

## **Brian D. Gardner**

**Linn County Sheriff**

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December 20, 2019

Destination Zero Program  
Memorial Fund Administrative Offices  
901 E Street NW, Suite 100  
Washington, DC 20004-2025

RE: Destination Zero – Comprehensive Safety Award Nomination

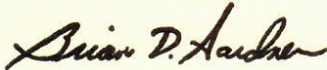
To Whom It May Concern:

Throughout my 39-year career in law enforcement, I have been a strong proponent of deputy safety. I was one of the first members of my agency to attend the Calibre Press Street Survival® seminars when they first came to our area back in the early 1980s. Since then, throughout the supervisory and command positions that I have held, I have tried to instill in our employees the importance of performing our job duties with safety as our primary goal.

When I was elected Sheriff in 2008, I felt even more of a sense of responsibility to ensure that all of our employees understood the importance of deputy safety and made it a priority to provide our employees with the appropriate training and protective equipment to help ensure that they worked in as safe of an environment as possible. To that extent, I have made it a point to ensure that my supervisors and commanders and my General Services Division personnel, who are responsible for employee training and equipment purchasing, are fully aware of and understand this philosophy.

This is why I am proud to submit my agency's nomination for the Destination Zero – Comprehensive Safety award. The information that follows helps to support the claim that we are a worthy recipient for this recognition. Thank you for this opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,



Brian D. Gardner  
Linn County Sheriff



# National Law Enforcement Officers MEMORIAL FUND

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RESPECT. HONOR. REMEMBER.

## Destination Zero Award Nomination Form

### AGENCY INFORMATION

Name of agency: Linn County (Iowa) Sheriff's Office

Award Category (check one)

- General Officer Safety
- Officer Traffic Safety
- Officer Wellness
- Comprehensive Safety

Agency contact name: Brian D. Gardner – Sheriff

Contact email: [Brian.Gardner@LinnCounty.org](mailto:Brian.Gardner@LinnCounty.org) Contact phone number: (319) 892-6101

Please include the following items with your nomination

- Department Release Form
- An executive summary which provides a brief overview of the approaches the agency has assumed, and the innovative practices, programs and partnerships that have been established
- A project narrative, which details the elements and initiatives of the agency's program.  
Items for possible inclusion in the narrative:
  - A description of the agency characteristics
  - A description of the program and its implementation (including marketing material)
  - A before-and-after comparison of change(s) due to the program
  - What makes this program unique compared to other initiatives?
  - What challenges had to be overcome to implement this program?
  - What impact has the program had on the staff within the agency?
  - Is there evidence of success (quantitative or qualitative)?
  - Can the program be replicated by other agencies?
- Any appropriate supporting documentation or attachments.



National Law Enforcement Officers  
MEMORIAL FUND  
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AGENCY LEADERSHIP ENDORSEMENT

By agency representative signature on this form, the agency acknowledges that all information contained herein and in attached documents is true and correct.

AGENCY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

By agency representative signature on this form, the submitting agency acknowledges and affirms that it is not currently under investigation by the Department of Justice or currently serving under a consent decree or other sanctions imposed by the Department of Justice.

AGENCY RELEASE

By agency representative signature on this form, the submitting agency agrees to the release of all submitted materials into the public domain via website or other means of transmission.

Name of the agency: Linn County (Iowa) Sheriff's Office

Brian D. Gardner – Sheriff  
(Printed name and title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signed endorsement of chief/agency head)

December 20, 2019  
(Date)

# DESTINATION ZERO

COLLABORATING TO ADVANCE  
OFFICER SAFETY AND WELLNESS

## Comprehensive and Strategic Implementation

### Linn County Sheriff's Office

Linn County, Iowa was founded in 1839. It is the second largest county in the State of Iowa with a population of approximately 224,115 citizens. The county has a total of 725 square miles. Interstate 380 and U.S. Highways 30, 151 and 218, and Iowa Highways 1, 27 and 13 traverse through Linn County, making it a thoroughfare between Minneapolis/St. Paul, St. Louis, Chicago, and Omaha. There are 18 cities, 8 unincorporated communities, and 19 townships in Linn County.



The Linn County Sheriff's Office was established in 1840. Since 2009, it has been led by Sheriff Brian D. Gardner. It is the second largest Sheriff's Office in the State of Iowa and is a full-service law enforcement agency with 204 total employees, 133 of which are sworn, full-time peace officers. The Sheriff's Office is supplemented with 25 Special Deputies (reserve officers), who volunteer their services to the Sheriff's Office for \$1 a year to be classified as employees for worker's compensation insurance purposes. While we are classified as a medium sized law enforcement agency with a medium sized budget, we take our obligation to employee safety seriously and make sure that we provide our employees with the progressive equipment and training necessary to ensure their safety.

#### GENERAL OFFICER SAFETY

##### Body Armor and Protective Gear

The Linn County Sheriff's Office issues custom-fit body armor to all our sworn employees. Previously, custom-fit body armor was not issued to deputies working in the jail. Rather, several vests of varying common sizes were stored in the jail for usage by Correctional Center deputies when their job duties required them to leave the jail, such as conducting prisoner transportation duties and perimeter checks. With the understanding that deputy-safety was enhanced when every deputy was issued their own

custom-fit body armor, last year we began issuing them to all sworn employees. As part of this process, when we changed body armor manufacturers, we provided deputies the opportunity to select between threat level II or III protection, as it made a difference in the comfort level and we wanted to ensure that wearability was not going to be an issue. A vest that is not worn will do nothing to protect a deputy. By policy, deputies are always required to wear their issued body armor and may be excused from wearing body armor only in certain, very limited circumstances.



To increase deputy-safety, deputies are also required to wear their body armor during range training. In addition, deputies assigned to the Immediate Response Unit (our tactical team) are provided threat protection level IIIA tactical body armor, with front and rear rifle threat protection.



Patrol Division deputies and deputies assigned to the Immediate Response Unit are also provided gas masks and ballistic

helmets with acrylic face shields or Nomex goggles. In order to ensure proper fit, deputies are required to complete gas mask fit tests on an annual basis.



For ease of accessibility and to increase deputy-safety in armed encounters, ballistic shields with tactical lighting are carried in several Immediate Response Unit (IRU) deputies' patrol cars, making them immediately accessible, in addition to those carried in the primary IRU response vehicle.

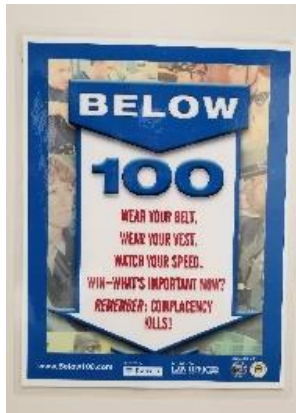


### **Mandatory Wearing of Safety Belts**

Sheriff's Office policy and a County work rule mandate that all persons riding in County-owned motor vehicles or privately owned vehicles on County business, including leased and rented vehicles, wear safety belts. The Code of Iowa (section 321.445) mandates that all front seat occupants and all occupants under 18 years of age wear safety belts. Employees will face progressive discipline if they are found to have violated these mandates. This policy is practical and employees globally understand and accept it.

### **Below 100**

Reducing line-of-duty deaths should be the primary focus of all law enforcement officers. This can be accomplished by eliminating preventable line-of-duty deaths and serious injuries through compelling



common-sense training designed to focus on areas under a deputy's control. In 2013, our General Services Commander was certified as a Below 100 instructor and since that time, the Sheriff's Office has been instilling the importance of the five Below 100 tenants to our deputies. They are continually reminded to wear their safety belts, wear their body armor, watch their speeds, understand the WIN (What's Important Now?) principle, and remember that complacency kills.



Below 100 training continues to occur during roll call and Below 100 posters are displayed throughout the staff areas of the Sheriff's Office. In addition, after completing the Below 100 training, deputies are required to take and complete the Below 100 Pledge form and a copy is placed in his/her file. Fortunately, we have no recorded incidents of employees being involved in line-of-duty traffic crashes resulting in serious injuries or deaths, or deputies having been fired upon by assailants.

### **Mobile Field Force Team**

To enhance deputy-safety during civil unrest, we proactively created a Mobile Field Force team comprised of Sheriff's deputies, officers from the Cedar Rapids and Marion Police Departments, and troopers from the Iowa State Patrol. This team is specially trained for civil unrest and riot control response and containment. Team members are equipped with matching black utility uniforms, level III threat protection soft body armor, helmets with face shields, riot batons, and additional upper torso protection, hand, elbow, shin, and knee protection. They are also equipped with 36" and 48" acrylic riot shields. Properly training and equipping these deputies and officers for this type of duty will help ensure proper response to these situations and enhance deputy and officer safety.



Several incidents of civil unrest have been reported across the nation as reaction to lethal law enforcement response. Properly training and equipping area law enforcement officers for such civil unrest and riot control is necessary and appropriate to help ensure public and deputy/officer safety.



### **AEDs**

In 2002, our initial four Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) were purchased and assigned to the Patrol Division. They were rotated through our patrol deputies from shift to shift. We purchased 22 additional AEDs in 2011/2012; enough to issue one to each patrol deputy. In 2017, we purchased seven more AEDs; enough to issue one to each civil deputy. 40 replacement AEDs were

purchased in FY20 and issued to all deputies assigned to the Patrol and Civil Divisions. AEDs are also maintained at the Sheriff's Office and in the Linn County Correctional Center. Deputies are certified in the use of AEDs biennially, when we conduct CPR training. Since 2010, ten deputies have received Life Saving commendation awards for the application of an AED on cardiac arrest victims who survived the incident after having received shocks from the AED.



