

To: Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, Inc.
From: Michael M. Somberg, Team Leader
Date: April 20, 2008
Re: Full-Compliance On-Site Assessment Report
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Standards Manual Edition: 4.0

A. Dates of On-Site Assessment: April 9, 2008 through April 11, 2008

Key Agency Personnel:

Chief Executive Officer: Sheriff Susan Benton
 Accreditation Manager: Kim Ketchner
 Accreditation Team Member(s):

B. Assessment Team:

Team Leader: Michael M. Somberg (MMS)
 Title: Director
 Employer: Broward Sheriff's Office
 2601 West Broward Blvd
 Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33312
 Telephone: 954.831.8935
 E-Mail: michael_somberg@sheriff.org

Team Member: Debra Jacobs (DJ)
 Title: Police Officer
 Employer: Oviedo Police Department
 300 Alexandria Blvd
 Oviedo, FL 32765
 Telephone: 407.971.5746
 E-Mail: djacobs@cityofoviedo.net

Team Member: Sheila Rowden (SR)
 Title: Lieutenant
 Employer: Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation
 Commission
 1239 SW 10th St
 Ocala, FL 34471-2797
 Telephone: 352.732.1228 x 123
 E-Mail: sheila.rowden@myfwc.com

C. Standards Summary Tally:

CFA Compliance Tally

M = Mandatory
 N = Non-Mandatory

	Total Number of Standards	Number of Standards Not Applicable (By Function)	Number of Standards Waived	Number of Non- Waived, Applicable Standards	Number of Standards Elected for 20% Exemption	Percent of Applicable Standards Elected (20% max.)	Percent of Applicable Standards Not Elected (80% min.)	Number of Applicable Non-Elected Standards In Compliance	Percent of Applicable Non-Elected Standards In Compliance *
M:	153	5	0	148	0	0.00%	100.00%	148	100.00%
N:	106	6	0	100	1	1.00%	99.00%	99	100.00%

* Both "Mandatory" and "Non-Mandatory" in last column must be 100% for accreditation.

D. Agency Profile:

Highlands County is located in the south central part of Florida and is within 100 miles of 85% of the major population centers in the State, which makes it a major crossroads of travel in the state.

Highlands County is comprised of 1,028 square miles with over 1,200 miles of roadway that the Sheriff's Office patrols on a daily basis. There are three incorporated municipalities in Highlands County, Avon Park, Sebring, and the Town of Lake Placid. Each of these municipalities has their own police departments. There is an excellent working relationship between the Sheriff's Office and these local police departments and this is one of the reasons the low crime rate in Highlands County has remained constant in recent years.

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office was created in 1921 when the county was founded; since then, 11 Sheriffs have served the county. The longest serving Sheriff was Broward Coker, who served from 1945 to 1969. The current Sheriff, Susan Benton, is the first woman to be elected Sheriff in Highlands County and has been in office since 2004. Sheriff Benton is a career law enforcement officer who has had a distinguished career over the 34 years of her service.

The first Highlands County jail was opened in early 1924 and housed 32 inmates. In 1957, a new jail was constructed to house 82 inmates, and at this time the agency also expanded its employment to a total of 10 employees, including Deputy Sheriffs, Correctional Officers, and Dispatchers. Continued growth of the county required yet another expansion in 1985, adding 60 inmate beds to provide a total capacity of 142 inmates. Overcrowding during the early 1990's required additional inmate housing. In 1996, an addition and renovation of the existing jail increased the inmate capacity to 316. The newest addition to the detention facility opened in 2004 and increased capacity to 512 inmates.

The population of Highlands County increased from 39,517 in 1974 to 80,458 in 1998. The most current census shows the population to be at 98,703. Along with population increases, calls for service have increased accordingly. In 1974, there were 9,990 calls for service; in 2007, deputies responded to 85,313 calls for service.

The Sheriff's Office currently employs 361 full-time and 32 part-time employees. The 2007-2008 Sheriff's Office budget is \$27,125,656.

In 2009, the Highlands County Sheriff's Office will relocate to a new, state-of-the art headquarters which is currently in the design phase. This building will encompass approximately 48,000 square feet and will contain modern office spaces and a sophisticated Communications Center.

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office is divided into three divisions. Each division head reports directly to the Sheriff. The divisions are Law Enforcement, commanded by a Major; Detention, commanded by a Major, and Administration, commanded by a Chief of Staff.

The future issues facing the Highland County Sheriff's Office are typical of what many Florida agencies face: continued growth in an environment of decreasing revenues. As more and more people move to the area for its solitude and numerous outdoor activities, the Sheriff's Office will be challenged to continue to provide excellent service with fewer new dollars.

E. On-Site Assessment Summary:

Prior to the Highlands County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) scheduled assessment the assessment team was provided with an information packet containing the following: a sample file containing all applicable directives and supporting documentation, the HCSO's organizational charts, and other pertinent information. Additionally, Team Leader Michael Somberg was provided the agency's Accreditation Manager (ACTRAC) data. All assessor assignments were made prior to arrival in Sebring, the headquarters of the HCSO.

The assessment team arrived in Sebring in the late afternoon of Tuesday, April 8, 2008. The team met that evening, at which time the team leader discussed the following day's itinerary and activities. The team's mission, accreditation philosophy, and all assignments were explained in detail. The team leader provided training and guidance in the use of the Assessor Tools program and expectations of the team during the assessment.

The assessment team was met at the hotel by the Accreditation Manager, Kim Ketchner at 7:45am on Wednesday, April 9, 2008. The team arrived at the headquarters building of the Sheriff's Office, located at 434 Fernleaf Avenue, Sebring, Florida. The team was escorted to a conference room for the formal entrance interview. The entrance interview was attended by Sheriff Susan Benton, Major Mark Schrader, Major David Paeplow, Lisa Burley, Chief of Staff, Captain Jeff Barfield, Kim Ketchner, Accreditation Manager, and Carol McCullough, Training/Accreditation Specialist. The Sheriff welcomed the team who were assured that everyone in the Sheriff's Office was excited to be a part of this process and full access would be granted to all functions and units. The Sheriff assured the team of the complete cooperation of all members of the Sheriff's Office. The Team Leader thanked the Sheriff and those present for participating in the process and assured them of a professional and detailed assessment.

At the conclusion of the formal entrance interview, Ms. Ketchner escorted the team to the static display which was set up at in a parking lot of the Sheriff's Office.

The static display was impressive in its organization and detail. Represented were the various functions, equipment, personnel and special purpose vehicles. The assessors interviewed each of the agency's personnel who participated in the static display, while conducting extensive inspections of the equipment, weapons and vehicles. The static display was coordinated by Captain Jeffrey Barfield, and was supervised by Deputy J.P. Fane. Security was provided by Deputy Donivan Cooper.

These interviews included the following personnel and their respective agency assignments:

Deputy Mickey Cloninger, Marked Patrol Vehicle
Lieutenant Jess Purvis, Unmarked Patrol Vehicle
Detective Jamie Davidson, Detective's Vehicle
Deputy Brian Giguere, SRO/DARE Vehicle
Deputy Scott Williams, K-9 Patrol Unit and his K-9 "Boss"
Deputy J.P. Fane, Motorcycle
Deputy Fred Tagtmeier, Mobile Command Van, Utility Terrain Vehicle, All Terrain Vehicle
Lieutenant Keith Starling, Airboat, Bay Boat, Personal Watercraft
Detective Jared Futch, Special Response Team Vehicle
Detective Jeff Fennell, Crime Scene Vehicle

Specialist Nell Hays, Crime Prevention Van
Detention Deputy Chris Ritenour, Prisoner Transportation Van
Deputy Wayne Gunn, Armored Personnel Carrier

In addition to those persons mentioned above, the static display was attended by Ms. Eileen May of the Lake Placid Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Scott Forsythe (retired Captain from the Miami Beach Police Department) a member of the Visioning Committee, Mr. Dan Pearson, a reporter with the Highlands Today newspaper, and Ms. Jasmina Meyer, a photographer with the Highlands Today newspaper.

At the conclusion of the static display, the team met with all the participants and thanked them for their hard work and the excellent job each of them did presenting their equipment.

The team was then taken on an agency tour which was provided by the following members including visiting the offices of:

Chief of Staff, Lisa Burley
Lieutenant Tim Lethbridge, Criminal Investigations,
Human Resources, Finance, Internal Affairs, Judicial Process
Supervisor Shane Smith, Communications,
Warrants
Training Coordinator Deputy Joe Noto,
Uniform Patrol Division,
Accreditation Manager Kim Ketchner
Training
Sergeant James Casey and Crime Scene Specialist Robyn McIntyre, Rod Dilling, Suni Vogel and Sissy High, Property and Evidence
General Services Director Deb Olson and General Services Specialist Lisa Oshand

Each assessor took time to meet and interview agency personnel, both sworn and non-sworn, while seeking proofs of compliance.

At the conclusion of the agency tour, the team was escorted to a conference room on the second floor of the Sheriff's building which would serve as the work area and the team began reviewing files while visiting various functions and units and verifying compliance and worked until 7:30PM.

The team arrived back at the Highlands County Sheriff's Office at 7:30AM on Thursday, April 10, 2008 and resumed work. During the day, the team reviewed files and visited various components of the agency including interviews with the following members:

In the Communications Department, Supervisor Shane Smith, Communications Technician Thomas Phipps, 911 Call Taker Sharon Johnson,
Property, Sergeant James Casey,
Finance, Merideth Wohl, Anita Worden, and Penny Robinson,
The Highlands County Courthouse, Sergeant Alvin Walters, Deputy Jerry Pendarvis, Deputy James Ward, Deputy Sly Wilcox
Detention, Deputy Gary Davidson,

Criminal Investigations, Lieutenant Tim Lethridge

From 1:00PM to 5:00PM the telephone session was held, there were two telephone calls during the period.

Assessor Jacobs visited the Special Investigations Unit, housed off-site, meeting with Detective Jared Futch and Sergeant Mike Delaney. Both are Special Response Team members. Assessor Rowden conducted a ride along beginning at approximately 5:00PM and rode with Deputy Mickey Cloninger, Deputy Dan Danly and Deputy Michael Theodorou. Assessor Rowden visited both Sheriff's satellite substations. She reported that all three deputies that she rode with were very professional, very dedicated and all were very supportive of the accreditation process. Assessor Rowden visited two of the five radio tower sites operated by the county. The team worked on files until 10:00PM.

The team arrived at the Highlands County Sheriff's Office at 7:00AM on Friday, April 11, 2008, and continued to review files while visiting various functions to verify compliance. Functions visited were Central Records with interview of Records Supervisor Liz Peralta, Crime Scene with interview of Kathy Perez, Crime Scene Technician, Crisis Negotiation Team interview with Lieutenant Tim Lethbridge.

The exit interview was held at 2:30PM on Friday April 11, 2008. Present was Sheriff Susan Benton, Major Mark Schrader, Major David Paeprow, Lisa Burley, Chief of Staff, Captain Jeff Barfield, Kim Ketchner, Accreditation Manager, and Carol McCullough, Training/Accreditation Specialist.

During the exit interview, each assessor discussed their assigned chapters and any comments or issues related to those particular topics and standards. The team leader summarized the results of the assessment process and discussed the findings and the corrective actions requested and reasons why they were considered as such.

The team leader thanked all those in attendance for their responsiveness and commended the accreditation manager and the entire staff for its hard work and professionalism.

Sheriff Benton thanked the team and assured them that the agency is totally committed to the accreditation process and will continue to move forward in it.

