

Pillar of the Community - First Responders

Eight- and one-half years ago when I first took office, our Police and Fire Departments were quite different than they are today. They were still staffed by dedicated individuals that stood ready to risk their lives to save ours, that's something that doesn't change. A career firefighter or career police officer has it in their genes, they are there to serve and do so without hesitation and without regard to their own safety. Sure, they want to live just like the rest of us, but they put themselves in harms way to make sure the citizen who is in danger has the best possible chance of survival.

If you have never entered a burning building or faced a person who is threatening to take another's life, it would be hard to imagine what a first responder might face on any given day.

But that is the nuts and bolts of the organization, that is who we hire and that is the job they do, they don't ask why, they just do it. And it's not just the First Responders, it's their support staff too. Visit the police station or fire station 2 and you will be exposed first hand to the great attitude and aptitude that the support staff has. Organizations like our police and fire don't happen by accident, they happen by great leadership. 8 ½ years ago, the police department had just changed chiefs and the fire department was not far behind. Both departments had multiple changes in leadership before we ended up with the gentlemen, we have in charge today. Organizations in and of themselves can be good just because of what they do, they become great because of their leadership and how it helps draw out the best in the employees that serve in them. That's where we are today, we have always been blessed with a good police and fire department, today we have a great police and fire department.

8 ½ years ago, we had to ask both departments to cut expenses by \$1 million each, both did so with the warning that some services would be cut. Well some were, but both departments stepped up and filled in the voids so that the effect on the residents was minimal. Both departments accepted modifications to their retirement plans which saved the city 10's of Millions of dollars and made their retirement wages far more secure.

But the Pillar of the Community award is not for what the members of each department do as part of their job on a daily basis, it is for what they have done, are doing, and will continue to do as a service to all the residents of Venice and to people who are less fortunate than many of us. It is what makes our departments different and makes them what they are:

Let's look first at what happened after Hurricane Michael. Both Police and Fire did not hesitate to go to the Panhandle to help those who felt helpless. Venice Fire became the Fire Department of Mexico Beach. They not only provided services that could not be provided by the local department, but they hauled up large quantities of needed supplies for the community and continue to haul donated items to areas that are still devastated today. Venice Police adopted Blountstown, FL and continue to support that area today. The community stepped in and donated a new washer and dryer for Blountstown so that their workers could have clean clothing as they helped to rebuild. I hope we never suffer through the destruction that the Panhandle went through, but I pray if we do, there is another city like Venice that steps up and does an unconditional act of love to help the recovery process begin and grow.

I'll start with the mission Statement of VPD followed by that of VFD: #1 followed by #2

These then are some of the "Extras" that our departments do, not because they must, but because they want to:

VPD #3 and #4

VFD #5

VPD# 6

VFD#7

VPD#8

VFD#9

VPD#10

VFD#11

VPD#12

These are just a sampling of the many “extra” things our police and fire departments do. Whenever one tries to calculate the cost of a department, they should also consider the benefits derived from that departments. Our departments give back whenever they can in any way they can and that’s what make them Pillars of the Community.

I am proud to know the men and women of our departments, proud of what they do for the community and proud to declare them Pillars of the Community.



Office of the Chief

CITY OF VENICE POLICE DEPARTMENT

TOM MATTMULLER ★ Chief



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The ultimate mission of the Venice Police Department is to provide public safety and preserve order for our citizens, visitors, schools and businesses. We accomplish this while guarding, without prejudice, the liberties of all those we encounter. We must be both approachable and transparent as an agency to become part of the community we serve.

Our responsibilities are varied, and we are committed to deliver superior service by interacting with our community to identify and solve problems.

Our Citizens, Our Community, Our Commitment

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❖ SHOP WITH A COP

The Venice Police Department and elementary students have participated in a thirty-five year tradition called Shop With A Cop. Every August, a VPD Officer and student are together for a day of back to school shopping. VPD Officers and students quickly bond to fill the shopping cart with school supplies and clothing. The day concludes with a lunch donated by a local restaurant. This event is possible through the generous donations of our citizens.

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❖ BLUE SANTA

The December holidays will often bring added stress to many families that are unable to provide a holiday meal and gifts for their children. Starting in October, the Venice Police Department partners with a local business to collect food and toys. Our local schools will assist the Venice Police Department to identify fifty families in a position of need for the holidays. The generous donations from the community and the partnership fostered with a local business allow us to ease the holiday stress by ensuring every family will have a meal and presents to open.

