



The Maury County Sheriff's Department in Columbia, TN, just completed our sixth Citizens' Academy class. The Citizens' Academy started in the fall of 2008, and 126 participants have graduated from the academy. Our ten week academy, coordinated by Deputy Mike Barnes, presents an overview of an agency striving to serve a growing community. The Maury County Sheriff's Department's Citizens' Academy

provides community members with an inside look at local law enforcement. Department employees and guest instructors present each session and interact with participants on an approachable level. The participants gain an appreciation for the issues facing police today and may present their own concerns and questions regarding the direction of public safety in an uncertain environment.

All persons residing and/or working in the Maury County area are eligible to apply for participation in the Maury County Sheriff's Department's Citizens' Academy. One of the benefits of going through the program - graduates can "ride along" with a Maury County Deputy after completing the course.



Our ten week program is filled with excitement and a lot of information. There is so much we can share with the public that we are expanding our program to twelve weeks. We start our program with Introductions of the Command Staff (the Sheriff, Chief Deputy, Captain, and Lieutenants that supervise various divisions within the department). We explain the history of the Sheriff's Department and conduct a tour of the jail. The SROs give us an insight of being in the public schools. They are more than just "cops at school." They provide educational resources and serve as positive role models, counselors and mentors for students. The one program that gets



everyone's attention is about gangs. The Deputies explain in detail about the violent gang members and gang activities in our communities. (Sadly, deputies have seen children as young as second grade show interest in gangs.) This program is truly an eye-opening experience. The Criminal Investigation Department reminds us that real life is not like TV land. Evidence is not processed as quickly, and criminals are not found/caught as easily as on a television show. A mock crime scene lets participants see what it is like to investigate crime scene and collect evidence. Everyone enjoys the night at the firing range. Participant are allowed to fire a .38 Revolver, Glock 45, 12 gauge shotgun, AR 15, and HK MP5 full auto. The K-9/VICE deputies explain how they pursue groups or individuals who manufacture, distribute or sell illegal drugs. The K-9 Deputies also demonstrate how the K-9s locate hidden drugs. Patrol deputies demonstrate how they conduct a Standardized Field Sobriety Test while wearing the Fatal Vision Goggles which simulate alcohol impairment. S.W.A.T. team personnel display their gear and equipment and explain how they work as a team and respond to high risk operation calls. We also invite representatives of federal agencies with whom we work closely (i.e. F.B.I. and U.S. Marshals) to explain the close partnerships we have and how federal agencies and local agencies differ.

The Sheriff's Citizens' Academy was initiated by Sheriff Enoch George, Chief Deputy Nathan Johns, and Deputy Mike Barnes. They wanted to give the citizens of Maury County a better understanding of the day-to-day operations of the Maury County Sheriff's Department. They also wanted to improve communication and obtain citizen input and support throughout the county. It is our hope the graduates will become partners with us in identifying problems and solutions to crime issues affecting our community. Hopefully, graduates will take their knowledge to their neighborhoods where they can enhance the quality of neighborhood life. The Maury County Sheriff's Department Citizens' Academy Program is going strong and we welcome you to come visit us.