

St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office



Phase 1, #10

Update

2007 Annual Report

www.stcharlessheriff.org

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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 tenth 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.

Steady decline in crime rate over last 10 years

Welcome to the tenth edition of the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office annual newsletter "Update". In this issue we present articles which display the numerous programs and services the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's office provides to our residents. Also included is a refrigerator magnet that contains an updated list of the numbers of the various offices and departments of the SCSO.

Despite a tremendous growth in population, the hallmark accomplishment of the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office is the steady reduction in crime over the last ten years. Since 1997, crime in St. Charles has fallen 18% according to the F.B.I. Uniform Crime Reports. This has occurred despite a 20% INCREASE in population. This drop in crime is even more dramatic when considered in terms of per capita crime. The challenge before us in this post-Katrina recovery period in the metropolitan area is to maintain this low crime rate along with our quality of life we hold so dear in St. Charles Parish.

The St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office has been in existence for over a century; however, many of our landmark accomplishments have occurred in the last ten years.

- A new state of the art correctional center built without raising taxes has gone a long way to help us reduce crime and hold the criminals that need to be held.
- One of only 25 Certified Police Training Academies in the State of Louisiana.

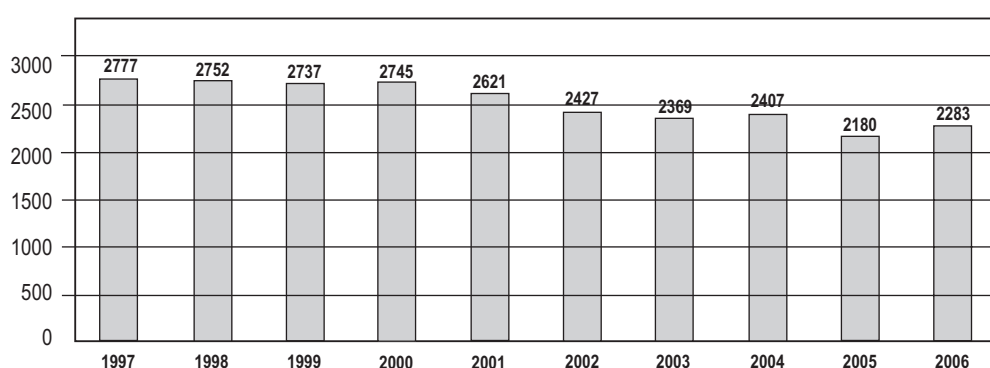
- A newly created Special Response Team or SWAT is now operating and is prepared for any type of violent emergency or homeland security threat.
- Salaries for deputies have been doubled in the last ten years.
- A new firing range has been built with inmate labor. It is 99% complete and will be functional in the next few weeks.
- Our multi-faceted school violence program has been emulated around the country. 10 deputies are permanently assigned to our public schools to protect our children. DARE, Character links, First Class camp for youths and many other programs provide activities and instructions for our youth.

- Our TRIAD Senior Citizen Community Advisory Panel provides information and education to protect our growing senior population in St. Charles Parish.

Feel free to read more about the above and many other programs and services the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office provides in this issue of our UPDATE.

ST. CHARLES PARISH ANNUAL UCR TOTALS

Total Index crimes reported to the FBI



St. Charles Parish Sheriff Greg Champagne to serve as President of Louisiana Sheriffs' Association

St. Charles Parish Sheriff Greg Champagne was sworn in on July 12 as the president of the 65 member Louisiana Sheriffs' Association. Champagne will preside over the prestigious group of Louisiana's chief law enforcement officials until July 2008. He is the first Sheriff in St. Charles Parish history to serve in the post. The gavel was passed to the St. Charles

Sheriff at the group's annual conference.

"It is an honor to be a Sheriff in the USA and the State of Louisiana," said Champagne. "It is an even higher honor to be selected by your peers in the state to lead this group of chief law enforcement officers. I will do my best for my state, parish and colleagues."

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1.

Community Strategies

Deputies receive across the board raise

We are rapidly approaching the two-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, a catastrophe that has had such an impact on our lives, families and our community. I often thank God that we were spared the horrific devastation that our neighbors to the east suffered. What a difference a few miles made!

As I have stated before, the members of the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office stood, as never before, to weather the storm and provided unparalleled service to our citizens throughout that difficult time.

I know that much has changed since Katrina. We have had to endure insurance companies, bureaucratic red tape, and many unfulfilled promises from government for many to get back to their quality of life. We have all been impacted and are still feeling the effects of this recovery.

Since Katrina, we have all worked hard to enhance salaries and benefits to all of our employees. The public recognized our commitment and voted for our millage proposition, and we received our increase

in November of 2005 (12%/18%). In 2006, we enhanced our deferred compensation match/contribution and instituted a longevity plan. In Jan. of 2007, we increased our life insurance coverage to three times our annual base salary.

