



THE South Dakota Sheriff

November 2020

With Special Thanks to the Members of the South Dakota Sheriffs' Association

South Dakota Sheriffs' Association & the South Dakota Police Chiefs' Association Annual Awards



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During April of each year, several special Awards are presented during the Joint Spring Training held in Deadwood. Despite the cancellation of this year's conference, each award recipient was recognized by peers in their home communities. All award recipients are so deserving of this recognition for their selfless dedication!

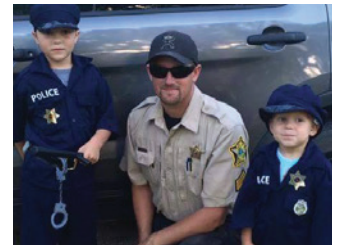
Sheriffs Service Award

The Sheriffs Service Award is presented each year in recognition of outstanding service within the community. This year's award recipient is Sheriff Cory Borg of the Deuel County Sheriff's Office. He was nominated by community members Kayla Sherman, a Deubrook Area Special Education Teacher, and Joni Kjelden.

The Deuel County Sheriff's Office hired (then Deputy Borg) during 2014. He first served as Emergency Manager and, afterward, was promoted to Sergeant. After a successful campaign in 2018, he was elected Sheriff by Deuel county citizens and took office during January 2019.

Fact is, Sheriff Borg gets along with people of all ages throughout the community – from expressing care for young children to visiting with elderly citizens at local hangouts. He has become a role model within the school district for children and faculty alike. Sheriff Borg is often seen during various public engagements

like sporting events, science fairs, etc. His active role and visibility in the community are vital because it helps establish trusting relationships between law enforcement and the people they serve.



Sheriff Cory Borg

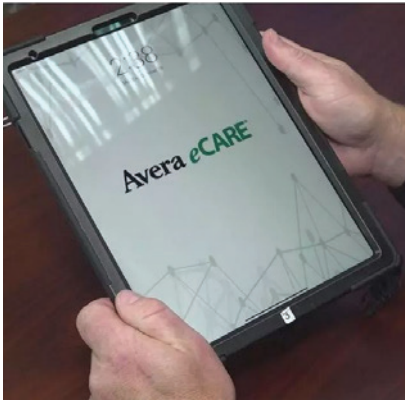
Sheriff Borg has also worked closely with the Deubrook Area Elementary School. During visits to the school building, Sheriff Borg interacts with students of all age groups, including reading sessions with Kindergarten age students. They love listening to Sheriff Borg reading memorable stories. The Sheriff also can be found in the 6th-grade classroom implementing the Empower Program!

Perhaps one of the most essential topics shared by Sheriff Borg includes law enforcement in the local community, the responsibilities that come with public service, and the importance of student safety. In addition to community service in law enforcement, Sheriff Borg is also actively involved with the Gary Fire Department, the SART (Sexual Assault Response Team), the Deuel County Community Foundation, and more.

Congratulations to Sheriff Borg on his outstanding achievements and for his real example of community leadership!

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New Virtual Crisis Care Pilot Program



Recently, Clay County Sheriff Howe recounted how one of his deputies was able to avoid placing an individual on an emergency mental health hold by readily connecting to a

mental health provider via a digital iPad tablet. "It prevented us from having to bring that person into the county jail to be held pending an evaluation by a qualified mental health professional and then possibly committing the person involuntarily to the Human Services Center, and that's the whole goal of this sort of effort," Sheriff Howe said. While the program is still in its infancy, Sheriff Howe and his peers are already seeing the programs potential.

Mental health professionals are now virtually assisting law enforcement in 18 counties and probation officers in one Judicial Circuit to de-escalate, stabilize, and assess the safety of those in a crisis and arrange for follow-up care with local community mental health centers.

