

From the President

– Ben Wolfinger, Sheriff
Kootenai County, Idaho
And WSSA President.

Here it is,
almost eleven
months since
I took on
the office of
President



of the Western States Sheriffs' Association. It has been a very busy year. It started on the Tuesday following the WSSA conference when I was asked to speak at a two-region Forest Service Law Enforcement training session. I shared the stage with Director Tracy Perry. It was important because we provided a unified message to the F.S. LEO's on what our expectations of them really are. I was asked to speak to another gathering in February of 2019 in Tucson, but the Federal Government shutdown cancelled their training. Between April and December I made 16 different trips and covered more than 15,000 miles, many of them looking through the windshield of my car. I attended many State Sheriffs' Associations, the Oregon

at the Oregon Marijuana Summit a trip to Washington D.C. and Douglas Arizona. In Douglas I was one of six sheriffs who had the opportunity to meet with Homeland Security Secretary Nielsen. Out of that small meeting on the true issues with border security came the request that a Sheriff sit on the advisory panel for the Secretary. In June at the NSA Conference, Sheriff Mark Dannels was named as that Sheriff. This is the first time ever that a Sheriff has sat in this capacity and we are already seeing the benefits. I had planned on attending the Colorado Conference in January, but one of my deputies whose son was killed by a drunk driver late in 2017 asked me to sit with the family during the sentencing. I know that the Colorado Sheriffs understand why that was a priority. Before our conference in March I will still attend the Idaho Sheriffs Legislative conference in Boise and the NSA winter conference in Washington D.C. It has been a jam-packed year but I know more than ever that we as the Western States Sheriffs' Association are truly sought after for our opinion and our support in everything from Second

Amendment law suits to working with our partners to have better border security and everything in between. There isn't hardly a day that goes by that in some manner find myself working on something to do with WSSA. As this incredible year winds down, I must first give special thanks to my wife, Mary who has put up with all of the travel and late nights and weekends at work. I must also thank my Undersheriff, Dan Mattos, who has carried the ball and kept me in the loop on the home front. Finally, I want to thank our Executive Director, Jim Pond who works tirelessly for all of us. He and I talk regularly and I could not have filled this role without his friendship, support and guidance. As this year draws to a close, I want to say that it has been an honor and a privilege to be your President. We have worked hard and we will continue to work just as diligently in the future. I encourage you to get off the bench and get in the game as well. Working together was are a powerful organization. I have seen it up close and personal this past year and I look forward to seeing it continue into the future. ■

Stable Defenders of Public Lands

*Sheriff Dave Brown
Skamania County, WA*

Over the past 25 years the Western States Sheriffs Association has been a constant and stable voice for the people in the western United States on issues surrounding public lands.

Regardless of the issue, recreation, travel management, rule-making, federal law enforcement, forest management and economics related to forest resources, the Sheriffs across the west have remained consistent in speaking out to those responsible for managing our public lands.

The U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management currently have the responsibility of managing over 200 million acres of public land in the U.S. Most of these lands lie in the western U.S. and for decades, provided immense economic support to counties.

Fully aware of how public land and resource management affects the economy of local governments, Sheriffs have established relationships with both resource managers and law enforcement within both federal agencies. These relationships have shown to be extremely valuable in establishing the position, and public

lands law enforcement philosophy, of the County Sheriff across our western states.

These relationships have proven to be invaluable considering the constant and frustrating merry-go-round of cabinet positions within a presidential administration. The Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture can, and should be, critical to the public lands policies of this nation.

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In recent times, the only thing you can count on with these appointees is that you can't count on them being there for any reasonable length of time. The constant change at the top has proven difficult in driving an agenda of real change and sustainable economics.

As we move toward another Presidential election cycle, the membership of the WSSA remains committed to protecting our public lands and guaranteeing the public unfettered use while at the same time, promoting active and sustainable harvest of natural resources to reduce the dangers of catastrophic wildfire and promote long-term economic health of our western counties. ■

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 guidelings 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



Skamania County Sheriff's snow kitten with Mt St. Helens in background

Web Weaving: www.westernsheriffs.org

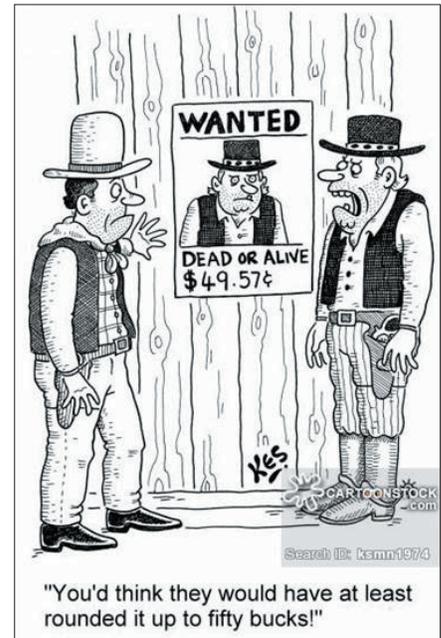
We might look different if you have recently visited our webpage at www.westernsheriffs.org. The project to weave a new look into our web presentation is nearing an end. The front page and all tabs have been updated and should provide for easier navigation. We have worked at making online registration and membership application easier and quicker through web applications as well as access to topics of interest. One final piece of the overhaul is the establishment of a member's forum that will provide access to an online communication link to share issues, concerns, ideas and solutions.

