



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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OC Sheriff promotes two Commanders, Division Director

SANTA ANA, Ca. (March 24, 2023): The Orange County Sheriff's Department on March 22 promoted 23 personnel, including two Commanders and a Division Director, in a ceremony held at the Orange County Sheriff's Regional Training Academy.

"We have new leaders with talents and experience that will benefit the community we serve," said Don Barnes, Orange County Sheriff-Coroner. "I look forward to seeing how their dedication and skill will help us continue to deliver exceptional policing services."

Wednesday's promotion ceremony also included six investigators and 14 sergeants. All personnel will assume their new assignments today, March 24.

Commander Brett Darnell – SAFE Division

Commander Darnell will be assigned to the SAFE (Strategy. Accountability. Focus. Evaluation.) Division, which includes the Risk Management Bureau, SAFE Bureau and Internal Affairs Unit. The Division carries a long list of responsibilities including developing policy, reducing liability and improving safety.

Commander Darnell first joined the Sheriff's Department in 1999 as a Sheriff's Special Officer before becoming a deputy sheriff in 2001. He first served in Custody Operations before being assigned to patrol in the city of Rancho Santa Margarita.

He joined the Medical Marijuana Task Force in 2011, investigating illegal marijuana operations throughout the county. He then was assigned as a deputy on the Directed Enforcement Team, providing support for a variety of investigations.

Commander Darnell was promoted to investigator in 2013 and served on North Narcotics, where he coordinated and conducted multiple investigations in his five years in the assignment.

In 2018, he was promoted to Sergeant, where he served in Custody Operations before being tapped to lead investigative teams. He first supervised North Narcotics before transferring to the Regional Narcotics Suppression Program.

Commander Darnell was then promoted to Lieutenant in 2021, serving as the Watch Commander for the Central Jails Division. Most recently, he was assigned as Captain of the Special Investigations Bureau, overseeing a multi-agency narcotics task force and five OC Sheriff investigative teams, including Vice and Human Trafficking and the Highway Interdiction Team.





Commander Chad Taylor – Central Jails Division

Commander Taylor will oversee operations for the Central Jails Division, which houses both sentenced and pretrial maximum-security inmates at the Men's Central Jail and Women's Central Jail.

Commander Taylor joined the department in 1997 and first served in Custody Operations then Patrol Operations, working in the city of Lake Forest and eventually becoming a Field Training Officer.

In 2007, he worked as a certified flight instructor for the Air Support Bureau, where he provided pilot training for the department's Tactical Flight Officers for six years. He joined the Mass Transit Bureau in 2013, providing law enforcement services and conducting special operations for the Orange County Transportation Authority's mass transit lines.

In leadership roles, Commander Taylor worked in the Custody and Professional Services commands before promoting to Lieutenant in 2019. He first worked as a watch commander of the Intake Release Center before being selected as the Chief of Police Services for the city of Lake Forest where he has served for four years.



Director David O'Connell – Research and Development Division (R&D)

Director O'Connell will oversee R&D, which is responsible for facilitating department-wide construction, maintaining all OC Sheriff facilities and fleet vehicles and issuing uniforms and equipment, among other responsibilities.

Director O'Connell joined the Sheriff's Department in 2004 as a facilities mechanic at the Central Jails Complex before promoting to several different positions within Facilities Operations. In 2016, he was promoted to project manager, overseeing multiple critical maintenance projects for the department, including the hot water system upgrade for the Theo Lacy Facility and a security fence installation for the James A. Musick Facility.

Most recently, Director O'Connell has served as the Facilities Operations Manager, overseeing large-scale infrastructure and maintenance needs of the department.

Prior to joining the Sheriff's Department, Director O'Connell spent 17 years working in the overhead material handling industry and six years as a welder foreman for the Southern California Gas Company.

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