In February of this year, we increased salaries 8% and instituted an education incentive to acknowledge and encourage continued higher education.

Effective July 8, 2007, I have authorized a 5% across the board salary increase for all employees. This increase will raise the starting salary of an enforcement deputy to \$37,377.35. With the corresponding benefits adjusted to \$8,358.66, the new total salary and benefits for a starting enforcement deputy is now \$45,731.01.

I, along with the staff, will continue to work to enhance our salaries, equipment and working conditions to keep the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office one of the best in the state.

Sincerely,
Greg Champagne,
Sheriff

Sgt. Paul Finn awarded Officer of the Year

St. Charles Parish Sheriff Greg Champagne is pleased to announce that our own Sergeant Paul Finn has been awarded the 2006 United States Marshal's Service Law Enforcement Officer of the Year for all of the United States by John F. Clark, Director of the United States Marshal's Service.

The United States Marshal's Service named St. Charles Sheriff's Office Sergeant Paul Finn "Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award". He was honored at the Director's Awards Ceremony held in Washington, DC on April 11, 2007.

Sergeant Finn and his canine partner "Bo" have worked with the U.S. Marshal's Crescent Star Fugitive Task Force in the Eastern District of Louisiana since 2003. Together, Sgt. Finn and Bo have worked with the Task Force to track down and arrest some of the district's most dangerous fugitives, including two defendants profiled on America's Most Wanted, and three major case arrests.

Even when Sergeant Finn was temporarily called back to the Sheriff's Department in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, he continued to support the Task Force during early-morning, late-evening, or weekend fugitive call-outs.



Sgt. Paul Finn, Sgt. Finn's Canine "Bo", Sheriff Champagne

One supervisor said of the two, "Paul finds'em, and Bo catches'em." Together, they form an integral part of the Marshal's Service's Fugitive Task Forces and has exhibited leadership and dedication that is matched by few.

"Crime is a regional problem. Sergeant Finn is one of several of my officers assigned to work with federal taskforce. I also have officers working alongside DEA and FBI Agents. This regional cooperative effort with our Federal law enforcement agencies helps not only the metro area deal with crime, but in return we receive additional manpower from these agencies in our local crime fighting effort," said Sheriff Champagne.

Each year the Director recognizes an officer from outside the Marshal's Service who makes "significant contributions to law enforcement and the missions of the Marshal's Service.

Sheriff receives Crimestoppers Award



Left to right: News Anchor Norman Robinson (Master of Ceremony), Sheriff Greg Champagne, Darlene Cusanza (Executive Director for Crimestoppers).

Sheriff Greg Champagne was recently honored at a local Awards Banquet held by Crimestoppers. Champagne was a recipient of the Law Enforcement Award which recognized him and his department's post Katrina efforts for serving their community and outstanding participation with Crimestoppers. Crimestoppers is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization which works in cooperation with local law enforcement, media, and the general public to solve and prevent crimes in the parishes of St. Charles, Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard, St. John, St. Tammany, Plaquemines, and St. James. The program is 22 years old and utilizes a

24-hour anonymous crime tip hot line.

Since its inception, Crimestoppers has assisted law enforcement to solve over 6,000 crimes and has paid out over \$800,000 in cash rewards to callers. "We just wanted to take this opportunity to thank Sheriff Champagne and his staff for doing such an outstanding job in protecting their citizens and property during Katrina. Crimestoppers is pleased to be affiliated with the St. Charles Parish Sheriffs Office", said Darlene Cusanza, Executive Director for Crimestoppers. Anyone interested in learning more about Crimestoppers or reporting a crime should contact 1-877-903-STOP or www.crimestoppersgno.org

Sheriff Greg Champagne re-elected to NSA board

St. Charles Parish Sheriff Greg Champagne was re-elected to a second term on the Board of Directors of the National Sheriffs' Association at the association's annual conference held in Salt Lake City, UT in July. Elected by Sheriffs from around the country, Sheriff Champagne will serve another three-year term on the prestigious 30 member Board of Directors. Sheriff Champagne was also appointed to serve

as chairman of the newly created legal affairs committee by National Sheriffs Association President, Sheriff Craig Webre of Lafourche Parish.

"I am again honored by the confidence my peers throughout the United States have shown in me by re-electing me to the NSA Board of Directors. I look forward also to serving as chair of the legal affairs committee which reports on and analyzes court decisions applicable to law enforcement and Sheriffs around the country," said Sheriff Champagne, also an attorney and former prosecutor in St. Charles Parish.

This committee will be very active in providing current legal information to the Sheriffs' Offices of the United States and by providing ongoing continuing legal educational programs to them and their deputies. Keeping up with the latest court decisions, both state and federal, and understanding the impact they have on local sheriff's offices is a constant challenge to the nation's sheriffs.



