

# St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office



# Update

Phase 1, #9

2006 Annual Report

[www.stcharlessheriff.org](http://www.stcharlessheriff.org)

DEDICATED TO REPORTING THE NEWEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ST. CHARLES PARISH SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## Postal Patron

This is a free annual publication mailed to St. Charles Parish residents, law enforcement professionals, community organization representatives, civic leaders and government officials. If you are not on the mailing list and would like to receive future issues, please direct your request to the Special Services Dept. at (985) 783-1355 or fax us at (985) 783-1195.



**SHERIFF  
GREG CHAMPAGNE**

Welcome to the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office's ninth issue of *Update*. In it we strive to keep local residents aware of the many advancements within the agency.

At the same time, we want to bridge the distance between the community and law enforcement providers, facilitating the exchange of information and giving a voice to all involved in the community policing process.

This issue explores recent advances we've made — from the latest policing strategies to vital public initiatives — all of which are aimed at keeping St. Charles Parish residents safe and maintaining our unique quality of life.

1.

## Crime rate still on the decline in 2005-2006

Despite an enormous surge in the population of St. Charles Parish following Hurricane Katrina, 2005 saw crime numbers fall to a nine-year low. Crime in St. Charles Parish fell by 21% from where it was in 1997. You can read the details of this dramatic decrease on page 2 of this issue.

While we are experiencing some of the lowest crime incidents per capita than many surrounding communities, we are not "crime free". I feel that we still have progress that we can make regarding property crime such as thefts and burglaries. I want to continue to urge you to take common sense proactive measures including locking your door to homes and cars as well as removing any items of value from your automobile while not in use.

I would also like to thank everyone for their overwhelming support of the law enforcement millage increase last July. This proposition passed by over 60% of the vote and shows the dedication the people of St. Charles Parish have to their law enforcement officers. Across the board salary increases for all of our employees were implemented in November and we have already seen the increase in applications for employment with our agency. We are also losing fewer employees to the private sector. Hopefully we can come close to our staffing goals by the end of 2006.

No sooner had the dust settled from the millage election, we were faced with Hurricane Katrina. This storm and the weeks following tested us like never before. I want to again commend the bravery of all our deputies. The days following Katrina were dim indeed. Rumors permeated our parish about violence spreading from the city. Nevertheless, your deputies persevered and continued to maintain law and order on the streets of St. Charles Parish. We receive a lot of help from our brothers in law enforcement from afar. At least 300 law enforcement officers from agencies all over the United States of America arrived in St. Charles Parish within days to assist us. Special thanks go to my friend Sheriff John Aubrey of Louisville Kentucky who sent 40 deputies to help at a time when our own deputies were exhausted. The Fraternal Order of Police also played a



Photo: Pictured with Sheriff Greg Champagne are Lieutenant Rodney Madere, Sergeant Roscoe Brewer, St. Charles Parish Emergency Operations Technician Jim Polk stand next to the St. Charles Parish Rapid Response trailer made available to St. Charles Parish through the Mutual Aide Assistance Task Force for the River and Bayou Parishes of Louisiana by a grant from the US Department of Homeland Security. SEE COMPLETE STORY ON PAGE 2.

key role in sending officers to us. Many officers actually took vacation from their jobs to come down and work with us for nothing but a meal and a cot. We owe a great debt of gratitude to all of them.

St. Charles Parish recovered quickly as a result of the cooperative efforts of all the government officials in St. Charles Parish. Parish President Laque, his directors, Tab Troxler EOC Director and his staff, Superintendent Rodney Lafon and his staff, The Fire Service officials, Hospital Director Fred Martinez and his staff, our local Red Cross and many representatives of our major industries displayed a phenomenal amount of cooperation and willingness to get the job done and get our parish quickly back on its feet. All deserve our thanks.

One major negative aspect of post-Katrina life in St. Charles Parish is that of traffic problems and congestion. Due to our increased population and the tremendous amount of traffic passing through

St. Charles for the recovery effort, traffic accidents jumped 40% following the storm. I urge everyone to please be careful especially when traversing our major highways. Our citizens need not fear being injured by violent crime. However, they are more than likely to be harmed in an automobile crash. Exercise caution please.

On behalf of all of the members of the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office, I would like to pledge to you our continuing hard work and dedication to keeping our parish a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

## Departmental

# Strategies

## 21% decrease in crime between 1996 and 2005

### ❑ Sheriff Champagne releases first half of the year crime stats

Sheriff Greg Champagne reports that crime in St. Charles Parish has fallen 21% since 1996, this despite a steady growth of St. Charles Parish population. Comparing crime totals in the 1st quarter of 2005 and the same period of 2006, there is a 2.4% increase. However, crime fell by .2% in the first half of 2006 when compared to the first six months of 2005. The total number of offenses reported to the F.B.I. according to the Uniform Crime Reports was 609 in the second quarter of 2006 as opposed to 595 during the second quarter of 2005, an increase of only 14 offenses. The total offenses recorded during the first six months

of 2006 fell by 2 offenses from 1123 in 2005 to 1121 in 2006.

