

THE DEPUTY



SUMMER 2026

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- RCSD'S UNSUNG SAVES
- RYAN RAWL WORKOUT
& 250 CHALLENGE

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THE DEPUTY is the official publication of the Richland County Sheriff's Department, "America's Law Enforcement Agency."

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Sheriff's message to the Department

WE AS A DEPARTMENT continue to build on lessons learned from shared experiences in the field. Three recent incidents stand out as perfect examples: The Horrell Hill Elementary School shootings, the protests on Parklane (in the wake of the Chow verdict), and the Summit residential-area shootings where our deputies suddenly came under a massive hail of gunfire. Our exceptional training and the relationships we have developed over the years were showcased in all three. By the grace of God, none of our deputies were injured (or worse), and we were able to successfully carry out our respective missions – doing what we had to do in all three.

HORRELL HILL ELEMENTARY SHOOTING

At Horrell Hill Elementary, our school resource officer (SRO) performed magnificently with her sole purpose being saving the lives of children at the school. The decisions she made potentially prevented a mass shooting which would have been disastrous. While three rounds – shots fired which were directed toward her – struck her vehicle, her quick thinking and immediate action prevented any bullets from striking any of our students. I'm very proud of her. This is a perfect example of why we train with the precision and intensity that we do. Training literally saves lives. There were split second decisions that had to be made. She made those decisions, and they were the

correct ones. The training we conduct becomes instinctive at the moment of truth. The action by our SRO at Horrell Hill Elementary is a direct reflection of that.



PARKLANE PROTESTS

Then there were the protests after the jury's verdict in the Rick Chow case which created a lot of fearful anticipation that those protests would devolve into something resembling the riots of 2020. But because of the community relations we had already developed – and continue to develop – over the years, we were able to coordinate with the protest organizers and prevent a peaceful protest from morphing into violence: All the while we protected the physical property toward which the anger was directed. Our deputies exercised proper, measured restraint which was and is necessary in situations like this, ultimately ensuring the safety of all.

(Sheriff's message continues)

SHOOTING AT THE SUMMIT

The third incident was the Summit gunbattle involving three of our deputies beginning with suspects shooting into residences. Our deputies – two K-9 officers and a region deputy – again had to make life-or-death decisions very quickly. They did so despite being suddenly subjected to an intense amount of direct automatic-weapons fire. They returned fire, effectively communicated with each other, protected each other, moved out of the kill-zone. And once again, training was key. None of our deputies were injured.

TRAINING SAVES LIVES

Whenever I'm asked why we conduct so much training, these three incidents are the reasons why. All three prove how valuable our training is. Our Training Division does a superb job. They are constantly upgrading our training curricula as new tactics, techniques, and procedures are introduced. Our training is frankly some of the best in the nation and is recognized as such. So time spent in training is – and has been proven to be – lifesaving, valuable, and effective. Those on the sidelines are able to review, dissect, critique, and criticize decisions that for us are made in fractions of a second; but in all three of these incidents our deputies performed at the highest-level of professional expectation.

BUDGETARY ISSUES

As we enter the new budget year, the 2.5 step-increase is on track as well as longevity pay. This has been a challenging year in

terms of the budget in that we were not able to order new vehicles, but we were still able to do our jobs with what we had. The County Administrator's office is also trying to make critical and disastrous changes to retirees' and dependents' benefits. But the Sheriff's Department was able to lead the charge in ensuring such changes did not pass. This may be a continuing battle for us, but we will continue to battle. We will not let our people suffer. Nor will we allow our operations to be led or dictated by those who are not chosen by the people to be their law enforcement agency. The office of Sheriff is a constitutional office elected by the people.

County Council gives us a budget: We manage that budget, and the operation of the Sheriff's Department is – by law – determined by the Sheriff's Department.

I am proud of everybody and the job you all have done – and that you continue to do. We will continue to be the best agency that we can be and to always support our people. Two things that make our agency stand out above any other agency in the United States: First, we have culture of caring: We take care of our people. Second, we are cops, professional peace officers.

