



***BROWARD COUNTY PBA
DAILY CLIPS***

May 26, 2017

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Hollywood Police Department says missing evidence a thing of the past

BYLINE: Susannah Bryan

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/fl-sb-hollywood-police-response-oig-report-20170525-story.html>

STORY: When Hollywood police failed to keep track of their evidence room — losing \$137,609 in cash and 1,096 pills — they got a sharp rebuke from a county watchdog agency for not catching the colossal error.

The missing evidence cost the police department its state accreditation two years ago. It also led to a scathing report earlier this year from the Broward Office of the Inspector General, accusing the agency of grossly mismanaging its property and evidence room.

On Thursday, Police Chief Tomas Sanchez said those problems are a thing of the past.

“We believe the practices we have in place will prevent any problems in the future,” Sanchez said. “We have so many internal audits now that we are very comfortable that this won’t happen again. We do it randomly and we use people from other divisions within the agency.”

The theft that got the department in hot water went on for years and was not discovered until 2012, the Inspector General’s report said.

Police supervisors became aware something was amiss in January that year, when a man arrested in 2007 contacted the department, seeking the return of \$743 that had been seized from him.

Vault logs confirmed the cash should have been there, but it was missing. That incident led to the discovery of more missing cash and oxycodone pills, sparking an investigation by Hollywood’s Internal Affairs division.

Sgt. John Nevins ran the property and evidence unit from 2006 through 2012. Nevins, now retired, was investigated but never charged. The Broward State Attorney’s Office declined to prosecute, citing insufficient evidence.

“Evidence required to prosecute the culprits was unavailable because the Hollywood Police Department had failed to institute security measures to document access, such as security cameras,” Inspector General John Scott wrote in a report released in February.

The agency has since installed security cameras, increased inventory checks, beefed up supervision and training for property clerks and officers.

This week, the chief sent a status report to the Inspector General’s Office detailing changes made at the department to prevent such a theft from happening again.

One key change involves the continued purging of items from the evidence room, Sanchez said. More than 1,220 items have been destroyed in recent weeks and another 3,440 items are in line to be destroyed.

“To err on the side of caution, previous administrations didn’t purge items,” Sanchez said. “Our property room should have had only 50,000 items and we had over 120,000 items. It made it that much difficult to find items and keep things under control. We should have been purging them under best practices to make it more manageable.”

Police officials also have been researching new scanning technology to accurately track, inventory and audit property and evidence.

Other changes include:

- Conducting two drug burns and scheduling a third one to get them off the streets;
- Taking 100 firearms to the Broward Sheriff’s Office for destruction — bringing the total number of firearms destroyed since the start of the Inspector General’s investigation to 502;
- And spending \$66,000 on upgraded storage, scanning and video surveillance functions.

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Broward Sheriff's Office K-9 mistaken for coyote and shot

BYLINE: Tonya Alanez

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/parkland/fl-sb-k9-killed-20170525-story.html>

STORY: Pedro the police dog met an untimely off-duty death when he was mistaken for a coyote, shot and killed.

Pedro lived with Broward sheriff's Sgt. Ian Sklar in Parkland.

When Pedro startled neighbor Frank Degati shortly before 11 p.m. on May 14, Degati yelled out.

"The dog jumped onto Frank with its front paws," an investigation report said. "Frank was pushed back and began to yell for help."

Frank Degati's son, John, grabbed his Sig Sauer 9-mm gun and fired 10 rounds at what he thought was a coyote, the report said

Pedro died at the scene.

"John stated he felt bad that he shot the dog," the report said. The weapon was legally owned.

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Trooper shortage at Florida Highway Patrol

BYLINE: Associated Press

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/parkland/fl-sb-k9-killed-20170525-story.html>

STORY: The number of speeding tickets issued by the Florida Highway Patrol has dropped for three straight years as the agency deals with a shortage of troopers.

