

Sheriff Mike Stone is asking for the public's support to help keep our community safe and preserve the quality of life in Lincoln Parish by voting yes on two tax measures in a special election set for April 21, 2012.

The first measure is a renewal of the 7.83 mill property tax currently in effect in Lincoln Parish. This tax presently funds 40 percent of the Sheriff's Office's operating budget. Renewal of this millage will cause no changes to taxpayers, as they will continue to pay the same rate as they have for the past 20 years.

The second measure will be for a ¼ cent sales tax, which will help offset the increased expenses incurred by the department in recent years and provide for the future funding needs of the Sheriff's Office.

"We have been hit hard by increased expenses over the last few years," Stone said. "As everybody knows, the price of gasoline has almost doubled from the end of 2009 to now and insurance costs have gone through the roof. The cost of training and outfitting our personnel has also increased significantly."

Meanwhile, while costs have increased, the services provided to the public have also jumped dramatically. Stone pointed to the fact that calls for service to his department have increased from 11,857 in 2000 to 18,171 in 2008 and are projected to rise to 20,400 in 2012.

He said that the department's expenses have more than doubled, from \$2,594,305 in 2000 to a projected \$6,795,631 for 2012.

"We have put many cost-cutting measures in place recently to offset these added expenses," Stone said. "From hiring, pay and training freezes, to reducing our technology budget, we have tried to run the most streamlined operation we can."

Stone said that Lincoln Parish only has 1 deputy per 719 citizens, which is a much lower per capita rate when compared with other similarly-sized parishes in North Louisiana, such as Webster (1 per 284), Natchitoches (1 per 476), Morehouse (1 per 151), DeSoto (1 per 313), and Bienville (1 per 247).

"When we took office eight years ago, we promised several things," Stone said. "More patrol and visibility on the street, adding an additional investigator, strengthening our drug interdiction (LPNET) and elderly protection (TRIAD) programs, putting an SRO officer in every school, improving litter abatement and animal control, and adding special patrol deputies (SCAT and CAP).

"We feel we've delivered on our promises and have been good stewards of the public's money, and we ask for your trust that we will continue to do so."