

## COP Bike Unit members serve as ambassadors

The **Broward Sheriff's Office Citizen Observer Patrol (COP)** program recently started the first-ever bike unit in **Lauderdale-By-The-Sea**.

The new program not only increases the visibility of law enforcement, but makes it easier for COP members to meet people and more readily provide them with help.

"They are very accessible and approachable to the public for answering questions and providing directions," said BSO **Capt. Fred Wood**, who oversees BSO operations in Lauderdale-By-The-Sea. "During peak traffic times they can also maneuver throughout the Town much more readily than in a patrol car."

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**— Capt. Fred Wood**

in **El Prado Park** in mid-November when an 80-year old man developed stroke-like symptoms.

"We were already there and were beckoned immediately," he said. "I was speaking on the radio with BSO dispatch while **Officer Les Kafka** directed ambulance and fire rescue personnel to the scene."

Bike unit members travel in pairs. While able to patrol anywhere in the Town, the unit's primary focus is the downtown area and all along Commercial.

"The bike unit will complement our COP car patrols," Wood said. "While looking for suspicious activity or potential hazards, the access of the

bikes will allow COPs to act as ambassadors to our community. Their close interaction with the public is very

conducive to our law enforcement procedures."

Besides Johansen, the COP Bike Unit members include **Maj. Lou Barbara**, **Sgt. Philip Wojahn**, **Sgt. Tim Bokovoy**, and officers **Lisa Quaranto**, **Dan Ford**, **Tom Ferris** and **Kafka**.

"BSO **Deputy Ben Koos** is our COP Liaison with BSO and has been a strong supporter to help get the unit going," Johansen said.

The unit's training emphasizes safe riding skills and how to navigate around obstacles and other hazards they could encounter, including curbs, sandy or wet pavement, moving vehicles and even pedestrians.

Wood isn't aware of other BSO jurisdiction in Broward using COP bike units, although two BSO districts have called him to inquire about starting one

up in their community, as did the **City of Indian Rocks Beach**, Fla.

### How to Join

To learn more about the Citizens Observer Patrol, go to [www.sheriff.org/about\\_bso/community/cops.cfm](http://www.sheriff.org/about_bso/community/cops.cfm). If you have questions about the LBTS program or would like to possibly join, please call Capt. Wood at **954-640-4240**.



**TRAFFIC STOP:** COP Bike Unit members Les Kafka (l) and Tom Ferris (r) chat with a Town resident and her guest in Anglin's Square during this year's annual Christmas-By-The-Sea.

The COP program uses resident volunteers as an extra set of eyes and ears for the police. COP members radio BSO if they spot criminal or suspicious activity. They also handle traffic control and other routine police matters, freeing up BSO's full-time police deputies to spend more valuable time on patrol.

**Col. Bill Johansen**, who heads up the COP program in LBTS, said bike unit members were at the **Farmer's Market**