

# Gordon County Sheriff's Office

Dedicated and Sworn to Serve

2025  
Year In  
Review

From  
Sheriff Mitch Ralston  
Compiled by  
Chief Deputy R.L. Paris  
And  
Ms. Jessica James  
February 2026



# Sheriff Mitch Ralston Sworn in for Fifth Term

**On Monday afternoon, December 30, 2024, Sheriff Mitch Ralston received his Oath of Office from Probate Court Judge Richie Parker for an unprecedented fifth term. Sheriff Ralston has served since January 1, 2009.**



The Office of Sheriff was established by (state) Constitutional mandate in 1777. In Georgia, the sheriff has three (3) primary duties:

- I. The delivery of law enforcement services as "the chief law enforcement officer in the county". The sheriff is described as the "chief conservator of the peace".
- II. The enforcement of writs, warrants, and other process from the various courts, Superior, Probate, Magistrate, and Juvenile, as well as the physical security of the courts.
- III. The operation and maintenance of the county jail.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the sheriff who is elected to 4 year terms. As a constitutionally elected official, the sheriff answers only to the electorate. He is serving his 5th term of office. A chief deputy acts as his executive officer, in charge in the absence of the sheriff. The Sheriff's Office employs 147 individuals, 129 full-time and 18 part-time, in various roles, i.e. deputy sheriff, jailor, and civilian support personnel. Sheriff's Office employees are classified as permanent county employees. Approximately 90 of these positions are sworn, deputy sheriffs. The Sheriff's Office is divided into 2 Bureaus, Enforcement and Judicial. The Enforcement Bureau, commanded by a major, consists of the Patrol and Detective Divisions, commanded by captains, as well as specialized units such as Drug Enforcement and School Resources. The Judicial Bureau, also commanded by a major, consists of the Court Services Division and the Jail Division, both commanded by captains. The jail has a capacity of 376. The combined budget for the Sheriff's Office (420/Enforcement and 421/Jail) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 is \$16,306,704

# Gordon County Sheriff's Office

*Community, Commitment and Growth*

## Serving a Growing Community

Gordon County is a growing community of almost 62,000 residents, with a projected growth rate of 1.49% by 2026. Our sworn duty is to protect this community and to ensure Gordon County, Georgia remains a safe and happy home for all its residents.



## Building Trust Through Outreach

The Gordon County Sheriff's Office is dedicated to establishing strong relationships and fostering trust within the community. We actively promote goodwill and open communication through various initiatives, including community outreach programs and school involvement.



**Dedicated to Protecting and Serving Gordon County**

# Enforcement



**“Courage is being scared to death - and saddling up anyway.” - John Wayne**

The Enforcement Bureau is subdivided into the Uniform Patrol Division, the Detective Division, and specialized Units. The Uniform Patrol Division patrols State and County roads to suppress and detect crime, arrest violators, and acts as the first responders to requests for service. The Detective Division provides follow-up investigations into reports of crimes, and detects, arrests, and prosecutes violators. The School Resource Officer Unit provides safety and security for the Gordon County Public Schools System. The Drug Enforcement Unit concentrates on the suppression of illegal drug activity in Gordon County, arresting and prosecuting violators.



## Patrol Division

The Uniform Patrol Division is the sheriff's office's "front line." Deputies in black and white cruisers are the first responders to 911 calls, including crimes, traffic emergencies, crashes, disturbances, and suspicious activities. They also handle non-criminal matters like unattended deaths, stray livestock, and assisting other agencies or emergency situations/breaches of the peace. These deputies provide aid, issue citations, make arrests, write investigative reports, and testify in judicial proceedings.

- Responded to **51,659** requests for service/actions countywide, including **4,356** from Interstate 75.
- **Executed and returned 205 search warrants.**
- Issued **770** Uniform Traffic Citations returnable to the Probate Court.
- Issued **271** Uniform Traffic Citations returnable to the Resaca Municipal Court.
- Issued **6,320** traffic violation warnings (both written and verbal).
- Issued **18** Ordinance Violation Citations returnable to the Magistrate Court.
- Filed **2,258** NIBRS (crime) Reports.
- Filed **283** Crash Investigation Reports, including **38** with injuries.
- Responded to **2,914** Open Records Requests.
- Filed **35** Juvenile Complaints in the Juvenile Court.