### Narcan



In order to enhance deputy, K-9 and public safety, in March of 2018 we issued Intranasal Narcan (naloxone) to all Patrol and Civil Division deputies. Narcan was also placed in the Linn County Correctional Center for utilization on inmates who experience an opioid overdose. A policy was created in order to ensure proper training, usage, storage, record keeping, and replacement of the Narcan. Any deputy issued Narcan is required to successfully complete the Narcan training program. To date, deputies have saved two lives through the administration of Narcan on patients experiencing opioid overdoses.

### "Downed Deputy" Kits

In 2018, all deputies issued patrol vehicles were issued "Downed Deputy" kits containing tourniquets, quick-clotting agent, and sucking chest wound patches, to be utilized in self-help, officer-down, and citizen medical response. In September of this year, all



deputies were issued tourniquet holders to be worn on their duty belts for immediate accessibility in the event of traumatic injury.



Two deputies were awarded Life Saving awards for the application of one of these tourniquets on a man who severely cut his leg with a chainsaw and was suffering massive blood-loss. On-scene medical personnel recognized their actions as being instrumental in saving the man's life.

### All-Inclusive First Aid Kits



When a deputy responded to a medical call, they used to have to carry several different bags onto the scene. In order to make that process easier for deputies and ensure that everything is taken into a scene without making multiple trips, Patrol Division deputies were recently issued an all-inclusive first aid kit containing first aid supplies, Narcan, the AED, and the Downed Deputy kit.



### Mass Casualty Bags

To better prepare for mass casualty events, Patrol Division supervisors and several agency commanders were recently provided Mass Casualty Bags to carry in their patrol vehicles. These bags contain large quantities of tourniquets and quick-clotting agent to allow us to provide essential medical care to critically injured citizens or law enforcement officers until they receive EMS care.



### Personal Protective Equipment Usage and Training



In order to safeguard personnel from blood-borne pathogens, body fluid, and other hazardous substance exposure, blood-borne pathogens and hazardous communication training is required of all employees (except the clerical staff) on an annual basis.

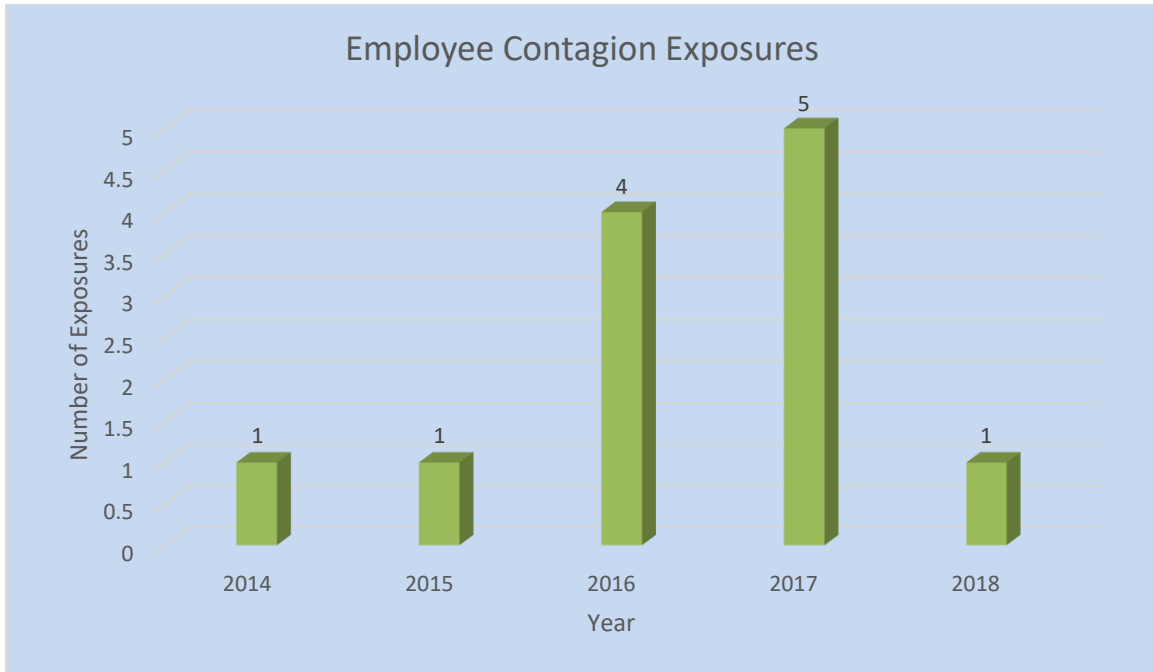
In addition, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are provided to all sworn personnel who are issued patrol cars. This includes protective eyewear, facemasks, contamination suits, booties, and disinfectant. PPE is also available to personnel working within the Correctional Center.

### Employee Contagion Exposure Process

In the event that an employee is subject to a blood-borne pathogen, body fluid, and other hazardous substance exposure, Iowa law (chapter 139A) allows and a procedure is in place that requires the person causing the exposure to be tested for disease. Employees who, while in the performance of their duties, encounter an exposure to blood and body fluids having the potential for a contagious or infectious



disease, are required to complete a Contagious Exposure Report. A consent form is also completed, notifying the source person of the exposure and that the exposure was a work-related incident. If the source person consents to the withdrawal of a blood sample, the draw may be performed at the Correctional Center or at a local hospital. Should the source person refuse to consent, a court order is to be obtained ordering the blood draw for contagious disease testing purposes. The results of the test and notifications are provided to Risk Management, the source person, and the affected employee. There have been twelve contagious exposures to Sheriff's Office personnel in the past five calendar years.



### **Weaponry**

Shortly before becoming Sheriff, while the Major overseeing the Patrol Division, I wanted to ensure that our deputies were not out-gunned and provided the Sheriff with a compelling argument for providing patrol rifles to our Patrol



Division deputies. I was given permission to ask the federal government for military surplus M16 rifles for our patrol deputies. These no-frills rifles helped to ensure that our deputies were not out-gunned in a firefight. Shortly after becoming Sheriff, I directed our General Service Division personnel to purchase new rifles that had the ability to have the necessary accessories affixed to them for increased deputy-safety. All deputies who drive county-issued patrol cars are currently issued patrol rifles, up-fitted with holographic sighting systems, tactical lighting, and tactical slings.

Our agency had long-issued Remington 870 shotguns to our deputies. However, these no-frills shotguns provided deputies only the bare essential in shotgun technology and were decades old. None of them was equipped with carry slings and when you needed to go hands-on with a suspect, you either handed the shotgun to a nearby deputy or laid them on the ground, creating a less than optimal deputy-safety



situation. Recently, I authorized our General Services Division to purchase new shotguns equipped with ghost-ring quick acquisition sights, sidesaddle shell holders, and tactical slings and issue them to deputies who drive county-issued patrol cars.

The shotguns and patrol rifles in Patrol Division vehicles are secured in racks within the interior of the vehicle and are directly accessible to the deputies while still seated in their vehicles. A hidden release button allows deputies immediate access to the weapons. The shotguns and patrol rifles in the vehicles issued to deputies from other divisions are either held in secured drawer systems in the rear of the vehicle or secured in cases in the padlocked and chained trunks (for extra security) of our few remaining sedans.



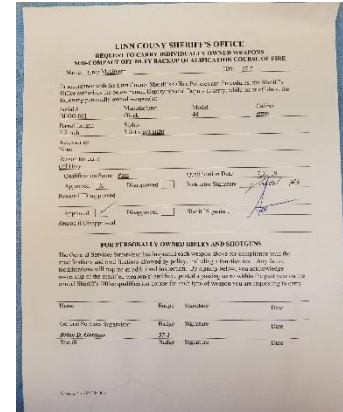
In addition, to ensure that we have ample ammunition in any active shooter situation, we recently issued “go-vests”, containing additional rifle and pistol magazines, shotgun ammunition, and first-aid supplies to all deputies who drive county-issued patrol vehicles.

### **Annual Firearms Qualification**

The Iowa Administrative Code mandates that all peace officers qualify with their issued duty firearms (handgun, shotgun, and patrol rifle) annually. We take the responsibility of firearms proficiency and safety seriously and require additional range training. Each year our sworn personnel are required to successfully complete tactical range training with their duty handgun and patrol rifle. They are also required to complete low light range training with their handgun, thus providing at least three annual weapon qualifications. Additionally, deputies are required to annually qualify with all off-duty/extra-duty weapons that they are authorized to carry. Those deputies, who desire to do so, are also encouraged to attend several open range dates throughout the year to increase their firearms proficiency with all weapons that they are issued and/or carry.

## Backup Weapons Authorized

To increase safety, deputies are authorized to carry back-up weapons and must qualify with them annually on the prescribed course of fire. To ensure proper authorization and tracking, deputies are required to submit a form that is used to request the carry of the specific backup weapon and is also utilized to track successful range qualification with the weapon. The range officer and the Sheriff must approve the carrying of the specific weapon.



## Less-Lethal Weaponry

Understanding that not every encounter with a person with a weapon should require lethal response, less-lethal shotgun rounds are issued to every deputy issued a shotgun and are to be carried in a special orange pouch in the glove box of their patrol vehicle, so as not to confuse them with traditional shotgun rounds. Deputies are required to train with less-lethal shotgun rounds on an annual basis in order to maintain proficiency.



This year, several shotguns with fluorescent orange stocks and forearms were acquired to be utilized exclusively for holding and firing less-lethal rounds. The bright orange color makes it apparent to on-scene law

enforcement officers that the shotgun contains less-lethal rounds. These less-lethal shotguns are currently issued to patrol sergeants and are carried secured in the back of the patrol vehicles so as not to be confused with the shotguns carrying lethal rounds accessible from the passenger compartment of the patrol vehicles. Plans are in the works to provide additional less-lethal specific shotguns to all patrol deputies.