With the proliferation of social media and the speed of

communication in today's world, a webpage can often be overlooked as a means of selling who we are as an organization. We continue to believe that the webpage will continue to promote the value of WSSA to its members and to those we serve in the western United States.

Our success comes from the ideas and creativity of our members and we are always seeking to improve our ability to promote the organization and deliver our message. If you have ideas, please feel free to reach out to executive director Jim Pond. He can be reached at james.pond@gmail.com

Enjoy! ■



Our Borders, Our National Security



Kirstjen Nielsen, United States Secretary of Homeland Security, talks with WSSA Director Jim Pond.

*Sheriff Mark J. Dannels
Cochise County, Arizona*

As our nation's leaders continue the debate over border security and immigration reform, our borders throughout the nation are at risk highlighted by these categories: Community-Public Safety, National Security and the Humanitarian crisis. As a resident and law enforcement professional for over 3 decades, living and working on the southwest border, I am amazed how our elected leaders continue to avoid the U.S. Constitution and inject their own

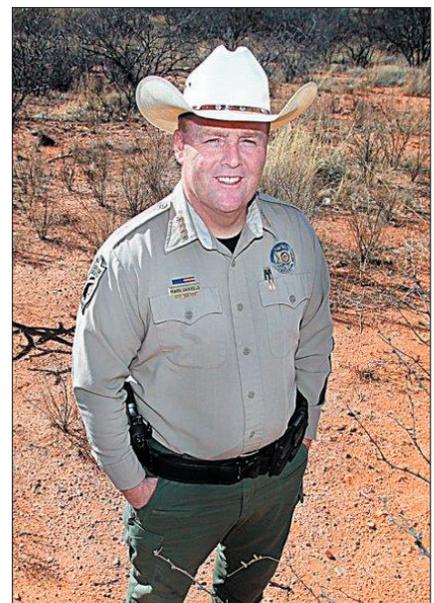
subjective opinion at our quality of life expense.

I have watched the federal government deploy their border plan for those living within the populated areas, (San Diego, Yuma and El Paso) and those counties with an international port of entry. The three populated counties, along with the counties with established port of entries received technology, fencing, staffing and funding to secure the ports. Otherwise, the rural parts of the southwest border were designated as implied travel routes for the Criminal Transnational Organizations, i.e. cartels. This plan caused disruption and the erosion of our Quality of Life for those rural counties, with little voice to challenge change.

In my county, border crime has taken a human toll on my citizens creating a sense of unrest, frustration and anger toward our federal leaders. The murder of local rancher, Rob Krentz in 2011, ignited the Honorable Sheriff Larry Dever to say, "Enough is Enough!" Sheriff Dever took his fight to Washington D.C. and the Arizona Capital to express his anger over his friend's murder to include demanding action. I would like to think he was the starting voice for our nation's sheriffs in bringing awareness to this crisis. Unfortunately, Sheriff Dever died in 2011, frustrated by the lack of action by our national leaders. In true respect for my friend, Sheriff Dever and all Americans throughout this great country, I continued the fight toward border security, the once mandated program. Today, the border plan continues to

support the Ports and Populated areas of the southwest border. Not much has changed regarding border security, but the argument and heated debate in Washington D.C. continues to increase. For this, I author this narrative to help explain my position as a duly elected sheriff by the citizens. Sheriffs throughout this nation are on the frontline for Community Safety to include the 31 southern border sheriffs facing the challenges of border security from Texas to California. No easy task for sheriffs as we face restricted budgets, economy declines and hiring challenges. Sheriffs possess a certain character and charismatic personality to overcome challenges based on community trust and shared community expectations. In Cochise County, my successes come through the trusted-partnerships with my fellow sheriffs who share the same Oath of Office; to support our respective laws and the U.S. Constitution. Over 3000 sheriffs with a direct representation to our communities, our voice is firm and loud. Combine that with our associations, i.e. Southwest Borders, Western States, Major Counties and the National Sheriffs Association. Continuing, partnerships with community, local, state and federal governments and finally, our nation's elected leaders brings a collective voice to reasonable and common-sense plans for border security which directly relates to community-public safety. On the operational side, my

office joined forces with the above-mentioned partners, we have established a collaborated effort to secure our county through education, prevention and enforcement with 100% prosecution. Supported by a multi-layer virtual system and a team of law enforcement professionals sharing a common mission, we have brought drug smuggling to an all-time low in my county. I like to call this program a "multi-badge, one mission" program. As my citizens say, "This is the best it's been in over 2-decades." This is the best report card one can ask for. This shared complimentary effort by all levels of government and our communities is an achievement that included NO politics, egos or shape of a badge, but a shared mission to serve those who elected us to do what is Legal and Right. I am proud to call Cochise County my home and a Great place to raise a family, which I have done both. ■



