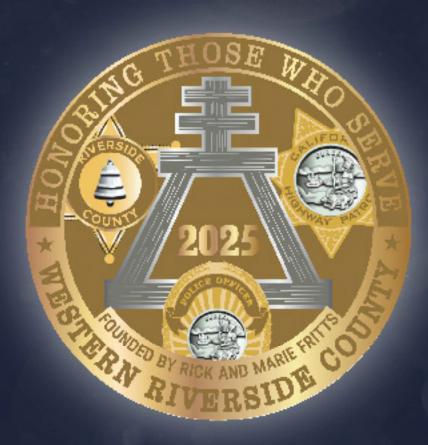
2025



Law Enforcement Appreciation Ceremony April 30, 2025

Honoring those who serve

## Welcome from the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee. . .

Good evening and welcome to the annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee (LEAC) Dinner and Awards event. I am deeply honored to serve as the civilian Chair of LEAC for 2025. As a community member, business owner, and steadfast supporter of law enforcement, it is a privilege to join you all tonight for this event.

Since 1978, LEAC has united law enforcement and community members across Riverside County to honor distinguished police work and exceptional service. The committee includes representatives from local businesses, community organizations, and law enforcement agencies, all united by a shared commitment. Tonight, we continue this proud tradition here in downtown Riverside, the heart of our county.

This evening is an opportunity for us to pause, to listen, and to reflect on the sacrifices these brave men and women make daily to protect our communities. While law enforcement often faces criticism, LEAC and events like this provide us with the chance to focus on the positive—to honor remarkable achievements and to celebrate the tireless efforts of those who serve.

Each of tonight's honorees has been nominated by their respective agencies for significant contributions, extraordinary acts of service, and longevity. Their dedication and bravery remind us of the incredible impact law enforcement has on our communities.

Being part of LEAC has given me the privilege of learning about what law enforcement officers endure, hearing their stories, and working alongside them on our committee. It has been inspiring to witness their dedication and courage.

Tonight, as we recognize the outstanding contributions of these exemplary individuals, let us share in an evening of gratitude, camaraderie, and celebration.

Tom Loza 2025 LEAC Chair

#### 2025 LEAC Executive Board

Tom Loza, 2025 Chair Dave Jones & Jennifer Garcia, Chair-Elect Dan Schoo, Treasurer Maura Kane McAuliffe\*, Secretary Ryan Railsback, Past Chairperson

#### 2025 LEAC Committee Members

Jason Adams
Jim Auck
Sol Ivett Avila
Ruben Ayala\*
Paul Barbieri
Nicholas Cardenas
Brendan Carney
Gary Cavender
Monique Cisneros
Henry Citarella
Samantha Corona
Josiah Douglas
Scott Eisenberger
Greg Fagan\*

Sherri Gomez
Gary Griffitts
LaShon Halley
Michael Hamilton
Jared Haringsma
Dave Jones
Maureen Kane\*
Shannon Kane
Cathy Kienle
Miguel Macias
Maura Kane McAuliffe\*
Maureen Mitchell
Javier Navarro

**Jennifer Garcia** 

Ivan Ostarcavic Brian Pearcy\* Ryan Railsback\* Karla Rodriguez Donald Sharp Jeremey Shumaker Kevin Slusarski Steve Sheere Michelle Steele Dennis Vrooman\* Maurice Ward James Wright \*Denotes past LEAC Chair

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The Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee thanks these generous sponsors for their outstanding support to law enforcement.

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#### **EXCEPTIONAL LIFESAVING**









#### LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT













#### **COMMUNITY BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP**

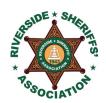


#### **ACT OF VALOR**





#### **INVESTIGATIVE EXCELLENCE**



#### **MARIE FRITTS DISTINGUISHED K-9 TEAM**





#### **EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE**



#### **COMMENDATION SPONSORS**









### **EVENING PROGRAM**

# Annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner and Recognition Ceremony

**Greeting** Tom Loza, 2025 Chair

Co-Chairs Riverside County Bureau of Investigations Commander Dave Jones and Chief Deputy District Attorney Jennifer Garcia

Introduction of Riverside County Sheriff and Chiefs of Police

Welcome to Riverside County Officials

**Posting of Colors** LEAC Memorial Flag and Pledge of Allegiance:

Ryan Railsback, Riverside Police Department and Past Chair

National Anthem Detective Lyndon Peats, Beaumont Police Department

**Invocation** Chaplain Anneti Bullock, Riverside Police Department

**DINNER** 

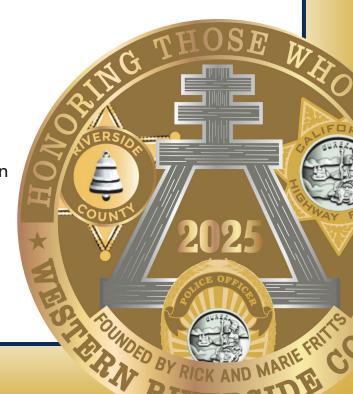
Thank You to Our Sponsors

**Recognition of 2025 Honorees** 

- Explorer Scholarship Recipients
- Community Business Partnership
- Excellence in Community Service
- Marie Fritts Distinguished K9 Team
- Investigative Excellence
- Lifetime Achievement
- Exceptional Lifesaving
- Collaborative Investigative Recognition
- Act of Valor

**Closing Remarks** 

Adjourn



## Honoring A Fallen Officer



### Probation Corrections Officer II Ryan Santana Riverside County Probation Department

On December 23, 2021, Probation Corrections Officer Ryan Santana passed away in the line of duty. He was 40-years-old at the time of his death.

Ryan Santana began his career with the Riverside County Probation Department on January 7, 2016. He served at Riverside Juvenile Hall until its closure in 2020, at which time he transferred to the Alan M. Crogan Youth Treatment and Education Center.

Ryan was a beloved colleague whose genuine character fostered meaningful friendships among his coworkers, and his playful sense of humor brightened everyone's day and lifted the spirits of all around him. His warmth and genuine humility naturally drew in his peers and the youth he mentored, creating an atmosphere of trust, comfort, and positivity.

While Ryan made his mark serving the department, his greatest treasure was at home in his family. His face lit up when he spoke of wife Hayley and the deep love and admiration he held for her and the beautiful life they created together. He was immensely proud of his three children—Aiden, Annabelle, and Troy—who were always his greatest source of joy and pride.

We were blessed to have Ryan alongside us for nearly six years, though it was far too brief. In that short time, he touched countless lives, making a meaningful difference to the youth he guided, the coworkers he supported, and above all, his cherished family. His loss leaves an irreplaceable void in the hearts of all who knew and loved him.

## **LEAC Police and Sheriff Explorer Scholarship Program**

The Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee established a college scholarship program to benefit police and sheriff Explorers in Western Riverside County agencies and stations. This program was created to encourage and assist future law enforcement professionals in their educational goals. The Scholarship Fund is administered by an appointed sub-committee comprised of LEAC members. For the second year in a row, opportunities were created for sponsors to contribute directly into the fund and support the selected Explorers.

Applicants are required to be a participant in an Explorer program and either a high school senior planning to attend college next year or currently attending an accredited college on a full-time basis. Each applicant was submitted on the recommendation of their LEAC Explorer agency. Scholarship funds are intended to support educational costs for full time college attendance.

#### SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA:

Applications were evaluated on future law enforcement-related goals, Explorer activities and contributions, academic and scholastic achievement, dedication to public service, and long-term goals. Each Explorer submitted an essay describing their personal commitment to supporting law enforcement and the community.

#### LEAC is very proud to announce these well-deserving Scholarship Recipients



NOLAN VASQUEZ

Submitted by Beaumont Police Department
Currently attending California State University San Bernardino

#### LAW ENFORCEMENT GOAL:

To join the Basic Peace Officers Academy, and eventually obtain the rank of Chief of Police by fostering a culture of collaboration, respect, and continuous improvement within that agency.



JANELLE HERNANDEZ
Submitted by Menifee Police Department
Currently attending Liberty High School

#### LAW ENFORCEMENT GOAL:

To attend University of California San Diego or California State University Fullerton, get a degree in biochemistry, and become a criminal forensic technician.



MADELYNN BARRAZA
Submitted by Corona Police Department
Currently attending Santiago High School

LAW ENFORCEMENT GOAL:
To attend California Baptist University or California State
University San Bernardino, and work in law enforcement.



SOPHIA FARIAS
Submitted by Riverside Police Department
Currently attending Martin Luther High School

#### LAW ENFORCEMENT GOAL:

To attend University of Redlands or University of California Riverside, major in public policy, and become a police officer.

## LEAC Police and Sheriff Explorer Scholarship Program, continued



LEILANI SANCHEZ
Submitted by Murrieta Police Department
Currently attending Murrieta Valley High School

LAW ENFORCEMENT GOAL:
To attend a university after high school, earn a degree, and pursue a law enforcement career.



