

THE FIVE POINT PRESS

A publication for the employees of the Travis County Sheriff's Office

Volume 1, Issue 1

Summer 2005

Introducing *The Five-Point Press*: As Much Yours as Your ID Badge

This is the inaugural issue of *The Five-Point Press*. It's yours. It's for all the employees of this Sheriff's Office.

That's why you'll find thoughtful Q & A columns written by employees in each Bureau. And really interesting stuff like the **UBI** column, researched and written by TCSO's favorite (okay, only) PIO. **UBI** stands for "Useless Bits of Information".

Check out the column by Sheriff Greg Hamilton on page 2. It'll be in the same place in every issue.

And you, too, are welcome to write a column or article! Just contact any of the folks listed in the Editorial Staff Box at the bottom of page 2 and propose an idea for the next issue.

You have plenty of time to submit an idea. *The Five-Point Press* will be

distributed quarterly, via email. Deadline for articles in the next issue is Monday, October 3rd.

Or call us and let us know what you think should be added, deleted or changed. Should we include recent retirements in each issue? What about promotions?

As for the name of this newsletter, it was suggested by Leslie Curry of TCCC Food Services. Lots of good, even great, and some spooey, goofy, names were submitted in the recent contest to name this newsletter. Leslie's submission was selected by a committee and approved by the Sheriff. And the reward Leslie gets? The hearty "Thanks!" of a grateful editorial committee and Sheriff.

Note to Supervisors:
Please print out copies of *The Five-Point Press* for those employees who do not have easy access to email. Thank you!

Want to know about the new 33 Goals for TCSO?

These goals include everything from the Sheriff's Town Hall Meetings to new Programs and Services for Inmates & Ex-Inmates.

Check out complete reports on each on the "Everyone" Drive. After you open the "Everyone" drive, double-click on the "On Our Watch" folder. You are there! You should see 33 documents. Each describes the status of a goal on our watch for the next year or more.

What Is . . . FEM-Lah?

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) became effective for most employers and employees on August 5, 1993. Since the FMLA went into effect, both employees and employers have had many questions and concerns. Here are some of those frequently asked questions (FAQ's):

What is FMLA?

The FMLA provides 12 work weeks of job-protected leave a year to eligible employees. The Act requires that your

group health benefits be maintained during the leave, just as if employees continued to work instead of taking leave. The FMLA allows employees to balance their work and family life by taking reasonable leave for certain family and medical reasons.

The 12 weeks of leave is unpaid by the Act, UNLESS the employee has leave accruals (sick leave, vacation leave, comp time, etc.). If you have these types of leave accruals, then the leave will be paid for as long as you have

accruals. The employee will be required to use leave accruals while on FML, per Travis County Policy.

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Sheriff's Spotlight

It's been six months since I swore to uphold the laws of the State of Texas and the Constitution of the United States as your Sheriff. A lot has been packed into our first six months together.

Every day is filled, sometimes from dawn to well past dark, with meetings, decisions, more meetings, speeches, presentations, emails, even more meetings, letters to read, letters to write – and did I mention a lot of meetings?

We've undertaken ambitious projects and plans, and for the most part, I'm proud of what we've accomplished.

I'm proud of the working partnerships established with other agencies, such as Travis County's Health & Human Services and Veterans Services (HHS&VS). Leaders in our Corrections Bureau are working with HHS&VS to provide beneficial programs for inmates, programs designed to help them help themselves to productive, law-abiding lives.

This effort was recently expanded to sharing information about a helpful program, Resolve to Stop the Violence (RSVP), with representatives from other government agencies, including the

Parole Division of the state jail, Austin Community College and even other Victims Services Advocacy groups. Officials from the Sheriff's Office in San Francisco flew to Austin to make a presentation about RSVP to a crowded chapel at TCCC.

I'm proud of the hard-working folks in our Law Enforcement Bureau who are also forming innovative and triumphant partnerships. The new alliance between our Reserve Officers and the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) produced several successful sting operations. They arrested a host of liquor store employees who sold alcohol to would-be underage drinkers. It'll be a long time before anyone who even *looks* less than 25 years old will buy alcohol without proof of their age from any of those establishments.

