



Washington Association of
**SHERIFFS &
POLICE CHIEFS**

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Greetings from your Executive Director:

Yes, last week was another eventful week for all of us, nationally and here in our state. I found a couple of interesting tidbits among the national news last week- and see if you draw any analogies to what we are dealing with in law enforcement right now-

First, Senator Lisa Murkowski, in her speech to the Senate regarding impeachment, pointed out the sharp political divide in our country, commented about "a careless media cheerfully tried to put out the fires with gasoline." Last Monday when the Iowa caucuses were delayed due to technological issues, and there was no results reported or information given, social media and 24-hour news channels went off into conjecture and conspiracy theories. They all began assuming negative intent. Researchers call this the "knowledge gap". When there is intense demand for information, and nothing is given, the vacuum is quickly filled with something else- which then becomes the story and it's hard to change it. Take any controversial issue or incident we handle, and this sounds very familiar.

Lanny Davis, former Presidential advisor and "crisis manager", uses the phrase, "Tell it early, tell it all, tell it yourself".

A recent good example: Bremerton PD had an incident in which an officer was on home surveillance video taking cash during a narcotics search warrant. The case was investigated by Tacoma PD and the officer was discharged. Rather than wait for the media to ask about it, or get a PDR, or react to questions, Chief Jim Burchett "told it early, told it all, and told it himself". He provided the video, since it was public anyway, and answered every question and took every interview. He expressed the department's outrage and disappointment, and made clear that this was not indicative of the men and women who made up the department. The story was clear and the coverage (while admittedly graphic because of the video) delivered the same positive message- this is not who we are, and we took assertive action. Great example of proactive response.

Many thanks to those of you who participated in our [Wear The Badge Washington](#) rollout at the end of January. We especially appreciate Cpl. Julia Valencia (Kirkland PD) and Officer Sebastian Castilleja (Kennewick PD) who added their voices of support about why they Wear The Badge in Washington. Here are links to some of the coverage - [Seattle PI](#), [KIRO-TV](#). We expect additional news coverage as we reach out to communities around the state to talk about the changing dynamics of a law enforcement career and give potential job candidates and the public a better understanding of what it's really like to work as a peace officer in the 21st Century. The event was livestreamed on Facebook and more than 875 watched the video in the first 24 hours! **We encourage everyone to "like" and "follow" @wearthebadgewa.org on your social media platforms.** Many departments have asked about filming your own videos. Everything you need will be sent out soon. Barbara Smith, Wear The Badge

Serving the Law Enforcement Community and the Citizens of Washington

Washington program manager can work directly with your staff to help us promote this exciting initiative - she can be reached at (206) 605-3392 or barbaras@waspc.org

TVW recently ran a segment on the **24/7 DUI Enforcement** program coordinated by WASPC- here is a [link](#).

There was a hearing last week on a good bill that increases the criminal penalties for Swatting, and we spoke in strong support- here is the [video](#) if you are interested.

Also, Sen. Steve O'Ban is sponsoring [SB 6109](#), which would create a pilot program to **bridge the gap between voluntary mental health treatment and Involuntary Treatment** holds, and create a court-appointed guardian in certain cases. Here is a [link](#) to the press conference on this bill which WASPC is supporting, as well as a [news story](#) about the content of the bill.

Many of you were able to attend the memorial service in Yakima last week for former **Yakima County Sheriff Brian Winter**, who also served as Treasurer for WASPC. Here is the [program](#) for those of you who could not attend.

Clark County Sheriff's Sgt. Fred Neiman recently retired after 40 years of service to Sheriff Atkins' agency, and sent [this message](#) out upon his retirement-- it's worth a read.

Have a good week -

Work Hard- Have Fun- Stay Safe

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