



FDSA

FRESNO DEPUTY SHERIFF'S ASSOCIATION

The past several weeks have been very busy, reflective and meaningful. The Fresno Deputy Sheriff's Association has hosted many events at our facility honoring fallen officers. Our members have also attended numerous ceremonies, locally and nationally to remembering those officers whose lives tragically ended this year in the line of duty.

Peace Officer Memorial Week

Peace Officer Memorial events began for the FDSA on Thursday, May 2. We hosted our 2nd Annual, Peace Officer Memorial Open House. This day is dedicated to celebrating the lives of our deputy sheriffs who have died in the line of duty in Fresno County. Since the Fresno County Sheriff's Department was founded in 1856, 11 deputies have been killed during the course of performing their job.

We hold this event also as a way to thank those donors who support us with contributions to our Peace Officer Memorial Fund. The fund has been established to help support the families of any deputy sheriff killed in the line of duty. We also offer support to other agencies in California when their officers lose their lives at work. Our annual FDSA golf tournament is the primary fundraiser that generates thousands of dollars to the Peace Officer Memorial Fund each year.

The open house also gives the families of our fallen deputies a time to reflect on their loved ones sacrifice. It also reminds these survivors that we continue to support them and share their loss.

About 100 people attended this year's event. I would like to thank, Brenda D. Lavell, for her ongoing support of this event. Brenda has been very instrumental in helping put on a first class event. She plans and assists in creating an elaborate menu that provides something for every taste. She also designs the décor, which adds a very nice finishing touch.

Peace Officer Memorial Events in Sacramento

On Sunday, May 5, hundreds of law enforcement officers from throughout the State of California gathered at the Peace Office Memorial monument in Sacramento, for the 37th Annual Candlelight Vigil. Many of you have attended the event which begins at dusk. The State of California honored two of its fallen officers- both were killed by gunfire in 2012.

"Professional's Protecting and Serving Fresno County"

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Deputy Sheriff, Robert Paris, of the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department; and Officer Kenyon Youngstrom, California Highway Patrol- Contra Costa.

The event was hosted by the California Peace Officer Memorial Fund and the names were read into the record by Attorney General, Kamala Harris. This candlelight ceremony is a very personal type of event for the families being honored. Concerns for Police Survivors (COPS) also is a host and gives a testimonial on how being associated with this organization has helped them following the death of a loved one, or co-worker who was killed in the line of duty.

On Monday, May 6th, the Peace Officer Memorial ceremony was held at the Peace Officer Memorial Wall, which is directly across the street from the Capitol. Hundreds of officers dressed in Class A uniforms, lined the sidewalk on the north entrance of the building- while the families of the fallen, their escorts, and department representatives make their way from the State Capitol to the event at the Memorial Wall. Governor Jerry Brown is present at the event along with several other dignitaries from the State of California.

At the moment, there are more than 1,600 names of law enforcement officers killed in the State on the wall.

The Fresno Deputy Sheriff's Association will continue to support and remember all officers who died in the line of duty. We feel continuous efforts also helps families, loved ones and those who worked alongside these officers cope with the loss and hopefully heal.

Peace Officer Memorial Events in Fresno

On Tuesday, May 7th, we honored the fallen officers killed in the line of duty in California from May 2012 through May of 2013.

This year, Fresno County did not etch another name in our beautiful Peace Officer Memorial wall located in Courthouse Park. The ceremony marked the 15th year of the Fresno County Peace Officer Memorial. The ceremony started right at noon and shortly thereafter, was met with tremendous downpour of rain. The showers lasted for about 10-15 minutes and then the sky cleared and the sunshine broke through to end the event on a dry and upbeat note.

Every attendee did not leave, but rather sat or stood and got soaked- to honor the sacrifices made by the officers killed in the line of duty, and the officers who have been killed in Fresno County. The support of the public, dignitaries, and department personnel shows the great support for law enforcement we have here in Fresno County.

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PORAC Events

During the week of Peace Officer's Memorial, PORAC, holds many events as well. Executive Members of PORAC, along with the Board of Directors, all attend these events. The following day, PORAC has its annual lobbying day at the State Capital. During this event, the different regions are split up to visit with our local delegation to lobby for bills PORAC is sponsoring or actively supporting.

This year, the event fell on the same day as the Fresno County Peace Officer Memorial event at Courthouse Park. To have representation at both gatherings, I attended the local event and the FDSA Executive Board participated with PORAC. However, once the event concluded, I returned to Sacramento for another meeting with Assemblyman Jim Patterson. The following day, the spring PORAC Board of Directors meeting was held at PORAC headquarters in Sacramento. On this day, PORAC President, Ron Cottingham announced to those present that after 10 years as President, he would not be seeking re-election. He will also be retiring from the San Diego County Sheriff's Department.

Ron has taken PORAC to an entirely new level- than it had never been before. PORAC is known as a very well respected group with political clout. Ron has taken PORAC to the national level as well, getting us involved in Washington DC politics, which is tied directly to public safety issues and public safety dollars.

PORAC Vice President, Mike Durant, who has been in that position for seven years- alongside Ron, also announced he would be seeking the position of President of PORAC. Mike has done an outstanding job as Vice President and has become of great friend of me personally, and of the FDSA.

Mike gained the support of the entire PORAC Board of Directors when he announced he would be seeking the President position. I cannot think of a greater candidate for our association (PORAC) than Mike Durant. He will gain the votes from the FDSA needed to succeed at his quest for PORAC President.

Passing of Retired Lieutenant Mike Lancaster

Monday, May 13, 2013 was an incredibly sad day for many members of the Fresno County Sheriff's Office and FDSA. Retired Lieutenant, Mike Lancaster passed away suddenly at the age of 52.

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Mike was one of the best people I knew with a heart of gold. He truly cared about the Sheriff's Office and the people who work here. I remember speaking to Mike just before he retired. He told me he was looking forward to retiring to spend time with his wife and son. Mike ended his career on June 24, 2012 and enjoyed a short 10 months of not having to worry about timecards, telestaff, or county email.

Although we become saddened by something like this, we all must endure the painful process of grieving. Whether in private or public- it's the only way to move past something like this. If you knew Mike you will remember the interactions you had with him. Make those positive. Make those monumental in your mind and never let them leave.

Those close to Mike cannot forget his son, Calvin and wife, Sue. Please keep them in your hearts, prayers and daily lives. Mike would want that, and Mike would have done the same for any one of us whom he cared about.

I want to say a personal thanks to Greg Isaac and Tim Juarez who are close with Mike's family and really coordinated the entire service for Mike. You defined what true friends do and I know it was also a difficult time for you, having lost such a dear friend.

Bargaining with Fresno County

Be Safe.

-Eric

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