# C.H.A.M.P.S.

Choosing Healthy Activities and Methods Promoting Safety

“Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future.” - John F. Kennedy

C.H.A.M.P.S. was developed by the Georgia Sheriff's Association in 2003 as a pilot program. It focuses on 5th grade students in each of the six County elementary schools. The wide ranging program consists of several 'elements', or individual topics of concern to the students: Introduction, Alcohol, Bullying, CHAMPS Project (Essay/Poster Contest), Choices and Consequences, Graduation, Home Alone/Child Abduction Safety, Gangs, Firearms Safety, Internet Safety and Social Media, Illicit Drug Abuse, Prescription Drug Abuse, Tobacco, Stress, and Avoiding Violence. The course of study is one period daily at each school for twelve weeks. The course work is overseen by two specially trained and certified deputy sheriffs, LT. Brian Brannon and Dep. Erik Ochoa who are assigned to the School Resource Unit full time.



We are currently in the 3rd year with the CHAMPS program being taught in the 5th grade classrooms at all 6 county elementary schools. Over 700 students have graduated the CHAMPS program so far and at the end of the 25-26 school year there is projected to be over 1000 students graduated.



**C.H.A.M.P.S.**  
CHOOSING HEALTHY ACTIVITIES & METHODS PROMOTING SAFETY

# Gordon County Sheriff's Office SROs

“The police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.”

— Sir Robert Peel



**Gordon County Schools and Gordon County Sheriff's Office partner to provide the best safety and security to the Gordon County schools with trained school resource officers.**



"When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth." – Sherlock Holmes

# Detective Division

The Gordon County Detective Division (investigative division) primarily handles felony investigations, crimes against children, and complex criminal cases. They conduct follow-up investigations from patrol reports, manage evidence, and perform suspect interviews. They are responsible for investigating major crimes like homicides and robberies.



## 2025 selected statistics for the Detective Division

- Maintained 77 reports files by detectives
- 688 cases assigned to detectives unit
- 503 cases closed
- 52 crime scenes processed
- 50 superior court appearances
- Conducted 100 forensic interviews
- Had 251 agency assist

## 2025 selected statistics for the DEU

- DEU was assigned 81 cases
- Had 74 arrest
- Seized \$56,743.25 of currency during drug bust
- Removed 1.23oz of fentanyl from the streets of Gordon County
- Recovered 86 firearms
- Confiscated 6.54lbs of meth

## K9 Units

- Maintained 4 working law enforcement canines, trained in narcotics detection, fugitive apprehension, and person-searches.
- These dogs were deployed 44 times.



# Judicial

**"Blessed are the peacekeepers, for they shall be called the children of God."**

**—Matthew 5:9**

The Jail Staff sees to the physical security of the facility, booking (incoming) and releasing (outgoing) arrestees. They oversee maintenance of arrest records, nutritional needs, medical care, as well as access to attorney services and visitation privileges for incarcerated persons.

The current Gordon County Jail is a modern detention facility opened in May of 2009. The 81,000 square foot facility has the capacity to house 376 inmates.

The Jail houses both male and female inmates charged with any criminal offense that occurs within Gordon County including the cities of Calhoun, Fairmount, and Resaca. This includes both pre-trial and convicted persons.

The mission of the Jail is to provide a safe and secure environment for both the citizens of Gordon County and inmates by adhering to Federal and State laws and standards.



## Jail Division

- Booked 2,362 inmates into the county jail.
- Released 2,366 inmates from the county jail.
- Saw an average daily jail population of 279.
- 460 Jail incident reports
- Total Collected and disbursed to the County General Fund (jail/fees, revenue): \$295,209.39
- Total Collected and disbursed in cash bonds to the Probate Court: \$176,615.00
- Total Collected and disbursed in cash bonds to the Magistrate Court: \$2,681.00
- Total Collected and disbursed in cash bonds and fees to the Clerk of Superior Court: \$155,985.00
- Total Collected and disbursed in cash bonds to the Resaca Municipal Court: \$14,625.00
- Total Collected and disbursed in bond-fees to the County General Fund: \$10,470.00



# Court Service Division

**Deputy Sheriffs assigned to the Court Services Division are tasked with executing and serving warrants, writs, summonses, and other court processes, transporting persons in custody, attending sessions of Superior Court and the lower courts as needed and providing physical security**

- **Screened 63,272 persons entering the Gordon County Courthouse through entrances secured by deputy sheriffs.**
- **Screened 12,916 persons entering the Juvenile Court facility on Newtown Road**