Other less-lethal options are also provided to each deputy including conducted energy devices (Tasers), oleoresin capsicum (OC) or "pepper spray" and expandable batons.



## Conducted Energy Devices

While the Major overseeing the Patrol Division, I paid close attention to the research that showed that deputy and suspect injuries were reduced utilizing conducted energy devices (CEDs), rather than getting into a physical altercation or using striking weapons, such as batons. After several discussions with the Sheriff, I was able to persuade him to allow us to purchase Taser model X26s for our Patrol Division deputies. We received them shortly after I became Sheriff and they were issued not only to Patrol Division deputies, but also to the jail supervisors for use within the Correctional Center. A policy was developed, providing for the authorized usage and reporting, as well as the need for proper medical treatment for suspects to which the Tasers were applied.

Recently, we purchased dual-headed Taser model X2s and issued them to every deputy not assigned duty in the jail. They continue to be issued to Correctional Center supervisors and commanders. Taser training is mandated annually.



After learning of several tragic fatal firearms discharges across the nation, where a law enforcement officer erroneously discharged his/her handgun thinking it was a CED, we recently switched from cross draw holsters for our CEDs, drawn with the strong hand, to standard holsters for our CEDs, drawn and maintained with the support hand.

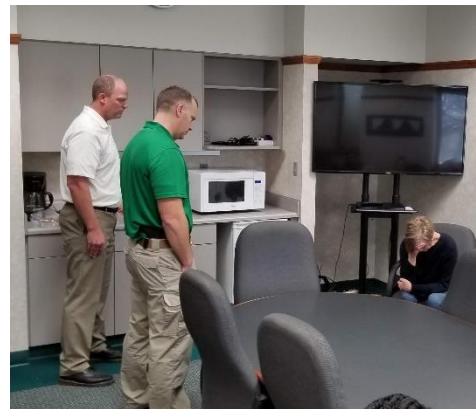
### **Crisis Intervention Training**



Understanding the need for de-escalation in many calls to which we respond for service and to decrease the chances of employees becoming injured in unnecessary physical confrontations with suspects, last month we finished providing 40-hours of Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to all sworn personnel, civilian correctional officers, jail nurses, jail cooks, and communications operators. In addition to including local mental health practitioners and service agencies in the training, we utilized actors from a local theater group to help provide more realistic training

for the scenario-based portion of the training.

CIT has been shown to improve law enforcement's ability to recognize symptoms of a mental health crisis, enhance their confidence in addressing such an emergency, and reduce inaccurate beliefs about mental illness. It has been found that after completing CIT, peace officers felt encouraged to interact with people suffering a mental health crisis and to delay their "rush to resolution." CIT was also identified in the Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing as being critical in enabling law enforcement officers to improve the way in which they and the community respond to people experiencing mental health crises.



### **Body-Worn and In-Car Cameras**

Because of their evidentiary value, the need to ensure and monitor proper conduct by Sheriff's Office employees, and to help safeguard employees against false claims of misconduct, HD-quality digital body-worn cameras (BWC) have recently been issued to all deputies operating outside of the Correctional



Center and they have been trained in their proper usage. The BWCs seamlessly link to our recently upgraded HD-quality digital in-car cameras, which have been installed in all Patrol and Civil Division and Transportation Unit patrol vehicles. The BWC and in-car camera systems can be started manually with the push of a button on either device or are automatically activated when the patrol vehicle's emergency lights are activated. Recording is also automatically activated when the patrol vehicle speed exceeds 100-mph. The BWC and in-car camera recordings automatically download to the server each time the patrol cars return to the Sheriff's Office or Correctional Center, typically requiring no manual interaction by the deputies.

Patrol Division Commanders routinely examine BWC and in-car camera recordings to ensure that deputies are complying with policies, are utilizing proper deputy-safety techniques, and are courteous in their interactions with the public. Although real-time notification does not exist, Patrol Division commanders also routinely examine in-car video where the cameras were automatically triggered due to the 100-mph speed threshold, prior to any activation of emergency lighting. Deputies observed providing exceptional customer service can be rewarded for their efforts through the commendation process, while deputies found acting outside of policy or in an unsafe or discourteous manner are counseled or disciplined, as necessary.

### **Emergency Vehicle Operations Training**

Cedar Rapids, Linn County's county seat, is home to Hawkeye Downs Speedway and Expo Center. The speedway contains both a paved 1/4 and 1/2 mile oval with banking. There is also ample open parking surrounding the expo center. The management of Hawkeye Downs is law enforcement friendly and upon request, we are allowed access to the tracks and parking lots to conduct precision driving training. We have three Academy-certified driving instructors who provide this training to our deputies who are issued patrol cars approximately every three years.



### **Vehicle Pursuit Policy and Review**

The Sheriff's Office has a comprehensive pursuit policy and deputies are initially trained on it during the Patrol FTO process and retrained on it periodically during roll call training sessions. The policy clearly describes under what circumstances/conditions pursuits are to be initiated, proper supervisor monitoring, and termination requirements.

Since becoming Sheriff, I have required that a Patrol Division commander conduct a formal review anytime a deputy is involved in a vehicle pursuit. A summary report is sent to the Chief Deputy and me. We can agree with the findings or ask for clarification or changes made to the report. A face-to-face, follow-up meeting between a Patrol Division commander and the involved deputy is required, at which time they go over actions that were performed correctly and any actions that were improper or in need of improvement. The purpose of the review is to reward good behavior and change risky behavior. The result of the review can lead to commendation for exceptional performance or corrective action, including formal discipline, if warranted.

### **Instructor Training**

Many of our instructors are certified by the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy. Some examples include ASP baton, chemical munitions, defensive tactics, firearms, less-lethal, precision driving, radar/LIDAR, SFST, etc. In order to ensure that their training is up to date, recertification is required. In addition, instructors are required to return to the Academy on an on-going basis as adjunct instructors to assist the Academy in providing training to recruits. This also allows Academy instructor-trainers to critique the training provided by our instructors and ensures that our instructors continue to provide the best training possible.

### **Rescue 57**



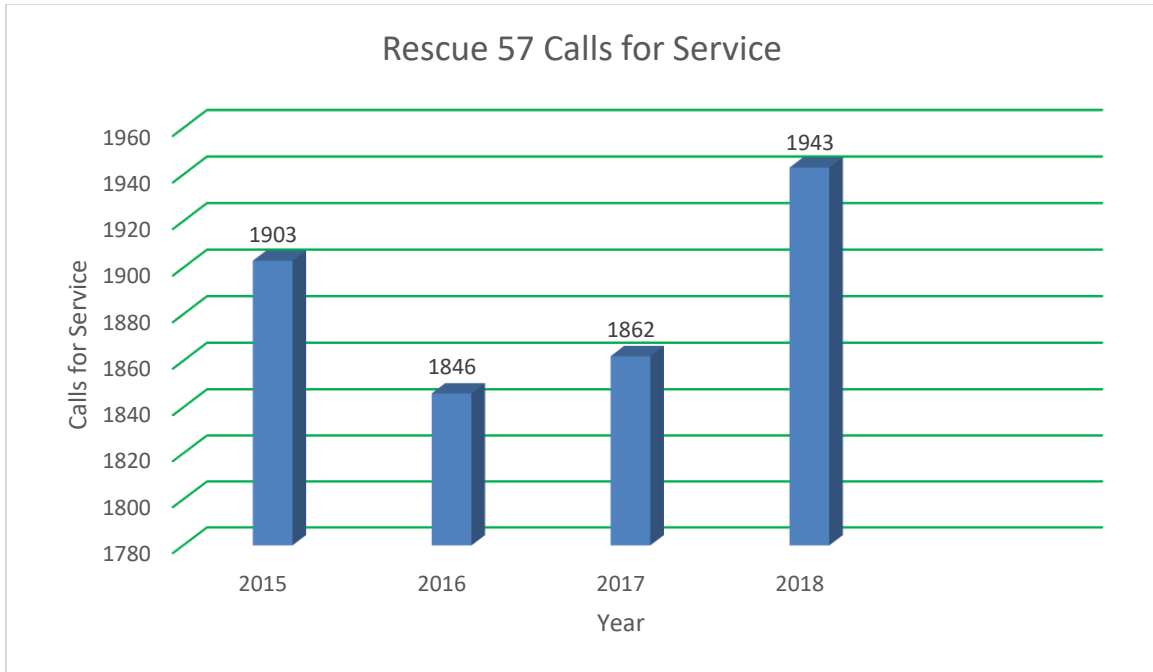
The Linn County Sheriff's Office is unique, in that we maintain a paramedic-level rescue service (Rescue 57). Rescue 57 responds to all EMS calls in the county (except in the cities of Cedar Rapids and Marion, who maintain their own 24/7 paramedics). Deputy sheriffs, who are also certified paramedics, staff Rescue 57 and provide the most advanced level of emergency medical care to our deputies and citizens. Rescue 57 also responds with our tactical team as tactical medics. In addition to responding to

medical calls, they also perform patrol functions to help supplement our Patrol Division deputies.

There are many documented "saves" as the result of the Rescue 57's response to medical calls. As an example, since July of 2016, Rescue 57 has responded to 60 medical calls where resuscitation was attempted (this number excludes obvious DOAs). Ten patients (16.67%) had ongoing resuscitation in the hospital emergency room, nine patients (15%) had return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC) in the field, and two patients (3.33%) had ROSC in the hospital emergency room. The national average for survival is 8-10%, but that is survival at hospital discharge, which our reports do not capture.