"Chief Justice Gilbertson's vision of providing law enforcement access to mental health resources in rural communities is becoming a reality through Virtual Crisis Care," said State Court Administrator Greg Sattizahn. "The goal of this pilot program is to prove its worth, so it can be made available to all Sheriff's offices, police departments, and probation officers across the state."

Having mental health professionals on hand can help decide the best course of action for the person in crisis and reduce law enforcement's time on-scene and avoid unnecessary out-of-county transports to mental health facilities. Counties can also avoid legal and healthcare costs associated with the involuntary commitment process, and the state can free up state hospital beds that have historically been used for unnecessary mental health holds.

"About one in every ten calls to law enforcement involves someone in a potential mental health crisis.

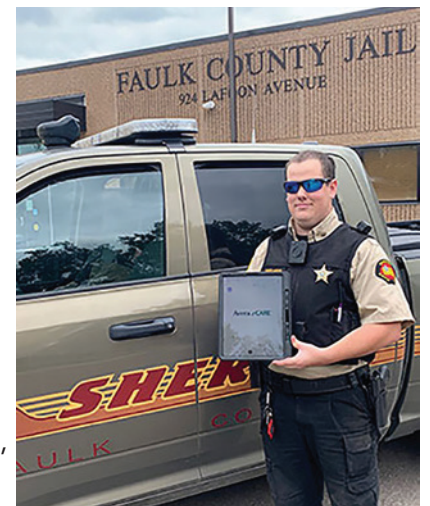
It can be extremely difficult for rural law enforcement officers to deal with these issues," said Walter Panzirer, a Helmsley Trustee. "The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust is proud to be on the forefront of increasing access to vital mental health resources for law enforcement officers and the communities they serve."

Pairing a mental health professional with law enforcement is not a new concept. Local data shows in-person mobile crisis team's work. Last year in Minnehaha County, in cases where the mobile crisis team responded, nine of every ten people were able to stay home rather than require a higher level of care. Until now, only Minnehaha and Hughes counties operate mobile programs in South Dakota.

"We've long known the value of crisis response teams, but it's been next to impossible to do in rural areas given time, staffing and budget constraints," Roberts County Sheriff Barry Hillestad said. "Now, we can bring the crisis team to rural communities and have a mental health professional available at the touch of a screen."

"With the deployment of the Virtual Crisis Care program, we are now able to provide our residents, and responders with more options," said McPherson County Sheriff Dave Ackerman. "A successful on-site consult via video conference may be the difference between remaining safely in one's home with follow-up care verses a long drive to an emergency room, a prolonged emergency room visit, and possibly a 24-hour stay in a mental health facility. Without question, many people will do much better remaining in their homes."

Virtual Crisis Care is a partnership between the Unified Judicial System, Avera eCare, the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust and South Dakota Sheriffs' Association.



Medal of Honor

The Medal of Honor is awarded to law enforcement officers who demonstrate courage and bravery. Often the circumstances involve the risk of severe injury or death during service to save or protect human life. This year's Medal of Honor recipient is Assistant Chief Thomas Chester, Martin Police Department (who currently works with the Brookings County Sheriff's Office).

On August 30, 2019, just before 4:00 AM on call, off duty Assistant Chief Thomas Chester was dispatched in response to reports of an armed male walking towards the City of Martin. Officer Chester responded immediately and contacted the armed subject. The armed and suicidal male failed to obey Officer Chester's commands.

Assistant Chief T. Chester used exceptional verbal skills and use-of-force tactics to de-escalate the situation and detain the male. Assistance Chief Chester was keenly aware of the danger yet showed extreme professionalism and bravery to take into custody a mentally unstable, intoxicated subject armed with a knife.

The investigation showed that the subject was en route to another location to fight another citizen. Assistant Chief Thomas Chester's actions likely prevented two deaths that morning, including the subject with the knife and the person he planned to fight.

Congratulations to Assistant Chief Thomas Chester for his professionalism and bravery!



