

County Sheriffs

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

On July Fourteenth, I attended the "Del Norte Support Rural America Sheriffs" event in Crescent City. The program consisted of a panel of six county sheriffs from Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Modoc, Siskiyou and Tehama. About three hundred people attended. This meeting was the fifth in a series of eight town hall type meetings taking place this year. The reason: To allow the elected county sheriffs to communicate with their citizens, telling the public of their problems and challenges so that there is better understanding between law enforcement and the people they represent. It is time that communications improve between the public and their sheriffs. Your county sheriff is elected by you the people, not appointed like state and federal agency enforcement officers. All law enforcement officers are sworn to uphold the Constitution of the United States, and the state in which they serve, but the county sheriff is the one who answers to the citizens. The county sheriffs of Northern California pride themselves as being "Constitutional Sheriffs". They are interested in understanding both the federal and state constitutions thus enabling them to better enforce the constitutional laws of the land. One of the problems facing today's county sheriff is some of the state or federal law enforcement agencies enter the county, unannounced thus usurping the authority of the sheriff. Over the years, it has been understood that outside law enforcement agencies contact and enlist the help of the sheriff in the spirit of cooperation. This still holds true in most cases but now there are so many agencies, with law enforcement branches, that difficulties have been encountered. The primary concern of each sheriff is the safety of the citizens that he or she works for. I have just touched lightly on some of the reasons for these forums. The goals of the Constitutional Sheriff, as stated, are A. "identify issues affecting local citizens, local governments, local economies and sheriffs". B. "Coordinate support from citizens and sheriffs in neighboring counties". C. "Find practical solutions utilizing the Constitution as the law of the land." Overall, I found the three hour meeting to be interesting and enlightening with the sheriffs involved sincere in their efforts to build a better society for everyone. You can be proud of Humboldt County Sheriff Mike Downey. He represented our county well and I believe that we chose wisely when electing him. I would hope that Eureka might be chosen for a forum next year. If any of you have the chance to talk with Sheriff Downey, encourage him to entertain such a plan. For those of you who might be available this year to attend one of the remaining scheduled forums, I strongly urge you to attend. The three forums left are as follows: August Eighteenth, Twenty Twelve at the Ukiah Veteran's Hall, September Twenty Second in Grants Pass, Oregon and in October (date to be announced) in Redding.

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