

To: Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, Inc.
From: Ron Cave, Team Leader
Date: May 13, 2013
Re: Full Compliance On-Site Assessment Report
 Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office
 Standards Manual Edition: 4.0

A. Date of On-Site Assessment: May 7-9, 2013

Chief Executive Officer: Sheriff Larry Ashley
 Accreditation Manager: Inspector Bob Norris

B. Assessment Team:

Team Leader: Major Ron Cave (RC)
 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation
 Commission Division of Law Enforcement
 Policy and Planning Section
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Team Member: Sergeant Rob Pace (RP)
 Leon County Sheriff's Office
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C. Standards Summary Tally:

M = Mandatory N = Non- Mandatory

	Total Number of Standards	Number of Standards Not Applicable (By Function)	Number of Standards Waived	Number of Non-Waived, Applicable Standards	Number of Standards Elected for 20% Exemption	Percent of Applicable Standards Elected (20% max.)	Percent of Applicable Standards Not Elected (80% min.)	Number of Applicable Non-Elected Standards In Compliance	Percent of Applicable Non-Elected Standards In Compliance
M	153	2	0	151	0	0%	100%	151	100.00%
N	108	2	0	106	0	0%	100%	106	100.00%

D. Agency Profile:

Okaloosa County is located in Northwest Florida, and derives its name from the Choctaw Indian word meaning "black (oka) water (loosa)". The county is 1082 square miles, of which 146 square miles is water. It is located between the state of Alabama and the Gulf of Mexico and ranges from rich farm land and pine forests in the north to sugar-white beaches along the Gulf. The county includes nine incorporated areas, five of which have their own municipal police departments.

In addition to the unincorporated areas, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office provides contract law enforcement services for the City of Destin, the City of Mary Esther, and the town of Cinco Bayou. During the census of 2000, there were 170,498 people residing in the county. The estimated population as of 2008 was 197,597, making Okaloosa County one of the fastest growing counties in Florida. It has been named one of the best places to live in America by Money Magazine and Top Family Destination by Southern Living Magazine for 11 years in a row. The School District typically ranks among the top three in the state. Okaloosa County is also the second most popular drive-to destination for Florida tourism, second only to Disney World. It hosts an estimated 4.5 million visitors each year. Tourism provides more than 35,000 jobs and one billion dollars annually. Okaloosa County houses three military installations, Eglin Air Force Base, Hurlburt Field, and Duke Field, collectively the largest Air Force Base in the world. The bases support more than 60,000 military, civil service, and military dependents. During 2011, the 7th Special Forces Group from Fort Bragg North Carolina transferred its 2,800 personnel to the Eglin site. The strong military presence has created an excellent environment for hi-tech employment, focused primarily in aerospace, engineering, and aviation.

The first Sheriff of Okaloosa County was B. H. Sutton, who was appointed in 1915, and served until 1921. Ninety-eight years later, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office employs approximately 363 sworn and non-sworn personnel. The Administrative Building of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office is located in Shalimar. Three full service offices are available, one at the Courthouse Annex in Shalimar, one in Crestview, and one in the City of Destin. Smaller substations are also maintained in Destin, Mary Esther, Bluewater Bay, Okaloosa Island, Sylvania Heights, Baker, Laurel Hill, and Hetherington.

The agency underwent tremendous upheaval in February 2009, when then Sheriff Charlie Morris and members of his staff were arrested and charged with fraud, theft, and money laundering. On February 27, 2009, Sheriff Ed Spooner was appointed Sheriff by Governor Charlie Crist to replace Morris until the people of Okaloosa County could choose his successor in November 2010. In the months that followed Morris' arrest, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office underwent extensive audits of its financial and internal control systems. Implementation of the recommendations made by the independent auditors led to several personnel changes and modifications to agency processes. On the personnel side, 13 positions were eliminated, including six

command staff or management positions. Additionally, technological improvements reduced the need for clerical labor, permitting elimination of four vacant clerical positions. In July, patrol shift start and end times were adjusted to more efficiently manage the schedules for road deputies. This adjustment resulted in a reduction of costs by \$500,000 annually by better utilization of existing resources during peak call times.

