

# St. James Parish Sheriff's Office



**Annual Report 2016**



## St. James Parish Sheriff's Office Annual Report 2016

Dear fellow citizens of St. James Parish,

On behalf of your sheriff's office, I present to you this brief summary of some of our activities throughout the past year. Thank you for reviewing it.

The senseless killings of officers in Dallas and Baton Rouge have made for some extremely tense and trying times for those of us in this profession, but they have also been extraordinarily rewarding. I have never experienced so many citizens going out of their way to express their support and gratitude for our efforts to keep St. James safe. Good sometimes comes from tragedy. In this case it is a renewed respect and genuine gratefulness among citizens towards law enforcement and first responders.

From the children who donated money made selling lemonade to the ladies that brought us goodie bags to the businessman who anonymously picked up the tab for a deputy's lunch, we don't ask for or expect special treatment for doing our jobs, but we thank you.

It's always nice to be appreciated.

It's also great to be a part of a community where people come together when faced with adversity. Through tornadoes and high water – from cleanup to sandbagging, St. James citizens help one another like nowhere else in the world and we're proud to protect you.

Several stories in this issue highlight the continuing efforts of this office to enhance our service to you. The SJPSO computer system has undergone a \$1.2 million upgrade that will further shorten our response times and keep better track of records and our jail population. We have purchased a new, specialized vehicle to provide security at community events and are providing additional ways for the community to use our shooting range and training facility.

As much as we appreciate your support, we sincerely need you to become even more involved in fighting crime in our parish by serving as an extra pair of eyes and ears for us. If you hear of something that may be a credible threat to our community, let us know. If you see something that "just doesn't look right," or witness criminal activity of any kind, do not hesitate to call 911. We will respond.

Please let me know if I or this office can ever be of service to you.

Very truly yours,



**WILLY J. MARTIN, JR.**  
Sheriff, St. James Parish  
[willy.martin@stjamesla.com](mailto:willy.martin@stjamesla.com)



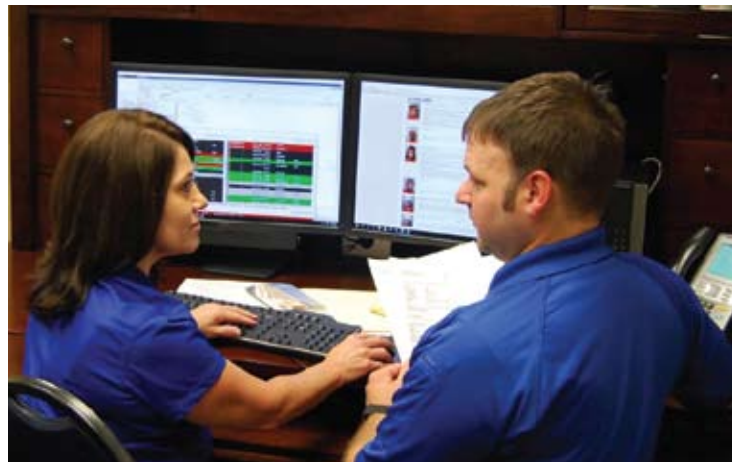
## February 2016 Tornado

Two people were killed and more than 30 injured when a tornado ripped through the Sugar Hill RV Park in Convent in February. The storm was one of more than a dozen to hit Southeast Louisiana that day.

"About 300 people lived in about 160 trailers before the tornado struck," Sheriff Martin said. "Whole trailers were sucked up and tossed, the area was completely destroyed and there was so much debris we used dogs to assist us in searching through the rubble."

Entergy reported about 500 customers were without service and at least 19 power poles were broken as a result of the storm.

*Colonel Mike Edmonson of the Louisiana State Police and Governor John Bel Edwards with Sheriff Martin as he speaks to the media about the February tornado.*



*Deputies Rhonda Rodrigue and Jason Chabaud led the team that installed a major upgrade to our computer system.*

## Computer System Upgrade

A \$1.1 million grant from the Port of South Louisiana and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has funded the majority of a major computer upgrade to our system. The software will help shorten response times and manage records and parish jail operations by "Getting everyone on the same page and tying all our divisions together," Sheriff Martin said. "The new system from Zuercher allows our personnel access to records in the civil and criminal divisions and to more closely track calls for assistance."

When a call comes in to our 911 Center, the dispatcher sees a history of action from that location or phone number, including past incidents and their resolution. The new software and GPS technology also allow a dispatcher to send the closest unit to the location.

