

Official Joint Statement from NAACP, CCSO, and PGPD

Posted: June 2, 2020

Charlotte County Sheriff Bill Prummell, Punta Gorda Police Chief Pam Davis, and President of the Charlotte County branch of the NAACP Reverend Louis Anderson, met recently to discuss our community's response to the situation that has developed nationwide as a result of the killing of George Floyd by a former Minneapolis police officer.

The group discussed agency policies and procedures, training, and accountability reviews pertaining to use of force, de-escalation, protests, and internal affairs. The protection of the constitutional rights and safety of peaceful protesters was also discussed.

All three agencies, which have been working closely together for many years as members of the Community Task Force, have renewed their commitment to communication and cooperation for the betterment and protection of our community.

"It is so important that we continue to keep those lines of communication open with our community leaders during this difficult time."

Chief Pam Davis, Punta Gorda Police Department

Chief Davis says, "Our partnership with Reverend Anderson and the NAACP has had a very positive impact on the police department's relationship with our community. It is so important that we continue to keep those lines of communication open with our community leaders during this difficult time."

It is important for the community to know that we hear you. We believe in your constitutional right to peacefully protest and we understand the pain our nation is feeling. Our goal is to keep the peace while your voices are being heard.

We live in a wonderful community with leaders who collaborate to discuss the concerns of our community members. Our job as law enforcement is to protect and serve all members of this great community.

"We are committed to protecting the constitutional rights of every community member and believe in the strength that our community has shown time and time again. Our hope is that we can come together as one and demonstrate what a unified community is capable of. Our strength is in our people," states Sheriff Bill Prummell.

"Our goal is to achieve the equality of right and eliminate race prejudice among all citizens of our community," says Reverend Anderson. "With this transparency between our law enforcement agencies, I am confident that we will have positive change moving forward. Let us continue to pray as we strive together to make a difference."

Statement from Chief Davis Regarding the Death of Mr. George Floyd

Posted: May 30, 2020

On behalf of the entire Punta Gorda Police Department, I want to let the community know that we are appalled over the actions of the officers involved in the death of Mr. George Floyd. I want to ensure all of our community members that the Punta Gorda Police Department does not train our officers to use any tactics that involve kneeling or applying pressure on the neck of an individual. Purposely using these tactics would be considered deadly force. Our department's organizational values; integrity, excellence, teamwork, fairness and impartiality, and respect are deeply entrenched within our agency at every level. We strongly believe in treating everyone as human beings. We value the sanctity of human life and we have incorporated de-escalation and the duty to intervene within our policies and training over the past few years. We will continue to hold ourselves accountable in the protection of the constitutional rights of everyone we serve and in treating everyone fairly.

Our hearts go out to the families and friends of Mr. Floyd. His death was senseless and wrong. Our profession has been tarnished once more because of the actions of these officers. I have spoken with our local NAACP President, Reverend Louis Anderson, and we will be meeting in person to further discuss

this situation. I ask that our community members continue to partner with us to maintain the highest level of trust and that we work together to make sure the needs of our community are being met.

Beware of Coronavirus Scams

Posted: March 26, 2020

Many scammers are taking advantage of concerned and frightened citizens during the coronavirus pandemic. It is important that everyone remain extra diligent to ensure that they do not fall victim to any of these scams. Here are some tips that will help you protect your money and your identity:

- Beware of emails claiming to offer information from Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or other health and medical sources. For the most up-to-date statewide and local information visit the Florida Department of Health at www.floridahealth.gov, for national information visit the CDC at www.cdc.gov, and for international information visit the World Health Organization at www.who.int.
- Do not respond to emails, phone calls, or text messages about stimulus checks from the government. These are only attempts to gain your personal information.
- Many scammers are selling fake vaccinations, medications, remedies, cures, and test kits for coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Don't fall for these

offers! At this time there are no FDA authorized home test kits for coronavirus. For more information visit www.fda.gov.

- Buy from reputable online sellers. Many online scammers are offering hard to find cleaning and sanitizing products or health and safety equipment such as masks and gloves. These items may be fake or you may pay and never receive your items at all. Make sure you know who you are buying from.
- Do your homework regarding charitable donations. Many scammers take advantage of people's generosity during times of crisis. If you want to help, donate to legitimate and established organizations and never make donations by sending cash, purchasing gift cards, or by wiring money.

If you believe you may have been the victim of a coronavirus scam, please call the Punta Gorda Police Department at 941-639-4111 or your local law enforcement agency.

