

January 19, 2006

Sheriff's Officers Sworn In, Exceptional Duty Awards Presented

SOMERVILLE – A combined swearing-in and awards ceremony was held recently for two sheriff's officers and 11 sheriff's officers and corrections officers, respectively.

Retired Judge Samuel Chiaravalli administered the oath of office to Sheriff's Officers Christopher Omelio and Pedro Rodrigues.

Officer Omelio is a resident of South Plainfield. He graduated from the Somerset County Police Academy on Dec. 22, 2005. He has a degree in mechanical design from the Somerset County Technical Institute and also has attended Raritan Valley Community College. Prior to being accepted to the county police academy as an alternate-route candidate, he worked in the health and fitness industry.

Officer Rodrigues is a resident of Union. He has a bachelor's degree from DeVry University. He is currently enrolled in the county police academy's training class. Prior to joining the Sheriff's Office, he worked as a manager for CVS Pharmacy.

In addition, 10 Special Response Team (SRT) members were presented exceptional duty awards for their participation in the Louisiana emergency assistance deployment.

The officers departed for Louisiana on Sept. 7, 2005, and after 36 hours arrived in Kenner, La. For the next 10 days they responded to police-related incidents, such as thousands of unanswered 911 calls, looting and fires, searched houses for survivors and victims and assisted animal-control officers.

The SRT members who received awards are Sgt. Nicholas Klementowicz; Sgt. Timothy Pino; Sgt. Frank Johnson; Cpl. Donald Essig; Sheriff's Officers Mark Szczecina and Timothy Musto; and Corrections Officers Keith Covert, Vincent Carrube, Jose Carrasquillo and Raymond Thompson.

In the audience was Assemblyman Christopher "Kip" Bateman, who also went to Louisiana to assist in the recovery. Sheriff Frank Provenzano acknowledged his participation in this effort.

Also, Sheriff's Officer Lewis Bimble was recognized for preventing a serious crime. While patrolling the parking lot of the Lyons train station in Bernards Township on Sept. 29, 2005, he observed a suspicious vehicle parked in a remote area of the lot. As a result of his actions, a 32-year-old male was arrested with a 14-year-old female.

Sheriff Provenzano spoke about his 37 years of experience in law enforcement and how infrequently police officers ever come across a crime in progress. He commended Officer Bimble's alertness, professionalism and investigative skills.

"Thanks to Officer Bimble, a sexual predator was apprehended and possible harm to the young lady was prevented," said Sheriff Provenzano.

For more information, contact Sheriff Frank Provenzano at (908) 231-7135.