

St. John The Baptist Parish Sheriff's Office

Annual Report 2015

Sheriff Mike Tregre

addresses families and friends during National Law Enforcement Week

May 13, 2015 Candlelight Vigil Honoring St. John's Fallen Heroes



Dear St. John Parish Residents:

When I began my first term as your Sheriff, I had a vision of transforming this department into a model of efficiency, responsiveness and professionalism. Through training, hiring new officers, upgrading our technology and expanding our community outreach, we have successfully improved our crime fighting and crime solving capabilities. I am proud to report a significant reduction in violent crimes in our parish and, at the time of production of this annual report, St. John Parish is murder free, making this year the second longest in St. John Parish history without a homicide! The record, you ask? October 27, 1988 was the longest time St. John went without one homicide in a calendar year. And we are working and praying to break that record in 2015!!



There are many factors that have contributed to our success in better serving the citizens. Technology advancement has taken a leading role as of late, from our state-of-the-art mobile command unit to our new mobile app for Androids and iPhones that offers the same instantaneous information as our upgraded website. New computers and software systems have strengthened 911 response efforts. I have implemented a department-wide email and text message alert system for information sharing across the department.

Meanwhile, crime cameras and home surveillance security systems have become an essential tool in helping us to solve crime. We are building a solid crime camera network by partnering with businesses and homeowners who register their cameras with our office. When citizens register their surveillance systems, it gives us information about where cameras are located throughout the parish, and the owners can allow officers to access their cameras or home surveillance systems, which significantly expands our coverage.

Now that I have completed my third year as Sheriff, I feel more like the leader and less like the “crisis manager.” My vision for the department is becoming a reality and over the past year, we have accomplished many tasks for the first time in the history of the St. John Sheriff’s Office. For example, many of our upgrades and programs are funded with the help of grants. Federal and State grants, as well as those from nonprofit foundations, frequently provide important resources to law enforcement agencies. The Sheriff’s office now has its first full-time grant writer to ensure that we take full advantage of any opportunities for funding to better assist the department in keeping St. John safe.

Also, for the first time, all four government entities will share a Motorola 700/800 radio system in order to communicate during any parish-wide emergency. When the Sheriff’s Offices’ radio communication system was upgraded in 2014, the previously used handheld radios were donated to the other St. John government entities (schools, Parish Government and Fire Department). Now, schools within St. John Parish will have direct radio communication with our 911 dispatchers and deputies. Likewise, the Sheriff’s Office can communicate directly with school board officials, parish administrators/elected officials, and even school bus drivers during school emergencies or hurricane evacuations.

Through advanced training in all departments, SJSO now has its first ever certified RAD (Rape Aggression Defense) instructors. RAD classes are offered free of charge to females of all ages in order to teach self defense. We held our first class in August of 2014. Since that time, four classes and 75 females have graduated from our self-defense class.

I fully believe that we cannot continue to provide incarceration without rehabilitation. So to round out our crime fighting efforts, we have implemented a new Inmate Re-Entry Program called “Opportunity Now.” This program is a three-month training course that provides work readiness, job placement and case management services to qualified inmates just prior to their release. The program strives to prevent inmates from becoming repeat offenders by providing a solid second chance with options for employment and help in transitioning back into society. More details, including pictures from our first graduation, are included in this report.

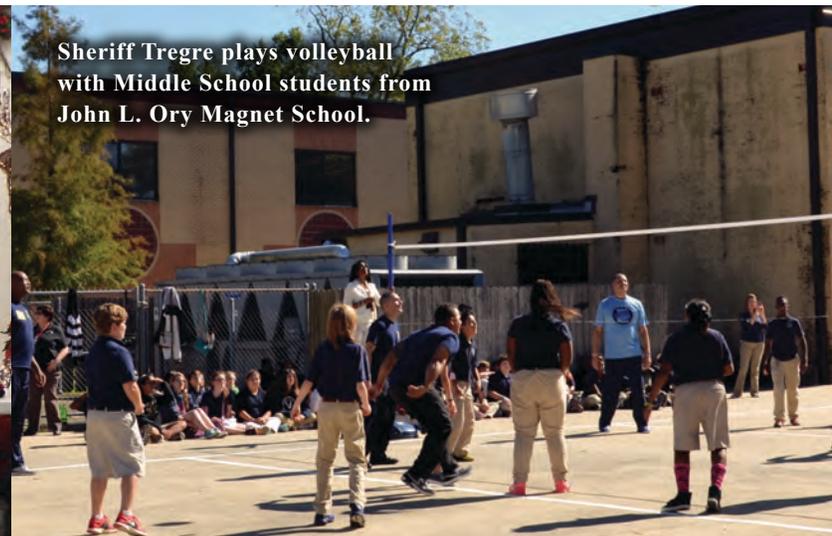
As you can see, my third year as Sheriff has been filled with a lot of “first time” events. Our “rough start” in 2012 hindered plans for the departments’ transition, but by no means were they halted. The men and women of this department continue to be fully committed to protecting and serving our great parish.

