

Unusual Volunteers:

SHERIFF'S OFFICE NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR RESERVE DEPUTIES

Silverdale, Wash. -- You may have watched police officers 'in action' on television; certainly the Fox Network production of "COPS" has garnered legions of viewers. Have you ever wondered, if given the opportunity to become involved in law enforcement, how would you measure up? You may have that opportunity.

The Kitsap County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) is now accepting applications for volunteer positions as a Reserve Deputy Sheriff. The deadline for application submission is 4:30 p.m., Friday, Sept. 26, 2003.

The Sheriff's Office is looking to bring on 20 reserve deputies, if possible. "The Sheriff's Office exists to keep communities safe by employing a wide spectrum of law enforcement resources. One of those resources is our reserve program," said Deputy Darren Andersson, reserve program coordinator. "Reserve deputies are all unpaid volunteers. This is unusual because they are serving their communities in potentially dangerous environments, not unlike volunteer firefighters. Our reserve officers give many hundreds of hours of their personal time, both on-duty and in training, to contribute to the community – to give of themselves to something greater than themselves."

Reserve deputies volunteer their time to support the Sheriff's Office mission. Typical duties performed by reserve deputies include criminal patrol, prisoner transportation from location of arrest to jail, security checks of buildings or residences, traffic control and crime scene security. Reserve deputies also play a large role in specialized community events, such as Whaling Days, the Kitsap County Fair & Stampede and Kingston SeaFest.

"The application process is the beginning," continued Deputy Andersson. "Every step to becoming a reserve deputy candidate involves a testing process. Successful completion of each phase allows an applicant to move forward to the Reserve Academy."

In order to qualify as a reserve deputy candidate, an applicant must meet these minimum requirements:

- Be a U. S. citizen
- No felony convictions
- Valid Washington State driver's license (out-of-state licenses allowed for active duty military)
- Acceptance of a completed application
- Pass the physical fitness/agility test
- Successfully complete a written exercise and an oral board interview
- Pass a truth verification test (polygraph or voice stress)
- Pass a psychological evaluation

Other requirements include the ability to attend monthly reserve association meetings and training, and a strong commitment to the program.. A reserve deputy must be willing and able to comply with all policies and regulations pertaining to the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office and the Reserve Association.

Once accepted as a reserve deputy candidate, applicants will begin their training academy which is tentatively scheduled to begin in early February. "Training is intense, both from an academic standpoint and from a physical standpoint," continued Deputy Andersson. "There is a lot of subject matter to cover, and proficiency must be gained in many areas. The pace of the reserve academy may seem daunting, yet with the right attitude and time management, it can be accomplished readily."

The reserve academy encompasses more than 200 contact hours of training, meeting every Tuesday and Thursday evening from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., and every Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for approximately 13 weeks. Successful completion of the reserve academy is required by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, in order for a candidate to be sworn & commissioned as a reserve Sheriff's deputy or a reserve police officer.

Subject matter covered by the reserve academy includes elements of criminal law, criminal procedures, firearms instruction and qualification, defensive tactics and emergency vehicle operations. Instructors include full-time KCSO deputies and police officers from local agencies, attorneys from the Kitsap County Prosecutor's Office and others with expertise in specific curriculums.

Where do reserve deputies come from? "Almost any field of employment that can be found locally," relates Deputy Andersson. "Thirty-five candidates completed and graduated from the most recent reserve academy, held from March to June 2002. Of that number 16 were Sheriff's Reserve Deputies and 19 candidates were from other agencies within the county to include Poulsbo, Bainbridge Island and Bremerton Police Departments. Their occupations ranged from restaurant server to active duty military; from landscaper to engineer, and from our own Sheriff's support staff to 911 dispatcher."

And the one thing that made the previous candidates stand-out and ultimately successful? “In addition to the absolute minimum requirements, a reserve candidate selection board is going to assess an applicant’s character,” stressed Deputy Andersson. “With time and training, we can teach a candidate to become a qualified reserve deputy or officer. What the applicant must bring to the process are strong ethics, common sense and a great deal of commitment. They are representatives of a law enforcement agency while on duty. The public expects professionalism and ethical behavior.”

“By policy, reserve deputies are expected to be in uniform and on duty for at least two, eight-hour shifts per month, as well as attendance at a monthly meeting. Most reserve deputies contribute much more than that,” continued Deputy Andersson. “Due to costs and other factors, coupled with operational requirements, we’re asking candidates to agree to a minimum two-year commitment as a reserve deputy. That takes a lot of commitment from one person... that’s a lot of time in uniform and away from their families.”

If you feel that you can meet the requirements, that you can volunteer a set amount of time each week and that you are up to the challenges of law enforcement work, then pick-up an application. The challenges are many, but the satisfaction derived from volunteer community service, the morale and unit cohesiveness found in a like group of contemporaries, and the insight gained into various aspects of law enforcement are immeasurable. “Earning a commission as a sworn reserve deputy or officer is not easily accomplished,” added Deputy Andersson. “It isn’t supposed to be. By doing so, however, it shows that an applicant has undergone a stringent verification, testing and qualification process that has few equivalents in the civilian sector. Reserve deputies and police officers are true unsung heroes.”

Applications may be obtained at:

Kitsap County Sheriff
Main Office (courthouse)
614 Division Street
Port Orchard, WA 98366

Kitsap County Sheriff
Central Office
3951 Randall Way, NW
Silverdale, WA 98383

Kitsap County Sheriff
North Office
26076 Illinois Avenue, NE
Kingston, WA 98346

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