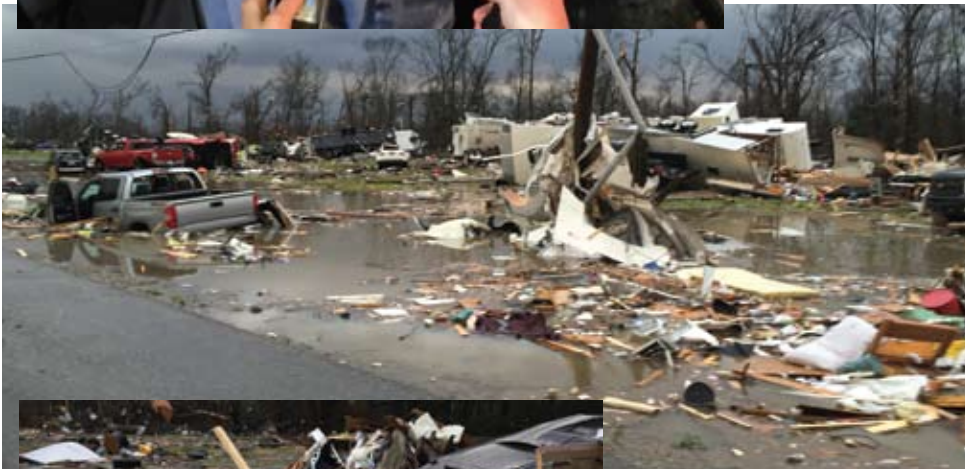
The computer upgrade provides closer monitoring of inmates in the parish jail. Each time a prisoner receives a visitor, leaves his cell or the jail for a medical or court appointment, the event is logged into our system.

## Stopping Phone Scams

Recently, some elderly St. James residents have been victimized by phone scams revolving around fake stories of a relative in jail or the IRS needing to collect an overdue bill. The person called is told to wire money so the loved one can be released or the account settled. In reality there's no one in jail or any IRS account and the funds are stolen.



"If you get a call like this, contact us," Sheriff Martin said. "We will verify if the person named is in jail or if the IRS claim is legitimate. Remember, if something sounds fishy, it likely is. Check with us first and never give out personal information over the phone."







L-R; Deputy Joseph Canatella drives the Bobcat while Deputy David Louque and Sergeant Devon Dabney check paperwork.

## Bobcat

A \$15,000 grant from Marathon Petroleum funded the purchase of a Polaris Bobcat ATV that will help with security at events. The unit will also enhance our search and rescue operations.

"The Bobcat is only four feet wide and 13 feet long, so it can maneuver in tight places where a patrol unit would have difficulty," Sheriff Martin said. "This vehicle will be very useful at crowded sports and community activities where we always provide security."

Powered by a 40 horsepower engine with a top speed of 35 miles per hour, the Bobcat can carry four people and 1,250 pounds in its cargo bed. Equipped with police lights and a siren, it also sports powerful spotlights to illuminate a nighttime location.



## Shooting Sports at Range/Training Facility

We continue to find new opportunities for the public to utilize our Shooting Range/Training Facility in Vacherie. Now the home of the St. James 4-H Shooting Sports team, the club teaches gun safety and marksmanship for a variety of arms from air rifles to small bore guns to bows and arrows. The range is a potential location for more local, regional, state and national shooting competitions. Hunter and boater safety classes are held periodically and we will continue to open the range for hunters to sight-in rifles. Check with us for dates.

## High Water of 2016

In what meteorologists labeled a "1,000 year event," some 24 to 30 inches of rain fell in our area in a matter of days in August, causing massive flooding to our north and west, in particular Livingston, Ascension and East Baton Rouge Parishes.

"When all that water upstream from us moved south, it dramatically raised the level of Blind River and the surrounding swamp very quickly, making northern Grand Point especially vulnerable," said Sheriff Martin. "Other low-lying areas had problems too, as water was forced into about 20 homes and structures."

Trustees from the parish jail and countless volunteers filled sandbags while SJPSO personnel kept roadways clear for distribution and installation. Fortunately, evacuations were not necessary and after several tense days, the water receded.



## People News

### Retirees

Congratulations to our retirees and **THANK YOU** for your dedicated service to St. James Parish.



**Heria "Butch" Williams**  
Chief Deputy  
39 years



**Craig Poché**  
Captain/Uniform  
Patrol Commander  
36 years



**Nora Steib**  
Juvenile Detective  
25 years



**Osborne Wallace**  
Corrections Officer  
16 years

### Promotions



**Colonel Sid Berthelot**  
– Chief Deputy



**Major Claude Louis**  
– Chief of Operations



**Captain Earl Geason**  
– Uniform Patrol  
Commander



**Lieutenant Duran Steib**  
– West Bank Sub Office  
Supervisor

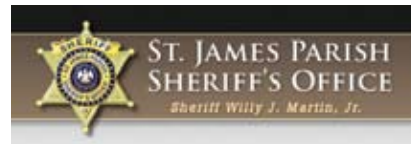
**Lieutenant Steven Brignac** – East Bank Patrol Executive Officer  
**Lieutenant Travis Lawless** – Shift Supervisor  
**Lieutenant Anthony Joseph** – Shift Supervisor  
**Sergeant Dustin Tomlinson** – Assistant Shift Supervisor  
**Sergeant Dustin Poché** – Assistant Shift Supervisor  
**Sergeant Brett Forsythe** – Criminal Investigations  
**Sergeant Julie Scioneaux** – Criminal Investigations  
**Sergeant Keith Brooks** – Special Response Team (SRT) Leader  
**Corporal Raquel Banks** – Shift Supervisor for Corrections  
**Corporal Roderick Williams** – Shift Supervisor for Corrections  
**Corporal Latanya Sterling** – Shift Supervisor for Corrections  
**Corporal John Falgoust** – Shift Supervisor for Corrections



### Prevent Auto Break-ins

One of the most effective ways to deter auto burglary is to lock your car and never leave anything worth stealing in sight. Something of value in a vehicle is a target for thieves. Lock your car and always take your keys.

