

**NEWS RELEASE**

January 10, 2009

Deputies and volunteers from the Columbia County Sheriff's Office assisted Clatskanie and Vernonia area residents during last week's flooding. Local resources were stretched to the limit by flooding, downed trees and landslides in those areas, and deputies were summoned to the scene, along with police officers from Oregon State Police, Scappoose Police and St. Helens Police to help their counterparts in the stricken areas.

Also pressed into service was the nascent Volunteers in Partnership with the Sheriff (VIPS) program. VIPS volunteers worked with County and local Emergency Operations Centers to coordinate county volunteer response and render aid in North Columbia County and the Nehalem River Valley.

"This is an excellent example of agencies working together for the greater good of those we serve," said Sheriff Jeff Dickerson. "The Sheriff's Office is committed to assisting local agencies and providing the leadership needed for county-wide responses to emergency situations. I was pleased with the work and flexibility of our volunteers and with the creative problem solving demonstrated by our deputies serving in the stricken areas," he added.

Anyone interested in joining the Sheriff's VIPS program and providing volunteer services across a wide scope of service opportunities is encouraged to contact the Sheriff's Office at (503) 366-4611.