Col. Gene Spaulding tells the Miami Herald the agency has lost 993 troopers — or about half of its workforce — to retirement or resignation since 2010.

Spaulding says the agency does what it can to provide public safety, patrolling areas that include Interstates 4, 75 and 95 in the nation's third most populated state that also doubles as a tourist destination.

The Herald cites low pay as a possible reason for high turnover.

A starting trooper in Florida makes about \$34,000, the same wage that's been in effect since 2005. In Mississippi, starting pay for a trooper is \$38,000 and \$47,000 in Louisiana.

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Fatal police shooting in Sunrise goes to grand jury

BYLINE: Susannah Bryan

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/sunrise/fl-cop-fatal-shooting-sunrise-grand-jury-20170525-story.html>

STORY: A grand jury is expected to decide within the next several days whether a Sunrise police officer was justified in fatally shooting a mentally ill man more than two years ago, court records show.

A federal lawsuit filed by the family of Marlon Woodstock says he never posed a threat but was hit several times with a stun gun, attacked by a police dog and then shot twice while he was on the ground.

According to the lawsuit, Woodstock was verbally unresponsive when he was shot by K-9 Officer Gregory Loor, then a 14-year veteran with the department. The lawsuit seeks more than \$75,000 in damages.

“We are still trying to gather as much info as we can, regardless of how the grand jury rules,” said Christopher Brown, an attorney for the family.

Woodstock’s life ended in a Walgreens parking lot on Sept. 30, 2014, after he refused to drop a knife and continued to resist officers, police reports say.

Sunrise officers had responded to a 911 call from Woodstock’s older brother that morning. He warned police that his brother was mentally ill, off his medication and needed to be taken to a hospital for evaluation under the state’s Baker Act, according to police reports.

Woodstock was schizophrenic and had been Baker Acted several times since 1999, his brother told police. Woodstock had just flattened the tires on his cousin’s truck with a knife and was heading on foot to a gas station at the corner of University Drive and Sunset Strip. His brother told police he was following behind him in a black Volvo until police could get there.

When police caught up with Woodstock at the gas station, he ignored orders to stop and ran across the street to a Walgreens parking lot, police reports say.

Woodstock held onto his knife even after being hit several times with stun guns and attacked by Loor’s police dog, according to police reports.

At one point, Woodstock held his knife to the dog’s neck and hooked his right arm around Loor’s leg. Loor pulled out his gun, ordered Woodstock to drop the knife and fired when Woodstock failed to comply. With Woodstock still clutching the knife, Loor fired a second time.

Officers on scene said Woodstock continued to resist even after being shot twice. After officers pulled the knife away, they handcuffed Woodstock and placed shackles around his ankles because he continued to kick and resist, police reports say.

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Coconut Creek, victim's family settle police Taser case

BYLINE: Lisa J. Huriash and Paula McMahon

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/coconut-creek/fl-sb-calvon-reid-settlement-20170525-story.html>

STORY: The city of Coconut Creek and the family of a man who died after being shocked with police Tasers have reached an undisclosed settlement, records show.

The case of Calvon “Andre” Reid, who was unarmed and asking for medical help the night he was stunned 10 times by three police officers, was scheduled to go to trial in federal court in December.

Police Chief Butch Arenal said the settlement was dictated by the insurance company because it would be cheaper than going to trial. “There is no admission of wrongdoing in this settlement,” he said.

Neither side revealed the amount of the settlement, saying it won’t be finalized until next week.

But for Reid’s parents, it’s a way around state law that requires the Legislature to approve jury awards greater than \$200,000.

The family’s lawyer, Jack Scarola, would only say “we are very pleased with the outcome of this case. This was a case of a death that never should have happened.”

The sovereign immunity law that protects government, he said, is a “difficult, political process having little to do with the [justness] of the cause. It’s a process that can take many years.”

Scarola and Reid’s mother Mamie said the money would be set aside for Calvon Reid’s two sons, one of whom graduates from high school next week. It will “help to do honor to the memory of their father,” Scarola said.