Officer Nathan Eisenmenger, Martin PD (left) presents the Medal of Honor to Deputy Thomas Chester

*Congratulations to all
Award Winners*

Citizen's Award of Merit

Awarded to South Dakota Salutes for unwavering support for the families of first responders who lost their lives serving their communities. Tony Bour has done an amazing job of running this organization, and gathering support from numerous businesses, as well as our State's top political leaders (Noem, Thune, Rounds, Johnson). Also included in the nomination were multiple news stories and photos which detailed the continued pattern of support that SD Salutes has provided by their significant contributions to our State's law enforcement, and why they are deserving of the 2020 Citizen's Award of Merit.



Tony Bour (left) receives the Citizen's Award of Merit from Yankton County Sheriff, Paul Vlahakis.

Officer of the Year Award

All sworn officers are eligible to receive the award for exceptional achievement in any police endeavor, including extraordinary valor, crime prevention, investigative work, community policing, traffic safety, drug control and prevention, juvenile programs, and training programs. The recipient of this year's Officer of the Year Award is Sergeant Samantha Bruening, Yankton Police Department. Sergeant Bruening went above and beyond the norm by volunteering to pilot an innovative program, aimed to help youth in our Yankton Schools.

This program, "You Can Too" was developed to "replace fear with facts" about the police and to teach young people that they can succeed and make a positive difference. Reports from the schools and students said the program is truly making a difference in young people's lives.

The "You Can Too" program will now be in area public and private elementary schools at the second and 4th grade level.



Chief John Harris presents the Officer of the Year award to Sergeant Samantha Bruening

Racial & Social Justice

By: Dave Pfeifle,
SDPAA Executive Director

Recent national surveys reveal that over 70% of African Americans and members of other diverse groups believe that they have been the victims of discrimination. Most white respondents believe they have also been the victims of racial discrimination.

Today's discussions about racial/social justice issues are focused on law enforcement. However, our entire society must address them, especially the public sector if we are to effectively serve our constituencies. While many local law enforcement agencies have been making commendable improvements in community policing and adopting inclusive practices, others are lagging.

Law enforcement officers perform a vital service in addressing all types of social strife. An interaction between law enforcement and an individual has the potential to escalate quickly if not handled correctly. The ability to make the "right call" at exactly the "right time" can mean the difference between a good and bad outcome. I have worked with hundreds of law enforcement officers who have said these situations require a "rolodex" of information that your brain must sort through in a split-second. Having the right information in that rolodex, should lead to a correct decision. Creating and storing the right information in that rolodex requires comprehensive training and years of experience.

Crisis intervention training has become a key focus in the law enforcement community. Last year the SD Sheriffs Association, the SD Division of Criminal Investigation, and the SD Public Assurance Alliance (SDPAA) sponsored the creation of crisis intervention training for SD law enforcement. This training has been especially beneficial for those dealing with an emotionally charged encounter. The most recent racial/social justice issues have created the need for additional specialized training. As one law enforcement officer told me recently, this training is essential and serves as a wake-up call.

Studies have shown that discriminatory practices are learned. They must be unlearned. As Mark Twain said: "Education consists mainly in what we have

unlearned." The initial acceptance and then the appreciation of the diversity of our fellow human beings takes a mindset that must be developed. The SDPAA is working with the SD Police Chiefs Association and the SD Sheriffs' Association to develop unique training for all law enforcement officers to improve their diversity mindset at all levels.

While this training is commencing with local law enforcement, the SDPAA plans to expand it to all others in local government in the coming months. The SDPAA is honored to join with our local law enforcement community to offer this training to their officers. The issue of racial/social justice does not need to prevent us from taking positive steps. It is possible to be sensitive and responsive to racial/social justice issues while also being supportive of improving good law enforcement practices.

SDPAA through its local vendor Safety Benefits, Inc., offers training on hundreds of topics. If you believe your public entity's team members would benefit from these trainings, please visit us online at: sdpaa@sdmunicipalleague.org.

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make a difference in the lives of others.*

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