



Sheriff's Department SPOTLIGHT

March 2008

Cops Helping Cops – New Orleans

Three members of the Allegan County Sheriff's Office recently returned from a week-long trip to New Orleans where they worked to rebuild the home of New Orleans Police Department Sergeant Justin Vitrano.

Lt. Scott Matice, Deputy Kim Thorington and Deputy Martin Mendell spent their vacation taking part in the Cops Helping Cops program (www.copshelpcops.com) that brings officers from throughout the nation together to assist emergency service providers in need—

currently rebuilding police officers' homes that were damaged or destroyed during hurricane Katrina.



According to Lt. Matice, “It was unbelievable...non-stop! New Orleans Police Officers met us at the airport and took us directly to the site. Within ten minutes, we had tool belts on and were busy working.” Thereafter, Matice advised that a bus would pick up the officers each morning at 7 a.m. and they would work until at least 8 p.m. each day, sometimes until the early morning. “We did everything from building walls, to painting, to putting on shingles, to installing cabinets, to yard work.” Deputy Kim Thorington stated “It was an incredible experience. I’m really glad I went.”



Approximately 40 workers were on site from several agencies in Michigan and some from other states as well. Deputy Martin Mendell described the traditional crawfish boil that was provided for the workers “They poured a huge pile of crawfish out onto the table—it was amazing.” Meals for the crew were provided by various groups, including the local Sheriff’s Department, Canteen Services, and even the producers of America’s Most Wanted, who did a great deal of filming during the project. John Walsh of America’s Most Wanted was on site during the week and highlighted the project during the episode that aired at 9:00 p.m. EST on Saturday, February 23, 2008 on the FOX network.

Sheriff Blaine Koops stated “I couldn’t be more proud of our deputies. They all have families with small children, which made it difficult for them to go, yet because of that, they understood how important it was for this officer to have a home for his own family.”

Donations are being sought by the Cops Helping Cops program, which is a 501(c)3 non-profit entity. Those may be mailed to:

Cops Helping Cops
2805 135th Ave.
Hersey, MI 49639

For more information on this program, visit www.copshelpcops.com.