

# New Zone 3 substation opens in growing Jacksonville

## Sheriff's Office rents space for \$1 a year

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The 190 officers and supervisors who patrol the city's Southside and Mandarin have a bigger home to work out of, and it only cost a buck for the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office to rent.

Instead of a cramped 2,400-square-foot building used for about 20 years next to Wolfson High School, Assistant Chief Mat Nemeth and his staff now have a 6,000-square-foot piece of an office building at 8875 Liberty Ridge Drive, within earshot of Interstate 95 and Baymeadows Road.

Faced with fielding officers in the city's most densely packed police zone and its acres of offices, apartments, highways and suburbs, the Sheriff's Office searched for a roomier and more centralized Zone 3 substation location for years. Crocker Partners, which owns the 54-acre Prominence business park, agreed to rent about half of one of its seven buildings between Dix Ellis Trail and Prominence Parkway to police for \$1 a year for the next decade.

With rapid development continuing in the zone in areas like the Town Center, Gate Parkway, Butler Boulevard and Nocatee, Nemeth said the move next door to I-95 means faster access to everywhere for his staff. It also means easier access to citizens who need to retrieve and file reports, get fingerprints done for background checks, or just need to talk with an officer.

"Our zone has grown so much in its south and east," Nemeth said. "... The interstate access gives folks

who are way down south in the Nocatee and southern areas better access to get to us. And even though we don't have officers who sit here, they do muster here. So having them muster closer to the interstate and more centrally in the zone, the officers can get to their areas quicker after roll call."

The Sheriff's Advisory Councils that meet monthly with Zone 3 staff to discuss crime in Southside and Mandarin got a preview of the new substation Monday. The ShAdCos have been working with officers for years, many times meeting in a small conference room at the old Powers Avenue substation or in local churches. But after seeing the new substation's large conference room and roll call area with flat-screen TVs, Sector G ShAdCo chairman Norman Joseph said they "love it."

"We are very impressed and very pleased for the new facilities, and to be able to have our meetings in one united building with everybody again," he said. "... You can't beat it."

Jacksonville has six police zones. Zone 1 focuses on the urban core, then the others radiate around it into the Northside, Westside, Arlington and Southside/Mandarin. Zone 3 encompasses 150 square miles of Jacksonville between Beach Boulevard and the Duval/St. Johns County line, divided into three sectors. It leads the city in traffic fatalities due to its high growth and overnight auto burglaries are also an issue, Nemeth said.

The original Zone 3 substation at 7100 Powers Ave. was so cramped that three



Officers and members of the Zone 3 Sheriff's Advisory Council met in the big roll call room at the new substation off Baymeadows Road Monday night as they toured the 6,000-square-foot office. (Dan Scanlan/Florida Times-Union)

lieutenants shared one office, Nemeth said. It was closed Thursday so staff could move four miles away to the new site.

"By our mere presence, driving 100 cars up and down Dix Ellis Trail, that will have a strong impact on crime in this immediate area," Nemeth said.

The sheriff's office isn't the only agency seeking more centralized operations in the growing area. Jacksonville Fire and Rescue just added another engine and rescue unit to Station 28 on Hogan Road to handle calls west of Southside Boulevard as it seeks at least one new station site in the Town Center area.



Police cars packed the parking lot of the new Zone 3 substation Monday night.

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# Students go back to school at Ridgeview Elementary



Principal Tracy McLaughlin talks with students in Jewel Usin's fifth-grade homeroom. Tuesday was the first day of school for students in Clay County. Students made their way to Ridgeview Elementary School in Orange Park, some with parents, or teachers and their assistants in tow, to start the new school year. Superintendent of Schools Addison Davis and members of the Clay County School Board toured the school later in the morning. (Bob Mack/Florida Times-Union)



Students in the pre-K class of Deanna Verboort walk to class holding a guide rope with handles.



Assistant teacher Michelle Bullard walks some of her pre-K students from the bus drop-off area as a student waves goodbye to her family.



Clay Superintendent Addison Davis talks with student Peyton Baker, 7, (left) as he toured Cheryl Brown's (right) second-grade class as she hands out school materials.



First-grade teacher Amanda Nicholas takes a photo of Kiara Zamora, who had chosen a green eggs and ham prop for the photo.



A lighted sign in Amanda Nicholas' first-grade class greeted students on the first day.



Art teacher Victoria Bowen goes over what she expects students to do when she says "Show the Mona Lisa" using an adapted photo of the famous painting with her face in place of the original.