

SALUTING THE VOLUNTEERS

Using volunteers increases sworn officer efficiency in dealing with critical issues and extends financial resources

The men and women who serve as volunteers with the Henderson County Sheriff's Office bring a wide range of talent and expertise to the tasks to which they are assigned. Currently averaging 1500 hours monthly, this corps of more than 150 dedicated individuals not only save the county taxpayers enormous sums of money by donating their time to essential tasks, they also apply their special abilities to improve life in our community in ways that might not be undertaken otherwise. The volunteer program has three divisions: the VIPs (Volunteers in Partnership) who volunteer in the areas listed below, and two specialized divisions—the Mounted Patrol and the ATV (All Terrain Vehicle) Patrol.

All volunteers undergo specific training in the area to which they are assigned. In addition, they receive first-aid and CPR training.

Areas of VIP service include:

ADMINISTRATION:

- General office work and answering telephones
- Staffing VIP office
- Manning the front desk
- Assisting with subpoenas
- Computer input
- Office assistance for the Sheriff's Office Attorney

COURTHOUSE:

- Manning x-ray and metal detector equipment
- Providing security in law library
- Conducting tours for public
- Assisting with electronic surveillance
- Assisting in general building security (locking/unlocking, etc.)

COMMUNITY RELATIONS/POLICING:

- Supporting Neighborhood Watch programs
- Assisting in community patrolling
- Giving safety talks to senior citizen and other groups

TRAFFIC/CROWD CONTROL:

- Assisting in civic events such as parades, festivals, etc.
- Providing funeral escorts
- Assisting in emergencies

HISTORIC COURTHOUSE:

- Provide building security
- Assist the public with questions/information

Today the VIPs average approximately 1,500 man-hours per month. Since its inception, more than 100,000 hours have been given. Value: approximately \$1,400,000!

ATV Patrol

In, January 1996, while participating in a search for an elderly woman, some paramedics from Henderson County realized that an organized team of trained searchers traveling on ATVs could cover a lot of difficult terrain in a short amount of time. Many areas in this region are not accessible to larger road-going vehicles, but searchers on ATVs would be able to explore hiking trails, muddy or snow-covered logging roads, large wooded areas, open farmland or pastures and many other areas. Not only could they search quickly, they would also be highly visible to someone lost and looking for help. ATVs would be helpful in severe weather conditions and capable of searching day and night.

From that concept, the Henderson County Sheriff's All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Patrol has grown from eight volunteers in 1996 to 40 today. They have logged more than 6,000 man-hours in training and missions in Henderson, Buncombe, Transylvania, Haywood, and Polk counties. Missions include such searches as one which located two teenaged hikers who were lost five miles deep into the Turkey Pen Gap area of the Pisgah National Forest. They were found at 4 am wearing light jackets with temperatures near freezing. In another search involving several agencies, the ATV Patrol located a downed aircraft in the Little Pisgah Mountain area around one a.m. in a driving rain storm.

ATV members all have medical training and are certified as First Responders, EMTs, EMT Intermediates, or Paramedics. They are required to complete the National ATV Safety Institute Rider Safety Course. Patrol rules require that the team members travel in pairs and stay in contact with Search Command Post when on a mission.

ATV Patrol volunteer hours: 6,000 Cost (all donated): approximately \$300,000!

Contact Us:

If you are interested in the VIP Program contact Director Bob Noble at 828-698-5055. We have a VIP Office located at the Blue Ridge Mall, Unit 5, 1800 Four Seasons Blvd, Hendersonville NC 28792.