Rescue 57 has also responded to medical calls involving deputies, including deputies suffering from heat-related injuries, stroke-like symptoms, heart-related issues, and syncopal episodes.



### **Lenco BearCat**

In August of this year, we took delivery of a \$300K Lenco BearCat G2 tactical armored tactical vehicle, built to provide blast and ballistic protection to defeat .50 Cal ammunition rounds. The BearCat protects first responders and allows them to safely approach potentially deadly situations under the cover of an armored rescue vehicle. The armor allows us to rescue wounded citizens and first responders, and to evacuate citizens from life-threatening situations, such as barricaded suspect and active shooter scenarios.



To ensure the proper operation of the vehicle, the Sheriff's Office tactical team participated in a 3-day training session in which internationally recognized training experts provided them hands-on training in the utilization of the BearCat. This training allowed deputies to become more confident in the capabilities of the vehicle.



The BearCat is equipped with a roof-mounted nozzle that is hooked directly to a main water line or fire engine for continuous water flow, to enable it to be utilized for fire suppression activities when fire fighters are prohibited from safely accessing a fire scene and tactical deployment is necessary.

The BearCat deploys anytime there is a potential for armed-subject encounters, such as active shooter situations, barricaded armed subjects, tactical situations, high-risk search warrant executions, and at the request of fire departments. This potentially life-saving piece of equipment is the first of its kind in this area. Since its delivery, we have utilized the BearCat in three tactical situations. We have also utilized the BearCat in training scenarios with surrounding law enforcement agencies and fire departments so that they are aware of its tactical capabilities.

### **Crime Scene Investigation and Immediate Response Unit Specialty Vehicles**



In an effort to keep our employees safe at crime and accident scenes and at tactical call-outs, we provide them with state of the art equipment and technology. However, it does little good to provide our deputies with this equipment if they do not have the appropriate means to transport it safely to a scene. We purchased two 2016 Ford F350 Transit vans; one to be utilized as our Crime Scene Investigations response vehicle and the other as our Immediate Response Unit vehicle.

Both are equipped with emergency lighting and siren and both have professionally customized interiors from a nationally recognized up fitter, specifically designed for their intended purpose. In addition to being designed to safely carry the equipment to the scene, they also have workspace incorporated into them, allowing deputies to conduct scene activities out of the elements during inclement weather and prolonged assignments.



In addition, our deputies have access to five trailer-mounted boats (including two boats on a double stacked, electronically

lowered trailer) and a trailer-hauled 6X6 ATV with enclosed cab and dump bed, complete with emergency lighting and siren. These specialty vehicles provide deputies with additional ways to safely access remote areas.





## **Bomb Disposal Unit**



In order to safeguard our personnel in real or potential explosives-related incidents, we maintain a jointly operated bomb squad with the Marion Police Department. The bomb squad currently has two robots and one disposal trailer in its inventory. The first robot is a Remotec Mini which is primarily used for surveillance/scene safety/small package manipulation, but it can be used for any bomb squad operation where distance from the command post is short (300')

and package weight is light. The second robot is the Remotec F6B and is the primary robot used by the squad. This robot is classified as a medium-sized robot that can handle any operation needed by the squad from surveillance, package manipulation and disruption, hazardous environment monitoring with sensors, X-Ray capabilities, assisting in SWAT operations or any other task needed by the squad. Package size is anywhere up to and including large vehicle bomb integration/mitigation.

The robots are housed in a recently purchased 16' custom trailer that has been equipped with emergency lighting to allow it to be safely towed to an emergency scene. The previous older, smaller trailer was repurposed as an equipment hauler for our Immediate Response Unit.

The disposal trailer in the bomb squad inventory is a double vent trailer with rigging capability through a pulley system for remote loading and unloading of a package for safe transport to an alternate site for disposal. This trailer has also been fitted with ramps for the robot to insert or remove a package.

## **Active Shooter Training**

Active shooter situations have become more commonplace across the nation than ever before. To better prepare our deputies to properly respond to them, in addition to properly equipping them for such an incident, we have also trained our deputies who have been issued patrol cars on how to properly respond to active shooter incidents using a nearby shuttered factory. Last year, after the courthouse had closed for the day, we also provided active shooter training to our Courthouse Security Unit deputies. This training better prepares them to respond to an active shooter situation in their assigned work area and



allowed for a realistic environment for the training. This training included roll playing scenarios with simunitions for added realism, with critiqued response.

Because they provide the critical link between callers and emergency responders, active shooter preparedness training has also been provided to many of our communications operators.

The Sheriff's Office has eleven ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate) trainers. They originally assisted in providing active shooter preparedness training to all school districts to which we directly provide law enforcement protection. Since that time, we have provided this training to county employees working in the Sheriff's Office, Linn County Courthouse, Juvenile Justice Center, Public Services Center, Community Services Building, and Public Health Department, training them how to properly respond to an active shooter incident. Since 2016, we have provided this training to over 70 business, churches, and other organizations, in classes lasting from two to four hours in duration, and continue to provide this training upon request.

### **Judgmental Use of Force and De-Escalation Scenario Simulator**

Instructing our deputies on proper use of force applications and de-escalation techniques is crucial to their safety and our success as a law enforcement agency. We are currently in discussions with VirTra, a leading provider in realistic judgmental simulators, for the lease of a judgmental use of force and de-escalation scenario simulator. This top-of-the-line, 300-degree wrap-around video firearms training simulator enables deputies to train for the most difficult real-world situations, including ambushes, active shooters, and maintaining full situational awareness during extreme stress. Deputy presence, communication skills training, tactical de-escalation training, Taser, and deadly force, are all available for simulation using our own standard-issue weapons. It is our hope to have this system installed in our Sheriff's Office facility sometime within the next four months.



### **Radio Communications**

Radio interoperability is critical in emergencies and is essential during daily operations for first responders. A devastating 1,000-year flood struck Linn County in June of 2008, with the Cedar River rising to a record-setting level. The Sheriff's Office, jail, county courthouse, city hall, federal courthouse, and central fire station all took on major flooding, as floodwaters forced the evacuation of a ten-square-block area of downtown Cedar Rapids. At the time, local emergency responders operated on disparate radio systems (VHF, UHF, and 800 MHz) and were unable to communicate directly with each other. This situation was worsened once responders from other jurisdictions arrived to help us with traffic and crowd control activities, attempting to keep people out of the affected area. Being unable to directly communicate with each other made the situation worse and hampered rescue activities.

Even prior to the flood, while running for Sheriff in 2008, I had made it a critical campaign issue to create radio interoperability amongst emergency responder in Linn County. When I became Sheriff in 2009, I made it a priority. The then Cedar Rapids and Marion police chiefs and I went to our respective city councils and board of supervisors and clearly outlined the need for such a system and we received overwhelming approval for the project.

The result was a \$21.5M countywide 800 MHz, digital-trunking, interoperable radio system that allows all Linn County emergency responders to seamlessly communicate on the same shared talk-groups. Funding for the radio system was split between the primary system users, with 50% of the funding provided by the city of Cedar Rapids, 30% of the funding provided by Linn County, and 20% of the funding provided by the city of Marion. Cedar Rapids and Marion provided mobile and portable radios for their first responders and Linn County provided mobile and portable radios to all other first responders in the County.

As a cost saving measure, our system joined a similar radio system with the county to our south, allowing first responders in both counties to seamlessly talk together. Since that time, additional counties have come on-board to our radio system, making it regional. The creation of this regional, interoperable radio system has greatly enhanced the safety of all first responders and has improved the level of service that we can provide to the public.

To ensure that Linn County first responders continue to maintain communications with those surrounding public safety entities that do not operate on our radio system, all mobile radios and all law enforcement portable radios are quad-band and are capable of transmitting and receiving on VHF, UHF, 700 MHz and 800 MHz radio frequencies.

### **Appropriate Patrol Vehicle Selection**

Because we work in a climate that truly experiences all four seasons, including extreme heat and humidity, and extreme cold, wind and snow, being able to properly respond to calls for service is essential in safely performing our job duties. To assist us in that regard, we recently moved to purchasing Ford Police Interceptor utility vehicles (Explorers) for all our patrol vehicle fleet. These all-wheel drive, pursuit-rated vehicles feature stability control, traction control, rear view cameras, and larger interior room, for safer operation by our deputies during both high speed and



inclement weather operation. The County Risk Manager had previously assisted us in convincing the Board of Supervisors to allow us to spend the additional money for the extra expenses in adding many of these safety features to the base patrol vehicles, as they helped reduce accidents and injuries. We had previously operated similarly equipped sedans, but after introducing a few SUVs into the fleet, deputies

felt they provided more space for themselves, their prisoners, and the equipment they are required to carry. The SUVs also provide for increased ground clearance, helpful while driving in snow and in off-road situations.

### **Patrol Vehicle Equipment and Lighting**

All patrol vehicles are designed and equipped with deputy-safety in mind. For increased deputy-safety, all Patrol, Civil, and Correctional Center Division patrol vehicles are minimally equipped with two-way radios, prisoner transportation cage, in-car camera system with front facing and rear passenger compartment facing cameras, rechargeable flashlight, emergency lighting and siren, fire extinguisher, first aid kit and jumper cables.

Our patrol vehicles have been up-fitted with the latest in emergency lighting and warning technology. The LED emergency lighting packages automatically temporarily shut off all lights on the driver's and/or passenger side of the vehicle when the doors are opened, so as not to obscure the deputy's vision, increasing deputy safety.

