

# Public-Private Partnerships: Community Partnership Evolving into Uncharted Territory

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## *Abstract*

*Public-Private Partnerships are one answer to dwindling public budgets. Working with the community to partner up for a special project, community program, or to purchase a needed piece of equipment can help to meet the needs of both the law enforcement agency and the business partner. The public agency is able to get a needed item or program that it wouldn't otherwise be able to purchase. Conversely, when the private company partners with law enforcement they benefit by showing they care about the community and what their values truly are. Sixty-seven (67) Florida Sheriff's were sent an eight (8) question survey, thirty (30%) percent responded. Of the thirty (30%) percent who responded eighty (80%) percent answered yes they would be open to the idea of entering into a Public-Private Partnership. Three (3) business executives were interviewed and all stated a sense of duty to their community as a main reason to enter into Public-Private Partnerships. Public-Private Partnerships work because the two entities work together, toward a common goal ultimately helping each other and most importantly, the community.*

## Introduction

Current economic times are difficult at best. The public sector has been affected especially hard. Administrators and directors are presented with difficult decisions dealing with decreasing budgets cuts. Managers are not only asked to make drastic cuts while maintaining current levels of service but also tasked with finding new ways to fund projects. Grant money is not always the answer due to decreased availability, as well as restrictions on the use of the grant money. Public-Private partnerships between law enforcement agencies and other non-profit groups have been around for many years with great success. Current economic times are forcing leaders to explore expanded uses for public-private partnerships.

Public-Private partnerships have flourished for many years in law enforcement. At the Volusia County Sheriffs Office (VCSO) alone they have had several partnerships with other community groups. One such group is the Volusia County School Board (VCSB). VCSO and VCSB have had a partnership for the better part of the last 15 years. Their partnership equally funds School Resource Deputies in all ten (10) public high schools as well as several middle schools within their county. Without this partnership, the sheriff's office would be unable to fund this initiative on their own. This partnership makes the schools safer for the students who attend them and provides an opportunity for law enforcement to work closely with area youth who might never have a positive encounter with law enforcement without the initiative (Smith, 2010).

Another partnership the Volusia County Sheriff's Office has had for many years is with their local trauma center, Halifax Health Medical Center. This unique partnership links two tax-payer funded entities together; each has a need for a part-time helicopter for completely different purposes. Halifax Hospital needs a helicopter for emergency medical transports while the sheriff's office needs a helicopter to assist law enforcement for a variety of duties. Neither organization could fund or justify the expense of the part-time duties. By joining together they are able to provide necessary emergency medical transports and assist law enforcement with a variety of functions. Their partnership calls for the hospital to fund the cost of the helicopters and the sheriff's office to fund the cost of the personnel and up keep. By all accounts both parties are satisfied with the partnership (Feasel, 2007).

In 2001, the Volusia County Sheriff's Office formed an even different partnership with several local businesses to help raise money to benefit the Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranches (FSYR). They started with a fund-raiser at a local race car track. After years of doing several different events they created a charitable organization called the Volusia County Sheriffs Office Charity Committee, Inc. To date they have held numerous community fund-raising events which have helped raise over a quarter million dollars for the FSYR. During their events they partnered with local and national companies who donated money to their charity. This partnership seems to benefit both the sheriff's office charity and those companies who partnered with them by donating money to their benefits (About Us, 2010).

It was out of one of these partnerships that a relationship was made with a local audio dealer. The Volusia County Sheriff's Office (VCSO) had a brand new Lincoln Aviator seized from a drug dealer. VCSO wanted to utilize this vehicle in its D.A.R.E. program to help grab the children's attention so they partnered with the audio dealer and they wrapped the outside of the vehicle in flashy colors mixed with their insignia and installed approximately \$15,000 worth of sound and lighting equipment. At the time it was the envy of all the deputies to get a chance to drive it! This was a positive example of public-private partnership. The audio dealer also put his company logo along with the other companies who helped with the project on the outside of the vehicle as advertising (Soundcrafters Builds VCSO, 2006).

Public-private partnerships with law enforcement have been going on for years. Is there a limit? Is it acceptable to partner with non-profit organizations but not with for profit companies? Is partnering with private companies ethical for law enforcement? Does this create an appearance of favoritism? Is posting the company name of companies that have donated proper? What, if any restrictions should be imposed? These are just some of the questions posed for the purpose of this study and hope to be answered through this research.

