

# St. John the Baptist Parish Sheriff's Office



## Annual Report 2016



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Dear fellow citizens,

The St. John the Baptist Parish Sheriff's Office takes great pride in presenting this report on some of the programs, activities and continual efforts we make to keep you and our parish safe. The items highlighted in this issue are only a small sample of the constant work of this department to fulfill our mission of protecting your lives and property.

The senseless violence against police officers in our nation and state has had a profound effect on not only those of us in law enforcement, but also on those we serve. In my nearly 30 years of police work, I have never seen such an outpouring of support for this department, heard so many thank yous, received so many offers for prayer or witnessed so many donations of goods and services for our officers. I humbly ask for your continued backing and sustained partnership with us to fight crime.

As I begin my second term as your sheriff, I'm pleased to say that this department continues to improve its abilities to serve and protect you. The 911 Center has undergone a major upgrade to handle the 50,000 calls a year it receives for assistance. New patrol units are on our streets and we are making significant drug busts and enacting more programs to keep our community safe. Substations and training facilities are under construction and our relationship with the community gets stronger every day.

Keeping St. John safe is a team effort. You can do a great deal to fight crime by following a simple phrase: If you see something, say something. Never hesitate to dial 911 or use our mobile app to report suspicious activity. We will respond.

Law enforcement is a very unique profession, unlike no other in many ways. Perhaps its most exceptional aspect is that each and every day, the 64 sheriffs and 14,000 deputies in Louisiana must be prepared mentally and physically to save a life, take a life or give our own for the citizens we serve. Here in St. John, we will continue the strong tradition established by this department many years ago of running towards danger while others run from it.

Please let me know if I or this office can ever be of service to you.

Sincerely,

**MIKE TREGRE**

Sheriff, St. John the Baptist Parish  
sheriff@stjohnsheriff.org



**Four More Years** – Judge Mary Hotard Becnel administers the oath of office to Sheriff Tregre for his second term while he places his hand on a Bible held by his son Jared.

## 911 Center Upgrades



With \$357,000 in improvements complete, our 911 Center provides dispatchers with better working conditions and our office with enhanced communication tools.

“The backbone of law enforcement has always been and will always be reliable communication,” Sheriff Tregre said. “The quicker we know about a situation requiring assistance, the faster we can respond.”

Upgraded phone and radio systems and new floors, desks, ergonomic Vesta Airbus consoles, computer screens and new software have been installed. “This center is used 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It’s the heart of our operation and making sure it’s in perfect condition is a top priority,” Sheriff Tregre said. “Our street mapping and records system has been improved while new radios allow everyone involved in an emergency situation to communicate as dead spots in the parish are eliminated.”

## New Offices at Patrol Headquarters

Extensive renovations are complete at the offices of our Patrol, Crime Scene Investigation and Public Relations Divisions. Besides a new roof, the remodeling includes new walls, floors and lights to the building just south of the jail. The upgrades provide a much more modern facility with new meeting rooms which can be used for community gatherings and training. Covered storage areas for our equipment are under construction.



*Sheriff Tregre leads a tour of the renovated patrol headquarters.*

## New Substation/Training Facility/Shooting Range

The SJBPSO has purchased the former River Bend Lanes bowling alley at Airline and Cambridge Drive and will convert the 88,000-square-foot building into a substation and training facility.

“We will bring this building, which has been vacant since 2008, back to life and establish a strong, visible police presence in that part of the parish,” Sheriff Tregre said. “This substation will allow for even quicker responses to calls for assistance. We will also build training facilities and an indoor shooting range with space to conduct hunter safety, crime prevention and self-defense instruction.”

West Bank residents will also soon see a new sheriff’s office substation as plans are being formulated to acquire land and design a building that will better serve residents there. Inmate labor will be used as much as possible for both projects.



*Inmates help clear the exterior of the former River Bend Lanes bowling alley in LaPlace.*



*Sheriff Tregre and former Sheriff Lloyd Johnson inspect the building’s interior.*

## Hello, Xin Chào, Bonjour, Hola, Guten Tag...

Several members of our department speak more than one language, including Arabic, Armenian, French, German, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese. Bilingual officers provide a valuable service to our office as well as tourists, witnesses, suspects and crime victims who speak little or no English.

# Awards and Honors



## Honoring Our Fallen Brothers



Officers from the SJBPSO were among thousands of law enforcement professionals from across the country who traveled to Baton Rouge to honor the lives of three law enforcement officers killed in July of 2016.

Members of the SJBPSO attended the funerals of fallen Baton Rouge Police Officers Montrell Jackson and Matthew Gerald and East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Deputy Brad Garafola.

