



Western States Sheriffs Association

2018

From the President

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Western States Sheriff's Association and I am proud to welcome the great state of Nebraska as our 16th state member this year. The Western States Sheriff's Association now represents over 900 sheriffs across the western United States.



*Sheriff Scott Mascher
Yavapai County, AZ*

I would like to thank Jim Pond our Executive Director and our board members who have traveled to individual state association meetings in order to discuss issues and strategize solutions to concerns that affect us all as sheriff.

As with our nation's past, the west continues with a strong presence of elected sheriffs dealing with unique and contrasting customs to other areas of the nation. As Sheriff we take an Oath of Office to uphold the Constitution of the United States. We take that Oath seriously and support the individual freedoms and liberties of those who elect us.

Vast areas of public lands, that generations of families have enjoyed, continue to be closed. Sheriffs along our borders are dealing with border security issues, our jails are under attack with immigration detainees, and our 2nd amendment rights to bear arms is a continuous battle. We are the primary law enforcement in

each of our respected counties. We represent the people and have more contact with the public and our constituents than any other official.

The Western States Sheriff's Association continues to keep a strong bond with our public and we work together to keep the office of sheriff strong. We must remain informed on federal and state legislative issues and address policy and procedural matters that are important to sheriffs. We must be vigilant with government encroachment affecting local issues without local representation. As an association it is very important to have support from our members.

Many of you know Sheriff Danny Glick of Laramie County, Wyoming. Not only was he the President of the Western States Sheriff's Association, but also gained the position of President of the National Sheriff's Association. Sheriff Glick was able to bring Western Sheriffs philosophy to a national level.

Sheriff Dave Brown of Skamania County, Washington, and past President of the Western States Sheriff's Association, continues to be a strong advocate for our public lands and has provided congressional testimony in Washington DC.

Sheriff John Cooke of Weld County, Colorado along with other Colorado Sheriff's fought hard for our 2nd Amendment rights. Sheriff Cooke is now an elected Senator of that State.

These are just a few of our supporting members. We have made a difference. We will continue to make a difference.

During my year as president, I pushed our membership to become active as an executive board member or with one of our standing committees. As my term comes to an end, I remain committed to engaging our membership and recruiting new members who will stand with this association in support of our mission.

God Bless.

Scott Mascher, Yavapai County Sheriff ■

Mission Statement

*The mission of the
Western States Sheriffs
Association is to assist
Sheriffs and their Offices
with Federal and State
legislative issues, address policy
and procedural matters,
develop guidelines to promote
uniformity in matters
that are important to Sheriffs
of the Western United States
and to work together to keep
the Office of Sheriff strong.*

Secretary of Agriculture Meets with WSSA



Secretary Perdue was provided a multi-colored stick representing land ownership in Skamania County, Washington. Skamania County Sheriff Dave Brown explained to the Secretary how over 80 percent of Skamania County is under federal ownership and how lack of responsible management of those lands is affecting the local economy.

The Western States Sheriffs Executive Board along with members of the National Sheriff's Association were fortunate to meet with Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue in Washington D.C.

Concerns and issues surrounding law enforcement on our Nation's public lands as well as overall management of public lands were discussed.

Other Western States Sheriffs spoke to the issues that have surfaced in relation to the implementation of the U.S. Forest Service travel management rules.

The Western States Sheriffs Association is committed to working with the Secretary to resolve many of the issues prevalent on our public lands. ■

Wilford Brimley



The membership of the Western States Sheriffs Association was fortunate to hear the words of an American hero at their 2017 annual conference.

Actor and cowboy, Wilford Brimley graced the stage and addressed over 200 in attendance.

For nearly an hour, Brimley recalled his career as an actor and his passion as a horseman, rancher and cowboy. Those in attendance were left smiling and laughing and with a deeper appreciation for a man who clearly loves the American west and America's Sheriffs.

Brimley was presented with a shadow box containing the WSSA badge, spurs and belt buckle. Brimley commented that he would trade any day of acting for the opportunity to be with the Sheriffs of our western states. ■

Did you know?

25 years ago, the Western States Sheriffs Association was formed.

A small group of western Sheriffs recognized that their concerns and issues were not being adequately addressed on the national level and were determined to have a voice. That small group quickly grew to a few states across the western U.S. Today, with the addition of the State of Nebraska, the WSSA has 16 member States representing nearly 1000 Sheriffs across the west. Our voice is heard throughout the halls of congress and amongst those who have responsibility for managing our public lands. Much has been accomplished in the past 25 years and there is a great deal more to do. Our hats are off to that small group of Sheriffs who had such a large vision so many years ago.