“I know what the policemen did was wrong,” said Mamie Reid. “We all know that. I try to assure Andre’s children that he will get justice. God will not allow his death to go unpunished.”

On the night of his death, Reid had asked a Wynmoor Village resident for a ride to the hospital; the man called an ambulance instead.

Paramedics said he was so agitated they called police.

Coconut Creek police arrived at the gated Wynmoor Village about 1 a.m. Feb. 22, 2015.

Because Reid had blood on him, they didn't know if he had committed a crime, and didn't want to leave based on his condition and appearance, officers told investigators.

Three officers fired the stun guns over the span of 10 minutes, with the first Taser deployed at 1:18 a.m., and the second one within a minute, records show.

But Reid fought back and a second officer fired his Taser, hitting Reid in the armpit near his rib cage, and then pulled the trigger again 14 seconds later, according to the records.

Reid died two days later. The Broward County Medical Examiner ruled Reid's death was the result of "complications of an electro-muscular disruptive device," or police's use of a stun gun on him.

A grand jury decided not to criminally charge the officers after testing showed the drug flakka in his system. Still, the agency suffered fallout after the incident — the police chief was forced to retire.

Reid's family filed a lawsuit in September 2015 against Coconut Creek, the three officers who fired Tasers and a fourth officer on site, alleging wrongful death and deprivation of Reid's civil rights.

They argue Reid was unarmed, had committed no crime, and that police officers Thomas Eisenring, Daniel Rush and David Freeman acted aggressively because Reid was black and Wynmoor is a primarily white community.

The lawsuit also faulted the agency for officers deploying Tasers when their certifications to use them had expired — and then trying to catch up on the paperwork after the fact. The incident, the suit alleged, "reflects a police department run amok."

The insurance company's cost analysis showed the settlement would cost less than defending the case, Police Chief Arenal said on Thursday afternoon.

"There are times the circumstances of the case aren't the issue," he said.

Mamie Reid said the resolution of the case doesn't truly resolve what matters — her ache for her only son.

"We've been on this road for two years," she said. "We're just so tired and so drained out. It's still rough on us every day. I've gotten to the point where I don't cry every day but I think about him every day. I miss him so much. But we have to try to go on. After fighting for so long you get tired."

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Broward property values soar to highest level

BYLINE: Larry Barszewski

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/fl-sb-broward-tax-roll-values-2017-story.html>

STORY: Broward County's property values continued their robust growth this year and are now at their highest level ever, topping the previous record set 10 years ago before the Great Recession collapsed the real estate market.

The county's taxable value dropped 29 percent between 2007 and 2011, but has now increased for the sixth straight year.

The taxable value is at \$177.3 billion, according to preliminary figures released Friday by Property Appraiser Marty Kiar.

Taxable values for existing properties increased 7.9 percent in the county from 2016. There is also \$2.3 billion in new construction being added to the tax rolls, bringing the overall increase to 9.3 percent.

"The real estate market is really moving in the right direction," Kiar said.

Broward city-by-city 2017 property values

Last year, former Property Appraiser Lori Parrish predicted Broward's values would level out and the increases would not be as large in coming years. But the 2017 figures showed growth continuing to accelerate.

All Broward cities saw increases in their existing tax bases, from a 3.6 percent rise in Parkland to an 11.4 percent jump in West Park. North Lauderdale was second highest with a 10.1 percent increase.

The picture changes when new construction is added in, with Dania Beach and Hollywood having the largest increases in their taxable values — due in large part to FPL's new "clean energy" plant at Port Everglades that opened last year and is within the borders of both cities.

Dania Beach shows a 20.5 percent increase in its taxable value and Hollywood a 15.8 percent rise. Hollywood had \$942 million in new construction, of which \$795 million was directly related to the FPL plant, according to property appraiser figures. In Dania Beach, FPL's plant accounted for \$291 million of its \$345 million in new construction, the appraiser's office said.

