



Jim Wiggins

Director of Organizational Services

Please encourage non-members to join the 36,000 officers throughout Florida who receive the benefits of belonging to the Florida PBA!

Several cannibals were recently hired by a big corporation. "You are all part of our team now," said the HR rep during the welcoming briefing. "You get all the usual benefits and you can go to the cafeteria for something to eat, but please don't eat any of the other employees."

The cannibals promised. Four weeks later their boss remarked, "You're all working very hard and I'm satisfied with you. However, one of our secretaries has disappeared. Do any of you know what happened to her?" The cannibals all shook their heads no.

After the boss had left, the leader of the cannibals said to the others, "Which one of you idiots ate the secretary?" A hand raised hesitantly, to which the leader of the cannibals continued, "You fool! For four weeks we've been eating managers and no one noticed anything, then you had to go and eat the secretary!"

News from Around the State

Organizational Update

Looking Forward To 2008...

As 2007 comes to a close, we should all take a moment to pause and reflect on the men and women in the law enforcement community who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect and defend this great country, and to say a short prayer for their families and friends and to hope that 2008 will be a safer, more prosperous New Year for us all.

That being said, I hope that each of you are ready to hit the ground running because 2008 is going to start with a bang! In Tallahassee committee weeks have begun, signaling the start of this year's legislative process.

Florida is faced with a \$2.4 billion (and growing every day) budget shortfall. Even after a special session that cut over \$1 billion from last year's budget... well you get the picture. It's going to be tough going for our state officers looking for money in this year's budget. But if anyone can find it, it's our veteran lobbying team. Some of them have been walking the halls of the Capitol for over 20 years. That's the kind of continuity you need to be successful in today's term limited Legislature.

Our city and county groups are in a similar position economically, due to the upcoming January 29 presidential primary. After selecting who you want to be your parties' candidate for president, you will have an opportunity to vote on Amendment 1, which will decide whether you want to potentially lower your property taxes and make portable your Save Our Homes equity, if you choose to buy a new home. As you can imagine, the cities and counties are all warning of the dire budget shortfalls they will face if the amendment passes.

The reason I'm painting such a gloomy picture is to make a point about what I've learned in the twenty plus years I've been working in the police labor movement throughout the country.

There will always be good times and bad times economically. We need to recognize and anticipate these economic trends—then adjust our contract negotiation strategies to focus more on non-economic enhancements, such as improving promotional procedures or your disciplinary review process. You can also work to add things like more court time or adding a new holiday. While these

items do have an economic impact, they are small ticket items that benefit everyone when compared to the cost of an across the board pay increase.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying you shouldn't put a reasonable wage proposal on the table even during the toughest of times—you should, but do so with the understanding that you're going to have to be creative and flexible to get the best deal possible.

Remember always that collective bargaining is a marathon, not a sprint, and economic improvements are measured in the long term, not the short.

In closing, I'd like to add the need for each bargaining team to communicate regularly with their members. The lack of communication is probably the number one complaint the organizational services staff gets while visiting members in the field. Keeping your membership informed during the negotiations process will not only limit how much misinformation is generated by the rumor mill, it will also help you keep everyone focused on the issues that are on the table, making it easier to mobilize everyone if you're forced to jump out into the court of public opinion to get the job done. Good communication also helps smooth the way when it's time for contract ratification—a win-win proposition for the Association and the membership.

As always, if you work for an agency that doesn't currently have collective bargaining, just give us a call. We'll be glad to sit down with you and explain the process. ●

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