



# Skamania County Sheriff's Office

*Partnering with the Community to Continually Improve Public Safety.*

**JULY 2019**



**Sheriff Dave Brown**

## From the Sheriff

It is the summer season in the Gorge. The temperatures are on the rise and the wind is blowing. These past few months we have been meeting and exercising wildfire plans with emergency response agencies, land managers and city governments on both sides of the Columbia river. Although our focus has been on the issue of a catastrophic wildfire, our response can be applied to most disaster related issues whether natural or man-made.

The reality may be that in the event of a significant wildfire, under all the worst conditions, there will be little that we can do stop it in a hurry. The best we can hope for is to provide ample notification to residents and encourage people to gather critical items in the event of the need for immediate evacuation.

### There are 3 Levels of Evacuation

#### A level 1 notification

... simply alerts residents in the projected path of the fire to GET READY. This level strongly urges you to gather those critical

items that you will need in the event you leave your home. Those items are things that you will need in the event you cannot return for several days and or cannot replace or do without. It is probably a good idea to think about always being in a level 1 status. Compiling a list now and having those items readily available to pack into a tote or other container for quick retrieval and loading will help in the event you must leave quickly.

#### A level 2 notification

... should suggest to you that evacuation notice is imminent. This level is often referred to as the GET SET level. At this point of notification, the car should be packed with items previously identified, the gas tank should be full, and you should be prepared to leave at a moment's notice.

#### A level 3 notification

... is the GO level. If you are notified that the area you live in is at a level 3, you should be evacuating. As a part of your personal planning, you should have knowledge of what your evacuation routes are. How do you get out of the area in advance of a catastrophic wildfire? Where should you go?

While you cannot be forced to leave your property, it is important to know that should you choose to stay, there is a possibility that there will not be resources available later to rescue you should it become necessary. It is also important to

know that should you choose to evacuate your property you can, by law, be restricted from returning until such time that it is determined to be safe.

In all cases of disaster, your personal level of preparedness is paramount to your safety and that of those around you. If you are ready now, good on you. Consider helping your friends and neighbors prepare as well. These types of incidents can be, and often are, emotionally disturbing in their aftermath. Pre-planning and preparation can go a long way in minimizing the after affects.

Emergency crews will be overwhelmed in the event of a catastrophic wildfire. Your ability to be well prepared will be a tremendous help to the overall success of the response and eventual recovery of our communities.

I hope this summer season brings many good times for you, your family and your friends.

Be safe, be smart and be ready. ■

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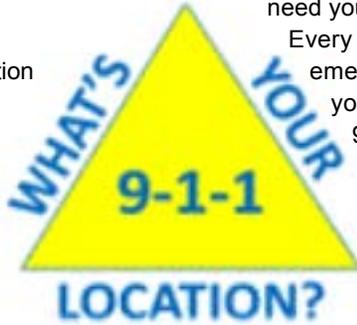
# Do You Know Your Location?

## 911... What's the location of your emergency?

Have you had to call 911? Did you know the exact location of the emergency?

Thanks to cell phones you can call 911 from almost anywhere.

But many people don't realize that cellphones and even smartphones don't always send location or GPS information when you call 911.



Since 911 dispatchers can't always tell the location of your emergency they need your help.

Every second counts in an emergency. If you identify your location when calling 911, help can be sent quicker. Help 911 help you, know your location.

Stop by and visit your local Sheriff's Office employees in the 911 Command Bus at the Skamania County fair from Aug-14th-17th.

By Sgt. Jennifer Purkeypyle

# Detecting a Change?



Detective Jeremy Schultz with Wife Jessica

Many of you probably know Jeremy Schultz as that friendly deputy who has been a valuable member of our team here at the Sheriff's Office for the past 11 years..

After years in the patrol division working both the north and south parts of the County, Jeremy was transferred to the detective division on January 1, 2019. Less than 2 months into his new assignment he was knee deep into a homicide case. Jeremy applied his many years of investigative knowledge to the case and within a month he had successfully identified a suspect.