There were no homicides reported in St. Charles Parish since the beginning of 2006. "2005 was a ten year low for crime in St. Charles Parish. Essentially, we are on track for a year similar to last year," said Sheriff Champagne. "According to our best estimates from parish government, there are approximately 20,000 additional people currently residing in our parish from the number pre-Katrina. I will be surprised if we don't see an increase in crime in 2006 from the record year we had last year," the Sheriff added. "We had about 51,000 people living here before the storm. That number now is estimated to be 69,100.

Sheriff Champagne urged residents to be

OVERALL UCR FIGURES BY CATEGORY										
Offense	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Murder	4	2	2	4	2	3	3	2	4	0
Rape	9	22	13	11	17	13	13	5	8	7
Robbery	56	40	51	33	47	26	37	32	24	17
Assault	813	908	1,010	1,046	964	866	750	737	677	393
Burglary	482	427	427	475	452	395	435	392	439	221
Theft	1,232	1,194	1,121	1,046	1,014	1,017	1,030	1,073	874	434
Auto Theft	170	160	113	130	125	107	101	166	154	49
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,766</b>	<b>2,753</b>	<b>2,737</b>	<b>2,745</b>	<b>2,621</b>	<b>2,427</b>	<b>2,369</b>	<b>2,407</b>	<b>2,180</b>	<b>1,121</b>

vigilant especially with respect to property crimes. He also advised residents to lock automobiles when not in use and to remove any valuables from inside of them. "Taking

some simple precautions can go a long way towards helping us continue to reduce crime in St. Charles Parish," said Champagne.

## NEW LOOK FOR PATROL FLEET

The St. Charles Parish Sheriff's office recently purchased 13 new patrol interceptors for its officers through a government program.

Patrolling communities on 12-hour shift intervals, police vehicles rack up lots of miles. Sheriff Champagne purchases a dozen new police units per

year, and retires older units with high maintenance costs.

The 13 Dodge Chargers were purchased at the statewide bid price of \$20,900 each. The low bid award is a change from the traditional Ford Crown Victoria that had consistently been the low bidder.



Pictured is Sheriff Greg Champagne, Jan Madere (Madere's Garage) and Deputy Brock Lawrence.

## It can't happen here ... Right?

A major part of any communities' success is their willingness to take a hard look at their vulnerabilities before a crisis and institute proactive steps to not only minimize the impact to their residents, but also be better prepared to handle the event. In St. Charles Parish, with a large concentration of industrial complexes and port facilities, St. Charles Parish Sheriff Greg Champagne and Parish President Albert Laque have formed a partnership to make our parish look less appealing to would be terrorists looking for a battlefield to attack the American way of life.

With over 30 deputies certified as Hazmat Technicians, St. Charles Parish has possibly one of the highest concentrations of public Hazmat responders in the state. Add to their arsenal, over \$1 million in state of the art emergency response equipment contained in a "Rapid Assessment" Trailer, a highly trained special response team proficient in high-risk entries, rescue,

2.

disaster response, and Hazmat incidents, a fully functional Emergency Operation Center that rivals even some of America's largest cities, and a vital partnership with local industry, St. Charles Parish has taken an aggressive and proactive stance against terrorism.

"When someone is willing to give their own life in the furtherance of a terrorist act, law enforcement is faced with unimaginable challenges. Of course, the most effective means would be to prevent terrorist activity before it occurs through intelligence gathered on a national and international levels," said Sheriff Champagne who has assigned a member of his department to work on the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force based in New Orleans.

"In St. Charles Parish, we have basically two approaches we take to minimizing our vulnerability. Working closely with the FBI, local industry leaders, parish government, and the school district, we have all taken ownership in the need for a united stance against terrorism, meeting regularly to discuss and review ways to prevent possible attacks. The other approach is our ability to effectively respond and neutralize threats

should an event occur," said Sheriff Champagne.

Since the terrorist attacks of 9-11, the federal government has assisted local governments in a more aggressive approach in protecting our homeland. In 2002, Congress established the "Homeland Security Act", which sets forth particular guidelines in ensuring the safety of our country. This Act has afforded St. Charles Parish and our neighbors an opportunity to be more proactive in Homeland Security efforts by offering federal funding for training opportunities and necessary equipment needed to effectively respond to and prevent terrorist attacks.