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office received its initial CFA Accreditation in June 2010. The following November, Sheriff Larry R. Ashley was elected as the 15th Sheriff of Okaloosa County during an out-of-cycle election. He was re-elected in November 2012 to his first full term. During the last three years the agency suffered a tremendous budget reduction which resulted in the elimination of 18 sworn and civilian positions, of which 14 were currently manned. Also, subsequent to the Newtown, Connecticut school shooting, a cooperative agreement with the Okaloosa County School Board resulted in the agency transferring 26 sworn deputies to the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program. This allowed for the staffing of a SRO in every Okaloosa County school. Consequently, until the new positions could be funded/replaced, several specialized units were eliminated or took a reduction in manpower.

E. On-Site Assessment Summary:

Prior to the arrival of the assessment team, assessors communicated regarding chapter assignments and other pertinent information relating to the assessment. Once arriving at the Sheriff's Office an entrance interview was conducted with the Sheriff and his command staff. The assessment team introduced themselves and relayed the Commission's philosophy and mission as well as the team's commitment to conduct a fair and impartial review of the agency. Sheriff Ashley described his agency and his commitment to the accreditation process, along with the accountability it requires of the agency and its members. The team was then taken to a static display and agency tour.

The static display provided the assessors an opportunity to talk with several staff members as it pertained to their job duties and accreditation standards. During the static display, Investigator Matt Abbott was interviewed and showed he was proficient with the department's vehicle operation policy as well as the pursuit policy. Investigator Abbott explained his current assignment as a property crimes investigator and his responsibilities.

Deputy Kelly Henderson, who is currently assigned to Delta Shift Patrol Division, displayed the equipment she kept in her vehicle and described her daily duties. Deputy Henderson is a Field Training Officer and serves as a Crime Scene Processor for her shift. She answered all questions correctly and with confidence. Deputies Daryl Culberson and Tim Harbarger, who are assigned to the Marine Unit, provided a tour of their boat and personal water craft. Both crafts were properly equipped. Both Deputies described their daily duties as well as what is expected of them during special events. The deputies acknowledge a strong working relationship with local agencies as well as the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Corporal Mike Smith was interviewed during the static display and explained that he has been a member of the Crisis Negotiation Unit since 2010 and was displaying the unit's response vehicle. Corporal Smith showed all of the equipment that was stored on the vehicle and explained the inventory process. All of the Crisis Negotiation Team members have been trained in the deployment of the vehicle. The vehicle did not require a commercial license. Corporal Dave Allen was interviewed at the static display. Corporal Allen has been a member of the Special Response Team since 2006 and was displaying the Lenco Bearcat armored vehicle utilized by the team. Corporal Allen showed the equipment attached to the vehicle. He advised each individual team member is responsible for carrying issued SRT equipment to the vehicle. The vehicle is a regional asset for the Domestic Security Task Force and may be used to carry other tactical teams during an event. Corporal Allen advised he was one of the team members assigned to ensure care and maintenance of the vehicle.

During the assessment, Assessor Nuzzi participated in a ride-along with Deputy Chris Wolverton, who is assigned to the Patrol Division. Deputy Wolverton is the rover for his squad and is also the squad's crime scene processor. Deputy Wolverton was friendly and confident. His patrol vehicle was clean and properly equipped. During the ride-along, Deputy Wolverton was dispatched to a 911 hang up. He responded to the call for service in a safe and proper manner. The communications center could not pin point an actual address for the 911 call and could only verify it was from a cell phone and they had received multiple calls from it. Deputy Wolverton arrived at the apartment complex and immediately rolled the windows down to his patrol vehicle to listen for any obvious disturbances. He slowly drove through the complex multiple times taking the opportunity to wave and greeted all citizens walking in the area.

