

## Park Security

Forbes Park is located in a rural, pristine setting. Some areas of the park are more populated than others, especially around Lake of the Ozarks, but it's important that each of the 145 miles is as secure as possible.

### **Benton County Deputy Sheriff**

The LOA has a contract with the Benton County Sheriff's Department to provide a fulltime Deputy to patrol the entire 12,800 acres. This service is provided to our land owners as a part of their Association Dues. Duties include reporting adverse road conditions, verifying that vehicle stickers or passes are displayed in every vehicle to thwart trespassing, poaching, dumping and any/all illegal activities. Ray discreetly walks a fine line between enforcement of Benton county laws and monitoring covenant compliance requiring empathy, discretion and diplomacy. He is an important part of the LOA team and is committed to serving all of our land owners. His presence creates a sense of wellbeing and protection in this rural setting. *(And his size inspires confidence in his ability to defend all of us! See his picture in the newspaper article below.)*

### **Gates**

There are 35 entrances to the Park. Three of these are secured by electronic gates which can be opened by entering the security code provided to each of our land owners or by a remote available for purchase. There are also 25 padlocked, cabled gates. The Board has included the addition of two (2) electronic gates in the 2011 budget and will continue to budget for the additional gates yearly as funds permit. There are security cameras located in various locations throughout the park to discourage vandalism of LOA and personal property.

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#### DEPUTY SHERIFF OF THE DEEP WOODS

He drives 125 to 175 miles a shift in a dust-covered car, his work hours change every week and he encounters wild animals and rough people. But, Deputy Sheriff Ray Knox loves his job providing law enforcement to landowners of Forbes Park, located near Edwards, Missouri. The Forbes Landowners Association pays the Benton County Sheriff's Department for Deputy Knox's services and for additional deputies during deer season when poachers try to hunt on private property.



"The people at Forbes are very friendly," he said. "They are always offering me a cup of coffee and inviting me into their homes. It is also relaxing to be in the country where you can see a variety of animals not visible in town. I enjoy the beauty of turkeys and snow-covered woodlands."

Deputy Knox has been a Deputy Sheriff for six years, but only began patrolling Forbes in November 2008, replacing John Cihy, who retired. Deputy Knox was previously a Road Deputy, responding to a variety of calls from "a cat in a tree" to "shots fired or armed barricades." He has lived in the local area all of his life, and "knows half of the people he arrests." He owned the Shooter's Supply Gun and Bow Shop before he decided to go into law enforcement.

"I thought I could make a difference in the fight against crime," he said when asked why he became a deputy sheriff. "And I wanted to help provide a safer community for my wife and children. Now, I bang my head against the wall," he said referring to the formidable task of dealing with lawbreakers and lawmakers.

He trained for his job by attending the law enforcement academy in Warrensburg where he learned weapons handling, report writing, fingerprinting, statutory law, and self defense. He also served in the U. S. Navy for twelve and a half years, including a tour with a U. S. Marine anti-terrorist security team force in Italy. He is a tall, husky guy who looks like he can take care of himself in a sticky situation.

Officer Knox says that Benton County is rough in some areas where groups set up drug operations in dense parts of the woods. He and fellow deputies do the best they can to track down these and other illegal activities in the county's 768 square miles.

At Forbes Park, he checks homes for signs of intruders or burglaries, responds to calls, and escorts trespassers back to public roads. He has encountered people entering private property on four-wheelers who he believes are casing the houses. During his daily patrols, on back roads, he has encountered 300-pound feral pigs, bobcats over 65 pounds, a pack of coyotes, and even an Angus bull. He had a call recently from a homeowner who saw an apparent-rabid fox in her yard. He attends Forbes Landowner meetings and warns homeowners to be protective of themselves and their pets in this wild setting.

The job of a sheriff or deputy in Benton County is not without risk. Two sheriffs and one marshal have been killed in the line of duty by gunfire. The last sheriff to be gunned down was Louis Miesner, in 1944, during an attempted prison escape. The machine gun bullet holes are still visible in the stairwell of the Sheriff's Office in Warsaw. Deputy Knox's house was ransacked recently by persons looking for the canine unit dog. Those responsible have not been apprehended.

The deputy belongs to a law enforcement group that has a proud history spanning well over a thousand years. Sheriffs are even mentioned in the Bible, in the book of Daniel. Some were very powerful and corrupt as the Sheriff of Nottingham in stories of Robin Hood. Some were heroes such as Bat Masterson and Wyatt Earp in our country's western territories. Sheriffs were often chosen because they were rich, strong or lucky. They were not always a professional group. Today, well-educated people with high-tech skills such as radar technology, underwater diving and piloting, are surfacing in many of the nearly 3,000 county sheriff's offices in the United States.

The Benton County's Sheriff's Office has great responsibilities. Deputies are tasked with law enforcement throughout the county as well as maintaining the county jail and providing court security and judicial services. They also assist the Warsaw Police Department when the need arises. We are fortunate and grateful to have the dedicated men and women who are such a potent force at keeping the peace.