- **Executed and returned 4,253 arrest warrants.**
- **Transported 1,431 inmates/ prisoners to/ from other jails, medical, and correctional facilities throughout the state.**
- **Transported 68 hospitalized psychiatric patients to psychiatric facilities throughout the state.**
- **Served 1,366 civil actions from the Superior Court.**
- **Served 3,514 subpoenas/summonses.**
- **Attended 360 sessions of Superior Court, requiring 3141 deputy-hours**
- **Attended 400 Juvenile court sessions, requiring 2728 deputy-hours**
- **Attended 25 Magistrate court sessions, requiring 67 deputy-hours**
- **Attended 42 Probate court sessions, requiring 78 deputy-hours**
- **Monitored/supervised over 279 registered sex offenders, 241 residents and 38 locally employed, as required by statute.**



# GCSO TRAINING

*"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." - Nelson Mandela.*



**Georgia POST- (Peace Officer Standards and Training)** refers to the state council responsible for certifying, regulating, and setting minimum training standards for law enforcement and public safety officers.

**GCSO Deputies must complete annual, mandatory training, including firearms proficiency. Programs designed for career development, promotions, and specific skill sets. Gordon county Sheriff's Office Deputies, jailers, and employees completed a total of 13,122 hours of Georgia POST approved training hours in 2025 with 23 certified instructors on staff.**



## **UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) or Drones in Law Enforcement.**



**Drones in law enforcement enhance officer safety, improve situational awareness, and provide cost-effective, rapid aerial support. Drones are aircraft piloted remotely or autonomously without a human crew on board, typically relying on aerodynamic forces for lift. GCSO maintains and operates 3 unmanned aerial vehicles.**

# GCSO Helping To Keep Gordon County Beautiful 2025



In the fiscal year, 2025, under Sheriff's Office supervision, inmate crews successfully removed **36,020 pounds (18.01 tons)** of trash from **72.9** miles of public roadways across **230** county and state maintained roads and highways. This total included **166** automobile tires.



Gordon County Sheriff's Office takes pride in our vast heritage where New Echota, once the Cherokee capital, now serves as a state historic site. Gordon County played a significant role in the Civil War, with several key battles fought here. We take pride in keeping our county clean and preserving our history.

# The Sheriff's Honor Guard

2025



The Sheriff's Honor Guard is a professional ceremonial unit that is tasked with rendering law enforcement honors at officer funerals and memorial services, and other ceremonial occasions. The unit includes a rifle team, and bagpipes and drums. The musicians wear uniforms based on those of the Royal Irish Regiment, a nod to Gordon County's Scots-Irish heritage.



# OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEES

Sheriff Mitch Ralston recognized several members of his staff for outstanding service in 2025. Pictured here (front row, left to right): Jailor P.L. Beavers, Jailor of the Year, Deputy Case Collins, Judicial Deputy of the Year, Detective Garrett Saylor, Detective of the Year, SFC Bobby Garcia, received Certificate and Medal of Commendation for fugitive apprehension, and burglary arrests, Ms. Amy Ivey, received the Sheriff's "Extra Mile Award", (back row, left to right): Mr. Gary Sutherland, Civilian Employee of the Year, Deputy A.J. Mills, Enforcement Deputy of the Year, Deputy Matthew Flippen, received Certificate of Commendation for fugitive apprehension, and Sheriff Mitch Ralston, who said, "I'm very proud of each one of these employees and sincerely appreciate all of their hard work and devotion to duty. They all do a wonderful job serving our community."



Friday, June 27, Sheriff Mitch Ralston awarded Sergeant Elbert Shelley the Distinguished Service Cross, and an appreciation plaque, upon his retirement from GCSO. Elbert served from 2009 until June 2025. From 2012 until retirement, he was a School Resource Officer in the County Schools. He was well known, liked, and respected by the school staff, students, and the public. Elbert had an impeccable service record and he will be missed not only in the schools but by his colleagues. Sheriff Ralston praised Elbert, particularly his dedication to the community in a variety of roles. We wish Elbert all the best in his retirement.