Lieutenant Rodney Madere commands the Sheriff's Office's Homeland Security Division, working hand in hand with Jim Polk, an Emergency Coordinator with the St. Charles Parish Emergency Operation Center, act as liaisons between the parish response agencies and private industry.

"Our Special Response Team is highly trained and equipped to handle any type of situation ranging



# DEPUTY OF THE YEAR

*Sheriff Champagne names every deputy in the St. Charles Sheriff's Office as 2005 Deputy of the Year*

## ☐ Courage, determination, bravery, and integrity exhibited under extreme circumstances

The year 2005 presented challenges to the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office the likes of which we have never seen before," Sheriff Champagne said. "After reviewing the actions of our deputies throughout the year, it soon became very clear that there could be only one choice for deputy of the year."

"As a result of the courage, determination, bravery and integrity by our deputies at all levels, I do hereby name every deputy in the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office as our Deputy Of The Year for 2005" Sheriff Champagne said.

Hurricane Katrina came and hit us with a ferocity that no gang of criminals could match. Employees had to stay behind to protect lives and property of the people of St. Charles Parish as they said goodbye to family members who evacuated the parish along with the vast majority of residents. The possibility of a direct hit of this dangerous hurricane in our area was heavy on the minds of all. Deputies began by working around the clock to aid in the

massive evacuation of not only St. Charles Parish, but also the surrounding metro area. In the days following the hurricane, deputies were faced with the task of preventing the lawlessness and looting, which was occurring in nearby areas. Anxiety was high due to the lack of information as to what was really happening in the devastated parishes to our east. Reports of widespread looting and attacks on law enforcement officers in adjoining areas were reaching our deputies raising the level of concern. Fear also began to spread among the citizens who had remained or returned

to man post and patrol the parish while witnessing the largest peacetime exodus of people from the New Orleans area through St. Charles Parish that had ever occurred.

Several members of the department themselves had lost homes as a result of the storm, but nevertheless continued undaunted in their mission to safeguard our parish and protect people. Many of our officers volunteered for dangerous missions, which successfully rescued dozens of desperate people. This included St. Charles Parish residents who witnessed the horrors of the New Orleans Convention Center as well as

others stranded in the flood waters nearby. Days were long and sleep was scarce, but we persevered.

After several days, assistance in the form of military and other law enforcement agencies from across North America began to arrive to relieve a sheriff's office that was mentally and physically exhausted. This was a welcome site; however, deputies would continue to work long hours without a day off for weeks to come.

Our agency also began to assist those agencies in the New Orleans, Plaquemines and St. Bernard areas with supplies and reassurance. This was greatly appreciated by our fellow officers in those jurisdictions and helped to raise their morale.

Finally, after several weeks, officers were able to take a few precious days off to assist their own families and rest themselves. Our office continues to face challenges in the months following Katrina, however, as before, we are up to the task.

The people of St. Charles Parish have been well served by the members of the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office. Congratulations to all of our 2005 Deputies of the Year.



## Automobile Accidents up by 40% since Katrina

As the parish continues to grow post Katrina, St. Charles Sheriff's deputies find themselves handling almost twice the amount of vehicle accidents than ever before. These traffic related matters range from minor accidents to fatalities.

According to Sheriff Champagne, the number of car crashes have increased by nearly 40% since Katrina. Champagne has attributed this problem to the increased population of new residents and other commuters traveling through St. Charles Parish.

"I feel that we have done a good job responding to the numerous accidents that have occurred and hope to see a decline in car accidents as we all move forward to normalcy", said Champagne. "However, it is important that you know what to do in the event that you are involved in a vehicle accident."

### TIPS

- Stay calm.
- Contact the police if you own a cell phone or have someone else contact them.
- Get all necessary paperwork(driver's license, insurance, registration) ready. This can speed up the accident investigation process.
- Take pictures of both vehicles.
- Never assume the other driver(s) have insurance.
- If you are injured, never attempt to move. You may injure yourself more. Have the 9-1-1 dispatcher contact EMS for other drivers.
- If the other driver attempts to get combative with you, do your best to ignore them or get away for you own safety or the safety of others. You should inform the officer as to what transpired when they arrive on the scene.



Nov. 2004 - Aug. 2005

**1,598**

Automobile Accidents

Sept. 2005 - May 2006

**1,883**

Automobile Accidents

Accidents are handled by both St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office and State Police.

