



# From the President



## Are we in a “New Normal” with the Corona Virus?

Some things indicated yes, and some things say this is what we do.

In Law Enforcement we do the best we can to deter crime by extra patrols, conflict resolutions and enforcing the Law. We respond to emergencies and try to do our best to keep all of us safe in doing so.

I am quite certain that within one year most every American will have been affected in one way or another by the Corona Virus.

In some of our less populated areas, social distancing is a way of life. Folks that choose to live in rural America and small

towns are adept in avoiding crowds. It is nice to live in a country that allows people to live where they want to live.

I can say that financially most Americans have been adversely affected and it will take some time to adjust to a different lifestyle.

As we move on and start to recover, we will see a very heightened approach to sanitary practices in public places. There will be more people with face masks and hand sanitizers. Café’s and public places will work on having more space between customers instead of adding more tables and crowding people in.

In the world of First Responders, 911 Dispatchers, Health Care Workers, Jail Staff and Food Suppliers, our world did not change much. We still had our jobs, were essential employees, and were expected to respond, no matter the call.

For many parents of school aged children, their lives did change. Having kids home all day, working out education disciplines so they don’t fall behind, plus the added cost to their households. Families are lucky if one of the two working parents were able to keep working.

Personally, I know a lot of “Spring Cleaning” has occurred; I’m afraid some of my treasures became landfill material! I know some families are enjoying getting outside and doing chores.

Young people have a lot of energy and they need to keep busy with school activities, including sports being canceled for the rest of the year; which has increased anxiety for the kids.

I do feel bad for the Senior Class of 2020. This is the time of their school years that the pressure is off and great memories are made. Technology has gifted all of us with ways to stay connected. It is inspiring to see how young people develop ways to stay in touch with each other, and even as a group they communicate.

In closing, as we start to recover and get things back on track, I hope that we all remain patient with one another. Respect the fears of other people; some of them are more vulnerable than others. I hope that parents have a little more respect and appreciation for the education system and the Teachers.

Take care of yourselves, take care of your Family and take care of America!

Respectfully,  
Fred A. Lamphere  
WSSA President ■

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# Border Security



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 three 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 ac-

tion. 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, a 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. Sheriffs possess a certain character and charismatic personality to overcome challenges based on community trust and shared community expectations. Which is no easy task as we face restricted budgets, economy declines and hiring challenges.

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". There are over 3000 sheriffs with a direct representation to our communities, and 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, bring 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, and we have established a collaborated effort to secure our county through education, prevention and enforcement with 100% prosecution rate. 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 our county has been in over two-decades.", and 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.

Sheriff Mark J. Dannels  
Cochise County, Arizona ■

# Presented with “The Stick”

# In Memorium



*United States Department of Agriculture Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment meets with Skamania County WA Commissioner Tom Lannen and Sheriff Dave Brown*

Skamania County, WA Commissioner Tom Lannen recently participated as a panelist at the annual Western States Sheriffs Government Affairs Committee meeting held in Reno Nevada. Sheriff Dave Brown also from Skamania County, currently serves as the chairman of the committee and represents the Washington State Sheriffs for the association. This year's meeting featured a panel discussion to include panelists representing the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Rural Counties and Utah public lands office.

The panel discussion centered around discussion on law enforcement issues on public lands and land management decisions that affect the economies of rural counties. U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, Jim Hubbard participated along with the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, William Pendley. Having a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of current forest management practices, Sheriff Brown invited Commissioner Lannen to participate in this year's meeting as a panelist representing rural counties. "The decisions and actions carried out by public land managers in the Western U.S. continue to have a heavy impact on the actions of Sheriffs. Our ability to establish these relationships has been beneficial in

heading off conflict with our federal law enforcement partners. It has also been beneficial to explain the economic impacts of poor forest management on public safety in rural America", said Sheriff Dave Brown "Once again, through the efforts of Sheriff Brown, the concerns of rural timber county commissioners with large amounts of Federal Forests were brought before Forest Service Managers and Under Secretary Hubbard. Having the opportunity to discuss these concerns in depth with the Under Secretary was an invaluable opportunity." noted Commissioner Lannen. Under Secretary Hubbard indicated his intent to visit Washington State in the future to meet with Commissioner Lannen and other county leaders to further the discussion on current land management practices of the U.S. Forest Service.