Left to right: Sheriff Champagne accepts newly created appointment by Sheriff Craig Webre of Lafourche Parish.

Community Outreach

NEW FIRING RANGE OPENS

The new firing range is located on approximately 2.5 acres apart from the Nelson Coleman Correctional Center in Killona, Louisiana. The St. Charles Sheriff's Office's, the newly constructed firing range is a state of the art facility. The construction lasted for a year with parish assistance and inmate labor, saving an estimated \$100,000.00 in construction cost. Also, in addition to the range, the former Special Services building was moved on site and will be used

for classroom training and hunter safety. The range is a valuable tool in the departments POST certified training academy, one of only a few in the State of Louisiana. The academy not only certifies deputies for St. Charles Parish, but also officers from various agencies throughout the state.



Hunter Education Courses offered by SCSO

The St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office offers Hunter Education Courses to individuals who are interested in outdoor sporting. This course is designed to assist first time hunters become more sensitive about weapon safety.

A certified firearm instructor with the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office will be on hand to teach in areas of firearm safety, land use, ethics, hunter responsibility, and

other important topics.

Anyone interested in finding out how to attend an up-coming Hunter Education Course should contact Deputy Ted Adams (504) 201- 5222 or Shelly at (985) 783-1173.

This course is required for all youngsters seeking to obtain their first hunting license as well as for many hunters who seek to acquire an out of state license.

PROJECT TRANSITION PROGRAM

Project Transition is a program which recruits a class of fifteen inmates who are in their last six months of incarceration at Nelson Coleman. The program involves them in an interactive examination of how substance abuse and behavioral issues can be identified and modified in such a way as to assist them to return to a productive and worthwhile life upon release.

Project transition is funded through

the United Way and is a joint project of the Nelson Coleman Center along with the St. Charles Mental Health Task Force (made up of the Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse for Greater New Orleans, Catholic Charities of St. Charles Parish, the Center for Family and Youth Services, the St. Charles Community Health Center, and the Child Advocacy Center).

Approximately 150 inmates have graduated from this eight-week course.



John King, Chairman for CADA (Council on Drugs and Alcohol) speaking to graduates of Project Transition.

What Is Neighborhood Watch?

Neighborhood Watch is a crime prevention program that:

- Teaches citizens techniques to reduce the risk of being victimized at home and in public.
- Trains citizens on the importance of recognizing suspicious activities and how to report them.
- Teaches participants how to make their homes more secure and properly ID their property.
- Allows neighborhoods to get to know each other and their routines so that any out of place activity can be reported and investigated.

In the United States, burglary is the second highest volume of crime of the seven classes of offenses, accounting for 27% of the 11,304,800 index crimes in 1976. Between 1972 and 1976, burglary increased 30%, nighttime burglaries increased by 23%, while daytime burglary increased by 36%. Every 10 seconds, a burglary is committed in the United States.

What Are the Benefits of Neighborhood Watch?

It instills a greater sense of security and well being, and reduces the fear of crime in your community. It also brings law enforcement and the community together as a TEAM.

How Do I Set Up A Neighborhood Watch?

DEFINE the area where the group will be active. This usually encompasses a one-block area, including houses on both sides of the street.

SELECT block captains. A general rule of thumb is to have one captain for every 15 families.

ENCOURAGE residents to participate in programs such as Operation Identification and security surveys. Once half the neighbors have completed either of the two programs, the sheriff's office will officially label the area a Neighborhood Watch group.

What Are the Responsibilities of the Block Captain?

- Organizes neighborhood meetings.
- Promotes the Neighborhood Watch program.
- Arranges for residents' orientation and education.
- Schedules residential security surveys and the Operation Identification program.

Contact Sgt. Dwayne LaGrange (Crime Prevention Officer) at 985-783-1355 to set up a Neighborhood Watch meeting or for additional information.

Young boys learn lessons for life at camp

The 12th annual "Operation First Class Sheriff's Camp" was held during the week of July 22 - 27 at the Boy Scout's Camp Salman located in the pine forest of Kiln, Miss. An average of 50-60 boys between the ages of 11 - 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, rifle shooting, repelling, and rock wall climbing. Since 1996 over 500 St. Charles Parish boys have attended this Summer Camp.



3.

CRIME PREVENTION AND SAFETY PROGRAM OFFERED TO SENIOR CITIZENS THROUGH TRIAD



Sheriff Champagne welcomes senior citizens to Triad's Senior Day event.