## SJBPSO Law Enforcement Memorial



As part of National Police Week, Sheriff Tregre and the SJBPSO hosted the annual memorial program honoring our officers killed in the line of duty. Family, friends and citizens attended the May 18 ceremony at REGALA Gym. SJBPSO members who made the ultimate sacrifice to ensure our safety are Constable Ignace Roussel, Deputy Harry Troxclair, Detective Sherman Walker, Deputy Barton Granier, Code Officer Edmond Songy, Captain Octavio Gonzalez, Deputy Brandon Nielsen and Deputy Jeremy Triche.

## P.O.S.T. Graduates

SJBPSO Deputies Gregory Johnson and Jared Seruntine recently achieved P.O.S.T. certification by completing the Peace Officers Standards and Training program at the Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Training Academy in Thibodaux. The 18-week program included instruction in firearms, physical fitness, law, reports and investigations.



Deputy Gregory Johnson



Deputy Jared Seruntine

## FBI Academy Graduate

Lieutenant Chip Wale is congratulated by Sheriff Tregre for completing training at the FBI Academy.



The 263rd session of the FBI National Academy had some local flavor as Lt. Chip Wale was among the 230 graduates from 47 states and 21 countries.

A 16-year veteran of the SJBPSO and our Training Director, Lt. Wale will share the knowledge he gained on advanced crime-fighting technology and techniques with our staff. The 10-week program is conducted at FBI headquarters in Quantico, Virginia.

"Lt. Wale was selected to attend this prestigious institute because of his work ethic and daily efforts to improve our training programs," Sheriff Tregre said. Lt. Wale is the SJBPSO's 10th FBI Academy graduate.

*The mission of the St. John the Baptist Parish Sheriff's Office is to improve the quality of life in our parish. We will protect life and property through partnership with our communities. We respect the rights of all citizens by upholding the U.S. Constitution and the Law of Louisiana. We will perform our duties by adhering to our core beliefs: Integrity, Professionalism, Compassion and Fairness.*



Sheriff Tregre with 2015's Officer of the Year Detective Vernon Bailey, Jr.

## Officer of the Year

Detective Vernon Bailey, Jr. is the SJBPSO's 2015 officer of the year. Detective Bailey's outstanding investigative work led to arrests, guilty pleas and lengthy prison sentences in two high-profile cases. He helped secure an 18-year sentence for the perpetrator in an attempted murder case and a 25-year sentence for another person convicted for homicide.

## 2015-16 Officers of the Month

sponsored by the St. John Business Association

Deputy Jonathan Walker  
 Deputy Claudette Edwards  
 Sgt. Denise Bertrand  
 Deputy Lisa Dorris  
 Deputy Grant Pierre  
 Deputy Brittany Layne  
 Deputy Grant Pierre  
 Deputy Roy Vicknair  
 Deputy Turner Barran  
 Deputy Stephen Perkins  
 Deputy Arthur Ponder  
 Deputy Gilberto Castellanos  
 Deputy Russell Smith and K9 Fox  
 Deputy Faron Duhe  
 Deputy Michael Schaeffer  
 Deputy Anthony Ealy  
 Detective Ann Taylor  
 Detective Christie Chauvin

## P.O.P.S. Protecting Our Precious Seniors



Deputy Roy Vicknair of our P.O.P.S. program visits Audrey Holmes.

The SJBPSO works to ensure the safety of our senior citizens and disabled adults by providing our P.O.P.S. or Protecting Our Precious Seniors program. Through P.O.P.S., officers make weekly visits to each person's home to assess physical and living conditions. Any concerns are relayed to the person's primary caregiver. For more information about P.O.P.S., please call 985.652.7058 or visit [stjohnsheriff.org](http://stjohnsheriff.org) and click the Community Services tab.

## We're Hiring!

If you've ever considered a career in law enforcement, now is a good time to pursue it as we are accepting applications for employment.

We offer a unique opportunity – the chance to serve your community while earning a competitive salary with generous benefits. Download an application from our website, complete it and get it to our office so we can discuss your future with the SJBPSO.

## Numbers

In 2015, we answered 49,895 calls for assistance to our 911 Center, made 2,669 arrests and investigated 1,607 traffic accidents. 207 people were arrested for DWI and 463 were taken into custody for illegal drugs.



Visit [stjohnsheriff.org](http://stjohnsheriff.org) for many ways to interact with us through the web. You can get the latest news and happenings, sign up for alerts, apply for licenses and permits, download useful forms and complete many transactions from your keyboard. Stay in touch on Facebook at *St. John the Baptist Parish Sheriff* and on Twitter *@stjohnsheriff*.

## Mobile App

Every day we hear "There's an app for that!" Well, there's one for your sheriff's office too and it's free. Simply go to the app store site for your mobile device, locate "St. John Sheriff," download it and you're connected.