Under Secretary Hubbard was presented with "the stick" which illustrates the breakdown of land ownership in Skamania County and the tax implications associated with each.

The meeting was attended by over 100 Sheriffs and command staff. The panelist all expressed an interest in continuing the discussion and working to find common ground that moves toward a more active and reasonable action affecting public land management. ■



## **Midland County's beloved sheriff, of nearly 35 years, died in late May – but his legacy lives on.**

Veteran **Gary Painter** enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1966 and served two tours in Vietnam before going into law enforcement.

He was hired as a patrolman in 1970 by the Department of Public Safety, with the Culberson County Sheriff's Office, Presidio County Sheriff's Office and the Midland Police Department before joining the Midland County Sheriff's Office in 1982.

In three years, he worked through the ranks from the detention division and criminal investigations units to patrol lieutenant, and in 1985, assumed the office of sheriff.

Sheriff Painter was installed as President of the Western States Sheriffs Association in March of 2019.

Sheriff Painter was a long-standing member of the WSSA and respected and admired for his forthright and honest approach to issues and his dedication to the Office of Sheriff.

***We all miss Gary but are grateful for the legacy he has left for us. ■***

# WSSA Conference Vendors 2020

## *More Like Family!*



When we talk about the trade show at the annual WSSA conference these are some of things we hear: “we could not do this without our business partners”  
“I can’t believe we have so many vendors”  
“did you see how much support the vendors gave for the annual auction”  
“We are so fortunate to receive the support from the Vendors”



These are just a few snippets of thoughts expressed when listening to our membership as they heap praise on the business partners on an annual basis. Over the past several years many of us have attended numerous conferences where we find a vendor hall filled with the latest and greatest technologies, vehicles, equipment etc..... and all of that is critical to our operations in law enforcement. What has happened over the past 27 years since WSSA was formed has been the creation and continued fostering of a relationship with those businesses whose business it is to support public safety. Our business partners are more like family to us.



Most of them are on a first name basis and our communication with many of them extends beyond the 2-3 days we see them at our annual conference. In many cases we see them throughout the year at other State Sheriff Association conferences. From providing an item for a drawing during the conference to contributing in large ways to the annual auction, our business family is so supportive of the Western States Sheriffs and the Association.

In the wake of this current pandemic, our thoughts and prayers are with those businesses who have supported WSSA over the years and we are hopeful they can remain solid in their mission. We are continuing to communicate with them throughout this time to find ways where we can work together to ensure we stay together and connected in our common goal to provide Sheriffs and their deputies with the very best that industry has to offer.

***We thank you all for your continued support of WSSA!! ■***

## **Did you know?**

“Texas John” Slaughter was a Civil War veteran, trail-driver, cattleman, Texas Ranger, famed Cochise, Arizona County Sheriff, professional gambler, and an Arizona State Representative during his lifetime. Before he died at the age of 80, he was a symbol of the American West and much-celebrated hero. In 1886, Slaughter was elected Cochise County Sheriff, tasked with ridding Tombstone and Galeville of the lawlessness. Working closely with Wells Fargo Express Agent and former U.S. Deputy Marshal, Jeff Milton, the two were deadly in tracking and capturing fugitives. During this time, Slaughter was known to have worn a pearl-handled .44 and carried a 10-gauge, double-barreled, sawed-off shotgun, which he called an “equalizer.”

## **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.*



# WSSA Sheriff of the Year

Gilliam County lies in the heart of north-central Oregon. A geographically diverse area, the county boasts elevations near sea-level to over 4,000 feet at the base of the Blue Mountains near Lonerock. The ecology of the land includes the nation's second longest, free-flowing river (the wild and scenic John Day River), miles of rolling golden, wheat fields, and incredible natural beauty.

Sheriff Gary Bettencourt is a Gilliam County original. He was born in Condon and raised on a ranch on Rock Creek, above Olex. After graduating high school Sheriff Bettencourt spent nearly eleven years in Silverton, Oregon working as an auctioneer and managed a seed processing facility.

In 1994 Sheriff Bettencourt returned to Gilliam County and for seven years owned and operated two businesses. In 1999 Sheriff Bettencourt became a Reserve Deputy for the Gilliam County Sheriff's Office and was hired as a full time Deputy in 2001. After moving to Condon in 2003 Sheriff Bettencourt was promoted to Undersheriff and then became Sheriff in 2005....