On April 23, 1997, Sheriff Greg Champagne and the St. Charles Council on Aging announced the creation of a local Triad program that would help support the needs of our growing elderly population. Triad is a commitment between the Sheriffs office, Council on Aging and Senior Service Providers in our parish to help reduce elder victimization and increase law enforcement services to older persons. The purpose of a Triad is to develop and implement crime prevention and education programs for older individuals. Activities center on both pre-victimization (preventative) and post-victimization (victim/witness assistance) aspects. Triad also focuses on reducing fear of crime by identifying misconceptions, educating seniors or



criminal activity that affect them, and creating programs to reduce elder crime with information exchange between law enforcement and older persons. St. Charles Parish Triad has several outreach programs that help with this assistance. Those are as described to the right. As a non-profit organization, Triad has been supported by funding through United Way of St. Charles since 2002. The Triad program has been able to reach out to more senior citizens and provide additional services since funding by United Way became available.

For more information about this program, please contact the Triad Coordinator, Lori Duplessis at 985-783-1355 or email lduplessis@stcharlessheriff.org

Self-Defense and Awareness Program

Half of everyday living is being aware of what is going on around you. Safety plays a big part in your day-to-day living. But, what if you were in a situation that you had to defend yourself from an attacker? Would you know how? The best way to prepare yourself to fight off an attacker is to take a self-defense class. The St Charles Sheriffs Office and the St Charles Parish



School System have been partners in preventing crimes by teaching self-defense classes for Women, Children & Senior Citizens. We'd love to give you all the right moves in just one article, but some things you just

have to learn in person. A good self-defense class can teach you how to size up a situation and decide what you should do. Self-defense classes can also teach special techniques for breaking an attacker's grasp and other things you can do to get away. This class can teach you ways to surprise your attacker and catch him or her off guard. A self-defense class should give you a chance to practice your moves. If you take a class with a friend, you can continue practicing on each other to keep the moves fresh in your mind long after the class is over. Lt. Pam Schmitt teaches classes several times a year in the fall and in the spring. These classes are taught at different levels for women, children and for senior citizens. Please call Lt. Pam Schmitt if you are interested in participating in these free classes at 985-783-1355.



FREE PROGRAMS FOR SENIORS

Adopt A Senior

Law enforcement officers meet with eligible senior citizens on a regular basis to provide reassurance of safety and open lines of communication between senior citizens and law enforcement officials.



Are You Okay? Telephone Reassurance System

A computerized daily telephone call to eligible senior citizens, confirming that all is well.

File of Life

Miniature Medical File for immediate access to one's medical history, current medications and emergency contacts.



Flashing Security Light

Developed for crime prevention, it helps emergency units find your home quickly by auto flashing capabilities. Also, steady light comes on automatically at dark and shuts off during daylight hours.

Operation Quick Response

A house numbering project for those senior citizens who do not have visible addresses on their homes. Every second counts in an emergency.



Senior Citizen Self-Defense Class

A class teaching senior citizens how to verbally and physically defend themselves. Also, teaches how to prevent from being a victim of crime.

Drug Disposal Program

This service is designed to reinforce the safe use and disposal of expired and unused medications of all types.



St. Charles Parish Sheriff Announces New Emergency Text Page Alert System

Sheriff Champagne is pleased to announce that he has implemented a new emergency notification system, which is now available to the public. This system allows anyone who registers to receive immediate text page alerts via their cell phones or alpha-numeric pager. These notifications will only be made in emergency situations such as hurricane evacuations, tornadoes, hazardous material spills, serious automobile crashes involving road blockage, and possible terrorist attacks.

Citizens should be aware that their cell phone service providers may charge for text page features. The cost is usually very low, but everyone is urged to contact their provider for exact

information and costs. Citizens are urged to contact their providers before activating this feature.

In order to register for this emergency notification service with the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office all you need to do is go to the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office Website at www.stcharlessheriff.org.

Scroll down to the bottom center of the page and click the banner which states **"ENROLL TO RECEIVE EMERGENCY TEXT MESSAGE."**



BAYOU WATCH

The St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office Marine Division patrols all waterways in St. Charles Parish. This includes Bayou Des Allemands, Bayou Gauche, Lake Catouache on the Westbank and The Spillway, Lake Ponchatrain and the Parish Line Canal

on the Eastbank. They also patrol all levees and off road areas for illegal ATVs. The No-Wake Zones are strictly enforced, as well as other boating violations such as D.U.I.'s. The Marine Division can be reached at 985-783-1145.



PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

SETTING THE PACE IN SAFE SCHOOLS

Taking a proactive approach in promoting a safe learning environment, the Sheriff's office and school board are in the forefront with their partnership in creating a safe schools program that has become a



national model. Since implementation 14 years ago, the St. Charles Parish Violence Prevention Program has yielded as much as an 83 percent reduction in violent incidents on school campuses. Seven deputies, serving as school resource officers, are assigned to the parish's middle and high schools where they serve as safety officers, teachers of law related education, and reality based counselors. The St. Charles Parish Safe Schools model has been duplicated by agencies nationwide.

