

# THE CRIME STOPPERS

# OBSERVER

... helping our Community Solve and Prevent Crime through Citizen Participation

## Donors Increase Rewards

### Missing Child: \$35,767 Reward



Haleigh Cummings is described as a five year old white female. She is approximately 3'0 and 39 lbs with blonde hair and brown eyes. Clothing description is unknown.

Haleigh was last seen at her residence in the Hermit's Cove area of Putnam County on February 9, 2009 between the hours of 8-10.

A statewide Amber Alert has been issued. An additional \$35,767 in rewards have been posted.

**If you have any information and wish to remain and wish to remain anonymous, please call Crime Stoppers at 1-888-277-TIPS (8477) or you can text your tip by Texting "TIP231 plus your message" to CRIMES (274637). We don't want your name; just your information.**

### Homicide: \$26,000 Reward

Up to \$26,000 in reward money awaits anyone with detailed information leading to an indictment of the home invasion suspect who shot and killed a Port Orange man during a poker game on October 15<sup>th</sup> in a New Smyrna Beach home.

David Turner, 62, was killed at about 9:20 p.m. during the home invasion-robbery in the 500 block of Mill Run Drive. Two gunmen entered the home and demanded money as the victim and others were playing cards. The two male assailants wore masks. One is described as tall and slender, 6'2"-6'5" and about 250 lbs. The other is described as being medium to stocky build, 5'8"-5'10" and approximately 260 lbs.

Crime Stoppers of NE Florida initially posted a reward of up to \$1,000 in the case. An anonymous donor has increased the reward by \$25,000. Investigators working the case are hopeful that this reward will prompt a detailed tip from the public that will lead to an indictment.

## Phenomenal Citizen Participation

In the '08-'09 six month report submitted to the Crime Stoppers Trust Fund Office of Attorney General Bill McCollum, our organization reported these Crime Stoppers of NE Florida statistics, a result of all our combined efforts.

**Number of Tips: 2,514**

**Number of Arrests: 69**

**Number of Rewards Approved: 55**

**The Value of Rewards Approved: \$9,393**

**Reimbursed: \$4,599**

**Value of Property Recovered: \$25,076**

**Value of Narcotics Recovered: \$53,265**

Every individual's participation in Crime Stoppers is appreciated. We offer thanks to our heroic men and women in law enforcement, our donors, and Crime Stoppers tipsters. Making our community a safer place depends on all of us. *Thank you!*

## 2009 Nominees for Law Enforcement Officer of The Year

Sergeant Christopher Besuden, Port Orange Police Department; Officer John Borzner, Ormond Beach Police Department; Detective Brian D. Brueggemann, Daytona Beach Shores Dept. Of Public Safety; Officer Robert Burns, Flagler Beach Police Department; Investigator Walter N. Carr, State Attorney's Office; Sergeant Stephen Cole, Flagler County Sheriff's Office; Officer Stephen Cranmer, South Daytona Police Department; Detective Heath Fawcett, New Smyrna Beach Police Department; Corporal Corey Mead, Ponce Inlet Police Department; John Merchant, Putnam County Sheriff's Office; Investigator Chris Middleton, State Attorney's Office; Officer Juan Millan, Deland Police Department; Sergeant John C. Murray, Bunnell Police Department; Deputy Stella Ott, Volusia County Sheriff's Office; Officer Pedro "Pete" Ruiz, Palatka Police Department; Officer Darrell Runge, Daytona Beach Police Department; Investigator Michael Shaffer, Holly Hill Police Department; Officer Todd Snipes, Volusia County Beach Patrol; Deputy Sean M. Tice, St. John's County Sheriff's Office; Sergeant Robert F. Walker, Oak Hill Police Department

# "Annual Meeting 2009"

The Crime Stoppers Annual Meeting of 2009 took place at The Daytona 500 Experience Bill France Room on Tuesday, January 27, 2009. During the meeting, Judge Richard Orfinger swore in Mr. Robert L. Wheeler, former Chief Homicide Investigator for the State Attorney's Office, 7th Judicial Circuit, as Crime Stoppers' new president. Mr. Wheeler has been involved with Crime Stoppers since its inception over a decade ago. Crime Stoppers boasts a 2008 track record of 2,065 tips leading to 182 arrests, said Brandon Perry, outgoing president. Even more impressive, said Mr. Perry, is the fact that over \$347,000 in narcotics were taken off the streets of our communities and over \$51,000 in