Through countless hours (actually we counted them) of interviews and report writing, an arrest warrant was issued in the case. Not to shabby for a seasoned patrol guy still learning the ropes in his new position.

In addition to his new role as a detective, Jeremy remains extremely active as our lead search and rescue coordinator and serves in the honor guard unit. He can be found walking the halls of our schools building relationships with the kids and loves spending off time with family camping and at the coast.

We are extremely excited to see Jeremy in this new role. With the retirement of Sgt. Buettner, we remain confident that Jeremy will carry forward the same level of commitment and dedication necessary to solving major crimes in Skamania County. ■



This past winter we retired and sold our 1980's vintage Tucker Sno-Cat.

The Cat had been a part of our family for almost 15 years. It was a good cat in that we really didn't have to feed it often but very seldom did it leave the barn to hunt.



After it was gone, we realized how much we missed it. So, we went and replaced it with a new Polaris Sno-Kitten.

## From a Sno-Cat to a Sno-Kitten

The sno-kitten is actually much more versatile in that it has the ability to change boots. It utilizes the much quicker rubber style shoes in the summer months and transitions to a snow boot for the winter months.

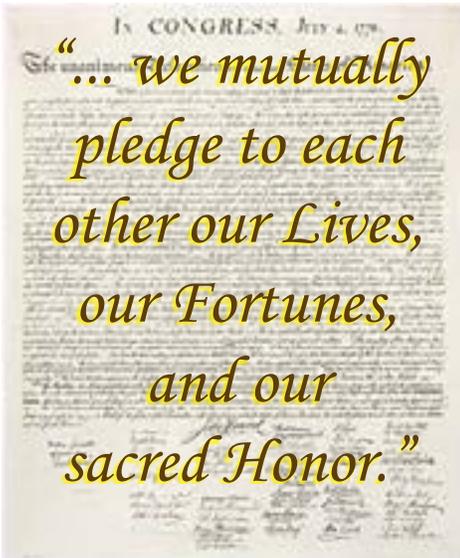


Within a week of bringing the kitten home, it had begun to prove its worth.

Since then, we have utilized the kitten for 3 separate hunting trips. All were successful in locating and rescuing our prey. We are excited to add the kitten to our family and look forward to years of productive work from it. ■

# Did You Know?

## What Happened to the Signers of the Declaration of Independence?



Five signers of the Declaration of Independence were captured by the British as traitors, and tortured before they died.

Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons serving in the Revolutionary Army; another had two sons captured.

Nine of the 56 fought and died in the Revolutionary War.

Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, died in rags.

Thomas McKeam served in the Congress without pay, and his family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him, and poverty was his reward.

Vandals or soldiers looted the properties of Dillery, Hall, Clymer, Walton, Gwinnett, Heyward, Rutledge, and Middleton.

Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife, and she died within a few months.

John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their 13 children fled for their lives. For more than a year he lived in forests and caves, returning home to find his wife dead and his children vanished. A few weeks later he died from exhaustion and a broken heart.

Norris and Philip Livingston also suffered similar fates. ■

## Skamania County and the Columbia River Gorge, A Welcoming Community



Hello, my name is Spencer Fredrickson, and I serve as a Corrections Officer and 911 Dispatcher for the Skamania County Sheriff's Office. I have worked here at the Sheriff's Office for 3 years. Recently Sheriff Dave Brown asked if I would be willing to write an article for the Sheriff's Office summer news letter. At first I was honored and excited. Then the nervousness sank in... what can I or can't I say? How long does it have to be? What am I going to write about? After some thinking and consideration I came up with a good statement/topic.

Skamania County and the Columbia River Gorge, A Welcoming Community.

See, I can make that statement because originally, I did not grow up in the Gorge

nor in the County. I'm from (what I thought was a small town) Battle Ground, Washington. I tested for this position in March of 2016 and was hired in June of 2016. I moved out here shortly after. I lived in my parents RV for a month in two different RV campgrounds, both of which were extremely welcoming. After that I was lucky enough to find an affordable rental in Stevenson and lived there for the next two years.

