

June 30, 2008

The Sheriff's Office is privileged to have been providing law enforcement services to the residents of Deltona since the community incorporated into a City in December 1995. After nearly 13 years, our service contract with Deltona is in serious jeopardy of being phased out by the City. Should this occur, the Sheriff's Office's jurisdiction would shrink and at least 80 VCSO employees would have to be laid off.

The Deltona City Commission has hired a consultant to study the feasibility and cost of the City severing its contract with the Sheriff's Office and starting up its own municipal police department. The report is scheduled to be presented to the City Commission at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, July 7th in the Deltona City Hall Commission Chambers, 2345 Providence Boulevard, Deltona. After presentation of the study, the City Commission could vote to create their own police department or schedule a referendum to let voters in the City decide the issue. Either way, I strongly believe that the City Commission and electorate should have all of the facts before making such a critical decision. I also believe that the City Commission should hear from all constituencies with a stake in the issue.

Certainly, the City has a right to have its own police department if that's what the voters/taxpayers want. But based upon my study of the facts, I strongly believe that a municipal police department would result in a more expensive and lesser quality law enforcement service for Deltonans than what the City presently receives from the Sheriff's Office. And I believe this would have negative consequences for both the City and the Sheriff's Office. Additionally, I have a grave concern that the consultant's study will significantly under-estimate the cost of starting up, equipping and running a police department.

The importance of this issue can't be overstated. I encourage you to get informed and get involved. I also encourage you to attend the Deltona City Commission meeting on Monday and make your voices heard before it's too late.

Sincerely,

Ben F. Johnson
Sheriff