Visit us on the Web:

westernsheriffs.org

And 'Like' us on Facebook!





Sheriff Chris Hoffman

Sheriff of the Year

WSSA has a long history of recognizing the accomplishments of our members. Beginning in 2008 we have selected one of our member Sheriffs to receive the associations "Sheriff of the Year" award. Nominations taken from the membership are considered and selected by a committee of peers. This past year, Ravalli County Sheriff Chris Hoffman was awarded the 2016-2017 Western States Sheriffs' Association, Sheriff of the Year. WSSA is proud to recognize Sheriff Hoffman as a member and for the many contributions he has given to further the cause of WSSA.

Past recipients of the

WSSA Sheriff of the Year

- 2016-2017- Sheriff Chris Hoffman, Ravalli County Mt.
- 2015-2016- Sheriff Kieran Donahue, Canyon County ID
- 2014-2015- Sheriff Tom Bergin, Clatsop County OR
- 2013-2014- Sheriff John Cooke, Weld County, CO
- 2012-2013- Sheriff Heath White, Torrance County NM
- 2011-2012- Sheriff Danny Glick, Laramie County, WY
- 2010-2011- Sheriff Chris Kirk, Brazos County, TX
- 2009-2010- Sheriff Andy Bentz, Malheur County, OR
- 2008-2009- Sheriff Dave Brown, Skamania County, WA

H.R. 622

“Local Enforcement for Local Lands Act”

H.R. 622 is a bill introduced on the floor of the House of Representatives in January of 2017.

This bill calls for the elimination of the law enforcement components of the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

This bill was originally introduced in 2016 and sponsored by former Congressman Jason Chaffetz from Utah. The intent of the bill is to reaffirm

that traditional law enforcement functions related to crimes occurring on our nation's public lands are the responsibility of the County Sheriff.

Representatives from the Western States Sheriffs Association met with congressman Chaffetz's staff and Sheriffs from the state of Utah in May of 2016 to discuss the merits of the bill and recommendations for changes. At the 2017 WSSA annual conference, there was a great deal of discussion and debate regarding the bill and many suggestions for amendments. After the meeting, a state by state vote was called for. Each member state was asked to poll their Sheriffs specific to the

“concept” of the bill as it was introduced in congress.

While many member states voted to support the concept of the bill as it was introduced, The Western States Sheriffs

Association has not taken a formal position to support or oppose H.R. 622.

Potential amendments to the bill include scaling back the current USFS and BLM law enforcement agencies,

pursuing violations of criminal law through the statutes of the states and re-directing funding to County Sheriffs to address the many public safety issues occurring on our public lands. Opponents of the bill believe the bill is a step toward transfer of our federal public lands to state control. The bill does not suggest or propose such an action. This effort is being considered to reign in the expansion of federal law enforcement across the United States.

The WSSA continues to monitor this bill and is prepared to offer testimony and amendments to ensure the duties and role of the Sheriff are both recognized and protected. ■

Potential amendments to the bill include scaling back the current USFS and BLM law enforcement agencies



Sheriff Mascher, Sheriff Brown, Chief Tooke, Sheriff Donahue and Tracy Perry

Members of the Western States Sheriffs Association met with U.S Forest Service Chief Tony Tooke in Washington D.C. in February to discuss the economic impacts being felt by western counties because of limited forest management activities.

WSSA President Scott Mascher, Yavapai Co. Arizona along with Sheriff Kieran Donahue, Canyon County Idaho and Sheriff Dave Brown, Skamania County, Washington expressed their frustration with the lack of sustainable harvest levels and the mounting collection of fuels on the forest floor that are contributing to large scale wildfires.

“Western States Sheriffs Meet with Forest Service Chief Tony Tooke”

Chief Tooke listened as the Sheriffs explained the effect on county services due to the loss of Secure Rural Schools funding and how it impacts law enforcement services as well as general county government services.

Chief Tooke seemed genuinely concerned and stated that the Forest Service is “trying really hard” to increase harvest levels across the national forest system.

The Forest Service manages 193 million acres of land in the United States.

75% of those lands or 146 million acres, are in the 16 western states that make up the Western States Sheriffs Association. “This is not an issue for just a couple of counties across the west,” explained Sheriff Brown, this affects most of our membership.

The Western States Sheriffs Association continues to support a separate funding structure through congressional action that would eliminate the fire transfer mandate that has decimated the general operating budget of the forest service for that past several years.

Under this model, the forest service typically transfers over 50% of their annual budget to help with the mounting costs of fire suppression across the U.S.

Under a separate funding scheme, those annual funds could instead be used to better manage the national forest system.

