



**OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF**  
COUNTY OF FRANKLIN

## Press Release

### **Sheriff Overton announces he will seek a third term.**

#### **Statement from the desk of Sheriff Bill Overton**

Today I make my official announcement to seek a third term as Sheriff of Franklin County.

It has been a great honor to serve as your Sheriff since 2012. During my tenure as Sheriff, we have been able to accomplish numerous achievements some of which include; accreditation of our agency, increased school security, implementation of Emergency Medical Dispatch, and focusing the fight against the national opioid and drug epidemic.

The Sheriff's Office is now a state accredited law enforcement agency and was recently re-accredited by state auditors. A process that occurs every 4 years, which ensures transparency, professionalism, and accountability in law enforcement. I have worked tirelessly to recruit and retain the very best personnel possible to serve our county. I have been successful in getting the starting pay increased which is now competitive throughout the region and have begun to address salary compression issues. I am a firm believer in using valuable data from our computer systems to analyze and develop solutions to crime trends as well as manpower deployment. My command staff does an excellent job of utilizing this information to allocate resources in the most efficient and effective way.

One of my top priorities is the safety and security of our students, faculty, and staff in our schools. The last thing they should have to worry about during the school day is their safety. After the horrific school shooting in February 2017 at Parkland High School in Florida I quickly assigned 2 additional deputies to our High School. With the size of the campus, multiple entries and the number of students and staff I knew we needed a more physical presence. I will continue to work at getting more deputies or other security personnel at all schools throughout the county. Deputies routinely stop in the county's many schools each day to be visible and make safety checks. This has been occurring since the Sandy Hook massacre in 2012. In 2016 I

presented the concept of a real-time alert system to the School Board, which provides teachers and administrators the ability to directly communicate with law enforcement from within the classroom in the event of an attack. This software allows for a rapid response and provides deputies with critical information as to specific locations of potential threats within the school. This system was at no cost to the taxpayers. I will continue to work with the board of supervisors, school officials and county administration to develop effective solutions to keep our communities safe.

In November we completed the implementation of Emergency Medical Dispatch in the 911 Communications Center. They can now provide medical information, such as CPR and pre-arrival instructions over the phone when someone calls 9-1-1. EMD is the link between your call requesting emergency medical assistance and EMS (emergency medical service) resource delivery. EMD allows the Communications Center to initiate and coordinate the necessary emergency service response to meet the needs of the situation reported, providing critical information which could save a life.

There are very few citizens in Franklin County that have not been affected, in some way, by the nationwide opioid epidemic. I am fighting hard, and will continue to fight, to address the drug problem in our county and particularly the opioid issue. I will continue our strong enforcement efforts, as well as our cooperative efforts with the school division, mental health providers and medical professionals to provide resources and specifically prevention efforts within our county. While we know we cannot arrest ourselves out of this national crisis, the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia must continue to be enforced. To help combat these issues, I have increased manpower and provided additional resources to the drug interdiction and narcotic units. We are working together with our local non-profits, churches, business leaders, civic groups as well as state and federal lawmakers to make a significant impact.

I strive for excellence in what we do each day to serve all citizens better. I expect all members to be professional and courteous in the performance of their duties. The citizens deserve a Sheriff's Office which delivers the very best service it can, and I can honestly say the men and women of the sheriff's office are dedicated to fulfilling that commitment. I am blessed with a tremendously talented workforce. We are not perfect, but we try to use every experience as an opportunity to become better.

The challenges are still before us, and evil still lurks, which is why I am committed and have a desire to seek another term as your Sheriff. I will continue to provide exceptional leadership while instilling our core values of accountability, integrity, professionalism, fairness, loyalty, courage and honesty within the Office of the Sheriff. I am asking for your support on November 5<sup>th</sup> so that I may continue to provide a high performing Sheriff's Office to the citizens of Franklin County.