**3.**



# Departmental Partnerships

## Sheriff Champagne warns St. Charles Parish residents about the threats of cyber predators

In the past ten years, the Internet has become one of the simplest and straightforward sources for information, shopping and, in a way, a sense of community. But there has been a downside too. The Internet has also become the cyber predator's best and most efficient tool for stealing private information, or worse, harming our children. "Cyber crime appears to be boundless in targeting its victims, too. It knows no age limit," says Sheriff Champagne. "A proactive approach to online safety, especially when children are out of school and online activity rises markedly, is the key to ensuring safety."

Six out of ten children online have received an email or instant message from a perfect stranger and more than half have responded, while one in 33 children has been aggressively solicited to meet their cyber friend in person. Teenagers are particularly at risk, owing in no small measure to the amount of unsupervised time they spend online and the increased likelihood that they'll participate in online discussions regarding relationships, companionship, or sexual activity.

Recently, a 37 year-old man molested a 16 year-old girl after they met on MySpace.com. The man misrepresented himself when he exchanged messages online with the teen. Then, he showed up

at the girl's after-school job, followed her to the parking lot, forced her in his car and attacked her. The assailant knew where she worked because she had posted it on her MySpace profile.

"This is a dark side of teen blogging and social networking," says Sheriff Champagne. "Along with favorite bands and best friends, kids are blogging phone numbers, class schedules, and other personal information that make them vulnerable to anyone who wants to track them down."

The Federal Trade Commission reports that about ten million Americans annually are victims of another form of cyber crime: identity theft. A common tactic used by cyber predators involves invasive spyware - a program hidden inside an otherwise harmless looking file which monitors and tracks information unknown to the user. It often results in the filching of credit card numbers, social security information, and other personal information. The latest trend in identity theft is what officials call "pharming" in which criminals redirect users from legitimate websites to fraudulent sites or proxy servers, without any overt indication they are doing so.

Sheriff Champagne offers the following tips to prevent cyber predators from entering your lives:



- Supervise children and teenagers at all times when using the internet. Put your computer in an open area where you can see what they are doing online.

- Establish ground rules such as the following: children and teenagers should not give out personal information over the internet. They should not post pictures, write about family matters, or share information about school.

- Keep an open line of communication with children and talk to them about the issue of cyber crime. They need to understand the dangers, but they also need to

trust you enough to tell you what is going on.

- Report suspicious and inappropriate things you find online whenever you or your children run across them.

Sheriff Champagne concluded, "It's best to think of the Internet as though it were a big city with all kinds of people and neighborhoods; there are some desirable ones and some you want to keep away from. If you see or experience something suspicious on the internet, report it just as you would any other suspicious occurrence in everyday life."

## DEPUTIES GRADUATE FROM POST ACADEMY

Sheriff Greg Champagne reports that the 2006 training academy received the highest GPA (95.5) than any other academy held since the Champagne department began its own academy in 2001. "Training is a very important factor in law enforcement," said Champagne.

Some topics of study included The History of Law Enforcement, Orientation to the U. S. Criminal Justice System, Elements of Criminal Conduct Definitions, Physical Assessment, Procedures for the use of Police Radio and N.C. I. C., Functions of the Police K-9, and several other law enforcement related topics.

According to Champagne, his department currently has 45 in-house instructors who teach various courses.

The department also has two (2) nationally certified instructors who assist with the training within the department. We are very fortunate to have such dedicated officers who give up their time to make certain that deputies following their leads are prepared to serve and protect St. Charles Parish citizens.



Pictured from left to right Shelly Harrison (Training Division secretary), David Williams, David Wilkes, Vicky Carter (class president), Jose Dominguez, Mikhael Minnich, Timothy Vasquez, Keysla Perrilloux, Jude Hibbs, Christine Urrata, Shawn Gregory, Frank DeCorte, Thomas Theriot, Chris Beard (cadet commander), Shawn Dugas, Stephen Banegas, Lieutenant Rocco Dominic (Training Commander/Instructor)

# Initiatives

## DON'T FALL PREY TO 'WOULD-BE' THIEVES

### MAKE DOORS CRIME-RESISTANT

- ❑ Install deadbolt locks, solid doors and sturdy hinges and strike plates.
- ❑ Use strong, sturdy doors such as solid wood or reinforced steel. Consider installing a peephole.

### PREVENT WINDOW ENTRY

- ❑ Use window key locks. Keep keys in locks to allow for a quick exit in case of emergency.
- ❑ Drill downward holes where inside and outside sashes meet on double-hung windows and insert nails or bolts.
- ❑ Consider installing grates for first-floor windows.
- ❑ Make sure window air conditioners are firmly secured to the window.

### SECURE SLIDING DOORS

- ❑ Install locks to prevent sliding or lifting.
- ❑ Drill a hole through the inside frame and insert a nail to prevent sliding.
- ❑ Place a wooden dowel or a rod in the track.

