

February 27, 2015



FROM THE SHERIFF'S DESK...

Drug Task Force Update

On January 26, 2015, representatives from various governmental organizations throughout Delaware County met at the Executive Drug Task Force Meeting to discuss the state of the heroin problem in Delaware County. The good news is that we are cautiously optimistic that we are making progress due to our relentless efforts to arrest dealers. But we must also recognize that drug addiction is also a health issue, and arresting dealers does not solve the problem, because where there is a need, there is a supplier. For every supplier arrested, another person steps up to take his place. It's easy money.

So where should we emphasize our efforts you ask? Education - Treatment and Enforcement Heretofore drug strategy has been approached primarily as a law enforcement issue. Police have done their jobs. Record arrests, massive drug seizures and record incarceration attest to that. Yet more people are using drugs, overdose deaths have accelerated and jails are crowded. The situation has gotten so bad that emergency responders now must carry anecdotes to resuscitate those who have overdosed. When narcan becomes a standard issue in our first aid kits, we know we have a really bad problem.

It is important to note that not all drug users are "addicted" and most do not need treatment. Therefore millions of "users" conduct normal lifestyles. Some walk among us and contribute to our society. Although my statistics are not up-to-the-minute, those I have indicate that 87 million Americans have used illegal drugs, yet only 3.6 million are dependent on illegal drugs. This means that 1.6 percent of the total population, aged 12 and older, are dependent on illicit drugs. We need to help those who are addicted. We cannot arrest 87 million people. See more information concerning an antidote at: <http://stopoverdose.org/> Although this website focuses on the State of Washington, it allows one to type in their own zip code for resources nearest them and contains a lot of useful information.

It has been estimated that treatment is 10 times more cost effective than interdiction and that for every dollar invested in substance abuse treatment, taxpayers are saved \$7.46 in societal costs. This means, treat the addicts, cure their addiction and encourage them to live off the fruit of their own labor; not ours.

I have saved the best for last. Educating our youth is our best hope for conquering this societal problem. It worked during the anti-smoking campaigns. Fewer people take up smoking

today. We need to teach our youth to live healthy lifestyles and we need to dedicate resources to providing productive school-based programs that promote healthy hobbies, industrious use of free time and develop skills that last a lifetime. Maybe the parents who use drugs, will be more disinclined to do so, as well. We are never too old to pick up a few good habits from those around us.

The Sheriff's Office has been working with school administrators and is happy to announce that we have employed our first full-time School Resource Officer ("SRO") who will be on a rotating schedule with participating schools. The SRO will and interface with school administration personnel, students and parents on a regular basis. We appreciate the efforts of the Town Supervisors throughout Delaware County in funding this position. We are encouraged by the possibilities it implies.

We are also very appreciative of the communities' use of our Confidential Drug TIP Line as well as our Sheriff's Mobil App available at no charge for your I-Phone or Android device. The Delaware County Community, through their use of the App service, has made our Sheriff's App rank number 5 in New York State and number 9 in the country! It is truly moving what we can accomplish together with a diligent amount of teamwork. As always, our TIP line is available 24 hours a day at 1-888-914-9111.

Stay safe, stay clean and stay sober. We want to keep you all around! In the meantime, rest assured, my Office will continue to work tirelessly to make Delaware County a healthy and safe place for all our county residents.