I'm proud of our new Community Services and Outreach Unit, and all the crime-prevention services those deputies are providing all over Travis County. They're forming new Neighborhood Watch Groups, hosting community events, coaching parents, organizing after-school activities for youth in Del Valle – and planning such major events



Photo by Toby Cross

Some meetings are more fun than others! Sheriff Hamilton meeting with Boy Scouts in March.

as Town Hall Meetings for August and September and National Night Out on Tuesday, August 2nd. And the Sheriff's Office Extravaganza is slated for Saturday, August 6th, at Northeast Metropolitan Park in Pflugerville. Mark your calendars!

And I'm proud of the partnerships and collaboration within TCSO, and of each of you who have given your time and toil to these broad-based efforts. That's what it's going to take: each of us creating opportunities to collaborate with each other, reconfirming our individual commitments to the mission of TCSO.

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Greg Hamilton".

THE FIVE POINT PRESS

The newsletter of TCSO for TCSO

Editor Pamela Mayo Clark
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Thanks to these employees who contributed articles, pictures and ideas.

Leslie Curry
Roger Wade
George Fuentes
Bucky Eacret
Jessica Sammons
Joseph Flores
Jerry Kovar

Deadline for submissions for next edition is Monday, October 3rd.



Photo by Leslie Curry

Law Day, May 13, 2005
What was the final score on that baseball game?

So “They” came up with another policy that does not make sense because “They” have no idea what it is to be a real cop. Ever think “Put me in charge for a day and I will fix this place”. Do you feel like “They” are not listening? Do you have a really good idea to improve some aspect of your job, but no one will listen? Do you know of an existing policy or procedure that no longer makes sense or needs to be modified to make it better? Maybe you have an idea about a new policy, procedure, or a piece of equipment that would allow you to do your job better? Now is your chance.

The Law Enforcement Bureau has implemented a procedure that empowers you to be heard by “They”, it is called a Strategic Action Plan. Simply go to the Everyone drive and click on “Law Enforcement/Strategic Planning/Strategic Plan Submission Template” and you are ready to begin. Download a copy of the template, complete the form, and submit your idea to Major Burroughs with a copy to Jessica Sammons. Your action plan will be reviewed and assigned to a project officer for research. The project officer will be responsible for developing the plan or providing a written response as to why it is not viable.

The strategic planning procedure has been in place since February 2005. So far we have had more than 80 submissions and almost 50 of those submissions have been completed or submitted to PBO for funding.

Suzanne Sellstrom joined many TCSO members in the Poker Run on May 14th. The Ride for the Heroes Poker Run earned more than \$2300 benefitting the TCSO Awards Committee and Sheriff’s Memorial Benevolent Society.



Photo by Leslie Curry

Projects are posted to the Strategic-Planning Index (“Law Enforcement/Strategic Planning/Strategic Planning Index”) and assigned a numeric or an alpha code and are also color coded to identify status:

0 indicates that the project has been proposed but has not yet been reviewed and/or assigned a project manager;

1 (White) indicates the project has been assigned a project officer and is in development;

2 Indicates that the project has been substantially completed and is in a test phase or partially implemented;

3 (Yellow) indicates the package has been completed and submitted to PBO for funding;

4 (Green) indicates the project has been completed;

R (Blue) indicates the project has been reassigned another code and/or combined with another project;

T (Red) indicates the project has been terminated.

A copy of your plan is also posted to the submissions folder so that you can track the progress. It is also very likely that you will assist the project officer in developing your idea. Prior to submitting a Strategic Action Plan, it is a good idea to review both the index and submission folder to determine if a similar plan has already been proposed. If you see a plan that is being developed and you would like to assist, please feel free to contact the project officer for that plan.

From the Law Enforcement Bureau

1. How can I work an off duty job?

To work a secondary employment job, the employee needs to complete an Application for Secondary Employment and submit it to their chain of command. The application can be found on the Everyone Drive/Off Duty/Off Duty Officer Application. Once approved through their chain of command, the application is sent to the off duty coordinator, Natalie Merritt, to add to the rotation list.