At the conclusion of the exit interview, the team departed at approximately 3:30PM.

There were no team/agency conflicts. In fact the team worked extremely well together and with the agency's accreditation team. It was a very professional and smooth assessment experience for all concerned.

F. Standards Noncompliance Discussion: None.

G. Corrective Action Discussion:

1.03 (M) (Assigned Assessor: SR)

A directive establishes command protocol to clarify who is in charge for the following situations at a minimum:

- a. In the absence of the Chief Executive Officer

- b. In exceptional situations
- c. In situations involving personnel of different functions engaged in a single operation; and
- d. In normal day-to-day agency operations

Special Order number SO0804.02 was created to clarify command protocol in pre-planned events as well as developing incidents.

4.06 (M) (Assigned Assessor: DJ)

A directive requires that only firearms and ammunition meeting agency approval are used in the performance of duty. The directive shall apply both on and off duty, and must address:

- a. Review, inspection, and approval of all firearms by a qualified weapons instructor or armorer, prior to carrying;
- b. A process to remove unsafe weapons; and
- c. Maintaining a record on each weapon approved by the agency for official use.

A review of the agency directive revealed that a procedure was not in place indicating how a deputy requests to carry a personal firearm off-duty. The agency created a directive via Special Order 0804.01, thus bringing them in compliance.

23.01 (Assigned Assessor: DJ)

A directive specifies an agency's responsibilities involving any of the following traffic crash incidents:

- a. Death or injury;
- b. Hit and run;
- c. Impairment of an operator due to alcohol or drugs;
- d. Damage to vehicles or property, including government owned;
- e. Hazardous materials;
- f. Disturbances between principals; or
- g. Major traffic congestion as a result of a crash, or damage to vehicles to the extent that towing is required.

During a review of the agency directives a conflict was noted in reference to investigation of traffic fatalities. Highland County Sheriff's Office does not work traffic fatalities; they turn them over to the Florida Highway Patrol for investigation. A change was made to the directive via Special Order 0804.03, which resolved the conflict. Special Order 0804.03 was generated to eliminate the contradiction in the existing directive.

24.04 (M) (Assigned Assessor: DJ)

A directive describes the circumstances warranting the use of roadblocks and procedures for implementation to include, at a minimum:

- a. The types of roadblocks authorized (moving, fixed, circle system);
- b. The circumstances justifying their use, e.g., to stop a fleeing felon,;
- c. The person who has authority to implement and/or cancel a roadblock;
- d. The person in charge at the scene; and
- e. Staffing arrangements.

Upon review of the existing agency directive it was noted that the staffing needs on a stationary roadblock was not in place. A corrective measure was taken in the form of S.O. 0804.04

Special Order 0804.04 was generated to address a deficiency in the existing directive. The Special Order remedied the issue.

33.12 (M) (Assigned Assessor: SR)

The agency has security measures for the protection of communications members, facility, and equipment to include, at a minimum:

- a. Backup resources; and
- b. Security for antennas and power sources.

The agency has five tower sites, four of which are owned and the responsibility of Highlands County government to maintain and one that is owned privately and the county leases space on the antenna. Two of the sites did not meet the requirements of 33.12 b, Security for antennas and power sources. There was no real level of security at these two sites. When this was brought to the attention of the agency, the team was informed that one site was in the process of being torn down and replaced with a new tower and building and is basically 'offline' and would only be used in an emergency. The other site is a tower is owned privately and the county is building a new tower it will own in another location and will move its equipment off the leased one. The team reviewed detailed plans, an approved budget, building permits, FAA approvals and work orders showing the tower sites are to be modified as stated. The assessor interviewed Deputy J.P. Fane and Communication Techicans Thomas Phipps and Lance Yasenchak regarding this standard.

H. Waiver Concurrence/Nonconcurrence Discussion and Recommendation: None.

I. 20 Percent Standards Election (See Section C. for "Tally")

Standards Elected for Exemption:

17.02

J. Standards Verified by the Team as "Not Applicable" to the Agency:

5.03 (Assessor: SR)	5.05 M (Assessor: SR)	13.11 (Assessor: MMS)
18.06 (Assessor: DJ)	18.07 (Assessor: DJ)	24.06 (Assessor: DJ)
31.04 (Assessor: MMS)	36.09 M (Assessor: MMS)	39.01 M (Assessor: SR)
39.02 M (Assessor: SR)	39.03 M (Assessor: SR)	

K. Standards, the Status of Which, Were Changed by Assessors:

Standard	Self-Assessed...	Changed To...	Assessor
17.02	Compliance	Elected 20%	DJ

L. Public Information Activities:

L-1. Public Information Session:

From: - To: - Number of Attendees: 0
 Meeting Highlights: None. (No speaker comments logged by assessors.)

L-2. Telephone Contacts Session:

From: March 26, 2008 1:00 PM To: March 26, 2008 5:00 PM
 Total Call Count: 2. Breakdown of calls are as follows:
 Pro: 1 Con: 1 Mixed: 0 Undecided: 0 Not Standards-Related: 0

Date/Time:	Caller:	Pro or Con:	Assessor:
4/10/2008 - 1:00:00 PM	Bobby Bean Sebring, FL	Con	MMS

COMMENTS: Mr. Bean has several complaints regarding the agency. He informed that he would provide all of this in writing and send it directly to the Commission. He advised the assessor of a recent audit of the Sheriff's property room where 33 items were found to be missing and stated he would send all of this information to the Commission.

RESULT: The audit Mr. Bean refers to was conducted by the HCSO as a result of appointing a new Property Custodian. The Sheriff has directed that an internal affairs investigation be conducted and it is being conducted.

4/10/2008 - 2:00:00 PM	Jim Morris Sebring, FL	Pro	MMS
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COMMENTS: Mr. Morris stated he thought very highly of the Sheriff's Office and that Sheriff Benton has done a great job.

RESULT:

L-3. Correspondence and Media Interest:

K-3-A. Correspondence:

There were three letters received during the assessment. One was not standards related, the other one was a letter of support and one was a letter from Mr. Bean who also called during the open phone line to complain regarding Highlands County Sheriff's Office. His main concern is a recent audit of the Sheriff's property room where 33 items were found to be missing. The audit Mr. Bean refers to was conducted by the agency as a result of appointing a new Property Custodian, the Sheriff has directed that an internal affairs investigation be conducted and it is being conducted.

K-3-B. Media Interest:

There were no team meetings or interviews with the media. However, the media was present during the static display and took pictures and interviewed the Sheriff and other members of the agency and wrote a newspaper article which is attached. There was another newspaper story published prior to the assessment and it is attached.

L-4. Follow-up by Assessment Team: None.

M. Exemplary Policies/Projects/Procedures:

Communication Consolidated Dispatch Plan

The most critical issues during any emergency have always been rapid response and reliable service. During 2006 the Sheriff's Office began to explore the possibility of combining the dispatch services of Highlands County's Law Enforcement, Fire and Emergency Medical Services to form one Consolidated Dispatch. This allows each agency to be on one synchronized dispatch team for fast action. The concept was being considered in an attempt to reduce operating costs and provide efficient call processing, and incident management while in an environment streamlined for the use of the 911 system. The new system was completed going on-line in segments from April through October of 2006. In April of 2007 upgraded radio consoles were installed to further enhance the system.

Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) installed in vehicles

In recent years, the Sheriff's Office became interested in equipping patrol cars and other law enforcement vehicles with in-car computers, or Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs). The research and funding project was completed resulting in the successful purchase and installation of 82 MDTs during the months of February and March 2007. The addition of the MDTs with printers has enhanced the response capabilities and efficiency of all patrol and other law enforcement vehicles. Officer safety resulting from the tracking of individual units is much improved due to the integrated GPS feature.

Marijuana Indoor Grow Houses

Criminal Intelligence revealed that Highlands County was experiencing a substantial increase in indoor marijuana grow house operations within the last two years. In response, a concentrated effort has been made to step up law enforcement in this specific area by the Special Investigations Unit. As a result beginning November 2006 through February 2008, a total of 66 grow house operations have been identified and eradicated. These efforts to date have resulted in the seizure of 3,772 plants, 81 arrests, \$107,145.00 in cash, and the seizure of assorted tangible property.

N. Quality of Law Enforcement Service:

Chapter 1: ORGANIZATION (Assigned Assessor: SR)

The Highlands County Sheriff's office has a complex organizational structure for the agency including Administrative, Law Enforcement and Detention Bureau over which the Sheriff presides. There are 361 full-time members of the agency. There is a written directive covering the command protocol. The Highlands County Sheriff's Office has an impressive three year Strategic Plan which includes the agency's vision, goals, mission and budget.

Chapter 2: AUTHORITY (Assigned Assessor: SR)

Highlands County deputies have an all inclusive canon of ethics they are required to follow. Their language requires that members follow orders unless they are unlawful and that conflicting orders will be brought to the immediate attention of the supervisor. The agency authorizes body cavity searches when approved by a supervisor for a qualifying circumstance(s). Appropriate documentation of having conducted such a search was reviewed. Highlands County deputies use a variety of alternatives to arrest all of which were well documented in the file. Law and legal guidelines are available to all sworn members both electronically and in hard copy format. All members are required to sign for and review any new orders. Deputies interviewed were well versed in the arrest procedures set forth by directive. The agency has a comprehensive bias-based profiling directive covering all aspects of the standard. Detention deputies have a different uniform from law enforcement deputies and the non-sworn member uniforms are decidedly different from both law enforcement and corrections. Deputies interviewed for compliance of the chapter included Deputy Mickey Cloninger, Deputy Dan Danley Field Training Officer (FTO), and Deputy Michael Theodorou.

Chapter 3: WRITTEN DIRECTIVE SYSTEM (Assigned Assessor: SR)

The agency has a detailed General Order and memorandum system. There is a review board in place to assure they are reviewed and consistent prior to publication and that the orders are kept up to date. An archive of the General Orders is maintained in the accreditation office while each Bureau maintains an archive of area specific memorandum. Members are encouraged to get involved in the review process; suggested revisions are forwarded through the chain of command for review by the board and incorporated as appropriate.

Chapter 4: USE OF FORCE (Assigned Assessor: DJ)

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office has a directive governing the Use of Force. The directive includes a list of authorized lethal and less-lethal weapons and training requirements. During the static display as well as during additional contacts with deputies, knowledge of the Use of Force directive by agency personnel was outstanding. An example was the interview with Deputy Sheriff Mickey Cloninger, a 15-year veteran of the agency. He stated that they have Use of Force training and followed-up by explaining the breakdown of the force continuum and when a deputy would use what actions. Deputy Cloninger further stated that it is not necessary to go through each step; if necessary he would escalate to meet whatever resistance he encountered at the time. Deputy Cloninger was right on target with the agency directive. Deputy Cloninger stated that members are required to qualify biannually with their firearms and that he last qualified on December 4, 2007. Deputy Cloninger said that he carries his department issued Glock and an M14 rifle. Deputy Cloninger carries a Taser on his duty belt and no Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray. During the static display contact was made with Deputy Sheriff Brian Giguere; he said that they qualify two times a year; and they have access to the range to train throughout the year. The question was raised about the firing of warning shots and all responses were within directive. Lieutenant Tim Lethbridge's response to when he can fire a Warning Shot was "Never". Deputy Cloninger said "it is against policy" to do so. Any Use of Force is documented in a report and reviewed by Supervisor; Division Captain; including an additional review by a Major.