So continue to encourage one another. Encourage and take care of each other and those you are sworn to protect. And embrace the spirit of the uniform and badge that you have chosen and earned.



Leon Lott, Sheriff of Richland County

Building International Bonds Through K9 Excellence



*RCSD handlers travel to France to exchange knowledge
and strengthen canine operations.*

Recently, members of the Richland County Sheriff's Department K9 Unit traveled to France to participate in an exchange program with the Centre National d'Instruction Cynophile de la Gendarmerie (CNICG), the National Canine Training Center of the French Gendarmerie.

During the week-long visit, K9 Specialist Sox and K9 Specialist Jeffcoat, joined by program coordinator K9 Specialist Michel Galliot, observed and participated in every stage of K9 training. They also took part in live operational scenarios alongside experienced French handlers and their canine partners.

The exchange program provides an opportunity to compare training methods, share best practices, and strengthen professional relationships with international law enforcement partners. By learning from one another, both agencies broaden their understanding of effective canine operations and reinforce their commitment to excellence in public safety.

RCSD extends its sincere thanks to CNICG Commander Colonel Pascal Segui, Captain Philippe Dubourg, and the many instructors, handlers, and administrative staff whose hospitality and expertise made this experience possible.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK MEANS MUCH TO THE FAMILIES OF THOSE LOST

"We will never forget those we've lost, nor their loved ones"
-Sheriff Lott

Throngs of law enforcement officers (including sheriffs and police chiefs), state legislators, S.C. Lieutenant Governor Pamela Evette, Attorney General Alan Wilson, and a class of cadets from the S.C. Criminal Justice Academy all gathered in front of the law enforcement memorial on S.C. State House grounds, Wednesday, May 6, to honor law enforcement officers from the Palmetto State who lost their lives in the line-of-duty.

The service, a candlelight vigil with bagpipes skirling and a ramrod straight color detail, was a precursor to NATIONAL POLICE WEEK, May 10-16. It was also a moment of prayer, song, stirring stories of heroic actions, and a reflection of the sacrifices made since 1797 by more than 500 police officers, state troopers and deputy sheriffs in South Carolina.

"That's 500 families," say officials with the S.C. Law Enforcement Officers Association.

For the Richland County Sheriff's Department (RCSD), that line-of-duty death number is eight since 1930 and includes the families of Jacob Eric Salrin (2023), Jerry Hurd (2018), Darral Keith Lane (2007), Byron Keith Cannon (2005), Donnie Reno Washington (2003), Edward Joseph Alva (1975), John Mark Dial (1974), and Allen F. Bennett (1930).

Deputy Ryan Rawl was killed in the line of duty "as a soldier" in 2012 while serving with the South Carolina Army National Guard in Afghanistan. The Ryan Rawl Memorial Workout is held every July 4th, Independence Day morning, in Rawl's honor.

"Ryan was still and will forever be one of our own," said Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott. "We will never forget him, his family, or any of the families of our deputies who made the ultimate sacrifice for us all."



Pictured is Major Ricky Johnson and Chief Ashe at a candlelight vigil

National Police Week (continued)



Pictured is Darral Keith Lane

For Lott, that's a tangible promise that he has put into action since first assuming the office of sheriff nearly 30 years ago.

"Sheriff Lott never forgets the anniversary of the loss of my late husband Darral," said Sheila Lane, an administrative assistant at RCSD. "I always receive a card and a letter from the Sheriff with kind, compassionate words letting me know we are not forgotten. I can't begin to express how much that means to me personally."

Master Deputy Allie Salrin-Zammuto, who works in RCSD's office of public information, agrees.

"As law enforcement officers, we honor those who have sacrificed

themselves for their fellow officers and our community," said Salrin, who lost her younger brother Jacob Eric Salrin in the line of duty in 2023.

"National Police Week is a time of remembrance and honor. As a profession, we pause to reflect on our mission as peacekeepers. As families, we share our loved ones with the world in hopes their sacrifice is not lost and their spirit lives on."

National Police Week is also an opportunity to connect with other survivors, she says. In 2025, Salrin traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend a sibling survivor group during National Police Week.