### SECURE VALUABLES

- ❑ Engrave TV's and other household valuables with some identifiable number.
- ❑ Rent a safe-deposit box for small valuables.
- ❑ Consider installing an alarm system in your home or auto. Make certain a reputable alarm company installs the system.

### CRIME-PROOF OUTSIDE AREAS

- ❑ Keep your yard, porch and entrances well lit. Consider motion-detection or photoelectric lights.
- ❑ Store tools, toys and valuables out of sight.
- ❑ Never hide keys outside your home.
- ❑ Keep bushes trimmed. This will give intruders fewer places to hide.
- ❑ Place gravel or rock beds below windows. It will be hard for burglars to sneak across without being heard.

# STOP THIEF!

## Protect yourself from property theft

### ❑ Sheriff urges citizens to lock valuables out of sight, help slow the volume of property crimes

Burglaries and thefts – at home or in your vehicle – are frustrating, inconvenient and, most times, preventable.

In St. Charles Parish, property crimes account for nearly two-thirds of the parish's total crimes. Last year, 435 burglaries, 1,030 thefts, and 101 auto thefts occurred.

"Until you are a victim, it's something you rarely consider," said Sheriff Champagne. "But when you return home to find your property stolen or your vehicle broken into, the statistics suddenly become very real."

In addition to the financial and property loss, victims often suffer emotional turmoil. "Having your privacy invaded can cause as much trauma as the loss of your prized possessions," the Sheriff said.

With a little extra care, most break-ins can be prevented.

"Most burglars and thieves are looking for easy targets ... They want to get in quickly and get away undetected," Sheriff Champagne said. "The harder you make it for them the lower your risk of becoming a victim."

In many cases, just storing your valuables out of sight can be a huge deterrent.

"Burglaries and thefts are generally crimes of opportunity," the Sheriff said. "Someone walking by sees something they want – an unattended bicycle, CDs and audio or video equipment in an unlocked vehicle, for instance – and they break in to get it."

Too often, these stolen items can easily



Unlocked, unattended valuables are quick, easy targets for thieves. Taking simple precautions, such as locking your goods out of sight, can serve as a huge deterrent.

be parlayed into cash. "Unfortunately, the crimes (burglaries and thefts) are usually linked to drug abuse and other illicit activity," Sheriff Champagne said. "We also see an increase in break-ins during the summer when more young people are roaming parish streets."

Although the Sheriff's Office cannot guarantee your home or vehicle won't ever be burglarized, taking the simplest precautions can decrease your odds of being burglarized. Sheriff Champagne urges residents to be vigilant and report unusual activity in your neighborhood.

"Citizens of St. Charles Parish are law enforcement's 'eyes and ears' on the street," the Sheriff said. "You travel your

area daily and know when something or someone looks out of place. Call us and report it."

Neighborhood watch groups throughout the parish have also proven to be effective deterrents. The program emphasizes neighbors watching out for neighbors, and asks residents to take an active part in monitoring their community.

"Effective security doesn't need to cost a fortune," he said. "A little common sense teamed with a few simple measures can make a world of difference."

By locking your home and automobile, storing valuables out of sight, and reporting unusual or suspicious activity, you can assist the Sheriff's Office in keeping your area safe.

In case your property is stolen, residents are urged to engrave valuables and log identification numbers – model numbers, serial numbers, etc. – to aid in the recovery. Be sure to include a personalized identifier other than your Social Security or driver's license number in your engravings.

## LOCK YOUR VEHICLE DOORS & STORE VALUABLES

### Lock Your Vehicle

- ❑ Shut windows tightly whenever you park. Even a small gap will allow a thief room to insert a wire to pry up the lock button.
  - ❑ Lock all doors and the trunk or hatchback every time you leave your car. Lock the garage door too.
  - ❑ Never leave a car running unattended.
  - ❑ Avoid leaving keys with a garage or lot attendant by choosing a place where you park your own car when possible.
- ❑ Carry as few valuables in your vehicle as possible. Cell phones, money, mobile audio or video equipment, etc., are lures for thieves looking to make a quick grab.
  - ❑ Lock packages in the trunk, or put them under the front seats.
  - ❑ Engrave your car's VIN on radar detectors, CD players, mobile audio or video equipment, etc., in your vehicle. If the equipment is found later it will make it easier to identify as yours.
  - ❑ Don't use the glove compartment as a "traveling safe." Take your valuables, including personal papers, with you.



