

## Charleston County News Release

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### **Charleston County's Mosquito Control and Sheriff's Office Rewarded for Safe Flying**

*Due to pilots' safe flying, Mosquito Control Division earns \$42,000 over seven years, and Sheriff's Office aviation insurance premiums are reduced by 37 percent.*

Charleston County Government has received an aviation insurance safety bonus check in the amount of \$4,175. This bonus check was awarded because Charleston County Mosquito Control Aviation Division pilots experienced an accident-free year from Jan. 2006 through Jan. 2007.

This is the seventh consecutive annual safety bonus check that Charleston County's Mosquito Control has received. To date, the seven annual safety bonus checks total \$42,000.

The Charleston County Sheriff's Office aviation insurance policy is underwritten by the same insurance company. Although their law enforcement aviation insurance program is not eligible for safety bonuses, the insurance company does reward safety through reduced aviation insurance premiums on renewal.

During the same seven-year period, Charleston County Sheriff's Office pilots have also been accident free, resulting in its insurance premiums being reduced by 37 percent.

The following pilots are congratulated for their outstanding and accident-free safety record:

#### Charleston County Mosquito Control Division

Michael Haines, Chief Pilot

Mark Kennedy, Pilot and Mechanic

Martin Hyatt, Mosquito Control Superintendent and Pilot

#### Charleston County Sheriff's Office

Lt. Bill Britt, Chief Pilot

Sgt. Scott Martray, Pilot

Sgt. Matthew Cole, Pilot

Charleston County Government's aviation insurance company includes the "safety bonus incentive" for the Mosquito Control Division to promote flight safety and help the County control insurance costs. The annual safety bonus can only be achieved if the client remains "accident-free."

Charleston County's Mosquito Control Division has earned the safety bonus every year since the incentive has been offered.

Charleston County's Safety & Risk Management Director, Larry Hodge, said he was pleased to announce the news. "The pilots and mechanics who work on the County's aviation equipment that is used to serve the public are outstanding, and they deserve to be rewarded again this year," Hodge said.

Mosquito Control's chief pilot, Michael Haines, plays a major role in attaining and sustaining the division's excellent safety record. Haines performs over 95 percent of all the flying for the County's Mosquito Control Division.

Haines, who lives in Goose Creek, has worked with county government since 1973, and has been flying for the county since 1985. Haines is a certified pesticide applicator in several categories including public health and aerial application.

Martin Hyatt, who has been the Superintendent of the Mosquito Control Division since 1988, has worked for the county since October of 1977. Hyatt, who lives on James Island, has been flying for Charleston County Government since 1985.

"We are proud to receive this bonus, but safety has always been our number one priority when it comes to our flying," Hyatt said. "We've had a great record ever since the county began conducting mosquito-related flights in 1982."

The bonus money will go into the Mosquito Control Division's budget, where it will be used to enhance safety measures.

The Sheriff's Office Air Support Unit provides a full-range of airborne law enforcement support to patrol and specialized units. Also, as the only full-time airborne law enforcement unit on the coast of South Carolina, it routinely provides assistance to local, state and federal agencies operating in the Tri-county area. The unit is actively engaged in homeland security operations and supports Project SeaHawk, a multi-agency task force, headed by the U.S. Attorney General's Office, which is responsible for security operations in the Port of Charleston.

The Sheriff's Office Air Support Unit is manned by three full-time pilots and ten collateral duty flight observers from other local government agencies. A crew is on call 24 hours a day to quickly respond to any emergency if needed.

The Sheriff's air unit operates both rotary and fixed wing aircraft. Two surplus military helicopters are used to support daily law enforcement missions. Primarily, these missions include patrol, pursuits, fugitive searches, missing persons, drownings, overdue boaters, search and rescue, marijuana eradication, ship escorts, reconnaissance/photo, homeland security missions, and aerial backup during traffic stops, disturbances and domestic calls.

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- Written by Jennie Davis -