The 3-position emergency lighting settings flash varying lights on the vehicle at varying speeds. Position 1 flashes only the rear-facing emergency lights in a slow alternating pattern in such a way as to create only minimal distraction to the approaching drivers. Position 2 flashes all front, side, and rear facing red and blue emergency lights at a moderate speed. Position 2 can be utilized when responding to emergency calls for service when visibility may be an issue, such as when driving in heavy rain, snow, or fog and the flashback effect of the white lights would impair the deputy's ability to safely see the roadway. Position 3 flashes all front, side, and rear facing red, blue, and white emergency lights at a rapid speed to get motorists attention, more clearly signally for them to move out of the way and yield to the emergency vehicle, allowing for safer emergency travel for the deputies and the public. Even if responding with emergency warning equipment in positions 2 or 3, the emergency lighting will automatically revert to the position 1 lighting and flash pattern, once the vehicle is placed in park, limiting the distraction to the approaching drivers. This feature can be overridden if emergency vehicle lighting surrounding the vehicle is needed for enhanced scene safety.

When the patrol vehicle is responding to a call with emergency lighting activated, most rear facing emergency lights blank out when the patrol car brakes are applied so that it becomes obvious that the vehicle is braking. This increases deputy-safety by ensuring that other vehicles, including those being operated by other law enforcement officers, are aware that the patrol vehicle is slowing/stopping, thus reducing the chance of a rear-end collision.

When operating the emergency lights at night, the lights will automatically switch to half-power once the vehicle has been placed in park, reducing the blinding effect of the LED lighting on other roadway users.

When a string of patrol cars is stopped at an emergency scene at night, in areas without an abundance of overhead street lighting, the patrol vehicle at the beginning of the string is encouraged to activate position 1 emergency lighting, to draw motorists' attention to an emergency scene ahead. Other patrol cars within the scene are encouraged to active "cruise" lighting mode, which steady burns all emergency

lights at half-power. This identifies them as emergency vehicles yet does not distract other drivers while they progress through the scene.

### **Tire Deflation Devices**



Understanding that public safety is enhanced when vehicle pursuits are ended quickly and safely, every patrol car is equipped with tire deflation devices. Training is initially provided on the proper deployment of tire deflation devices during patrol field training and is periodically reviewed during roll call training. Those deputies not actively engaged in a pursuit are encouraged to get ahead of or parallel the pursuit so that tire deflation devices can be deployed. Deputies are trained to stay out of the roadway and stay behind cover during the deployment of tire

deflation devices to shield themselves from potential injury from passing vehicles or debris.

### **Patrol Field Training Officer Program**

Linn County sheriff's deputies start their careers in the jail and can bid out to another assignment once they have enough seniority to do so. Often this can take seven to eight years. Although law enforcement officers are mandated to attend the state law enforcement-training academy within the first year of employment, it can be several years before our deputies hit the streets and are able to put much of that training into practice. In order to ensure that our deputies are provided proper refresher training and understand how to properly apply academy training into real world situations, all deputies bidding from the jail to a position where they are issued a patrol car are required to successfully complete the six-week Patrol field training officer (FTO) program. Certified FTO deputies and an FTO supervisor provide and oversee the training through a formalized learning process. Weekly meetings are held with the new patrol deputy and the FTOs and FTO supervisor to discuss program progress and concerns. Remedial training is provided when necessary. Deputies have been unable to successfully complete the program, even after remediation attempts, and have been returned to their former assignment.

### **Traffic Stops**

For increased deputy and public safety, all deputies are instructed on the proper way to conduct traffic stops while attending the law enforcement-training academy, with additional focus on that activity during the six-week field-training program. Deputies are instructed to utilize their two-way radios and inform the Communications Center of their location, the vehicle license plate, the vehicle description, and the number of occupants before exiting their patrol vehicles.

Deputies are instructed to utilize a passenger-side approach on all high traffic and/or high-speed roadways to lessen their exposure to the hazards presented by other drivers.

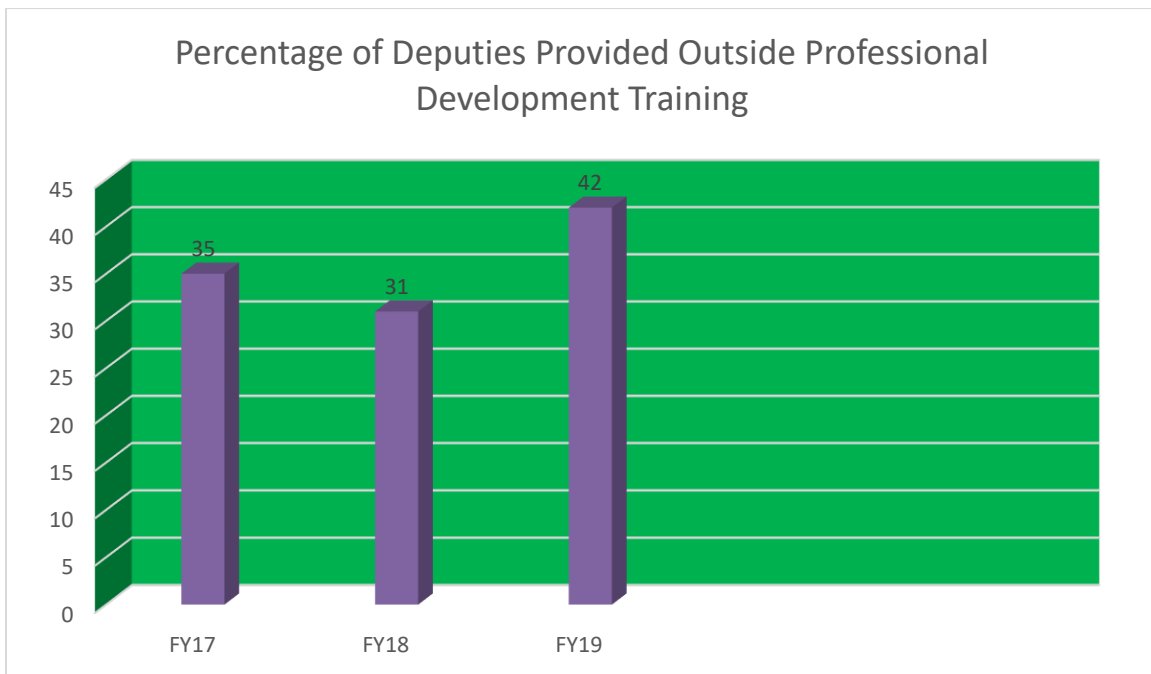
Deputies are also instructed to minimize their exposure to vehicle strikes while out of the vehicle by staying away from the traveled portion and away from standing between vehicles while interacting with motorists outside of their vehicles.

If a commander observes unsafe traffic stop procedures during the review of a deputy's BWC or in-car video, the commander will speak with the deputy in-person. At that time, the specific concerning issue(s) will be discussed and the proper way to have handled the traffic stop will be explained to the deputy. If necessary, remedial training can be provided by the field-training deputies.

### **The Importance of Training and Education**

I have always understood the importance of training and education and have carried that with me throughout my career. After becoming Sheriff in 2009, I directed my staff to increase the amount of training and educational opportunities provided to our employees. Since then, we have sent far more employees to organized training programs across the state and have dramatically increased the in-service training that is provided to our employees than under prior administrations. In addition, in 2011 we began using PoliceOne Academy to assist us in delivering some of our in-service training programs. PoliceOne provides training opportunities at individual employees' pace as time and workload allows. Utilizing PoliceOne has allowed for more year-round training opportunities for our personnel.

Starting two years ago, as part of the County's annual budgeting process, we are required to submit Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) highlighting noteworthy programs and processes. One of our KPIs has been to ensure that we are providing at least 30% of our deputies with outside professional development training opportunities during any given fiscal year. 35% of our deputies were provided this training in FY17, 31% were provided this training in FY18, and 42% were provided this training in FY19.



Per the Iowa Administrative Code, peace officers are required to complete a minimum of twelve hours of in-service training each year and corrections officers are required to complete a minimum of twenty hours of in-service training each year. As a whole, our agency far exceeds the minimum training requirements on a continual basis. In FY18, our non-jail deputies averaged 137.86 hours of training and our jail deputies averaged 87.42 hours of training. In FY19, our non-jail deputies averaged 140.05 hours of training and our jail deputies averaged 96.53 hours of training.

### **College Education Required for Promotion**

Although a high school graduation or GED are the minimum educational requirements for initial employment, I understand the value of a formal education, as I feel that a college education and the college experience provide for a more-well-rounded deputy. With this understanding, in 2011, I convinced the County's Human Resources Department and the Civil Service Commission to increase the minimum education requirement for promotion for all supervisory ranks to an Associate's Degree or the equivalent of an Associate's Degree, based on semester hours acquired. Those deputies holding rank without the minimum college education requirement were grandfathered in at the current rank, but are not eligible for further promotion until they meet the minimum college education requirement. Studies have shown that better educated deputies are found to provide better law enforcement services and increased positive public relations.

### **Institute for Credible Leadership Development and Certified Credible Leader**

In order to ensure the highest standards of law enforcement ethics and community service, when I was the president of the Iowa State Sheriffs' and Deputies' Association (ISSDA) in 2015, I created a partnership with the International Academy of Public Safety to bring the Institute for Credible Leadership Development (ICLD) training program to all ISSDA members statewide. The ISSDA paid for the program and association members, both sworn and non-sworn, are allowed to participate in it free of charge.

