



McCormick Car Club members took up a donation at their annual holiday dinner for the McCormick County Sheriff's Department, which is raising funds for bulletproof helmets for deputies to use in active shooter situations. Club members (l-r) Jane Mills and Don Webb pass along the club's donation to Sheriff Clarke Stearns and Investigator Dee Collier. McCormick Lions Club members staffed a table for three days at the Savannah Lakes Village Recreation Center to collect donations from Villagers visiting the center. -StocktonPhoto

Groups respond to sheriff's need for deputies' bulletproof helmets

Three organizations – Good Shepherd Catholic Church, the McCormick Car Club and the McCormick Lions Club – are among supporters of the McCormick Sheriff's Department need for head protection. The story below describes the church's pancake breakfast and donation to benefit the sheriff, and an additional photo and caption describe the car club's and Lions' efforts.

Fantastic support of our sheriff

By Rod Wurst
VP Good Shepherd Men's Club
The Good Shepherd Men's Club would like to thank all of the wonderful people who came to our "Support your Sheriff", breakfast on Sunday Jan. 13. We had 244 people who had attended our pancake breakfast. We had donations for the Sheriff Office Special Helmet Fund of \$1000 and a donation from the Good Shepherd Men's Club of \$1,500 for a total donation to this important fund of \$2,500.

Thanks again for your wonderful support.



Sheriff Clarke Stearns and his wife Lana joined the Good Shepherd Men's Club breakfast for a fundraiser on Sunday. The Men's Club donated \$2,500 to the Sheriff's Tactical support team.

Sheriff's Department fundraiser

By Jerry Dargis
Friends of the McCormick County Sheriff's Dept.

On Wednesday afternoon, Sheriff Clarke Stearns spoke to the Good Shepherd Women's and Men's Clubs. He described in detail many of the challenges he and his deputies face in protecting the citizens of McCormick County. Many of the situations included dealing with active shooters (being fired upon). One deputy was wounded and is on medical leave. They have protective vests, but no protective headgear. And they also

have no basic tactical tools such as a battering ram, pry bars, etc. His team consists of 18 deputies (seven of which are Tactical members) and himself. The McCormick County Council has approved (over the past two years) a budget of \$2,000 annually for uniforms and equipment. This has left the department with no means to provide for the safety of the Tactical Deputies and obtain the necessary equipment. He has asked for funds to purchase seven Kevlar helmets (as used by the military) at a cost of \$350 each. Our goal is to raise these funds and more to pro-

vide necessary equipment also.

McCormick County has over 3,000 households and with a donation of \$10 per household we can easily provide funds that would meet the department's needs now and for the next year or two.

Donations will be accepted at White Hardware, 210 S. Main St., McCormick. Cash will be accepted and checks can be made out to McCormick County Sheriff Special Operations.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and let's support those who protect us.



McCormick Armory located on Bradley Street. -Photo provided by cultural resource manager.

South Carolina Army National Guard proposes to demolish the McCormick Armory

The South Carolina Army National Guard (SCARNG) is proud of its historic presence in South Carolina and recognizes the role the McCormick Readiness Center has played throughout history. In 2011, the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) determined that the McCormick Armory was eligible for listing with the NRHP. The SCARNG respects the significance of this determination and is committed to protecting and preserving its cultural and historic resources to the best of its ability.

Over the years, the McCormick Armory has deteriorated to a hazardous extent. The building is plagued by asbestos, lead paint, mold, and a failing roof system. The structure poses a risk to both soldiers at the facility, as well as members of the McCormick community who may access the building. The SCARNG has considered numerous options to repair and renovate the building, but is unable to secure the funding necessary to safely maintain the structure. Consequently, the SCARNG has made the difficult decision to

pursue the demolition of the McCormick Armory.

The SCARNG will maintain its presence in the McCormick community and plans to continue to use the McCormick facility for parking and military storage. The SCARNG values the McCormick community's interest in this proposal. If you have any questions, concerns, or comments about this project, please contact the SCARNG's Cultural Resource Manager, Rachel Morgan at MorganRB@tag.scmd.state.sc.us or 803-299-2091.