I encourage you to take the time to read through this report, which covers all of these topics in greater depth and more of what our department has been up to in the past year.

Sincerely,  Mike Tregre, Sheriff, St. John the Baptist Parish



Sheriff Tregre calls Bingo numbers at Place Du Bourg Independent Living Center during the Christmas Holidays.



Sheriff Tregre plays volleyball with Middle School students from John L. Ory Magnet School.

EMBRACING THE FUTURE OF TECHNOLOGY

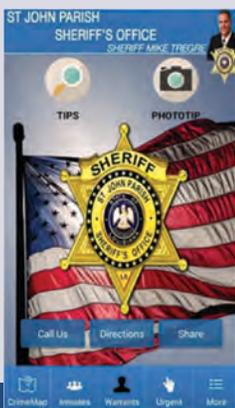
Online Presence Connects Citizens with SJSO

Looking for the latest crime maps for your neighborhood? Needing to pay tickets, obtain a traffic accident report or register your bicycle? You can do all this and more on stjohnsheriff.org.

Need a deputy detailed for your special event? Simply request one online. You can also download a job application or find out where our next community outreach event will take place. You can even search a roster of prison inmates or check for an outstanding warrant.

Our web team has been working hard to keep you up to date on the latest news from the Sheriff's Office, and now that information is even more accessible with our new mobile app available for both Apple and Android devices.

In addition to giving citizens daily information on arrests and the locations of crime around the parish, the app allows you to submit tips to investigators through writing, audio, photograph or video. The Sheriff's Office can also push out urgent messages to supported devices through the app. The app is available through your device app store by searching for "St John Sheriff."



Be sure to "like" St. John the Baptist Parish Sheriff's Office on Facebook as well to learn about our latest public safety events and stay informed of community news.



Technology Enhances Safety

While nothing compares to an officer working his beat or a 911 operator answering that critical call for aid, advances in technology have played an important role in helping us provide quick, efficient and effective service.

SJSO has recently purchased four digital speed boxes. While citizens may think that these boxes are simply showing a driver their current speed, there is much more going on. The boxes are actually conducting a speed study. It can record the speed of each car over the time it is put in one location. The data recorded tells officers when speeding most frequently occurs in a particular area. SJSO utilizes the recordings to identify when and where traffic officers are most needed.

Other technological advancements that are aiding Deputies in law enforcement are dash cameras and thermal imaging scopes. By providing excellent video coverage of traffic stops, the dash cameras allow officers to record interactions with motorists, especially those suspected of DWI. The video is then downloaded to a USB drive and serves as strong evidence for prosecutions. Each shift will also have access to new thermal imaging scopes, which can detect small changes in temperature and allow officers to detect suspects that may be otherwise hidden from view. These scopes will also be helpful in search and rescue efforts.



TRAINING

Similar to keeping up with the latest in technology, officers and 911 dispatchers must continually refresh their knowledge of the job and learn new skills. In 2014, five officers graduated from the 17-week Peace Officer Standards and Training Program (POST) offered at the Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Training Academy. The deputies became POST certified after receiving instruction in firearms, physical fitness, Louisiana criminal and traffic law, writing reports, conducting interrogations and general investigative techniques. Recently, three SJSO reservists were the first reserve officers given the opportunity to graduate from the POST Training Academy.

Currently, all newly hired 911 operators train for 1,380 total hours over an eight-month period. In April 2015, dispatchers attended the Autism and Law Enforcement Education Coalition Training in Baton Rouge and the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials/National Emergency Number Association (APCO/NENA) Symposium in Lake Charles.

In addition, seven officers attended training at the International Chief of Police Conference, and six officers experienced networking with Sheriffs from around the state at the Louisiana Sheriff's Association Conference. All members of the St. John Parish Sheriff's Office are required to attend CPR certification training, which includes AED and Infant CPR training.



Remembering Major Troy Hidalgo



T-Roy, our fully equipped mobile command center, was recently dedicated by Sheriff Mike Tregre in the memory of Major Troy Hidalgo. A 24-year-veteran of the force, Hidalgo was the head of Technology for the Sheriff's Office and designed and oversaw the construction of T-Roy. Hidalgo died Dec. 22, 2014, following complications from heart surgery at the age of 43. His wife, Kimberly, will always be a part of the SJSO family.