"Everyone shared the circumstances surrounding their loss and one person's story in particular taught me a valuable lesson," said Salrin. "I was – and occasionally still am – angry to have lost my little brother with no warning, no chance to be there when he left this world. But the lesson I learned through hearing another's story is this: when you love someone enough, the grief of losing them will persist through any set of circumstances. There is no right time, never enough time."

Salrin adds: "There is a difference between trauma and grief. Maybe we'll be spared some trauma, but when we love, we accept the inevitability of grief. National Police Week, among other things, inspires me to be strong enough to share my story with others because you never know who's listening. Someone else's story saved me; maybe, one day, I'll have the chance to pay it forward."



Pictured is MD Allie Salrin (left) and her brother, Deputy Jacob Salrin (right)

National Police Week (continued)

Human deputies are not the only deputy losses suffered by RCSD. Since 2011, the department has lost four K-9s in the line of duty, including K-9 Wick, K-9 Kodak, and K-9 Bumi; all killed in action in 2024, the largest number of K-9s lost by a South Carolina agency that year.

K-9 Fargo was lost in 2011. Fargo participated in the first annual Richland County Sheriff's Foundation-sponsored and RCSD-presented Guardians of the Night 5-K road race in July of that year. Fargo was KIA four months later. Every Guardians of the Night event since then has been organized and "run" in Fargo's memory.

That's not all. A beautiful K-9 memorial statue was also unveiled in RCSD's memorial garden in front of RCSD headquarters during National Police Week last year.



“We don't forget any of our deputies lost,” said Lott.
“Never will.”

”

Congratulations to the 2025 Retirees!



Our 2025 retirees leave behind a legacy of dedication, courage, and compassion that has shaped the Richland County Sheriff's Department in countless ways. Each of them has spent years serving with integrity, guiding younger deputies, and strengthening the bond we share with our community. Their commitment helped build the foundation we stand on today, and their impact will continue to be felt long after their final shift. We wish each retiree a future filled with rest, joy, and well deserved pride in all they have accomplished.

John C. Barron
Harold Bouknight
Daphane Bowman
Henry Bowman
Marcus Brown
Cynnamon Clinton
Donald Curtis
Heidi Derijke

Matthew Faile
Rafael Gonzalez
Joseph Gravelyn
Rhett Hall
Taima Jordan
Bill Mann
Todd Minemier
Lilliam Parker

Robert Plexico
Willbur Savage
Sherrick Tolber-Hill
Sallie Marie Waldrop
Miles Weaver
Augustus Williams
Fred Williams
Lee Wright

A FORCE OF FAITH

Richland County Sheriff's Department Chaplains play key role within the department and throughout the community



The Richland County Sheriff's Department (RCSD) has for decades maintained a viable corps of chaplains, officially the RCSD Chaplaincy Program (spiritual caregivers who serve the needs of those within the department): Primarily and for most of its history Christian clergymen and those working as professional ministry leaders.

In 2026, RCSD chaplains include men and women from all faiths – Christians (both Protestants and Catholics), Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims speaking a variety of languages and all serving the spiritual needs of RCSD deputies and those whom the deputies serve.

For years, the Chaplaincy Program was under RCSD's Victim Services Unit, but when RCSD's Wellness and Resiliency Unit (today the RCSD Wellness Unit) was created to serve the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of all deputies and employees; chaplains were brought

under Professional Development where "Wellness" resides, all of which is commanded by Deputy Chief Maria Yturria.

"Our Chaplaincy Program is a dynamic and, in many ways, unique element within the department," says Chief Yturria.

"We're unique in that most agencies have non-denominational chaplains, we have chaplains of all faiths," says Yturria. "The deputies also see our chaplains at all events and at the gyms where we work out. So they are training with us."



A Force of Faith (continued)

“Dynamic in the sense that our chaplains do much more than serve the spiritual needs of others. Their outreach extends to the tangible needs of the deputies and babies born into the RCSD family.”

For instance, RCSD chaplains operate a food pantry for deputies. Chaplains also visit all newborn babies born to RCSD parents and present those families with welcome baskets including information on how to care for your baby.

