



Florida Police Chiefs Association

Quality Law Enforcement for the Sunshine State

FLORIDA POLICE CHIEFS HONOR OFFICERS, AGENCIES FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The Florida Police Chiefs Association (FPCA) today announced that it has honored several law enforcement officers and agencies for outstanding service and acts of bravery. The officers and agencies received their awards last night during the FPCA’s 62nd Annual Installation and Awards Banquet, held in conjunction with the association’s Summer Training Conference. The FPCA presented a total of eight awards, including the Lee McGehee Police Officer of the Year Awards, the Rocky Pomerance Excellence in Policing Awards, the FPCA President’s Choice Award and the FPCA Director’s Choice Award.

“I am so honored to recognize these officers and police agencies for their hard work, their dedication to public safety and the commitment they have shown to their communities,” said Springfield Police Chief Philip Thorne, 2013-2014 President of the FPCA. “Our law enforcement in Florida is outstanding, and these honorees are truly exemplary.”

The FPCA established the Lee McGehee Police Officer of the Year Awards in 1998 to recognize police officers who have demonstrated exceptional achievement and shown a genuine commitment to their profession, their agency and the public they serve. The Rocky Pomerance Awards recognize excellence in policing and encourage the sharing of best practices and programs developed to address community problems, enhancing the agencies in the eyes of their respective communities. Both awards are bestowed to recipients from small, medium and large agencies.

For small agencies of 30 or fewer sworn officers, the Lee McGehee Police Officer of the Year Award was presented to **Officer Manuel Bello of the West Miami Police Department**. Officer Bello risked his life twice during a precarious shooting incident in July 2012 to remove both the weapon and the wounded suspect from harm’s way. The Rocky Pomerance Excellence in Policing Award was given to the **Port Canaveral Police Department**. Recognizing the Port Authority’s need for a heightened standard of security, the Port Canaveral Police Department grew to 30 sworn officers and 70 employees over the last five years, assuming oversight of all law enforcement and security operations within the port. The department embraces its role as a nontraditional law enforcement agency, specially trained to provide both maritime security and traditional law enforcement.

Detective William Powell of the Oviedo Police Department received the Lee McGehee Police Officer of the Year Award for medium-sized agencies, with 31-75 sworn officers. Detective Powell has performed exceptional work in the area of investigating cyber crimes against children, including one case that led to the arrest of a former military contractor. In this category, the **Venice Police Department** won the Rocky Pomerance Excellence in Policing Award, recognizing the department’s implementation of several programs that tailored its services to the city’s demographics. These programs, combined with a renewed mission statement, allowed the department to become a better service provider to its community.

For large agencies with more than 75 sworn officers, the Lee McGehee Police Officer of the Year Award was awarded to **Officer David Conticelli of the Fort Myers Police Department**. Last July, Officer Conticelli was able to positively identify a suspect, which led to that suspect’s arrest for robbery and kidnapping. Officer Conticelli also went above and beyond the call of duty by supplying a family in need with clothing and toiletries. This act of generosity garnered media attention that led to an overwhelming amount of support for the family from the community. The Rocky Pomerance Excellence in Policing Award went to the **Palm Beach Gardens Police Department** for their child safety campaign, Frog-et Me Not. This

self-funded program was developed to increase awareness about the danger of leaving children in hot cars. More information about the campaign is available on line at: <http://www.frogetmenot.org>.

Through the President's and Director's Choice Awards, the FPCA recognizes an individual for exceptional performance and/or his or her support or service to the President, the Association and the advancement of the law enforcement profession.

The 2014 President's Choice Award recipient was **Chief Albert "Butch" Arenal of the Punta Gorda Police Department**. Chief Arenal is an ardent supporter of law enforcement accreditation and serves as a Commissioner for the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, Inc. (CFA), the accrediting body for the state of Florida. He served as Commission Vice Chair in 2010 and Chair in 2011, and has also served as an assessor, team leader and instructor for the Commission for more than 10 years, assessing Florida law enforcement agencies for standards compliance.

"Florida's law enforcement accreditation process is a critical component to each agency's success, and I can't thank Chief Arenal enough for his commitment to the Commission," said Chief Thorne. "Chief Arenal is an excellent example of someone who truly cares about the level of expertise this job demands."

The 2014 Director's Choice Award was presented to **Chief Gary Hester of the Winter Haven Police Department**. A career law enforcement officer, Hester has a wide range of expertise, rising through the ranks of patrol deputy, canine handler, detective, sergeant, lieutenant, captain, major, colonel and Chief of Staff at the Polk County Sheriff's Office before his appointment to Chief of Police in 2010. His service to Florida's law enforcement professional is highly commendable.

"Over the course of his career, Chief Hester has repeatedly demonstrated his competency and his commitment to protect his community," said Amy Mercer, Executive Director of the FPCA. "The FPCA is proud to recognize him for his years of service."

The FPCA is the fourth largest state police chiefs association in the nation and is composed of more than 750 of the state's top law enforcement executives. FPCA serves municipal police departments, airport police, college and university police, private business and security firms, as well as federal, state and county law enforcement agencies. The FPCA has members representing every region of the state.

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