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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

The Burleson Police Department's 20th Citizens Police Academy graduated Aug. 14 in a ceremony at Burleson City Hall. Bill Moore, county attorney for Johnson County, was the keynote speaker. Brian O'Heren, the CPA coordinator and traffic sergeant for the police department, presided over the festivities which included the presentation of certificates and t-shirts.

The police department hosts the free 10-week Citizens Police Academy each year, June-August. The classes last three hours, every Thursday night. This year's roster included Eric Allen, Rhyan Anderson, Chuck Ashton, Sherry Christian, Harry Clark Jr., Tommie Devlin, Joshua Duran, Nedra Lamar, Tanya Lane, Cheryle Nix, Andy Penney, Roy Primeaux, Lauren Reimer, Keri Roberson, Sheila Stone, Brenda Swales, Max Tate, Bob Weaver and Derek Zelder.

"I applaud this year's and past participants for making the enormous commitment to attend the Citizen Police Academy," O'Heren said. "It truly is a pleasure bringing the public together with their police department to build a lasting relationship that will work to serve each other better in the future."

Sgt. O'Heren is the coordinator, but he isn't the sole CPA instructor. Speakers from throughout the department share their expertise and occasionally instructors (prosecutor, judge) are brought in from outside the department as well.

The Citizens Police Academy topics include the department's organization, recruiting process, Texas Penal Code, criminal investigations, search and seizure, building searches, traffic law enforcement, narcotics investigation, SWAT, patrol procedures, and more. The classes are as "hands on" as possible. Instructors demonstrate techniques used to search a building for an intruder, then participants practice what they've learned. Participants also solve a homicide scenario by identifying evidence, using investigative techniques, and interviewing witnesses. Students ride along with an officer or monitor the communications office.

The Citizens Police Academy is open to men and women, 18 or older. Citizens must submit an application packet which consists of the application, a waiver form, and consent for criminal history check. The next academy will be the summer of 2015.