



ILLINOIS SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

Protecting Our Communities,
HONOR • SAFETY • SERVICE



FEB/MAR 2026

The inside stories for you!
**SHERIFFS, LAW ENFORCEMENT
& MEMBERS NEWS & UPDATES**

Illinois Sheriffs' Association

2026

Winter Training Conference • February 7-10



The Illinois Sheriffs' Association hosted our Annual Winter Training Conference in Springfield last month. The event included the Executive Board Meeting, two days of continuing education training, the ISA Business Meeting, and the Annual Awards Banquet. During the banquet, the ISA swore in the 2026 Executive Board and welcomed its 2026 President, Wabash County Sheriff J. Derek Morgan. The evening also recognized the 2025 Service Award winners and celebrated the many accomplishments of ISA members. The ISA congratulates President Morgan and wishes him great success as he helps lead the

2026 ISA Executive Board Sworn in at Winter Conference Banquet

2026 EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT

Sheriff J. Derek Morgan
Wabash County

1ST VICE PRESIDENT

Sheriff Mike Downey
Kankakee County

2ND VICE PRESIDENT

Sheriff Dustin Heuerman
Champaign County

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Sheriff Brian VanVickle
Ogle County
(Past President)

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Sheriff Nicholas Pettigout
McDonough County



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sheriff Dwight Baird, Kendall County
(Past President)

Sheriff Andy Hires, Richland County
(Past President)

Sheriff Pat Hartshorn, Vermilion County
(Past President)

Sheriff Andy Myers, Clay County

Sheriff Mike Walker, DeWitt County

Sheriff Andy Sullivan, DeKalb County

Sheriff Darby Boewe, Edwards County

Sheriff Mark Landers, Logan County

Sheriff Shawn Kahl, Macoupin County

Sheriff Robb Tadelman, McHenry County

Sheriff Jeff Lower, Tazewell County

Sheriff John Booker, Whiteside County

ILLINOIS SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

Jim Kaitschuk, Executive Director



ABOVE: Wabash County Sheriff J. Derek Morgan sworn in as ISA 2026 President



ABOVE (left to right): Champaign County Sheriff Dustin Heuerman sworn in as 2nd Vice President and Kankakee County Sheriff Mike Downey sworn in as 1st Vice President



Left photo: Ogle County Sheriff Brian VanVickle sworn in as Secretary/Treasurer. Right photo: DeWitt County Sheriff Mike Walker sworn into Executive Committee.



Roger Scott High Sheriff Award



ABOVE: Sheriff Pat Hartshorn with ISA Executive Director Jim Kaitschuk

The Illinois Sheriffs' Association proudly presents the Roger Scott High Sheriff of Illinois Award, one of its highest honors recognizing individuals who have made outstanding contributions to preserving and strengthening the Office of Sheriff.

The award was recently renamed in honor of the late Roger Scott, retired Sheriff of DeKalb County, whose service and dedication left a lasting legacy within the Association and the law enforcement community across Illinois.

This prestigious recognition is reserved for individuals whose selfless actions promote professionalism in law enforcement and advance the goals, programs, and mission of the Illinois Sheriffs' Association.

This year, the Association is proud to recognize Pat Hartshorn, Sheriff of Vermilion County. Through his leadership, commitment to public safety, and continued advocacy for the Office of Sheriff, Sheriff Hartshorn exemplifies the service and dedication that this award represents.

Please join us in congratulating Sheriff Hartshorn on this well-deserved recognition!!



2026 BILL OF THE DAY IS UNDERWAY!



With all of the bills introduced this year in the House and Senate, ISA Executive Director, Jim Kaitschuk has his hands full tracking these bills, working to collaborate with Legislators as they are drafted and to have conversations in the earliest stages on bills that impact public safety and policing!

Go to the [ISA Website Resource Page](#) or watch for posts on our [Facebook](#) for more information.



Below are just a few examples of the bills we've highlighted so far

IL 104th GENERAL ASSEMBLY | PENDING LEGISLATION

SB 2801
CRIM CD-CONVERTIBLE PISTOLS — **ISA OPPOSES**

• **Senate Sponsors:** Senators Celsina Villanueva and Laura Fine

Provides that the Act may be referred to as the Responsible Gun Manufacturing Act. Amends the Criminal Code of 2012. Provides that a person commits the offense of unlawful possession of weapons when the person knowingly manufactures, sells, or offers to sell, purchases, receives, manufactures, imports, or transfers a convertible pistol. Establishes penalties. Provides exemptions. Provides that a machine gun also includes any convertible pistol

IL 104th GENERAL ASSEMBLY | PENDING LEGISLATION

SB 2820
BAN HIRING OF ICE OFFICERS — **ISA OPPOSES**

• **Senate Sponsors:** Senators Laura Fine, Adriane Johnson, Emil Jones, III, Sara Feigenholtz, Lakesia Collins, Mary Edly-Allen and Napoleon Harris, III