Moving solo into an area and town where you don't know where things are and don't know anyone can be tough, and it was. There were some lonely nights and days off but as the summer went on I began to go out and explore the area. I frequented some of the restaurants in Stevenson and slowly became a regular at a select few. I drove my truck around and familiarized myself with the county roads (as this would come in handy when dispatching).

The best part of all was how friendly everyone at the Sheriff's Office was. Coworkers were excellent at helping me settle into the community and I had the feeling that some were, in a sense, taking me under their wings.

Maybe the transition was so smooth because I share a lot of the same hobbies

as people out here? My top 3 hobbies include hunting, fishing, and gold prospecting. Don't think I'm limited to just those though as I love shooting guns and will always be ready to go buck some firewood in a moment's notice (what I've learned is like most of the residents in Stabler).

The moral of this story is how nice everyone has been to me out here. In what seems like a short 3 years, I have made friendships that will last a life time. I have been welcomed by people with open arms and they have helped me start my career off on a really good note. Now I may not live in the Gorge forever, as I have my family and a great girlfriend to the west back in town. However, for the time being, I am proud to work for the Sheriff's Office and represent the people of the Gorge. To the people of Stevenson, Carson/Stabler, North Bonneville and the rest of Skamania County...

Thank you!!

**Spencer Fredrickson**

Corrections Officer/Dispatcher  
Skamania County Sheriff's Office ■

## Chaplaincy With Officer Steve Minnis

The duty of law enforcement comes with a requirement of having a variety of skills. These skills in turn assist our personnel on how to deal with unknown situations that may arise in the line of duty. However, one area that can often go unnoticed which training cannot always prepare you for is dealing with the effects of the job. These effects can come at our personnel from anywhere; up to and including working with family and community members who have just lost a loved one.

Our office has recognized these struggles and are working to provide a resource for our deputies to utilize and assist them in their daily duties. This resource comes in the form of Chaplaincy Program. Areas that this program will seek to help are in matters like hospital visits, death notifica-



tions, memorial services, and assist in Sheriff's Office related events just to name a few. One of the most important service that we desire of this program is to be an ear for our first responders should they need to simply talk or have questions.

Officer Steve Minnis was selected earlier this year to start up and oversee this program. He has been with this Office for 12 years. Officer Minnis is an ordained minister through the Church of the Nazarene and pastors The Bridge Community Church in addition to his employment with

our office. He shows compassion for all he works alongside and those he supervises while serving in our jail. "It is my desire to help those in my community and ease some of the burdens of my coworkers. I look forward to seeing this program edify not only this Office, but Skamania County as a whole" said Officer Minnis.

While this program is off to a new start, we look forward to all it will have to offer. In the future our chaplaincy program will seek to bring on other chaplains to aid in bringing support. It is our desire to build a team of chaplains within our community who can come alongside our first responders when called upon. We are thankful for all who choose to put their lives on the line daily, and those who seek to support them. ■

## The 3 R's Resignation, Retirement and Re-hirement

*This past year we have continued to experience the loss of valued team members at the Sheriff's Office. Some have chosen to seek a career outside of public service while others have reached a point where they can retire and transition to a slower pace and other rewarding experiences.*

### Corrections Officer Jesse Augiar



We are always looking for hometown people who want the opportunity for an exciting career. Officer Augiar is well known to us after serving as a

Sheriff's Office explorer while attending Stevenson High School.

Officer Augiar accepted the position of Corrections Officer/Dispatcher in 2018 on a temporary assignment. In May of this year, officer Augiar was offered the position on a full-time basis and happily accepted.

He will be attending the corrections academy this fall and has proved to be a great addition to the corrections dispatch team.

### Deputy Brandon Vanpelt



Deputy Vanpelt is a born and raised Skamaniac. He attended Stevenson High School and completed his studies in criminal justice in Spokane at Eastern Washington

University. Seeking a job in law enforcement, deputy Vanpelt tested with SCSO and placed high on our selection list. He was hired as a patrol deputy on January 1, 2019 and was immediately sent to the basic law enforcement academy.