Register your bicycle at [stjamessheriff.com](http://stjamessheriff.com). If it is lost or stolen, returning it to you will be much easier with a record of ownership.



St. James Parish  
Sheriff's Office



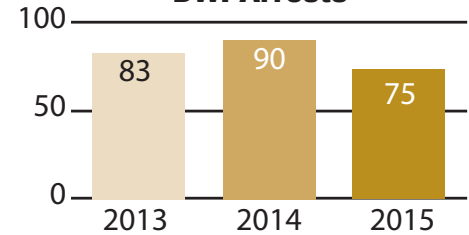
@St.JamesSO

## stjamessheriff.com

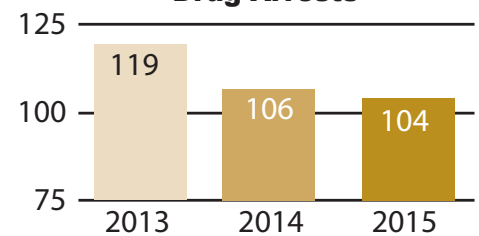
Visit our web site, [stjamessheriff.com](http://stjamessheriff.com) for news updates and many ways to interact and perform transactions with us online. While at our web site, sign up for Nixle alerts to receive Email and text bulletins on emergency situations and traffic problems. You can also find us on **Facebook** at "St. James Parish Sheriff's Office." Join us in strengthening our lines of communication to keep our community safe.

## The Numbers

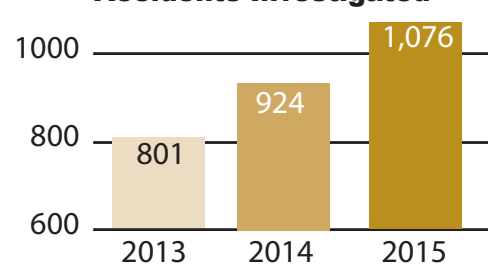
### DWI Arrests



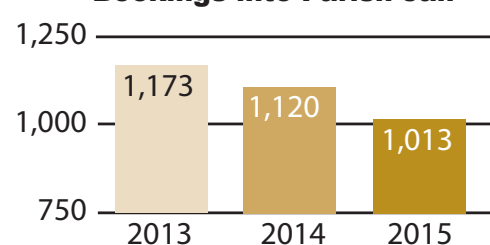
### Drug Arrests



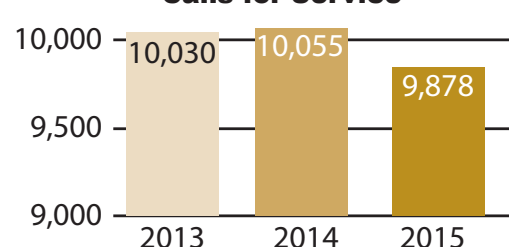
### Motor Vehicle Accidents Investigated



### Bookings into Parish Jail



### Calls for Service



Submit an anonymous crime tip at [stjamessheriff.com](http://stjamessheriff.com).





# St. James Parish Sheriff's Office

## Sheriff's Office Survey

In the last year, did you call the sheriff's office for assistance? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, did you dial the office number or 911? ☐ Office ☐ 911

In your neighborhood, what's the most important issue we can address?

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What programs currently sponsored by the SJPSO would you like to see expanded?

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Any suggestions on new community outreach efforts we could undertake?

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How long have you lived in St. James Parish and what is your zip code? \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to be contacted personally to discuss law enforcement issues in our parish, please provide your contact information.

Name	Address	Telephone	E-mail
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Please return to:

**Sheriff Willy J. Martin, Jr.**  
St. James Parish Sheriff's Office  
5800 Louisiana Highway 44  
Post Office Box 83  
Convent, Louisiana 70723  
225.562.2200 Fax: 562.2380

Post Office Box 27  
Vacherie, Louisiana 70090  
225.562.2510 Fax: 562.2512

### *Our Mission*

*The St. James Parish Sheriff's Office is committed to providing quality law enforcement to the residents, businesses and visitors of our parish. We strive to establish safe and secure communities so that our residents can live, prosper and have peace of mind.*

*Our primary goal is to serve and protect while exhibiting honesty, integrity, fairness and concern to all. By committing ourselves to the citizens of St. James Parish, we recognize the importance of our duty to make our parish a safe and secure place to live and grow.*

# Emergency Dial 9-1-1