

**ST. MARTIN PARISH SHERIFF'S OFFICE FIRST IN STATE
TO OUTFIT ALL PATROL CARS WITH AEDs**

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Sheriff Ronny Theriot puts saving lives and property among his list of high priorities as Sheriff of St. Martin Parish. Today, Sheriff Theriot announced the addition of thirty-six Automated External Defibrillators to their fleet of patrol and civil cars. This will bring the number of AEDs within the Patrol and Civil Departments to forty-three. Each Civil and Patrol Unit will have an AED in their vehicle at all times with three additional AEDs to be used as back-up.

An AED is a small, portable device that analyzes the heart's rhythm and prompts the user to deliver a defibrillation shock if it determines one is needed. AEDs are specially designed for easy use by a "first responder," who would be the first person to typically arrive on the scene of a medical emergency. A first responder can be an emergency medical services worker, a firefighter or police officer, or it can be a layperson with minimal AED training.

"By improving access to AEDs we can increase the survival rate for St. Martin Parish," said Sheriff Theriot. "Whether on duty or off, our trained deputies will be ready to assist at any public event such as ball games, church services, family events and everywhere we respond."

"Without proper treatment, the survival rate from Sudden Cardiac Arrest is only five percent," said Jay Pierret, vice president of business development of Acadian Ambulance. "Early CPR and defibrillation can bring the survival rate from SCA to well over 70 percent. Proper treatment within the first five minutes gives the patient the best chance of survival. By linking the different levels of emergency cardiac care, Sheriff Theriot is creating a heart-safe community in St. Martin Parish."

Sheriff Theriot's decision to equip all units with AEDs was the result of two successful resuscitations with the device within the last two years. According to Theriot, the first incident involved a St. Martin SO employee who was exercising at a Health Club and suddenly collapsed. Bystanders began CPR and an SO deputy arrived with and utilized the AED.

The second incident took place recently when a Cecilia High School student was struck by lightning and was unresponsive. School staff began CPR and again, a deputy sheriff arrived and utilized the AED. Both victims are alive because the AEDs were readily available.

"Although the cost is significant to equip our entire fleet, even more significant is the ability to save lives by having the AEDs in our units," said Theriot. "We purchased the AEDs from the Medical Products division of Acadian Ambulance. We've had a great working relationship with Acadian Ambulance for over 30 years, and we knew we could depend on them for their guidance and training."

Acadian Ambulance staff will train the St. Martin Parish Sheriff Deputies on the proper usage of the AED as part of their annual training.

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