In 2014 Sheriff Bettencourt served as the President of the Oregon State Sheriff's Association (OSSA). Sheriff Bettencourt serves on several OSSA committees. For several years Sheriff Bettencourt has provided the voice and the talent as the annual auctioneer at the Oregon State Sheriffs annual conference. For the past 3 years, Sheriff Bettencourt has filled the same role at the annual conference of the Western States Sheriffs.

With donated auction items from vendors and fellow Sheriffs along with local businesses, Gary lends his auctioneering expertise to create an extremely successful fund-raising event for both organizations. At this year's conference, Sheriff Bettencourt was recognized as the 2019-2020 "Sheriff of the Year."

Representing 17 states west of the Mississippi river, the Western States Sheriffs' Association annual conference is an important networking and informational event for Sheriffs. Sheriffs are elected officials, and those who work in western states are typically in rural areas with expansive territories to cover.

The Western States Sheriffs' Association addresses issues that are unique to the western side of the country. The interaction with public land managers, tribal issues, search and rescue and a myriad of legislative issues brings over 800 members together to work collectively for those who live, work and play in the western U.S. When commenting on receiving the recognition as WSSA Sheriff of the Year, Sheriff Bettencourt said, "It's an honor, but I didn't do it alone."

WSSA Executive Director Jim Pond says the award is well-deserved. "In addition to the things he has done for Western States, he has done so much for his own community and his kids," said Mr. Pond. "He has a heart of gold."

Congratulations, Gary! ■



*Sheriff Bettencourt conducts a fundraising auction at the WSSA Conference.*





# My Horse Needs a Rest...



## WSSA Executive Board

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Butte County, South Dakota

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Sheriff Jim Pond (Ret.)  
Albany County, WY

As I finish my last year in office and end my career that started in the early Spring of 1983 working for the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office, I look back and thank God that I have had the opportunity to have a fabulous career, serving grateful citizens and working with incredible people. When I began my career there were about 50 people in the agency, when I leave we will have about 320. The population has grown from less than 63,000 people to more than 166,000 today.

Rapid growth in population and the corresponding service needs allowed many in the agency to promote and grow with this organization. I was fortunate enough to be one of those who worked hard and was recognized early in my career to be able to move upward and help lead the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office.

As a young lieutenant, I was introduced to the Western States Sheriffs' Association and immediately recognized the value of banding together the Sheriffs from the West who had similar issues and utilizing our one voice to address them. I had already experienced that the National Sheriffs Association really did not seem to care about issues unique to the western states since they were predominantly ruled by Sheriffs from east of the Mississippi River. I stayed active in WSSA with the blessings of two previous sheriffs and when I finally ran and was elected to be the Sheriff, I immersed myself into the work of the WSSA to work towards

solutions that had so long been elusive. Working with Sheriffs like Andy Benz from Oregon, Dave Brown from Washington, Danny Glick from Wyoming and Tony Harbaugh from Montana, amongst many others, I learned a great deal of not only the issues, but the corporate history of the organization and the roadblocks that we had faced through time.

I am proud to have been a small part of having made great strides forward in resolving many issues with our Federal partners. In fact, just that we refer to them as partners is a huge step forward. All of the issues are not 100% resolved, but today, we have the avenues to address them and people in Washington D.C. are responsive.

I am also proud to have been a small part in mending many fences with the NSA and they regularly look to WSSA for our expertise and opinion for issues that are truly Western based.

As I have moved through the leadership chairs for WSSA, I have learned much from those who preceded me, but am encouraged and excited for what is yet to come from those who follow. None of this could be possible without the strong leadership and friendship of the WSSA Executive Director Retired Sheriff, Jim Pond.

As I, like many of you, retire from law enforcement, I am tempted to close the door on this part of my life. However, I know that WSSA will be there and there will be a need for retired Sheriffs to help mentor new Sheriffs. I know that retired Sheriffs will have corporate history to provide to new leadership so the same mistakes don't have to be repeated. I know that there will be a new sheriff in my town on January 11, 2021, but that I will hope to see all of you at the WSSA Conference in March of 2021.

God Bless You All.  
– Ben Wolfinger, Sheriff,  
Kootenai County, Idaho. ■