MONIQUE CASTANEDA
Submitted by Hemet Police Department
Currently attending West Valley High School

LAW ENFORCEMENT GOAL:
To attend California State University Fullerton or California
State University San Bernardino, and earn a spot as a cadet
for the Hemet Police Department.



ELIZABETH KACKERT
Submitted by Riverside Sheriff's Office, Perris Station
Currently attending Vista Murrieta High School

LAW ENFORCEMENT GOAL:

To attend San Diego State University, and become a law enforcement officer after getting a degree.



ETHAN SCHUMACHER
Submitted by Riverside Sheriff's Office, Southwest Station
Currently attending Liberty Online Academy

LAW ENFORCEMENT GOAL: To dedicate his future career to law enforcement.



CEILO AQUILA RODRIGUEZ
Submitted by Riverside Sheriff's Office, Moreno Valley Station
Currently attending Moreno Valley Online Academy

LAW ENFORCEMENT GOAL:
To attend San Bernardino Valley College or Mt. San Jacinto College, and become a detective in law enforcement.



JAYDEN JULIAN RAMIREZ
Submitted by Val Verde Unified School District Police Department
Currently attending Citrus Hill High School

LAW ENFORCEMENT GOAL:
To attend California State University San Bernardino or
California State University East Bay, going into a profession
that contributes to public safety.

## **Community Business Partnership**



## Northgate Gonzalez Market Gonzalez Reynoso Family

The **Riverside Police Department** is incredibly thankful for the strong support of the **Northgate Gonzalez Market**, which began in 2019 with the opening of their first Riverside location. Since that time, the business has made remarkable contributions to the Riverside community.

Northgate Gonzalez Market has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to fostering connections and improving the lives of those they serve. Their numerous and impactful contributions include organizing toy giveaways, back-to-school events, and youth programs. They are also actively involved in supporting faith-based organizations, offering nutrition education, donating food to churches and senior centers, as well as providing free health screenings to the community. Notably in 2024, they awarded \$250,000 in scholarships to students across five counties, providing them the opportunity to pursue a higher education.

Through their collaboration with the Riverside Police Department, Northgate Gonzalez Market has supported numerous initiatives. They have donated to the Riverside Police Foundation, provided raffle baskets, and participated in the foundation's Golden Badge Awards and golf tournament fundraisers; all to benefit the youth programs coordinated by the Riverside Police Department. Their generosity extends to the Explorer and Law and Protective Services youth programs, where they continue to make a meaningful difference.

During the holiday season, Northgate Gonzalez Market has gone above and beyond, donating gift cards to families in need and providing boxed lunches and breakfast for first responders and civilian staff. They further reinforced their commitment by hosting a JUNTOS Award ceremony during which they donated \$2,000 to Riverside Police Department's nonprofit, You Are Not Alone program, directly benefiting seniors with limited resources.

For the invaluable support Northgate Gonzalez Market and its dedicated employees provide to the Riverside Police Department and community, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is proud to honor them with the Community Business Partnership award.



## **Excellence in Community Service**

#### CATEGORY CRITERIA

Recognize an officer for exceptional execution of responsibilities in a community service program or project that has had a significant impact on public safety in a community or communities within Western Riverside County.

#### **Hemet Police Department**



Officer Jose Renteria

Officer Jose Renteria serves as a dedicated School Resource Officer at Rancho Viejo Middle School in Hemet, where he has gone above and beyond his primary duties to make a lasting impact on the community. Recognizing the challenges faced by at-risk youth, he spearheaded an innovative initiative in partnership with school staff, the Boyz Summit Leadership Program. This men-

torship program identifies and supports at-risk male students struggling academically, socially, or emotionally. Through mentorship, leadership development, and positive reinforcement, the program aims to improve students' grades, attendance, and self-confidence while fostering a sense of purpose and direction in their lives.

Under Officer Renteria's leadership, the program has provided invaluable guidance to students in need of positive role models, empowering them to stay on a productive path toward success both within and outside of the classroom. His dedication reflects a deep commitment to youth empowerment and preventative intervention, promoting a safer, more supportive school environment.

Beyond this impactful program, Officer Renteria has demonstrated extraordinary compassion and initiative. When he noticed several students attending classes without essential school supplies, he took quiet but decisive action, partnering with the local Walmart to secure backpacks filled with necessary materials. His efforts ensured that these students were better equipped to succeed in their academic pursuits.

Through his exceptional dedication, Officer Renteria has not only transformed the lives of individual students but also strengthened the connection between the police department, the school, and the broader Hemet community. His actions embody the spirit of service, leadership, and commitment, and the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is proud to recognize Officer Jose Renteria with the Excellence in Community Service Award.

#### Murrieta Police Department



Sergeant Travis Baker

Murrieta Police Department's Sergeant Travis Baker and Officer Jeff Martin collaborate to organize the transformative Shop with a Cop program. Shop With a Cop is a nationally recognized initiative that pairs deserving youth with an officer for an inspiring day of food and shopping.



Officer Jeff Martin

Partnering with a local school district, they identify at-risk and in-need children who would benefit from positive interactions with law enforcement. Each year, they select 10–15 youth, coordinating not only the logistics of the shopping experience, but arranging meals and recruiting other officers to volunteer their time.

The enduring impact of Shop with a

Cop is evident in the heartfelt testimonials shared by past participants and their families. One grateful mother, whose child previously participated in the initiative, reached out to the Murrieta Police Department to express her heartfelt appreciation. She shared how the experience had profoundly influenced her child, guiding him toward a more positive path in life.

Beyond benefiting the youth involved, the program has fostered strong, long-term relationships between law enforcement and the community. Local businesses eagerly vie for the opportunity to participate, and many past participants have gone on to support the initiative themselves. Additionally, numerous officers continue to volunteer year after year, carrying the program's positive influence into their everyday work.

Sergeant Baker and Officer Martin have taken on this time-intensive endeavor, demonstrating steadfast dedication, leadership, and a deep commitment to community service. They exemplify the passion that law enforcement officers have for making a positive difference in the lives of those they serve.

The Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is honored to recognize Sergeant Travis Baker and Officer Jeff Martin with the Excellence in Community Service Award.

## Marie Fritts Distinguished K-9 Team

#### CATEGORY CRITERIA

Outstanding effort on a particular case, or a long-term high level of performance in the field of police K-9 work or recipients risked severe personal injury or death to accomplish their mission, or to save another threatened with severe personal injury or death while performing their duties as a K-9 Team.

## Riverside County Sheriff's Office Special Enforcement Bureau



Deputy Rafael Casillas and K-9 Sky

In 2024, alone, Riverside County Sheriff's Deputy Rafael Casillas, and his K-9 partner, Sky, were deployed over 400 times to assist patrol personnel, leading to the successful apprehension of several violent suspects. Beyond their operational success, Deputy Casillas and Sky participated in numer-

ous public demonstrations at schools and community events, fostering stronger connections between law enforcement and the community.

In December 2024, deputies from the Riverside County Sheriff's Office Perris Station responded to a domestic disturbance involving a suspect reportedly following the victim by car. When deputies located the suspect and attempted a traffic stop, he refused to pull over, leading them on an hour-long chase. The pursuit concluded with a PIT maneuver executed by Deputy Casillas' K-9 unit, disabling the suspect's vehicle, which subsequently caught fire.

Once outside the vehicle, and despite multiple commands, the suspect remained uncooperative and repeatedly reached into his vehicle. Sensing an imminent threat, Deputy Casillas released Sky to subdue the suspect. During the struggle, the suspect pulled out a knife. Deputies responded by firing two 40mm rounds designed to temporarily stop someone without causing serious harm, forcing the suspect to drop the weapon.

Even as flames engulfed the car, the suspect continued to resist arrest. Deputy Casillas, with the support of his colleagues, pulled the suspect away from the burning vehicle to ensure his safety. He was then taken into custody for multiple violent offenses.

Deputy Casillas and his K-9 partner, Sky, displayed extraordinary courage, discipline, and teamwork during this high-risk encounter. Their unwavering dedication and tactical expertise exemplify the critical role of K-9 units in law enforcement, ensuring the safety of both the public and their fellow officers.

The Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is proud to honor Deputy Rafael Casillas and K-9 Sky with the Distinguished K-9 Team Award.



### **Investigative Excellence**

#### CATEGORY CRITERIA

Recognize an officer for exceptional execution of responsibilities by successfully concluding a major investigation or by demonstrating outstanding investigative or interrogative techniques in the course of an investigation.

## California Highway Patrol Temecula Office



Sergeant Eric Nicholas

Sergeant Eric Nicholas has earned a reputation as an exceptional investigator with sharp analytical skills. His expertise is evident in the 22 Drug Recognition Expert evaluations he conducted and his impressive DUI enforcement record, which includes 33 arrests and four additional turnovers. His proactive efforts against street racing resulted in 28 citations, while he also man-

aged 26 traffic collisions with diligence and precision.