Child FINGERPRINTING



Imagine one second your child is by your side and the next he or she is gone. It is a parent's worst nightmare. Having the needed information readily available the first few moments of the search can be invaluable to law enforcement authorities. Realizing this, Sheriff Greg Champagne is making available free Child I.D. Files for your children. A Child I.D. File is a packet of information about a child, gathered, stored and regularly updated by a parent. The file focuses on a child's unique characteristics. Many children disappear each year, whether they are runaways, kidnapped by a divorced or separated parent or by an unknown person. No matter why a child is missing, finding

that child quickly is vital and a Child I.D. file can help. Have your child's fingerprints taken. Fingerprints can be used to identify children who can't identify themselves due to injuries, disabilities, trauma or because they're too young to speak. They can also be used for older kids who refuse to identify themselves or who give incorrect information or for victims who have died. Children's appearances change, making photos less useful as time passes, but fingerprints stay the same. The St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office offers free child fingerprinting and a booklet about keeping a Child I.D. File. For more information, contact the Special Services Department at 783-1355.

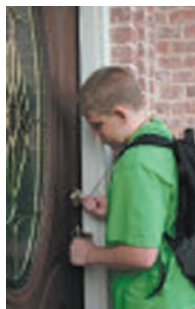
Safety Programs Focus on Youth

As a service to the community, the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office regularly visits schools, local events and meetings. Also, the Special Services Dept. offers community programs designed to promote safety and crime prevention. The objective of these programs, which are offered at no charge, is to provide residents with vital information and needed skills to lessen their risk of becoming a victim. Through education, we hope to reduce crime locally.

Topics and demonstrations include:

- * Child Fingerprinting
- * K-9 Demonstrations
- * Crime Scene Presentations
- * Halloween Safety
- * Narcotic Awareness

- * Seatbelt Safety
- * Bicycle Safety
- * Vehicle Safety
- * Tips for Latchkey Kids
- * Personal Safety
- * Drug Awareness
- * Self Defense



To arrange a presentation for your group or organization, contact Susie Breaux Gauthier at 783-1355. Scheduling is flexible.



Free Bicycle Registration



The St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office offers free Bicycle Registration. You can register your bicycle and receive a bicycle license. For more information contact the Special Services Division at 783-1355.



5.

Community Awareness



What is identity theft?

Identity theft occurs when someone uses your personally identifying information, like your name, Social Security number, or credit card number, without your permission, to commit fraud or other crimes.

It is estimated that as many as 9 million Americans have their identities stolen each year. In fact, you or someone you know may have experienced some form of identity theft.

The crime takes many forms. Identity thieves may rent an apartment, obtain a credit card, or establish a telephone account in your name. You may not find out about the theft until you review your credit report or a credit card statement and notice charges you didn't make or until you are contacted by a debt collector.

Identity theft is serious. While some identity theft victims can resolve their problems quickly, others spend hundreds of dollars and many days repairing damage to their good name and credit record. Some consumers victimized by identity theft may lose out on job opportunities or be denied loans for education, housing or cars because of negative information on their credit reports. In rare cases, they may even be arrested for crimes they did not commit.

How do thieves steal an identity?

Identity theft starts with the misuse of your personally identifying information such as your name and Social Security number, credit card numbers, or other financial account information. For identity thieves, this information is as good as gold.

Skilled identity thieves may use a variety of methods to get hold of your information, including:

6.

Dumpster Diving. They rummage through trash looking for bills or other paper with your personal information on it.

Skimming. They steal credit/debit card numbers by using a special storage device when processing your card.

Phishing. They pretend to be financial institutions or companies and send spam or pop-up messages to get you to reveal your personal information.

Changing Your Address. They divert your billing statements to another location by completing a change of address form.

Old-Fashioned Stealing. They steal wallets and purses; mail, including bank and credit card statements; pre-approved credit offers; and new checks or tax information. They steal personnel records, or bribe employees who have access.

Pretexting. They use false pretenses to obtain your personal information from financial institutions, telephone companies, and other sources.

What do thieves do with a stolen identity?

Once they have your personal information, identity thieves use it in a variety of ways.

CREDIT CARD FRAUD:

They may open new credit card accounts in your name. When they use the cards and don't pay the bills, the delinquent accounts appear on your credit report.

They may change the billing address on your credit card so that you no longer receive bills, and then run up charges on your account. Because your bills are now sent to a different address, it may be some time before you realize there's a problem.



PHONE OR UTILITIES FRAUD:

- They may open a new phone or wireless account in your name, or run up charges on your existing account.
- They may use your name to get utility services like electricity, heating, or cable TV.

BANK/FINANCE FRAUD:

- They may create counterfeit checks using your name or account number.
- They may open a bank account in your name and write bad checks.
- They may clone your ATM or debit card and make electronic withdrawals your name, draining your accounts.
- They may take out a loan in your name.

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS FRAUD:

They may get a driver's license or official ID card issued in your name but with their picture.