Punta Gorda Police Department's Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Posted: March 24, 2020

Update: June 1, 2020

The Punta Gorda Police Department is taking action to minimize

the risk for both emergency personnel and the public as we deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. First responders make contact with many people through the day, respond to medical calls, and are at a much higher risk of infection than the general public. Not only is it important to minimize the risk to first responders in order to keep them available, but also to minimize the interactions they have with the public to avoid unintentional transmission to our most vulnerable population. Effective immediately the police department has enacted the following changes to our procedures:

- The public safety building lobby is open only for emergency situations or when other means of contact are not available. We ask that community members needing to make a non-emergency report call **941-639-4111** rather than coming to the police department. If possible, please call during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.) For emergencies, dial **9-1-1** anytime.
- Non-emergency reports that do not require an in-person officer response will be handled over the phone to eliminate unnecessary social contact.
- When an in-person officer response is necessary, officers will be asking that callers step outside to make the report whenever feasible. This will reduce the chances of transmitting illness. Officers will only enter residences and businesses when absolutely necessary.
- We will no longer be responding to certain public services such as VIN verifications. These can be completed by any licensed auto dealer, tax collector or FLHSMV employee, or notary public.
- We will no longer be responding to minor parking lot crashes. Florida allows most minor crashes to be self-reported either online or by mail. For more information and instructions, please visit

www.flhsmv.gov/traffic-crash-reports.

- The police department's records unit window will be closed. Records requests can be made online by visiting **www.pgpdrecords.com** or by mailing your records request to **PGPD Records Unit, 1410 Tamiami Trail, Punta Gorda, FL 33950**.



We appreciate all of the support we have received from the community and for everyone's cooperation and understanding

during this difficult time.

UPDATE: As of June 1, 2020 the Punta Gorda Police Department lobby is open to the public. However, we encourage anyone utilizing the lobby to wear a mask and practice social distancing whenever possible. We will still not be able to provide fingerprinting services due to CDC guidelines.

Operation Dry Streets



On March 13th through the 15th, the Florida Police Chiefs Association, the Florida Highway Patrol and the Florida Sheriffs Association, to include ...

Operation Dry Streets

Juveniles Arrested in Vehicle

Burglary Investigation

Posted: February 6, 2020

On the morning of January 28, 2020 police responded to multiple reports of burglaries to unlocked vehicles that occurred in the Burnt Store Meadows community. While investigating the burglaries detectives were contacted by the Fort Myers Police Department who had arrested two juveniles that morning, Schleidens Goudette and Jared Francioni of Punta Gorda, for Breach of Peace after a traffic stop on a suspicious vehicle. Fort Myers Police stated that multiple suspicious items were found in the vehicle including a backpack containing a wallet with credit cards belonging to an unknown person. Punta Gorda police detectives contacted the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office who were also investigating a vehicle burglary that occurred a short distance from Burnt Store Meadows.

Detectives were able to confirm that items located in the vehicle by the Fort Myers Police Department were items stolen from vehicles both in Burnt Store Meadows and in the burglary being investigated by the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office including backpacks, wallets, and a bottle of pills. In addition, detectives were able to match the clothing worn by the suspects in security camera footage to the clothing worn by Goudette and Francioni at the time of their arrest in Fort Myers.

"This is a great example of local law enforcement agencies working together for a quick and successful resolution. We are lucky to work in an area with agencies that are so

willing to cooperate and work together to better all of our communities.”

Punta Gorda Police Chief Pam Davis

On February 5, 2020 both Goudette and Francioni were located by the Charlotte County Sheriff’s Office and placed under arrest. The Punta Gorda Police Department has filed charges on both subjects for Burglary of an Unoccupied Vehicle and Petit Theft.

Punta Gorda Police Chief Pam Davis stated, “This is a great example of local law enforcement agencies working together for a quick and successful resolution. We are lucky to work in an area with agencies that are so willing to cooperate and work together to better all of our communities.”

Motorcyclist Dies in Traffic Crash

Posted: February 5, 2020

On February 4, 2020 at 7:34 p.m. officers responded to a traffic crash with injuries at the intersection of East Olympia Avenue and Cooper Street in Punta Gorda involving an SUV and a motorcycle.

The SUV made a right turn onto East Olympia Avenue from Cooper Street and began traveling east in the far right lane when a motorcycle traveling at a high rate of speed struck the back of the SUV.

The motorcyclist, Victoria Rose Eastman, 23 years old, was airlifted to Lee Memorial Hospital where she succumbed to her injuries. There were no other injuries reported. It is unknown at this time if alcohol or drugs contributed to the crash. The investigation is ongoing.

Punta Gorda Police and ABT Team Up for Underage Alcohol Sales Sweep

Posted: January 31, 2020

Punta Gorda Police Detectives and State Investigators from the Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco (ABT) Bureau of Law Enforcement teamed up on Wednesday, January 31, 2020 for an enforcement sweep in the City of Punta Gorda targeting the sales of alcoholic beverages to minors. The operation included compliance checks at eleven local commercial establishments in the City of Punta Gorda licensed to sell alcoholic beverages. Two of the establishments were closed, eight of the establishments open for business were found to be in compliance, and one establishment was out of compliance.