Deputy Vanpelt graduated from basic training on May 24, 2019 and is currently in the second month of a 4-month field training program. It is exciting to bring on a home grown person with great community relationships and knowledge of the area.

### Deputy Christa Davis



Deputy Davis was hired in the fall of 2018 as a road deputy. She previously worked for the Clark County Medical Examiners office assisting with autopsies.

Her passion however, is in law enforcement and her desire to work in a smaller agency brought her to SCSO.

She loves the outdoors and has a big interest in looking into cold cases. Deputy Davis attended basic law enforcement training and graduated May 24, 2019. She is in her second month of field training and looks forward to getting out on her own after September.

*We welcome these latest additions to the team and are excited to know that they will bring their enthusiasm, knowledge and dedication to an already committed group of public servants. ■*



**Sgt. Monte Buettner Retirement**

“Although mostly silent, the good do exist.” When I graduated the police academy, I typed these words on the back of thirty of my business cards. I then passed them out to each of my fellow graduates. It’s a simple message, really. But one I have since found is often difficult to believe. In our world much of the media openly thrive for every opportunity to show law enforcement in a poor light. Groups like Black Lives Matter openly advocate for the murder of police officers (\*D). Officers are being assassinated as they sit in their patrol cars or while having a coffee break (\*B&C).

The majority of Washington voters recently passed a law encouraging murder charges against police officers after they are fortunate enough to survive a deadly force encounter (\*A). Things like this have, on occasion, made me question my career choice.

Thirty years ago, when I was hired as a Skamania County Deputy, most of the Sheriff’s employees seemed like really old guys. Many were set in their ways and resistant to change. But change we did, and as the younger generation filled the vacancies left through attrition, we met the 21st century with some highly trained and motivated investigators. We went from being forced to recycle and re-use crime scene tape in the early 90’s, to being well stocked with some of the best tools of the trade by the turn of the century. For several years we continued to grow in both technology and staff, but sometimes all good things must come to an end. Starting



around 2010, due to a county wide budget crisis our staff was cut and technology slowly started passing us by. It was a long period of a very difficult time, but finally in recent years we have again been able to hire staff and rejoin the technology race. As I write this, I’m just a few hours from joining the ranks of the retired.

This last week has been filled with memories of the people I have worked with and some of the cases I have investigated. Over the years both have caused sleepless nights, the occasional tear, brief periods of outright terror, and sometimes maybe an inappropriate laugh or two.

There have also been a few open/unsolved cases which continue to haunt me. In 1975 thirteen-year-old Jo Carol Saunders was sexually assaulted and murdered, in 1998 Valerie Dietel was murdered as she was pushed off of a cliff, and in 2017 William Sutton was murdered while camping in the forest. For these cases I’m forced to pass the torch to my capable colleagues, trusting that one day they will be solved.

For every case that remains unsolved, there are a hundred which were solved and resulted in convictions. As case officer, I have enjoyed a very high conviction rate over the years. For this I can thank the highly dedicated and passionate employees of both the Sheriff’s Office and the Prosecutor’s Office. I have simply been one member of a team. Not a day went by that I didn’t heavily rely upon civil staff, corrections, dispatch, patrol deputies or other detectives. Whether they were newly hired or seasoned employees, all had valuable input regarding these investigations.

The citizens of Skamania County can be proud of their law enforcement. These people take their oath of office seriously and are not willing to compromise on their values. For making me appear competent, I will be forever grateful.

After 36 years of wearing a badge and as I leave law enforcement, most of the Sheriff’s employees seem like very young men and women. All seem excited for the future and prepared to take the Skamania County Sheriff’s Office to the next level of professionalism and greatness.