Building on his investigative acumen, Sergeant Nicholas executed 29 search warrants and led 25 Special Investigation Unit cases, primarily as the lead investigator. His deep knowledge made him a trusted court expert, frequently testifying as a Drug Recognition Expert and Vehicle Dynamics Specialist.

One standout case involved a five-vehicle crash on State Route 79. Through a meticulous investigation, Sergeant Nicholas determined that the suspect had been driving 103 miles per hour while making an illegal pass, causing the devastating collision. Search warrants and dash-cam footage analysis uncovered hours of reckless driving, linking the suspect to a car club involved in street racing earlier that day. His efforts secured felony reckless driving charges against the suspect and identified seven other car club members for prosecution.

In another case, in October 2024, Sergeant Nicholas played a crucial role in uncovering the truth behind a fatal head-on crash. Initially, the surviving driver appeared to be at fault due to impairment. However, Sergeant Nicholas' thorough analysis of evidence and toxicology results revealed the real story: the deceased driver had been traveling the wrong way with a high blood alcohol content. His diligent investigation spared the surviving party from facing wrongful felony charges and ensured justice was served.

Sergeant Nicholas' dedication to the California Highway Patrol

and public safety is evident in all he does. Whether investigating crashes, conducting mechanical inspections, or mentoring fellow officers, his precision, experience, and commitment stand out. He plays a vital role in keeping California's roads safe and remains an invaluable asset to both the CHP and the community.

In recognition of his unwavering dedication to justice and public safety, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is honored to present Sergeant Eric Nicholas with the Investigative Excellence Award.

#### **Corona Police Department**



Sergeant Steven Hungerford

In May 2024, the Corona Police Department received a report from a woman alleging that her ex-boy-friend was stalking her, violating a court order, and making criminal threats. Evidence revealed that he had threatened to shoot her, sent pictures of an AR-15, placed tracking devices on her car, surveilled her workplace, and used rental cars to follow her undetected. His esca-

lating behavior posed an imminent danger to the victim.

Sergeant Steven Hungerford was assigned to the case and conducted a thorough follow-up investigation. He diligently gathered additional evidence and secured a search warrant to monitor the suspect's cell phone location. On May 24, while off-duty at home with his family, Detective Hungerford noticed the suspect's phone pinging near the victim's workplace in Corona. Recognizing the potential threat, he immediately attempted to contact the victim but received no response. Understanding the urgency of the situation, he swiftly prepared for duty, notified his supervisor and on-duty patrol sergeants, generated a call for service, and coordinated a plan to locate and apprehend the suspect.

Upon arriving at the victim's workplace, the suspect was not found, prompting Detective Hungerford to expand his search. He discovered an unoccupied rental vehicle parked three miles away—an approach consistent with the suspect's past behavior. Working with patrol officers, he monitored the vehicle. When the suspect returned and was positively identified, officers initiated a vehicle pursuit, which ended on the westbound 91 freeway. Refusing to surrender, the suspect engaged in a prolonged standoff with tactical teams before ultimately taking his own life. Detective Hungerford's keen investigative instincts, unwavering dedication, and decisive actions likely saved the victim's life.

His tenacity, professionalism, and steadfast commitment to protecting the community exemplify the highest standards of law enforcement.

Throughout his career, Detective Hungerford has demonstrated an unwavering pursuit of excellence. This case stands as a testament to his outstanding service. With great pride and gratitude, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is honored to present Detective Steven Hungerford with the Investigative Excellence Award.

## **Riverside County District Attorney Bureau of Investigations**



**Senior Investigator** Claudia Estrada

Your first impression of Senior Investigator Claudia Estrada might be to characterize her as having a quiet demeanor. However, Investigator Estrada's reserved persona does not overshadow her strengths of being meticulous, consistent, reliable, and focused when it comes to investigating crimes related to child abuse. Investigator Estrada worked Sexual Assault and Child Abuse investiga-

tions, known as SACA, prior to joining the Riverside County District Attorney's Office in October 2020. Investigator Estrada continued to work SACA cases as a Senior District Attorney Investigator. In 2024, Investigator Estrada faced the immense challenge of handling multiple victims and coordinating witnesses while preparing for and testifying as the lead investigator in two trials where the defendants faced life imprisonment.

Most recently, Investigator Estrada worked on a case in which the suspect was charged with sexual abuse of his three granddaughters. Due to her strong investigative commitment, the suspect was found guilty of all charges and is now facing multiple life sentences. While Investigator Estrada was handling that case in court, she started a second trial. In the second case, the suspect was in a relationship with the victim's mother, residing in the family home for six years. During this time, the suspect sexually abused the victim, starting when the child was six years old and continuing until the age of 11. The suspect was found guilty on charges and was sentenced to 40 years, plus an additional 137 years to life.

During the simultaneous trials, Investigator Estrada worked closely with the deputy district attorneys and both presiding judges to coordinate her presence in each courtroom. Her days were full and exhausting, often starting before sunrise and ending after sunset. She also handled additional investigative tasks for the district attorneys and ensured that all evidentiary requests were fulfilled throughout the weeks-long trials.

Investigator Estrada's unyielding dedication and commitment to the most vulnerable citizens of Riverside County resulted in life sentences for the offenders, ensuring our community remains a safer place to live.

In recognition of her outstanding investigative skills and relentless dedication to seeking justice for victims of sexual abuse, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is proud to present Senior Investigator Claudia Estrada with the Investigative Excellence Award.

#### Menifee Police Department



**Detective Chalon Harris** 

In 2024, Detective Chalon Harris spearheaded a lengthy and complex narcotics investigation known as "Operation Looney Tunes." This operation led to the arrest of a major methamphetamine supplier in the city of Menifee, along with the seizure of a substantial quantity of drugs and firearms.

The investigation began with Detec-

tive Harris conducting two undercover operations to purchase methamphetamine from a local dealer. These efforts led to the identification of a suspect believed to be supplying multiple dealers in the area. Through surveillance, including the use of a vehicle tracker, Detective Harris gathered critical intelligence. The data from the tracker led to a traffic stop, during which methamphetamine was discovered, further advancing the case.

As the investigation progressed, Detective Harris identified a key supplier operating in Menifee—who was also being tracked by the Rialto Police Department Narcotics Team. This supplier, a resident of Perris, became the central target of a joint operation between Detective Harris and the RPD team. Working together, they coordinated a vehicle stop, which resulted in the seizure of three pounds of methamphetamine and \$2,000 in cash. A subsequent search warrant at the suspect's residence uncovered an additional three pounds of methamphetamine, three rifles, two handguns, extended magazines, ammunition, and another \$4,000 in cash.

Detective Harris effectively employed a range of investigative continued to next page

#### Investigative Excellence, continued

tactics and strategic planning, leading to an outstanding outcome with a significant impact on the city of Menifee. By dismantling a major drug supply network and removing dangerous firearms from circulation, she played a crucial role in enhancing public safety.

In recognition of her leadership, teamwork, and exemplary investigative skills during "Operation Looney Tunes," the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is honored to present Detective Chalon Harris with the Investigative Excellence Award.

#### Riverside County Sheriff's Office Rural Crimes Team



Sergeant Kory Murphy

Established in 2021, the Riverside County Sheriff's Office Rural Crime Team partners with agricultural and farming communities to address the unique challenges they face. The team develops solutions for both criminal and non-criminal issues in unincorporated areas, consisting of a sergeant, a corporal, a community service officer, and five deputies.



Corporal Arturo De Santigo



Corporal Roger Loza

Beyond conducting complex investigations, the Rural Crime Team actively engages with the community by attending monthly farm bureau meetings and providing quarterly training. In 2024, they hosted the 1st Annual Riverside County Rural Crime Conference, bringing together representatives from Code Enforcement, Animal Control, the District Attorney's Office, the United States Postal Inspection Service, and liaisons from multiple sheriff's stations. They also launched the Riverside County Agriculture Pass Program, partnering with CAL FIRE to train farmers on fire and disaster safety. This program grants farmers access to their agricultural properties and businesses during emergencies.



Deputy Robert Ochoa



Deputy Jonathan Millares



Deputy Richard Schweitzer



Deputy Kurt Plummer

In 2024, alone, the Rural Crime Team:

- Authored 194 search warrants
- Made 188 arrests
- Recovered 20 stolen vehicles, tractors, and skid steers
- Retrieved \$518,000 worth of stolen property
- Rescued \$1.7 million in stolen or injured livestock
- Seized several pounds of illegal drugs
- Recovered 21 stolen firearms

The team utilizes cutting-edge law enforcement tools, including trail cameras, theft bait trackers, vehicle trackers, search warrants, drone technology, and surveillance to combat rural crime. Their efforts extend beyond county borders, with search warrants executed as far as Ventura County.

