**Public Safety Highlights**

**Lowest Crime Rate in Florida in 41 Years.** The Department released the 2011 Annual Uniform Crime Report, which showed Florida’s crime rate dropped 0.8 percent compared to 2010, marking the lowest rate in the 41 years the Department has collected crime statistics. The total number of crimes dropped 0.1 percent last year. The number of violent crimes (murder, forcible sex offenses, robbery and aggravated assault) was down by 3.7 percent. The report showed a 0.2 percent decrease in the number of murders, a 0.1 percent decrease in forcible sex offenses, a 1.8 percent decrease in robberies and a 5 percent drop in aggravated assault. Non-violent crime (burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft) increased 0.4 percent. Burglary and larceny each rose 0.7 percent. The number of motor vehicle thefts decreased by 4.4 percent.

**FDLE Launches New Firearm Eligibility System.** The Department launched the new On-line Firearm Eligibility System, which is designed to improve the efficiency of receiving and processing criminal record searches submitted by licensed dealers for firearm purchases. Last year, FDLE’s Firearms Purchase Program processed more than 660,000 requests for background checks for gun purchases. The new system was initially available to large volume dealers and will allow for automated submissions and responses to reduce overall telephone call volume and wait time for staff and other dealers. It was successfully piloted with select Florida firearm dealers to ensure its stability and address last-minute system issues. Additional firearms dealers will be added in the upcoming months with full implementation set for September 2012.

**FDLE activates 500th Silver Alert.** In June 2012, the Department activated the 500th Florida Silver Alert. Since the inception of the program, Silver Alerts have contributed to the direct recovery of 63 missing seniors. Florida’s Silver Alert Plan was initiated by an executive order signed on Oct. 8, 2008 and was codified into law by the Florida Legislature in 2011. It is a standardized system to aid local law enforcement in the rescue of an elderly person with an irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties who goes missing. The plan calls for the broadcast of information via the media and highway message signs (when a vehicle is involved) to enlist citizens in the search for an endangered senior. Under the Silver Alert Plan, local law enforcement agencies are encouraged to develop policies and procedures that work best in their respective jurisdictions.

FDLE members, along with members from the Department of Elder Affairs, the health care community, law enforcement and other entities, serve on the Silver Alert Support Committee, which helps formulate model policies, develop training and promote awareness. Floridians are encouraged to sign up to receive Silver Alerts via e-mail at [www.elderaffairs.state.fl.us](http://www.elderaffairs.state.fl.us). To learn more about Florida’s Silver Alert Plan, visit [www.fdle.state.fl.us](http://www.fdle.state.fl.us).
Missing Alzheimer’s Disease Patient Initiative. With Florida’s large elderly population it is imperative that law enforcement be well-versed on Alzheimer’s disease and utilize available resources to ensure every officer understands his or her role in the handling persons with Alzheimer’s. In 2009, the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, awarded the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) with the Missing Alzheimer’s Disease Patient Initiative. This is an 18-month project from an Advisory Board of subject matter experts that includes representation from FDLE. This project seeks to educate law enforcement on three main areas of responding to persons with Alzheimer’s disease:

- Basic disease education appropriate for law enforcement;
- Best interaction practices for persons with Alzheimer’s; and
- Search and rescue strategies specific to mindset of the missing person with Alzheimer’s.

The focus of this initiative is missing patients, but in the course of the Board’s work, they discovered there is a general lack of information available to law enforcement about Alzheimer’s disease, the role law enforcement has in interaction with persons with Alzheimer’s, and effective interaction/intervention techniques. To date, the project has produced a training presentation and a model policy, both of which are available via the IACP website.

Florida Law Enforcement eXchange. Last year, the state celebrated completion of all eight regional law enforcement data sharing systems, including Smart Cop (Northwest Florida), Tampa Bay Security Network, FINDER (Central Florida), LINX (Northeast Florida) and R-LEX (North, Southwest and Southeast Florida and the State Node). Each system receives data from more than one hundred law enforcement entities per region. This gives law enforcement an edge over sophisticated and mobile criminals, resulting in greater domestic security while enhancing the safety of officers, visitors and the public.

The Florida Law Enforcement eXchange (FLEX) project to link these regional systems together is underway. As a result, queries run by any investigator or analyst will collect and combine data from all the connected regional systems. Any participating agency in any region will be able to access and combine data from all regions in the state. This will significantly limit the ability of a criminal to easily move around the state undetected. The FLEX project will be implemented in stages. The first stage is to build a prototype by connecting two of the regional data sharing systems. This will enable a query generated from either of these two systems to pull information from both systems. The subsequent stages will add functionality and additional regions, until all regions in Florida are linked.