Other cities that saw their values rise more than 10 percent, including new construction, are Margate, Sunrise, Tamarac and Wilton Manors.

Parkland had the smallest percentage increase in value of existing properties, but \$252 million in new construction boosted its overall taxable value 9.5 percent.

While the county has recovered all of the lost taxable value it had prior to the Great Recession, that doesn't mean individual properties have seen their values completely rebound. New construction, including renovations and additions, has played the biggest role in bringing the county back in the past decade, said Holly Cimino, finance director for the appraiser's office.

Of close to 540,000 single-family homes and condos in the county with no additions or remodelings during the past decade, only 8.5 percent of them have market values above their 2007 levels, Cimino said.

Property owners can look online, at www.bcpa.net, to see how their own home values fared this year. Homesteaded properties were limited to a maximum 2.1 percent increase this year because of state law, Kiar said.

The figures released Friday will be used by cities, the county and other local taxing districts to prepare their new budgets for the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1. Final values will be issued in July.

The higher values mean if cities charge the same tax rate as last year, they will still be assessing a tax increase because of rising values. The appraiser's office estimates county government will see an \$82 million tax increase if it does not lower its tax rate. Hollywood's expected increase is \$15.5 million if no changes are made to its tax rate, while Fort Lauderdale is looking at charging \$11.7 million more in taxes if its rate stays the same.

This story will be updated. Check back for more information.

MEDIA OUTLET: Broward Beat

HEADLINE: Broward Throws Millions At Outmoded Technologies

BYLINE: Buddy Nevins

LINK: <http://www.browardbeat.com/broward-throws-millions-at-outmoded-technologies/>

STORY: Sometimes it feels like Broward County is stuck in the last century, with politicians making expensive decisions based on yesterday's technology:

The Wave streetcar system for Fort Lauderdale is moving ahead without taking into account that people in downtown Fort Lauderdale might prefer rides from companies like Uber/Lyft.

County Commissioners handed \$10 million to Broward Sheriff Scott Israel for two new helicopters and ignored the trend towards dramatically cheaper law enforcement drones.

Broward Sheriff's Office wanted two new helicopters for medical and law enforcement. Based on the comments of BSO Col. James Polan to commissioners this week, there no doubt is a need.

But how big is the need?

Polan of BSO wanted two new helicopters. Commissioner Michael Udine wanted to give BSO one new helicopter and wait until next year for the second.

Udine questioned whether drones might be able to do some law enforcement tasks in the future.

Polan explained BSO's problem.

The BSO colonel said that out of four helicopters, one lies in pieces on the floor of a maintenance facility while a second one has exceeded its useful life.

Commissioners bought Polan's argument.

Polan got his two new helicopters. Only Udine and Barbara Sharief voted No.

Taxpayers got a \$10 million bill.

Yet everyone from Amazon to other law enforcement agencies to the military is exploring the use of drones.

Broward?

When Udine brought drones up at the meeting, there was no answer from BSO.

The one constant in government is the desire to grow and expand. I can guarantee that regardless of the new helicopters, BSO will be back to the County Commission in the future asking for drones.

If taxpayers are lucky, those drones won't be able to look down upon The Wave streetcar system in downtown Fort Lauderdale. Yet the planning for this old, outmoded idea chugs on.

At a cost of \$100s millions in construction and open-ended operating costs, the Wave was planned before the Uber/Lyft explosion in ride-sharing.

It was proposed when self-driving vehicles did not exist outside of science fiction. Today companies are pouring billions of dollars into this technology.

The future has overtaken The Wave. It will never compete successfully with ride-sharing, which has virtually no cost for taxpayers?

The Wave's own plans call for between 10 and 15 minutes between streetcars. How many well-heeled in downtown Fort Lauderdale will wait 10-15 minutes in the broiling sun and intermittent rain for a streetcar when they can get a Uber/Lyft in minutes to take them door-to-door?