## Literature Review

Public-private partnerships with law enforcement have been going on since the birth of our country. When the Sheriff or Marshal of a territory needed additional manpower he would reach out to local businessmen or townspeople to create a posse. Even today, public-private partnerships still exist and there appears to be no end in sight. Chief Joseph C. Carter, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and

President of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) discuss increased responsibilities and a need to work closely with private companies in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 tragedies. Chief Carter says, "... a growing number of private companies have been awakened to a sense of corporate citizenship—meaning a sense of responsibility to share their resources and expertise for the greater good of the United States" (Carter, 2011). He is specifically discussing private security companies working with local law enforcement to secure the many different sensitive areas they secure and the need for local law enforcement to not only work with them but to also assist in their training. Chief Carter stresses the importance of these public-private partnerships; he discusses how the IACP believes so much in these partnerships that in 1986 they created the Private Sector Liaison Committee (PSLC) to work closely with the private sector on new research, debate issues, and several other areas. Furthermore, the IACP has formed a partnership with the Target Company and their ongoing program called Target & Blue. Through this partnership they have built two separate state-of-the-art forensics laboratories to help protect its assets and employees. They are located in Minneapolis and Las Vegas. Over 125 different law enforcement agencies have had evidence processed at these facilities (Carter, 2011). According to the Target Store's web site, this is just one example of numerous law enforcement grants they give out to law enforcement throughout the country. One such grant was awarded to the Spring Valley Police Department in Rockland County, New York. Target gave them \$2,000 in electronic equipment including digital cameras, memory sticks, and a 40-inch computer monitor they can use to scroll through pictures of wanted people in their local area (O'Rourke, 2010).

"In 2000, the IACP launched an even more ambitious project, Operation Cooperation, a national initiative to encourage partnerships between law enforcement and private security professionals". (Carter, 2011) This initiative established guidelines and forged the way for numerous community partnerships all over the nation. This is an ever increasing trend throughout the nation, where people are looking for a less expensive option to keep property and high profile assets secure. The IACP in conjunction with the American Society for Industrial Security, the National Association of Security Companies, and the National Sheriffs' Association developed curriculum for private security officer selection, training, and licensing guidelines. They even went a step further to develop guidelines for security companies who wish to form partnerships in the future (Carter, 2011).

If there is one thing everyone inside and outside of law enforcement can agree on is that everything having to do with law enforcement changed after September 11, 2001. Time will tell if the same will be true of the recession we are currently in, which roughly started in 2008. The current economic crisis has brought sweeping cuts in law enforcement along with the need to find cheaper ways of protecting our world. Al Youngs had foresight into this issue and wrote, "Today's police departments are under monumental pressure to perform, keep crime rates low, and do it all with fewer resources. Agencies can accomplish this seemingly impossible mandate by supportive partnerships with private security providers" (Youngs, 2004). He details a historical look at enforcing the law where he explains law enforcement solely by the government is a relatively new concept and historically public-private partnerships were more commonplace across Europe into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

“Fortunately, privatization of certain police department functions has proven a powerful solution to the problem” (Youngs, 2004). Explaining, “Some federal agencies have saved as much as 50 percent by hiring contractors to provide services” (Youngs, 2004). In these tough economic times that amount of savings is essential for survival in the era of ever shrinking budgets. Youngs describes how police spend approximately 20% of their time on crime-related matters. If they could free law enforcement officers from peripheral duties they would be able to spend more of their time deterring crime. In 2001 the Volusia County Sheriff’s Office did this very thing. They hired civilian process servers to serve non-enforceable civil process in lower crime areas throughout the county. This enabled them to use less, more expensive sworn personnel man-hours and still perform the same level of service. The sworn personnel could then focus more of their time on more high profile/liability cases, which increased our production and reduced overall costs (Davidson, 2001).

The Atlanta Police Foundation was established in 2003 to help support the mission and initiatives of the Atlanta Police Department and the City of Atlanta Georgia. The foundation works with the chief of police and other elected officials to determine what projects or incentives are needed to further their mission. The foundation then partners with community sponsors to support the programs with private monies not public tax payer dollars. The foundation currently supports such community programs as Crime Stoppers, Mounted Patrol – Adopt a Horse, and Housing Incentives to name a few. In each of these programs they seek private support for these community programs. They boast 82% of the donations received go to the programs they sponsor (Welcome to the, 2011). Without these community partnerships these community programs would not exist.