File contained a completed Administrative Investigation in reference to a Shooting Review which occurred on Feb 16, 2007; the review was completed on March 1, 2007. The document included a Memo reinstating the deputies to full duty.

Chapter 5: PART-TIME SWORN AND AUXILIARY MEMBERS (Assigned Assessor: SR)

The agency has a limited reserve program. Reserve Deputies are required to meet the same selection criteria as those for full-time deputies and are authorized to perform the same duties as a full-time deputy. Part-time deputies attend training with full-time deputies. The agency does not utilize auxiliary deputies.

Chapter 6: CIVILIAN VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS (Assigned Assessor: SR)

The agency does not utilize large formal volunteer programs so their description of volunteer use is broad not limit or constrict their use of volunteers. Currently, the agency has nine civilian volunteers - five victim advocates; one criminal investigations (cold case) volunteer; a filing volunteer and two crime prevention volunteers. All civilian volunteers receive an agency orientation followed by specific assignment training. Volunteers report to an identified supervisor. Civilian Volunteers attend an Orientation program which includes the agency's mission statement, vision and values. Dress, ID cards and rules are reviewed as well as the limits of their authority, their chain of command, importance of information confidentiality and phone etiquette. Volunteers are provided a tour of the the Sheriff's Office and assist with filing, cold case review and telephone follow ups with victims. Human Resource Administrator Kathy Fluharty verified compliance with this chapter.

Chapter 7: FISCAL ACTIVITIES (Assigned Assessor: SR)

An independent group performed an annual audit of the agency's fiscal activities in September 2007, and no discrepancies were found. No emergency appropriations were required for fiscal 2007/2008. The agency has four funds from which petty cash is handled on a daily basis. A quarterly report accounting for expenditures and balances is included in the file. An annual property inventory is accomplished. Issue, transfer and disposal of property is accomplished using the Property Disposition Form. All items changing location (possession) are documented on the property disposition form within five days of the location change. Transfers are loaded into an electronic data base for reconciliation during the annual audit. Confidential funds approval and disbursement are the responsibility of the Investigations Captain. Quarterly audits and a report of funds expenditures is provided for the Sheriff's review. Interviewed for compliance verification of this chapter was General Services Director Deb Olson, General Services Specialist Lisa Osha, Accounting/Internal Audit Director Penny Robinson, Chief of Staff Lisa Burley, Sergeant Mike Delaney and Detective Jared Futch.

Chapter 8: CLASSIFICATION AND DELINEATIONS OF DUTIES (Assigned Assessor: MMS)

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office has written Job Task Analysis (JTA) for every position within the agency. The JTAs are comprehensive and appear to cover all of the tasks required of the position. The agency has current Job Descriptions for each position in the agency and the job descriptions are reflective of the JTA's.

Chapter 9: OFF-DUTY AND EXTRA-DUTY EMPLOYMENT (Assigned Assessor: MMS)

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office has clear and concise guidelines along with effective written procedures that regulate its employees' off-duty and extra-duty employment, including identifying a central point of coordination and the documentation by employees of significant events. The agency has an approval process for its sworn employees to complete before participating in any off-duty or extra-duty work. The agency presented documentation in the files that off-duty and extra-duty employment conforms with its procedures.

Chapter 10: GRIEVANCE PROCESS (Assigned Assessor: MMS)

The agency has a clear and concise grievance process that clearly delineates those things that can be grieved, the time frames for any grievance filed, the authority of each agency member involved in the grievance process, and the appellate process for members who feel the grievance was not settled to their satisfaction. The agency advised that there have been no grievances filed in the past year.

Chapter 11: CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY PROCESS (Assigned Assessor: MMS)

The agency has well written and comprehensive policy and procedures on conduct and discipline. The agency's code of conduct and appearance clearly state what is expected of each employee both in conduct and appearance. The agency's system for rewarding, counseling, and disciplining is clearly written and the agency provided proofs of compliance for demonstrating an employee being rewarded, counseled and disciplined. The agency has not had any terminations in the recent past but it has policy for the information provided to an employee upon dismissal. Each level of supervision has clearly delineated authority for disciplinary actions.

Chapter 12: RECRUITMENT (Assigned Assessor: MMS)

The agency has an active recruiting program that is reflected in the diversity of the members. The agency has well written Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Affirmative Action plans. The agency uses print media, personal visits and other methods to recruit new members. The agency's recruitment plan is well written and has provisions for review, which was conducted within the last year and documented in the file. All of the members of the agency used for recruiting have received appropriate training.

Chapter 13: SELECTION (Assigned Assessor: MMS)

The agency utilizes a very comprehensive system of selection criteria, all of which are specifically job related. All of the selection and hiring is conducted in compliance with all of the applicable Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (CJSTC) rules and regulations, and applicable standards. All of the agency's requirements are administered, scored and interpreted in a uniform manner. All law enforcement applicants are required to complete the CJSTC background investigation requirements and non sworn applicants are subject to background investigations in compliance with the standards. All members who conduct background investigations receive training. The agency uses psychological examinations that are all administered by a licensed psychologist. All records are maintained according to Florida statutes. All new employees are subject to a 12 month probationary period prior to becoming a permanent member. All probationary members are evaluated under the FTO program and there is a process for a probationary member to contest his or her evaluation. The agency does not administer physical agility tests.

Chapter 14: TRAINING (Assigned Assessor: MMS)

The agency has a firm policy on attending training. Training programs and classes are developed using job descriptions and job task analysis. Lesson plans are prepared and administered and are in complete conformance with the standard. Lesson plans were reviewed and found to be in compliance. Agency policy requires all newly hired personnel, both sworn and nonsworn conform to the standard. Documentation presented confirmed attendance and subject areas. The agency's remedial training policy is well written, concise and complies with the standard. Documentation reflects instances of remedial training by members. The agency training records are up to date and maintained by the Accreditation/Training Specialist Ruby C. McCullough. The agency has a 12 week Field Training Program and all of its FTOs are selected via a published process, and trained as FTOs. All agency instructors are trained and certified as instructors for high liability areas. All mandatory in service training is conducted in full compliance with CJSTC guidelines. The agency's directives identify agency positions that require specialized training for both sworn and nonsworn positions.

Chapter 15: PROMOTION (Assigned Assessor: MMS)

The agency has very detailed policies and procedures for promotions. Promotional announcements contain all of the required information relating to the position. The procedures detail eligibility lists and how they are used, the duration, etc. The process for selection of those members to promote is clearly written and documentation demonstrated that the agency conforms to its procedures. The review and appeal process is clear and part of the grievance procedures. There have been no appeals.

Chapter 16: PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS (Assigned Assessor: MMS)

The agency recently implemented a new performance evaluation system. The new system is computerized and contains measurement definitions predicated upon the position being evaluated. The agency has trained all of its members in the new performance evaluations and they are currently in the process of collecting data on all employees. The agency has chosen to evaluate all of its members by September 30, 2008, Chief of Staff Lisa Burley explained the new program and all of its components. The agency has clearly demonstrated its commitment to the new performance evaluation system and is implementing it as planned.

Chapter 17: PATROL (Assigned Assessor: DJ)

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office has good directives governing the administration, operation and equipment of the patrol function. Deputies and Communications personnel interviewed during the assessment were extremely well versed in the department directives. During the static display Assessor Jacobs observed all agency vehicles that are usually used to perform patrol/traffic functions to have the requisite equipment. All vehicles also contained personal flotation devices (PFD's) and Stop Sticks or "Stingers". All deputies are trained with these items upon issuance. In response to inquiries about the Pursuit Policy, Deputy Mickey Cloninger stated that they are allowed to pursue with no limitations on speed. He said that by no means are they allowed to pursue vehicles into on-coming traffic. Deputy Cloninger added that despite "Pitting" being in the agency policy manual, they are not trained in this maneuver. It is his understanding that the only person that is trained in "Pitting" is the Training Coordinator Deputy, Joe Noto. During the Static Display as well as encounters with uniformed personnel throughout the assessment, vests were worn and personnel are knowledgeable about the agency directive addressing wearing of the vest. The agency Canine (K-9) directive addresses the standard. K-9 Deputy Scott Williams was very proud to share his knowledge and experiences as a K-9 deputy. When questioned about storage of canine drugs he explained that they are not supplied by DEA; they are in fact from Highlands County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) property and evidence. The training drugs issued to K-9 deputies are maintained by the deputies in a locked/secured container in the trunk of their vehicles to which only the K-9 Deputy has access. In accordance with the agency's revised directive, K-9 deputies are required to have their assigned training narcotics verified monthly. Lieutenant Purvis (Canine Supervisor) provided a copy of a Narcotics Issue Request Form and associated documentation addressing the issuance of training narcotics to Deputy Scott Williams for training of his assigned K-9 "Boss". Documentation also included verification of weights on a monthly basis. During the agency tour, Assessor Jacobs observed the Communication Center and met with personnel as they worked their positions. Communications Supervisor Shane Smith explained the responsibilities of each position and explained that they are also the Communication Center for Lake Placid and Sebring. The Communications Center is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Chapter 18: INVESTIGATIONS (Assigned Assessor: DJ)

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office has strong directives regarding the investigative function. The procedures provide for a high level and quality of service to victims of crime. Access to the Criminal Investigations Unit is a controlled limited access area. Upon entry one must be allowed entrance and if need be, escorted to the person or destination requested. While touring the Criminal Investigations Unit, no files were observed on desks where detectives were not actively working, and computers in unattended work areas were locked. Working files were in file cabinets that were located in the detectives' work area. Lieutenant Timothy Lethbridge, The Criminal Investigations Supervisor stated that the area is secured constantly; therefore, file cabinets are not necessarily locked. While meeting with Lieutenant Lethbridge and Sergeant Darin Hood, in Criminal Investigations, Lieutenant Lethbridge stated that he accesses reports through the computer if he needs to view or review anything. Sergeant Hood stated that all files that the detectives have are copies, and the originals are maintained in central records. Sergeant Hood further advised that records are purged by central records in accordance with public records law. Sergeant Hood is very knowledgeable about case file maintenance. All contacts made by the assessor confirmed a statement made by Lieutenant Lethbridge when he said that HCSO is small enough that good communications exists between patrol and investigations.

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT - LOCATED OFF SITE

Sergeant Mike Delaney and Detective Jared Futch, members of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) were interviewed. Sergeant Delaney directed the Assessor to an office that contained a metal filing cabinet that was secured with a master lock. The file cabinet contained the confidential informant (CI) files. Sergeant Delaney stated that only he and the Unit Lieutenant have keys to the cabinet. Both Sergeant Delaney and Detective Futch displayed a great deal of knowledge and experience in interacting with CI's. Detective Futch showed the Assessor documentation associated with Investigative Funds (I.F.) and a receipt. He said the I.F.'s are audited monthly. Detective Futch further stated that the C.I.'s are always referred to by numbers. Whenever funds are disbursed to a CI, the "two-man" rule is in place; always a witness to the transaction. SIU members are very cautious when interacting with CI's and when meeting with a CI they make every effort to be as far removed from observation as possible. They have pre-arranged meeting locations. When interacting with members of the opposite gender or where the gender is questionable, they always have two people in attendance. Both SIU members are very well versed in the policy.

