

Summit County, Ohio uses Shield to shine its light

By Paul Matulavich, Director of Strategic Media

Law enforcement newsletters are nothing new – agencies have used them for many years, primarily as a means of internal communication. What makes our newsletter, the Summit County Shield so special is that it was specifically created to connect the Sheriff and his staff with the citizens we serve. Every month, the Shield presents carefully crafted articles and professional photography in an 8-page format that proudly shows who we are, and what we do.

Certain articles describe our agency in motion, and cover every aspect of our operations – from Investigations to Patrol, from Corrections to Court Services – as well as specialized units like SWAT, CSI, Bomb Squad, K-9s, and Marine Patrol. We take the public behind the scenes and show them our equipment and explain how it's used. We reveal the duties, depth of training, and degree of dedication required to do this job. In short, we share our story with the world.

Since its inception, the Shield was designed to showcase our people. If the many 'agency in motion' articles reveal the heart of our sheriff's office, then



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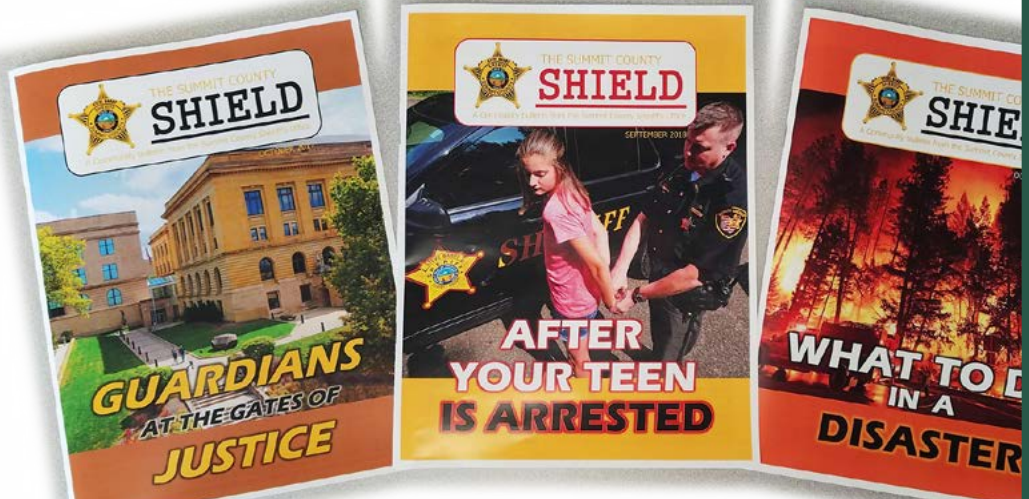
Sheriff Steve Barry

'Why I Wear It' reveals our soul. This series of articles profiles our uniformed personnel and tells their personal story of how and why they chose a life in law enforcement. Nothing

humanizes the uniform more than getting to know the person who wears it.

But the Shield is more than a stage for our staff – it's a safety advisory for our citizens. Articles offer advice and information on personal safety and home security – from driving tips to burglar alarms, from avoiding stalkers to the latest scams. For families with young children, our 'Warnings from Wyatt' series depict a typical little boy who attracts all kinds of trouble. His misadventures teach other youngsters, and their parents, how to avoid childhood dangers in everyday life.

Occasionally there's something for the history buff and retired employees too, in a series we call 'Pieces of our Past'. We delve into our archives, uncover old photos, and expose an interesting story from our proud and prestigious past.



Since we're always looking to strengthen our conversation with the community, the Shield invites the public to write in and 'Ask the Sheriff' whatever they choose. Questions and answers are published in every issue, and is just one more way of creating a personal dialog with the people we serve.

The Shield is published in-house, then printed copies are made available at no charge to citizens throughout Summit County. You'll find it in every library, government office, municipal building, and even our local airport. It's at fast food restaurants, grocery stores, doctor's offices, and community centers – wherever people congregate.

Digital copies are sent directly to subscribers on our email list, and 70,000 more read the Shield online from our website, Facebook page, and Nextdoor site. So popular has the Shield become that we now have readers around the world in twenty-four foreign countries.

According to Summit County Sheriff Steve Barry, "The Shield has far exceeded our expectations as a means of reaching the citizens we serve. It portrays our people in a positive light, promotes the public welfare, and proves the importance of sheriff's offices everywhere."

Director of Strategic Media, Paul Matulavich agrees, "Our readership is as loyal as it is legion. They've come to appreciate what our men and women do on a daily basis, and the public's trust and support of our agency grows with every issue."

If your agency is interested in increasing its community outreach, you may want to consider creating a newsletter of your own. Take it from us – it's working in Summit County Ohio.



To view the September 2019 issue of The Summit County Shield, visit this link:
<http://bit.ly/32atEHs-KeepingSummitSafe>