One notable case involved a construction theft in Winchester. Using advanced investigative techniques, the team tracked the suspect's movements across Southern California, Nevada, New Mexico, and Colorado, before his return to California. The suspect, along with a wanted Colorado felon, was apprehended upon reentry. The investigation linked the suspect to a series of car wash burglaries spanning seven jurisdictions, leading to pending cases in three states.

Through their dedication, innovation, and relentless pursuit of jus-

tice, the Rural Crime Team has made a significant impact on crime reduction throughout Riverside County and beyond.

The Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee proudly presents the Investigative Excellence Award to Sergeant Kory Murphy, Corporal Arturo De Santiago, Corporal Roger Loza, Deputy Robert Ochoa, Deputy Jonathan Millares,



Deputy Richard Schweitzer, Deputy Kurt Plummer, and Community Service Officer Scott Lehman of the Riverside County Sheriff's Office Rural Crime Team.

CSO Scott Lehman

## University of California Riverside Police Department



Sergeant Jesse Orona

On Halloween 2024, a UC Riverside employee discovered a shooting target with bullet holes in her office trash can. Concerned, she alerted campus police and identified a specific coworker she believed was responsible—an individual who had attended the department's Halloween event dressed as an "active shooter."



Detective Joseph Lara



Detective Megan Debaca

Upon receiving the report, the UCR Police Department and Human Resources launched an investigation. During a meeting with HR, the employee became confrontational and verbally threatening. At one point, he stepped out, claiming he needed to use the restroom, but instead walked in the opposite direction. When he returned, a bulge in his pants pocket appeared to resemble a handgun.

Detective Megan Debaca conducted a comprehensive threat assessment, identifying multiple warning signs. Working closely with university officials, she provided safety guidance and updates while ensuring the integrity of the investigation

remained intact. Recognizing the potential for violence, **Sergeant Jessie Orona** determined immediate intervention was necessary. Sergeant Orona coordinated with the Riverside City Attorney's Office and assigned **Detective Joseph Lara** to obtain



Detective Jonathan Estrada

an emergency Gun Violence Restraining Order, all while maintaining surveillance on the employee's residence outside city limits.

Once the restraining order was approved, detectives collaborated with the Riverside Sheriff's Office Special Enforcement Team to serve it. The operation resulted in the seizure of four registered handguns,

an AR-15–style rifle, and thousands of rounds of ammunition. **Detective Jonathan Estrada** observed that the rifle appeared to have been modified, potentially rendering it illegal under California law. His assessment was later confirmed by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Building on this intelligence, Sergeant Orona continued surveillance to better understand the suspect's daily routine. When it was discovered that the suspect regularly dropped off his child at a local daycare, Orona coordinated with deputies to safely intercept him after he left the daycare. A search of the suspect's vehicle revealed a shooting target identical to the one found in the trash can on Halloween, along with a handgun safe concealed beneath the passenger seat. The suspect was subsequently taken into custody by UCRPD and booked on felony assault weapon charges.

Through their investigative expertise, exceptional professionalism, and unwavering commitment to public safety, these detectives successfully mitigated a potential threat to the UC Riverside community.

The Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee proudly presents the Investigative Excellence Award to the University of California Riverside Investigations Bureau.

#### **Riverside Police Department**



Detective Nic Cantino

On the evening of Saturday, October 21, 2023, Riverside Police officers responded to the emergency room at Riverside University Health System Medical Center, where a male victim had arrived with gunshot wounds. The victim reported that while driving on Grove Community Drive in Riverside, near a church, another vehicle pulled

## Investigative Excellence, continued



Sergeant Corbin Clinedinst



Crime Analyst Fred Lee

alongside him and opened fire. Despite his injuries, he managed to drive himself to the hospital. Officers later located evidence of the shooting at Grove Community Drive and Plainview Street.

Detective Nic Cantino of the Robbery-Homicide Unit, Officer Corbin Clinedinst—now a Sergeant—of the Problem-Oriented Policing Team, and Crime Analyst Frederick Lee led an extensive follow-up investigation. Their meticulous work uncovered a shocking murder-for-hire plot orchestrated by a church pastor who opposed his daughter's relationship with the victim. Through analysis of phone records, social media activity, and financial transactions, investigators determined that the suspect paid

\$40,000 to hire multiple individuals to target the victim. Their findings revealed meetings, surveillance efforts, and financial exchanges directly tied to the plot.

On March 13, 2024, law enforcement executed simultaneous warrants in Victorville, Long Beach, and Lynwood, leading to the arrests of the main suspect and one of the suspected hitmen. Authorities seized multiple firearms; and critical evidence, linking the suspect to the scheme. During questioning, the suspect confessed to orchestrating the shooting and hiring accomplices to intimidate the victim. Further investigation identified another suspect who is believed to have fled the country. Efforts are ongoing to secure his arrest and extradition.

The dedication, expertise, and persistence demonstrated throughout this investigation were instrumental in solving a high-profile case. This successful effort not only brought those responsible to justice but also reinforced public confidence in the Riverside Police Department's unwavering commitment to safety and justice.

In recognition of their outstanding investigative work, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee proudly honors Detective Nic Cantino, Sergeant Corbin Clinedinst, and Crime Analyst Frederick Lee with the Investigative Excellence Award.

## Riverside County Probation Department



Officer Cindy Gil

Deputy Probation Officer Cindy Gil serves on the Central Post-Release Accountability and Compliance Team (PACT), a multi-agency task force dedicated to monitoring highrisk offenders in Riverside County under the AB109 Realignment Act.

Over the past year, Officer Gil's team averaged 185 probation searches per month, with her playing a key role

in pre-operational planning. She meticulously reviewed and verified intelligence packets prepared by her colleagues, contributing to thousands of compliance checks. Her efforts led to the confiscation of drugs, weapons, identity theft materials, and other contraband, with multiple offenders returned to custody.

Beyond her daily duties, Officer Gil played a pivotal role in three large-scale probation and parole sweeps in Perris, Hemet, and Banning, working alongside local, county, state, and federal agencies. Her expertise in identifying and vetting targets ensured the success of these operations. She was instrumental in verifying search conditions, confirming addresses, and issuing supervision holds. Additionally, she provided offenders with information on community resources for post-release support.

In October 2024, Officer Gil participated in a probation compliance check in San Jacinto, which led to the arrest of an individual in possession of significant quantities of narcotics and firearms. Through social media and law enforcement databases, she identified the suspect as having active felony warrants. After observing traffic violations, Officer Gil and her partner conducted a vehicle stop, uncovering Xanax, opioid pills, suspected fentanyl powder, and a firearm. A subsequent search warrant for the suspect's motel room led to the seizure of:

- Six pounds of methamphetamine
- Seven ounces of heroin
- 29 grams of fentanyl powder
- Hundreds of pills
- Two firearms
- Over \$6,000 in cash

Further investigation resulted in the discovery of additional drugs and firearms after the suspect agreed to cooperate.

During another probation compliance search in Lake Elsinore, Officer Gil's keen observational skills led to the discovery of seven firearms, ammunition, and magazines. Noticing security cameras and firearm-related stickers, she questioned the occupants about firearms, prompting a roommate to disclose their location. Her proactive approach resulted in additional charges and enhanced public safety.

In recognition of her diligence, investigative expertise, and unwavering commitment to public safety, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is proud to honor Deputy Probation Officer Cindy Gil with the Investigative Excellence Award.



### Lifetime Achievement

#### CATEGORY CRITERIA

Officer has completed a minimum sworn law enforcement service of 25 years, Officer has continuously displayed the highest level of professionalism, has continuously exceeded expectations, has had a sustained positive impact on his/her service community and has consistently performed his/her duties in a manner in harmony with the department's goals, mission, objectives and values, Officer has served as a peace officer in Riverside County for at least the last five years (e.g., a CHP officer completing his/her career in Riverside County).

## California Highway Patrol Temecula Office



Officer Edward Holloway (Ret.)

Officer Edward "Eddie" Holloway dedicated 25 years to the California Highway Patrol, demonstrating unparalleled skill, dedication, and commitment to public safety. He began his career at the Santa Fe Springs office in Los Angeles, but truly left his mark during his 16 years in Riverside, starting in 2001. There, he established himself as one of the department's top DUI enforcement officers, making over 100

arrests annually for 13 consecutive years—an almost unheard of achievement. In his last 11 years in Riverside, he led his office in DUI arrests and topped the entire state on three occasions. His most remarkable year was 2008, when he removed 214 impaired drivers from the road—an extraordinary feat.

Officer Holloway's success stemmed from his sharp observation skills, deep understanding of DUI indicators, and quick decision-making. Identifying impaired drivers among countless vehicles requires intense focus and an instinct for detecting dangerous behavior. His keen ability to recognize subtle signs of impairment, combined with strong interviewing skills, and expertise in field sobriety tests, helped him build solid cases. His unwavering commitment to DUI enforcement saved lives, and made the roads safer for the community.