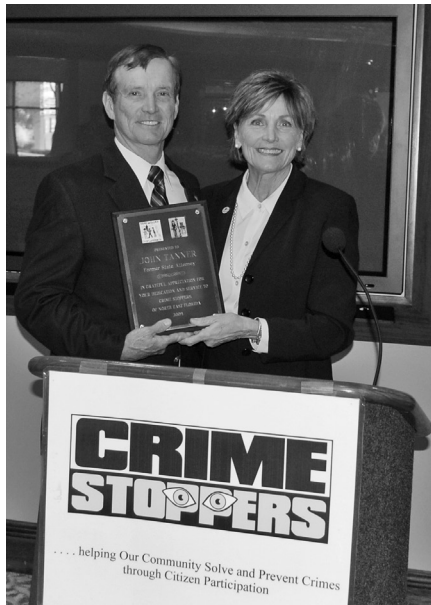


*Board members being sworn in by Judge Orfinger*

personal property has been recovered as a result of Crime Stoppers tips.

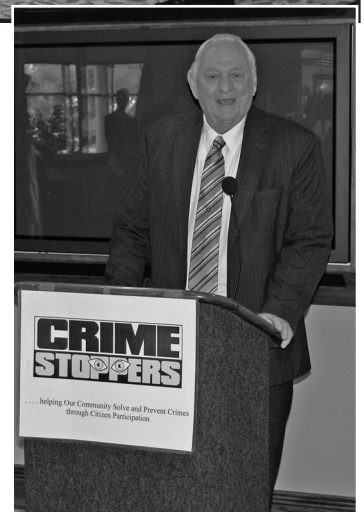
Also sworn in at the meeting were the new additions to the Crime Stoppers Board of Directors including; Mr. Kevin Bowen, Mr. Rick Staly, Mr. Gary Wandelt, State Attorney R.J. Larizza, Mr. Noel Griffin, and Sheriff Jeff Hardy.

In other business, County Council member, Joie Alexander, presented former State Attorney, Mr. John Tanner, with an award recognizing his many years of dedication to Crime Stoppers' Student Poster Contest. The program promotes the Crime Stoppers Tipline and new text messaging option by encouraging students to submit original artwork depicting their idea of the anti violence message "Break The Silence, Stop The Violence". Winning artists receive awards and the grand prize winning posters are displayed in classrooms and on VOTRAN buses throughout the 7th Judicial Circuit. The initiative was prompted by the Columbine High School shooting. In this event along with other school shootings, someone knew ahead of time, said Mr. Tanner. The poster contest works to motivate students to report, anonymously, any information they may have regarding violence that has happened or may happen in the future in hopes of preventing potential school violence.



*County Council member Joie Alexander presenting Mr. John Tanner with an award on behalf of Crimestoppers*

Also present at the meeting was McGruff "The Crime Fighting Dog". Crime Stoppers prides itself in reaching out not only to a community of adults but to the children in the community as well. McGruff is one of the most recognized icons of Crime Stoppers. His message to the children is clear and strong on how to keep their environment and themselves safe. McGruff visits thousands of elementary schools throughout the country each year.



*Robert L. Wheeler 2009 President*



*Brandon Perry, Past President*



# 2009 OFFICERS OF THE YEAR

## **FLAGLER COUNTY OFFICER OF THE YEAR 2009**

### **Sergeant Stephen Cole of The Flagler County Sheriff's Office**

Sergeant Stephen Cole was born in Long Beach, California and grew up in Jacksonville, Florida. He graduated from Flagler College where he received a Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration. He is currently attending Walden University and is only three courses away from obtaining his Master's Degree in Public Administration. He is a 19 year veteran of Law Enforcement and has been with the Flagler Sheriff's Office for 14 years. In January of 2008 he opened a Criminal Street Gang Investigation in reference to a local set of gang members. In October, the investigation culminated in the arrest of 13 gang members all charged with RICO and conspiracy to commit RICO. This was the first known Gang RICO case to occur in the region and serves as a template for other agencies to use in combating gang related issues. Sergeant Cole is married to Cyndi and they have three children.



