

NEWSRELEASE

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Paul Babeu, Sheriff

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pinal County Sheriff's Office – “COP” Program Launches Second Volunteer Unit in San Tan Valley

The Pinal County Sheriff's Office, Citizens on Patrol (COP) program will have a second volunteer unit operating in the San Tan Area effective March 6, 2011. The San Tan Valley area will be divided into two patrol groups to be identified as San Tan Valley East and San Tan Valley West; the dividing line between the two areas will be Gantzel Road.

According to COP Program Director, Pat Prince, over twenty new volunteers living in San Tan Valley communities have recently completed their training and are patrolling in communities as they serve as the "eyes and ears" for deputies. By dividing the area into two patrol groups, COP volunteers will be able to spend more time focusing on their individual and adjoining communities to create a stronger visual deterrent to crime.

Lieutenant Doug Brown, Region Commander for the PCSO, is in the process of acquiring two additional patrol vehicles for the program which would result in more frequent patrols and allow the volunteers to provide a greater assistance to deputies.

During 2010, Citizens on Patrol members volunteered over 8,471 hours with a wage equivalency savings to Pinal County taxpayers of \$175,193. During 2009 they volunteered 6,594 hours with a wage equivalency of \$131,704. Prince noted that there were several reasons for the rapid growth with the volunteer program, and that the main reason for the success is the strong support for the program that Sheriff Babeu has consistently demonstrated for the past two years. Sheriff Babeu recognized the importance of the program being under the direct leadership of a Region Commander to improve communication, training, and interaction with field personnel. COP volunteers are now trained by AZPOST certified instructors, and their training has been expanded to include CPR and First Aid. Sheriff Babeu and Lt. Brown recently joined several volunteers at the annual NACOP (National Association of Citizens on Patrol) convention in Chino, California.

Citizens on Patrol is an excellent program that allows citizens to be proactive in being part of the solution to preventing crime by patrolling their communities. Volunteers with the COP Program must reside in an unincorporated area of Pinal County, be at least 21 years of age, possess a valid driver's license and pass a background investigation including, but not limited to, a wants and warrants, criminal history and driving record check. In addition, volunteers must attend and successfully complete the COP Academy. If you are interested in joining COP, please contact COP Program Director, Pat Prince at 480-671-4847 or 480-982-2241 or by email at patprince6064@msn.com.