And it’s not simply one or two chaplains, or even five representing each aforementioned faith or religious discipline: RCSD fields approximately 34 chaplains countywide. And they’re all unpaid volunteers.

“RCSD chaplains provide spiritual, emotional, and moral support,” says RCSD Chaplain Marty Wells, a retired U.S. Army command sergeant major. “There is no proselytizing. We simply serve people of all faiths.”

According to Wells: “Chaplains are trusted confidants. We are available for field (training) exercises, and we participate in ride-alongs with patrolling deputies.

Wells adds: “We seek no personal recognition, and our varied backgrounds can be leveraged for myriad situations.”

Col. (Ret.) Bryan Walker, U.S. Army, a former commandant of the United States Army Chaplain Center and School at Fort Jackson, is today an RCSD chaplain. He agrees with Wells as regards “backgrounds,” leveraging, and parallels between law enforcement chaplains’ ministries and those of the military.

“I see parallels between law enforcement and military chaplain ministries in regard to

‘emotional layering,’” says Walker, RCSD’s Chaplain of the Year for 2025. “Although it can occur for a variety of reasons, such as past trauma, I think it occurs with law enforcement and military members because of the emotional ‘thickening’ necessary to do their jobs.”

Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott is unabashedly direct in his praise of the Chaplaincy Program at RCSD. “What these men and women bring to the table in terms of real-world experience and ministry could easily serve as a model for other law enforcement agencies, and I’m quite sure it does,” says Lott. “We’re all the beneficiaries of their service and outreach.”

According to the chaplain applicant form, RCSD Chaplains are required to maintain a minimum of six contact hours each month with deputies and/or unsworn personnel within the department. Fact is: The amount of time RCSD chaplains spend with deputies and employees is much greater.

“For chaplains this a life-calling ministry,” said Lott.

Not surprising: RCSD culture is one that has long embraced spiritual faith (like physical, mental, and emotional “wellness”) as being vital to the overall well-being of its deputies. In August 2025 for instance, RCSD produced its official PRAYER OF THE RICHLAND COUNTY DEPUTY which was subsequently published at POLICE1, one of the nation’s most widely-read law enforcement publications.

The RCSD Chaplaincy Program serves, and has long served, as the lifeblood of that very same culture.

To celebrate America's 250th birthday, the Richland County Sheriff's Department hosted the 250-LB Bench Press Challenge, inviting deputies, employees, local athletes, and members of the community to test their strength by bench pressing 250 pounds. Participants could complete a single repetition or as many reps as possible, with all lifts officially verified at participating fitness centers.

250 CHALLENGE



The six-day challenge, held June 28 through July 3, brought together powerlifters, recreational lifters, and first-time participants in a fun event focused on fitness, friendly competition, and community involvement.