The ICLD is an in-depth course of instruction designed to develop leadership, character, ethics, emotional intelligence, decision-making skills, and related competencies, specifically geared toward law enforcement personnel. There are three phases of the ICLD: Foundation and Principles of Leadership, Theories and Practices of Leadership, and Application and Advancement of Leadership. Each phase is delivered on-line and is accessible 24/7. Each phase is worth 60 hours of training (including the required reading of seven books). Successful participants are provided with a certificate of completion for the Credible Leadership Course at the conclusion of each phase.

Another component of the ICLD training program is the ability to extend the ICLD training to include national certification through the Criminal Justice Commission for Credible Leadership Development (CJC-CLD). This is an optional certification process designed to acknowledge that the participant has met the requirements and training as a Credible Leader. For each phase of the ICLD (I – IV) there is an optional accompanying CCL (I - IV Star) certification process. To be eligible for CCL certification, an applicant must successfully complete the associated phase of the ICLD program, complete an on-online

application and verify that they are in good standing within their agency, pay the applicable CCL application fee, and take an additional online course and successfully complete a comprehensive examination, which may include essays and other criteria.

The results of the additional online course and the comprehensive examination are graded and validated by commission staff and successful applicants then receive a professional certificate, suitable for framing, a lapel pin identifying them as a Certified Credible Leader (CCL) for the phase of the ICLD that they have completed, and the ability to utilize the official CCL designation.

In order to encourage my employees to participate in the CCL certification process, I pay for their application fees out of the Sheriff's Office training budget.

To date, 51 employees have signed up to participate in the ICLD training program, with 26 employees completing ICLD phase I, 23 employees completing ICLD phase II, 22 employees completing ICLD phase III, and 20 employees completing ICLD phase IV.

To date, twenty employees have applied to participate in the CCL certification process, with eight receiving CCL-IV certification.

### **Credible Leadership Organization**



Building off the Institute for Credible Leadership Development training and the Certified Credible Leader certification process, in May of 2019, the Linn County Sheriff's Office became one of only two law enforcement agencies in the nation to be conferred Credible Law Enforcement Organization certification by the Criminal Justice Commission for Credible Leadership Development (CJC-CLD®).

Becoming a Credible Leadership Organization (CLO) requires a commitment to build an agency, which represents the highest of ethical standards and is dedicated to developing personnel with an unparalleled level of service capability and orientation to the community. The progressive CLO agency is reform-minded, future-focused and seeks to continuously strengthen the organization by developing its people as leaders and by extension, provides a problem-solving leadership role in the community.

The goal of the CLO program is to put an infrastructure of progressive processes in place that deliver continuously improved services. The CLO prioritizes human capital development as the strength of individuals contribute to the strength of the organization. The CLO becomes a trusted partner in the



community’s work to solve problems that contribute to overall well-being that are not limited to safety and security. Ultimately, the CLO becomes a focal point for positive change.

For employees to be eligible for participation in the CLO training, they had to have completed 240 hours of training through the ICLD, read eight textbooks, and taken 45 on-line examinations, verifying their understanding of the concepts and principles of the ICLD training. 18 Sheriff’s Office employees participated in the CLO program in 2019.

**Advanced Command-Level Training**

It is understood that in order for Sheriff’s Office commanders to properly lead and develop their subordinates, they need to be properly trained themselves. To ensure that this training is the most relevant and professional as possible, since becoming Sheriff in 2009, I have made it a point to send our division commanders to the FBI National Academy (FBINA) and/or the Northwestern School of Police Staff and Command (SPSC). To date, four current commanders have attended the FBINA (with one currently on the waiting list to attend) and seven commanders have attended the Northwestern SPSC.

In 2017, 15 commanders and supervisors completed MAGNUS leadership training sponsored by the National Command and Staff College. This cutting-edge approach to leadership development focuses on tactical methods that law enforcement officers can use to enhance their performance, effectiveness, wellness and resiliency. Class participants emerge as MAGNUS Leaders with deeper understandings of the scientific and practical uses of the Theory of Things, Expectancy and the Reversal Theories of Leadership.

Since 2016, six commanders and supervisors have completed the FBI-LEEDA Trilogy training series, comprised of the Supervisor Leadership, Command Leadership, and Executive Leadership Institutes.

Three commanders have also completed the International Association of Chiefs of Police – Leadership of Police Organizations (LPO) training. The three-week LPO course explores leadership at different levels in the organization, including leading individuals, groups, and organizations. The course teaches students about these levels of leadership using applied learning, translation of theory to practice, and practical leadership strategies.



### **Lexipol Policy Development**

Our current policy and procedure manual was written in the 1990's when the intent was to obtain national accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA); the Sheriff at the time halted the project due to a few specific CALEA requirements that he did not wish to follow. However, little had been done with the manual since that time, with the exception of a few policies that were added or updated as the need presented itself.

A law enforcement agency is only as professional and effective as the policies that guide it. With that understanding, we recently signed an agreement with Lexipol to assist us in rewriting our Sheriff's Office and Correctional Center policy manuals. Lexipol is a well-known, nationally respected company, formed by some of the most experienced law enforcement risk managers in the country.

With Lexipol's assistance, we are currently creating comprehensive and defensible policies for both our law enforcement and jail operations. These policies also ensure that our employees are provided guidelines that meet nationally accepted safety standards. Under the terms of the agreement, the policies are updated annually or more frequently if needed, in the event in law changes or court-rulings. To increase employee understanding and adherence to the policies, Lexipol also provides our employees with policy-specific, scenario-based daily training bulletins.

### **On-Going Roll Call Training**

Patrol supervisors are encouraged to conduct roll call training sessions on an on-going basis for any subject needing additional discussion and/or training, such as traffic safety, proper vehicle approach, pursuit driving, etc. At times, these roll call sessions are scripted by the administration and at other times, the supervisor is free to determine appropriate content. For example, when the tourniquets were initially issued, training was conducted during roll call training. It also occurred when we issued Naloxone/Narcan.

### **Tracking of Employee Training and Equipment Issuance**

We recently purchased a computerized tracking program that allows us to more efficiently and effectively track employee training and equipment that is issued to employees. The Collective Data system provides for inventory and fleet management, employee training, and personnel. It is utilized to track completed training and provides timely reminders when recertifications or renewals are due. This ensures that employees training is up to date and certifications are current.

## **OFFICER SAFETY – TRAFFIC**

### **Traffic Safety Vests**

In order to help reduce traffic-related deputy injuries and deaths, all deputies who are issued patrol cars are issued ANSI-compliant traffic safety vests and they are required to wear them anytime that they are out of their patrol vehicles performing traffic control/direction activities. This applies to both on-duty and extra-duty work shifts. Amongst their other on-scene duties, supervisors are required to ensure that deputies comply with this directive.

## LED Powered Traffic Beacons

While they provide enhanced visibility at night, because of their combustible nature, traffic flares are inherently dangerous at traffic accident scenes where leaking automotive fluids such as gasoline, diesel fuel, and oil have the potential to ignite if they are exposed to the flares. Such a situation could cause an otherwise minimal traffic collision to become potentially deadly for both motorists and first responders. To reduce the chances of spilled fluid ignition, we no longer issue traffic flares. Instead, we now issue each Patrol Division vehicle a set of six battery-powered LED emergency beacons for safer awareness and traffic direction/control at night. They are magnetic and can



either be mounted to the side of a patrol vehicle or placed on the ground. They are crush-resistant and can withstand the weight of a 20,000 lb. vehicle. They can be placed in flash mode to get motorists' attention and steady mode to direct motorists through and around accident and crime scenes.

## Emergency Scene Ahead Signage



To ensure proper compliance with Federal Highway Administration standards, large fluorescent pink "Emergency Scene Ahead" portable traffic hazard signs are carried in each Patrol Division supervisor's vehicle and in the Crime Scene Investigation vehicle. These signs are to be placed ahead of any traffic-related scene where traffic back-up is anticipated, to provide motorists with proper warning of the incident and to reduce the occurrence of secondary, and sometimes more severe, crashes.

## Scene Lighting

Working in well-lit areas during times of darkness is critical for officer safety. This is especially true at accident and outdoor crime scenes. In addition to the standard high-intensity flashlights that we have provided our deputies, we also have a trailer-mounted Allmand Night-Lite Pro portable light tower and a FoxFury Nomad battery-powered scene lighting system.

The trailer-mounted portable light tower is diesel-powered and consists of



four (4) 1,000-watt metal halide lamps, powerful enough to light an area

the approximate size of a football field. The FoxFury Nomad lighting system is a two-piece telescoping, 360-degree, rechargeable portable lighting system, each capable of producing 7,000-lumens of light intensity. Both lighting systems can be utilized for accident and crime scenes, perimeter lighting, command post, on scene size-up, and forensic and night photography.



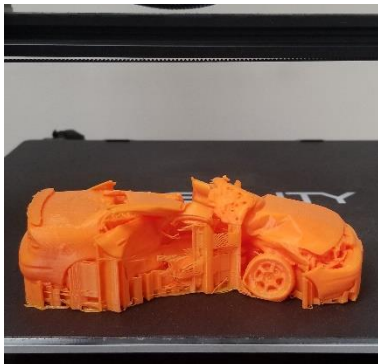
## FARO Crime and Accident Scene Scanner

The longer first responders are on-scene of a traffic collision, the more likely there will be a secondary and perhaps more severe collision. In order to reduce on-scene time during serious accident investigations, yet still allow for complete and thorough investigation, last year the Sheriff's Office purchased a FARO® 3D laser crime and accident scene scanner. The FARO replaces a total station system that we previously utilized for several years. The FARO provides fast, accurate documentation



of accident

scenes and allows crash investigators to quickly record vast amounts of data and bring the virtual scene back to the office for further investigation. This opens the roadway back up much quicker than utilizing previous accident investigation methods, making it safer for first responders and motorists.