**The Gordon County Sheriff's Auxiliary is a volunteer organization of citizens, established in 2009 by Sheriff Mitch Ralston. Its mission is to support the Gordon County Sheriff's Office (GCSO) staff, enhance community relations, and fund local charitable causes through activities like monthly luncheons and an annual golf tournament.**



**The group acts as a bridge between the sheriff and the public and is a community-minded support system, not a law enforcement unit. A key activity is the monthly luncheon that gathers law enforcement, first responders, officials, and citizens.**



# Shop with a Cop 2025



Sheriff's Office personnel have participated in the Shop-With A-Cop' Christmas Program here for many years. 2025 was no exception. On December 2nd, the day started with a breakfast at Fire Department Headquarters, then a trip with a police escort to Home Depot for photos with Santa Clause, then on to Walmart where deputies and other first responders accompanied local kids to buy Christmas presents. "Shop With A-Cop" involves all First Responders in our community, and our personnel are proud to be a part of this wonderful program.

## *Christmas Parade 2025*

The Gordon County Sheriff's Office, including Sheriff Mitch Ralston and staff, participated in the annual Calhoun Christmas parade on December 11, 2025. The GCSO Honor Guard was featured in this local holiday event.



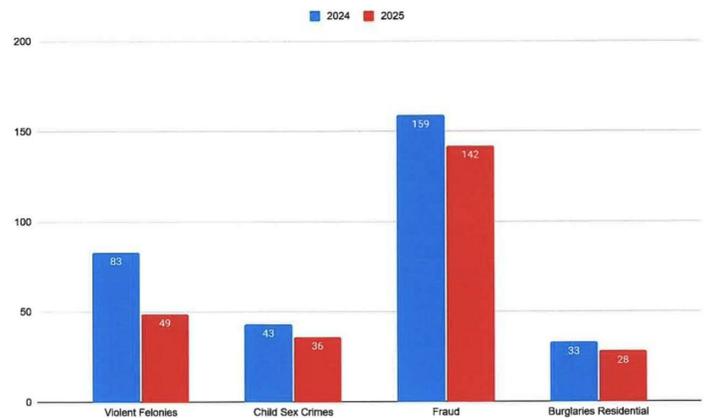
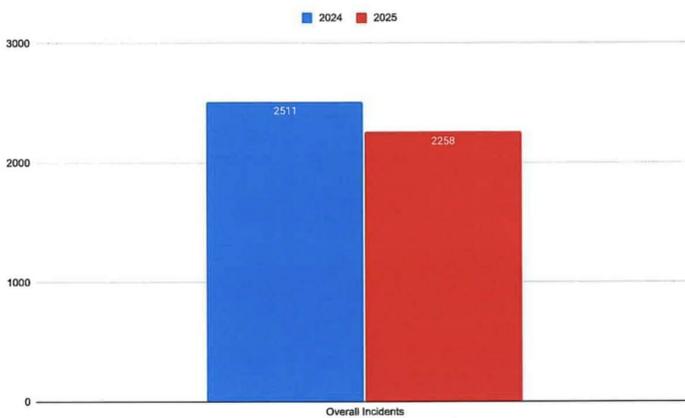
# Crime in Gordon County 2025

Reports of crimes are maintained via the "National Incident Based Reporting System" NIBRS (formerly "Uniform Crime Reports")

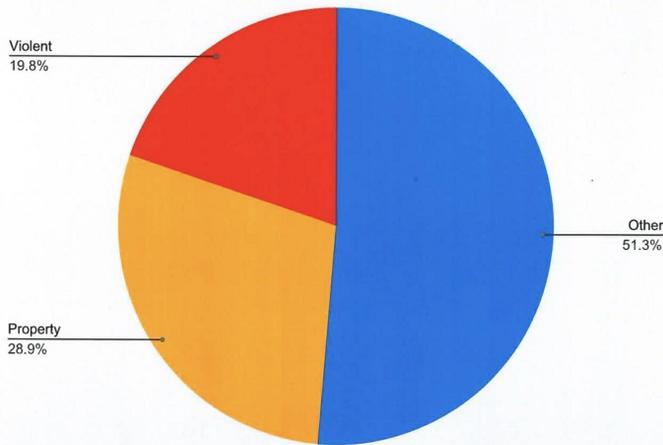
Crime in Gordon County saw a decrease in 2025, down approximately 10.9% from 2024 (2511 NIBRS incidents reported in 2024 versus 2343 NIBRS incidents in 2025). The number of incidents reported to the Sheriff's Office fell in the following major categories:

- Violent Felonies (aggravated assault, aggravated battery, etc.)
- Child Sex Crimes (aggravated molestation, molestation, etc.)
- Fraud (all types, including internet based fraud.)
- Residential Burglary (homes)

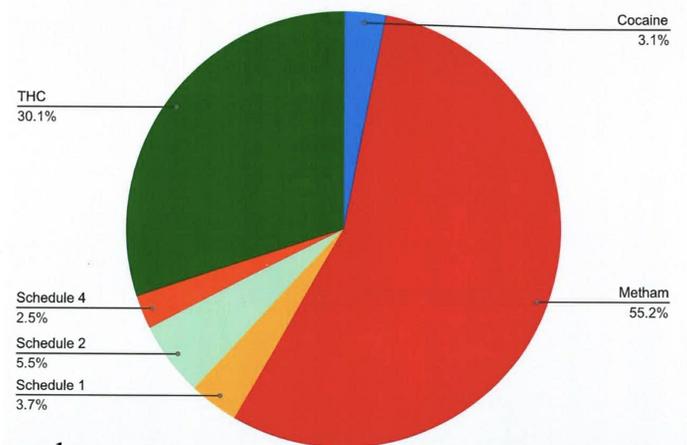
## Gordon County followed a nationwide, overall decrease in crime in 2025



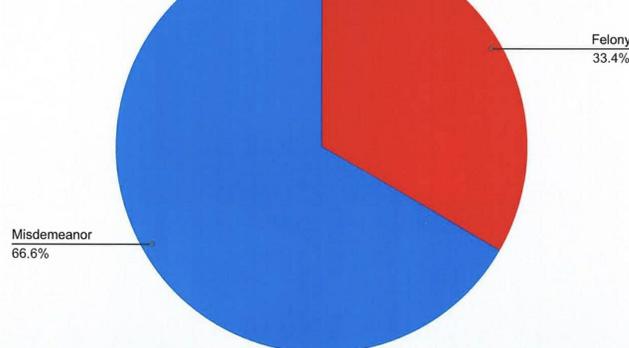
Gordon County Crimes by Type 2025



Drug Offenses by Type 2025



Gordon County Crimes by Severity 2025



On Thursday, May 15, 2025, the community met together at the Gordon County Sheriff's Office to celebrate and honor the 175th anniversary of the office.

In the 175 years since Gordon County was formed, no elected office has been more important as that of Sheriff. The Office of Sheriff is a Georgia constitutional office, which dates back to 12th century England. Today, the sheriff and his staff are responsible for a wide variety of public services, which include servicing the Superior, Probate, Juvenile and Magistrate courts, enforcement of criminal law and maintaining the County jail.

Sheriff Mitch Ralston recognized Ms. Anne McGinnis Ayers, a descendent of Sheriff Noah McGinnis, sheriff from 1885-1892, who was killed in the line of duty in Plainville, Georgia.

On Nov. 26, 1892, acting upon information that a notorious gang of train robbers were hiding near Plainville, Sheriff McGinnis formed a posse consisting of himself, his deputy and several other men. They traveled to Plainville and surrounded a cabin the train robbers were hiding. Sheriff McGinnis was shot, and died the next day from his injuries.

Sheriff Mitch Ralston unveiled a street sign, to be placed in the entrance of the Gordon County Sheriff's Office and Gordon County Jail, naming the entrance the "Sheriff Noah H. McGinnis Memorial Drive."

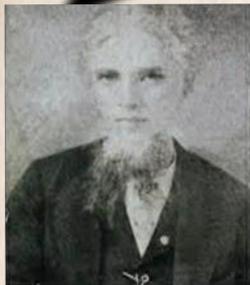
McGinnis-Ayers was also presented an American flag from the Gordon County Sheriff's Office in appreciation for the service of Sheriff McGinnis.





