

SHERIFF
From 2B

a Citizen's Academy years ago to help concerned citizens learn more about the police department operations and to improve relations with citizens. As Sheriff, I would continue and expand the current program at the Sheriff's office.

Mike Chapman: Every citizen should have the opportunity to participate in the academy program. When you understand how and why an agency works the way it does, I believe you have a greater respect for the agency.

Danny Gordon: Absolutely! I have been involved in our Citizen's Academy since its inception. I feel that it is extremely important to provide citizens with an inside look and better understanding of our agency and the services we provide.

Raymond Hamrick: I feel the Citizens Academy will increase understanding and positive communication between citizens and sheriff's office personnel by educating attendees on subjects such as: An overview of the Sheriff's Office, Uniform Patrol Operations, Criminal Investigations and Sex Offender Registry, Crime Scene Investigations, Detention Center/ Court Security/ Civil Process, Vice/Narcotics, and ICE, Crime Prevention/ SRO/ DARE, Special Operations Units (SERT/ CNT/ K9), Use of Force and Personnel issues. We have had a great response from people interested in participating in the classes and from those who have completed the classes. For more information about the program go to our website: www.sheriffcleveland-county.com. We gladly will continue the program.

David Morrow: Since the academy is designed to increase understanding and positive communication between citizens and Sheriff's personnel through education, I think it is a great program and should be continued. The more insight residents of Cleveland County have into the responsibilities and operations of their sheriff's office, the better the relationship will be between law enforcement and the citizens they serve.

Alan Norman: I think the Citizen's Academy is a great idea and I plan on continuing the program.

Q7) Can the county operate with essentially an absentee sheriff?

Don Allen: I believe the citizens of Cleveland County deserve to have their Sheriff present and accounted for. The Sheriff is supposed to be much more than an administrator. The Sheriff is supposed to be the leader of his department operations. He is responsible for the safety and welfare of all the citizens of his county. The Sheriff is a servant of the people and is supposed to be obligated to the 'Oath of Office' and the defender of the rights of all the citizens of his county. I will not be an absentee Sheriff.

Mike Chapman: Anytime a sheriff is absent from his job it takes away from the department. The chief deputy fulfills that position and it continues downhill from there. In the event of a life-changing illness, I feel like the position should be resigned. Personally, in my law enforcement career, I have taken three hours of sick leave in 27 years, which can be verified. If you are scheduled to work, then you go to work. It's that simple. People are depending on you.

Danny Gordon: With a very strong management team, consisting of the right employees in the right positions supporting the sheriff, the sheriff's office is capable of running efficiently in his absence. However, I plan to be at work and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, serving the citizens of Cleveland County.

Raymond Hamrick: The sheriff's office command is structured such, that if the Sheriff is away for whatever reason, the chief deputy's role is to assume his/her responsibilities. If neither is available at the same time, then the next in command is the administrative captain. Assuming that this question comes following my having to be out of work, first let me say that neither I nor my opponents, can guarantee that they can be in office everyday while serving as sheriff, and certainly none of us are immune to sickness or health issues any more than anyone who reads this paper. There were two things that happened to me which were out of my control. It was unfortunate when a drunk driver ran over me from behind in Oct. 2005 while riding a motorcycle, and it was unfortunate in April of 2007 when my kidneys failed and I had to start dialysis. I was fortunate however to have recovered from the wreck, and from kidney failure by means of dialysis until I could get a kidney transplant. I have been back at work and assumed my duties for over two months. I'm in better health now than I have been in a long time. I would not have assumed my duties or be running for sheriff if my doctors and I did not feel I was capable of doing so. I'm trying to reclaim my life. And while on this subject, I hope the City of Kings Mountain will support your Asst. Chief Jerry Tessener while he is going through similar circumstances as I went through. Jerry, if you read this, don't give up hope for a transplant, because you'll be amazed at how much better you'll feel afterwards. You may not know it immediately, but it will happen! You're in my prayers!

David Morrow: The past two years have proven that it can. However, for the sheriff office to be an effective force in the county, someone must have authority to conduct the business of law enforcement management. The sheriff is the most effective person to do that. Absence for a short period of time can be covered by a competent staff, but there really is not a substitute for the sheriff. If you are accepting a salary from the citizens of Cleveland County, you must be accountable to them with your presence.