West St. John H. S. Outreach

Sheriff Mike Tregre addresses the male student body at West St. John High School a few days following the Ferguson, Missouri, fatal shooting of Michael Brown. The Sheriff talked about the law enforcement perspective in these situations. He then took questions and gave answers to the audience.





SHINING STARS

Officers Recognized for Outstanding Service

Several St John Sheriff's Officers were honored for their bravery, outstanding performance and dedication to service throughout 2014 at the second annual Officers Awards Ceremony held in January at the St. John Community Center in LaPlace.

Lt. James "Bo" Bessinger was named Officer of the Year. A member of the U.S. Marshals Fugitive Task Force, Lt. Bessinger searches for and apprehends the most violent of criminals. Since joining the task force, he has a 100% arrest rate of all cases assigned to him from St. John Parish Sheriff's Office. Lt. Bessinger was also chosen as 2014 Officer of 4th Quarter.



The Officer of 1st Quarter Award went to the entire Criminal Investigations Division because of their continued dedication and commitment to keeping our citizens safe, including their work on the LaPlace Feed Store homicide case. Deputy Turner Barron received Officer of the 2nd Quarter for his professional and unselfish manner in performing his duties, particularly when he went above and beyond to help an individual during freezing weather. Deputy Michael Duronslet was named Officer of the 3rd Quarter for performing CPR on two separate individuals on the same day. He also received two lifesaving awards.

Other recipients of lifesaving awards included Deputy Steven Daily, who performed the Heimlich Maneuver on a fellow officer who was choking, and Deputy Sidney Triche, who administered CPR to an unconscious male found near a swimming pool.



Remembering Our Brothers in Blue

A candlelight vigil was held May 13, 2015, during National Police Week, on the same day as the vigil in Washington, DC, allowing officers and the general public to remember those who have lost their lives in the line of duty. Since 1936, eight officers have died while protecting the safety of others here in St. John Parish.

The solemn ceremony remembering our Fallen Brothers in Blue was hosted by Sheriff Mike Tregre and the St. John Parish Sheriff's Office on the front lawn of the Percy Hebert Building in LaPlace. National Police Week pays special recognition to law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty throughout the United States.

The eight officers honored for their sacrifice in St. John Parish were Constable Ignace Rousselle, who died Oct. 20, 1936, Deputy Harry Troxlair Sr., who died Aug. 1, 1969; Det. Lt. Sherman Walker, who died Nov. 6, 1984; Deputy Barton J. Granier, who died Jan. 27, 1996; Code enforcement officer Edmond Songy Jr., who died July 9, 2002; Captain Octavio "Ox" Gonzalez, who died June 16, 2006, Deputy Brandon Nielsen, who died Aug. 16, 2012; and Deputy Jeremy Triche, who died Aug. 16, 2012.





OPPORTUNITY NOW

After three months of intensive work readiness and life skills training, the first class of students attending the St. John Parish Sheriff's Office Opportunity Now Re-entry Program graduated in May 2015 and a second class graduated in August. The participants, who were all Louisiana Department of Corrections inmates housed in St. John Parish's Correctional Center, volunteered to attend the program that prepares them for re-entry into society.

"We're offering these guys a second chance," said Sheriff Mike Tregre. "It's an opportunity for them to prepare for re-entry into the workforce, increasing their chances of success. After they serve their time, most of these inmates will return to St. John Parish. Given the chance, they can be productive and contribute to our community. I know because I have hired one, and he is an excellent employee."

Opportunity Now differs from traditional re-entry programs because it is a collaborative effort between the St. John Sheriff's Office, the Louisiana Workforce Commission, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services and the Louisiana Department of Corrections to provide work readiness, job placement and other self-sufficiency services to qualified inmates. Paid for by the state, Opportunity Now offers nearly 120 hours of instruction. Job placement and case management services are mandated aspects of the Opportunity Now Re-entry Program.