The WSSA remains committed to working with the forest service to improve conditions across our public lands in the western United States. ■



When the Western States Sheriffs’ Association began some 25 years ago, I was a young lieutenant in charge of our small patrol division for the Kootenai County Sheriff’s Office. Our small area of national forest (about 390 square miles) was a constant source of problems and issues.

My Sheriff at the time, Pierce Clegg, had gotten involved with this new organization known as WSSA. He explained to me that it was primarily focused on law enforcement on public lands and the fact that issues facing western Sheriffs were not being addressed by the National Sheriffs’ Association.

From that time forward, I have been involved with, and an avid supporter of, the Western States Sheriffs’ Association. I am proud of the fact that we now have open dialogue with heads of both the Forest

A Sheriff’s Perspective

Service and Bureau of Land Management Law Enforcement Divisions. I am often frustrated that we move at the speed of the federal government, and recognize that there is still a great deal of work to do, but I am excited that we continue to move forward. I can remember the days when these federal agency heads would not even talk to us.

The combined voice representing Sheriffs from sixteen states cannot be ignored. We are often sought by organizations to have our voice heard in the Courts on issues that are important to Sheriffs in the West. The National Sheriffs, who appeared to disregard Sheriffs in the West in the past, now partner with us on many important issues.

Sheriffs from our member states are leading the battle on immigration issues, 2nd Amendment issues and other critical issues on behalf of the people who live, work and play in our western states.

My experience has been that when someone tries to give us accolades, we give them the “aw shucks” attitude and dismiss it as part of our job. Humble as we may be, we cannot ignore the fact that the office of Sheriff is well respected and people listen to what we say.

When we say it as an organization representing the Sheriffs from sixteen states, our voice is very loud. The work being accomplished by this association is not completed in a vacuum.

Membership in the organization is important, but involvement and participation is critical. I continue to advocate to our membership to get involved and be part of the solution to a wide variety of matters that we deal with as Sheriffs.

Ben Wolfinger, Sheriff
Kootenai County, Idaho ■

25 Years of Service



Who Are These People And What Are They Doing?

They Are Forming The Association - August, 1993

Back Row (LtoR): Charles Byrd, Siskiyou County, CA; Skip Veatch, Alpine County, CA; Ken Blake, Amador County, CA; Jerry Maple, Douglas County, NV; Gary Butler, Navajo County, AZ; David Bateman, Utah County, UT; and Richard Ness, NM Sheriffs' & Chiefs' Assoc.

Middle Row (LtoR): Sue Munsie, California Sheriffs' Assoc.; Bill Slaughter, Gallatin County, MT; and Al Cardoza, Solano County, CA

Front Row (LtoR): Lee Adams, Sierra County, CA; C. W. Smith, Jackson County, OR; Ed Williams, San Luis Obispo County, CA; Chuck O'Reilly, Lewis & Clark County, MT; and Paul McGrath, City/County of Carson City, NV.

A number of the above went on to become the Association President, a number are now retired and doing something other than "sheriffing", and unfortunately one had an untimely death. The WSSA was officially formed on August 30, 1993 during a meeting held at Lake Tahoe, Nevada.

Attending as noted above were representatives from Arizona, California, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon and Utah. Colorado, Idaho, Washington, and Wyoming conferred with the newly elected first President, Ed Williams by telephone and joined. The state of Texas in 1995 joined the WSSA and in 2001, the state of Oklahoma.

Sheriff's honorably serving as Association President in the first ten years:

- 1993 & 1994 Sheriff Ed Williams, San Luis Obispo County, California
- 1995 Sheriff Charles M. O'Reilly, Lewis & Clark County, Montana
- 1996 Sheriff David R. Bateman, Utah County, Utah
- 1997 Sheriff Marvin L Hare, Sr., LaPaz County, Arizona
- 1998 Sheriff Richard E. Shockley, Larimer County, Colorado
- 1999-2000 Sheriff William A. Wiester, Grant County, Washington
- 2000-2001 Sheriff Jim Pope, Shasta County, California
- 2001-2002 Sheriff Edgar L. Phillips, Millard County, Utah
- 2002-2003 Sheriff Juan D. Julian, Valencia County, New Mexico

Sheriff Ed Williams served (2) one year terms; and in 1999, the association changed anniversary dates for required meetings to the spring. Presidents now served a portion of their term in two calendar years. ■



"I lost Bart's trail, but I'm still following him on twitter."

WSSA Executive Board

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Sheriff Scott Mascher
Yavapai County, AZ

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Kootenai County, ID

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Albany County, WY