

Sheriffs Statement about Federal Investigation

News Release

May 6, 2016

“I am proud to serve as Harnett County Sheriff. I believe in, and value, our deputies and staff who work in stressful roles whether that is on the road as a deputy, in our 911 center answering emergency calls, or in our detention center monitoring those incarcerated. They show me daily how dedicated they are to doing their best to serve the citizens of Harnett County.

Last year alone our deputies responded to more than 45-thousand calls for help from the public and our investigators solved more burglary cases than the national average of other similar agencies . I hope you will give us the opportunity to work with federal investigators before reaching a conclusion in anything you hear in the public or read online.

As for the federal investigation reported on in the media, I believe it is appropriate for me to limit my comments regarding the situations under investigation. I can confirm the Harnett County Sheriff’s Office has received requests from the United States Attorney’s Office regarding matters related to recent media reports. We take these allegations very seriously and are taking action. Our priority is public safety for both Harnett County citizens and the officers who serve to protect us every day.

We are in the process of retaining outside counsel to assist the Sheriff’s office in:

- evaluating any and all claims of police misconduct;**
- immediately reviewing current protocols and procedures; and**

- **considering additional procedures.**

All of this is in an effort to serve our citizens in an honorable way and restore any public trust which may have been lost in the Harnett County Sheriff's office. As Sheriff, I am committed to maintaining the highest standards of accountability for our employees. The citizens of Harnett County should expect nothing less."

Sheriff Wayne Coats