Florida ABT & Punta Gorda Police

The commercial establishments that were found to be in compliance and did **NOT** sell alcohol to a minor were:

- **Village Fish Market** (1200 West Retta Esplanade)
- **Carmelo's Italian Ristorante** (321 West Retta Esplanade)
- **Sandra's Restaurant** (111 West Olympia Avenue)
- **Dockside Grill at Four Points** (33 Tamiami Trail)
- **Phil's 41** (1975 Tamiami Trail)
- **88 Keys at Wyvern Hotel** (101 East Retta Esplanade)
- **Manatees Pizza** (408 Tamiami Trail)
- **Punta Gorda Diner** (3941 Tamiami Trail)

The commercial establishment that was found **NOT** to be in compliance and **DID** sell alcohol to a minor was:

- **Laishley Crab House** (150 Laishley Court)

This operation was the result of a continuing partnership between ABT and the Punta Gorda Police Department to curb the illegal sale of alcoholic beverages and tobacco to minors. The

Punta Gorda Police Department, along with Drug Free Charlotte County and ABT, will continue to work constructively with local retail establishments where violations occur to ensure that employees are educated regarding Florida law. Operations like this one will continue.

Chief Pam Davis urges all individuals to report the illegal sale of alcoholic beverages and tobacco to law enforcement. Violations within the incorporated city limits of Punta Gorda can be reported to the Punta Gorda Police Department by calling 941-639-4111.

First Responders Save Life at Charlotte High Soccer Game

Published: December 20, 2019

On December 12, 2019 Officer Chris Owensby, a School Resource Officer at Charlotte High School was working an extra-duty detail for a boys soccer game. Officer Terry Chow, a School Resource Officer at Punta Gorda Middle School, was attending the game off-duty. During the game the referee collapsed on the field. Both Officer Owensby and Officer Chow, along with a medical professional who had also been attending the game, called for the Fire Department and EMS to respond and rushed to the patient. While attending to the patient he stopped breathing and Officer Chow began administering CPR with

assistance from the medical professional. An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) was used and one shock was administered to the patient who began breathing, but remained unconscious. The Punta Gorda Fire Department and Charlotte County EMS responded and transported the patient to the hospital.



Officer Terry Chow & Officer Chris Owensby

The patient remains in stable condition and is expected to make a full recovery thanks to the quick actions of first responders.

Holiday Safety Tips

Posted: December 6, 2019

The holidays are a time for joy and giving, but unfortunately can create ideal circumstances for criminals. Shoppers rushing around stressing to find the perfect gifts, purchased left in vehicles, and people traveling or away from home for holiday events can fill criminals with holiday joy as well. In addition, holiday parties tend to lead to an increase of drinking and driving.

To help ensure that everyone has a safe and happy holiday season the Punta Gorda Police Department will be providing increased holiday patrols throughout the month of December. This will include increased police presence downtown and in our commercial shopping districts, as well as dedicated DUI patrols. Here are some of the things you can do to keep safe and avoid becoming a victim this holiday season:



When You Are Shopping:

- Stay alert and be aware of your surroundings;
- Park in well-lit areas making sure that gifts and valuables are out of sight and your vehicle doors are locked;
- If shopping with children make sure they have been taught to seek out a store clerk, security guard, or police officer should they become separated from you;
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash when shopping. Pay with credit cards or checks when possible.

When You Are Away From Home:

- Get an automatic timer for your lights;
- Have mail and newspaper delivery stopped while you will be away;
- Ask a neighbor to keep an eye out for unexpected packages, flyers, etc. Having items sitting outside your home for an extended period of time is a sure indicator to criminals that your home is vacant;
- Be very careful about what you post on social media and who can see it. Criminals have become very savvy using social media. Posting information or photos about your travel plans can inform criminals that your home is unoccupied.

When You Are Out for the Evening:

- Make sure that doors and windows are closed and locked;
- Leave lights and a TV turned on so it appears that someone is still home;
- Keep gifts and valuables where they cannot be seen through windows or make sure that window coverings are closed;

- If you may be drinking alcohol while you are out designate a sober driver, plan on calling a taxi, or utilize a ride share service. Never drive when you are intoxicated, even buzzed driving is drunk driving.



Other Safety Tips:

- The holidays are the ideal time for package thefts. Have packages delivered where someone will be able to receive them such as your workplace or a neighbor or family member's house. You can also ask the post office to hold your packages until you are able to pick them up yourself;
- After the gifts have been open avoid advertising the valuables inside your home by putting out packages for televisions, computers, or other expensive items. Instead break down boxes and packaging and put them in garbage bags or cans;
- Criminals often prey on people's generosity during the holiday season by soliciting for "charitable donations" either door-to-door, by phone, or online. Only do your holiday giving directly to legitimate charitable organizations that you know and trust.

We hope that everyone has a happy, healthy, and safe holiday

season!