A 3D printer that directly connects with the FARO system was also purchased to allow us to more realistically recreate accident and crime scenes.

## **Traffic Incident Management**

In an effort to increase deputy safety and clear traffic congestion as soon as possible, thus reducing the likelihood of secondary collisions, in 2017, the Sheriff's Office began training our deputies and other first responders in the Traffic Incident Management System (TIMS). Through TIMS training, deputies and other first responders learn safe, quick clearance of traffic incident scenes, prompt, reliable and open communication, and motorist and responder safeguards. First responders also learn how to operate more efficiently and collectively together. To date, 37 deputies and many local police officers, fire fighters, EMS personnel, and tow truck operators have attended the training sessions held at the Sheriff's Office.



## **Tracking On-Scene Time and Secondary Crashes**

To better understand the frequency and cause of secondary crashes, the Traffic and Criminal Software (TraCS) computerized accident reporting software utilized by law enforcement officers across the state now requires the investigating officer to record on-scene time at traffic collisions and to track the number a causation of secondary crashes. By studying this data, researchers hope to find ways to reduce on-scene time and ultimately reduce the number and severity of secondary crashes.

## **Patrol Car Collisions and Damage Reporting**

Anytime a Sheriff's Office vehicle is damaged or involved in a collision, the employee operating the vehicle at the time of the incident is required to submit an incident report. A Patrol Division commander then conducts a formal review and determination is made as to whether employee error contributed to the incident. A summary report is sent to the Chief Deputy and me. We can agree with the findings or ask for clarification or changes made to the recommendation in the report. If employee fault is determined, follow up is conducted with the employee. The purpose of the follow-up is to increase deputy safety by identifying and changing risky behavior. The result of the review can lead to corrective action, including formal discipline, if warranted.

In checking the statistical data from as far back as 2012, it appears that a large number of those incidents were unavoidable and involved deputies striking or being struck by animals in the roadway (deer, raccoons, dogs, birds, etc.), debris in the roadway, or other acts of nature (falling tree branches, hail, etc.). The next highest category of collisions occurred when the deputy was in the process of backing the patrol car. Those numbers have significantly decreased since purchasing patrol cars equipped with rear back-up cameras.

Since 2012, of the 181 vehicle damage incidents, only eight were reportable accidents that required a state accident form to be completed, and none of those resulted in personal injury. A deputy was found to be at fault in only two of those collisions, while the other driver was found to be at fault in six of them. 66 of the vehicle damage incidents were caused by animals, debris, or acts of nature.

In those incidents where a collision occurred as the result of the deputy's vehicle intentionally and lawfully making contact with a vehicle that was being pursued, Iowa law allows for an agency commander to notify the Department of Transportation that this was an on-duty traffic collision that occurred within the course of the deputy's employment, where the deputy was not at fault, and the collision will be removed from the deputy's driving record.

## **WELLNESS PROGRAM**

### **Employee Peer-to-Peer Counseling and Employees Assistance Programs**

Studies have clearly shown that divorce, suicide and substance abuse issues are more prevalent in law enforcement jobs than almost any other career. To reduce those occurrences and allow our employees to better deal with stressors that occur in their lives, including those stressors that are job-induced, we created a peer-to-peer counseling program that utilizes trained employees to provide counseling services to their fellow employees. The discussions occurring during the peer-to-peer counseling remains confidential unless suicidal or homicidal thoughts or illegal activity is discovered. While the program is in its infancy, we currently have seven peer-to-peer counselors, including both deputies and dispatchers. Thus far, they are averaging two contacts per counselors per month including one critical intervention in which a deputy was placed on administrative leave with pay while they received appropriate professional treatment, allowing the employee to return to full duty. The peer-to-peer counselors have also provided support to several employees after critical incidents.

Our peer-to-peer counselors have also joined ranks with Foundation 2 and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at Mercy Medical Center to ensure employees are receiving appropriate mental health care as soon as issues are discovered. Foundation 2 is a local nonprofit human service agency offering crisis prevention and intervention programs to people of all ages. The EAP acts as a partner, or resource, providing professional, confidential help to employees and their families, through their own initiative or supervisor referral.

Additionally, the County provides confidential EAP counselling to all county employees. The first five EAP sessions are free of charge, with follow-up care being billed to the employees' health insurance carriers.

### **Critical Incident Stress Debriefing**

With the understanding that allowing our employees to appropriately deal with the stressors that they encounter in their jobs as soon after they occur as possible, we have long-provided them access to Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) counselors. Any employee experiencing a critical incident, or an employee noticing the affected negative behavior of another employee, can trigger the more formal CISD process. Our peer-to-peer counselors also assist with the CISD process.

## **Employee Annual Mental Health Check**

We firmly believe that the best way to address our employees' mental health concerns is to prohibit them from occurring. Nationally, employee mental health checkups have become a popular way to address the stressors that our employees experience, both personally and professionally. As we are set to enter into the contract negotiation process with the unions representing our deputies and sergeants, management is set to propose requiring/offering all sworn personnel to attend an annual mental health check with a local mental health provider. While the details have yet to be worked out, this issue is important enough for employee wellness that it needs to be addressed.

## **Blue Courage Employee Wellness Program**



Understanding the importance of public service and employee wellness and the important connection between the two, in 2016, I directed our staff to locate two senior deputies who would volunteer to attend a weeklong Blue Courage® training session to become program instructors. Blue Courage is a transformational leadership development workshop designed for all levels of the law enforcement organization to provide a holistic approach for the personal and professional development of today's law enforcement

officers and employees. Blue Courage is designed to collectively build the spirit of community involvement by increasing engagement, dedication, productivity, collaboration and community trust. Blue Courage is a force multiplier that encompasses nine teaching principles focused on the nobility of policing. Blue Courage highlights today's law enforcement culture through the dedication of personal and community respect. Blue Courage builds emotional resiliency and hope, and emphasizes the importance of health and wellness in the pursuit of positive community and relationship outcomes.

I have since required all of our employees, from the deputies to the clerks and auto mechanics, to attend the two-day Blue Courage training. Since all of our employees have direct interaction with the public and it is important for all of our employees to maintain a state of mental and physical wellness, I felt it was appropriate to include all our employees in the training.

## **Employee Fitness Center**

To help maintain physical fitness and reduce employee stress, a fully equipped fitness center is located in the lower level of the Sheriff's Office and is available to employees 24/7/365. After a flooding event in 2016, the fitness center was redesigned, enlarged and made to conform to ADA standards. The physical fitness center includes 4 Treadmills, 3 Elliptical Machines, 2 Stationary Bikes, 1 Stair Stepper, 1 Universal Station Machine (4-separate exercise movements), 1 Smith Machine (w/ several weight plates), 1 Crossover Cable Machine, 1 Squat Rack (w/ several weight plates), 1 Power Tower (dips, pull-ups, abs), 1 Rubber coated Dumbbell Set (5-100 lbs.), 1 Kettlebell Set (5-80 lbs.), 1 Medicine Ball Set, 1 set Stretch Bands, 2 Power Bags, and 6-floor mats for floor exercises. The exercise room also has a stereo sound system, along with a CrossFit interval timer and DVD player to play exercise videos.

To make it more user friendly, male and female locker rooms, complete with shower and restroom facilities, adjoin the fitness center. To ensure that the equipment is used correctly and to reduce employee injuries, employees wishing to utilize the fitness center for the first time must go through an orientation process and sign off on a liability waiver. While physical fitness standards are not mandated, all employees are strongly encouraged to utilize this free facility before, after, and/or during working hours as well as on their off-duty time.



## **Employee Comprehensive Wellness Program**

Employee wellness is key to maintaining healthy employees. Linn County collaborates with Health Solutions to offer a comprehensive program to increase employee wellness and decrease health insurance costs. However, two years ago, the County changed the program and it now allows employees to earn up to a \$500 yearly incentive for engaging in activities and behaviors that result in reduced health risk, improved health status, and a better quality of life. All benefit-eligible employees are eligible and encouraged to participate in the program. Participants earn \$150 dollars after they complete an annual health screening and on-line video. Employees are eligible to earn an additional \$350 dollars by earning a total of 1,000 points by participating in additional wellness activities and challenges through the wellness portal that encourage nutritional, mental, and physical wellness. Participants earning above 1,200 points qualify for an additional \$100 prize raffle and the highest point earner within the county is rewarded an additional \$100.

In speaking with the County's Risk Manager, he advised:

"I commend you and your staff for your proactive approach to injury prevention. Whether utilizing specific safety training modules or promoting a culture that encourages well-being on



**PROGRAM OBJECTIVE:**

The objective of the Linn County Wellness Rewards Program is to provide all employees the opportunity to earn a generous incentive for engaging in activities and behaviors that result in reduced health risk, improved health status, and a better quality of life.

