



Officer B.P. Dawson tests Kyra Bixler on facts she studied on the WSPD during the drill completion at the 9/11 Public Safety Challenge.



ROTC cadets take aim in the marksmanship contest at the 9/11 Public Safety Challenge.

9/11 competition unites JROTC cadets and first responders

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

The city and county commemorated the 15th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks by holding a competition for Junior ROTC cadets at the Winston-Salem Fairgrounds Annex on Saturday, Sept. 10.

Now in its second year, the 9/11 Public Safety Challenge lets cadets interact with first responders and even discover a little of what it takes to be one. Before it began, local first responders did their traditional 9/11 procession. A bell was rung and taps was played for the fallen.

Elected officials such as Mayor Allen Joines remarked about the occasion.

"They tried to demoralize America, to dim our spirit, but just the opposite happened, America came together," said Joines about the country's reaction to the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, which he said "may have been our finest hour."

Then the competition began. There was marksmanship with pellet guns, a regular staple of JROTC competitions. The close

orders drill competition, another regular JROTC competition, was judged by Winston-Salem Police officers.

The Public Safety Raider Course let cadets go through a course similar to the one used to train first responders. It included clearing a fence, rolling with a 100 pound bag, climbing up and down stairs carrying a hose with firefighter gear on and then dragging a 150 pound dummy while wearing the gear.

Commemorations on 9/11 have a long tradition of honoring first responders, many of whom were killed trying to save others when the World Trade Center collapsed. LTC Willie McCoy, JROTC director for Winston-Salem Forsyth County schools, said he felt the competition was a good way to continue that tradition and educate the young cadets, most of whom were too young to remember 9/11.

"It's a good commemoration to let them know what America has gone through, and I think the more history they know about 9/11, the more they

grow and learn to respect what happened on that day," said McCoy.

All 10 schools with JROTC programs competed. Jovell Moore, a senior at Carver High School, had the fastest time in the raider course for the second time this year. He said it was exhausting, but he was prepared for it. He joined JROTC because he wants to join the Army and follow in the footsteps of his military uncles. He said if he changed his mind and pursues a career in public safety, he now knows he can do it.

"It shows me what they go through," Moore said about the raider course.

It was the first year that female cadets ran the challenge's raider course. Nascha Blue, a senior at Glenn High School, was among those who completed the course. The daughter of a retired Army recruiter, Blue plans to go into the Army, too. She said the course has given her a new appreciation of first responders.

"It was intense," Blue said.

Atkins Academic and Technology High School is the overall winner.

Forsyth infant mortality remains at all-time low

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

The Forsyth County infant mortality rate continues to be historically low. That was among the findings in an annual report on child protection and fatalities presented to county commissioners on Thursday, Sept. 9 by Public Health Director Marlon Hunter and DSS Family and Children Services Director Victor Isler. The report showed that in 2015, the infant mortality rate remained at the historic low 6.4 per 1,000 live births that it reached in 2014.



Hunter

Infant mortality is when a baby less than one year old dies. For years, the county experienced higher infant mortality than the state average. Hunter credited the turnaround in recent years to numerous programs of education and outreach for families with babies, including those that get health educators and nurses out into those homes.

"We would like to think that it is because of all the momentum and the effort we have put behind trying to make sure we raise awareness," Hunter said.

In 2015, the county had 55 deaths of children, which the report defined as 17 years-old or younger. The leading cause of death was unsafe sleep in babies

with 10 fatalities. Hunter said the health department got a state grant to combat the problem that will go to contraception at its family planning clinic and an educational outreach program with cribs for families.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF PRETERM LABOR?

It is important to know the signs of early labor:

- Bleeding - Feeling that the baby is balling up
- Contractions (your belly tightens like a fist) every 10 minutes or less
- Changes in vaginal discharge (leaking fluid)
- Pelvic pressure (feeling that your baby is pushing down)
- Low, dull backache - Cramps that feel like your period
- Abdominal cramps with or without diarrhea - Feeling that something is not right

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