Deputy Wolverton was then dispatched to an address where a subject had three warrants for worthless checks. Prior to arriving to the address, Deputy Wolverton pulled his patrol vehicle over and researched the name and date of birth on the subject with the warrants. Deputy Wolverton obtained a driver's license photo of the subject so he would be able to identify the subject on first sight. Assessor Nuzzi and Deputy Wolverton arrived at the address dispatch provided. Upon arrival, Deputy Wolverton made contact with a male standing outside the residence. The male advised he did not live at the residence and was only visiting a friend who was not home at the time. Deputy Wolverton asked the male if he had identification and the male became upset. He raised his voice and accused Deputy Wolverton of not doing his job correctly. Deputy Wolverton never lost his composure and continued to smile. Deputy Wolverton told the male he simply asked for his identification and politely asked him to calm down. The male provided his identification even though he was not asked a second time. Deputy Wolverton confirmed the male was not the subject with the warrants. He asked the male if he knew the subject and the male stated, "I don't know anyone." Deputy Wolverton knocked on the door of the residence but no one answered. As he checked the perimeter of the residence, the male called for Deputy Wolverton and advised him he may want to check the residence next door. Deputy Wolverton asked if the wanted subject was there and the male again advised he just may want to check. Deputy

Wolverton checked the residence next door and located the subject who had the warrants. Deputy Wolverton briefly spoke with the subject prior to handcuffing the subject. Deputy Wolverton kept calm and in return the subject offered no resistance to the arrest.

Assessor Nuzzi was escorted to the offices of the Investigative Services Division by Captain Arnold Brown. He was provided a tour of the offices and shown where the confidential files are stored in a secured cabinet in a secured room. Assessor Nuzzi observed the interview rooms, which are both video and audio recorded. There is a separate monitoring room that has been recently sound proofed. Investigator Pat Uptmor is responsible for investigating property crimes. He has worked in this capacity for approximately two years. He enjoys his assignment as well as working for the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office.

Assessors met with Jennifer Bellamy who works as the agency's Evidence Manager. Prior to entering the secured property and evidence room, Assessor Nuzzi was required to sign in. Ms. Bellamy provided a tour of her work area which included refrigerated areas, separate safes for money and jewelry, and appropriate storage for firearms and narcotics. Bellamy confirmed her work area is subject to both scheduled and unscheduled inspections. Assessor Nuzzi also met with CSI Christy Hoffman. CSI Hoffman explained her job duties and gave a tour of her lab. Currently there are two CSIs assigned to the Crime Scene Unit and they share a bi-weekly call out schedule to provide 24 hour CSI coverage.

Assessors met with Human Resource Manager Meribeth Poole, who was asked to show where medical records are kept for employees who have filed exposure reports as well as grievance records. Ms. Poole escorted assessors to a secured records room with limited access, where the medical records are kept in an area separate from the rest of the files and color coded. Ms. Jennifer Cantrell was present during the interview with Ms. Poole, and showed Assessor Pace the secure file room where the completed background investigation files and psychological fitness examination files were stored. Ms. Cantrell retrieved additional sample files for Assessor Pace to review. The files were found to be compliant with CFA Standards.

Assessors also met with Communications Manager Denise Sledge, who provided a tour of her work area. Ms. Sledge demonstrated immediate playback of radio transmission and 911 calls. She also showed the communication operators' immediate access to databases containing employee information and Tactical Dispatching plans. Assessors visited the Okaloosa County Courthouse Facility accompanied by Lieutenant Eric Aden. Lieutenant Aden brought the assessor through the public entrance to display the screening operation of visitors to the courthouse complex. Lieutenant Aden also gave Assessor Pace a tour of the security monitoring office, which was in a secured area. Video from any of the security cameras in the courthouse complex could be viewed from the monitoring room.

