



Remembering the Fallen Officers of 2013

This month's message comes at a time we are again reflecting on those officers who died while serving the citizens of California. Many members of FDSA honored the service of those fallen in 2013 at Peace Officer Memorials, in both Sacramento and at Courthouse Park in Downtown Fresno.

These remembrances are especially meaningful and important for survivors of officers and deputies killed in the line of duty. A poignant remark was made recently during a speech given by Leon Isaac. Leon spoke during our annual FDSA Peace Officer Memorial Open House. His son, Jeff, died while on patrol in Fresno County on September 8, 1997. He said officers who die in the course of their duty have the ability to die not once, but twice. One- when they actually die, and two- when we no longer remember them. That statement is so meaningful and really captures how important Peace Officer Memorial Week is.

Staffing Issues for all Deputy Sheriffs

The recent change in patrol captains has brought a different approach to deployment. An ongoing issue for many years has been how deputies are assigned and how staffing levels are arranged.

After the death of Deputy Sheriff Erik Telen, former Sheriff Richard Pierce, implemented a 'preferred staffing' in order to maintain the safety of Deputy Sheriff's. He took into account adequate back-up to handle complex situations that arise, and to ensure the public they have the resources when they call the Sheriff's Office.

Throughout the years, we've been continuing to operate at this level- filling shifts without hiring additional deputies to take over for those who retire or leave the agency. In 2006, the FDSA and Sheriff's Administration met and came up with an agreement regarding staffing. We came up with a policy related to how to cover vacancies. We also looked at the amount of shifts an employee can volunteer for, that would keep them from being assigned a mandatory shift.

In 2007, Telestaff was implemented. This program made assigning shifts fair and equitable. This system initially had some glitches, but those were worked out.

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However, a Sergeant has always had the ability to manually go in and override the computer.

In 2008, when the recession hit, many vacant positions were deleted from the Sheriff's Office. Even though we were losing countless employees due to retirements, promotions, resignations, etc. - this left the agency short about 100 deputy sheriff positions. Of these, roughly 80 were line staff deputy sheriff jobs.

This caused a ripple effect and eventually led to deputy sheriff's being ordered in to work mandatory overtime. There was a tight financial strain, specifically relating to overtime. During this crisis, the department took preferred staffing down to critical levels. FDSA never agreed to this staffing level, because the Board of Directors felt it was unsafe for deputy sheriffs and the public. Many of you voiced your concerns and complaints over these low levels. Morale also dipped during this time of frustration for many who worked on patrol.

In 2012 and 2013, as the financial forecast began to improve, staffing was increased back to adequate levels. We worked alongside Captain Jennifer Horton, to boost patrol staffing, to have sufficient coverage of beats.

Beginning in spring of 2012, we were able to start increasing staffing, specifically in Areas 2 and 3- where call volumes are much higher.

When revenues came in during 2013- more than budgeted, this allowed us to increase our deployment numbers. This allowed us to keep 'preferred staffing' at a beat minimum assigned to the area. The only exception was Area 2 and 3 on midnights.

This year, we are seeing an increased amount of 'on the job' injuries, coupled with vacancies, that we are still holding in patrol. This, compounded with seasonal positions, and collateral assignments of SAR/Dive, etc., could create a perfect storm due to staffing shortages. This is especially concerning since many of these positions are busiest during May through October.

We are aware that patrol personnel are working 5 to 6 days a week just to maintain staffing levels. Unfortunately, hiring is slower than anticipated which is not helping the strained situation.

Several detectives are being put through 'return to patrol' (RTP) training to refresh their patrol skills, and allow the "help your fellow deputy" concept to flourish behind

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filling the shifts. When one person is willing to take a shift that someone wants out of, this is incredibly helpful. I understand the juggling involved for those who are carrying a case load and the difficulty of shifting gears to go work a beat. Currently there are two deputy sheriff recruitments (deputy sheriff 2 and deputy sheriff 3), so this will be a temporary for detectives.

Recently, a Job line was opened up for a Deputy Sheriff Sergeant recruitment. I want to share the response from the department regarding this:

“I want to take the initiative and tell you this is only to develop and have a prepared list for the promotional opportunity. I have been told the priority is to hire Deputy Sheriff's and reduce the amount of MOT's. I do not want anyone under the impression that promotions will occur before filling patrol vacancies.”

The goal is to get deputy sheriff's hired and trained for patrol. This is going to be a longer process than anticipated, but the commitment from Sheriff Mims is to hire deputy sheriffs. With budget hearings starting June 9th, we will be lobbying the Board of Supervisors for add-backs of the roughly 100 positions lost during the recession. I will have an update as the time nears.

Officer Involved Shooting Protocol

During the past month, we have had two officer involved shootings within a week of one another. Another sign of unpredictability, but also a sign of an evolving, bold criminal element.

The FDSA has met with Sheriff's Administration over the years to come up with a notification protocol when an OIS occurs. Each one is different and brings different dynamics that allow for distraction.

On the last two shootings involving deputies, FDSA was contacted shortly after everything was calm and certain procedures had been handled.

I would like to remind all of you the importance of calling FDSA so we can help initiate protections provided to you through this association. Also, the Legal

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Defense Fund needs to be activated for the shooter- to ensure their best interests are being handled.

I want to commend the Sheriff's Department's Homicide Unit and Internal Affairs for making the deputies involved in these traumatic incidents feel comfortable during this stressful time. After years of meetings and discussions- there is an understanding between the department and the FDSA that both interests are met. That cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Primary Election Around the Corner

I want to update you all on the June 3rd Primary that is a few weeks away and the endorsements the FDSA has made. We would like to recommend you review our recommendations while you read your voter guide. Please cast your ballot.

- **District Attorney: Elizabeth Egan**
- **Supervisor District 1: Brian Pacheco**
- **Supervisor District 4: Ernest "Buddy" Mendes**
- **Assembly District #23: Jim Patterson**
- **Assembly District #31: Henry T. Perea**
- **Senate District #12: Anthony Cannella**
- **Senate District #16: Andy Vidak**
- **Congressional District #21: David Valadao**
- **Congressional District #22: Devin Nunes**

**Note - - Some of these elections may end in a run-off, which would be decided in November. However, in the race for Fresno County District Attorney, this race will be decided during this June election.

The Board of Directors and your PAC has taken time to research and talk with many of the candidates seeking election. We have also considered their priorities and commitments to support public safety and the policies shaping law enforcement.

Thank you and stay safe.



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