Beyond his enforcement excellence, Officer Holloway faced life-threatening situations that highlighted his bravery and tactical skill. In 2015, during a traffic stop, he and his partner came under gunfire, but their swift response neutralized the threat and protected the public. In 2017, during a DUI stop, he encountered a suspect armed with an assault rifle. Prioritizing the safety of the suspect's child, he maintained composure and waited for

backup, demonstrating remarkable judgment under pressure.

When Officer Holloway transferred to the Temecula office in 2017, he continued his exceptional work, ultimately achieving an astonishing 2,375 DUI arrests over his career. His contributions to the CHP are immeasurable, embodying the essence of a top-tier law enforcement officer. His outstanding work ethic set a standard for the department, and his legacy will continue to inspire future generations of CHP officers dedicated to protecting their communities.

In recognition of his extraordinary achievements, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is proud to honor Officer Edward Holloway with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

#### **Corona Police Department**



Officer Robert Romans (Ret.)

Officer Robert Romans exemplifies dedication, innovation, and leadership in law enforcement. He began his career as a deputy with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department before joining the Corona Police Department in 2002. There, he solidified his legacy by earning a coveted position as a Motor Officer, serving with distinction until his retirement in 2024.

During his 16 years as a Motor Officer, Romans made a profound impact on traffic safety, leading the department with over 27,000 moving violation citations. His efforts saved countless lives and made the streets safer for the community. But his passion for traffic enforcement went beyond the numbers—he mentored new officers in the traffic unit, sharing his expertise and unwavering commitment to excellence.

Beyond enforcement, Officer Romans played a pivotal role in modernizing the Department's operations. Partnering with software companies, he helped transition collision and citation reporting into the digital era, trained the entire department on these new systems, and collaborated with vendors to ensure continuous improvements. His push for innovation enhanced efficiency and set the foundation for improved policing.

In addition to his regular duties, Romans contributed to specialized teams, including Major Collision Response, Critical Incident Response, and the Unmanned Aerial Systems Team. A drone enthusiast, he became an expert in their use for law

enforcement, helping introduce them as first responders, and expanding their role in public safety.

His influence extended beyond the Department, as he served as a trusted advisor on traffic engineering projects, special event logistics, and road detours. He represented the department at numerous community events, earning widespread respect, and admiration. Additionally, as a Motor Officer, he participated in funeral processions, honoring fallen colleagues with duty and compassion.

A true master of his craft, Officer Romans was both a leader and a mentor, leaving a lasting impact on the Corona Police Department. His extensive knowledge, and willingness to share his expertise shaped the careers of countless officers.

For his unwavering commitment to service, leadership, and public safety, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is proud to honor Retired Officer Robert Romans with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

#### **Beaumont Police Department**



Captain Greg Fagan (Ret.)

Captain Greg Fagan's journey in law enforcement began in 1992 with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, where he embraced both the challenges and rewards of the profession. In 1996, he joined the Beaumont Police Department, dedicating the next 28 years to serving with honor, integrity, and unwavering commitment, before retiring in 2024.

Throughout his career, Captain Fagan held various key positions, including Detective, Field Training Officer, and Instructor in defensive tactics, taser, and baton. His passion for training and mentoring became a defining aspect of his service, shaping the next generation of officers.

His leadership qualities emerged early, leading to his promotion to Sergeant. In this role, he supervised patrol operations, served as the Administrative Sergeant, and took on the critical responsibility of Training Coordinator. As he advanced through the ranks, his influence expanded across the organization, ultimately overseeing all divisions of the Department with great success.

One of Captain Fagan's most significant contributions was

spearheading the modernization of the Department's communications system. He coordinated a multi-million-dollar upgrade, introducing advanced technologies such as Flock cameras, which played a crucial role in crime prevention and resolution.

Committed to continuous growth, Captain Fagan attended the LAPD Leadership Course and graduated from Session 260 with the prestigious FBI National Academy. His leadership extended beyond the Department holding the position of Past President of the Beaumont Cherry Valley Rotary Club serving as a board member on the Riverside County Law Enforcement Administrator's Association. He has served on this Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee (LEAC) for over a decade, and was the Chairperson in 2017.

Captain Fagan's legacy is one of dedication, leadership, and community engagement. The relationships he built with colleagues and the community reflect his exceptional character. His vision and commitment have been instrumental in the Department's growth and evolution, leaving an indelible mark on law enforcement in Beaumont.

In recognition of his distinguished career, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee proudly presents the Lifetime Achievement Award to retired Captain Greg Fagan.for embodying the spirit of selflessness and dedication to duty.

#### **Riverside Police Department**



Lieutenant Brian Dodson (Ret.)

Retired Lieutenant Brian Dodson began his law enforcement career with the Riverside Police Department in April 1993, serving in patrol across the city, and as a Field Training Officer. In 1997, he became an officer with the East Neighborhood Policing Center's Problem-Oriented Policing Unit and later took on roles in Crime-Free Multi-Housing and Central Neighborhood Problem-Oriented Policing.

In 2000, Lieutenant Dodson was awarded the Medal of Valor—RPD's highest honor—for disarming a parolee who attempted to shoot his partner. This act of bravery also earned him recognition from the California Peace Officers' Association.

Promoted to Detective in 2001, Dodson served in the Special Investigations Bureau, with assignments in Narcotics, Abatement,

### Lifetime Achievement, continued

the Inland Crackdown Allied Task Force, Field Operations, and Crimes Against Persons. After his promotion to Sergeant in 2010, he worked in patrol, the University Neighborhood Enhancement Team, and Centralized Investigations, specializing in Domestic Violence cases. In 2017, he was promoted to Lieutenant, serving as Watch Commander, in Centralized Investigations, and as the East Neighborhood Policing Area Commander.

Lieutenant Dodson also played a key role in coordinating the Department's Chaplain program , and supporting religious outreach initiatives. His commitment to service extended beyond law enforcement—he remains actively involved with Cops Out Preaching Salvation, a non-profit organization of retired and active law enforcement personnel dedicated to mentoring, sharing faith, and offering hope to incarcerated individuals in prisons, jails, and detention centers.

After an esteemed career spanning nearly 31 years, Lieutenant Dodson retired with honor in February 2024. His unwavering commitment to service, both in uniform and beyond, has left a profound and lasting impact on the community.

In recognition of his exceptional dedication, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is proud to present Lieutenant

#### Murrieta Police Department



Chief Anthony "Tony" Conrad (Ret.)

Chief Anthony Conrad began his law enforcement career in 1995 with the San Diego Police Department, where he served for eight years as a Field Training Officer and a member of the Primary Response Team. In 2003, he joined the Murrieta Police Department, holding a variety of roles, including Officer, Detective, Patrol Sergeant, Special Enforcement Team Sergeant, Patrol Lieutenant, Investigations Lieutenant,

Administrative Lieutenant, SWAT Team Commander, and ultimately Operations Division Captain. In March 2021, he was promoted to Chief of Police.

As Chief, he implemented key programs and developed new units, including reviving the Youth Court Program and enhancing the Live 911 program to integrate body-worn cameras, unmanned aerial drones, and the Carbyne live video system. He also spearheaded a major dispatch partnership between Murrieta PD, Menifee PD, and Murrieta Fire and Rescue, expanding

emergency service coverage to approximately 230,000 residents.

Under his leadership, Murrieta PD became the first agency in the county to transition to the National Incident-Based Reporting System, earning certification in 2022. He also prioritized officer training by establishing an in-house training unit, and launching the Performa Labs app, which provided officers with 24/7 mobile training in de-escalation, use of force, and tactical operations. Additionally, recognizing the importance of officer well-being, he introduced more than 14 wellness programs, including the addition of a therapy dog named Simpson.

Beyond his Department, Chief Conrad served on multiple boards and committees. In 2022, he became the first Police Chief in the county appointed as Chairperson of the Public Safety Enterprise Communication System Project. He also served on the Board of Directors for the SAFE Family Justice Center and the Community Corrections Partnership Executive Committee, overseeing public safety task force funding related to Assembly Bill 109. As Chair of the Public Entity Risk Management Authority, he played a crucial role in overseeing Workers' Compensation and Risk Management initiatives.

Chief Conrad holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Management and a Master's degree in Organizational Leadership. He is a graduate of the Senior Management Institute for Police Executives in Boston, and earned the California Police Chiefs Association Executive Certificate.

In recognition of his distinguished career, and the profound impact he has had on the communities he served, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee proudly presents the Lifetime Achievement Award to Retired Police Chief Anthony Conrad.

## **Exceptional Lifesaving**

#### CATEGORY CRITERIA

This recognition involves one or more agency personnel distinguishing themselves by personally performing an exceptional act or acts that saved one or more human lives (not necessarily under conditions requiring bravery, or exposure to great personal risk), where the victim(s) survived the incident.