They may use your name and Social Security number to get government

benefits.

They may file a fraudulent tax return using your information.

OTHER FRAUD:

They may get a job using your Social Security number.

They may rent a house or get medical services using your name.

They may give your personal information to police during an arrest. If they don't show up for their court date, a warrant for arrest is issued in your name.

How can you find out if your identity was stolen?

The best way to find out is to monitor your accounts and bank statements each month, and check your credit report on a regular basis. If you check your credit report regularly, you may be able to limit the damage caused by identity theft.

Unfortunately, many consumers learn that their identity has been stolen after some damage has been done.

You may find out when bill collection agencies contact you for overdue debts you never incurred.

You may find out when you apply for a mortgage or car loan and learn that problems with your credit history are holding up the loan.

You may find out when you get something in the mail about an apartment you never rented, a house you never bought, or a job you never held.

What should you do if your identity is stolen?

Filing a police report, checking your credit reports, notifying creditors, and disputing any unauthorized transactions are some of the steps you must take immediately to restore your good name.

Should you file a police report if your identity is stolen?

A police report that provides specific details of the identity theft is considered an Identity Theft Report, which entitles you to certain legal rights when it is provided to the three major credit-reporting agencies or to companies where the thief misused your information. An Identity Theft Report can be used to permanently block fraudulent information that results from identity theft, such as accounts or addresses, from appearing on your credit report. It will also make sure these debts do not reappear on your credit reports. Identity Theft Reports can prevent a company from continuing to collect debts that result from identity theft, or selling them to others for collection. An Identity Theft Report is also needed to place an extended fraud alert on your credit report.

You may not need an Identity Theft Report if the thief made charges on an existing account and you have been able to work with the company to resolve the dispute. Where an identity thief has

opened new accounts in your name, or where fraudulent charges have been reported to the consumer reporting agencies, you should obtain an Identity Theft Report so that you can take advantage of the protections you are entitled to.

In order for a police report to entitle you to the legal rights mentioned above, it must contain specific details about the identity theft. You should file an ID theft complaint with the FTC and bring your printed ID Theft Complaint with you to the police station when you file your police report. The printed ID Theft Complaint can be used to support your local police report to ensure that it includes the detail required.

A police report is also needed to get copies of the thief's application, as well as transaction information from companies that dealt with the thief. To get this information, you must submit a request in writing, accompanied by the police report, to the address specified by the company for this purpose.

How long can the effects of identity theft last?

It's difficult to predict how long the effects of identity theft may linger. That's because it depends on many factors including the type of theft, whether the thief sold or passed your information on to other thieves, whether the thief is caught, and problems related to correcting your credit report.

Victims of identity theft should monitor financial records for several months after they discover the crime. Victims should review their credit reports once every three months in the first year of the theft, and once a year thereafter. Stay alert for other signs of identity theft.

Don't delay in correcting your records and contacting all companies that opened fraudulent accounts. Make the initial contact by phone, even though you will normally need to follow up in writing. The longer the inaccurate information goes uncorrected, the longer it will take to resolve the problem.

What can you do to help fight identity theft?

Awareness is an effective weapon against many forms identity theft. Be aware of how information is stolen and what you can do to protect yours, monitor your personal information to uncover any problems quickly, and know what to do when you suspect your identity has been stolen.

Armed with the knowledge of how to protect yourself and take action, you can make identity thieves' jobs much more difficult. You can also help fight identity theft by educating your friends, family, and members of your community.

Community Partnerships

Sheriff Champagne Tells Parish Residents,

“ESTABLISH HURRICANE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANS”

Tips for Before, During and After a Storm

Hurricane. The mere mention of the word causes concern for south Louisianans inland and those along the coastal region of the state. And, it is with good reason, too. A hurricane is an enormously powerful force of nature, with winds as high as 160 miles per hour, which can wreak havoc on anything that may chance upon its path.

The hurricane season begins June 1 and ends November 30.

“Because forecasters are predicting a higher incidence of potential hurricane activity this year, it’s important that we remain very cautious this hurricane season. Awareness and preparedness are the keys to securing the safety and well being of your family and property,” cautioned Sheriff Champagne. “We know that even without hurricanes, tropical storms can cause damage and even worse, death.”

Sheriff Champagne advises St. Charles Parish residents to familiarize themselves with, and incorporate, this basic, safety information as part of their hurricane emergency preparedness plan.

BEFORE A HURRICANE

✓ **Plan an evacuation route.** Have disaster supplies on hand (flashlights and extra batteries; first aid kit and manual; battery operated radio and extra batteries; emergency food and water; non electric can openers; essential medicines; cash; credit cards and sturdy shoes).