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW:**

- Eligibility**
  - All benefit eligible employees are eligible and encouraged to participate in the program.
  - Points are not prorated for part-time status or new hires.
  - Participants must be actively employed when the wellness incentive is paid out.
- Incentive**
  - The total wellness incentive available to all participants is \$500
  - Participants will earn \$150 and 150 points for completing the following steps by September 30, 2019:
    - Attending the annual on-site health screening or Weland Labs, or submitting a Health Form
    - Understanding Your Results by watching a video in your wellness portal, attending a group presentation or reviewing results with a health coach
  - Participants will earn an additional \$350 for earning at least 850 additional points throughout the fiscal year of July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020. You may begin earning points on July 1, 2019.
  - Incentive will be paid via payroll credit (and is subject to tax):
    - \$150 will be paid after October 1, 2019
    - \$350 will be paid after August 1, 2020
  - **BONUS:** To encourage continued participation after reaching 1,000 points (you can win both):
    - There will be a \$100 prize raffle among participants earning 1,200+ points!
    - The highest point earner within the county will also be rewarded an additional \$100!
- Annual Screening**
  - Annual health screenings can be completed on-site at various Linn County locations in August, with your medical provider, or at a Weland Lab location.
    - Lab and biometric results collected with your primary care provider between December 1, 2018 and September 30, 2019 (and not used for the 2018-2019 program) may be submitted via Health Form.
      - *To claim points for completing your annual physical, it must be completed during the 2019-2020 program, between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020!*
    - Results must be submitted by September 30, 2019 if completing through Health Form or Weland Labs.
  - *Complete the annual health screening process, including understanding your results, to be eligible for ANY of the wellness incentive.*
- Quarterly Activities**
  - Any event/activity that states points are rewarded 'per quarter' will need to be completed and recorded within the quarter. For Quarters 1-3 that end on a holiday or weekend, you will have two additional business days to record. Quarter 4 deadline is June 30, 2020 regardless of a holiday or weekend.
    - Quarter 1: July 1, 2019 - September 30, 2019
    - Quarter 2: October 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
    - Quarter 3: January 1, 2020 - March 31, 2020
    - Quarter 4: April 1, 2020 - June 30, 2020
  - If participating in the Physical Activity Challenge, you must re-enroll each quarter. If you enroll in the challenge after the quarter has begun, you can manually enter prior activity to receive credit.

and off the job, the message to employees is that the employer is engaged in their wellness. This is a great model to follow not only when considering the safety culture of an organization or agency, but also the overall culture which leads to lower absenteeism, lower turn-over rates and can lead to savings in the costs associated with workers' compensation programs and health insurance plans."

**Employee Health and Safety Fair**

For the past several years, Linn County has provided employees with a Health and Safety Fair that occurs one day each fall for several hours over the lunch period. The Health and Safety Fair provides free information to employees and includes health, wellness, safety, and benefits vendors. All County employees are strongly encouraged to attend and are allowed additional time during their lunch period to do so. Attendees are provided a free healthy lunch and are eligible for door prizes. In 2019, 41 vendors participated in the Health and Safety Fair and provided useful information on topics such as Alzheimer awareness, employee assistance program, health awareness, financial wellness, insurance and benefit services, safety equipment and supplies, and chiropractic services.

**Flu and Hepatitis Vaccines**

As part of the overall wellness program, flu shots are provided free of charge to all County employees and employees who routinely encounter at-risk members of the public are provided free hepatitis B vaccinations and proper monitoring.

### County-Sponsored Employee Weight Loss Program

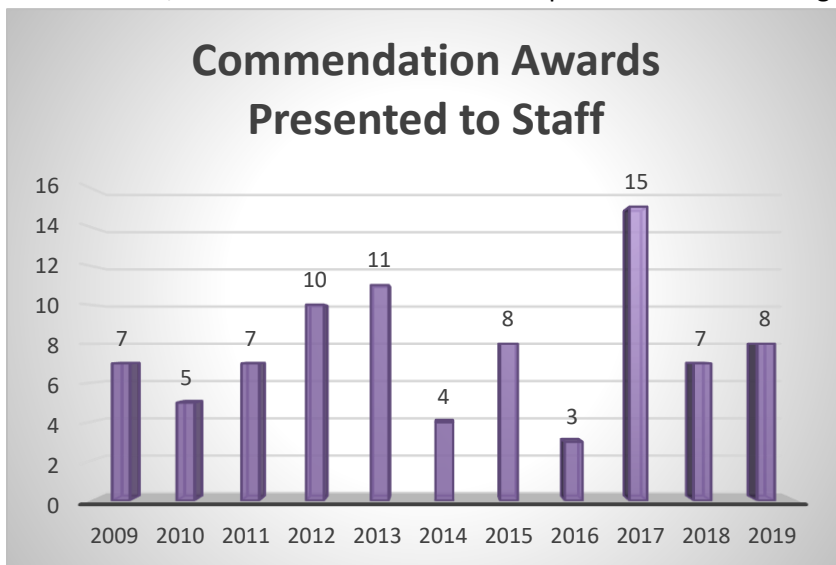
Maintaining a healthy body weight is important to living a healthy lifestyle. Starting two years ago, to assist with weight loss and achieving a healthier life-style, all County employees are eligible to participate in the Naturally Slim® diet program. Valued at \$595, this ten-week, science-based, video-delivered, diet program is free to all county employees and counts as points toward the County's wellness program. Upon successfully completing the ten-week program, employees are eligible to continue with the program free of charge for a full year.

### Commendation Award Program



To help recognize those employees who go above and beyond in serving the community, the Sheriff's Office has a commendation award program. While the program has existed since the 1990s, prior administrations did not make appropriate use of the program. Since becoming Sheriff in 2009, I have ensured that all employees deserving commendation recognition are awarded it. The recognition promotes employee accomplishment and wellness and is a point of pride within the organization. These awards consist of a citation to be displayed on the deputy's uniform, a medal, and a written letter of commendation that manifests the deed.

Since 2009, 84 commendation awards have been presented to Sheriff's Office employees, with the overwhelming majority being for successful lifesaving efforts. To make the commendation award more impactful, they are presented at roll-call sessions in front of the employee's peers. In addition, recognition is also made during the County's quarterly employee recognition breakfasts and the information, complete with a photo of the commendation presentation, is submitted for publication in *The Gold Star*, the Iowa State Sheriffs' and Deputies' Association magazine.



## Deputy and Special Deputy of the Year Award Program

I have always felt that positive recognition is important to deputy morale. It helps acknowledge proper behavior and promotes deputy-wellness. Upon taking office in 2009, I implemented the Deputy of the Year and the Special Deputy of the Year award programs. These award programs are meant to recognize a specific deputy and special deputy (regardless of rank) who went above and beyond in serving the Sheriff's Office and the citizens of Linn County during the previous year. Nominations can be made based on a specific incident or can be made based on the consistent positive behavior of an employee. Nominations are sent to the Chief Deputy, who compiles them, then forwards them to the nomination selection committee. The nomination selection committee consists



deputy who evaluate the nominations

on their merit, then forwards the name of a recommended recipient to me for recognition consideration. The recognition awards are presented in group settings with the deputy recipients and during the monthly group training sessions for the special deputy recipients.



## Sheriff's Challenge Coin

Within the last two-years, I created a Sheriff's challenge coin program that recognizes employees who go above and beyond in serving the County, where their actions do not necessarily rise to the level of a commendation award, but still deserves special recognition. These challenge coins are specifically from me, as the Sheriff, and are meant to recognize those employees who respond admirably in certain situations that may occur only once in a great while, or involve employees who do great things for the agency on a continual basis.

The Sheriff's challenge coin program is designed to provide only one challenge coin to an employee over the course of their employment, with the ultimate goal of employees eventually receiving one, assuming that it is deserved.



## **Last Wishes Packet**

In 2015, we started requesting deputies to complete a Last Wishes Packet. This form was created with the intention of making available any pertinent information in the unfortunate event that a current employee is killed or gravely injured and unable to communicate his/her wishes. Although we understood that such circumstances are extremely unpleasant to consider, having certain information readily available to the Sheriff's Office at the time of an incident significantly reduces the logistical burdens to our employees' family and loved ones in an otherwise catastrophic occasion. Additionally, much of the information requested in the packet is vital for completing the various applications for death benefits that would be provided to the family of a fallen deputy.

The basis of the Last Wishes Packet is as follows: A deputy may fill out the form, including only as much information as he or she wishes to provide. The deputy then seals the form in an envelope. The envelope is then placed into storage specifically for all of the Last Wishes Packets. There are only four scenarios in which these forms are ever removed from storage. The first is if the deputy wishes to update the information. The second scenario is when the deputy retires, in which case the form is removed and returned, unopened. The third scenario is if the deputy no longer wants to participate in the program and requests his/her form be returned. The fourth scenario is in the unfortunate situation that the deputy is either killed or gravely injured (while either on- or off-duty) and is not able to communicate on his/her own. It is stressed that the information in the packet will never be read by anyone unless the fourth scenario occurs. Additionally, all of the information on the form is strictly voluntary. Employees are not required to fill out any portion of the form and it is acceptable for employees wishing to complete only portions of the form.

A Designation of Beneficiary Form is also included in the packet. This form is required by many federal and state organizations that offer death benefits to the deputy's family. The Last Wishes beneficiary form also ensures that we are able to channel any benefits to our employees' loved ones from the many outside organizations that provide benefits due to a line of duty death. By documenting the beneficiary, it helps to ensure that the correct person is receiving the benefits, in addition to speeding up the application process for the benefits.

## **Closing**

Since becoming Sheriff in 2009, my command staff and I have made it a priority to ensure that we provide our employees with the safest working environment possible. We have done so by developing, implementing, and promoting in-depth comprehensive and strategically implemented deputy safety and wellness programs.

These programs employ a strategy that embraces voluntary participation and an enhanced agency awareness that has achieved a high degree of employee buy-in through our creative and innovative awareness strategies. These programs are widely accepted by our employees, have high employee participation rates, and are vastly regarded by both them and our administration as being successful. I believe that the programs and strategies that we have implemented can easily be replicated by other agencies.

For all of the above stated reasons, I firmly believe that our agency is worthy of the Destination Zero – Comprehensive Safety award.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Brian D. Gardner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'B'.

Brian D. Gardner  
Linn County Sheriff