**175<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
GORDON COUNTY



W.G. TAYLOR 1881-1885



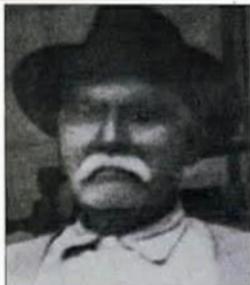
NOAH MCGINNIS 1885-1892



H.L. SMITH 1901-1907



T.N. OWENS 1911-1912



R.H. LAND 1913-1917



E.L. MEDDERS 1920-1925



WILLIAM A. SHIRLEY 1929-1933



LEE BARRETT 1933-1936



GEORGE E. WELCHEL 1936-1938



LEE ERWIN 1942-1946



GEORGE FOX 1946-1948



FRANK E. WILSON 1949-1952



HUGH PRATER 1952-1956



HUGH DON DAVIS 1956-1972



PAT BAKER 1973-1988



SID ROBERTS 1989-2000



JERRY DAVIS 2001-2008



MITCH RALSTON 2009-

**INDEX OF GORDON COUNTY SHERIFFS 1850-2025**

- ★ 1. David C. Wylie 1850-1851
- ★ 2. Jesse M. Miller 1852-1853
- ★ 3. David C. Wylie 1854-1855
- ★ 4. John H. Arthur 1855-1856
- ★ 5. Samuel T. King 1856-1856
- ★ 6. E.D. Hudgins 1858-1859
- ★ 7. John Gresham 1860-1861
- ★ 8. Moses M. Dillard 1862-1863
- ★ 9. John Gresham 1864-1865
- ★ 10. J.B. Richards 1865-1866
- ★ 11. Joseph McConnell 1866-1867
- ★ 12. Napoleon B. Hudgins 1868-1885
- ★ 13. John Gresham 1870-1874
- ★ 14. Isaac C. Bartlett 1875-1876
- ★ 15. W.G. Taylor 1877-1878
- ★ 16. William H. Black 1879-1880
- ★ 17. W.G. Taylor 1881-1885
- ★ 18. Noah H. McGinnis 1885-1892 (Killed, Line of Duty)
- ★ 19. Noah H. McGinnis 1885-1892 (Killed, Line of Duty)
- ★ 20. W.T. Willingham 1892-1992
- ★ 21. D.M. Durhm 1899-1999
- ★ 22. David Johnson 1999-1900
- ★ 23. H.L. Smith 1901-1907
- ★ 24. J.Q. Evorett 1907-1911
- ★ 25. T.N. Owens 1911-1912 (Died in Office)
- ★ 26. R.H. Land 1913-1917
- ★ 27. H.S. Watts 1977-1920 (Died in Office)
- ★ 28. T.M. Watts 1920-1921
- ★ 29. E.L. Medders 1920-1925
- ★ 30. F.A. Cochran 1923-1929
- ★ 31. Will Shirley 1923-1936
- ★ 32. Lee Barrett 1933-1936
- ★ 33. George Welchel 1936-1936
- ★ 34. Coley Kay 1933-1942
- ★ 35. Lee Erwin 1942-1946
- ★ 36. George Fox 1946-1948
- ★ 37. J.E. "Doc" Miller 1948
- ★ 38. Frank Wilson 1949-1952
- ★ 39. Hugh Prater 1952-1956
- ★ 40. Hugh Don Davis 1956-1972
- ★ 41. Pat Baker 1973-1888
- ★ 42. Sid Roberts 1999-2000
- ★ 43. Jerry Davis 2001-2000
- ★ 44. Mitch Ralston 2009-Present





*Serving Georgia's Best Citizens  
Since 2009*

**Sheriff Mitch Ralston**





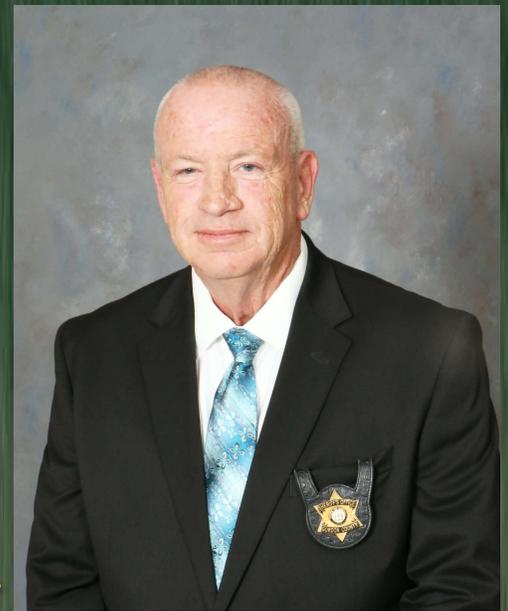
# Sheriff Mitch Ralston



**Major Ritchie Harris**  
Enforcement Bureau  
Commander



**Robert L. Paris**  
Chief Deputy Sheriff



**Major Pat Bedford**  
Jail Administrator