Lieutenant Aden introduced Assessor Pace to Sergeant Stefan Vaughn, who gave a tour of the detention area. Prior to the tour, weapons including sharps were secured in available lockers. During the tour, Sergeant Vaughn explained every step of the booking process, including searching inmates and property processing. The facility had separate areas for male, female, and juvenile prisoners. The holding cell areas were clean with proper lighting, air circulation, and facilities. All cameras and alarms in the holding area were monitored by a detention deputy in a secured control room. First Aid Kits and an AED were readily available. Sergeant Vaughn explained the processing area was utilized by all law enforcement agencies in the southern part of Okaloosa County. Once the prisoners are processed they are transported to the Okaloosa County Jail. These transports occur several times during the shift at random times due to security precautions. The Okaloosa County Jail is operated by the Okaloosa County Commission and is approximately 26 miles from the courthouse facility. Sergeant Vaughn showed Assessor Pace the route prisoners were escorted to the courtroom areas. The courthouse is designed with secure areas for prisoners beside the courtrooms on each floor. The route displayed fire evacuation maps at several points.

Sergeant Vaughn explained the detention deputies were unarmed in the secured areas and courtrooms. During the court proceedings the detention deputy was responsible for the security of the inmate, who was secured in restraints. The armed court bailiff is responsible for the security of the judge and the public in the courtroom. In the event of an emergency, this process allows the detention deputy to quickly escort the inmate to the secure area without having to secure weapons. Sergeant Vaughn pointed out panic buttons placed under the judge's bench and also under the clerk's desk in case of an emergency. The judge's bench was also equipped with a telephone. Bailiffs are issued portable radios and utilize their own talk group for courthouse operations on their agency radio system. The evacuation routes in the public area of the courthouse were clearly posted in several areas. The courthouse complex was new construction and accreditation standards were used during the planning phase.

Assessor Pace met with Sergeant Bob Dudley of the K-9 Unit at the Central District Office, who showed assessors the secure safe where K-9 training narcotics were stored. Sergeant Dudley explained the process of issuing the narcotics, the inventory process, and the audits conducted by the Office of Professional Standards. Sergeant Dudley advised K-9 vehicles were equipped with security vaults to store training narcotics during the training process.

After meeting with Sergeant Dudley, Assessor Pace visited the complaint desk at the Central District Office. Civilian Employee Robin Griffith explained the Sexual Offender/Predator registration procedures followed by their agency. The complaint desk completes registrations from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. Assessor Pace returned to the Administrative Offices and met with Primitivo Collazo, who is the Secondary Employment Coordinator. Mr. Collazo explained the agency's process of screening secondary employers and the activities prohibited by Sheriff's Office policy. He advised deputies are eligible for secondary employment once they complete the FTO program.

Assessor Pace contacted the agency Public Information Officer, Michele Nicholson. Ms. Nicholson demonstrated the agency's procedures for assisting the media in covering news stories related to agency activities. She also displayed the agency's use of social media to alert the public of road closures, weather emergencies, and areas to avoid during an emergency operation. Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office utilizes a website named Nixle to disseminate this information in a timely manner. The information can be transmitted by Nixle with Watch Commander approval. Nixle automatically posts on Facebook and Twitter. Ms. Nicholson fully explained agency policy concerning public release of information.

Assessor Pace went to the North District Office located in Crestview and was met by Sergeant Kenny West and Deputy Joshua Axsom. Assessor Pace accompanied Deputy Axsom on Patrol during the shift. Deputy Axsom advised Assessor Pace of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office policies concerning pursuits, use of spike strips, initial criminal investigations, warning shots, prisoner transport, and extra duty employment. Deputy Axsom said he would be able to consult his agency PowerDMS program to confirm any questions he had about agency policy. During the shift, Deputy Axsom took Assessor Pace to the agency shooting range facility and introduced him to Deputy Charlie Bozeman, who is a firearms instructor and the agency armorer. Deputy Bozeman explained the agency firearms qualification and the inspection process of firearms. Assessor Pace observed several deputies qualify using the FDLE qualification course.

