

June 16, 2015

Sally Ellertson
Public Information Officer
141 West Renfro
Burleson, Texas 76028-4261
817-426-9622
F: 817-426-9390
sellertson@burlesontx.com
www.burlesontx.com

Vicki McElroy and Kristy Gilbert were honored with Lifetime Memberships from the Texas Citizens on Patrol Association during the state conference June 13 in LaGrange, Texas.

McElroy is the assistant Citizens On Patrol coordinator for the Burleson Police Department and a member of the Burleson Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association. Gilbert is a member of the Burleson COPs and treasurer of the Texas COPs.

The Lifetime membership is awarded by the TCOPA president to a member who exemplifies volunteer service and promotes purpose of the Association in a positive manner. The recipient is someone who has done these things for several years and does so not seeking awards or accolades. McElroy joined COPs in 2006 and Gilbert followed in 2007.

Chuck Ashton, who joined the Citizens On Patrol in 2014, won Overall Best Shooter in the Laser Shooting Simulator. And, the COPs patrol vehicle, a 2004 Ford Expedition, won third place overall in the conference car show. Last year the Expedition won honorable mention. The Expedition is used to conduct vacation checks, close patrols, and business and residential patrols.

The Burleson COPs program was started in 2006. There are currently 30 active members. Burleson Police Sgt. Brian O'Heren is the coordinator.

COPs are trained to patrol neighborhoods, parks, and businesses; report suspicious people and vehicles; report traffic hazards; perform traffic control at special events such as the City's July 4th fireworks celebration; complete vacation checks and close patrols; co-host community events; educate the community about crime prevention; report City ordinance violations such as junk vehicles, curfew violations, and park violations; and patrol major retail parking lots during the holidays.

COPs are also certified, via a four-hour class, for handicapped parking enforcement. COPs are trained to recognize violations and write citations to put on the windshields. COPs do not confront drivers.

COPs recruits must be at least 21 and a graduate of the department's Citizens Police Academy (36-hour course). COPs undergo a criminal background check before they are trained by members of the police department. Recruits must have a valid driver's license, must be of good moral standing in the community (at least two references are required), and vision that is correctable to 20/30.

Training for the COPs program includes a 16-hour certification course, four-hour orientation and riding out with a patrol officer.