrol deputies. COP volunteers patrol their subdivisions, neighborhood parks, schools and area businesses in clearly marked agency vehicles. They look for suspicious or criminal behavior and hazards in their communities. They are trained and certified to perform CPR, AED, and to assist at crash sites until a deputy arrives. They also assist with road closures at the request of a deputy, road hazards (trees down, objects blocking roadway, disabled vehicles), school crossings, vacation house checks, business checks, wellness checks and many other non-enforcement duties.

During 2008 COPS volunteers contributed 6,000 hours to the Orange County Sheriff's Office and the Citizens of Orange County. They provide an invaluable service to the agency, the deputies they assist, and their fellow citizens. While they are prohibited from engaging in enforcement activities nor do they have the authority to make an arrest COP volunteers have located stolen vehicles, called in the location of vehicles deputies were actively searching for, and identified known drug houses.

COMMUNITIES WITH ACTIVE CITIZENS ON PATROL PROGRAMS

Sector 1- Forest Park, Hiawassee Oaks, Kingswood Manor, Moss Park, Tangerine

Sector 2- Avalon Park, Azalea Park, Cypress Isle, Eastwood, Fairways, Wedgefield

Sector 3- Robinswood, Westwood

Sector 4- Belle Isle, Hunters Creek, Meadow Woods, Peppermill, Pine Castle

Sector 5- Vista Del Lago, Williamsburg

If you have any questions pertaining to COP or would like to learn how your community can become involved in the program contact COP coordinator Koreen Liburd (407) 254-7374 or koreen.liburd@ocfl.net.

BE SAFE IN CYBERSPACE

PARENTS ARE URGED TO CAREFULLY MONITOR THEIR CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY ON THE INTERNET

by

Ed Gallagher

Orange County Sheriff's Office Information Management Services

This month's tip is all about your kids. Those of you who let your children use the Internet unsupervised should pay particularly close attention to this article.

Myspace, Facebook, Friendster and many other similar sites that have sprung up on the web lately are called 'social networking' sites. A social networking site is a web site where a user can easily setup a personal webpage, create a profile (including pictures), keep a journal (web log or 'BLOG') and 'connect' with their friends. It is this connection to friends that has made these types of sites HUGE hits with teenagers (and pre-teens). But, with all of this connectivity there are also some possible safety issues. One problem is that only the USER is responsible for what is included in their profile. A user can enter any personal info they like and truthfulness is not a requirement. This includes information such as how old the user 'claims' to be. So my question to all you parents out there is: have you seen your kid's profile? If your 14 year old uses Myspace, and you haven't seen their profile, how do you know they aren't logged on as Buffy, 19 year old exotic dancer from Las Vegas? There are also minimum age requirements to have an account on most of these sites. The minimum age on Myspace is 14 but since no one checks, MANY users are younger. We found our neighbor's 13 year old daughter on Myspace. Her profile said she was 18, lived in the Virgin Islands, and included some very 'grown-up' looking pictures. Misrepresented ages seem to be very common on these sites. (There are probably older men out there logging on as 20 year old college students)

There are other issues with personal info besides age. Here's an example: Your daughter has info about what high school she attends on her web page. She has several pictures, including some in her cheerleading outfit. She also has a blog and all of her friends are discussing the football game on Friday night and where they will meet afterwards. Now climb into the mind of a very bad person looking for a possible victim. How hard do you think it would be for this person to find your cheerleader daughter?

There is criminal activity also conducted via these sites. Gang members (and younger wanna-be gang members) have profiles on these sites as well as other types of criminals. A planned Columbine type school shooting at a Kansas school in 2006 was stopped in the planning stages by someone notifying authorities about another student's writings in their Myspace BLOG. Five teenage boys were arrested.

The key here is to stay involved. If your child uses Myspace or similar sites and you haven't seen their profile, sit down with them and check it out. The quickest way to find out if your child has their personal information posted all over the internet is to ask. Remember, the internet is a wonderful thing. It is a warehouse of knowledge that can't be found anywhere else. But anywhere this much information is so easily accessible, there can also be danger. Knowledge is power, so use YOUR power and stay informed with what your children are doing while on-line.



ATTENTION AREA MOTORCYCLE ENTHUSIASTS!

The annual Orange County Sheriff's Office Heroes Ride is in its initial planning stages. We will be updating you in the very near future on the exact date and what's in store for what has become one of the most popular gathering of motorcycle enthusiasts in Central Florida.

If you liked what you have just read...

Your next issue of the Community Update will provide you with information on how you can subscribe to our community newsletter on a regular basis by logging on to ocso.com and completing a simple subscription form. We'll keep you posted!



Community Update is produced by the Orange County Sheriff's Office Media Relations Section. 407.254.7350

We welcome your comments and suggestions.

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