In Florida there are similar programs that are based on public-private partnerships as well. The Daytona Beach Police Foundation sole program to date is the sponsorship of their officers to further their education at local area colleges. “Promotions within the Daytona Beach Police Department are tied to educational attainment. As a result, officers are encouraged to pursue degrees from associate to masters. To help officers attain their educational goals more quickly and affordably, the DBPF will provide officers with tuition assistance from the scholarship fund” (Programs, 2011). The city can not afford to pay its officers to go to college yet requirements for promotion are directly related to college degrees. This partnership makes it possible for officers to further their education, both bettering themselves and the community they serve. The education they receive is at no cost to the city they work for but directly benefits their city through better trained officers and employees who are less likely to leave their employment thus costing the city more money in the long run (Programs, 2011).

The Volusia County Sheriff’s Office has created its own non-profit charity. This charity works with local businesses to raise money to benefit underprivileged children at the Florida Sheriff’s Youth Ranches. The partnerships between the sheriff’s office and the local businesses benefit both parties. The sheriff’s office is able to raise money for a very worthy cause while the businesses, receive a tax break for their donation but also receive advertising and affiliation with the sheriff’s office. (About Us, 2010) This very affiliation lends to the question, when does a community partnership become a conflict of interest?

These partnerships were taken to the next level after a series of tornadoes struck Volusia County. During the tornado disaster, the Volusia County Sheriff's Office discovered a need for a mobile field kitchen and a mobile shower unit. They found when disaster struck they were ill-equipped to feed or bathe their first responders. Unfortunately, they did not have the money budgeted for such a large one-time expense so they reached out to their community partners. Several local Rotary Clubs and businesses agreed to donate the \$24,000 needed to purchase the needed equipment. After the sheriff's office purchased and marked the equipment with VCSO insignia they also affixed the company names and logos on the outside of the equipment recognizing those businesses who contributed money. This was viewed as a creative positive partnership where needed equipment was able to be purchased at no expense to the tax-payers (Volusia County Sheriffs, 2007).

The Daytona Beach Police department recently received negative press coverage for a partnership with a local attorney during a local special event. During Biktoberfest, an annual special event, 2010 a local Segway company donated the use of several Segways to the police department for use to help get around the crowded streets during the Biktoberfest event. The Segways did not come with any police markings so to help identify them as "police vehicles" they partnered with a local law firm who agreed to purchase shields and pay for them to be marked with Daytona Beach Police Department insignias. The law firm also put their company logo on the same placards under the police department logo. A win-win for both parties, however, not everyone thought this was a good idea. The local news media felt this could be construed as a conflict of interest if the officers on the Segways made an arrest, the subjects may believe they have a better chance in court if they were represented by "partners of the police". Kelly Feeley, an associate professor of law at Stetson University in Gulfport said "It becomes a question of whether the police department is endorsing that attorney as the one to call if you have an accident," "I think it puts them (police) in an unexpected potential conflict because perception can sometimes be everything" (Longa, 2010).

What determines if a partnership is appropriate or not? Why is one legitimate business better or worse than another? If a company is willing to donate a certain sum of money or cover the cost of a needed item that couldn't be purchased otherwise, who or what makes a partnership proper or not?

## Methods

Information gathered from this research survey was to determine the scope and use of Public-Private Partnership with Florida Sheriff's Offices throughout the State of Florida. The eight (8) question research surveys were sent to each of the sixty-seven (67) Sheriff's offices in the State of Florida. The research study was emailed to each Office of the Sheriff with the intent to be answered by the Sheriff or command staff designee. The maximum responses would be sixty-seven (67).

This research study dissects how Public-Private Partnerships are currently used between the sixty-seven Florida Sheriff Offices and local businesses along with the open-mindedness of agency heads to explore utilizing Public-Private Partnership. With the uncertain economic future of Florida on the horizon, this study further discusses how

agencies can expect more Public-Private Partnerships in the future to make up for shortfalls in our tax-base. Creating partnerships with the private sector may not only benefit the law enforcement agencies but it may help private companies with being a “good neighbor” within the community they serve. Thus, improving the public image and helping law enforcement protect and serve the community they live and work in.