# Storm Watch

## Resolve to be "READY" this storm season!



### Sheriff's Departments Response to Hurricane Katrina

There was a time when yearly hurricane preparedness was completed with little forethought of the "Big One" affecting our rural community. Hurricane Katrina has forever changed lives. This deadly storm has forced government, businesses, and citizens alike, to reexamine their emergency preparations by using a benchmark much higher than they have ever witnessed before.

Although experiencing high winds and some flooding, St. Charles Parish was spared the blunt of Katrina's tidal surge that left many of our neighboring parishes in ruins, the storm did allow Sheriff's Office personnel to gain valuable experience in preparation for future storms. With this additional knowledge and experience Sheriff Champagne has his Department striving to update and improve the departments preparedness and response.

"Our main focus is the protection of lives and property. Deputies are mobilized early into around the clock shifts to assist at intersections in coordinating the evacuations and to patrol the parish," said Sheriff Champagne.

Pre and Post Hurricane Katrina, Sheriff's Office employees functioned in many areas;

- Check points established along evacuation routes to aid motorists and assist in the flow of traffic.

- Extra Deputies assigned to patrol neighborhoods and business areas.

- A parish wide curfew is in effect and aids in protection. "Anything that moves gets stopped," said Sheriff Champagne.

- Police escorts for senior citizens being transported from inter parish care facilities to shelters.

- Shelter, Commodity distribution, Red Cross and other facility security.

- Staging area for additional Police Officers and commodities to assist our parish and other areas affected.

- Assisted in transportation of evacuees walking into the parish to a safe shelter.

- Rescued several citizens and Medical Care personnel from the New Orleans Convention Center.

- Correctional Center Inmates assisted in commodity distribution.

While our agency and citizens are still in the recovery process from the effects of Hurricane Katrina, the Sheriff's Office must be prepared for the 2006 Season. Our efforts are being focused to the following areas of improvement.

#### Back-up Communications Systems

Unlike many of our neighboring parishes during Katrina, the St. Charles Sheriff's parish wide 800 MHz Radio System remained reliable. In other parishes,

their radio system's failures required police, fire, EMS, School Board, and other agencies to communicate on a crippled system incapable of adequately serving their needs. In addition to hardening the sheriff's office radio towers and systems to minimize our vulnerability in future disasters, the department, in cooperation with St. Charles Parish Government, is exploring a back up system to increase system resiliency.

#### SUV's

The sheriff's office vehicle fleet is being augmented with SUV's to assist in responding on debris covered or flooded streets. Hurricane Katrina blocked the streets with debris, utility lines and rainwater. The SUV's will allow for greater travel with less chance of stalling a unit and provides for a much safer means of travel.

#### Improved Public and Employee Information Systems

The St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office web site, which was knocked offline when the hosting company flooded, will contain updated information about the condition and recovery efforts of the Parish during future events. "We have improved our ability to provide information on conditions here on a continuous basis," said Sheriff Champagne. "Our focus is not to keep people away from their homes and property, but to inform you of what you will need to sustain your family upon return. Following Katrina, we wanted residents to return

home and begin the recovery process, but that required they bring their own food, water, generator," said Sheriff Champagne.

#### Employee Shelters

Communications/9-1-1 personnel were transported to a safe haven out of harms way for Katrina. This proved to be beneficial when the fresh personnel immediately return to assist with recovery efforts following the storm. They relieved their co-workers who worked endlessly during the hurricane's destructive winds. This allowed a second wave of fresh dispatchers to continue the around-the-clock response.

The magnitude of Katrina also caused the department to reevaluate the local shelters used by deputies. In the future, deputies will be housed in better-equipped buildings and our internal supply system affording the resources for them to effectively respond have been enhanced.

In all, there are many lessons learned through our Katrina experience that have made us better prepared to protect the life and property of St. Charles Parish. But all our planning are paled in the importance of our residents making their own plans to deal with such events. "This is a united effort where local government coordinates their efforts and preparations to protect St. Charles Parish while local residents implement their personal crisis plans to ensure the safety of their loved ones," said Sheriff Champagne.

## DISASTER SUPPLY KIT

There are six basics you should stock for your home: water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies, and special items. Keep the items that you would most likely need during an evacuation in an easy-to carry container — suggested items are marked with an asterisk (\*). Possible container include a large, covered trash container, a camping backpack, or a duffel bag.

### WATER

Store one gallon of water per person per day. Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for each person in your household for food preparation/sanitation).\*

### FOOD

Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food.

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables
- Canned juices
- Staples (salt, sugar, pepper, spices, etc.)
- High energy foods
- Vitamins
- Food for infants
- Comfort/stress foods

### FIRST AID KIT

6.

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car.