Chapter 19: JUVENILE OPERATIONS (Assigned Assessor: SR)

The agency has very specific and direct guidelines for handling juveniles. Nearly all encounters result in some sort of custodial actions. However, discretion is encouraged and exercised. The patrol deputies the Assessor rode with indicated that they encounter a lot of activity as a result of juvenile action. They all have a very good attitude concerning handling juveniles and a good working knowledge of whom is in their juvenile community. Juvenile detainees are transported separate from adults and members of the opposite sex when appropriate for the situation. There are a variety of intervention agencies to assist when a juvenile is taken into custody where mental health and abuse or neglect concerns are apparent, or when action other than incarceration needs consideration. When incarcerated, juveniles are held in an area of the jail completely isolated from adults. They are monitored by video in such a manner as to appropriately allow them privacy. Male and female juveniles are held separately. When juvenile interviews are required, all elements of the standard are met including time and number of restraints, parent or guardian presence, rights advice and attorney presence. Interviewed for verification of this Chapter was Captain Bobby Green and Deputy Chris Ritenour.

Chapter 20: UNUSUAL OCCURRENCES (Assigned Assessor: SR)

The agency has effective mutual aid agreements with all Florida Sheriffs as well as with surrounding agencies. Additionally, there are provisions in the General Orders for calling on aid from federal entities. The agency has an array of speciality vehicles and equipment including watercraft, aircraft, Special Response Team trailer, Armored Personnel Carrier and a Mobile Command Post for response to unusual occurrences. The equipment is inspected annually, at a minimum. The General Order includes procedures for medical treatment, mass arrests, transportation and post occurrences duties. Sworn members have attended the mandated Incident Command System (ICS) training for their rank and a tabletop exercise with Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is scheduled for June of 2008. There has been no instance of an unusual occurrence during the accreditation period. A variety of plans for response to unusual, emergency or catastrophic events are ready to be implemented as needed. Table top exercises are conducted and all command staff have attended the required ICS training. A Public Information Officer (PIO) is appointed by the appropriate Incident Commander, Bureau Commander, Watch Commander, Lieutenant or designee when the PIO function is required for a special occurrences event.

Chapter 21: SPECIAL OPERATIONS (Assigned Assessor: DJ)

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office has sound directives regarding the coordination and planning of personnel for special events and operations. The directives require clear management and control via the chain of command and persons responsible with specified assignments. The agency has an inter-agency agreement which provides support to and from surrounding agencies when needed. During the static display, Detective Jared Futch – Special Response Team member, provided the assessors with a tour of the Special Response Team (SRT) Van. He explained the equipment and function. The agency has a vast array of tools and equipment (for example: the "Bat-Shield"; distraction devices; 37mm multi-launcher; entry tools, etc.) with which to perform their job function. Sergeant Michael Delaney, one of the 15 members of the Special Response Team, said that the SRT has scheduled training and actually has a coordinated training exercise with the Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT). He said that to pull such an exercise together requires a great deal of coordination between the teams. This statement was echoed by Lieutenant Tim Lethbridge, CNT Leader for the past three years. According to Lieutenant Lethbridge, there are currently six active members on the CNT. The Highlands County Sheriff's Office CNT members belong to the Florida Association of Hostage Negotiators (FAHN). Lieutenant Lethbridge said that team members attend training conducted by FAHN. Lieutenant Lethbridge said that when the CNT is called out either he or back up team leader, Lieutenant Ludden responds to the call out. CNT does not have a specialized vehicle as of yet; it is currently being customized. The equipment they do have, which is secured, maintained and operational, is in the HCSO main building. Lieutenant Lethbridge showed the Assessor a rescue phone and cord reel; a Megavox Pro wireless and a non wireless. The equipment that required charging was plugged in. All members of specialized teams that were contacted are extremely knowledgeable of their jobs and agency directives.

Chapter 22: TRAFFIC OPERATIONS (Assigned Assessor: DJ)

The agency's directives address procedures for interacting with residents, juveniles, legislators, diplomats and military personnel. All appropriate documentation is given to a violator at the time he or she is given a citation. The agency's directive identifies the various traffic offenses and provides procedures for each. The agency's directives address the use of emergency equipment and how and under what circumstances it can be used. The agency has clearly written procedures for handling those persons arrested for driving under the influence.

Chapter 23: TRAFFIC CRASH INVESTIGATIONS (Assigned Assessor: DJ)

Although the agency directive addresses traffic crashes, it was determined through interviews that the standard procedure is for Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) to be notified, regardless of severity. Deputy Mickey Cloninger, said that HCSO rarely works traffic crashes. He said that FHP works crashes in unincorporated Highlands County unless their response time is exceptionally long. In that case HCSO would work it unless it involved a fatality. Deputy Cloninger explained the agency's guidelines for safeguarding property of victims of traffic crashes. Deputy Mickey Cloninger's responses to traffic related questions indicate that he is extremely familiar with agency policy. The Assessor questioned him if he wore anything different when assisting in traffic issues and without hesitation he said: "my vest, it is orange and I have a red cone for my flashlight".

Chapter 24: TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND CONTROL (Assigned Assessor: DJ)

The agency's directive addresses the standard with precise procedures for manual traffic direction. The directive states that deputies are required to wear their issued reflective vest when engaged in the manual direction of traffic; this was verified during an interview with Deputy Mickey Cloninger. He said that whenever he is involved in any type of traffic control he dons his reflective vest. Reflective vests were noted during the static display.

Chapter 25: TRAFFIC ANCILLIARY SERVICES (Assigned Assessor: DJ)

The agency has written directives addressing procedures for assisting stranded motorists, emergency assistance and hazardous highway or roadway conditions. The agency's directive addressing towing is comprehensive.

Chapter 26: CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE (Assigned Assessor: SR)

The agency's Special Investigations Unit is responsible for maintaining and disseminating criminal intelligence. Directives clearly outline the purpose for collecting intelligence and provides procedures for limiting access, providing security during analysis, and maintaining security for this sensitive information. Security of criminal intelligence was observed. The agency has not purged any criminal intelligence at this time.

Chapter 27: INTERNAL AFFAIRS (Assigned Assessor: SR)

The agency demonstrated professionalism in investigating allegations of misconduct within the agency. Directives identify personnel required to investigate and review complaints at various levels. Secure maintenance and storage of internal affairs investigations was observed. The agency has procedures for the use of medical testing, photographic line ups and submission of financial information. The agency does not use the polygraph or other devices for the detection of deception. Notification of both agency members and complainants of the conclusion and disposition of investigations was demonstrated in the proofs of compliance.

Chapter 28: PUBLIC INFORMATION (Assigned Assessor: SR)

The agency directives clearly outline the duties and responsibilities of the Public Information Officer. Cooperation with the media and timely release of newsworthy information to the public was noted in several reports and news releases.

Chapter 29: ARRESTEE TRANSPORTATION (Assigned Assessor: DJ)

The agency has strong policies and procedures that provide guidelines for the safe transport of arrestees, specifically when addressing arrestees that become violent, sick or injured. The policy ensures that arrestees and department vehicles are searched before and after transport. During the static display, Detention Deputy Chris Ritenour showed the various restraint devices and the methods of use. Deputy Mickey Cloninger was questioned about his knowledge on this directive. Given a scenario regarding transporting a prisoner and coming upon a traffic crash what action would he take - Deputy Cloninger responded he would stop and render aid. His response was in accordance with agency policy.

Chapter 30: HOLDING AREAS (Assigned Assessor: DJ)

The agency operates a full service jail facility and meets all of the requirements in terms of life, health and safety issues. Inspections of fire detection equipment (fire and smoke alarms) are conducted on a regular basis and documented. There is signage regarding the No Weapons policy and armed personnel have lockable gun boxes by all entrances to the facility. Prisoners are searched and their property inventoried and secured. All prisoners are supervised 24 hours a day by video in addition to corrections staff. Males are separated from females and juveniles are separated from adults and further separated by male and female. Medical signage is posted and medical assistance is provided. The facility has plans for space arrangements in the event of a mass or group arrest.

Chapter 31: COURT SECURITY (Assigned Assessor: MMS)

The agency is responsible for court security at the Highlands County Courthouse. The agency has detailed policies for detailing the role and authority, court security, security of the building and all the other requirements in the standards. A tour of the courthouse, a courtroom, inmate holding areas as well as general security was observed and found in compliance. The entire courthouse, inside and out is under constant video surveillance; each courtroom has video as well as panic alarms that terminate in the control room. All of the equipment used for court security is maintained in operational readiness and staffed by trained operators. Inmates who are in custody are moved between the jail and the courthouse through secured doors and a secured tunnel. Compliance was verified by observation, documentation and interviews with Sergeant Alvin Walters, Deputy Sly Wilcox, Deputy Jerry Pendarvis, Deputy Jimmy Ward, and Detention Deputy Gary Davidson.

Chapter 32: CIVIL PROCESS (Assigned Assessor: SR)

Being the executive officer of the court by statute, the Highlands County Sheriff's Office is responsible for executing all variety of process applicable within the county's jurisdiction. Service can be made by sworn and non-sworn members as appropriate and deputies are authorized to use an appropriate use of force to any level of resistance that is encountered. A variety of examples addressing all requirements was provided depicting proper civil process service. As part of civil process procedures, seizure of properties is accomplished. Property descriptions, individuals from whom the property was seized and appropriate identifiers are properly recorded. Procedures are in place for collection of civil process credits. Electronic receipts are generated and accounted for daily. Monies are balanced with electronic receipt records and deposited daily. All standards are met for disposition of properties seized under civil process.

Chapter 33: COMMUNICATIONS (Assigned Assessor: SR)

The dispatch center is located within the Sheriff's complex and access is restricted to authorized personnel only by key entry. The agency provides dispatch for itself, two other law enforcement agencies and Emergency Management System (EMS). Persons not authorized for routine entry are escorted by assigned personnel. The agency has specific and detailed directives establishing radio procedures to be followed in a variety of emergency and non emergency incidents. Call takers have an "on scene" checklist for taking information and it includes all pertinent information relating to an incident. The CAD system automatically sends that information to the dispatcher for dispatch. All calls and radio transmissions are recorded digitally and the agency has elected to archive these records for three years. Misdirected calls are either handled by the Sheriff's Office or referred to the appropriate agency. All agency vehicles are equipped with laptop computers with Global Positioning System (GPS). Status of deputies is color coded for ease of use by dispatch personnel. Communications personnel have access to all emergency numbers for command staff, other agencies, and tactical dispatch plans. Dispatchers who are trained to provide emergency first aid over the telephone do so with a reference guide. The facility has three generators that are designed to run the Sheriff's Office, Communications and the Jail. They are phased so that if one or even two of the generators fail, the remaining one will power the communications center.

Chapter 34: RECORDS (Assigned Assessor: SR)

The agency currently utilizes mobile data terminals to submit incident reports. The Records Unit is secure and restricted to records personnel and commanders only. During normal business hours, authorized personnel are allowed entry by Records personnel. Members have access to records after hours through the computer system. Ms. Liz Peralta, Records Supervisor, was very knowledgeable regarding security measures for National Crime Information Center/Florida Crime Information Center (NCIC/FCIC) and juveniles. Juvenile records are separated from adults. They are password protected in the computer system to prevent unauthorized access. Juvenile fingerprint cards are maintained in a locked file cabinet and separate from adult records.