Deputies arrest mother, son, two others for home burglary

By Bob Stockton

McCormick County Sheriff's deputies made arrests in one burglary last week and are continuing to investigate a second.

A woman called county dispatch last Friday, said her husband was holding her at gunpoint in the Lost Wilderness area and refusing to let her go. When deputies arrived, a man came out and was questioned. He admitted he had a rifle, stated that his estranged wife had left months ago, but returned to cut a chain link lock, broken out a window and gained entry to his residence.

A female was brought out, questioned, and she admitted to having bolt cutters and breaking the window to gain entry. She said she was trying to reconcile her relationship with the home owner.

During questioning, the couple's son, girlfriend and a third person drove in, and the son said he had dropped his mother off so she could pick up some of her belongings. Further questioning determined that the son and girlfriend had also entered the residence while the third person remained on the porch.

The mother, son and girlfriend were arrested for second degree burglary and the additional person for accessory to burglary. All four were transported to the county detention center to await bond hearing. The case continues to be investigated and additional charges are pending.

"When we receive calls involving firearms, we take them very seriously as the stakes are automatically higher," said Sheriff Clarke Stearns. "Fortunately, in this case, no one was injured. Deputies did an excellent job in investigating this case and flawlessly handling what could have been a volatile scene. That's why we train hard and often."

Deputies responded to a burglary complaint in the Julia Mae Saxon Road area last Tuesday. The victim said that after she had returned home, she noticed that items including computer games and a small TV were missing. Deputies observed damage to the front door, photographed the scene and lifted several fingerprints.

They also canvassed the neighborhood, and a witness said he had seen two black males, one carrying a black book bag and a Spider Man book bag. One was wearing a black ball cap and hoodie, red jogging pants and purple and red shoes. Anyone seeing a person or persons matching this description is asked to

call the McCormick County Sheriff's Office at 864-465-2520.

The General Sessions Court convened last week, and there were 14 felony cases presented by the McCormick Sheriff's Office to the grand jury. All 14 cases were true-billed, meaning indictments will be forthcoming. Additionally, 11 felony cases were tried and disposed of.

In late 2017, the sheriff's office partnered with Cornerstone and CVS to have a drug drop box installed in the front lobby of the justice center. This is an apparatus in which residents can come in and dispose of medications or other drugs anonymously, without question.

"Our drop box is open 24 hours

a day, seven days a week," Stearns said. "Last year we weighed and destroyed 36 pounds of discarded medication. This is a free service which obviously has paid pounds and pounds of dividends. By disposing of it, we take it off the street and out of any equation for criminal intent.

"We are grateful to Cornerstone and CVS for supplying the box free of charge. This service works, and I encourage anyone who needs to, please take advantage of it," he said.

The box is not for syringes, needles and other instruments. Residents are asked to take them to EMS Station No. 1 which can dispose of that.



McCormick County Sheriff's Office Major Brock displays the latest collection of medications dropped into the drug drop box in the lobby of the justice center.

Relay For Life to meet Jan. 21

By Hoyt Dorn
Senior Community Development Manager
American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society's Relay For Life of Abbeville/McCormick is celebrating something special this year, the 25th anniversary of the event. Words cannot express the appreciation to the volunteers and sponsors. You have stepped forward as event leaders, team captains or team members.

Your efforts have helped countless cancer patients receive resources needed during their battle with cancer, including life-saving research along with free programs and services and supported caregivers and families with information to understand how to help their loved one.

As we start working toward the anniversary, we encourage former volunteers to return for this special occasion. We also welcome new teams and sponsors to help us celebrate life and save lives. Please make plans to join us on Jan. 21 at 6 p.m. for our first meeting. We will be at Long Cane Volunteer Fire Department located at 5 Durham Rd. Abbeville.

We look forward to seeing you there. We will be displaying the new fundraising shirts along with the 25th anniversary signs. So, invite a friend and bring your creativity and imagination with you. Please contact me at 864-871-4210 or email hdorn@cancer.org. For cancer information 24/7 log onto cancer.org or call 1-800-227-2345. Our website is relayforlife.org/abbeville

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