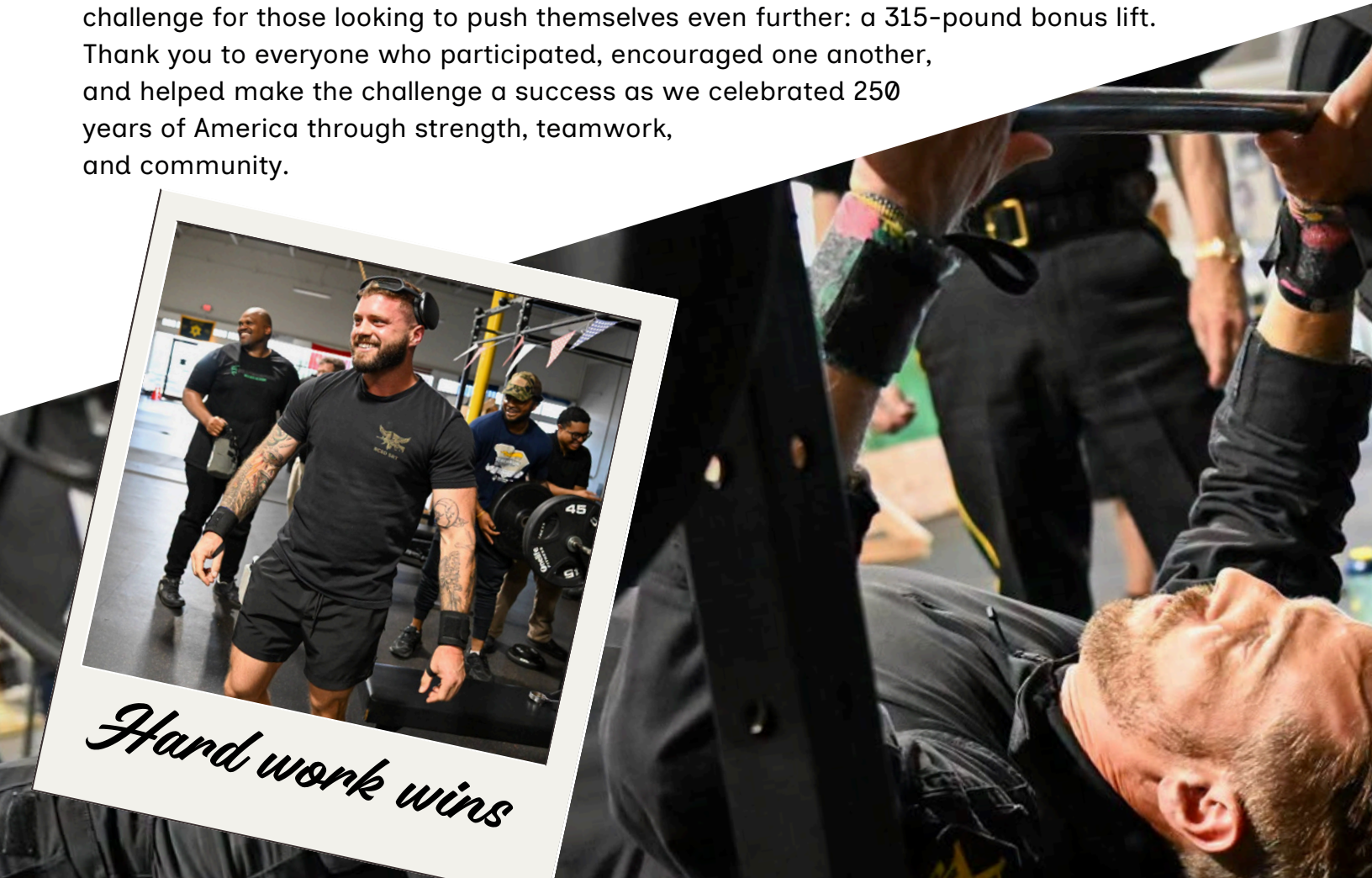
"A lot of our deputies are either competitive or recreational powerlifters, so we saw this as a fun event for them," said Sheriff Leon Lott. "We quickly realized there was interest beyond the department, so we opened it up to everyone."

The event was made possible through the support of OneLife Fitness, which provided equipment and hosted participants throughout the challenge. To top it all off, Sheriff Lott added an extra challenge for those looking to push themselves even further: a 315-pound bonus lift.

Thank you to everyone who participated, encouraged one another, and helped make the challenge a success as we celebrated 250 years of America through strength, teamwork, and community.



Hard work wins



RYAN RAWL MEMORIAL WORKOUT

*The July 4 event honored fallen Soldier and RCSD
Deputy Ryan Rawl*



The 14th Annual Ryan Rawl Memorial Workout was held Saturday, July 4, on the grounds of the South Carolina State House in Columbia. Hosted by Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott and the Richland County Sheriff's Department (RCSD), the Independence Day event began at 8 a.m. and featured station-to-station running and exercises based on the CrossFit model and various military and law enforcement physical fitness regimens.

"We've been doing this on the morning of Independence Day for the past 14 years as a way to honor and remember our own RCSD Deputy and South Carolina Army National Guard officer Ryan Rawl," Sheriff Lott said. "Because it begins early on Independence Day, the workout serves as a special kickoff to the day's celebrations here in the Midlands of South Carolina."