Alan Norman: My pledge to the citizens of Cleveland County is that I will be a working sheriff who is not a 9-5 sheriff. I will be out in the communities getting involved with the citizens as well as working with the deputies. The sheriff is an elected official and has unlimited vacation and sick time. When I am elected sheriff I will hold myself accountable by adhering to the adopted county policy that all the deputies adhere to as far as vacation and sick time accumulation.

Q8) How would you plan to cope with potential cuts to the sheriff's department budget?

Don Allen: My plan is to make my office as efficient as possible. If a budgeted program is not effective or unnecessary it will be cut. I will encourage volunteer service where possible. I will not give myself salary increases and

will accept only the base salary as set by the Commissioners. Times are hard now in Cleveland County with high unemployment. I will have to be a good steward of the taxpayers' money and all our personnel will be expected to do more with less.

Mike Chapman: You can always work with less. The economy has taken a toll on everyone, on every agency and business. You simply make do unless you have an emergency or extreme need and you should always have a back-up plan or nest egg so to speak to take care of that.

Danny Gordon: For the past three fiscal years, we have implemented cost-saving measures to reduce spending so that there was no interruption in the delivery of our services or reductions in force.

Raymond Hamrick: For the past three years we have been asked to keep our budgets in line with the previous year's budget. And we have been able to do that. This year, we were asked to do it again. With the addition being built onto the Detention Center Annex, we already know we are going to have to hire 15 new detention officers. So we know the detention center budget will increase to cover that. However if we had to make cuts, most likely we would have to start by minimizing part-time positions first or at least cutting their work hours. I will say this, we have been fortunate to have our county commissioners and the county manager and finance director working close with us and we appreciate them having not asked for cuts in these tough economic times. They understand the needs of the sheriff's office. And we understand they have tough decisions to make. So, we are truly blessed to be able to operate as efficiently as we do. By working together though, we will get through this together.

David Morrow: I would manage and spend the budget based on priority with the good of the whole organization in mind. I will look at every line item on the budget. I will evaluate the operations and identify areas where we could conserve and implement needed changes to establish effective cost cuts.

Alan Norman: I realize that in hard economic times like today many government agencies are cutting their budgets. I would first have to evaluate where the money is currently allocated and go from there. This is also why one of my goals is to apply for grants. Over the last eight years, the Cleveland County Sheriff's Office has not received any federal manpower grant money. Over the last five years the Shelby Police Department has received 2 million dollars in grant funding. This is money they have not had to have from the tax payers of the City of Shelby. Citizens county wide deserve the same.

Q9) We only have nine miles of interstate highway and we have an interstate patrol vehicle. How do you explain that?

Don Allen: As this question is written, it is not for me to explain what our current Sheriff does with his vehicles. I can, however, say that I believe the State Highway Patrol officers are better suited for traffic enforcement than deputies. I do support 287(g) agreements with I.C.E. to fight illegal immigrant crime, drug smuggling and threats to our Homeland Security.

Mike Chapman: The interstate vehicle will be assigned back to the neighborhoods and the

communities. We need to get control of these areas first and foremost. Drugs in Cleveland County are a huge problem and I believe on working the areas around us from the inside out.

Danny Gordon: The ICE (Interstate Criminal Enforcement) Team continues to be very valuable to Cleveland County as it intercepts drugs traveling through Cleveland County. The members of this team are highly trained in the recognition and enforcement of illegal alien drug trafficking and individuals that have made illegal entry into our country. To date, this team is responsible for seizing \$2,893,358 from illegal drug dealers; they've collected 70.4 lbs of cocaine, 10 lbs of methamphetamine, 73.8 lbs of marijuana, 2,954 ecstasy pills, 2.7 lbs of heroin and nine firearms. Funds collected are given back to the sheriff's office and have been used to purchase vehicles, allowed us to purchase equipment and implement Project Lifesaver within our community, crime scene investigation equipment, in-car cameras that were paid for without using county funds.