Chapter 35: EVIDENCE (Assigned Assessor: DJ)

The Crime Scene Unit is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. During an interview with Kathleen Perez, Crime Scene Technician she spoke of her extensive training and background. Ms. Perez has been a Crime Scene Technician with this agency since August 2007, she indicated that in addition to the ongoing training she has received since being hired she also completed a two year Crime Scene Technology program at St. Pete College. Which gave her significant training in all areas of crime scene investigation; to include but not limited to: latent print processing; shoe impression casting; court room demeanor, etc. She has training in conventional and digital photography and is currently using a NIKON D70. All crime scene technicians are trained in digital photography and the proper handling and storage of original files. According to Ms. Perez, upon completion of shooting a scene, she downloads the digital images from the NIKON D70 onto the computer and burns it directly to a disc for submission into evidence. The packaging/disc is marked as "original" and is no longer handled by her or anyone else. Ms. Perez said that once that is done she will not do anything to the images she has saved to her computer unless she is directed by the assigned detective. She is very knowledgeable of her duties, policies and procedures, and very enthusiastic about her position with the agency. A tour of the laboratory and processing area revealed many pieces of equipment to include a drying cabinet which contained items from a suicide. Ms. Perez was very knowledgeable of all the equipment and operation of each item. Prior to touring the lab Ms. Perez explained the process for collection, preservation and submission of physical evidence, to include biological material. Ms. Perez and Detective Fennell both indicated that there is on-going training in the section; Ms. Perez is currently advancing her training in latent print examination. The assessor spoke to Detective Jeff Fennell, a Crime Scene Investigator at the static display. He indicated that he had training with both digital and conventional cameras. Detective Fennell responded in accordance with HCSO directives concerning collecting and preserving evidence.

Property and Evidence ante room contained a locker storage area and packaging area with all of the required labels, bags, containers for sharps and bio-hazards, and paperwork for logging and submitting evidence. The room housed properly labeled refrigerators for bio-hazard material. A large storage vault is available for items excessive in size.

Chapter 36: PROPERTY (Assigned Assessor: MMS)

The agency's property is stored at the main headquarters building. The property room is located within the secured sallyport. The property room is alarmed and access is limited to only those persons authorized to be there. There are provisions for the temporary storage of property and evidence when the unit is not manned with locking cabinets of various sizes that can accommodate just about any size of item. In addition, the agency uses an off-site area at their vehicle maintenance facility that consists of individual fenced and lockable spaces for the temporary storage of items of property that are too large to fit in one of the available cabinets, such as vehicles and bicycles.

The agency has a computerized property records system that complies with all of the standards. The agency conducted an inventory on January 2008, when they appointed a new property custodian and presented documentation of that inventory. Items of special value are separated by room and secured. The storage of perishable items is accomplished with a secured and alarmed refrigerator. Interviewed Sergeant Jaime Casey, and Evidence Technicians Suni Vogel, Sissy High, Rod Dillinger and Crime Scene Technician Robin McIntyre who verified compliance with the various standards in this chapter.

Note: Prior to the assessment an internal evidence audit was conducted and 33 items were discovered missing; Sheriff Benton has referred the matter to internal affairs and there is an on-going investigation.

Chapter 37: INFECTIOUS DISEASES (Assigned Assessor: MMS)

The agency has well written policy and procedures for this chapter. The agency identifies those positions that are at risk of exposure and all of those positions identified have been trained in the exposure control plan. The agency has a Hepatitis B vaccination program that is well documented with both members who wished to be inoculated and those who did not. The agency pays for the cost of the Hepatitis B shots for those members who request it.

Chapter 38: FORFEITURES (Assigned Assessor: SR)

The agency has clearly written and defined policies regarding the enforcement of the Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act. The agency has specific procedures for the seizure and forfeiture of vessels, vehicles, aircraft and other property.

Chapter 39: INTERVIEW ROOMS (Assigned Assessor: SR)

The agency has designated rooms used for interviews, however, there are no locks on the doors, the rooms are under video surveillance, and the agency's procedures require that suspects are maintained under constant supervision and there must be two deputies present at all times.

The agency maintains continuous supervision therefore this chapter is N/A.

O. Summary and Recommendation:

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS: Throughout the assessment, the review of the Highland's County Sheriff's Office was thorough, comprehensive and performed with the utmost scrutiny. This review resulted in the need for additional proofs, changes/revisions in the written directives and one change to the status of one standard. Suggested changes and/or revisions were implemented within hours of discussing them demonstrating the agency's commitment to the process. The assessment team was very impressed with the Highland's County Sheriff's Office and the professionalism of both its sworn and non-sworn members. The

agency's policies and practices promote responsiveness to the community's law enforcement needs. The team members completely agree that every member of the HCSO who was interviewed demonstrated a high level of job knowledge, competence and satisfaction. Moreover, they were all enthusiastic and energetic regarding their jobs and the agency itself. It was clear to the entire team that Sheriff Benton is an exceptional leader and her leadership permeates the entire command staff and department. She is an energizing force for the HCSO and she leads by example. She and the entire agency demonstrated a sincere willingness to meet the letter and spirit of the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, Inc. (CFA) Accreditation process and standards and are very supportive of it.

The entire assessment team strongly recommends the Commission favorably review the Highland's County Sheriff's Office for initial accredited status at the next Commission meeting.

NON-COMPLIANCE SUMMARY: None.

Signed: _____
Michael M. Somberg -- Team Leader

List of required attachments to accompany submission of the final report:

1. Supporting documentation for noncompliance finding.
2. Supporting documentation for corrective action, old and new directive, if applicable, with changes highlighted.
3. Supporting documentation for waivers, with original waiver request form signed by Team Leader.
4. Public comment telephone log (original, if used).
5. Correspondence received (original).
6. Onsite media coverage/articles/press releases.
7. Documentation for exemplary projects/policies/procedures.
8. Proof of CALEA Accreditation (Comparative Compliance only).

To: Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission
 From: Darren Bryant, Team Leader
 Date: January 25, 2011
 Re: On-Site Assessment Report
 HIGHLANDS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE DETENTION BUREAU
 338 S. Orange Street
 Sebring, Florida 33870
 Standards Manual Edition: 3.0

A. Dates of On-Site Assessment: November 30, 2010 through December 2, 2010

B. Assessment Team:

Team Leader: Darren Bryant (DB)
 Title: Sergeant
 Employer: Orange County Corrections Department
 P. O. Box 4970
 Orlando, Florida 32802
 Telephone: 407-254-8296
 Email: Darren.Bryant@ocfl.net

Team Member: Michael Devoter (MD)
 Title: Sergeant
 Employer: Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office
 3228 Gun Club Road
 West Palm Beach, FL 33406
 Telephone: 561-688-4424
 Email: DevoterM@pbso.org

Team Member: Lieutenant Charles "Chuck" Davis (CD)
 Leon County Sheriff's Office
 2825 Municipal Way
 Tallahassee, FL 32304
 Telephone: 850-922-3568
 Email: davisc@leoncountyfl.gov

C. Standards Summary Tally:

M = Mandatory N = Non-Mandatory									
	Total Number of Standards	Number of Standards Not Applicable (By Function)	Number of Standards Waived	Number of Non-Waived, Applicable Standards	Number of Standards Elected for 10% Exemption	Percent of Applicable Standards Elected (10% max.)	Percent of Applicable Standards Not Elected (90% min.)	Number of Applicable Non-Elected Standards In Compliance	Percent of Applicable Non-Elected Standards In Compliance
M	106	5	0	101	0	0.00%	100.00%	101	100.00 %
N	141	2	0	139	0	0.00%	100.00%	139	100.00 %

D. Agency/ Facility Information:

D-1. Agency/Facility Profile:

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office was created by legislative act in 1921 and is located in the south central part of Florida. There are 1,028 square miles within the jurisdictional limits of the county where the Sheriff's Office is responsible for maintaining public safety. There are over 1,200 miles of roadway that the county maintains and Sheriff's Office patrols on a daily basis. The Highlands County Sheriff's Office is divided into three bureaus: Law Enforcement, commanded by a Major; Detention, commanded by a Major; and Administration, commanded by a Chief of Staff. The Sheriff's staff consists of the General Counsel, Office of Internal Affairs, the Property and Evidence Unit, and her Executive Assistant, all of which report directly to the Sheriff. There are three incorporated municipalities in Highlands County: Avon Park, Sebring, and Lake Placid. Each city is governed by an elected Mayor and City Council. The Highlands County Sheriff's Office is the chief law enforcement agency for the county with each of the three municipalities having their own police department.

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office Detention facility is housed and located on a single location in downtown Sebring. It is an integral part of the Sheriff's main office and houses 504 inmates. The original jail was built on the corner of Fernleaf Drive and Eucalyptus Drive in 1924, and it housed 32 inmates. In 1957, a new jail was constructed to house 82 inmates and expanded its employment to a total of 10 employees to include deputy sheriffs, detention deputies, and dispatchers. Continued growth of the county required yet another expansion in 1985, adding 60 inmate beds to provide a total capacity of 142 inmates. Overcrowding during the early 1990's required additional inmate housing. In 1997, an addition and renovation of the existing jail increased inmate capacity to 288. In 2004, another new addition increased inmate capacity to 504. The new detention facility addition was necessary to alleviate overcrowding and was part of a 10.4 million dollar project that included expansion of the courthouse. This addition included two 72 bed direct supervision pods where a single detention deputy is in the pod with up to 72 inmates. The Highland's County Sheriff's Office 2010/2011 total operating budget for the Detention Bureau is \$8,884,868.00 with a reserve contingency of \$45,000.00.

D-2. Key Personnel:

Chief Executive Officer: Sheriff Susan Benton
Jail Administrator: Major David Paepflow
Facility Administrators: Captain Bobby Green and Captain Booker Johnson
Accreditation Manager: Ms. Kim Ketchner

E. On-Site Assessment Summary:

The assessment team arrived in Highlands County on Monday, November 29, 2010. A briefing was arranged at the hotel with two other assessors to review the materials provided and discuss the assignments.

On Tuesday, November 30, 2010, Accreditation Manager Kim Ketchner arrived at the hotel at approximately 0800 hours and provided transportation to the facility. The team attended an entrance meeting at approximately 0830 hours with Sheriff Susan Benton and the following key staff members:

Major David Paepflow
Major Mark Schrader
Chief of Staff Lisa Burley
General Counsel Mike Durham
Captain Bobby Green
Captain Booker Johnson
Nursing Administrator Linda Travers
Captain Jeff Barfield
Human Resource Administrator Kathy Fluharty
Business Administrator Merideth Wohl
Information Services Administrator Rob Jordan
Detention Deputy Elizabeth Hamilton
Detention Deputy Heather Mills
Accreditation Manager Kim Ketchner

The assessment team performed the necessary introductions and provided information related to the accreditation process. The team explained the intent of the assessment was to determine proof of compliance through interviews and inspections throughout the facility in addition to the file review. Sheriff Benton expressed her desire to achieve initial accreditation status from the Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission.

The team conducted a walk through tour of the facility, escorted by key personnel. Areas visited included the detention center, inmate housing, control rooms, medical, inmate library, booking intake, laundry, and kitchen areas. Numerous staff and inmate interviews were conducted during this time. Afterwards, the team met in the designated work area and began reviewing files. The team broke for lunch at 1330 hours and returned to complete the file review. At 1830 hours the team attended the evening shift briefing and spoke with staff. In attendance were:

Lieutenant Gilliam
Sergeant Abeln
Sergeant Svendsen
Detention Support Officer Wehrman
Detention Deputy Clark
Detention Deputy Soto
Detention Deputy Lammie
Detention Deputy Camp
Detention Deputy Sweet
Detention Deputy Carnes
Detention Support Officer Tilley

Detention Deputy Worth
Detention Deputy Waldon

The team conducted brief introductions and explained the importance of their involvement in the process and expressed an appreciation for their hard work towards receiving their initial accreditation. The team departed the facility at 1910 hours.

