

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE



WINTER SPRINGS POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Winter Springs Police honor achievements and promotions at awards ceremony

WINTER SPRINGS, Fla. – On Thursday, January 25, 2024, the Winter Springs Police Department held its Employee Promotional and Awards Ceremony at the Winter Springs Civic Center.

The ceremony was attended by family, friends, and fellow police department personnel who came to honor the employees for their hard work and dedication to the department.



L to R Chief Matt Tracht, Officer Jacob Senecal



Lt. Shaun Philbrook, Sgt. Joshua Cook

During the ceremony, Chief Matt Tracht swore in Winter Springs's newest Officer, Jacob Senecal, and promoted Sergeant Shaun Philbrook to the rank of Lieutenant and Officer Joshua Cook to the rank of Sergeant.



Pictured L to R Chief Matt Tracht, Investigator Charles Quick, Sergeant Matthew Scovel

Investigator Charles Quick, Sergeant Matthew Scovel, and Investigator Jean Roman of the Street Crimes Unit received a Unit Citation for their work in helping take down a drug distribution operation. The two year-long investigation resulted in the seizure of 90 lbs. of cannabis worth an estimated \$300,000.



Pictured L to R Chief Matt Tracht, Officer Peggy Bittikofer, Officer Laura Chitty, Sergeant Kristin Herwick, Officer Matthew Devernoe, Officer Adam Greene, Officer Danielle Brooks, and Officer Richard Smalley

Sergeant Kristin Herwick, Officer Peggy Bittikofer, Officer Matthew Devernoe, Officer Adam Greene, Officer Laura Chitty, Officer Danielle Brooks, and Officer Richard Smalley of Delta Squad also received Unit Citations for their work in apprehending a dangerous carjacking and robbery suspect who was wanted in connection with several crimes within the City.



Pictured L to R Chief Matt Tracht, Sergeant Lynn Saccente Officer Jacob Stewart and Officer Ryan Von Bargaen,

Sergeant Lynn Saccente, Officer Ryan Von Bargaen, Officer Vincent Maine, Officer Dwayne Darrisaw, Officer Michael McLemore, and Officer Jacob Stewart of Bravo Squad also received Unit Citations for their role in apprehending armed and dangerous aggravated assault suspects who had fled from officers.



Pictured L to R Chief Matt Tracht and Winter Springs Officer of the Year Peggy Bittkofer

Officer Peggy Bittkofer was honored with the Officer of the Year award for her exceptional work as part of the Operations Bureau. Officer Bittkofer was nominated because of her willingness to improve herself and take on extra responsibilities as a senior officer, all to keep the agency moving forward. Her superiors point to Officer Bittkofer's positive attitude, eagerness to learn, attention to detail, and work ethic are great examples of what it means to be a Law Enforcement Professional.



Pictured top L to R Chief Matt Tracht, members of the Orange County Sheriff's Office and the Crime Analyst and Research Unit, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Seminole County Sheriff's Office, members of the Winter Springs Police department CID.

As part of the ceremony Chief Tracht presented the Unified Response Award to several other Central Florida Law Enforcement agencies for their assistance in the case of missing Winter Springs woman Shakeria Rucker.

Shakeria Rucker was reported missing from her Winter Springs residence by family members on November 11, 2023. Over the course of six days a massive search effort involving the Lake, Orange, Polk and Seminole Sheriff's Offices, Mount Dora Police Department, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, FBI, and Winter Springs Police department was conducted for the missing mother of four.

Chief Tracht said while the outcome of the case was unfortunate the teamwork and collaboration between all agencies involved was instrumental in bringing the case to a close.

"When we work together, extraordinary things can be accomplished. I am grateful for all the efforts and work accomplished during this event. I know that we could not have done this by ourselves," Tracht said.

Other awards presented were the Meritorious Service Award to Officer Adam Greene, Lifesaving Award to Officer Vincent Maine, Investigator of The Year to Investigator Kyle Harrop, FTO of The Year to Officer Ryan Von Bargen, and Civilian Of The Year to Melissa Buchman.

The Winter Springs Police Department congratulates all of this year's honorees and thanks them for their service to the citizens of Winter Springs.