

## 20<sup>th</sup> CITIZENS' POLICE ACADEMY TO BEGIN SEPTEMBER 18

by Bruce Kemmerer (Editorial Board member of the Suwannee Democrat)

The 20<sup>th</sup> annual Citizens' Police Academy will begin this September 18 at the Live Oak Police Department. The academy is a public service program conducted by the Live Oak Police Department and is organized and facilitated by Officer David Shapiro. Officer Shapiro has been involved with Florida law enforcement for almost 30 years and is perfectly suited to lead this community-minded program. Shapiro explains that the purpose of the academy is "to give citizens a view of law enforcement and the criminal justice system, from the inside out" and its goal is "to enhance a harmonious working relationship between community members and law enforcement while opening a mutually supportive avenue for communication." Shapiro stresses that the course offers an opportunity for citizens to learn more about their local law enforcement, ask questions, and gain a more thorough understanding of the inner workings of the Live Oak Police Department. The Academy is also a means for participants and police personnel to share information and ideas about the police profession. "The Academy also provides for improved community/police relationships, enhanced cooperation, and reduced stereotyping," says Shapiro.

During the ten week course participants are introduced to many of the activities and investigative techniques that the police use on a regular basis, as well as other departments within the judicial system. This year's course will include a segment on the hazards of texting and driving, a live K-9 demonstration, a presentation by an FBI agent as well as a representative of the USPS Investigative Unit, a presentation by Homeland Security, and an active shooter awareness session. There will be representatives from other state and local agencies, including active participation of other LOPD officers. Many of the activities include interaction between class members and presenters and they all allow for ample questions by Academy members. Don and Carolyn Baker have been attending the event for six years and look forward to the extended knowledge and interaction that they gain each year. "We were hooked after the first year," says Baker. "I enjoy learning about the different areas covered in the academy and David Shapiro always seems to get high quality speakers for each session."

Classes are held on Tuesdays beginning at 6:00 pm. **There is a \$20.00 registration fee for the academy which** covers the cost of ammunition used at the firing range, the certificate of graduation, and a banquet at the end of the course. Applications are available at the LOPD office at 205 White St. For more information, call (386) 362-7463.



Presenter from the  
U.S. Marshals Service at  
last years Citizens'  
Police Academy.

Photo by Don Baker



Members of the Live Oak  
Police Department assisting  
Academy members at the  
firing range.

Photo by Carolyn Baker