From left Flagler County Sheriff Don Fleming, Dety Stephen Cole, Robert Wheeler

## **ST. JOHNS COUNTY OFFICER OF THE YEAR 2009**

### **Investigator Chris Middleton of The State Attorney's Office, 7th Judicial Circuit**

Investigator Chris Middleton was born and raised in Crescent City, Florida. He graduated from Palatka High School and received his Associate's Degree from Vincennes University. Currently, he is pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration from Flagler College in addition to his career as a Homicide Detective with the State Attorney's Office, 7th Judicial Circuit. He has been in Civilian Law Enforcement for seven years in addition to four years spent as a Military Law Enforcement Officer. He was instrumental in solving numerous homicide investigations in 2008 and set the standard for professionalism, dedication, and case integrity. He is very successful in seeking the truth due to his fine tuned interviewing skills and impressive work ethic. He was married to Heather Middleton in August 2008.



From left Chief Investigator Noel Griffin with Investigator Chris Middleton

## **VOLUSIA COUNTY OFFICER OF THE YEAR 2009**

### **Deputy Stella Ott of The Volusia County Sheriffs Department**

Deputy Stella Ott was raised in Volusia County, Florida. She is currently completing her A.A. Degree through Daytona State College, finished in May. She has been with the Volusia County Sheriffs Office for six years. She works as a School Resource Deputy assigned to Seabreeze High School and Ormond Beach Middle School. She has been recognized over this past quarter for her outstanding work investigating the hierarchy and membership of several suspected gang members. She was also commended on intercepting a series of text message threats directed towards students at one of her assigned schools. She was also instrumental in identifying two armed robbery suspects linked to several robberies in the 7th Circuit. The information provided by Deputy Ott helped solve numerous cases for The VCSO and led to several arrests. She is married to Richard, has two children and two step-children.



From left Volusia County Sheriff Ben Johnson, Dpty. Stella Ott, C.S. Pres. Robert Wheeler

## **PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICER OF THE YEAR 2009**

### **Officer Pedro "Pete" Ruiz of The Palatka Police Department**

Office Pedro "Pete" Ruiz was born in New York. He attended Florida Community College in Jacksonville, Florida, and received his Basic Law Enforcement Certification in 2002. Officer Ruiz has been with The Palatka Police Department for six years. In March of 2008 Officer Ruiz conducted a routine traffic stop within the city limits of Palatka. As he approached the driver's door of the vehicle, the driver opened fire on him. As he ran for cover, he was struck in the left shoulder by a 9mm revolver. Officer Ruiz was treated at Shands Hospital in Gainesville, Florida, and released within 72 hours. After a short recovery, Officer Ruiz returned to serving the citizens of Palatka. Officer Ruiz showed the ultimate in resilience. His bravery and courage serves as an example to all who wear the badge. Officer Ruiz has a six year old daughter.



From left Officer Pedro Puiz and Palatka Police Chief Gary Getchell

## **THE "SPIRIT OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARD"**

### **Detective Brian Brueggemann**

Detective Brian Brueggemann was born and raised in Altamonte Springs, Florida. He is a graduate of the US Marine Corps Basic Training at Parris Island, followed by four years of service. He is enrolled at Daytona Beach State College. He has been with the Daytona Beach Shores Department of Public Safety for four years. He functions as a Field Training Officer, spending two weeks with each new officer as they become acquainted with the agency's Criminal Investigations Division. While carrying a significant case load, he recently concluded a year long investigation into racketeering and theft of trade secrets. Through his cultivation of a cooperating witness and the successful service of multiple search warrants, he developed probable cause for the arrest of four suspects and the seizure of significant assets. His experience in the areas of fraud and financial crimes contributed to the successful outcome of this extremely complicated, in-depth case. Detective Brueggemann is married to Melissa and they have two children.



From left C.S. Pres. Robert Wheeler, Detective Brian Brueggemann, D.B. Shores Chief Steven Dembinsky



**of Northeast Florida**

*serving Flagler, Putman, St. Johns and Volusia Counties*

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Crime Stoppers wishes to express its deepest appreciation to the Companies and Organizations listed below for their strong commitment to Law Enforcement and the important work of Crime Stoppers through their Sponsorship.

## **11<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Banquet Honoring Local Law Enforcement**

### **Event Sponsors**

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