



the level of citizen protection

Elevating

The Department of Public Safety serves a vital role to the community, providing and coordinating lifesaving services. These include response to fires and hazardous materials incidents, special operations, emergency management and E 9-1-1 communications, disaster response and animal services. The Department's purpose, training and orientation are all focused on providing these essential services to the public around the clock.

Positively Ready

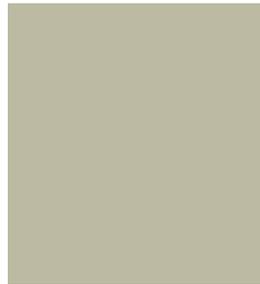
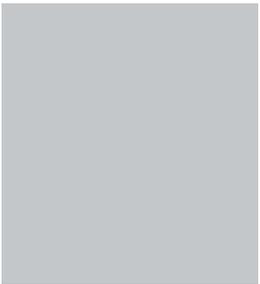
The Fire Rescue Division operates 14 staffed stations and seven volunteer stations to provide emergency response to medical calls, vehicle accidents, fires, hazardous materials and special operation rescues. During the past year, the Division experienced a 10 percent increase in call load equaling 14,371 incidents.

To provide greater accountability and faster command action, the Fire Rescue Division implemented a realignment of the management organizational structure without increasing staff in the spring of 2004. Vacancies in both field and staff positions were filled, and in the coming year additional training will increase the number of stations providing advanced life-support services.

Fire Rescue has adopted a "level of service standard" that provides an average five-minute urban response and an average 10-minute rural response, as well as a minimum staffing level of two firefighters per engine-company and three firefighters per ladder-company. In response to community needs, Station 52 on Highway 44 in Grand Island was re-opened as a staffed station in February 2004. The opening of this station has dramatically improved response times to the Grand Island and Lake Yale areas. Station 52 now houses a new 3,000-gallon water tanker, a fire engine, a brush truck and a Fire Rescue officer who supervises the surrounding area.

Property Protectors

The Code Enforcement Division has had a very active year responding to more than 2,800 individual complaints—300 of which were specifically related to protection of the environment. The Division actively resolves a multitude of issues ranging from unpermitted tree removal and storm water violations to construction in wetlands. This level of activity means that each officer received an average of 35 new cases each month which totaled more than 7,300 site visits last year.



The Animal Services Division handled 10,445 animals, helped citizens adopt or reclaim 1,633 animals and responded to 9,377 service requests last year.

A fundamental change to the enforcement process was made this year by replacing the Code Enforcement Board with the Special Master process. This change will ensure a factual, rule-based enforcement process.

Serving Needs

Since 2002, the Probation Division has continued its partnership with the Lake County Sheriff’s Office in enhancing offender supervision and accountability. Probation officers supervise probationers at a satellite location in the Sheriff’s Office, as well as the Clermont substation and the Tavares office. In September, the probation staff expanded its police-probation partnership by supervising probationers at a second satellite location at the Lady Lake Police Department.

The Animal Services Division provides for public safety and animal welfare, enforces Florida statutes and local ordinances, provides professional services to the public and promotes responsible livestock ownership. Two additional officers, a dispatcher position, and two shelter technician positions have been added to the staff, enabling shelter visitation hours to be extended to

6 p.m. Monday through Friday and until 4 p.m. on Saturday.

The Communications Systems Division completed an upgrade of the E 9-1-1 system in April 2004 to identify wireless call locations. The upgrade aids in the location of wireless phone callers during emergencies as it provides a call back number as well as a latitude and longitude of the wireless phone call.

Fighting Invaders

Changing environmental conditions over the past four years has stimulated hydrilla growth in Lake County water bodies. The Aquatic Plant Management Section has responded by increasing management efforts to suppress current growth and prevent further infestations. The Mosquito Management Section has recently augmented the mosquito larviciding program by incorporating the use of an all-terrain vehicle. Mosquito management personnel now have accessibility to those areas that may provide a suitable habitat for production of disease-carrying mosquitoes.