

2011 NSA CRIME VICTIM SERVICES AWARD

Orangeburg County, South Carolina, Sheriff's Office



Left to Right: JV Venable, Sheriff (ret.) Aaron Kennard (NSA Executive Director), Thomas Seigle (President, Public Safety Services Group, Appriss, Inc.), Sheriff Leroy Ravenell (Orangeburg County, SC), Chandra McPherson (Victim Advocate, Orangeburg County, SC), Major Ren Williams (Supervisor, Victim Services Unit, Orangeburg County, SC), and Sheriff B.J. Roberts (NSA President)

The NSA Crime Victim Services Award was established in 2005 with funding support from the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Since 2008, the award has been generously sponsored by Appriss, Inc. NSA's Crime Victim Services Committee administers this award program which recognizes "outstanding achievement by a Sheriff's Office in support of victims." The award recipient for 2011 is the Orangeburg County, South Carolina, Sheriff's Office, headed by the newly elected Sheriff Leroy Ravenell. Former Sheriff Larry Williams passed away on September 21, 2010.

The Victims' Services Unit of the Orangeburg County Sheriff's Office works diligently and enthusiastically to provide exceptional and compassionate services to the citizens and visitors of Orangeburg County.

The role of the Victims' Advocates is multifaceted. They respond to victims and provide support, information, and transportation during court appearances. They intervene on behalf of victims with creditors and employers. They host community events and invite special guest speakers, including survivors. They meet with crime watch and other community groups. And they display victim-related literature and posters in those areas within the Sheriff's Office most heavily trafficked by the public.

In addition, each summer the Sheriff's Office engages youth and teens through its Youth Enrichment Days. At these events, staff from the Sheriff's Office, including the Victims' Services Unit, go into the community and provide young people with the experience of meeting and interacting with local law enforcement personnel.

During National Domestic Violence Awareness Month each October, the Sheriff's Office ties purple ribbons on the antennae of patrol vehicles. To assist abused and battered women, Victims' Advocates also collect and distribute used cell phones that are equipped to call 9-1-1 without a cell service plan.

Finally, the Orangeburg County Sheriff's Office Foundation was recently established with one of its objectives being to aid in the provision of emergency housing, food, and clothing for victims of crime. In recent years, state and local budget cuts have limited the operations and expansion of the Victims' Services Unit. Advocates and deputies have sometimes paid emergency expenses out of their own pockets. Community fundraisers and special events are now held to provide Foundation resources so that the Sheriff's Office can even better serve crime victims in Orangeburg County.

NSA established the Crime Victim Services Award to focus national and local attention on law enforcement services to victims of crime; in recognition of the unique needs of crime victims; and to promote victim assistance by law enforcement as early as possible in the response process. For more information, contact Tim Woods, Director of Research, Development & Grants, at 703-838-5317 or twoods@sheriffs.org.

This year's award was sponsored by Appriss, Inc.