According to Lott, "No matter what participants had planned for the day and the weekend, this was the best way to gather with friends, enjoy a great workout, reflect on the significance of the day, and honor one of our own, without whose sacrifice, and the sacrifices of those like him, 'independence' would be a hollow word."



Ryan Rawl (continued)

Lott added, "Through this event and in other ways throughout each year since we lost him in 2012, Ryan and his family will never be forgotten, not as long as I'm sheriff."

A former Lexington High School football player and wrestler who later graduated from The Citadel, Rawl began serving with RCSD in 2005. In 2006, he was commissioned into the South Carolina Army National Guard.

On June 20, 2012, Rawl was temporarily detached from his duties as an RCSD school resource officer and deployed as a 1st Lieutenant with the Guard's 133rd Military Police Company when tragedy struck. He and fellow soldiers were manning a security checkpoint at a crowded market in Khost, Afghanistan, near the Pakistan border, when both the checkpoint and the market were attacked by a suicide bomber.

The explosion killed Rawl and fellow soldier Sgt. John David Meador II of Lexington, who served with the Lexington County Sheriff's Department, and Sgt. 1st Class Matthew B. Thomas of Travelers Rest. Five other Americans were seriously wounded, and 21 Afghans were killed, with many more injured.

Like all Gold Star families, the Rawl family experienced a devastating loss. Ryan's mother, Diane Rawl, once feared her son might one day be forgotten.

"Never," Lott has said.

Following Ryan's death, Lott directed RCSD to establish the first Ryan Rawl Memorial Workout. The inaugural event was held on July 4, 2013, and over the years has included station-to-station workouts, 5K Freedom Runs, and Kids Fun Runs.

This year's theme was "Honor his spirit. Celebrate his life. One rep at a time."

Participants and supporters gathered to remember Ryan's life and sacrifice while celebrating the freedoms he gave his life to protect.

The 2026 Ryan Rawl Memorial Workout was preceded by RCSD's six-day 250-LB Bench Press Challenge, held in celebration of America's 250th birthday.



TURNING TRAGEDY INTO

hope

What began as an unimaginable loss has grown into a powerful movement for change.

After losing her son, Ju, to gun violence, his mother chose to turn her grief into purpose by creating the Ju'stice Foundation. Her mission is simple but profound: prevent other families from experiencing the same heartbreak by raising awareness, building stronger community relationships, and promoting efforts to reduce gun violence.

This year, the Richland County Sheriff's Department was honored to partner with the Ju'stice Foundation for two impactful community events.

The first was a Gun Take Back event hosted by Serve & Connect. Every unwanted firearm turned in represented an opportunity to prevent a theft, an accidental shooting, a crime, or even the loss of another life. What began with the hope of removing just one firearm from circulation became a meaningful demonstration of what can happen when a community comes together with a shared purpose.

RCSD deputies also participated in the Ju'stice Games, a friendly football matchup against the Columbia Police Department that brought law enforcement officers together to support the Foundation's mission. The event raised awareness about gun violence while strengthening relationships between agencies and the communities they serve. After an exciting game, RCSD earned a 54-8 victory, but the greatest win was the opportunity to support a cause that extends far beyond the football field.

The Richland County Sheriff's Department is grateful to the Ju'stice Foundation for transforming tragedy into hope and to Serve & Connect for helping make these events possible. Together, we continue to prove that positive change happens when communities, organizations, and law enforcement unite around a common goal: creating a safer future for everyone.



DIGITAL FORENSICS A CRIME-SOLVING GAME-CHANGER

Richland County Sheriff's Department points to mobile-phone forensics as "vital asset" in recent homicide-solving successes

Recent national reports of the Richland County Sheriff's Department's (RCSD) successes in solving 100-percent of all homicide cases (80 murder cases in fact since 2023) beg the question: How? Broad investigative team effort, including an intelligence and analysis unit which is second to none; strong community support; and technologies to include ballistics, forensics, and in-house tech services.

As part of in-house tech services: "Having a full-time digital forensics unit has been an absolute game-changer for criminal investigations as a whole," said RCSD Major Ricky E. Johnson with the department's Criminal Investigations Division. "We are not in the business of forensically guessing."