The research in this study was collected using a web-based survey company. The survey was then electronically sent to each prospective Sheriff or command staff designee, one survey for each Sheriff’s Office in the State of Florida. The request was sent within a short email where the reason and need for the survey were explained.

Additional information was collected through interviews. Interviews were conducted with three (3) business leaders from different size and type of businesses. The selected businesses were chosen due to their long history of partnering with law enforcement agencies toward a common goal. The companies are from different types of industry and have different relationships to law enforcement. One is a global company serving customers throughout the world. The second is a statewide company who services several different areas throughout the state of Florida. The third is a local company who has a singular, county wide market.

## Results

The eight (8) question survey was sent out to all sixty-seven sheriffs departments in the state of Florida. The survey was to be completed by the Sheriff or Command Staff designee. Twenty (20) of the sixty-seven (67) agencies responded making a response rate of 30% (.29850). Each surveyor completed every question within the survey.

The first question asked: If your agency was in need of a specific piece of equipment or special project but the funds were not available, would your agency consider seeking funds from a private company to help fund the equipment or special project? Eighty (80%) percent of responses answered that they would seek funds from a private company if they were in such need.

The second question asked: Does your agency (currently or previously) engage in any of the following Public-Private Partnerships: (please check all that apply) with choices of: School Resource Officers, D.A.R.E., Fund Raising, Business Partners, Special Projects, Other. Eighty-five percent (85%) said they had/have a school resource program. Forty-five (45%) percent said they had/have a D.A.R.E. program. Forty (40%) percent have done some type of fund raising. Forty (40%) percent had/have business partners. Fifty (50%) percent conduct special projects. Three (3) respondents added specific comments: 1) Teen Driving Challenge 2) Very successful volunteer program and 3) Donations from Veterinarians for K9 armor annually.

The third question asked: Does your agency have (currently or previously) a Public-Private Partnership with a local or national business? If yes, please explain briefly. This question was split down the middle with fifty (50%) percent answering yes and no. Ten (10) respondents added the following comments:

1. School board
2. We teamed up together with a local company to buy a piece of equipment.
3. We partner with several local and national businesses on community projects.

4. Teen driver challenge, insurance companies are solicited for financial backing.
5. Both partnered with us to support our K-9 program
6. D.A.R.E. Teen Driver Challenge
7. Every year we hold a local "Beat the Sheriff" 5K race to benefit a charity. We reach out to many local businesses to raise money for the charity.
8. Several area businesses have helped with neighborhood beautification projects. Over 200 area businesses support our summer youth program.
9. ABL Food Service - Jail food service
10. See above

The fourth question asked: To your knowledge, has your agency ever been approached by a private company to assist in funding a piece of equipment or special project that your agency declined? If yes, please briefly describe. Eighty (80%) percent answered no they had not been approached. Five had added written responses:

1. Local company bought piece of equipment
2. Lots of companies offering to write grants but not provide funding
3. Disaster response equipment to be used mostly after hurricanes
4. D.A.R.E. Vehicle
5. We have had business leaders offer to purchase a dog for a K-9 program

The fifth question asked: Does your agency promote/advertise any company on any of their vehicles or equipment or special item that was obtained in conjunction with a Public-Private Partnership? If yes, please explain briefly. Seventy (70%) percent answered no. Of the six (6) that answered yes, they added the following comments:

1. Not really, we have Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube stickers on our vehicles.
2. We post their names on the equipment stating, donated by (the donor)
3. D.A.R.E. Vehicle has a sponsor
4. We sell web space on our site to attorneys and bail bondsmen.
5. Target assisted us with our Crime Prevention Van and they are credited on the Van.
6. Our "Beat the Heat" race car was partially renovated with donations from the Gainesville Raceway and has a sticker saying that on it

The sixth question asked: Would your agency consider promoting/advertising a company name or logo if you engaged in a Public-Private Partnership in the future? This question was split down the middle with fifty (50%) percent answering yes and no.