The financial predictions are widely off if Uber/Lyft bleeds 25 percent of the ridership. The shortfall would probably be a lot more!

Ride sharing has another benefit. Unlike The Wave, Uber/Lyft doesn't take existing traffic lanes away from vehicles.

Fortunately an increasing numbers of Fort Lauderdale residents know The Wave is being built for only one reason: To enrich the development industry.

The tiny, looping system downtown made no sense 10 years ago. It makes no sense today as the future overtakes the 150-year-old streetcar technology.

MEDIA OUTLET: Miami Herald

HEADLINE: Not enough troopers means FHP writes fewer tickets, handles fewer accidents

BYLINE: Jeremy Wallace

LINK: <http://www.browardbeat.com/broward-throws-millions-at-outmoded-technologies/>

STORY: TALLAHASSEE - The number of speeding tickets written by Florida state troopers has plunged three straight years as the agency grapples with a personnel shortage and high turnover.

While that might be good news for highway travelers who want to speed this holiday weekend, it's a concerning trend for the head of Florida's Highway Patrol.

Since 2010, the agency has lost 993 troopers to retirement or resignation, or about half of its current workforce of 1,946 troopers, said FHP Director Colonel Gene Spaulding.

"That's a big turnover," said Spaulding, a 24-year highway patrol veteran himself. "That's really tough."

Spaulding had 240 vacancies in the department this spring. Reinforcements aren't filling the void. The state's trooper academy typically has 80 recruits per class three times a year. Spaulding said the current class doesn't even have half of that.

"This is crisis," said Sen. Jack Latvala, R-Clearwater, who for the last two years has been advocating for across-the-board pay raises for all state government workers.

While Spaulding said the agency is doing what it can to provide public safety, he acknowledged response times are getting longer.

Meanwhile, the workload is increasing. In 2011, the state reported 229,000 crashes. In 2016, that was up to 395,000. Local governments are stuck picking up the slack, said Sarasota Sheriff Tom Knight, who spent 20 years working for the FHP.

In 2008, his sheriff's department worked 38 percent of crashes in Sarasota County. Now? It's up to 71 percent.

"It's not the fault of the highway patrol," Knight said. "It's the Legislature not stepping up to take care of FHP."

Less troopers, more drivers

State data shows troopers are not writing violations for speeding or other infractions like they did back in 2011 either, even though there's 1 million more licensed drivers in Florida.

State troopers wrote about 317,000 tickets for speeding in 2011, according to the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles records. That dropped by 18 percent to 258,000 in 2016.

It's not just speeding tickets. All traffic citations written by FHP have dropped from 947,000 in 2011 to 742,000 in 2016.

A possible culprit for trooper turnover is low pay.

It's been three years since the last pay raise for most of state law enforcement. The Florida Legislature has passed an \$82.4 billion budget this year that includes a 5 percent increase for troopers and other state law enforcement. But even with the raise, Florida's salaries for troopers will remain well behind other states, even in the South where troopers in places like Alabama and Mississippi earn higher starting wages.

A starting trooper in Florida now makes \$33,977 — the same rate that has been in effect since 2005. In Mississippi the starting wage is \$38,000 for troopers. In Alabama and Louisiana it's \$39,000 and \$47,000. Texas troopers start at over \$73,000.

But it is not just other states pulling Florida troopers away. Local sheriffs and police departments are also luring troopers with higher pay.

"We are losing very qualified and well trained troopers to local municipalities," said Terri Rhodes, Director of the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, which includes FHP.

In counties like Orange, Hillsborough, and Broward, law enforcement wages start at over \$40,000 a year. And in Miami-Dade, the pay is over \$50,000. And in each of those counties, the attrition rate is about half of the 11 percent rate that state law enforcement is facing, according to the Florida Police Benevolent Association.

Knight said FHP's attrition rates are part of his pitch for pay raises. He said he tells Sarasota commissioners it costs more to recruit and train new deputies than it does to provide raises so his department doesn't lose valuable experience like the highway patrol.