2. If I am a civilian, do I still need to complete an Application for Secondary Employment?

Yes. All secondary employment must be approved through the chain of command.

3. How do I get a contract approved and how often do contracts need to be submitted for approval?

All contracts are to be signed by the vendor requesting the secondary employment and then submitted to Major Scott Burroughs for approval. Depending on the type of secondary employment, it may need to be resubmitted for approval at the end of each job or be approved annually. Most ongoing secondary jobs are required to be resubmitted on an annual basis. For further information, refer to your TCSO Policies and Procedure, Policy Number 1.8.3.

4. If I have business downtown can I park on the South side of Central Booking on the hill?

If you park on the hill and you are not booking a prisoner, you will likely receive a citation from the City. Our parking agreements with the City apply only to metered spaces. Because these spaces are not metered, you are not exempt and become personally responsible for any violations.

How much leave am I entitled to?

An eligible employee is entitled to 12 weeks of leave for certain family and medical reasons during a 12-month period.

How is the 12-month FML period calculated?

Travis County utilizes a “rolling calendar” This is a “rolling” 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses Family Medical Leave.

Can the employer count leave taken due to pregnancy complications against the 12 weeks of FML for the birth and care of a child?

Yes. An eligible employee is entitled to a total of 12 weeks of Family Medical Leave (FML) in a 12-month period. The 12 weeks of FML can be for more than one eligible condition.

Which employees are eligible to take Family Medical Leave?

Employees are eligible to take FML if they have worked for Travis County at least 12 months, and have worked at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months

Do the 1,250 hours include paid leave time or other absences from work?

No. The 1,250 hours include only those hours actually worked for the employer. Paid leave and unpaid leave, including FML, are not included.

Do I have to give my employer my medical records for leave due to a serious health condition?

In order to be considered for FML, the employee must personally notify his/her supervisor of an illness or injury which will prevent the employee from coming to work as scheduled, AND the employee must complete and return all necessary forms associated with the Travis County Sheriff’s Office Policy and Travis County Policy. For scheduled events, the employee must notify the supervisor at least 30 days prior to the leave.

Can my employer require me to return to work before I exhaust my leave?

Subject to certain limitations, your employer may deny the continuation of Family Medical Leave due to a serious health condition if you fail to fulfill any obligations to provide supporting medical certification.

Will I be required to submit any documentation prior to returning to work from FMLA?

Yes, if the absence is due to a serious health condition to the employee. In order to determine fitness for duty prior to returning to work, the employee will be required to submit documentation from their healthcare provider and/or a TCSO Work Capacity Form (WCF).

More information concerning FML can be found in the Travis County Policies, Procedures and Regulations Manual (chapter 10.038). If you have any questions or would like additional information regarding FML, contact the TCSO HR Office at 854-9772.

DEPUTY UBI REPORTING

All 50 states are listed across the top of the Lincoln Memorial on the back of the \$5 bill.

A dime has 118 ridges around the edge.

Would you guess that the average life expectancy of your one-dollar bill is just 18 months or that you can fold a dollar bill 8,000 times before it will tear?

490 \$1 bills weigh one pound. A million one dollar bills would weigh 2,040 pounds.

You might think that Susan B. Anthony and Sacagawea are the first women to appear on US issue money, but that isn’t true. Martha Washington appeared on the one dollar silver certificates in 1886, 1891, and again in 1896.

During the Civil War period, people hoarded coins because of their intrinsic value. This created a drastic shortage of coins for circulation. To deal with this problem, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing produced “fractional currency” starting in 1862. The lowest denomination in this series was three cents. Fractional notes were discontinued in 1876.

Although the highest denomination in circulation today is \$100, it has only been about 30 years since much higher denominations were available. High denomination notes of \$500, \$1,000, \$5,000 and \$10,000 were last printed in 1945, but continued to be issued for circulation until 1969. However, the highest denomination notes ever printed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing were the \$100,000 Gold Certificates issued in 1934. These notes were used for transactions between federal reserve banks and were not circulated among the general public.