The seventh question asked: If approached by a company (who your agency shared like values with) to assist in purchasing a piece of equipment or with a special project, would you engage in such a partnership if the company wanted to have their company name affixed to the item or project? If No, please briefly describe. Seventy-five (75%) percent of the respondents answered yes to the question. Four (4) of the five (5) added written comments:

1. Our policy is not to engage in marketing private companies.

2. Would have to examine the merits on a case by case basis and ensure there are no present or potential political ties. Would need to ensure everything was ethically correct. This would have to apply to question number 3 below as well.
3. Would completely depend on the assistance from BOCC and budget constraints
4. Obviously with certain restrictions.

The eighth question asked: After answering these questions and thinking about this topic; do you think your agency would be open to the idea of entering into Public-Private Partnerships with private companies in the future? Eighty (80%) percent answered yes they would be open to the idea of entering into a Public-Private Partnership.

The results of the survey give a detailed picture why Public-Private Partnerships work. What it does not answer is why a business would want to get involved with Public-Private Partnerships with law enforcement. How does it benefit the business? Do they expect anything out of the partnership?

Three business executives who are currently actively involved in Public-Private Partnerships with law enforcement agencies as well as ventures agreed to be interviewed and shared the reasons why they engage in these partnerships.

Communications International, Inc. (CI) is a global corporation and industry leader in communications equipment for law enforcement agencies throughout the state of Florida and beyond. CI has a long history of community involvement, "giving back", and partnering with the Florida Sheriff's Association as well as local law enforcement agencies throughout the state. Katie Erfurt, Marketing Coordinator for CI said, "Public-Private partnerships allow our company to work side by side with agencies in our community in areas that are important to one another. We are able to step outside of the normal day to day work environments and show that we care about what is important to them, as well as taking care of them as a customer. Both parties are given the opportunities to make a difference in the community, where it might have been difficult without the partnership in place. These partnerships allow for the sometimes daunting task, event or purchase to be possible. I believe that the expectations sought are that the agency will recognize in certain times or situations, who was there for them when others were not, who is willing to be in the trenches with them to make something happen and who they in turn should look to support when it is needed on the other side" (Erfurt, Personal Communication, 2011).

Bright House Networks (BHN) serves most of the communities in the Central Florida and Tampa areas. As a company, they are committed to supporting the local community. In addition to law enforcement, they consistently support education, after school programming and safety. Their sponsorships range from year-round recognition with non-profit organizations and public venues to taking a leadership role in community events. Joe Cordaro, Sr. Director of Operations/GM Northeast Operations for BHN in Daytona Beach had this to say, "Bright House Networks supports law enforcement for several reasons. Most importantly, it strengthens the community in which we live. Our involvement in a Public-Private partnership with law enforcement demonstrates a



commitment to our customers and our community, helping to make it a safer, better place to live.

Having a strong relationship with law enforcement improves communication and helps raise our awareness of important legal issues. Increased understanding helps us operate safely, reduces our exposure to crime and keeps us in step with local law enforcement priorities. Familiarity with staff members and their roles is very helpful when we mobilize in response to storm damage, for example.

As partners and sponsors, we support priority projects like school safety, community education, gun buy-backs and crime prevention; Bright House Networks *Project Bright Eyes* is a good example” (Cordero, Personal Communication, 2011).

Politis Law Firm is a local company with its main office in Volusia County, Florida. Owner, Michael Politis grew up in Volusia County. After receiving his degree in law he returned to the community where he grew up. He began his law career as a prosecutor in the Daytona Beach with the State Attorney's office. Several years later he started his own practice and continues to sponsor numerous community events including several events with local police departments and the sheriff's office. Politis Law Firm is proud of their community involvement and continues to be a leader in the community in many areas. Mr. Politis shared, “My support of law enforcement goes back to my early career as a state prosecutor, when my respect and admiration of those men and women in uniform grew exponentially. And, as I built a successful private practice, it made perfect sense for me to further my support of law enforcement by partnering with those same agencies that continue to protect and serve those in our community. From a business owner's perspective, devoting both your time and money the right way is critical to your future. What better way to allocate your marketing dollars but to invest with a group of people you respect and admire, while at the same time providing support to a few very worthy charities. You can advertise to the masses all day long, but it doesn't tell people what you really stand for – what you believe in. I believe in Justice – and the members of law enforcement are the first step to ensuring we all have the same chance at it” (Politis, Personal Communication, 2011).

