

# Caddo Sheriff's Regional Training Academy reaches milestone with start of 50th basic training class

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Cadets who are part of the Caddo Sheriff's Regional Training Academy's 50th basic training class have reported for duty marking a milestone for the law enforcement training facility.

Located near the bank of the Red River on LA Hwy. 1 South, the academy has been turning out new deputies and police officers since 2001. Since opening its doors, 1,174 law enforcement officers have graduated from the academy's basic training course and thousands more have attended retraining for their jobs.

"When we opened in 2001, I said that peace officers begin to develop their disposition toward policing on the first day they walk into the classroom. I still believe that to be true," said Caddo Sheriff Steve Prator. "I couldn't be prouder of the quality of training our Academy staff provides and the example they set for new deputies and officers."

The Louisiana Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Council in Baton Rouge approved the opening of the Caddo Sheriff's Regional Training Academy in October 2001. The designation allowed CPSO to provide state-required basic training for its recruits and those from other agencies in the 10-parish region. Since then the Academy has trained deputies and officers from 61 law enforcement agencies.

Becoming a regional Academy was no easy task. POST officials inspected the Caddo facility's guidelines, curriculum, building, and instructors' credentials before making the designation. Lesson plans for the 320-hour basic curriculum were written from scratch. District attorneys, federal prosecutors, and other legal minds were recruited to teach the law.

Over the years, and at the urging of Sheriff Prator who served on the Louisiana Peace Officer Standards and Training Council, the curriculum for all new officers in the state grew to more than 600 hours. Training now includes courses such as crisis intervention, diversity in the community, and de-escalation.

"I'm proud that we accomplished increasing training hours to 600 for all officers in the state but I still feel there's more to be done," the Sheriff said. "It's our duty as a training center to make sure new deputies and officers are at their best and ready for any situation they encounter."

The Caddo Sheriff's Regional Training Academy also grew in size. In 2006, a 6,000-square foot addition was opened to provide five times the classroom space. The building included a commercial kitchen, locker rooms, administrative offices, and a library. A new classroom for the firing range followed and improvements were made to the outdoor range.

Twenty-seven cadets from 11 agencies began training with Class #50 on July 19. They are scheduled to graduate November 2.