#### NON-PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

- Aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid (for stomach upset)
- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the [Poison Control Center](#))
- Laxative
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

#### Tools and Supplies

- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils\*
- Emergency preparedness manual\*
- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries\*
- Flashlight and extra batteries\*
- Cash or traveler's checks, change\*
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife\*
- Fire extinguisher: small canister ABC type
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water

- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of the area (for locating shelters)

#### SANITATION

- Toilet paper, towelettes\*
- Soap, liquid detergent\*
- Feminine supplies\*
- Personal hygiene items\*
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Household chlorine bleach

#### Clothing and Bedding

- \*Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.
- Sturdy shoes or work boots\*
- Rain gear\*
- Blankets or sleeping bags\*
- Hat and gloves
- Thermal underwear
- Sunglasses

#### SPECIAL ITEMS

Remember family members with special requirements, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons

#### FOR BABY\*

- Formula
- Diapers
- Bottles
- Powdered milk
- Medications

#### For Adults\*

- Heart and high blood pressure medication
- Insulin
- Prescription drugs
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eye glasses

#### ENTERTAINMENT

- Games and books

#### IMPORTANT FAMILY DOCUMENTS

Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container:

- Will, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds
- Passports, social security cards, immunization records
- Bank account numbers
- Credit card account numbers & companies
- Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

- Store your kit in a convenient place known to all family members. Keep a smaller version of the supplies kit in the trunk of your car.

Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Change your stored water supply every six months so it stays fresh. Replace your stored food every six months. Re-think your kit and family needs at least once a year. Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.

Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications



# LESSONS LEARNED

## Prepare now for your safety!

Through the valuable lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina, citizens need to prepare now for the future.

A Louisiana Citizen Awareness and Disaster Evacuation Guide has been published to assist you in your preparation. This guide can be obtained by contacting your, American Red Cross or the State of Louisiana Homeland Security & Preparedness Office.

### Evacuations

St. Charles Parish is listed in Phase II of the States evacuation plan. Know your evacuation route in advance.

Citizens who choose to ignore a Mandatory Evacuation Order should be aware that during the height of the storm, all emergency responders will be "bunkered down" and will not respond to emergencies until the weather situation allows them to do so safely. Depending on the amount of destruction (down trees, utility lines, debris, water, etc) it may be hours, even days, before someone can respond to your needs. Please take this into consideration before staying home to weather the storm.

### Family Communications Plan

Create a family communications plan ahead of time. This will help ensure you and your family can connect as easily and quickly as possible. Designate an

individual outside of the state to serve as a family point of contact. (After Katrina, it was easier to call out-of-state than within the affected area.) Make sure that all family members know who this person is and how to contact him/her. After a disaster or evacuation, all family members should make contact with the designated individual. Try choosing a certain time for everyone to check in.

### Prepare For Your Pets

If you are a pet owner, your family's disaster plan must include your pets. Bring pets indoors at the first sign of danger. If you must evacuate, the best thing you can do to protect your pets is to evacuate them too.



### Family Disaster Supply Kit

Assemble your kit now to allow for immediate action during an emergency. Keep the items in a waterproof container that can be easily transported from your home to your car and your safe place.

### After a Storm

Stay tuned to local radio or television for information from your local or state officials. The Sheriff's Office Web Site; [www.stcharlessheriff.org](http://www.stcharlessheriff.org) will provide you with valuable information on returning to the parish.

Return home only after state or local officials advise that it is safe to do so. Remember that necessities such as; food, water, sewage, electricity and fuel may be in short supply or not available.

There may be long lines at stores or commodity distribution points.

Have proper identification with you when returning back into the Parish. Check points may be established to limit or control your return to your home or an area.

## ACTION CHECKLIST

### Do you have:

- A plan in place to survive a disaster?
- A home and car emergency supply kit?
- Updated homeowner's and flood insurance?
- A plan for turning off your utilities?
- Copies of your insurance policies, important documents and other valuables in a safe place?
- An inventory and detailed description of your property?
- A storm-ready roof, which has been inspected within the last six months?
- Well-maintained trees and shrubs around your house?
- A car in good running condition, including properly inflated tires and a spare?
- An up-to-date emergency phone list?
- Complete arrangements for your out-of-state communication contact?
- A plan to address the "special needs" family members?
- A place to house your pets or animals?
- A recovery plan?
- A sound education and involvement in community preparedness?
- Money for the additional expense to prepare your home, buy supplies and evacuate?