According to Johnson: "We're getting between 20-25 cell-phones a week, the majority of which are from investigators."

That's when Johnson's team of six (including himself) examiners and technicians immediately get to work preserving the phone data (though the on-scene deputies and investigators play key roles in the initial preservation of seized phones), extract the data, and then analyze the data.

PRESERVATION IS VITAL

Unlike computer forensics wherein evidence is static – stopped and not moving in-or-out – "phones are living systems; essentially a radio frequency transceiver designed to be in constant, autonomous communication with external networks," says Johnson. "So every second after seizure can impact what data survives and what does not."

Johnson, a 19-year veteran of RCSD and a former task force officer with DEA, adds: "Because we can do everything in-house, we have the equipment and trained personnel to do everything at our lab, and our lab does mobile forensics, to include fixing and repairing broken, damaged, or otherwise inoperable devices, vehicle forensics, and video forensics."

THE DIGITAL FORENSICS UNIT

Digital Forensics (continued)

Johnson's six-person team is singularly dedicated to the digital forensics component of any given case. His team learns the particulars of the case and immediately becomes part of the broader investigative team working the case.

"As mentioned, we have had a 100-percent solvability rate on homicides over the past three years," says Johnson. "But the digital forensics unit has also helped bring closure to families of missing people, solved car break-ins, commercial and residential burglaries, sexual related crimes, financial crimes, you name it."

Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott said: "Our investment in digital forensics and other investigations-related technologies to include the employment of the best people and excellent training they receive is an enormous crime-solving element that the public by-and-large is not aware of."

DIGITAL FORENSICS WORKS

"Criminals will lie," says Johnson. "The data does not. And it's not simply if someone did something, but if they did not."

Fact is everybody has a cell phone, some people have more than one. The current U.S. population numbers are just over 343-million people, whereas in 2025 there were a total of 417-million active cellular phone-connections across the United States. That's tens-of-millions more phone connections than there are people. "So the probability of us seeing a phone is extremely high," says Johnson.

THE DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

All digital activity leaves evidence of one's interaction or traces of the evidence. Sounds complicated? It isn't. Though the work for RCSD investigators and technicians to preserve, extract, and analyze the data sometimes is.

"A mobile device aka 'smartphone' is not simply a communications tool," says Johnson. "The smartphone has become the primary witness in legal proceedings, offering an objective, time-stamped narrative of human behavior. Smartphones are digital witnesses in modern criminal investigations. Therefore the reporting of digital evidence is crucial and must be conducted in a manner that is legally admissible and scientifically reproducible."

Johnson adds: "Leaders of police agencies must invest in a unit like this moving forward if they haven't already. There is a digital footprint for almost everything nowadays. Invest in equipment, but more importantly, invest in PEOPLE with training and involvement, and the rest will take care of itself."

UNSUNG SAVES: HOW RICHLAND COUNTY DEPUTIES QUIETLY SAVE LIVES

Three real incidents show how South Carolina deputies made split-second decisions to save lives — moments the public rarely sees

In my near-10 years with the Richland County Sheriff's Department (RCSD) in Columbia, South Carolina, I've learned a simple truth about law enforcement: Far more acts of heroism happen than the public ever sees.

Despite ride-alongs and shows like "On Patrol: LIVE," deputies are often working in moments no camera captures — especially in the darkest hours of the night. And many of those moments involve split-second decisions that save lives.

Consider three recent incidents.

A CRASH AND A TOURNIQUET

In the first, Captain Danny Brown, best known as one of the regularly featured "stars" of On Patrol: LIVE, forwarded a memo to his (and my) boss, Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott, describing what can only be deemed heroism and cool-headedness in the purest sense.

According to the memo, dated Dec. 4, 2025: "In the early morning hours of August 11, 2025, while on patrol in the area of Sparkleberry Road and Mallet Hill Road [in northeast Richland County], RCSD Master Deputy Geoffrey Kendall spotted a vehicle that had been previously commandeered in a carjacking. Master Deputy Kendall attempted to stop the vehicle, but the vehicle fled at high speeds down the road [in a heavily populated residential area]. The driver subsequently lost control of the vehicle and it crashed violently into a grove of trees, immediately ejecting the driver [suspect]."

