

NEWS

You Can Use...

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

December 2023



Greetings,

I hope each of you enjoyed the holiday season, and I hope you have a great new year! We remained busy throughout December.

Our honor guard team and many members of the department participated in and assisted with the funeral ceremony for Officer Sam Owens (Ret.). Sam will always be a beloved member of our department, and he will be missed. (See Facebook).

We held our Annual Christmas Party for Kids at City Hall. Although the weather was poor, we had a great turnout. All of our wonderful volunteers and Sergeant Tator did an outstanding job putting everything together. Mr. and Mrs. Claus (Dean and Sandra Prince) also ensured a great success! (See Facebook).

We participated in the "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" national campaign for the last two weeks of December. Despite being shorthanded, we made 30 DUI arrests, with the traffic unit effecting 22 of those arrests. (See Facebook).

Members from our traffic team and Downtown CAPE Unit, joined by officers from Neptune Beach Police and Florida Highway Patrol, conducted a "Wolf Pack" task force as part of the "Celebrate Safely" impaired driver initiative. This campaign was created to help reduce alcohol-related traffic deaths and injuries throughout the holiday season. Together, they conducted 71 traffic stops resulting in 9 arrests. One of those arrests was a DUI with a charge of armed possession of cocaine/marijuana with intent to sell. (See Facebook). Special thanks to Dispatcher Wendy Catlett for being the voice on the other end of the radio for this initiative!

Downtown CAPE, despite also being shorthanded, continued to be proactive in their enforcement activity in the Community Redevelopment Area. They also dealt effectively with several large events, including Deck the Chairs and the Gator Bowl Pep Rally. There were no critical incidents downtown and comparatively few arrests with the tens of thousands of visitors who came to the area.

We held an applicant processing day where 12 prospective police applicants participated; this produced four viable candidates. We are expecting them to start work with us in early January. This was the largest police applicant group we have had in two years. We also hired a dispatcher with extensive experience from an agency in Georgia. Additionally, an officer that was deployed with the military for a year returned to work this month. We hired him last year around this time, and he has prior experience from another agency. He was able to complete half his training last year and picked up this month where he left off. We are expecting him and another trainee to finish training in January.

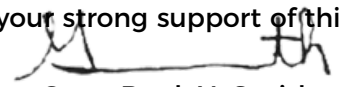
I included a few links to digital articles that may interest you. The first link is an article continuing our retail theft discussion (national trends). The second link is a digital article that continues our discussion on the "doom loop" that many cities find themselves in relating to crime and general lawlessness. The last link discusses the issues caused by the decriminalizing of drug offenses.

<https://www.foxbusiness.com/lifestyle/louisiana-sporting-goods-store-employees-terminated-chasing-thief-stole-firearm-report>

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/california-city-will-stay-doom-loop-2024-businesses-flee-crime-rises-resident-warns>

<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/enormous-mistake-business-leaders-residents-fed-blue-state-drug-laws-issue-2024-ultimatum>

We will continue to provide excellent customer service in 2024. Thank you to all of you for your strong support of this police department!


Gene Paul N. Smith

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