



# The Utah Sheriff

Spring 2017

A special newsletter from your Utah Sheriffs' Association

## Foster Relationships with Key Stakeholders

By Sgt. Jeremy Hales and Sheriff Todd Bonner, Wasatch County Sheriff's Office



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In the spring of 2016, Sheriff Todd L Bonner, along with members of the Wasatch Council and the Wasatch County Manager, moved the duties and responsibilities of the Emergency Manager under the stewardship of the Wasatch County Sheriff. I was a patrol sergeant at the time and was moved into the emergency management role. Over the past 13 months, Wasatch County Emergency Management has undergone a significant change in focus as it relates to preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery from emergencies and catastrophic events.

One of the changes that was made was that Wasatch County, under the direction of the Wasatch County Council, developed an emergency management board. This board meets regularly to discuss emergency preparedness matters that affect the county. We have established an open communication line where all of the key policy makers and department heads are kept current on the various incidents that are related to emergency preparedness. Furthermore, we have included our key partner, the Utah State Division of Emergency Management Community Support Liaison, as part of this team.

I had the opportunity to bring our Community Support Liaison, Tara Behunin, along with one of the State Emergency Management trainers,

Sheriff Alden Orme, retired, to one of the meetings to discuss the role the state plays in enhancing our capabilities as a county to better serve our citizens. During the discussion, it was apparent that we needed to foster and build key relationships with all of our partners in emergency management, especially our state Liaison. We discussed the importance of including the public as a part of the emergency management

community and using them as a resource to assist the first responders.

Our meeting switched to focus our discussions and efforts on the potential high water and flooding our county could experience. Our Public Works Director spoke about a flood channel that is need of repair. As

a result of this discussion, Tara mentioned the availability of a potential Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant. She set up a field study to review the project and provide vision to our county in applying for the competitive grant.

We also discussed the need for training our elected officials and employees about responses to disaster situations. We were invited to participate in the Division of Emergency Management's monthly State Emergency Response Team trainings. We have been trying to find some good examples of what to pattern our emergency operation center after. This visit was a huge benefit as we were able to see the great work that gets accomplished because of the

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# What the Utah Sheriffs' Association Means to Me

*Sheriff Nathan Curtis, Sevier County*

I spent the last couple of hours

having dinner with a Sheriff from another county. He is someone I have looked up to ever since I started this journey as Sheriff. He and other past and present sheriffs have had an impact on how I do the things I do each and every day. When I took office the previous sheriff had passed away and I did not have him there to call and ask for background or history and why certain things were the way they were. Before Sheriff Phil Barney passed away, he gave me a piece of advice that has been a saving grace to me. He told me to stay involved in the Utah Sheriffs' Association at all costs.

Now, you may ask what does the Utah Sheriffs' Association do, and how can it help an elected sheriff, and more importantly, it shows how the association affects you. The Utah Sheriffs' Association was set up for several reasons. According to the articles of incorporation those reasons are:

1. *To promote and facilitate communication among sheriffs, their deputies, other peace officers and citizens interested in the enforcement of the laws of the State of Utah;*
2. *To improve the quality of law enforcement in the State of Utah;*
3. *To promote public awareness of issues affecting law enforcement;*
4. *To support legislation that would increase the effectiveness of law enforcement;*
5. *To assist county governments in the more efficient use of the merit system; and*
6. *To cooperate with similar police associations throughout Utah*

*and the United States.*

The very first reason in this list is one that made all the difference for me. Because of the Utah Sheriffs' Association I was able to quickly get up to speed on various topics, many of which I did have some experience in, but needed to get more in depth understanding of issues a sheriff was facing. The wide range of topics was at times overwhelming; those were just the issues we could face.

There were many other issues I needed some expertise on, someone who was dealing with the issues I was wrestling with in my own office. The question was: Where do I go for help? Because of the advice I was given by Sheriff Barney, I had multiple contacts and resources to help me understand what I needed to watch out for and to give me advice. It should be no surprise it was the other sheriffs I was getting to know through the Utah Sheriffs' Association. I knew several of the sheriffs because I started going to association meetings with Sheriff Barney and participating before I was actually in office. The previously mentioned sheriff was one I quickly identified as being someone who had a pretty good handle on things in my opinion and I began looking to him and other sheriffs for guidance on a wide range of issues. From budgeting to employees, jail issues to jurisdictional issues, and most importantly the role and duties of the Sheriff were just a smidgen of the advice I received from these men who make up the Utah Sheriffs' Association.

Now you may be asking "how does all this affect me?" From traffic enforcement to medical call assists and domestic disputes law enforcement has a direct impact on daily life. And how law enforcement takes action depends

on who is at the head of your local law enforcement agency and how they want to respond to each type of call, how they will handle those calls, and how they will focus on problems unique to your community. Because of the guidance and input from the Utah

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## Community Involvement: Sheriffs and Deputies Extend a Helping Hand

Did you know that several of our Sheriff Offices participate in nationally known events like Coffee with a Cop, National Night Out, Shop with a Cop, D.A.R.E, and Polar Plunges throughout the year? Some of our offices even put together their own events such as:

- Self-Defense Courses
- Home Safety & Crime Prevention Seminars
- Citizen Firearm Classes
- Community Emergency Planning

### Why Outreach Matters

These local outreach events not only benefit the community through fundraising opportunities but also create community engagement that occurs by:

- Having a shared understanding with mutual trust and respect
- Relating to each other as neighbors with common goals and difficulties
- Hearing and addressing specific concerns and potential misconceptions

To find out what your County Sheriffs' office may be participating in this year, be sure to visit their office webpage or Facebook account.