Digital Forensics (continued)

The memo continues: “The front seat passenger then fled on foot.”

Remaining composed and focused, Kendall shouted commands for the fleeing passenger to stop, which she ignored. He then continued working to clear the car and locate the driver.

Kendall found the driver in nearby woods, but “the lower portion of her left leg was amputated below the knee.” Kendall remained calm and immediately placed a tourniquet at the appropriate spot to stop the profuse bleeding, saving her life.

Despite the severity of her injuries, the suspect — clearly in shock — questioned why the tourniquet was being applied so tightly and why she needed one at all.

Capt. Brown concluded: “Master Deputy Kendall demonstrated calmness, care, and compassion at that moment, keeping her calm ... so much professionalism, a true example of a hero, a lifesaver, professional and just a good human.”

A SUICIDE ATTEMPT STOPPED

The second example of remaining cool under extreme pressure involved RCSD Corporal Avery Arrington.

On the night of Nov. 26, 2025, Arrington observed a female dressed in a hospital gown running from a hospital and being chased by a nurse. The woman climbed a tree and attempted to take her own life by pulling a razor blade from her mouth and cutting her throat, lacerating herself from her left ear to the middle of her throat.

Arrington persuaded the woman to drop the razor and climb down. Once on the ground, he retrieved a medical kit from his partner, Deputy James Potash, and immediately rendered aid, slowing the bleeding until firefighters with the Columbia-Richland Fire Department arrived and stabilized her.

In a memo dated Jan. 7, 2026, RCSD Capt. Russel Q. Brewton wrote: “Cpl. Arrington expertly performed his duties, while bravely facing a traumatic situation. He refused to allow fear to prevent him from giving his best and in doing so, he gave a young person another chance at life.”

A SUICIDE ATTEMPT STOPPED

The third example — and there are many more — involved a victim thrown from his motorcycle following a crash with another vehicle along heavily trafficked Two Notch Road, a stretch of U.S. Highway 1 just outside Columbia.



Digital Forensics (continued)

Master Deputy Monica Parker witnessed the crash and ran toward the victim in active traffic. She found him unconscious, unresponsive and without a pulse. Parker immediately began CPR, and after numerous chest compressions, the victim regained consciousness and ultimately survived.

According to a Jan. 26 memo, Capt. Michael Pearson wrote: “While stabilizing the victim, Parker was also directing traffic and initiating crowd control as no other units had yet arrived.”

Parker continued assisting the Columbia-Richland Fire Department until EMS arrived. Her actions demonstrated “true leadership, dedication and bring great credit upon the Richland County Sheriff’s Department,” Pearson concluded.

THE WORK MOST PEOPLE NEVER SEE

These are just three examples.

Not only among RCSD deputies, but among law enforcement officers across the country — in agencies large and small — acts of life-saving professionalism happen every day. Many will never be widely reported, not because they are rare, but because they are routine for those sworn to protect others.

And for the men and women doing the job, that’s simply part of what they’ve signed up to do.

Your vest is the difference between close call and tragedy.
**Wear the vest,
or pay the price!**

Since 2005, more than 130 American law enforcement officers have been killed after having been struck by vehicles along U.S. roads and highways, according to THE NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MEMORIAL FUND. All life is precious! You are not the exception. Your highly visible traffic vests are vital, DAY OR NIGHT! Just like your vital ballistic body armor. WEAR BOTH!



THE NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MEMORIAL FUND also says that over the past 10 years, more than 1,500 law enforcement officers have lost their lives in the line of duty.

That’s “an average of one [law enforcement officer] death every 58 hours, or 151 deaths per year.” In 2017, there were 129 law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty.

“I hope seeing this photo of me will remind deputies to wear their traffic vests.”

– the late Deputy Jerry Hurd



Deputy Hurd was struck by a vehicle on duty in 2002.



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