#### **Corona Police Department**



Officer David Sosa



Corporal Karla Sosa

In November 2024, Officer David Sosa and Corporal Karla Sosa of the Corona Police Department were on duty and taking their lunch break at a local taco shop in Corona when they noticed a nearby patron in clear distress, choking and unable to breathe. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, Officer David Sosa immediately sprang into action. With calm precision, he performed the Heimlich maneuver, successfully dislodging the obstruction and restoring the man's ability to breathe.

At the same time, Corporal Karla Sosa quickly secured emergency medical assistance and coordinated with the Corona Fire Department to ensure the individual received follow-up care. Their swift teamwork proved

critical in preventing what could have been a tragic outcome.

Thanks to Officer David Sosa's quick thinking, composure under pressure, and effective application of life-saving techniques — combined with Corporal Karla Sosa's decisive coordination and support — the man made a full recovery. He later expressed heartfelt gratitude for the team's immediate and compassionate response.

Officer David Sosa and Corporal Karla Sosa's professionalism, vigilance, and dedication to public safety exemplify the highest ideals of the law enforcement profession.

For their heroic actions, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is proud to present them with the prestigious Exceptional Lifesaving Award.

#### **Hemet Police Department**



Officer Dylan Detwiler



Officer Michael Joromat



Officer Colby Skaug



Officer
Jose Vera

Just after midnight in May 2024, the Hemet Police Department received a call reporting shots fired at a bar on Florida Avenue — with chilling news that someone was down. Within moments, Officers Dylan Detwiler, Jose Vera, Colby Skaug, and Michael Joromat arrived on scene, nearly simultaneously. What they encountered was grim: a man lying on the ground, bleeding profusely from multiple gunshot wounds.

Without hesitation, the officers sprang into action. They quickly assessed the victim's injuries and began administering lifesaving aid. A tourniquet was applied to slow the bleeding, and multiple chest seals were used to stabilize the most critical wounds. Working with urgency and precision, the team operated seamlessly, each officer playing a vital role in the fight to keep the man alive until paramedics from the Hemet Fire Department arrived and took over. The victim was rushed to the hospital, where doctors discovered he had sustained a staggering twelve gunshot wounds to various parts of his body.

Despite the overwhelming severity of his injuries, the victim survived. According to medical personnel, it was the swift, decisive, and coordinated efforts of the responding officers that saved his life. Without their skillful intervention and unwavering commitment, the outcome likely would have been fatal.

Their composure under pressure, flawless teamwork, and dedication to preserving life are a testament to their professionalism and courage — embodying the very essence of what it means to serve and protect. In recognition of their heroic and coordinated efforts, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is proud

## Exceptional Lifesaving, continued

to present Officers Dylan Detwiler, Jose Vera, Colby Skaug, and Michael Joromat with the Exceptional Lifesaving Award.

#### Menifee Police Department



Sergeant Matt Bloch

In the early hours of October 31, 2024, a frantic 911 call came from a woman in Menifee, reporting that her adult daughter was in active labor and that the baby's arrival was imminent. Menifee Police Department **Sergeant Matt Bloch** was less than a mile away when the call for assistance came through. Recognizing the urgency, Sergeant Bloch immediately responded.

As he was enroute, dispatch relayed a critical update: the baby had been born — but was not breathing. Moments later, Sergeant Bloch arrived at the residence and quickly made his way inside. There, he found the newborn in the arms of the grandmother, the umbilical cord still attached. At first, the baby appeared to be breathing, but then, without warning, turned pale and stopped breathing entirely.

Remaining calm amidst the panic, Sergeant Bloch relied on his training in infant CPR. He gently cradled the newborn, opened the airway, and began administering chest compressions with steady precision. He tapped the baby's leg while closely watching for signs of life. After a few tense seconds, the infant gasped for air, let out a cry, and began breathing on their own.

Sergeant Bloch swiftly wrapped the baby in a blanket to keep them warm until paramedics arrived. The sound of the baby's reassuring cries brought immense relief to the family and first responders — undeniable proof that the child's life had been saved.

Sergeant Bloch's calm demeanor, rapid response, and skilled application of life-saving techniques made all the difference. For his extraordinary actions, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is proud to present Menifee Police Department Sergeant Matt Bloch with the prestigious Exceptional Lifesaving Award.

#### **Riverside Police Department**



Officer Ransom De Castro

In September 2024, Riverside Police Officer Ransom De Castro responded to an emergency call no first responder ever wants to receive—a one-month-old infant was not breathing.

Racing to the scene, Officer De Castro arrived to find a desperate mother and an unresponsive baby. Without hesitation, he sprang into action.

Drawing on his training, he immediately began administering one-person CPR. Maintaining his composure, he communicated with the infant's mother to gather critical information. For three tense minutes, he worked tirelessly, ensuring every compression counted. Then, a flicker of hope—the infant began taking intermittent breaths.

When paramedics arrived, Officer De Castro seamlessly transitioned to assisting their lifesaving efforts. The baby showed further signs of improvement and was promptly transported to Riverside Community Hospital. There, the trauma team stabilized the infant, who regained full breathing function and displayed strong vital signs.

According to the treating physician, the infant was in stable condition and expected to make a full recovery. Later, the doctor confirmed what everyone on the scene had witnessed: Officer De Castro's swift, precise intervention saved the infant's life. His immediate, skillful application of CPR revived the child, preventing potential brain damage and averting what could have been a tragic outcome.

In this critical moment, Officer De Castro exemplified professionalism, composure, and an unwavering commitment to service. His quick thinking, steady hands, and calm communication under pressure made all the difference. This incident highlights both his exemplary service and the Riverside Police Department's dedication to their community's well-being.

For his heroic actions, Officer Ransom De Castro is proudly recognized by the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee with the Exceptional Lifesaving Award.

## Riverside County Sheriff's Office Jurupa Valley Station



Deputy Blake Oldenburg

In the early morning hours of April 8, 2024, Riverside County Sheriff's **Deputy Blake Oldenburg** responded to a frantic 911 call from a woman reporting that her husband was in the bathtub with severe lacerations to both wrists.

Within minutes, Deputy Oldenburg arrived at the scene and quickly made his way to the bathroom,

where he found the man bleeding heavily and slipping in and out of consciousness. Despite the urgency, the deputy remained calm, acting swiftly to stop the bleeding. With precision, he applied two tourniquets, his training taking over as he reassured the man that help was on the way and that he was going to be alright.

As paramedics arrived, Deputy Oldenburg guided them inside while also speaking with the man's family, offering support in their moment of crisis. Thanks to the deputy's quick response and steady presence, the man was stabilized and transported to Riverside Community Hospital for further care.

According to a trauma nurse at the hospital, Deputy Oldenburg's decisive actions saved the man's life. His composure, skill, and compassion in a life-threatening situation made a profound impact—not just for the man in need, but also for his family.

For his remarkable poise and unwavering empathy under extreme pressure, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is proud to honor Deputy Blake Oldenburg with the Exceptional Lifesaving Award.

#### Riverside County Sheriff's Office Lake Elsinore



Deputy Kyle Oyama

On January 12, 2024, Riverside County Sheriff's **Deputy Kyle Oyama** responded to a critical emergency—a 6-year-old child was unresponsive. Time was of the essence. Upon arrival, Deputy Oyama quickly assessed the situation and recognized the immediate need for CPR. Without hesitation, he began chest compressions and rescue breaths, working methodically to restore the child's breathing.

Performing CPR is physically and mentally demanding, but sustaining it for ten minutes—especially on a child—requires immense focus and perseverance. Despite the pressure of the moment, Deputy Oyama remained steady, ensuring continuous circulation and oxygen flow until emergency medical personnel arrived. His actions played a crucial role in keeping the young child alive.

Beyond his technical skill, what stood out was his ability to stay calm under stress, making quick, decisive choices in a life-threatening situation. His professionalism, endurance, and dedication made all the difference that day.

In addition to his lifesaving actions, Deputy Oyama demonstrated exceptional teamwork and communication. He coordinated effectively with EMS upon their arrival, ensuring a smooth transition of care. This collaboration further highlights his ability to perform under pressure and his commitment to achieving the best possible outcome for the child.

The child is alive today because of Deputy Oyama's immediate and decisive actions. His swift response and determination to perform CPR in a high-stress, high-stakes situation exemplify the highest standards of service and dedication.

In recognition of his heroic efforts, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is proud to honor Deputy Kyle Oyama with the Exceptional Lifesaving Award, a testament to his unwavering commitment to safeguarding lives.

## Exceptional Lifesaving, continued

#### Riverside County Sheriff's Office Perris Station



Deputy Brett Pendleton

On April 4, 2024, the Special Enforcement Team from the Riverside County Sheriff's Perris Station was conducting an undercover "John" operation at a local hotel. During the operation, **Deputy Brett Pendleton** attempted to detain a known human trafficker seated in a parked vehicle. As Deputy Pendleton approached, the suspect suddenly started the car, accelerating recklessly—nearly striking

the deputy—and crashed into his patrol car before speeding away.