✓ **Make arrangements for pets.**
✓ **Ensure that family members know how to respond after a hurricane.**

- ✓ **Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1, police or fire department.**
- ✓ **Protect windows.**
- ✓ **Trim back dead or weak branches from trees.**
- ✓ **Check into flood insurance.**
- ✓ **Develop an emergency communication plan so that family members can reunite if separated.**

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A HURRICANE WATCH AND A HURRICANE WARNING

According to the Emergency Management Agency, a **HURRICANE WATCH** is issued when there is a threat of hurricane conditions with 24-36 hours.

A **HURRICANE WARNING** is issued when hurricane conditions (winds of 74 miles per hour or greater, or dangerously high water and rough seas) are expected in 24 hours or less.

DURING A HURRICANE WATCH

- Listen to a battery-operated radio or television for hurricane progress reports.
- Check emergency supplies.
- Fuel cars.
- Bring in outdoor objects such as lawn furniture and anchor down larger or heavier items.
- Secure buildings by closing and boarding up windows. Remove outside antennas.
- Turn refrigerator and freezer to coldest settings. Open only when necessary.
- Store drinking water in bottles, jugs, cooking utensils and in a clean bathtub.
- Review evacuation plans.
- Moor boats securely or move into a safe place. Use tie downs or anchor to the

ground.

DURING A HURRICANE WARNING

- ❑ Listen constantly to a battery-operated radio or television for official instruction.
- ❑ If in a **mobile home**, check tie downs and evacuate immediately.
- ❑ Store valuables and personal papers in a waterproof container on the highest level of your home.
- ❑ Avoid elevators.

IF AT HOME:

- ❑ Stay inside. Keep away from windows or glass doors.
- ❑ Keep a supply of flashlights and extra batteries handy. Avoid open flames such as candles.
- ❑ If power is lost, turn off major appliances to reduce power “surge” when electricity is restored.

IF YOU MUST EVACUATE:

- ❑ Leave as soon as possible. Avoid flooded roads and bridges.
- ❑ Unplug appliances and turn off electricity and the main water valve.
- ❑ Tell someone out of the storm area where you are going.
- ❑ Elevate furniture to protect it from flooding, if time permits.
- ❑ Bring preassembled emergency supplies and warm protective clothing.
- ❑ Take blankets and sleeping bags to shelter.
- ❑ Lock up home and leave.
- ❑ Be on guard.
- ❑ Once at your new location, log on to www.stcharlessheriff.org for updated parish information.

Electrocution, clean up accidents, fires and other recovery-related accidents can become part of the aftermath of a hurricane

and cause deaths. Don’t be lulled into a false sense of security just because the wind and rain have subsided.

AFTER A HURRICANE

✓ Remain where you are until you receive official word from authorities that the storm has ended and it is safe to leave. Remember, it is probable you will be without power, water, and other services. Monitor local radio, TV broadcasts and local parish websites for information regarding emergency medical aid, food, and other types of assistance.

✓ Avoid driving, as roads may be impassable. Also, emergency vehicles and relief workers will be able to respond more efficiently without additional traffic congestion.

✓ Stay clear of downed power lines.
✓ Look out for snakes, insects, and animals driven to higher ground by storm surge and flooding.

✓ Beware of weakened tree limbs.
✓ Secure your pets to keep them safe.
✓ Clear your street, making a path for emergency vehicles. Get neighbors to pitch in.

✓ Avoid the use of candles, matches, and other open flames in your home.

✓ Open windows and doors for ventilation.

✓ Use your telephone only for emergencies.

Sheriff Champagne concluded, “Officials in St. Charles Parish will be as vigilant as ever in looking out for the safety of its residents. And, it is up to every one of us to do his or her best to establish good, sound plans to help prevent injuries and property damage in the event of a hurricane. **Don’t wait until the last minute.”**

THIS IS A DRILL!! WMD EXERCISE

The St. Charles Parish Sheriff’s Office along with other local governmental agencies participated in an exercise on February 12-14, 2007, that involved the simulation use of



Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). This particular training was offered by LSU’s National Center for Bio Medical Research and Training Academy

(Academy of Counter-Terrorist Education). The purpose of this training was to help provide a framework for the coordination of parish, local, and outside resources in dealing with a terrorism incident, said

Colonel Tom Tucker, Director of the Academy. “This was a complex course that served as a learning experience for all involved”.

According to Emergency Operations Director



Tab Troxler, this was the very first time that LSU’s Counter-Terrorist Academy has delivered this training to any jurisdiction and that St. Charles Parish was selected to pilot the three- day course for logistic

purposes. Afterwards, the team traveled to other major cities where WMD devices may be in transit via rail, barge, or cargo containers.

“We were very fortunate to have been chosen to participate in

a training of this magnitude and expect to activate our Homeland Security Team that is responsible for responding to an event such as this”, said Sheriff Greg Champagne.



7.

