

NEWS

You Can Use...

JACKSONVILLE BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT
Gene Paul N. Smith, Chief of Police

August 2023



All,

The department began its annual media campaign concerning traffic/pedestrian safety for the beginning of the school year. Each day, starting on August 1, we shared information with the public on back-to-school safety, safe walking/biking routes to each of our schools, general student safety, reminders for drivers about school zones, and information on school crossings. (See Facebook)

Additionally, the traffic unit conducted intensive education and enforcement in an around school zones for two weeks. During the first week, warnings were predominately given to educate and remind drivers to drive with caution and obey all traffic laws. The second week, officers began issuing citations. (See Facebook)

We began Class 49 of the Citizen Police Academy. The class is being hosted by our new civilian crime prevention specialist, Eden Meyer. Eden works in the Records Section and volunteered to participate in a pilot project (crime prevention specialist) to test the viability/effectiveness of this position. The goal is to increase community engagement and decrease the workload on sworn officers. She has been integral in making it a great success so far.

The department completed training this month on the use and application of Narcan to treat opioid overdoses. Narcan has been issued to all current officers, and will continue to be issued in the future. (See Facebook)

The Detective Section hit a major milestone this month in the Bridegan homicide. After 18 months of investigation, we made the third arrest in Jared's case. This case drew intense local and national coverage. We arrested Shanna Gardner, the ex-wife of the victim, for 1st Degree Murder. We have much left to do to prepare the case for trial, but this was a big deal to us and the victim's family. These arrests gave the victim's family great comfort and brought immense satisfaction to all of us here. The most sacred duty a law enforcement officer performs is investigating a homicide, because we speak for the victim who no longer has a voice. (See Facebook)

Hurricane Idalia forced the city into a state of emergency over two days. The Category 4 storm, although coming from the west coast, could have caused significant damage to our city if it maintained its original track. Fortunately, the storm took a westward turn, and we had almost no affects. An emergency operations center was activated at the police department and was staffed by representatives from all city departments. There were no incidents or damage related to the storm. (See Facebook)

Last weekend, our wonderful volunteers helped with the 4th Annual Corporal Andy Lavender Memorial 5k Beach Run. This annual event raises awareness concerning suicide prevention among law enforcement and first responders. (See Facebook)


Gene Paul N. Smith

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