Our app sends you emergency notifications, traffic updates, road closures and weather alerts. You can also use it to submit a tip to investigators with a photo or video. "It's another way we can continue to enhance the lines of communication between us and citizens by providing useful information," Sheriff Tregre said. "We want and need your continued involvement with our office to keep St. John safe."

## Fighting Drugs

We continue to work hard to stop the illegal drug trade and recently broke up major distribution networks based here.

"Deputies seized 220,000 doses of the anti-anxiety drug Xanax worth more than \$1.1 million and made arrests that ended a nationwide distribution system," Sheriff Tregre said. "We also stopped a large cocaine and heroin operation, picking up cash, firearms and drugs valued at \$480,000."

Sheriff Tregre said illegal drugs affect all segments of the population because of crimes linked to their use.

"National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence statistics show that about 60 percent of individuals arrested for most types of crimes test positive for drugs and half have addiction issues," Sheriff Tregre said. "Drugs hurt not only the users, but their families and our community. If you see any activity you think is drug-related, call 911 immediately. We will respond."



*Sheriff Tregre with hundreds of thousands of Xanax pills that were recently confiscated in St. John, breaking up a major illegal drug ring that operated through the Internet.*



*Sheriff Tregre addresses local church leaders on keeping them and their congregations safe.*

## Intruder Awareness

Educating group members, in particular churches, on what to do should an intruder pose a danger is the focus of a new program from the SJBPSO.

"A church used to be the safest place in town but the world we live in today presents dangers not often faced a generation ago," Sheriff Tregre said. "This free course, which we plan to expand to cover more churches and organizations that hold regular get-togethers, stresses awareness and security measures that can be put into place to protect people."

Some 25 pastors attended the initial event, learning how to recognize suspicious persons and steps to take should a threatening situation take place. "We will continue to work to keep citizens safe no matter where they are in our parish," Sheriff Tregre said.



## Register Your Cameras and Bicycles

If you have security cameras at your home or business, consider registering them with our office. Video from your system may help us solve a crime. Visit [stjohnsheriff.org](http://stjohnsheriff.org) for information and while there register your bicycle as well. If it's lost or stolen, getting it back to you is much easier with recorded ownership.



## Need a speaker for your next meeting?

A representative of the SJBPSO will gladly address your organization on any topic regarding law enforcement in our parish. To schedule, please contact our community relations division at 985.652.7058.



*SJBPSO deputies survey tornado damage.*

## Tornado of February 2016

The SJBPSO quickly restored order after a tornado struck LaPlace on February 23, 2016. One of 13 twisters that struck the state that day, the St. John storm had winds up to 135 miles per hour which damaged or destroyed 500 structures and knocked out power to 3,000 homes and businesses. Miraculously, no one was seriously injured.

“Unfortunately, our office has a lot of practice dealing with disasters such as Hurricane Isaac in 2012 and flooding in the parish in 2014,” Sheriff Tregre said. “We have a solid, tested plan to handle these events and put it into effect immediately to protect citizens and their property.”

Patrols were increased in the areas affected and a curfew was enacted. Our inmate work crew helped clean up debris.

## On Two Wheels...



A nationwide study showed that an officer in a patrol unit contacts about three citizens per hour while one on a bicycle averages more than seven interactions in the same time period. On a bicycle, deputies move slower, are able to observe more and can sometimes ride right up on criminal activity while it's occurring.

## Bullet-Proof Vests

After several years of service, bullet-proof vests worn by SJBPSO deputies lose their effectiveness and must be replaced. With a cost of about \$500 each, we've established a special fund to buy new vests and welcome your contribution in any amount. Help protect us as we continue to protect you. Please call 985.652.9513 for more information.



*Sheriff Tregre and Chief Deputy Steve Guidry with a bullet-proof vest.*

## Lending a Hand

Members of the SJBPSO Search & Rescue Team helped evacuate residents from our neighboring parishes during the historic floods in August. Using high-water vehicles and boats, our team rescued about 700 people.



**St. John the Baptist Parish Sheriff's Office**

**Mike Tregre, Sheriff**

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8-5 M-Th, 8-4:30 F



**Reserve/Garyville/Mt. Airy**

985.536.4176

**Edgard/West Bank**

985.497.3435

[stjohnsheriff.org](http://stjohnsheriff.org)

**EMERGENCY: DIAL 911**

# Connected to Our Community

Let us know if you'd like our participation in your event. We'd welcome the opportunity to visit.



Honor Roll Roundup



K-9 Demonstration



Read Across America



Kids' Fishing Rodeo



Veterans' Lunch



War Veterans Home Visit



Gun Safety Instruction



Basketball Court Repair



Independence Day Celebration



Sheriff's Prayer Breakfast