On Wednesday, December 1, 2010, the assessment team arrived at the Highlands County Sheriff's Office at 0830 hours to continue the assessment. At 1230 hours the team broke for lunch and returned by 1330 hours. The remaining afternoon was spent conducting staff/inmate interviews and visiting various departments for observations. The team departed the facility approximately 1730 hours.

Staff interviews:

Detention Deputy C. Douberly - Inmate property/ inmate identification
Detention Support Officer J. Keefe - Inmate counts/ key control/ control room duties
Sergeant J. Murphy - Intake procedures/ release procedures/ safety and security/ legal mail
Captain B. Green - Intake procedures/ juveniles/ weekly inspections/ tool inventory
Detention Deputy D. Bennett - Mail/ legal mail/ commissary items
Sergeant C. Dischert - PREA/ legal mail/ mail/ emergency evacuation/ cutlery/employee training/ commissary items/ hygiene items
Lieutenant K. Pendarvis - Classification/ inmate programs/ disciplinary hearing/ PREA/ cutlery
Detention Deputy H. Mills - Food service operations/ PREA/ disciplinary procedures
Detention Deputy E. Hamilton - Recreation/ inmate uniforms/ chemical storage/ maintenance
Business Administrator M. Wohl - Fiscal/ personnel files
Human Resource Administrator Kathy Fluharty - Personnel files/ employee training
Human Resource Specialist Crystal Moore - Personnel files/ employee training/ benefits
Detention Deputy E. Simpson - Control duties/ inmate programs
Captain B. Johnson - Key control/ tool control/ chemical storage/ safety and security
Detention Deputy T. Saraceni - Inmate counts/ juvenile housing/ sanitation/ inmate uniforms
Detention Deputy V. Pope - Inmate identification/ recreation/ chemical storage
Detention Deputy D. Gossard - Inmate workers/ visitation/ food service
Detention Deputy V. Ferrante - Security inspections/ inmate identification
Detention Deputy M. Broskey - Inmate property/ barbers
Clerk C. Garcia - Hygiene items/ commissary
Drug Program Art Harriman - Inmate drug programs/ education
Nursing Administrator L. Travers - Medical licensing/ sharps/ medications/ sick call
Accreditation/Training Specialist C. McCullough - Employee training

Inmate Interviews:

Cody Spiegel - Juvenile housing/ programs/ medical/ meals/ commissary/ hygiene
Laqwan Arrington - Housing/ clothing/ bedding/ programs/ mail/ hygiene items
Devontie Betts - Library/ indigent commissary/ hygiene/ telephone/ medical
Joshua Jones - Medical/ mail/ programs/ housing/ recreation/ meal/ commissary

Denise Nelson - Female programs/ hygiene/ visitation/ clothing/ legal mail/ medical
Kathleen Foley - Cleaning supplies/ hygiene/ telephone usage/ first appearance/ medical
Lynn Barfield - Inmate handbook/ PREA/ sick call request forms/ medications
Limardo Torres - Programs/ meals/ mail/ inmate handbook/ first appearance/ medical
Tammy Cranfield - Programs/ legal mail/ recreation/ hygiene/ clothing/ commissary
Kenneth Horn - Showers/ visitation/ library/ legal material/ inmate handbook/ PREA
Frank Finnikin - Recreation/ programs/ clothing/ cleaning supplies/ commissary
Johnny Malone - Inmate handbook/ clothing/ bedding/ medical/ visitation
James Meredith - Bedding/ clothing/ inmate handbook/ meals/ mail/ telephones
Christopher Rowe - Inmate work programs/ religious programs/ medical/ mail
Tommy Callahan - Inmate work programs/ clothing/ hygiene/ recreation

On Thursday, December 2, 2010, the team returned to the facility at approximately 0900 hours. An exit interview and the teams' oral report were conducted at 0930 hours. The following were in attendance:

Sheriff Susan Benton
Major David Paepflow
Major Mark Schrader
Chief of Staff Lisa Burley
General Counsel Mike Durham
Captain Bobby Green
Captain Booker Johnson
Nursing Administrator Linda Travers
Captain Jeff Barfield
Business Administrator Meredith Wohl
Information Services Administrator Rob Jordan
Detention Deputy Elizabeth Hamilton
Detention Deputy Heather Mills
Accreditation/Training Specialist Carol McCullough
Accreditation Manager Kim Ketchner
Human Resource Specialist Crystal Moore
Lieutenant Mike Gilliam
Behavioral Health Coordinator Dorothy Reed

The team explained the initial corrections accreditation process and presented individual comments of the assessment. The team expressed their gratitude to the agency for their professionalism and courtesy displayed by Highlands County Sheriff's Office.

F. Standards Noncompliance Discussion: None.

G. Corrective Action Discussion: None.

**H. 10-Percent Standards Election (See Section C. for "Tally")
Standards Elected for Exemption: None.**

I. Standards, the Status of Which, Were Changed by Assessors: None

J. Standards Verified by the Team as "Not Applicable" to the Agency:

2.05 M (Assessor: DB) 4.12 M (Assessor: DB) 8.03 M (Assessor: DB)
8.04 M (Assessor: DB) 9.19 (Assessor: DB) 11.02 (Assessor: DB)
19.04 M (Assessor: DB)

K. Public Information Activities:

K-1. Correspondence and Media Interest: None.

K-2. Follow-up by Assessment Team: None

L. Exemplary Policies/Projects/Procedures:

Jail Alternative to Substance Abuse Treatment Program (JASA):

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office contracts with Tri-County Human Services Inc., to provide a 12-week, voluntary program for male and female inmates that provides screening, psychosocial assessment, individual counseling, group sessions on a weekly basis, alcohol/drug education on a weekly basis, and case management services. The case management program includes the establishment of after-care plans and incorporates community-based treatment, attendance at AA, NA, and other support group meetings. This program received an award for best practices from the Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association (FADAA)

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Grant Program (RSAT):

Through grant funding, the Highlands County Sheriff's Office contracts with Tri-County Human Services Inc., to provide a treatment program available to two cohorts of 12 participants each for a total of 24 adult males per year. Male inmates participate in the program for at least six and not more than twelve months. Eligible males are those committed to the Detention Facility either in a pretrial status or post adjudication for the requisite time to complete the six month program. Serving as an alternative to court sanctions, the program also accepts inmates sentenced directly from courts. The program includes counseling sessions, alcohol and drug education, urine screening, GED classes, case management and aftercare services. The male inmates participate in a 12-step program and have a post-release treatment plan which incorporates aftercare services. The program utilizes the Therapeutic Community Model with the use of Cognitive Behavior Modification.

Inmate Farm:

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office maintains an inmate farm, operated by inmate workers housed at the Detention Facility. A farm manager provides training and direction to the inmate workers who grow a variety of vegetables that are used in the Detention Facility's menus for the inmates. These vegetables produced at the farm help defray the cost of the meals to the inmates.

Facility Renovation:

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office Facility is undergoing a renovation to upgrade the HVAC and electrical infrastructure that supports both Law Enforcement and Detention operational and communication functions. This project does not provide for space expansion; rather it provides reliable power, necessary server UPS back-up system, adequate air conditioning, alteration of fire egress and a minor ADA facility change.

M. Quality of Service: No chapter summaries.

N. Summary and Recommendation:

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS: The Highlands County Sheriff's Office commitment to the accreditation process was clearly evident by the condition of their facilities and the cooperation of their staff. The assessment team was impressed with staff knowledge of, dedication to, and preparedness for the assessment.

After reviewing files, interviewing staff and inmates, and observing the daily operations of the facility, the Highlands County Sheriff's Office complied with 100 percent (101 standards) of the applicable mandatory standards and 100 percent (139 standards) of the applicable non-mandatory standards. The assessment team unanimously recommends the Highlands County Sheriff's Office Detention Bureau for initial accreditation at the next scheduled Commission meeting.

O. Attachments:

- Current Organizational Chart
- Most Recent FMJS Inspection
- Most Recent Fire/ Safety Inspection
- Most Recent Health/ Sanitation Inspection
- Most Recent Food Services Inspection

Signed: _____

Darren Bryant -- Team Leader

To: Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, Inc.
From: Warren (Lanny) Wyatt, Team Leader
Date: May 9, 2011
Re: Full-Compliance On-Site Assessment Report
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Standards Manual Edition: 4.0

A. Dates of On-Site Assessment: May 2 through May 4, 2011

Chief Executive Officer: Sheriff Susan Benton
 Accreditation Manager: Ms. Kim Ketchner
 Accreditation Team Member(s): Captain Jeff Barfield
 Accreditation Specialist Carol McCullough

B. Assessment Team:

Team Leader: Warren (Lanny) Wyatt (WW)
 Title: Research and Planning Manager
 Employer: Plantation Police Department
 451 N.W. 70th Terrace
 Plantation, FL 3337
 Telephone: 954-797-2716
 E-Mail: wwyatt@psd.plantation.org

Team Member: James Vachon (JV)
 Title: Sergeant
 Employer: Lake County Sheriff's Office
 360 West Ruby Street
 Tavares, FL 32778
 Telephone: 352-343-9500
 E-Mail: James.Vachon@lcsso.org

Team Member: Carol Kersey (CK)
 Title: Accreditation Manager
 Employer: Putnam County Sheriff's Office
 130 Orié Griffin Blvd.
 Putnam, FL 32177
 Telephone: 904-669-1586
 E-Mail: ckersey@putnamsheriff.org

C. Standards Summary Tally:

CFA Compliance Tally

M = Mandatory N = Non-Mandatory		Total Number of Standards	Number of Standards Not Applicable (By Function)	Number of Standards Waived	Number of Non- Waived, Applicable Standards	Number of Standards Elected for 20% Exemption	Percent of Applicable Standards Elected (20% max.)	Percent of Applicable Standards Not Elected (80% min.)	Number of Applicable Non- Elected Standards In Compliance	Percent of Applicable Non- Elected Standards In Compliance
M		152	5	0	147	0	0 %	100 %	147	100 %
N		109	4	0	105	2	1.94 %	98.06 %	103	100 %

D. Agency Profile:

Highlands County is located in the south central part of Florida. It is within 100 miles of 85 percent of the major population centers in the state. There are 1,028 square miles within the jurisdictional limits of the county. There are over 1,200 miles of roadway that the county maintains and the Sheriff's Office patrols on a daily basis. There are three incorporated municipalities in Highlands County: Avon Park, Sebring and Lake Placid. Each municipality is governed by an elected mayor and a city or town council. All three municipalities fund and operate their own police departments independent of the Sheriff's Office. The relationship between the Sheriff's Office and the municipal agencies has contributed to the historically low crime rate within Highlands County. Highlands County's current population is approximately 99,215.

The position of Highlands County Sheriff was created by legislative act in 1921. The Sheriff's Office main building is located in the city of Sebring, in the central part of Highlands County. There is a main substation, housing the majority of the law enforcement bureau, located on U.S. Highway 27 in Sebring. Other off-site facilities include a substation in Avon Park, a substation in Lake Placid, and a mechanical maintenance shop, and an aircraft hangar facility in Sebring.

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) is a full-service law enforcement agency providing patrol, investigations, aviation, K-9, traffic, marine unit, special response team, crisis negotiation team, victim advocate, crime scene processing, crime prevention, court services, detention and organized crime/homeland security services. In 2010, HCSO deputies responded to 142,298 calls for service.