While on patrol with Deputy Axsom, Assessor Pace observed several calls for service. They responded to assist a civil unit to serve a felony arrest warrant. After checking one location family members gave information the subject was staying in a known drug house. Upon arrival, Deputy Axsom contacted the homeowner and gained consent to look for the subject. Deputy Axsom located the individual hiding under clothing on the couch and took him into custody. As the number of calls increased Assessor Pace was monitoring radio traffic. Assessor Pace heard Sergeant Kenny West assign units to handle calls for service based on priority. Deputy Axsom was cancelled from handling two property related calls to respond to two suspicious vehicle calls in residential areas in the far northeast corner of Okaloosa County. Assessor Pace observed the equipment in Deputy Axsom's patrol vehicle. All items were in good condition and in compliance with CFA standards.

Assessor Pace met Lieutenant Eric Aden and Deputy Butch Buchanan at the Okaloosa County Courthouse in Crestview. Lieutenant Aden advised the prisoners brought to the Crestview Courthouse remain in the custody and control of Okaloosa County Jail personnel. He showed Assessor Pace the holding area used by the Jail Staff. The facility is compliant with CFA standards requiring proper lighting, air circulation, and facilities. Lieutenant Aden showed Assessor Pace a prisoner restroom that was previously used as a temporary holding cell. Assessor Pace observed that Deputy Buchanan had to go to the Bailiff Office to retrieve keys from a lock box to gain access to the room. Entry to the room was made by opening a wooden door matching the

courthouse décor in order to open an inner steel door. Lieutenant Aden took Assessor Pace on a tour of one of the courtrooms in the complex. The courthouse facility has been in operation since the 1950's. The courtroom was equipped with a duress alarm and telephone on the judge's bench. Assessor Pace observed posted evacuation routes and the public security screening process.

The agency was exceptionally well prepared for the assessment. A close out meeting with the sheriff and his command staff was held and the agency members present were advised of the findings of the assessment team. The team advised agency members they would be recommending the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office for reaccreditation.

F. Standards Noncompliance Discussion: None.

G. Corrective Action Discussion: None.

H. Waiver Concurrence/Non-concurrence Discussion and Recommendation: None.

I. 20 Percent Standards Election (See Section C. for "Tally")
Standards Elected for Exemption: None.

J. Standards Verified by the Team as "Not Applicable" to the Agency:

24.06 (RP)
31.08 (RC)
33.14M (BN)
36.09M (RC)

K. Standards, the Status of Which, Were Changed by Assessors: None.

L. Public Information Activities:

L-1. Public Information Session: None.
L-2. Telephone Contacts Session: None.
L-3. Correspondence and Media Interest: None.
L-4. Follow-up by Assessment Team: None.

M. Exemplary Policies/Projects/Procedures:

In an effort to enhance the transparency of the agency and keep the public informed the agency utilizes many social media programs in addition to its basic website. These include Facebook, Twitter, Nixle, and YouTube. During the Florida Public Information Officers Association Annual Conference in 2012, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Facebook page was cited as a model for a successful Facebook page during the social media presentation by Stephanie Slater, who showed and discussed examples of how to create a successful page. Launched during 2012 was a new initiative that allows the

public the opportunity to help identify suspected criminals. The initiative is entitled "Take a Look, Catch a Crook," and can be found on the Sheriff's Office internet page, Facebook page, and on the Emerald Coast Crime Stoppers home page. This link will display images and videos of vehicles, unknown suspects, and witnesses wanted for questioning by the Sheriff's Office. Images and videos will be displayed on the site with a brief synopsis of the crime. A link for each case will direct the viewers to the Emerald Coast Crimes Stoppers web tip page where they can provide information about the crime.