Creates the Prohibited Hiring of Federal Immigration Officers Act. Provides that a law enforcement agency may not hire as a law enforcement officer any person who was hired as a federal immigration officer by the U.S. Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement between January 20, 2025 and January 20, 2029. Defines "federal immigration officer", "law enforcement officer", "federal immigration officer", and "law enforcement



ISA CELEBRATED OUR 2025 AWARD WINNERS AT OUR
2026 WINTER CONFERENCE BANQUET



2025 Deputy of the Year

Morgan County Sheriff's Office - Deputy Derek Suttles

[Watch ISA 2025 Deputy of the Year Video](#)

This video details his longstanding career in Law Enforcement and his work in criminal interdiction. His record shows an enormous commitment to keeping the citizens of Morgan County and Illinois safe. Deputy Suttles' 20 years in law enforcement, professionalism, dedication to the citizens of Morgan County and the State of Illinois made him the clear choice by the ISA as our 2025 Deputy of the Year.





2025 Correctional Officer of the Year

Kane County Sheriff's Office - Sergeant John Hoffman

[Watch ISA 2025 Correctional Officer of the Year Video](#)

In this video you will hear about Sergeant Hoffman's legacy career in Corrections and his dedication to the citizens of Kane County and the State of Illinois. Sergeant Hoffman's leadership style embodies compassion, patience, and experience, and he consistently fosters a positive and supportive work environment that strengthens his entire team. It is the ISA's distinct honor to have chosen him for the Correctional Officer of the Year.



2025 Telecommunicator Officer of the Year

Jefferson County Sheriff's Office - 911 Dispatcher Grace Cole

[Watch ISA 2025 Telecommunicator of the Year Video](#)

In the evening hours of September 1st, 2025, the Sheriff's Office's 911 Center learned through a citizen report there was a possible homicide, and a suspect vehicle description was provided. 911 Operator Grace Cole was working by herself during this event. It is proven that first responders do a better job the quicker they get accurate information when responding to a call

for service, especially when it is a major event. Cole's performance certainly did just that and we commend her for it. JOB WELL DONE!



2025 ISA Lifesaving Award Presentation

[Watch ISA Lifesaving Award Video](#)

On behalf of the Illinois Sheriffs' Association, it is our distinct honor to recognize Illinois Deputies and Correctional Officers whose decisive actions, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to service directly resulted in the preservation of human life. The Lifesaving Awards are reserved for those moments when training meets courage—when individuals step forward without hesitation, placing the safety and wellbeing of others above their own. Today, we proudly acknowledge these officers for their extraordinary service and dedication to the communities they serve.

- **Wabash County**, *Correctional Officer Francine Clowers*
- **Wayne County**, *Correctional Officers Kenneth Drake & Donovan Lee*
- **Clinton County**, *Deputy Brett Winegarner*
- **Christian County**, *Deputy Alan Bailey, Court Deputy Robert Campbell & Correctional Officer Malorie Bergschneider*
- **McLean County**, *Correctional Officers Alex Hawkins & Neil Kendregan*
- **Kankakee County**, *Corporal Zachory Richmond*
- **Kankakee County**, *Correctional Officer Nicole Licht*



Today we celebrate K9 Veterans Day, a time dedicated to honoring the extraordinary service dogs who

work alongside their human partners. This special day recognizes the bravery, loyalty, and vital roles of K9s in detection, security, and search-and-rescue missions. These heroic dogs take on critical duties, whether protecting soldiers in combat or ensuring safety at our nation's airports. While this day began with the U.S. military, today it also celebrates all working dogs - including those in Search and Rescue, Law Enforcement, and Border Patrol.

K9 Veterans Day is a time to honor the bravery and sacrifice of these canines who are essential in keeping the public safe, apprehending criminals, locating drugs, recovering stolen property, and finding lost individuals. By celebrating this day, we acknowledge the incredible bond between handlers and their loyal canine partners and recognize these four-legged heroes' contributions to our safety and security.

The Illinois Sheriffs' Association celebrates County Sheriff's Offices that have K9 programs, their handlers, and the courageous four-legged officers who serve alongside them!