The HCSO is divided into three Bureaus: Law Enforcement, commanded by Major Mark Schrader; Detention, commanded by Major David Paepflow; and Administrative, administered by Chief of Staff Lisa Burley. The Sheriff's staff consists of General Counsel, Internal Affairs, Property Evidence Unit, and the Sheriff's Executive Assistant. The Sheriff's Office currently employs 341 full-time and 23 part-time employees.

Sheriff Susan Benton was born and raised in Miami, Florida. She graduated from Monsignor Pace High School and earned a BA degree in Administration of Justice from St. Thomas University and a Master's of Public Administration from Troy State University. She is a Certified Public Manager and has completed the National Sheriffs' Institute Executive Level Management Education and Training course in 2006, and 2007. In her career Sheriff Benton has served as a physical education teacher; Police Officer with Dade County Schools; Administrative Aide, Highlands County Board of County Commissioners; as a Foster Care Counselor and Protective Investigator with the Department of Children and Families; as a HCSO employee: Deputy Sheriff; Sergeant of School Resource Officers; Lieutenant of Administrative Services; and as the Lieutenant of Criminal Investigations. She was elected Sheriff of Highlands County in 2004 and re-elected in 2008. Sheriff Benton was selected for the Miami Dade College Alumni Hall of Fame in 2010; she was appointed as a Commissioner to the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation in 2010; and in 2010 she was appointed by the governor to the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission.

Future Issues:

The HCSO current facility is undergoing renovation that includes information technology and consolidated dispatch expansion. The needs of property/evidence and laboratory facilities for crime scene investigation will require new construction. Additionally, the remainder of law enforcement administration and law enforcement services to include patrol, investigations, special operations, and crime analysis will require either extended office leasing, purchase of an existing facility with renovation, or new construction.

Within the next several months, requests for proposals will be prepared and advertised for these projects. Funding has been identified within the County's Capital Financial Strategy.

The total budget for the Sheriff's Office fiscal year 2010-2011 is \$24,413,678 including \$45,000 contingency. The current Law Enforcement budget for the fiscal year 2010-2011 is \$14,451,008 which is approximately \$500,000 less than the previous year. Future concerns are maintaining staffing levels and current patrol allocations.

E. On-Site Assessment Summary:

The team arrived at the HCSO Monday, May 2, 2011, between 9:30 am and 10:30 am and began file review. The schedule change was done to accommodate a request by the team leader to conclude the assessment before Thursday May 5th.

Sheriff Benton conducted an entrance interview at 1:00 pm at the Sheriff's Office main building. There were approximately 21 command and executive staff members present. All the staff introduced themselves and spoke about their respective assignments. The Sheriff expressed her commitment and the agency's commitment to the accreditation process and gave credit for the agency's success to the employees in the agency.

Captain Jeff Barfield, along with Accreditation Manager Kim Ketchner and Accreditation Specialist Carol McCullough, were in constant contact with the assessment team and were immediately available during the assessment process.

The files were in exemplary shape and as a result file review was completed very quickly and with no issues.

The Sheriff's Office staff reviews policies on a monthly basis. A number of employees stated they participated in these policy review sessions and each employee, whether sworn or civilian, appreciated the opportunity to provide input into any needed policy changes.

Team Leader Wyatt conducted a field inspection of three radio tower sites and each are secure with appropriate fencing, emergency generators with propane fuel supply tanks, and an alarm system. All the inspected tower sites are in compliance.

Team Leader Wyatt participated in a ride-along with Deputy Sheriff Ken Jorgensen. He was a Florida Highway Patrol Trooper before joining the HCSO approximately 1 ½ years ago. Deputy Jorgensen is knowledgeable and up to date on use of force, report writing, the field training program, evaluations, weapons and proficiency testing. When asked about the agency pursuit policy, he pulled a sheet of paper from his visor and said "Here's my cheat sheet. If it isn't on this list, I can't pursue." It was apparent that Deputy Jorgensen was proud of the agency. Later in the evening, Deputy Jorgensen sustained a knee injury in a foot pursuit on some subjects involved in a theft case. He was working the front desk on light duty at the time of the exit interview.

Team Leader Wyatt interviewed front desk personnel Ellie Ramos, Administrative Support Officer, and Deputy Sheriff Kenny Vincent. The HCSO keeps a supply of donated stuffed animals on hand in the lobby to provide children something to play with to help them deal with the stress associated with their visit.

Assessor Kersey spoke with two members of the Central Records Division, Bonnie Gregg and Jenny Edwards, in reference to their procedure on public records request. Both answered all questions pertaining to their division.

Assessor Kersey spoke with Human Resources personnel Tina Swain and Crystal Moore. Ms. Moore was very insightful reference to application procedures.

Assessors Kersey and Wyatt toured the temporary headquarters of the Consolidated Dispatch Center. Telecommunicator II Lowanda Thompson provided a tour of the facility and Telecommunicator I Sonya Johnson provided the assessors with information referencing the SmartCad System. Assessors Kersey and Vachon met with Switchboard Operator Keith Voy, who provided information reference call volume.

The HCSO is currently working out of the agency back-up communications facility while the main center is being renovated. The assessment team posed the question of what would happen if they needed to abandon the back-up communications center and the on duty communications supervisor was not sure of the answer. As soon as the team returned to the Sheriff's Office, the Dispatch Director Heather Carr identified two back-up consoles in the Sheriff's Office that could function as a third facility if needed and disseminated that information to communications personnel.

Assessor Kersey made contact with personnel from the Training Unit, Carol McCullough and Captain Barfield, and confirmed that all employees received mandatory retraining within the allotted timeframe.

Assessor Kersey met with Warrants Specialist Evelyn Lugo and Supervisor Sheila Roper-Kane from the Warrants Unit and reviewed the confirmation of warrants within FCIC/NCIC rules and regulations and also confirmed that warrants are available 24 hours a day and reviewed the process for removal of active warrants after arrest.

Assessor Kersey was provided a tour of the aviation unit, to include the plane and hangar. Pilot Bob Curry provided an aerial tour of Highlands County.

While the assessment team was at lunch at a restaurant owned by a HCSO detective's wife, Detective Stacy Andrews introduced himself to the team and provided information relating to crime scene training and digital evidence storage.

Team Leader Wyatt spoke with Lieutenant Kenny Johnson of Internal Affairs. Lieutenant Johnson explained how a typical complaint process would be conducted. He brought out the complaint logs for 2010 and 2011 which contained all completed employee internal affairs investigations for those years. He confirmed the agency accepts all complaints and investigates each complaint as needed.

Team Leader Wyatt spoke with K-9 Unit Supervisor Sergeant David Stewart who was conducting training with two Avon Park Correctional Institution K-9 handlers. Both Avon Park handlers spoke glowingly about the relationship with the Sheriff's Office.

Team Leader Wyatt spoke with Chief of Staff Lisa Burley. Ms. Burley is in charge of all of the civilians working the business end of the Sheriff's Office operations. She spoke highly of the value of accreditation and the positive impact accreditation has had. Of particular importance was the fact that she had input towards all policy review that took place in the agency. She also said that accreditation had served to standardize the way the Sheriff's Office operates.

Assessor Vachon interviewed K-9 Deputy Ritenour, K-9 Deputy Fort and Deputy Lister while participating in a ride-along with Deputy Morales on Bravo squad (night shift). All deputies interviewed are familiar with Sheriff's Office policies regarding vehicle pursuits, domestic violence procedures, and evidence handling. All deputies indicated that should they have a question regarding departmental policy

that they could easily access the policy manual via the Power DMS system; Deputy Morales demonstrated access to the online policy manual via his in-car laptop computer. Assessor Vachon observed the vehicle equipment on several marked vehicles to be in working order including emergency lights and audible siren. While participating in the ride along, Assessor Vachon observed the deputies interacting with members of the public and each other. They interacted in a professional manner with members of the public and worked very well as a team while responding to a call of fleeing suspects.

Assessor Vachon observed several marked HCSO vehicles. All vehicles had the requisite equipment including fire extinguisher, emergency lights, audible siren, flashlight, and personal protective gear.

Assessor Vachon toured the Criminal Investigations Unit (CIU) located at 7177 S. George Blvd. in Sebring. The office area was neat, tidy and well organized. There were no detectives in the facility at the time of the tour as they were all out in the field conducting investigations. Assessor Vachon met with Lieutenant Darin Hood who supervises the Criminal Investigations Unit. Lieutenant Hood indicated that no original records are kept on site and that all original documents are copied and sent to Central Records to be scanned. Lieutenant Hood further indicated that working copies of records are shredded once no longer needed by the individual detectives. The facility is only accessible to personnel with key fobs programmed to access the facility. Assessor Vachon interviewed Detective Amanda Dettman. Detective Dettman indicated that she had transferred into investigations approximately seven months prior. She indicated that she destroys working copies of case files once the original documents have been scanned and sent to Central Records and the working copy is no longer needed. She further indicated that as she drives an unmarked Sheriff's Office vehicle she is not permitted to pursue a vehicle unless ordered to do so by a supervisor under unusual circumstances. Both Lieutenant Hood and Detective Dettman are very professional in their appearance and demeanor; they are excellent representatives of the HCSO.

While on site, Assessor Vachon toured the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) which is housed in the same building as the Criminal Investigations Unit, but in a separate and secure area. Assessor Vachon interviewed Detective Jared Futch who is a SIU detective. Detective Futch indicated that the files maintained by the SIU were kept in a locked filing cabinet inside a locked closet. Detective Futch did not have access to the locked closet and requested a Captain to open the closet. Captain Randy Labelle arrived at the SIU office and opened the locked closet for review. Assessor Vachon observed the confidential informant files to be kept in a filing cabinet secured with a padlock. Captain Labelle indicated that only he and a Lieutenant had access to the confidential informant files. Assessor Vachon observed a log book indicating each time a detective accessed the confidential informant files.

Detective Futch explained their process for documenting new confidential informants and showed Assessor Vachon the packet that is completed on each prospective informant. Detective Futch is well versed on "Rachel's Law" regarding the safety of informants. Detective Futch also showed Assessor Vachon the paperwork and process for utilizing investigative funds. Assessor Vachon met with Lieutenant Tim Lethbridge of the Special Victims Unit at his office located at the Children's Advocacy Center. Lieutenant Lethbridge advised that the Special Victims Unit is housed in the same facility as the local Department of Children and Families (DCF) investigators which he said led to better relations with DCF. The facility is neat and tidy and is very well suited for conducting investigations involving child victims. Lieutenant Lethbridge showed Assessor Vachon an interview room for suspects and for child victims. Original copies of investigative reports are maintained at Central Records while detectives use working copies. The working copies are destroyed when they are no longer needed for investigation. It is obvious that Lieutenant Lethbridge is proud of his unit.

Assessor Vachon and Team Leader Wyatt interviewed Sergeant Alvin Walters of the Court Security Division and conducted a field inspection of the courthouse holding cells and the courtrooms. Sergeant Walters demonstrated the security measures for entering the courthouse such as magnetometer and hand

held mirror. Sergeant Walters took the assessors on a tour of the facility and pointed out evacuation plans, duress alarms in courtrooms, prisoner detention facilities and general courthouse security.

Sergeant Jamie Casey gave Assessor Vachon a tour of the property evidence unit and described practices for submitting, cataloging and storing evidence. Assessor Vachon observed refrigerators for perishable evidence both in the storage area and in the packaging area. Four random samples of evidence were checked for proper packaging and paperwork, with no discrepancies noted. Extra security was provided for exceptional, valuable and sensitive items such as narcotics, firearms, large sums of money and homicide evidence. Large sums of money are kept in a safe located behind two locked doors. Sergeant Casey is very professional and demonstrated an enthusiasm for the evidence division. The facility is secure to include several surveillance cameras recording audio and video.

