

Overview from Deputy Andy McEwen
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Citrus County Florida Sheriff's Office
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**Citrus County FL Sheriff's
Volunteer Unit**

Volunteer Unit Formed: 1975
Number of Volunteers: 705
County Population: 141,236
Number of Sworn Full Time: 217
VIMS Client Since: 2011

The VIMS Impact:

Using VIMS allows members and directors to enter data at any time. Able to get up to date information and access it from anywhere. VIMS has been very helpful retrieving data from mobile devices during meetings, etc. VIMS allows us to recognize volunteers based on documented hours & events accurately.

What Feature(s) do you best like about VIMS and why?

Being able to access data from anywhere with any device such as my smartphone. I can locate people and search for people using various criteria. The birthday and anniversary notifications help us recognize volunteers automatically. Having our volunteers headshot photos online is important with 700 people to track and remember. Up to date access to numbers is also very helpful with so many groups.

What do your volunteers like best about VIMS?

Having up to date information at any time. They are able to report it at meetings and events as needed.

Citrus County is located on the west coast of Florida approximately 90 minutes due north of Tampa and 90 minutes northwest of Orlando. Citrus County has a population of 141,236 citizens over 581 square miles, primarily considered a bedroom and retirement community. Citrus county was created in 1887 and was named for the county citrus trees.

What were the initial goals of starting the volunteer program?

Originally formed in the city of Beverly Hills, Florida within Citrus County, the initial goal of the volunteer force was to enhance law enforcement services, maintain high quality of life and low crime rates.

What are the primary functions of your volunteer unit?

The approximately 700 citizen volunteers of the Citrus County Sheriff's office are grouped into specialized units which include: Court Bailiffs, Surveillance Units, Chaplains, Child ID Program, Civil Process Server, Cold Case Unit, 14 separate Crime Watch Community Patrols, Mail Courier, Mounted Posse, PRIDE, Public Service Officer, Rails to Trails Patrol, Seniors vs Crime, Sub Station Staffing, Victim Advocates and general administrative support throughout the agency.

What are the qualifications to become a volunteer member?

Good character (Criminal History & Drivers License Check), desire and ability to volunteer, be a team player who can work with others and complete an interview process by Sheriff's staff members.

What type on initial training do volunteers receive?

When a person becomes a volunteer they will then go through assignment related training to be able to complete the tasks.

How do you primarily recognize and/or reward your Volunteers ?

We have an annual volunteer appreciation program which includes lunch, entertainment and prizes and each quarter we try to highlight a volunteer that has done something exceptional as part of their duties.



Community Crime Watch volunteers on patrol in one of the 16 Citrus County Sheriff's volunteer patrol units and one Rails to Trails pickup truck in county.

What were your most current year's statistics such as hours volunteered by all members total, services performed, etc?

Year 2012 Statistics: Number of Volunteers – 670; Number of Hours – 79,990; Number of Miles Patrolled – 329,020; Number of Citizen Contacts – 4,896; Number of Children Fingerprinted – 532; Number of Persons Fingerprinted – 1,789; Number of House Checks – 44,353

What is your annual operating budget and how are you funded?

\$2000 for uniforms and office supplies. Fuel, vehicles and radios are through a separate cost center in the agency.

Do you offer any ongoing Special Services to the public?

We offer Fingerprinting, Vacation House Checks & Child ID services to the community.

What special events do you provide support for such as Parades, Fairs, etc?

Sheriff's Summer Safety and Youth Expo, All County Parades, County Fair, Beat the Sheriff 5k Race, Fourth of July Fireworks, Strawberry Festival, Floral City Heritage Days & Fort Cooper Days.

What is the most significant event known that your Volunteer program can take credit for?

Our volunteers rescued a child locked in a car in the hot sun in addition to our Seniors VS Crime volunteer unit has recovered over one million dollars since the program inception for seniors who have been victims of fraud and scams.

Prior to using VIMS, what methods or programs did you use to track hours, schedule events and shifts, track recognition, training, etc.??

Microsoft Access, Excel and Word to track various functions such as hours, personnel data, upcoming events, years of service, etc.

What challenges did you encounter utilizing the previous methods?

The biggest challenge we had was having 700 volunteers in over 20 separate units recording their hours on paper then turning them into their unit leader who then entered those hours into an Excel spreadsheet for their unit. Those 20 separate spreadsheets were then forwarded to one person who would merge the hours into one large spreadsheet, every month. VIMS provides us a consolidated streamlined method with up to the minute hourly totals as their entered by our volunteers.

Pictured to the right are volunteer members of the Citrus County Sheriff's Seniors VS Crime program at work. Seniors vs. Crime is a joint project of the Citrus County Sheriff's Office and Florida Attorney General's Office. It is designed to assist people in the community who have been scammed or taken advantage of. They can also review proposals, documents and other "offers" to verify their validity before they proceed. Since the program's inception, the all volunteer staff has recovered over two million dollars in money and services for residents of the community and has prevented some people from being victimized in the first place by alerting them to fraud.