## What the Utah Sheriffs' Association Means to Me (Continued from page 2)

Sheriffs' Association I have gained valuable information and knowledge to help me make good decisions when faced with difficult situations. And when I didn't have a clear answer I had great resources just a mere phone call away because of the connections made with the other sheriffs through the Utah Sheriffs' Association.

There is a lot more the Association does and participates in but there is not enough room in this publication to print it all. I am glad I listened when I was told to stay involved in the Utah Sheriffs' Association.

## Spring Driving: Tips & Reminders

**W**ith changing weather conditions and changing laws, here's some helpful information with your safety and well-being in mind:

### 1) **NEW Blood Alcohol Consumption limit:**

With Utah's new BAC limit of .05, it's important to plan ahead. Set a drink limit BEFORE you start consuming. This new limit also applies to anyone carrying a dangerous weapon.

In addition to limiting alcoholic intake, arranging alternate transportation in advance may be helpful in preventing an unsafe (and illegal) situation.

### 2) **NEW Helmet Requirement:**

The Utah legislature passed a bill (SB159) in March requiring motorcycle helmets be worn by riders aged 21 years and younger, a shift from the previous 18 year requirement.



### 3) **Extreme Weather:**

Spring storms can include sudden downpours, lightning, and hail. And if it has been a few weeks since the last shower, built-up oil and other car fluids lifted by a light rain will cause wet road surfaces to be even more slick than usual.

Avoid patches of road that are flooded or with fast-moving runoff. Turnaround don't drown.

### 4) **Non-Motorized Traffic:**

With warmer weather and the school year winding down, more young people (and adults) are using their foot-powered vehicles (bicycles, rip-sticks, scooters), especially in our neighborhoods. More pedestrians are on our roads this time of year, and not all of them are paying attention. Stay alert.

Enjoy the sights and sounds of spring in our beautiful state, and know that your Sheriff's Office wishes you a happy and healthy transition into summer.

## Tips On What To Do If Pulled Over Verses Passing A Stopped Emergency Vehicle:

### **If You're Pulled Over:**

If you're required to pull off to the side of the road for any reason, here are a few helpful tips from which all drivers can benefit:

- 1) **Pull all the way over:** Pull off to the right side of the road as much as possible, and as far away from the active lane as the terrain will allow.
- 2) **Signal Lights:** Signaling appropriately communicates an awareness of the request and willingness to cooperate with the officer(s). Once on the side of the road, hazard lights help alert other drivers of stopped vehicles.
- 3) **Overall Demeanor:** Remaining calm and respectful may be the hardest – and most important – goals for a driver being pulled over during a traffic stop. It is harder to think clearly when fear and anger dominate thinking. So take a few deep breaths, listen to the officer closely for provided directions, and remember that law enforcement professionals are there to keep all parties safe.

- 4) **Dome Light:** Any time from dusk to dawn, a driver should turn on their dome light to make the interior of the car, and the driver's movements, more visible to an officer.

### **Passing A Stopped Emergency Vehicle:**

When you see an emergency vehicle on the side of the road, consider taking these three steps for your safety (and theirs):



- 1) **Stay Away:** Get as far away from the parked car(s) as possible. If you can safely be two lanes away, all the better.
- 2) **Stay Alert:** Avoid being distracted by phones (and passengers), even if just talking.
- 3) **Straight Ahead:** Focus on the road ahead of you. Do not "rubberneck" by looking at the details and actions of the participants on the side of the road.

## Foster Relationships with Key Stakeholders

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building and fostering of relationships with our key stakeholders and partners. Seeing how all of these differing groups, both from the public and private sectors, work as a team to do good for the greatest amount of people was humbling and amazing.

Over my short time as emergency manager, I have found that it is imperative that we have open communication with our leaders and liaisons in order to provide the best service to the citizens we serve.

During some recent flooding events in northern Utah, we were called by Tara to see how many sand bags we could supply to our neighbors if needed.

Without question, we offered a quantity of sandbags, manpower, and additional equipment, to enhance their capabilities. From this call and many others similar it was apparent we all will have the opportunity to assist each other in response and recovery measures. Neighbor helping neighbor.

A few weeks following this meeting I was setting goals, along with Tara,



in developing strategies to combat the wildfire season. There were concerns from some of the county stakeholders as to what the

focus and intent of the wildland fire program is going to look like for the future. Through vision and foresight of our state partners, the need to mitigate this concern was apparent. Through discussion we established key players who have a direct impact from all levels of the public sector to mitigate these concerns and establish a common ground for all. As a result,



we have a stronger understanding of what is to be expected and how we can enhance our support to the wildland fire issues.

Our liaison, just like all of the other liaisons across this great state, has been key to the successes we are having in preparedness, response, migration, and recovery for our citizens. This partnership that each county has with the state has proved to be very vital in several situations that have been faced over the past year. In a recent training opportunity, I found this statement from Emergency Manager Bucky Whitehouse of Tooele County to be important: "Relationships among the public safety and the emergency management community are vital."

I have appreciated the many opportunities to build and continue to network with the public and private sectors in the great State of Utah. Furthermore, the relationships that are established as a result of this networking have assisted me in bringing about a clear vision for building a strong and resilient community that is prepared for any disaster that we may face.

# Utah Sheriffs' Association

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