## Discussion

In reviewing the data, most agencies would be open to the idea of Public-Private Partnerships with almost half already having success to varying degrees with them. The data shows the concept of Public-Private Partnerships is very common; however, people understanding that they are involved in a Public-Private Partnerships is less common. Many have partnerships for typical law enforcement functions like School Resource Officers, D.A.R.E., etc. Most respondents have not thought beyond the basic partnerships. Most agencies appear to be uncomfortable advertising their partnerships or using partnerships that might become a political liability. The data reveals most agencies would seek a partnership for a specific necessity but would not make it a common occurrence. However, the majority of the agencies would be open to a partnership if initiated by the business partner. In the final question, the respondents were asked if after reading and completing the survey would they participate in a Public-Private Partnerships. Eighty (80%) percent said they would be open to entering into a

Public-Private Partnership. This shows that presented with the right circumstances the vast majority of agencies understand partnerships can be beneficial to both parties.

Public-Private Partnerships have been around from the dawn of time. At some point law enforcement discovered the benefits of partnering with other entities whose goals were similar. The school resource program is the first type of partnership most people think of. Public-Private Partnerships exist for various reasons. While on vacation recently in the Bahamas there was a small building erected next to an open air market that said "Police Substation." Under the sign was a separate sign that thanked a local family by name and said the building was made possible by their support. A few years ago on a family trip to our nation's capital you could see these types of partnerships in action. Washington D.C. is policed by a variety of resources including contracted private security. Some less liability positions have been replaced with the lower cost private security. The United States Capital Police are in a partnership with a security company to secure our nation's capital. This partnership was initiated to save money and to free up more highly trained officers for higher liability assignments. This is a different type of partnership but it is a partnership none the less. These types of partnerships are everywhere. In the example above of the school resource officer, both law enforcement and the school systems wanted the schools to be safer and found the best way was to put a deputy on campus. Most times school resource officer positions are funded by a 50-50 split with each side paying half of the expense of the officer.

The data shows law enforcement is open to the idea of partnerships but they are still very skeptical. Those agencies that have been progressive and found Public-Private Partnerships as creative ways to meet short falls in their budgets are of course more open to thinking outside the box. These agencies also have several different partnerships. The survey shows once an agency becomes comfortable with partnerships, their partnership ideas become limitless. They are open to unique partnerships to suit their needs. Conversely, agencies that have not had a great deal of experience in partnerships are apprehensive to creating new partnerships due to their unfamiliarity.

When unfamiliar, the idea of Public-Private Partnerships can be overwhelming. They can be seen as a daunting task. Approaching a company or corporation asking them for money for something they have no real need for; can be unnerving. Additionally, selling the idea to your staff, your agency's governing body and your community can be difficult. However, the partnerships can be as simple as an agreement to work together for a common goal. Finding the right community partner for the right job or special project is the key. Using the school resource officer as a perfect example; partnering the right people to satisfy one another's needs. That is all it takes.

It starts with an idea or a need that is unfunded, combined with a little imagination. Agency X discovers it is in need of a specific piece of equipment but they do not have the funds to purchase it. If the equipment is absolutely essential, the governing body will always find a way to purchase the item. However, what if the item fills a great need but is not a mandatory item. What do they do? Go without the item; wait until the next budget year? Possibly, but what if that is not possible. A Public-Private Partnership is one option. Partnering with the right community partner or partners can solve the problem. The survey shows Florida Sheriff Offices are open to the idea of partnering with community businesses but they don't actively seek out these

partnerships. The irony is most agencies have a grant writer on staff to get money from the government so why not a *partnership writer*, someone who is actively seeking ways to work with the community. With the current economic times in a downturn the Federal government doesn't have the additional capital to offer as many grants as it once did. Therefore, finding additional sources of money to fund projects is essential.