Art by George Fuentes

Members of the TCSO Honor Guard Washington, D.C. May 2005



Photo by Jerry Kovar

CORRECTIONS BUREAU: Jail Overcrowding Update

Why is the jail so overcrowded, and what is being done about it?

Volumes could be written about why the jail is overcrowded, including everything from lack of diversion programs to delays in court appearances, etc. But the bottom line is that our inmate population is “hardening”, which means more inmates are staying longer.

A few years ago the Jail Overcrowding Task Force (JOTF), consisting of judges, commissioners, county attorneys, district attorneys, and criminal justice planners, was created. They were successful at drastically lowering the inmate population by speeding up the justice process so that a huge number of inmates with lower charges and shorter sentences were released faster. That type of inmate population is now much lower, and the result is a rapidly rising overall inmate population. The JOTF is still working, but there is less that can be done, so the results are not as pronounced.

Another simple but true answer is that there are more people being arrested than released. As simple as it sounds, the implications are profound, and the solutions challenging. There are basically only three solutions: control the numbers coming in, control the numbers going out, or handle the numbers going up. The Corrections Bureau has no control at all over the numbers coming in. By law we have to incarcerate anyone arrested and magistrated in Travis County. The Corrections Bureau has no control over the numbers going out. That’s why the JOTF was created, and there is less they are able to do. That leaves us with only the last solution: handle the rising numbers.

How much are those numbers rising? Approximately four years ago when the JOTF was successful at lowering the numbers, our inmate population fell into the 2100’s. Since then it has risen to almost 2800, the highest numbers we’ve seen in years, creating a serious jail overcrowding problem. To handle the rising numbers, we have:

- kept the commissioners and JOTF informed weekly of the rising numbers,
- filled all buildings to capacity,
- opened old buildings that had been closed,
- sought approval from the Texas Commission on Jail Standards to temporarily raise our variances (allowing us to house more inmates without violating jail standards),
- requested funds to house up to 200 inmates out of Travis County, and
- requested funds for more officers to handle the increased number of inmates.

Unfortunately, when the numbers were in the 2100’s the commissioners implemented a Reduction In Force (RIF) and cut 42 Corrections Officer (CO) positions, staffing us for an inmate population between 2175 and 2300 inmates. As the number of inmates has risen, the number of officers has remained the same. Clearly, additional staff are needed.

Historically the jail numbers have always risen in the summer. Unfortunately, this year we hit almost 2800 during months that we do not typically see such high populations. Will this trend continue throughout the remainder of the summer months? That is hard to tell but there is no indication that we will see a decline in the near future. Until the number of inmates goes down, we will be forced to continue to staff these crowded areas with staff on overtime. As stated earlier we have requested 40 additional staff be funded by the Court immediately to address this critical issue.

These are not easy problems, and there are no easy solutions. One thing is for sure though, the hard-working professional men and women of the Corrections Bureau, including our incredible support staff, are doing an AWESOME job of keeping it all together. They are going above and beyond the call of duty to handle every challenge thrown at them, and they are appreciated more than they know!

A response to our TCSO Guest Readers Program

May 24, 2005

Dear Officers
Cardenas, Garcia and Trevino,

It was a real treat to have you in our Pre K classroom for our “Reading is Fun Week”. My students enjoyed the stories you read to them and they immediately told their parents about you when they were picked up that day. I’m sending you the pictures I took and displayed in our hall. Thank you for taking the time to spend part of your day at Metz Elementary!

Sincerely,
Laura M. Martinez



Hector Garcia reading to Ms. Martinez’ class at Metz Elementary.

You, too, can be a Guest Reader!

We’re already getting requests for Guest Readers at elementary schools. Get involved in promoting the importance of reading by signing up to be a “Guest Reader” for 15-20 minutes in September. All you need to do is contact Jeannie Miller at 854-9788 or jeannie.miller@co.travis.tx.us. Here are the schools where we’ll send Guest Readers in September:

Campbell Elementary School
Windermere Primary
Pflugerville Elementary School

EMPLOYEE PROFILE: Clyde Hoffman delivers mail, smiles & quips

You've seen him zip past, delivering mail and friendly greetings throughout the Sheriff's Office buildings, as far flung as Del Valle's TCCC and the West Command's Moore Building. Always in a hurry, yet always taking time for a friendly word with whomever he encounters.

