

THE DEFENDER

*Newsletter of the
New Mexico Law Offices of the Public Defender*



APRIL/MAY 2021

**We are
getting
a new
website**

**AND WE'RE
PLANNING
FOR THE
FUTURE**

Come this summer, LOPD will have a fancy, new website designed just for us with the goal of making life easier for clients and LOPD employees.

How can LOPD evolve to better serve clients and our communities? What are the core values and mission of LOPD? Every LOPD employee is invited to help map out our future . Yes, you!

Message from the Chief



As public defenders, it can feel like we are constantly working from one case and crisis to the next, without time to actually look up and think about where we're going. And to a degree that is true. But as a department, we can't operate that way, and we want to — have to — look forward. Who are we as LOPD? How do we want to present ourselves? And what is the best way to get where we want to be? The goal is to always improve our work for our clients and our communities. But deciding how we get there will be better if we all contribute to the process. We want you to be part of it. We are asking for everyone's ideas from across the state, from every position in the department, and from our community partners. Could the administration and the Commission do it by ourselves? Sure. Would it be as good as if we all worked together? No way. In this edition of the newsletter, you'll read about our plans to move forward and grow as an agency, and about how you can participate. Please consider joining in to improve our work and our workplaces.

— Ben

Door swipe cards

Each LOPD office is set to receive a new, safer entry system that will replace keys and lockpads with a swipe card or phone app. Yes, you will be able to open the door with a wave of your hand if you have your phone app active.

"The department was concerned about people's safety. It really is the department looking out for its people," said IT Director Matt Bevington.

The program will allow quick access and separation of access for arriving or departing employees without having to re-key or put in all new locks for an office. If an office must be locked down for safety, that can be done very quickly.



Swipe cards getting installed in the Contract Counsel Legal Services office in Albuquerque

Cellebrite

These special devices and training allow us to do cellphone dumps internally. Getting this information ourselves saves the department a lot of money and increases the quality of evidence for the defense. Three LOPDers are being trained and certified. They are Jon See, Wade Swift, and Michael Cesario.

"This makes us one of the first (public defender agency) in the country to have this system," IT Director Matt Bevington said.

We are getting a new website

and a new logo!

The new website design process is more than just some new pictures. The redesign brings with it a new logo, a new color scheme and most important a client- and employee-centered website. It will be mobile-friendly and geared toward getting clients and their families easily in touch with the information they need. Employees will have access to HR and fiscal documents and an IT and training resources area.

Real Time Solutions has designed 30+ state agency websites including the governor's, the Dept. of Health, the Dept. of Veterans Services, the Attorney General and the Sunshine Portal, just to name a few.

"It will be the most beautiful and most functional website we've ever had," IT Director Matt Bevington said.

AND WE'RE PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

We're about to do some intentional co-creation of the department's goals, mission and direction.

Everyone at the department, contractors, and community partners is asked to participate in Virtual Retreat. The sessions will ask us, "what should LOPD look like in 5 years?" and help us focus on how to get there. The Maryland Public Defenders is facilitating the process for us at no cost.

Virtual Retreat for everyone
Thursday, April 29th
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Register by this Tuesday, April 20

Use this [LINK](#) or the one in the newsletter email

SIGN UP NOW



Speaking up and out



Several LOPD attorneys from around the state represented the department and profession at a recent UNM School of Law panel put on by Lambda Law Student Association.

LAMBDA "provide[s] support, networking, and social events for members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered community and their friends at the University of New Mexico School of Law" in addition to advocating on legal issues affecting the LGBT community and equal and legally-protected human rights, regardless of sexual orientation.

Attorneys Maggie Brister, Sofia Flores, Mitha Nandagopalan, and Nicole Hall sat on the panel.

Hometown school visit



Deputy Chief of Contract Counsel
Randy Chavez

Deputy Chief Randy Chavez grew up in the small community of Cuba where he says poverty is widespread and children are hungry to hear of success. He was one of 12 Cuba High School alumni to recently join in "Motivational Monday," speaking sessions created by a Cuba teacher who noticed her students fear for their future.

He recently addressed nearly 100 Zoom attendees about his road to law school and his career. He then took questions that he said surprised him.

"Especially from the elementary school students. It is obvious they are keenly aware of social issues regarding racism, poverty, domestic violence, and other children's issues," he said. "It is important for individuals from these rural communities to be more involved. I believe we can reach a certain number of students and give them hope that others in their similar situations can have successful careers after achieving post-high school educations."

Going places fast



LOPD Metro attorney Anna Purcell ran a 50k in February and came in second place. Here she is at the February Bigfoot Trail Run.

New Cars



LOPD recently purchased four new vehicles with specific funding approved in the 2020 Legislative Special Session. The new vehicles, which have not yet been assigned to a location, include two 2021 Nissan Altimas and two 2021 Nissan Rogues. The vehicles will provide upgrades and replace some of the outdated vehicles in the department's fleet.

LOPD Anniversaries

Celebrating 1, 5, 10,
15, 20+ years

20 Years



Louise "Weezie" Gurule
Legal associate Appellate

Farewell!

Farewell to these retirees!

Louella Arellano

Wesley LaCuesta

Michael Sousa

Welcome to the LOPD team!

Shane Brill
Sabrina Cook
Thomas Lewis
Michael Pannitto

Mally Darnell
Sonseeahray Begay-Rodriguez
Margie Rutledge
Anthony Spaulding
Martin Wolfson

Conference wrap-up

The recent NAPD "We The Defenders: Rise. Resist. Represent." Virtual Conference drew attendees from every state and even Guam.

Through LOPD, 433 people registered, including 25 contractors and four commissioners. Of those registered, 100 responded to a survey saying about 94% would like to attend similarly in the future.



*Preparing For Financial Emergencies - <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7479068721474207245>

Overview- Many people face financial emergencies, but few have prepared adequately to prevent them from having a major impact on their personal finances. This webinar will cover the processes and products that can help people survive the various types of financial emergencies.

Objectives- Know the different types of financial emergencies. Learn the steps necessary to become prepared and consequences of being unprepared. Understand why budgeting is so important, and the different products that can help and how they work.



*Supporting Others Through End of Life – <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3405836636913025291>

Overview- When we care for the dying, we experience many emotions, like sadness, confusion, shock, anger, fear, regret, etc. We often don't know what to say, how to plan or how to comfort the dying. We will look at end-of-life issues, navigating care needs, what to expect, and coping with the emotions.

Objectives- Understand the physical, emotional and psychological changes that occur during the dying process, how to prepare and what to expect. Discuss care options and planning, and providing comfort and support to your loved one using a variety of tools and resources.



*Friendly Persuasion: How to Get the Things You Want -

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5631847405368826123>

Overview- Some people are good at persuading, but for most others the path lies in knowing what we want to achieve and deciding to achieve it. This workshop will provide you with communication techniques to help get the results that you want and need.

Objectives- Describe how to assess your own persuasive abilities, identify tools like listening, questioning techniques, and persuasive dialogue. Describe the results of your persuasion self-assessment, and create a personal action plan to improve your persuasive abilities.