Raymond Hamrick: If you are referring to our ICE (Interstate Criminal Enforcement Team), it is composed of three deputies with three vehicles. The ICE team was created in Feb. 2004 in cooperation with federal prosecutors, U.S. Customs, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and U.S. Immigration to disrupt the flow of illegal drugs/money/illegal immigrants traveling up and down our highways. I-85 is a well-known route between the major drug distribution points of Atlanta, Ga., and Charlotte. And since 2004, my deputies have seized over \$2,000,000 in illegal cash and record amounts of crystal methamphetamine, cocaine, marijuana and other drugs, along with vehicles, firearms, and illegal immigrants. From the illegal money seized, a portion is returned to the sheriff's office. We have used that money to buy patrol vehicles both for our patrol division and the ICE Team, a crime scene vehicle and investigative equipment. Drug education in the schools, CODAP's Drug Survey, and the DO the Right Thing program in the schools have been financed through forfeited funds. This has resulted in saving taxpayers thousands of dollars, by using the drug dealers' money to offset the cost of purchasing equipment and these programs in our schools. Being the first county inside North Carolina, traveling north from Atlanta means we get the first crack at stopping their illegal activity in our county and state. The team also works Hwy. 74 because of its relationship with both I-85 and I-26.

David Morrow: According to the current sheriff's statement, this team has been successful in seizing over 2.8 million in currency and huge amounts of illegal drugs which has funded purchase of patrol vehicles, a crime scene vehicle and investigative equipment. If the statement is true, it's a good thing we have the patrol vehicle in place. I do feel however, that the operation of this program needs to be evaluated.

Alan Norman: The interstate team has had great success at intercepting drugs and drug money that has the potential to reach Cleveland County. They have recovered millions of dollars that has come back to the Sheriff's Office which has been used to purchase equipment. This unit, like any other unit or position, will be re-evaluated to determine the need as I move forward as sheriff.

Q10) What is your stand on the gaming consoles (sweepstakes and internet lotteries) that have swept through the county?

Don Allen: I am personally opposed to gambling. You may try to use the 'politically correct' term of 'gaming', but it is still gambling. Gambling for profit is very big business and the gambling industry has spent big bucks on lawyers, lobbyists and political contributions (including sheriff candidates). It is, however, my understanding that the current state law relating to these machines has been ruled unconstitutional by a Wake County Superior Court Judge. The Judge ruled the State could not give permission to the Cherokee Indians to operate these machines and exclude everyone else. The lawsuit was brought before the Court by attorneys for the gaming industry. Our state laws on illegal gambling have been very weak, difficult to enforce and, many times, difficult to prosecute. The Sheriff is supposed to enforce the laws as made by our Legislature. The General Assembly needs to decide to either legalize and properly regulate and tax the machines or give law enforcement enforceable laws to make them illegal.

Mike Chapman: If and when the courts decide on the laws to put in place, then we will work accordingly. The majority of these types of businesses attract other things, such as alcohol and drugs, along with the troublemakers. There is also the high risk of gambling addiction. We have to have the laws in place to protect the community.

Danny Gordon: I am certainly not in favor of them and the NC Sheriff's Association continues to seek legislation against them.

Raymond Hamrick: My stance on this is similar to the stance I took on video poker, and that is we don't need this in our county. Our economy is bad enough the way it is and this is just another way of taking money from our citizens and preying on their weaknesses to participate in these things. I will strongly support legislation that will get this out of our counties across our state like we did with video poker. The amusement gaming machine owners have a strong group of attorneys and lobbyists fighting to get the legislature to allow the machines to remain. So, "the power of the Almighty Dollar is at work." Right now there is a moratorium in place in Wake and Guilford Counties. Because of it, many prosecutors across the state don't want to prosecute cases until the moratorium is lifted or the court rules otherwise. We can investigate complaints regarding illegal pay-offs on these machines but it's up to our D.A. to prosecute them, but they have a low priority if they go to trial, with so many serious matters on the court dockets already.

David Morrow: Under state law, these gaming consoles are a legal business, so regardless of how I may feel personally; they are tax paying businesses and will be treated as such. If or when the law changes, I will enforce whatever the law is on those machines.

Alan Norman: I believe it is gambling and I am against them.

Q11) What do you feel is the biggest problem facing law enforcement?

Don Allen: I believe the biggest problem facing law en-

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