❖ Shark Tooth Fishing Tournament

In 2002, the Venice Police Department Marine Officers started the Shark Tooth Fishing Tournament. This annual event organized by the Marine Officers bring together charter

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"Our Citizens, Our Community, Our Commitment"

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boat captains who donate their time and boats to take Special Olympic Athletes fishing. After a morning of fishing, the athletes, captains and many volunteers return to the marina to complete the day with lunch and prizes. During the Shark Tooth Festival to support Special Olympics, athletes receive recognition with an award. This event continues to grow every year with sponsors, donations, and volunteers.

❖ ADVANCE, Class Room and Cops

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The Venice Police Department recognizes children are our greatest asset. Our goal is to provide every child the education, mentoring, and support they need to resist inappropriate decision making while enforcing the belief that everyone is treated with RESPECT. A Venice Police Officer teaching a five-week class to elementary students called ADVANCE, Avoiding Drugs Violence And Negative Choices Early, accomplishes all this.

❖ SAFE, Senior Assistance Freedom Enrichment

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The purpose of the Senior Assistance Freedom Enrichment program is to offer to our citizens a free service that will enhance their choice of independent living and freedom. It is the Police Department's hope and desire that citizens who use the SAFE Program will lead a longer, more active and productive life with the assurance that they are cared for by members of the Venice Police Department. The Department feels that the peace of mind offered by the program promotes good mental as well as physical health. We want to encourage independent living with a helping hand. Each day, a member of the Venice Police Department will contact the participant by telephone to check their welfare. If VPD is unable to reach the participant by telephone, an officer will be sent to check on their wellbeing.

❖ CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY

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The Venice Police Department has found that education has been the most effective in gaining understanding and support from the community. The Citizens Police Academy offers citizens insight into how police officers perform their duties and how the department serves the community. The 10-14 week program engages and excites our community members while educating them on what VPD Officers encounter on a daily basis. This program is the foundation of building a relationship with our citizens. Many of the Citizen Police Academy graduates will join with us as volunteers assisting with the many community outreach programs and those with very special skills continue to volunteer daily within the Department.



CITY OF VENICE FIRE DEPARTMENT

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② *"The mission of Venice Fire & Rescue is to promote, preserve and protect the safety of all members in the community utilizing effective fire prevention with community outreach programs while providing quality fire, rescue and emergency medical services with a commitment to excellence. Our top priority is to provide the best fire service to our great city while maintaining a high ISO rating."*

1. Community Outreach Program – The purpose of the Venice Fire Department's Community Outreach Program is to increase our presence, interaction and outreach to the residence we serve.

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- CPR/AED
- File of Life
- Fire Extinguisher Training
- Blood Pressure Checks
- Safety Program Presentations
- Visits to your local station
- Community Room at Station 3
- Participating at your public events
- Review your Emergency Plan
- TOT Finder Program
- Home Safety Survey
- Child Carseat Safety Checks

2. Muscular Dystrophy Association - "Fill The Boot". All proceeds from the firefighters' boot drives aid local children and adults affected by neuromuscular diseases. It provides leg braces, wheelchairs, communication devices, clinic visits, research, flu shots, repairs to durable medical equipment and a weeklong summer camp for children 6 years of age and older.

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3. ISO Rating of 2 - Insurance Service Offering

⑨ The Public Protection Classification program evaluates the efforts of the department in regards to fire protection services for the residents and property owners of Venice. This rating helps create fair premiums for insurance, generally offering lower premiums in communities with better protection.

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4. Benevolent Fund – "Primary goal is to help firefighter and local families during critical times of disparity." The Venice Firefighters Benevolent Fund is a separate entity from the City of Venice as it is independent organization recognized as a 501 c (3) non-profit charity. A volunteer board comprised of members of the Venice Fire Department lead it. Remaining members of the Department also support and participate the fund raising events. Assistance is provided in a variety of ways. Among these have been:

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- Financial for medical expenses
- Medically related home modifications related to medical needs
- Funeral assistance
- Emergency shelter assistance
- Specialized therapy assistance
- Supply/stock materials for school classrooms and nurses stations
- Provisions for food pantries
- Student assistance