Issues

The Mission of the Western States Sheriffs Association is adhered to in our areas of focus as an organization. It is important that the citizens across the western United States recognize where our resources are expended. There are a multitude of issues that we as an organization dedicate much of our time and effort. The three areas listed below are a snapshot of why it remains important to protect the elected Office of Sheriff and why we came together to collectively combat issues affecting your safety, security and liberty.

Border Security

- WSSA has partnered with the Southwest Border Sheriffs coalition and the Texas Border Sheriffs coalition to address issues surrounding border security.
- We recognize there is a distinct difference between immigration and border security.
- The federal government must be held accountable to address illegal immigration in this country.
- WSSA believes the issue of border security must be addressed through the collaboration with our federal partners.
- The criminal element that comes with a lack of security on our nation's border is affecting the lives of American citizens across this country.
- WSSA members understand that this is a nationwide problem and deserves the attention of Sheriffs across the west.

2nd Amendment

- The 2nd amendment to our nation's constitution guarantees the individual right to keep and bear arms.
- WSSA members have taken a firm stance on protecting this right and ensuring that no person, legally entitled to possess a firearm, realizes any pressure from laws inconsistent with the Constitution.
- We continue to monitor this issue, both regionally and nationally and join to defeat any legislation that seeks to impair our 2nd amendment right including Amicus Briefs in support of second amendment rights in law suits in California, Maryland and Colorado



Public Lands

- WSSA has remained deeply invested in the issues that pertain to the use of public lands. Land management agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management regularly attend WSSA conferences.
- It is critical to the role of the elected Sheriff to maintain open lines of communication with these agencies to ensure that law enforcement activities on public lands across the west are consistent with the desire of the elected Sheriff in each county.
- WSSA members also recognize the economic and social impacts of land management decisions and work to ensure that county governments remain actively involved in discussions surrounding roads, trails, and grazing, mining and overall use of public lands.
- WSSA has maintained a position of no tolerance for the inconsistent application of rules and regulations on our nation's public lands.
- With the vast area of public land in the western United States, WSSA continues to argue for increased funding for Sheriffs who provide services on these public lands. ■

California Sheriffs Under Attack



Sheriff-Coroner Jon E. Lopey
Siskiyou County (CA)

Excerpts

“To begin with, I want to emphasize the fact the views in this article are my own and I am not representing the views or positions of any organization or group. Recently, there has been renewed interest in California to eliminate the position of elected sheriff. . . .”

“Sheriffs, because they are elected, are accountable to the people of this state. . . .”

“I’d like to take a moment to summarize the authority of the Sheriff in California Pursuant to the California State Constitution (Article 11, Section {a} & {b}) the state legislature “shall provide for county powers, an elected sheriff, district attorney, assessor, and governing body...” In our case, the governing body is the Board of Supervisors. . . .”

“When I attended the NSA’s National Sheriffs’ Institute in 2011, one statistic stood-out during the instruction. The average sheriff at the time served for 12-years. The average police chief 2.5 years. Why is that? It is because the citizens elect sheriffs they feel represent their interests and stand for them. Police chiefs are great and I have many friends in their ranks but they don’t last as long because, at least to some degree, they are beholding to their political leaders – They are appointed. . . .”

“I can tell you with utmost certainly, most sheriffs in California share his views that the state sanctuary laws were a factor in the tragic murder of Corporal Singh and most of us know, if we are honest, that these policies allow undocumented immigrant criminals to walk the streets of our communities, in some cases unabated, and our communities, families, and children are less safe

because of this law and the policies and positions of too many of our political leaders. the rule of law and endanger our citizens, including our children. . . .”

“It is a dubious comparison the author makes between modern sheriffs and the Sheriff of Nottingham and he seems to think sheriffs should be “cursed” as a “nasty artifact” of America’s history as an English colony. A comparison to ancient English history is a poor and unfair comparison indeed and I don’t know of any sheriffs who collect taxes and extort bribes and comparing modern, elected sheriffs with such a stereotype is outrageous. . . .”

“I think of how great America is and how much better society is because of the brave, dedicated, and selfless sheriffs that serve all over this nation in nearly all states except three. . . .”

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