A concern for any public agency or elected official is the appearance of impropriety. Several survey responses dealt with this. Finding a partner who shares your agency's and your community's values is of utmost importance. There are benefits to the community partners. In most cases there are tax breaks for any donation they make. On a more fundamental basis companies are made up of people who want to be community minded and simply be a good neighbor. Katie Erfurt of Communications International said, "Public-Private partnerships allow our company to work side by side with agencies in our community in areas that are important to one another. We are able to step outside of the normal day to day work environments and show that we care about what is important to them, as well as taking care of them as a customer. Both parties are given the opportunities to make a difference in the community, where it might have been difficult without the partnership in place" (Erfurt, Personal Communication, 2011). Ms. Erfurt explains the importance of community and caring. Why would Communications International, a global company known throughout the world care so much about the local communities? Because, as she simply put, it might not be possible without their help and the Public-Private Partnership. Joe Cordero of Brighthouse Networks echoes Ms. Erfurt's feelings when he says, "Bright House Networks supports law enforcement for several reasons. Most importantly, it strengthens the community in which we live. Our involvement in a Public-Private partnership with law enforcement demonstrates a commitment to our customers and our community, helping to make it a safer, better place to live" (Cordero, Personal Communication, 2011). Their concern about the community, their desire to give back and to help local law enforcement is what drives them to be a community partner. Of course the additional publicity and association with a community project that has feel-good charm helps promote their positive image within the community thus making them more marketable to their customers. When a law enforcement agency partners with a respected community oriented company, it is a win-win situation for everyone. I believe Michael Politis of a local community law firm summed it up the best, "You can advertise to the masses all day long, but it doesn't tell people what you really stand for – what you believe in" (Politis, Personal Communication, 2011). Partnering with law enforcement is about character, duty, and honor. It shows what your company's values are all about.

## Recommendations

Public-Private Partnerships are viable ways to help law enforcement agencies with shortfalls in their budgets. These private funds help purchase equipment, further community programs, and assist local law enforcement agencies with numerous other items of projects. Many agencies have different forms of partnerships. I believe with greater education, understanding of the benefits, and the ethical use of Public-Private Partnerships more agencies would be involved in the partnerships. I would suggest

within the state of Florida an organization, like perhaps the Florida Sheriff's Association (FSA); take the lead in educating the sheriffs and other leaders on the benefits of Public-Private Partnerships. This can be done at one of their annual conferences. With having the FSA involved more national and larger statewide companies would be enticed to participate in partnerships with Florida law enforcement agencies. This would foster more community programs and allow the agencies to purchase state-of-the-art equipment to better service their citizens. Additionally, the FSA could create an education program teaching a new position of *partnership writer*. This program would educate trained professionals how to ethically initiate Public-Private Partnerships to help benefit both the agency and the community partner. These educational programs would not only save the taxpayers money but would foster a strong bond between our local law enforcement and our community business leaders. This strong relationship will lead to additional partnerships and a greater support of our local law enforcement.

Lieutenant Charles Brown has been in law enforcement for 15 years with the Volusia County Sheriff's Office. During his career as a deputy he has worked Patrol, School Resource Deputy, Evidence, and Court Services. He has supervised Patrol, Court Services, Civil, and served as Watch Commander. He is currently the Assistant District Commander for northeast Volusia County. Lt. Brown has an A.A. Degree in Criminal Justice from Daytona State College and a Bachelor's Degree in Organizational Management from Warner Southern College.

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## Appendix A

### Survey

1. If your agency was in need of a specific piece of equipment or special project but the funds were not available, would your agency consider seeking funds from a private company to help fund the equipment or special project?
2. Does your agency (currently or previously) engage in any of the following Public-Private Partnerships: (please check all that apply).
  - School Resource Officers
  - D.A.R.E.
  - Fund Raising
  - Business Partners
  - Special Projects
  - Other
3. Does your agency have (currently or previously) a Public-Private Partnership with a local or national businesses? If yes, please explain briefly.
4. To your knowledge, has your agency ever been approached by a private company to assist in funding a piece of equipment or special project that your agency declined? If yes, please briefly describe.
5. Does your agency promote/advertise any company on any of their vehicles or equipment or special item that was obtained in conjunction with a Public-Private Partnership? If yes, please explain briefly.
6. Would your agency consider promoting/advertising a company name or logo if you engaged in a Public-Private Partnership in the future?
7. If approached by a company (who your agency shared like values with) to assist in purchasing a piece of equipment or with a special project, would you engage in such a partnership if the company wanted to have their company name affixed to the item or project? If No, please briefly describe
8. After answering these questions and thinking about this topic; do you think your agency would be open to the idea of entering into Public-Private Partnerships with private companies in the future?