Without hesitation, Deputy Pendleton pursued the fleeing vehicle down a muddy dirt road, made even more treacherous by recent rainstorms. The chase took a dramatic turn when the suspect lost control and plunged off a cliff into a fast-moving aqueduct.

What happened next was not just about law enforcement—it was about instinct and courage. As the suspect surrendered, a chilling sound cut through the chaos: a baby crying from inside the sinking vehicle.

Without hesitation, Deputy Pendleton jumped into the frigid, waist-deep water. Footage from his body-worn camera later revealed the dire reality—the car was rapidly filling with water, and the infant, still strapped into a car seat, was in imminent danger of drowning. Battling against the cold and the rising water, Deputy Pendleton freed the child and carried them to safety. Because of his quick thinking and fearless actions, a precious life was saved that day.

In recognition of his extraordinary bravery and unwavering dedication, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee proudly presents Deputy Brett Pendleton with the Exceptional Lifesaving Award.

## California Highway Patrol Riverside Division



Officer
Javier Torres

On an early December morning, a black Toyota Camry traveling west-bound on the 60 Freeway spun out of control after the driver reportedly fell asleep at the wheel. The vehicle veered into a concrete barrier along the south edge of the roadway. Moments after coming to a stop, smoke began to rise from the engine compartment, quickly followed by

California Highway Patrol **Officer Javier Torres** arrived on scene within minutes. Inside the vehicle, he found the driver lying unresponsive on the front passenger floorboard. As the fire intensified, Officer Torres tried to rouse the driver through the window but received no response. Without hesitation, he entered the burning vehicle from the driver's side, kneeling on the seat to reach the unconscious man. Wrapping his arms around the driver, Officer Torres pulled him back against his chest and dragged him out of the vehicle to safety — just as flames fully engulfed the engine compartment.

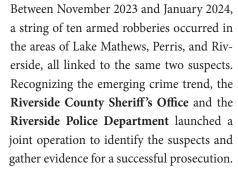
American Medical Response personnel quickly treated the rescued driver on-site before transporting him to Riverside University Health System Medical Center. He sustained lacerations to his hands and pain in his left leg but survived — thanks entirely to the swift and selfless actions of Officer Torres. There is no doubt that without Officer Torres' courage and urgency, the driver would have perished in the fire.

Officer Torres displayed extraordinary bravery and selflessness, far exceeding the call of duty. By risking his own life to save another, he set an inspiring example of true heroism. The Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is proud to present Officer Javier Torres with the prestigious Exceptional Lifesaving Award.

## Collaborative Investigative Recognition

## Riverside County Sheriff's Office Lake Matthews / Perris Riverside Police Department







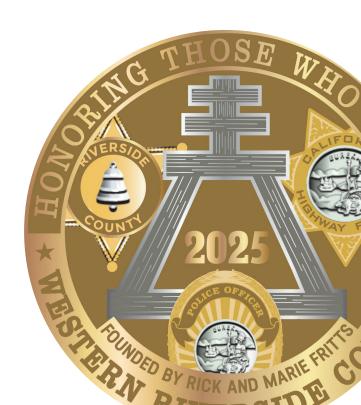
Through extensive follow-up investigations, interviews, and analysis of cell phone tower data, investigators developed crucial leads

that led to multiple undercover surveillance operations. These efforts ultimately identified the primary suspect, his residences, and the vehicles used in the robbery spree. Investigators obtained a GPS tracking warrant for the vehicle, and within days, the suspect used it in three more robberies. Convenience store surveillance footage confirmed the primary suspect's identity, as well as that of a second suspect and his vehicle.

On January 18, 2024, the Lake Mathews Sheriff's Station Special Enforcement Team, the Riverside Police Department Robbery Homicide Unit, and the Perris Station Robbery Burglary Suppression Team executed search warrants in Perris and Brea. The searches yielded significant evidence linking the suspects to the robberies. They were arrested without incident and confessed to the string of violent crimes. They were booked into the Robert Presley Detention Center on multiple felony charges, including armed robbery, conspiracy, and weapon-related offenses. As a result of the diligent work of law enforcement personnel, both suspects pled guilty and each received a 15-year prison sentence and 22 strikes.

The successful resolution of this case highlights the dedication and professionalism of the Riverside County Sheriff's Office and the Riverside Police Department. Through exceptional collaboration and investigative expertise, dangerous criminals were brought to justice.

The Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is honored to recognize the Riverside County Sheriff's Office and the Riverside Police Department with the Collaborative Investigation Recognition Award for their outstanding efforts in safeguarding the community.



## **Act of Valor**

#### CATEGORY CRITERIA

Recognize an officer for exceptional execution of responsibilities by distinguishing himself/herself with exceptional bravery or heroism beyond ordinary and usual expectations during 2024 in accordance with the agency's official standards for such an award.

### **Banning Police Department**



Officer Alec Halverson

On October 17, 2024, Officer Alec Halverson of the Banning Police Department responded to a call about a suspicious man peering into parked vehicles at a food market on San Gorgonio Avenue. The store clerk reported that he had confronted the individual, but the situation escalated alarmingly when the man brandished a box cutter-style knife.

Officer Halverson gathered essential details from witnesses and was informed that the suspect had been spotted walking away along West Lincoln Street. He located the individual and approached cautiously. Officer Halverson attempted to engage the man, who appeared visibly intoxicated, displaying erratic behavior characteristic of drug or alcohol impairment.

Officer Halverson gave clear instructions, directing the man to sit on the ground. As he radioed for backup and notified dispatch that he had the suspect at gunpoint, the situation took a sudden and dangerous turn. The suspect refused to comply. His behavior grew increasingly erratic before he suddenly charged at Officer Halverson, the knife raised high above his head in a stabbing grip.

With only seconds to react, Officer Halverson sought cover behind the open driver's door of his patrol vehicle. He issued repeated commands for the suspect to stop. Undeterred, the suspect continued his threatening advance, compelling Officer Halverson to discharge his duty weapon to neutralize the immediate threat. Tragically, the suspect succumbed to his injuries at the scene.

The Banning Police Department deeply regrets the loss of life and recognizes the profound tragedy of this incident. At the same time, the department acknowledges the extraordinary bravery and remarkable composure exhibited by Officer Halverson when faced with a life-threatening situation. His ability to remain calm and focused under immense pressure is a testa-

ment to his dedication and training. In recognition of his courage, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is honored to present Officer Alec Halverson with the Act of Valor Award.

### Riverside County Sheriff's Office Jurupa Valley Station



Deputy Luis Tapia

In law enforcement, bravery is not just a trait—it is a necessity. At times, it means confronting danger headon, risking one's own safety to protect others. Riverside County Sheriff's **Deputy Luis Tapia** embodies this courage and selflessness, particularly in a recent incident that underscores his exceptional dedication to serving and safeguarding the community.

On June 8, 2024, Deputy Tapia responded to a welfare call regarding a man covered in blood. Upon arrival, he encountered a distressed individual armed with a knife, expressing a desire to end his own life.

Despite the imminent danger, Deputy Tapia remained composed and professional, engaging the individual with empathy and understanding. He focused on de-escalation, striving to establish trust and prevent further harm. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, he applied a tourniquet to the individual's arm, which was rapidly losing blood, demonstrating both his training and his commitment to preserving life.

The situation escalated suddenly when the individual turned violent, aggressively advancing toward Deputy Tapia and nearby community members while armed with the knife. Facing an immediate threat, Deputy Tapia responded swiftly and decisively to subdue the attacker. Despite sustaining injuries himself, he continued to provide lifesaving medical aid.

Deputy Tapia's heroic actions not only saved a life, but also exemplified the highest ideals of law enforcement: integrity, courage, and compassion. His commitment to protecting and serving the community, even in the face of grave danger, is an inspiration and reaffirms the noble principles upon which law enforcement is founded.

In recognition of his extraordinary selfless devotion to duty, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is honored to present Deputy Luis Tapia with the Act of Valor Award.

#### **Hemet Police Department**



Sergeant Matthew Hiatt



Officer Michael Joromat



Officer
Colby Skaug



Officer Brad Willison

In the early morning hours of a day in June 2024, Hemet Police Department officers responded to a report of a woman breaking windows on West Acacia Avenue. The caller also reported that the woman was armed with a gun and had threatened to shoot responding officers.

Sergeant Mathew Hiatt was the first to arrive on scene and located the woman sitting on the curb near a market on South Sanderson Avenue. Sergeant Hiatt was quickly joined by Officer Brad Willison, Officer Colby Skaug, and Officer Michael Joromat. As they approached, the woman initially appeared cooperative. However, she suddenly began digging her hands into a backpack in front of her.