INMATE LABOR IMPROVING COMMUNITIES

Inmates sentenced for nonviolent offenses and with limited time left on the sentences, are allowed to work in the St. Charles Inmate Work Program. Sheriff Champagne makes these workers available for a wide range of community improving programs throughout St. Charles Parish. Pictured are inmates providing clean up services at a recent local festival and painting school buildings during the summer months.



CRIMESTOPPERS 1-877-903-STOP



Crimestoppers, Inc. is a 501© 3 non-profit which works in cooperation with local law enforcement, media and the general public to solve and prevent crimes in the parishes of Orleans, Jefferson, St. Benard, St. Charles, St. John, St. Tammany, Plaquemines and St. James.

The program is 22 years old and utilizes a 24-hour anonymous crime tip hot line. Since its inception, Crimestoppers has assisted law enforcement to solve over 6,000 crimes and has paid out over \$800,000 in cash rewards to callers. Crimestoppers, Inc. is a member of Crime Stoppers International and Crime Stoppers USA.

Through Crimestoppers' success, the saving of dollars and manpower hours means law enforcement can redirect these additional crime-fighting efforts. Also, the program works because of the appeal to tipsters continues to rest on permanent

anonymity, which prevents criminal retaliation. Rewards paid on indictment and are not subject to income tax.

Our Corporate Purpose:

- The provision of administrative and support services necessary to the successful accomplishment of the mission.
- Education of the general public, businesses and appropriate organizations regarding Crimestoppers' programs and contributions to community life and safety.
- Informational programs to targeted groups regarding the working of Crimestoppers programs, their desirability and the ease and safety of tipster participation.
- Fundraising.
- Provision of coverage to the eight-parish area.

Special Services Department gets new home



The Special Services Department has a new home. The department's home for 10 years was replaced by a larger, more modern modular office building that provides a more conducive working environment. The Special Services Department oversees Public

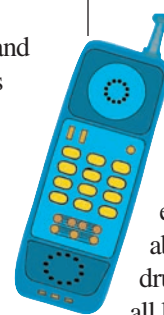
Information, Victims Assistance, Animal Cruelty, School Resource, DARE, Triad, neighborhood watch, safety programs, and other community outreach programs. The old building was moved to the department's firing range and is used as a training facility.

DRUG HOTLINE (985) 785-4450

Sheriff Greg Champagne announces yet another tool in aggressively pursuing dealers and abusers of illegal drugs in St. Charles Parish. With a new 24-hour drug hotline, residents are urged to call to report drug activity.

These anonymous tips will be used by deputies to aggressively investigate drug activity.

Experts suggest that as much as 90% of all criminal activity has some correlation to illegal drugs, whether it is directly or indirectly. "Those who abuse drugs often go to extreme levels to obtain them, even if it means robbing or stealing from those they love," said Champagne.



"The St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office is committed to the war against drugs, but we can't do it alone, we need the residents to be our eyes and ears in efforts to rid our neighborhoods from illegal and harmful drugs. Aggressive enforcement, education of children about the harmful effects of illegal drugs, and community involvement are all key elements in battling drug activity," added Sheriff Champagne.

To report drug activity, call the drug hotline at **(985) 785-4450**. All calls will be kept confidential and will be instrumental in making St. Charles Parish a safe community.

PROGRAM TARGETS FAMILY ABUSE

Domestic violence was once considered a "family affair." No more. Now it is a crime!

The SCSO's latest program in its arsenal is SAVE -- Stop Abusive Violent Episodes. Funded by the department and VAWA (Violence Against Women Act), the program's aim is to teach deputies what to look for, how to defuse incidents, and to provide victims with information on available resources.

Once deputies respond to the victim's initial call for help, follow-up contact with law enforcement officials is limited. SAVE, however, will change that. Victims will be provided "encouragement visits" and assistance in filling out victim reparations forms and restraining order requests.

The third component of the SAVE program will team the Sheriff's Department, District Attorney, and local judges.

On follow-up visits with victims, SAVE staff will take digital photographs of victims' injuries. These pictures can be quickly delivered via e-mail and should greatly help in making court decisions.

Increasing public awareness of the causes, potential threats, and available help will also be a goal of the SAVE program. By better educating the public -- and especially those in harm's way -- the program seeks to reduce the number of violent incidents in our community. For more information contact the Special Services at 985-783-1355.

STOP ABUSIVE VIOLENT EPISODES

Courthouse Tours Available

Young and old can personally view SCSO at work.

If your school class or organization would like to see the inner-workings of the Sheriff's Office, you're in luck. The Special Services Dept. regularly conducts walkabouts through the St. Charles Parish Courthouse and 911 Communications Center in Hahnville.

In addition to housing the Sheriff's Office, the building is home to the parish's courts and governmental system. The 911 Center, meanwhile, is the central point for all medical, police and fire calls.

For more information, contact Susie Breaux Gauthier at 985-783-1355.

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.