As I look back over my career there have been some good times and some bad. But to be honest, I wouldn’t trade away a minute of it. I am now the old guy set in my ways and resistant to change, who I so despised thirty years ago. Recognizing that as I respectfully step aside, I offer a simple message that’s as true today as it was 30 years ago. Although mostly silent, the good do exist. ■

\*A) [https://defensemaven.io/bluelivesmatter/news/union-i-940-requires-cops-to-aid-wounded-suspects-before-their-victims-6mq\\_v3ACjEW-fE38qmBAYbQ/](https://defensemaven.io/bluelivesmatter/news/union-i-940-requires-cops-to-aid-wounded-suspects-before-their-victims-6mq_v3ACjEW-fE38qmBAYbQ/)  
\*B) <https://www.odmp.org/officer/20104-officer-timothy-q-brenton>  
\*C) <https://www.odmp.org/officer/20137-sergeant-mark-joseph-renninger>  
\*D) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqQXmnlMr\\_w8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqQXmnlMr_w8)

## Mission Statement

**The Mission of the Skamania County Sheriff’s Office is to consistently earn the public’s trust by providing the highest quality law enforcement services possible within the resources provided to us.**

**We are committed to demonstrating pride in our profession and in the Sheriff’s Office, to effective communication with the people we represent, to treating everyone fairly, and to adapting rapidly to changing circumstances.**

**Find us on Facebook and Twitter!**



In the aftermath of the Eagle Creek Fire in 2017 there was an understandable interest in how such a fire in our county would impact us, and what interagency coordination of the response would look like.



Commissioner Tom Lannen spearheaded the efforts to bring the community, firefighters and other agencies and industry together to address concerns and explore options for coordinating entities.

The process started with a Community Wildfire Preparedness meeting in April with panelists from USFS, DNR, Local Fire, Red Cross, PUD and BPA who discussed concerns and response in the face of wildfire.

Later that month a 'Roundtable' was convened among stakeholders including fire agencies, county and city government, infrastructure/industry and other service providers. Discussions on the limits of what might realistically be done during wildfire incidents occupied much of the conversations. The Firewise program was viewed as being the best strategy for homeowners to be proactive in the face of the significant wildfire hazard.

In early June we conducted a Tabletop Exercise (TTX) around a catastrophic wildfire scenario. Participants responded to the expanding incident based on plans and procedures currently in place. It quickly became apparent local resources will be overwhelmed almost immediately. The rugged terrain, poor forest health and fuel loads complicates effective suppression efforts. Fire agencies are trained, equipped and organized, with a well-earned reputation for incident management. Other non-fire entities typically lack such organizational expertise and often struggle to appropriately and effectively integrate with the 'Big Picture' of complex incidents.



The TTX provided a forum to identify needs, gaps and strategies to mitigate the confusion inherent in the initial wildfire response. Participants were uniformly positive about the outcomes of the exercise.

The next step in this process is another Community Wildfire Preparedness meeting in early July. The intent of which is to promote the Firewise program in our communities, and reinforce the understanding of the individual responsibility for preparedness. ■

## “What you Said”

Attn: Skamania County Sheriff's Office  
 “Sgt. Clifford and Deputy Helton,  
 Thank you so much for providing bikes for my kids. They are excited to have new bikes for the summer and I am grateful for your generosity.”

Dear Deputy Lyle,  
 “Thank you for all the support you give Carson Elementary and especially for supporting our “Rise Up Day” for our 6th graders. It was an incredible day that helped students build empathy and compassion.”

Dear Sheriff,  
 “From our years working in our respective careers, we have seen how easy it is for public service employees to become “hardened” and less compassionate when dealing with more difficult elements of our society. And yet most such employees rise above this and remain very helpful. We write today to say “Thanks for a great job” in helping with the removal of a person’s van from the Underwood area and getting that person back on the straight. From your staff of Pat Bond, Deputy’s Minnis and Dunn, we were able to get her cell phone to her, which held the phone number of her son and that of her friend. Both were able to help in getting her taken care of.” We thank you and your staff for serving us so well.



***Be Part of the Solution***

<http://skamania-prepare.org/ares/>