Recognizing the potential danger, all four officers swiftly closed the distance just as the woman produced a handgun and pointed it at Officer Joromat. A struggle for the firearm ensued, with each officer grabbing at the woman's hands and body in an effort to disarm her before she could fire. She resisted violently, attempting to maintain control of the weapon, but the officers ultimately overpowered her and secured the firearm.

The Hemet Police Department officers demonstrated exceptional composure and professionalism throughout the intense struggle. Their teamwork and clear communication were instrumental in preventing a potentially deadly outcome and ensuring the safety of everyone involved. Their bravery in confronting an armed suspect and placing themselves in harm's way exemplifies true heroism.

The Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee is honored to present the Act of Valor Award to Sergeant Mathew Hiatt and Officers Brad Willison, Colby Skaug, and Michael Joromat, in recognition of their extraordinary courage and dedication to duty.



#### LEAC HISTORY

In 1978, Rick and Marie Fritts, two very community-oriented Riverside residents and business owners, wanted to pay tribute to law enforcement officers throughout Western Riverside County for their on-going commitment to protect families,

homes, and neighborhoods.

As a result of their passion, dedication and appreciation for these everyday heroes, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee (LEAC) was born. Since then, LEAC, a California non-profit organization, has fulfilled Rick and Marie's wishes by bringing the community together at the Annual LEAC Awards Ceremony to honor officers for distinguished police work and outstanding service.

LEAC is comprised of officers from agencies throughout the County, public officials, business people, and community representatives who volunteer their time during the year to plan this annual event in order to recognize the fine men and women of public safety.

As Western Riverside County continues to grow, demands on local lawenforcement increase in intensity and complexity. More than ever, it is critical that we, as a community, take a proactive stance to show our support for those who safeguard our families, streets, neighborhoods, and businesses.

Each year, LEAC recognizes officers for exemplary service in the following categories: Valor, Investigative Excellence, Excellence in Community Service, Lifetime Achievement, Law Enforcement Collaboration Recognition, Collaborative Investigation Recognition, and Spotlight Exceptional Lifesaving Recognition.

The Rick and Marie Fritts Founders' Award recognizes an individual or couple who has made an exceptional and/or extraordinary positive impact on the quality of life in his/her community through sustained support and/or partnership with local and/or regional law enforcement.

In addition to these individual officer awards, the Distinguished K9 Team award is presented to a canine team for a particularly outstanding job on a case or for long term high level of performance.

As with any event, sponsorships are critical. They provide financial support to produce the event, and an opportunity for businesses to publicly support and thank law enforcement officers for their bravery and commitment to the public. LEAC welcomes sponsorship support and donations and we encourage you to do your part. Please contact LEAC for more information on how to become a part of this important historical community event.

#### PAST LEAC CHAIRS

## Thank you for your service to LEAC and our communities.

1980	Sam Digati
1982	Herb Ober
1985	Andy Balogh
1987	Dick Baird
1992	Dave Pekarek
1994	Russ O'Buch
1996	Jim Guthrie
1997	Jim Guthrie
1998	John Sabatello
2000	Bill Chamberlain
2001	Rick Higgins
2002	Ruben Ayala
2003	Phil Rizzo
2004	Rod Pacheco
2005	Maureen Kane
2006	Brian Pearcy
2007	Cliff Dochterman
2008	Stanley Sniff
2009	Sara Danville
2010	Mike Lane
2011	Phil Holder
2012	Michael Abel
2013	Ken Nelson
2014	Nola Tainter
2015	Joe Cleary
2016	Marie Moreno Myers
2017	Greg Fagan
2018	Maura Kane McAuliffe
2019	Larry Gonzalez
2020/21	Maureen Kane
2022	Ruben Ayala
2023	Dennis Vrooman
2024	Ryan Railsback

## **FALLEN OFFICERS**

		1			
1895	F. Hamilton	Riverside County Sheriff's Office	1989	R. Lutz	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
1907	P. Swanguen	Temecula Constable	1993	K. Hintergardt	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
1912	J. Baird	Riverside Police Dept.	1993	G. Cavender	Riverside Police Dept.
1913	G. Alexander	Corona Police Dept.	1994	M. Kemp	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
1916	L. Tripp	Riverside County Sheriff's Office	1996	A. Valencia	U.S. Border Patrol
1917	D. MacIntyre	Riverside Police Dept.	1997	M. Haugen	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
1921	H. Nelson	Riverside County Sheriff's Office	1997	J. Lehmann, Jr.	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
1921	T. Crossley	Riverside County Sheriff's Office	1997	S. Martinez	California Highway Patrol
1925	T. Gardner	U.S. Border Patrol	1997	D. Muehlhausen	California Highway Patrol
1938	C. Burtner	Riverside Police Dept.	1998	P. Claire Connely	Riverside Police Dept.
1940	E. Bertino	Riverside Police Dept.	1999	E. Thach	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
1944	A. Simpson	Riverside Police Dept.	2001	D. Jacobs, III	Riverside Police Dept.
1947	A. Oneto	U.S. Border Patrol	2003	B. Jenkins	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
1954	F. Epperson	California Highway Patrol	2003	B. Lee	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
1956	H. Scheffler	Riverside County Sheriff's Office	2003	S. Distel	California Highway Patrol
1956	R. Geiger	California Highway Patrol	2007	M. Villegas	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
1961	G. Eldridge	Palm Springs Police Dept.	2007	R. Goldstein	U.S. Border Patrol
1961	R. Strong	Riverside County Sheriff's Office	2008	A. Garcia	Union Pacific Railroad Police Dept.
1962	L. Larrabee	Palm Springs Police Dept.	2009	N. Afolayan	U.S. Border Patrol
1967	T. Newton, Jr.	U.S. Border Patrol	2009	T. McLaughlin	U.S. Border Patrol
1967	G. Azrak	U.S. Border Patrol	2010	R. Bonamino	Riverside Police Dept.
1969	W. Rutledge	Riverside County Sheriff's Office	2011	J. Gibson	Cathedral City Police Dept.
1969	W. Carter	Riverside County Sheriff's Office	2013	M. Crain	Riverside Police Dept.
1969	A. Shewmaker	California Highway Patrol	2013	G. Cortez	Department of Corrections, Norco
1971	L. Christiansen	Riverside Police Dept.	2016	J. Vega	Palm Springs Police Dept.
1971	P. Teel	Riverside Police Dept.	2016	L. Zerebny	Palm Springs Police Dept.
1971	R. Morello	Calif. Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement	2019	S. Licon	California Highway Patrol
1973	W. Prettyman	Riverside Police Dept.	2019	A. Moye, Jr.	California Highway Patrol
1974	E. Schrader	Riverside County Sheriff's Office	2020	T. Young	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
1974	L. Walters	Riverside Police Dept.	2020	H. Cohen	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
1977	E. Parker, III	California Highway Patrol	2020	J. Beltran	Riverside County Probation Dept.
1980	J. Evans, Sr.	Riverside County Sheriff's Office	2021	A. Flores-Banuelos	U.S. Border Patrol
1980	D. Leonardson	Riverside County Sheriff's Office	2021	R. Santana	Riverside County Probation Dept.
1982	D. Doty	Riverside Police Dept.	2022	S. Taylor	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
1982	P. Trust	Riverside Police Dept.	2022	I. Cordero	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
1987	M. Brandt	California Highway Patrol	2023	D. Calhoun	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
1987	M. Taylor	California Highway Patrol	2023	B. Harris	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
1988	M. Davis	Riverside County Sheriff's Office	2025	T. Corlew	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
1988	D. Vasquez	Cathedral City Police Dept.			

## A SPECIAL THANK YOU

#### - EXPLORER POSTS -

Representing the following agencies:

Beaumont Police Department Post #1015

Corona Police Department Post #404

Hemet Police Department Post #910

Menifee Police Department Post #720

Riverside County Sheriff's Office Moreno Valley Station Post #882

Riverside Police Department Post #714

Val Verde Unified School District Post #975

#### - HONOR GUARD -

Representing the following agencies:

Corona Police Department

Hemet Police Department

Menifee Police Department

Murrieta Police Department

Riverside Police Department

Riverside County Sheriff's Office

### - ADDITIONAL THANK YOU TO -

Riverside County Sheriff's Office Media Information Bureau

Deputy Daniel Garcia, Riverside County Sheriff's Office

National Anthem Singer Detective Lyndon Peats, Beaumont Police Department

Invocation given by Chaplain Anneti Bullock, Riverside Police Department

Michael Thomas Photography

University of California, Riverside Pipe and Drums Riverside Convention Center

## LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION COMMITTEE (LEAC)

A California non-profit organization. Tax ID #33-0578595.

Tax deductible as allowed by law.

Sponsorships enable us to invite all Honorees and their guest to attend the LEAC Recognition Ceremony as our guests.

In addition, two family representatives of Fallen Officers are also our guests.

P.O. Box 51597 • Riverside, CA 92517 • (714) 376-5969 www.LEACriverside.org



Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee (LEAC)