LEARN MORE ABOUT ILLINOIS SHERIFFS K9 HEROES! www.ilsheriff.org/k9-heroes



**DuPage County Sheriff's Office:
K9 Hope & Handler, Deputy
Laura Richardson
Bloodhound – 4 Yrs Service**



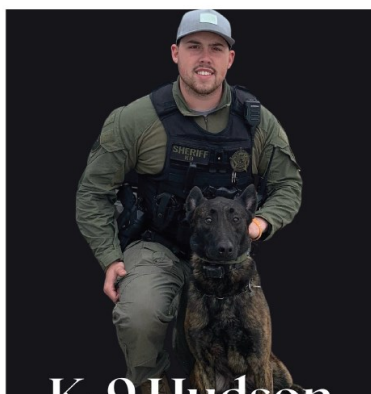
**Montgomery County Sheriff's Office
K9 Flex & Handler, Chf. Deputy
Lance Weitekamp
Belgian Malinois – 6 Yrs Service**



**Cook County Sheriff's Office:
K9 Boone & Handler, Sgt. Daniel Codd
Yellow Lab – 3 Yrs Service**



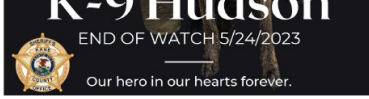
**Lake County Sheriff's Office:
K9 Danno & Handler, Deputy
Andrew Martini
German Shepherd – 4 Yrs Service**



K9 Hudson



**COUNTY CLERK CENTER
TH CAPITAL**



Kane County Sheriff's Office:
K9 Hudson &
Handler, Sgt. Luke Weston
(E.O.W. 05/24/2023)
Shepherd – 2.5 Yrs Service



Tazewell County Sheriff's Office:
K9 Maverick & Handler,
Deputy Austin Gillespie
German Shepard/Malinois Mix –
2 Yrs Service

To further support K9 programs, the Illinois Sheriffs' Association is proud to introduce the 2026 ISA K9 Hero DuPage County K9 Xena. Xena is a dual-purpose K9 trained in narcotics odor detection and human remains (cadaver) detection. She joined the DuPage County K9 Team in 2020 and was paired with her handler, Deputy Aaron Davis. K9 Xena is a true hero who plays an important role in protecting the community. To Deputy Davis, Xena has earned the nick name of "The Goodest Good Girl" and he is proud to be her partner.

Every time you shop or become a member, you help ISA continue to provide support and training to Sheriff's Offices throughout Illinois. The DuPage County K9 Hero Xena plush is a special donation item, net proceeds will directly support the DuPage County K9 Unit in honor of Xena's service.

Through programs like this, the Illinois Sheriffs' Association continues its mission of supporting law enforcement and the K9 teams that play a vital role in keeping Illinois communities safe.



PRICE:
\$30 ea.
 includes
 shipping

DONATE TO THE ISA K9 HEROES SERIES!

When you donate \$30, you'll receive one of our NEW plush K9 Heroes with Trading Card!



SHERIFFS K9 HERO SERIES
 Brought to you by the Illinois Sheriffs' Association
ilsheriff.org/k9-heroes

Go to our site to read the full story on Xena!

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR K9 HEROES

2026 ISA Get to Know Your Sheriff Series
March | Wabash County

Protecting Our Communities
HONOR · SAFETY · SERVICE



Sheriff J. Derek Morgan



GET TO KNOW YOUR SHERIFF | WABASH COUNTY



Elected as
Sheriff 2014
23 Years in
Law Enforcement



Average
Household
Income
\$57,086



Population
Wabash County
10,979



1. What first made you get involved with law enforcement?

Ever since I was young, I always said I was going to be a police officer. I can't explain exactly why—I just always knew this was what I was meant to do.

2. Describe your role as Sheriff in your Office and throughout your County:

I see my role as ensuring our deputies have the tools they need to do their jobs to the best of their ability—whether that's vehicles, technology, or training. My responsibility is to support them so they can effectively serve our community.

3. What is your favorite part about being Wabash County Sheriff?

I genuinely enjoy helping people, no matter the situation. I also value being involved with the youth in our county and meeting new people throughout the community.

4. Describe what drives you to get involved within the community:

I've lived and worked in Wabash County my entire life, and my family has operated a business here for 75 years—it's home. Making Wabash County a better place to live and raise a family is what

better place to live and raise a family is what motivates me.

» **IF YOU WEREN'T DOING WHAT YOU DO NOW, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR DREAM JOB?**

I would have worked alongside my father in our family business, cementing and servicing oil wells.

» **WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU AREN'T WORKING OR VOLUNTEERING?**

Lately, you'll find me proudly serving as an enthusiastic cheer dad—my daughter is a freshman cheerleader at MCHS.

» **WHAT MIGHT SOMEONE BE SURPRISED TO KNOW ABOUT YOU?**

I enjoy listening to 90s girl grunge bands.



5. What's the best thing to happen to you because of your community or career in peace keeping service?

One of the best parts of my career has been the relationships I've built across the state. Law enforcement is a close-knit community, and I'm proud to have strong friendships from one end of the state to the other.



6. Tell us about someone or something that has influenced you:

My late parents, Bev and Jeff Morgan, have been my greatest influence. My father's dedication to our family business and my mother's hard work raising three children while working full time instilled in me a strong work ethic and sense of responsibility.