The Agency's Crime Prevention program consists of over 22 individual crime prevention/citizen educational programs serving the 180,000 residents of Okaloosa County. These programs include, but are not limited to, Neighborhood Watch, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, Women's Self Defense Tactics Training Program, Safe Assured Digital ID Program, Children's Self Defense Tactic's Training Program, Eddie Eagle Gun Safety Program, Bicycle Safety Program, Take Me Home Program, Communities Against Senior Exploitation Program, Lock Take Hide Theft Prevention Program, Call Reassurance Program (CARE), Check On Delinquent Youth (CODY) Program. The agency's Crime Prevention Manager, Ashley Bailey was selected as Florida Crime Prevention Association's Crime Prevention Practitioner of the Year for 2010. Some of the more prominent programs are:

Neighborhood Watch: Encourages and enables citizen involvement in discouraging and preventing residential crime. The program uses citizen involvement to secure their own homes and personal property and to report any suspicious activity to the police. Neighborhood Watch operates to educate participants in the principles of deterrence, delay, and detection. The program depends upon a communication network organized with three levels of participants— the residents, block captain coordinators, and the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office.

Take Me Home Program: A database of citizens who may need assistance due to special needs. The database includes a picture, demographic information, and at least three caregiver contacts. If a Deputy encounters someone who cannot identify themselves or where they belong or if they are in a crisis, the deputy searches for the individual by name, physical description, age, sex, or agency in the database. With the information at hand, the officer can provide the citizen with needed assistance.

Okaloosa County Sheriff's Citizen Academy: An educational program which removes the veil of mystery that often surrounds law enforcement work and helps citizens recognize and appreciate the demands and challenges Deputies face daily. Participants in the Sheriff's Citizen Academy spend three hours in a class once a week for approximately 13 weeks learning about police work and legal considerations in law enforcement. Participants also learn how to make themselves and their property less attractive to criminals.

Communities Against Senior Exploitation (CASE): The CASE Partnership is a unique and successful elder fraud prevention program, for both urban and rural

communities, in which prosecutors and law enforcement partner with faith communities. CASE provides a faith-based program for elder fraud prevention, crime detection and reporting, and victim support.

Lock Take Hide Campaign (Anti-Theft Campaign): The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office promotes a public education campaign that reminds residents and tourists to lock their cars, take their keys, and hide their belongings. Signs were posted at parks around the county. The campaign helped reduce vehicle burglaries and thefts in the targeted areas by nearly 40%.

Check On Delinquent Youths (CODY) Program: Pairs trained volunteers with members of the Sheriff's Posse to checks on youth offenders to ensure they are complying with mandatory in-home curfews. Currently more than 400 juveniles in Okaloosa County are on probation and are monitored by the program. Initial checks found approximately 60% of participants were not in compliance with the terms of their probation, however the program has greatly enhanced accountability with the majority of participants now in compliance.

Eddie Eagle Safe Gun Program: The Eddie Eagle Gun Safe Program teaches children in pre-K through third grade four important steps to take if they find a gun. These steps are presented by the program's mascot, Eddie Eagle.

N. Quality of Law Enforcement Service: No Chapter Summaries.

O. Summary and Recommendation:

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS:

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office has seen a dramatic decrease in funding, while at the same time experiencing a significant increase in call volume and population growth. Since FY 2009, the Sheriff's Office has seen nearly a 20% reduction in funding or \$5.6 million. Additionally, the Sheriff's Office operates with a very low percentage of officer/citizen ratio, which is 1.45 sworn officers per 1000 citizens. Despite these funding challenges, the agency is clearly a top notch agency and the quality of law enforcement provided to those in Okaloosa County is exceptional. It is evident that the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office is operating within the spirit and intent of Florida's accreditation program.

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office has done an exceptional job of preparing for the accreditation assessment. The Sheriff, the command staff and members of this agency have embraced accreditation as a way of doing business on a daily basis.

The team recommends the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office be considered for reaccreditation by the CFA.

NON-COMPLIANCE SUMMARY: None.



Signed: _____

Ron Cave, Team Leader
Major
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Division of Law Enforcement