**To learn more, contact the St. Charles Red Cross in Luling, or call SCPSO's Special Services Dept. at 985-783-1355.**

## Sheriff's Camp builds future leadership

The 11th annual "Operation First Class Sheriff's Camp" was held during the week of July 16 - 21 at the Boy Scout's Camp Salman located in the pine forest of Kiln, Miss. Fifty-eight boys between the ages of 12 - 16 attended the 5-day camp along with ten deputies serving as chaperones.

The camp promotes trust and interaction between the parish's youth and the deputies. "Campers and deputies have raved about this experience. The summer camp provides the boys the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, make new friends, and develop new skills. For many of the boys, it's the first time they've ever been camping," said Sheriff Champagne.

The St. Charles Sheriff's

Office sponsors this annual event allowing local youth an opportunity to develop leadership skills. During the 5-day camp, the youth had the opportunity to experience the outdoors, camp fires, swimming, canoeing, archery and rifle shooting, repelling, and rock wall climbing. Over the past ten years, over 500 St. Charles Parish boys have attended this Summer Camp since it started in 1996.





## Judge Weimer praises officers



St. Charles Parish deputies listen as Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Judge John Weimer speaks to them. Weimer praised the officers for their astonishing efforts in protecting and serving the citizens of St. Charles and other surround-

ing parishes during Hurricane Katrina. He also briefed deputies on recent court cases that may apply to their profession. Justice Weimer started out as a district court judge and a professor prior to his election to the Louisiana Court of Appeals.

## PAY INCREASE APPROVED

In July, 2005, St. Charles Parish voters overwhelming approved a 3.75 millage proposition generating 2.7 million dollars. The revenue is dedicated to immediate salary increases for all employees and expenses.

The salary increases were implemented last November. Enforcement Personnel Uniform Officers, Investigators, Correctional Officers, and 9-1-1 Dispatchers received an 18% increase while, office and support staff received a 12% increase.

The millage increase allowed Sheriff Champagne to elevate starting pay for deputies from \$26,084 to \$30,140 a year, allowing the department to be more

competitive with other agencies. This increase also attracts qualified applicants and retains better trained and experienced officers. "This salary increase will close the gap and make our pay more competitive," said Sheriff Champagne.

"St. Charles Parish continues to be one of the fastest growing parishes in the State of Louisiana because of the quality of life we enjoy. An excellent public school system and a low crime rate are the two primary reasons for the popularity of our parish as a place to live, work, and raise a family," said Sheriff Champagne. "Attracting qualified employees and retaining trained and experienced officers is essential to our continued success."

## It can't happen here ... Right?

continued from page 2

from incidents of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Hazmat incidents, hostage situations, school or office shootings, barricaded subjects, high risk warrants, and more," said Lieutenant Madere. "Special Response Activities and homeland security go hand in hand. We train every month for all of these incidents, and we also train with surrounding agencies. This is truly a regional approach to addressing concerns," he added.

"Although we have a large concentration of certified Hazmat respond-

ers, we are striving to be even better prepared," said Sheriff Champagne who has set the goal to have every first responder in the department certified. "First responders of this nation put themselves on the line every day to protect our communities. by bringing together information and resources to prepare for and respond to terrorist attacks, natural disasters, or other large-scale emergencies. Our collective efforts can only enhance our ability to maintain the quality of life we all enjoy in St. Charles Parish," he added.

## Sheriff's Department Contact Numbers

Sheriff Champagne .....	(985) 783-6237
Administrative Services.....	(985) 783-6237
Patrol Operations.....	(985) 783-1145
Criminal Investigations.....	(985) 783-1135
Narcotics Division .....	(985) 783-1159
Juvenile Investigations .....	(985) 783-1135
Special Services Division.....	(985) 783-1355
Personnel Division .....	(985) 783-6237

## www.stcharlessheriff.org gets a new look

The St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office's Web site, [www.stcharlessheriff.org](http://www.stcharlessheriff.org), has been significantly updated. Many features have been added and information updated so that the citizens of St. Charles Parish can keep abreast of the latest happenings in the parish. Visitors will also be able to receive up-to-date information on sex offenders in their neighborhood, alerts on missing children, and detailed information on the parish's most wanted fugitives.



## Send your gift home

SCSO employees enthusiastically gave to the United Way of St. Charles in 2006, increasing contributions for the seventh consecutive year.

By designating the parish's United Way agency as the recipient of your pledge, you can ensure that neighbors like you will receive crucial services in their time of need. Unless you designate St. Charles Parish, your gift will go to the parish in which your office campaign is held.

Please, send your gift home to the United Way of St. Charles.



8.

Want more information on the services or programs offered by the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office? Whether you're seeking a listing of departments, services, or a brief history of the agency, you can find it on the World Wide Web. Visit us today at: [www.stcharlessheriff.org](http://www.stcharlessheriff.org).