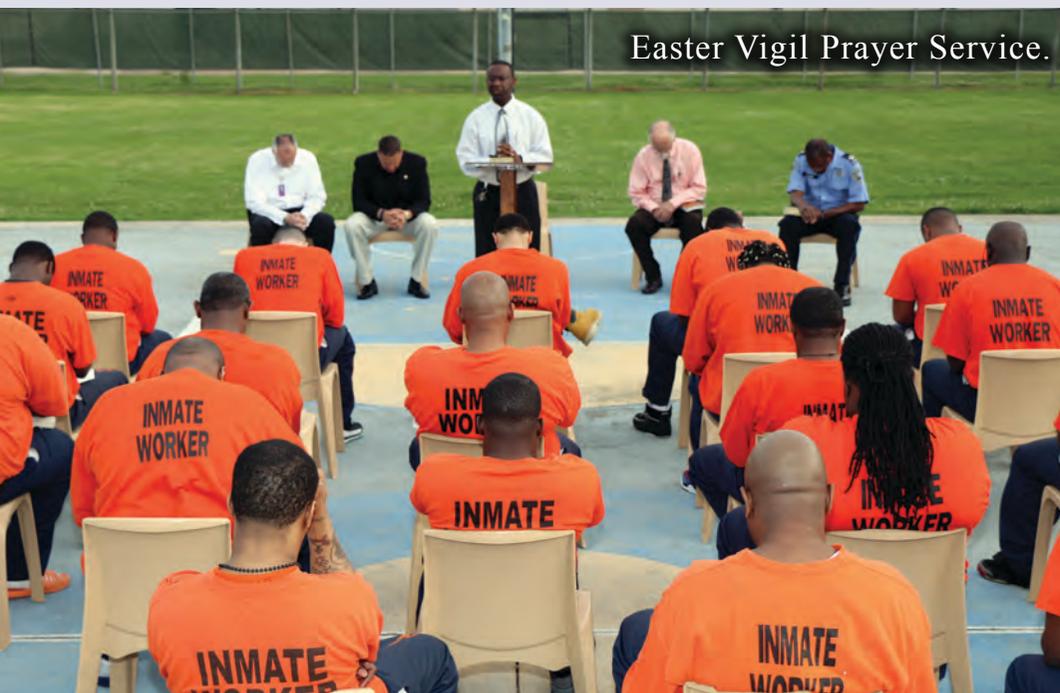
Kerry Brignac

BIKE PATROL

For the first time ever, a uniformed bike patrol is coming to SJSO. With the help of two local businessmen, who donated the funds for the purchase of five police grade bicycles, we have initiated try-outs and training for a bike patrol division. Officers who try out for this must pass a strenuous fitness test. Once they are chosen for the bike division, they will receive training before hitting the sidewalks. The goal is to have officers on bikes in the business corridor along Airline Highway by the holiday season.



Pat Sellars



Easter Vigil Prayer Service.



FACILITY UPGRADES

Patrol Headquarters

Plagued with a continual leaky roof, which caused damage to some electrical equipment, Patrol Headquarters has recently received a much needed new roof. The upgrades didn't stop there, though, as the small building was then renovated to better utilize space. Public Relations, Patrol Commanders and other staff now have offices at Patrol Headquarters. The renovations include full bathrooms and storage for cots in case of an emergency where officers must stay close. The renovations of the inside and some of the roofing work were performed by inmates.



Jeremy Triche K-9 Kennel

K-9s serving the St. John Sheriff's Office have a new building to call home after their previous facility was damaged by fire. Complete with heat and air-conditioning, the building provides a comfortable environment and a bathing area for the seven dogs. The facility was built with inmate labor and is accessible from the animals' outdoor running area. The dog kennel is dedicated to fallen Deputy Jeremy Triche, whose dream was to have a state-of-the-art facility for the K-9s.



OUTREACH FOR A SAFER COMMUNITY

From safety in schools to protecting our precious seniors, deputies have been working together with the community to help citizens learn best practices for defending themselves and others.

"Our job is to protect the citizens of St. John the Baptist Parish and to teach them ways to avoid crime and defend themselves if necessary," said Sheriff Mike Tregre. "We offer a wide range of programs designed to meet the needs of all our citizens, from the elderly to our youngest students."

In a joint effort with the St. John the Baptist Parish Public School District, officials from the Sheriff's Office are visiting the campuses to make sure they are secure for students and staff. After assessing each campus, deputies provide safety recommendations such as limiting access through a front



entryway, locking gates and suggesting places for students to hide or ways to evacuate during an active shooter event. A small-scale active shooter drill took place at the end of the 2015 school year at LaPlace Elementary.

The Sheriff's Office Community Relations Division is busy talking with the community at events around the parish, such as the St. Joan of Arc Fair and the Sheriff's Office Expo at Home Depot. For upcoming events, be sure to like us on facebook and regularly check out our website stjohnsheriff.org.

St. John the Baptist Parish Sheriff's Office

Mike Tregre, Sheriff

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SHERIFF'S OFFICE



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SJSO Crime Lab



18 meth lab busts over the past 2 years

BY THE NUMBERS

Annual Crime Statistics



	2012	2013	2014	1st Half of 2015
Homicides	9	13	8	0
Rapes	3	4	5	1
Robberies	26	34	40	21
Assaults	130	142	167	76
Burglaries	423	346	298	131
Larcenies	812	794	965	541
Motor Vehicle Thefts	73	67	61	23
Arrests for Meth Labs	3	6	12	18
Gun Collection				90
911 Calls	45,317	39,146	47,682	24,914