Sergeant Casey demonstrated the HCSO practice for improperly packaged evidence. The improperly packaged evidence is not accepted into inventory but is instead locked in a "trouble locker." An e-mail is sent to the deputy who submitted the evidence which is copied to the deputy's supervisor and Sergeant Casey. The improperly packaged evidence is only accessible to the submitting deputy's Lieutenant to be repackaged by the submitting deputy. The property receipt reflects that the evidence was repackaged. Assessor Vachon observed a property receipt reflecting that the evidence had been repackaged. The Property Evidence Unit is a significant strength for the HCSO.

Assessor Vachon met with Crime Scene Detective Stacey Andrews at the Crime Scene Unit offices located at 7177 S. George Blvd. Detective Andrews showed Assessor Vachon the equipment for preserving digital evidence and described training received by the Crime Scene Unit. Detective Andrews' assigned vehicle, a marked HCSO vehicle, has numerous pieces of equipment utilized for processing crime scenes as well as emergency equipment such as flashing lights and siren, fire extinguisher, etc.

Team Leader Wyatt spoke with Deputy Joe Noto, the agency armorer, about weapons inspections and how the inspections are documented. Deputy Noto located all requested inspection information easily and quickly.

Team Leader Wyatt verified weapons training records through an interview and inspection of training file documentation with Accreditation Specialist Carol McCullough.

All interviews and field inspections were conducted very professionally with the full cooperation and participation of HCSO personnel. There were no accreditation issues identified in any field inspection or interview.

The assessment team participated in an exit interview with Sheriff Benton at 1:00 pm on Wednesday, May 4th at the Sheriff's Office main building. In addition to the Sheriff and the accreditation team, there were approximately 20 command and executive staff members present. Each assessment team member spoke about their chapter reviews, interviews and field inspections. Each assessment team member expressed the complete commitment to the agency and the accreditation process they encountered from all members of the agency and the fact that the agency personnel were well prepared for this assessment.

The team concluded with a recommendation that the HCSO be reviewed for reaccreditation at the next full Commission meeting.

F. Standards Noncompliance Discussion: None.

G. Corrective Action Discussion:

31.08 (Assigned Assessor: JV)

A directive provides procedures for the control of electronic and manual keys to the courthouse and courtrooms.

During the inspection of the courthouse one compliance issue was noted regarding key control. A key box was located in a control room located in a holding area. The key box contained several keys and a list of keys in the box but no system for tracking keys in and out of the box. The issue was brought to the attention of the Accreditation Manager later in the day who advised that a change in procedure had already been put into place involving a sign in/out log for the key box in the courthouse. Special Order SO1105.01 was issued to reflect the new practice.

H. Waiver Concurrence/Nonconcurrence Discussion and Recommendation: None.

I. 20 Percent Standards Election (See Section C. for "Tally")

Standards Elected for Exemption:

17.02

17.12

J. Standards Verified by the Team as "Not Applicable" to the Agency:

5.03 (CK)	5.05 M (CK)	13.11 (CK)	24.06 (JV)
31.04 (JV)	36.09M (JV)	39.01M (CK)	39.02M (CK)
39.03M (CK)			

K. Standards, the Status of Which, Were Changed by Assessors: None.

L. Public Information Activities: None.

L-1. Public Information Session: None.

L-2. Telephone Contacts Session: None.

L-3. Correspondence and Media Interest: None.

L-4. Follow-up by Assessment Team: None.

M. Exemplary Policies/Projects/Procedures:

Teen Driver Challenge

Sheriff Susan Benton recognized the need to provide Highlands County's upcoming teenage drivers with specialized training on the hazards of operating a motor vehicle. To accomplish this important goal, the HCSO decided to implement the Florida Sheriff's Association's (FSA) Teen Driver Challenge (TDC) program. The TDC program model was developed through the FSA and implemented statewide during 2007.

The TDC is a voluntary student enrollment program. It provides high school students with hands on driving experience, enhances driving skills, educates them on the dangers of vehicular crashes, and

driving while impaired. The TDC program provides Sheriff's Offices with a new proactive tool allowing us to educate high school student drivers during their developmental stages.

Due to stringent requirements, lengthy preparations to implement the TDC in Highlands County began early 2009 when the TDC program became one of the organizational objectives incorporated into their Strategic Plan. The HCSO is one of the 32 out of 67 Florida Sheriff's Offices currently participating in the TDC program.

In order to teach the TDC program, law enforcement driving instructors must be certified by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), the TDC program, and the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV). During 2010, two of their Training Unit members completed the mandatory certifications, becoming certified TDC Train the Trainer Instructors.

The pilot TDC class was held during December 2010 at their driver training facility in Sebring. To date in Highlands County, 17 students have successfully completed the two day program. Graduating students receive a certificate of completion and a FSA/TDC tee shirt. The Sheriff's Office plans to continue this important community service with additional TDC classes planned through 2012.

Operation Medicine Cabinet

Operation Medicine Cabinet (OMC) is a law enforcement supervised, prescription drug take back and disposal program. The HCSO serves as the lead agency in their county by organizing each of the bi-annual OMC events. Each OMC event is held in cooperation with the three city police departments within their jurisdiction, and the Drug Free Highlands Coalition (DFH). During an OMC event, the HCSO and the three police departments operate their own independent collection sites. Currently one of the bi-annual OMC events is held with the operational support and advertising of the Drug Enforcement Administration. (DEA)

OMC events benefit the community by promoting public awareness that unused, unwanted prescription medications in the family home can potentially lead to abuse. The OMC program educates the community on the proper disposal of prescription drugs and the potential environmental impact if disposed of improperly. Each OMC event reduces the risk of unwanted pharmaceuticals ending up in the hands of the youths by removing the drugs from circulation.

During 2010 and 2011 to date, two separate OMC events were conducted and organized by the Sheriff's Office in Highlands County. The combined multi-agency effort resulted in a total of 1750.50 pounds of unwanted prescription drugs being removed from circulation. The Sheriff's Office will be coordinating an additional OMC event during September of 2011. Their efforts will continue to educate the citizens and promote a proactive based philosophy regarding proper disposal of unwanted prescription drugs.

Special Victims Unit/CAC

The HCSO Special Victims Unit (SVU) is comprised of two victim advocates, two deputies, three detectives, a lieutenant, and a unit secretary. However, it is more than the composition of the unit that makes the Special Victims Unit exceptional. The SVU is housed in the Champion for Children Advocacy Center of Highlands County. From this location, the SVU works collaboratively with other agencies based in the same building: the Department of Children and Families, Guardian Ad Litem, the Child Protection Team, as well as mental health and substance abuse agencies.

The HCSO has a memorandum of understanding which specifies all investigations of abuse or neglect of a child, elder, and disabled person will be investigated jointly by the Sheriff's Office and the Department

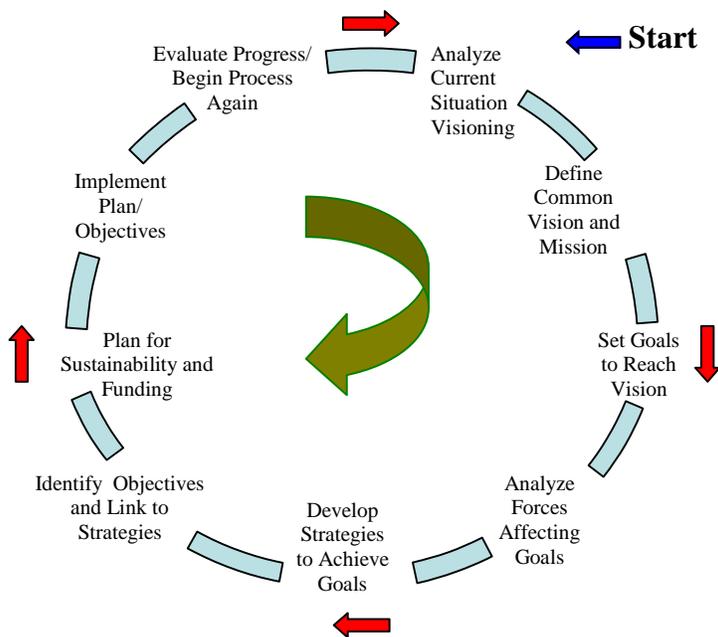
of Children and Families. Investigators from each agency work only a few feet from each other. DCF investigators accompany deputies and detectives during the investigation of each abuse or neglect allegation and the two work together throughout the entire investigation. By having both investigative and service agencies housed together, victims and their families receive faster and more efficient services. The interagency trust and communication that has been built following this model contributes to successful investigations.

Strategic Planning

As Highlands County lead law enforcement agency, the Sheriff's Office is charged with public safety responsibility, court security, execution of court orders, and management of persons incarcerated in the county jail.

To meet these and other responsibilities of the Office of Sheriff they recognize that strategic thinking and planning is one of the most critical elements of public management. Its purpose is to establish long-term goals, strategies, quantifiable objectives, and detailed actions that address issues related to performance, productivity, required statutory services, and community and personal well being. This plan affords them the benefit of long range planning, will build on their goals and practices, and will propose modifications for the future to meet the anticipated changes in the community and environment. This process establishes the organization's preferred future, ensures consistency and clarity of purpose throughout the organization, and is intended to provide the foundation for maintaining a collaborative working relationship among the public, citizens, and private sector entities for identifying public safety priorities and needs.

The below diagram shows a continuum that indicates the necessity for continuous feedback, evaluation, and comparison with previous steps. A quarterly assessment process is implemented to assure a successful outcome.



N. Quality of Law Enforcement Service: No chapter summaries.

O. Summary and Recommendation:

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS:

The assessment team found the HCSO to be exceptionally well prepared for this assessment. From the introductory material to interviews with all employees, the assessment team found that all were well prepared and knowledgeable about what to expect. The agency has seen tangible benefits in the areas of technology, innovation and standardization under Sheriff Benton's leadership. She is committed to her vision of creating a safer Highlands County and leads by example.

The Sheriff's Office has benefitted from a comprehensive multi-year Strategic Plan that is detailed, specific and sets lofty goals for the Sheriff's Office. The Highlands County Sheriff Office have regular policy review sessions that include members from all components of the agency, a commitment to individual responsibility and promoting ethical behavior. Of particular significance is the emphasis that the HCSO places on the integrity of property/evidence. This unit reports directly to Sheriff Benton and is audited and inspected rigorously.

A number of Sheriff's Office personnel commented on how accreditation has changed the agency for the better. All mentioned standardization and the opportunity to participate in policy review sessions are significant. Sheriff Benton and her entire staff demonstrated a sincere willingness to comply with the spirit and letter of Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation standards and philosophy.

The assessment team recommends the Highlands County Sheriffs Office be favorably reviewed for reaccreditation at the next full Commission meeting.

Signed: _____
Team Leader

List of required attachments to accompany submission of the final report:

- 1.Supporting documentation for noncompliance finding.
- 2.Supporting documentation for corrective action, old and new directive, if applicable, with changes highlighted.
- 3.Supporting documentation for waivers, with original waiver request form signed by Team Leader.
- 4.Public comment telephone log (original, if used).
- 5.Correspondence received (original).
- 6.Onsite media coverage/articles/press releases.
- 7.Documentation for exemplary projects/policies/procedures.
- 8.Proof of CALEA Accreditation (Comparative Compliance only).