"We don't want to become like that," Knight said.

Replacing troopers takes time. Once a trooper completes trooper academy it can take a year for them to be fully trained to be on the road, Spaulding said. And it's not until five years on the job when experience really starts to take hold, he said.

A raise but still far behind

"Everyone is grateful for that 5 percent," Matt Puckett, executive director of the Florida Police Benevolent Association, said of the Legislature's proposed raises.

But Florida will still offer less than most other southern states.

"We still have some issues to work on," said Puckett, who recommended in January that the state boost starting salaries by \$10,000 for all state law enforcement to reverse turnover rates.

One idea Puckett and Spaulding wanted this year was a career development path that would give troopers consistent pay raises as they hit benchmarks. It is one tool that Spaulding said could keep some troopers from leaving early.

They've won over State Rep. Clay Ingram, R-Pensacola, who is the chairman of a budget writing committee that includes the Florida Highway Patrol's budget. He said the 5 percent increase this year isn't enough.

"I would hope we are not done," Ingram said.

BY THE NUMBERS

Speeding tickets issued by FHP since 2011

2011: 317,000

2012: 297,000

2013: 321,000

2014: 353,000

2015: 310,000

2016: 258,000

Car crashes in Florida since 2011

2011: 229,000

2012: 283,000

2013: 317,000

2014: 344,000

2015: 374,000

2016: 395,000

Source: FHP

MEDIA OUTLET: CBS Miami (Channel 4)

HEADLINE: Police K-9 Killed In Parkland, Mistaken For Coyote

BYLINE: Joan Murray

LINK: <http://miami.cbslocal.com/2017/05/26/police-k-9-killed-parkland-mistaken-coyote/>

STORY: PARKLAND (CBSMiami) — A police dog, mistaken for a coyote, was shot and killed when it startled a man in Parkland.

The dog, named Pedro, lived with handler Sgt. Ian Sklar of the Broward Sheriff's Office, according to the Sun-Sentinel.

On May 14th, around 11 p.m., Pedro jumped onto neighbor Frank Degati and was pushed back. As he yelled for help, his son, John, grabbed a handgun and fired 10 times at what he thought was a coyote.

Pedro died at the scene. The newspaper said the men were remorseful about the dog's death.

MEDIA OUTLET: ABC Miami (Channel 10)

HEADLINE: Hollywood police work to correct mismanaging of Property and Evidence Unit

BYLINE: Amanda Batchelor

LINK: <https://www.local10.com/news/florida/hollywood/hollywood-police-work-to-correct-mismanaging-of-property-and-evidence-unit>

STORY: HOLLYWOOD, Fla. - The Hollywood Police Department is continuing to work on correcting its mismanagement of its Property and Evidence Unit, the Broward Office of the Inspector General reported Thursday in a news release.

The OIG reported in February that Hollywood police officials failed to institute protocols that are consistent with industry standards, which led to the theft of \$137,609 in cash and 1,096 pills from its evidence room.

The OIG found that there was a lack of control in limiting access to the evidence room and some evidence that was needed to prosecute some criminals was unavailable after the thefts.

The report said there were no security cameras in the room to capture images of the thieves.

According to the latest news release from the OIG, Hollywood Police Chief Tomas Sanchez provided the OIG with a status report that details the results of the police department's remedial actions, which include:

- The continued purging of items from the unit, including 1,224 items purged and another 3,440 items identified to be purged.

- Two drug burns and a third burn scheduled.

- The transport of an additional 100 firearms to the Broward Sheriff's Office to be destroyed.

- Adding two clerk positions to the PEU.

- Finalizing a manual which established guidelines for the PEU.

- Spending about \$66,000 for upgraded storage, scanning and video surveillance functions.

The OIG reported that the police department has also met with vendors to research technology that allows for scanning to accurately track inventory and audit property and evidence.

A PEU supervisor and clerk will also receive training provided by the Property and Evidence Association of Florida.