Clyde Hoffman has been picking up and delivering TCSO mail for seven years. It was wife Gloria, food-service purchaser at TCCC, who told Clyde about the mailroom position in TCSO.

The native Texan was hired in 1998 for the mail-delivery job, and the next year he was selected "Employee of the Year".

Both of his parents, Clyde, and all of his siblings were born and reared in Rockne, an unincorporated community twelve miles south of Bastrop. The first public building in the town was a catholic church. Rockne was originally named after a series of German catholic families who pioneered the area.

Rockne was so named in 1931 shortly after the death of Notre Dame football coach Knute Rockne. It was the schoolchildren of the community who voted to rename their town in his honor. And the adults readily accepted it.

By the time Clyde was born in 1942, the third of nine children, Rockne boasted a population of 150. Clyde's subsequent

brothers and sisters brought that number closer to 160.

About growing up in such a rural setting, Clyde says, "I just hated working the fields: picking cotton, chopping weeds around the corn. I wasn't too crazy about milking cows, either."

A young Clyde moved to Houston shortly after graduating from high school. On one fateful day in November, 1963, Hoffman was driving on the Gulfgate Freeway (now I-45) when he noticed all the cars pulled over and parked on the side of the highway. Then he remembered that President and Mrs. John Kennedy were to land at Hobby Airport on the first day of their swing through Texas. Clyde stopped, too, and got a good look at the youthful President and his wife as their motorcade drove past. Twenty-four hours later, President Kennedy was dying of a gunshot wound in Dallas.

"I got a good look at him," Clyde remembers. "I just couldn't believe it the next day when one of my co-workers told me the President had just been shot. I was sure he would be alright; the doctors would fix him up."

That expectation the best will happen is another Hoffman hallmark. Whether he's delivering your inter-office envelope or playing dominoes at the VFW in Rockne, Clyde's ever-ready, ear-to-ear



Photo by Joseph Flores

grin assures one and all that everything is going to be just fine.

Clyde is married to Gloria Hoffman, who buys all the food and other supplies for the kitchen at TCCC. In addition to Gloria, Clyde's family includes two daughters: Donna and Anita. There's a grandson, Joshua, who is completing his third year as a Corrections Officer at TCCC. And there's a granddaughter, Tabitha, whose own young daughter knows how to get her "Paw-Paw" to do her bidding, at the mature age of two-and-a-half.

"That Madyson, she doesn't have a whole lot of words, but her Paw-Paw understands her," Clyde says, grinning broadly just thinking about his first great-grandchild.

And then he's off, picking up and delivering your mail to the East Command, West Command, TCCC, and all Sheriff's Office points in between.

THREE ASSOCIATIONS AND HOW THEY RUN

National Latino Peace Officer Association (NLPOA)

Box 685153, Austin, TX 78768
470-9564

www.nlpoacentex.org

Email info@nlpoacentex.org

NLPOA CTC represents members from seven agencies in five counties. Our membership is made up of various ethnicities who support our Mission and Objectives. Our motto is "Honoring Family, Education, Community through Service & Mentorship."

Javier Hernandez - President
Hector Garcia - 1st Vice President
Robert Tijerina 2nd Vice President

Travis County Sheriff's Law Enforcement Association (TCSLEA)

Box 142025, Austin, TX 78714

www.tcslea.org

E-mail: info@tcslea.org

The TCSLEA joined the Fraternal Order of Police in June '02. We are proud to represent the FOP as Texas Lodge 912, in memory of our beloved brother, Keith Ruiz #912, who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

Darla Fuller - President
Craig Smith - Vice President
Bobby Huckabay - Secretary

Travis County Sheriff's Officers Association (TCSOA)

Office 469-0773

Fax 469-0718

Website www.tcssoa.org,

E-mail office@tcssoa.org

The mission of the TCSOA is to protect and enhance the benefits and rights of our members by encouraging professionalism, which ultimately benefits the community we serve.

Timothy Henry - President
Alex Leo - Vice President
Lynda Hutchinson - Secretary