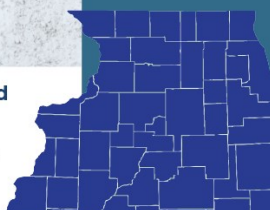


7. What do you consider the biggest challenge in your community?

Mental illness and the lack of accessible treatment remain major challenges. While larger cities like Springfield and Chicago have more resources, communities in the southern part of the state face limited and often strained services, especially where mental health and substance abuse intersect.

8. How do you think someone meeting you for the first time would describe you?

I hope they would describe me as fun-loving, approachable, and someone who genuinely cares about his community.



9. What advice would you give young people?

Decide what you want in life—and go after it.



FOLLOW THEM:
Wabash County Sheriff's Office



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ILORCA
ILLINOIS ORGANIZED RETAIL
CRIME ASSOCIATION
Learn more at www.ilorca.org

As a member, you'll receive:

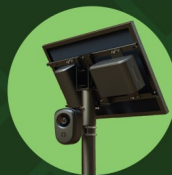
- Access to Auror, a crime intelligence platform
- Meetings, seminars & networking events
- News alerts & briefings
- Advocacy at the local, state & federal levels

Scan the QR code or **CLICK HERE** to join!

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Improve safety with live and recorded video for enhanced situational awareness and case clearance



Audio Detection

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Mobile Security Trailer

Deploy cameras where fixed infrastructure can't reach—ideal for events, lots, or remote areas

Flock Aerodome

Automated DFR (drone-as-first-responder) system providing faster, more efficient responses to enhance safety

FlockOS

Seamlessly integrate first and third-party data across video, audio, and LPR to deliver real-time intelligence

flocksafety.com

THE MAIN ATTRACTION
CGTI 2026
JULY 12-16

FUN!

CGTI 2026

cgti



CGTI 2026 Scholarship Opportunity

5-day youth leadership conference open to incoming 7th - 12th grade students (2026-2027 school year)

CGTI 2026 Registration is NOW OPEN!

The Cebrin Goodman Teen Institute (CGTI) is a 5-day youth leadership conference focused on leadership development, substance use prevention, and mental wellbeing - happening July 12-16, 2026.

For over 30 years, the Illinois Sheriffs' Association has proudly provided scholarship opportunities to help Illinois youth attend this award-winning program. Thousands of students across the state have grown their leadership skills thanks to the generosity of ISA members! Please see the links below for more information and to fill out a scholarship interest form.

Eligible Applicants:

- Incoming 7th-12th grade students (2026-2027 school year)
- Volunteer Staff (18+)
- PALS + Youth Staff (returning high school attendees)

Early Bird Registration ends April 16!

Learn more and apply:

ABOUT: <https://www.cg-ti.org/cgti-summer-conference>

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY: <https://iabh.wufoo.com/.../2026-cgti-isa-scholarship.../>

Please share if you know a student who would benefit from this incredible scholarship opportunity!

2026 ISA Conference & Training Schedule

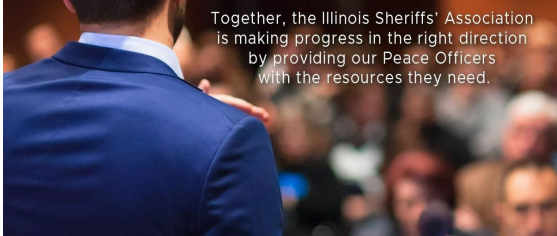
Chief Deputy & Jail Administrators Conference

April 22-24, 2026

Embassy Suites, East Peoria

Civil Process

ISA PRESENTS -
Law Enforcement
Continued Education
Opportunities



Together, the Illinois Sheriffs' Association is making progress in the right direction by providing our Peace Officers with the resources they need.

June 2026, TBD, East Peoria

Sheriffs Summer Training Conference

September 12-15, 2026
Embassy Suites, East Peoria

New Sheriffs Management Institute

November 15-19, 2026
President Abraham Lincoln Hotel,
Springfield

[Visit Our Website](#)

We would not be able to put our training and conferences on without our Preferred Vendors! The Illinois Sheriffs' Association would like to thank your vendors listed below!

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LEVEL DIAMOND



LEVEL PLATINUM

Flock Safety



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MEMBERSHIP YEAR -
January 1 - December 31, 2026

Renew... Upgrade Your Level and
Encourage Others to Do the Same!

WHY RENEW?
Membership dues support initiatives that help our IL Sheriffs keep your communities safe.



FASTEST WAY TO RENEW:
ilsheriff.org/renew

f @illinoissheriffsassociation

Plan to **LIKE, FOLLOW** and **SHARE** posts from the ISA to help us spread the word about and educate others on public safety, policing and your rights that the ISA fights for!

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