

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
County of Luna

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Media Release

Law enforcement motorcycle clubs are banding together to kick off this year's Shop with a Cop season of fundraising and giving for children across Luna County.

Luna County Sheriff's Office Lt. Richard Cowles, in his fourth year at the helm for the project, said the Bonafide Saints and Armaduras motorcycle clubs are holding a bike run on Saturday, Oct. 10 beginning at K-Mart on East Pine Street. Shop with a Cop sponsors will join the motorcyclists before they hit the road in an effort to raise funds for the annual holiday shopping spree given to children. This year's goal is to supply 400 school children with \$40 gift cards to K-Mart.

"We decided it would be kind of cool to have all the bikes there with the sponsors on that day," Lt. Cowles said. "If it wasn't for the community and volunteers, from the private sector all the way through the public sector, this would never work. The only reason it is successful is because of the community."

He stressed that community members should be aware of new identification badges those representing Shop with a Cop will be wearing when soliciting donations. Community members should not donate money to individuals unless they have the proper identification showing they represent the effort. Additionally, event organizers are sending letters throughout the community to ask for sponsorship of the event.

"Whatever money is leftover in K-Mart gift cards is what we spend on toys for the preschool kids," he said of the group not meeting its goal of 400 children. "Whatever happens, the funds we raise benefit children in Luna County."

In early December, emergency responders like law enforcement, fire fighters and Border Patrol join community members to escort local school children through the toy section at K-Mart. The intent is for children to buy toys for Christmas and the holiday season, but sometimes the children pick out clothing or food to fill gaps at home.

"I am humbled to participate in this event, and I encourage the community to support it however they can manage," District No. 3 Commissioner Javier Diaz said. He can typically be found the morning of the event escorting children to shop. "Whenever I get a little boy or little girl that doesn't want to buy for themselves and insists on buying for their siblings or their mom or dad, it's an awakening that there's still good in this world at that young age."

Event organizers have several events planned to help include as much of the community as possible in the fundraising and fun of preparing for the event. On Saturday, Aug. 22, during

the Great American Duck Races, a round-robin volleyball tournament is scheduled to be held at the Deming High School volleyball pits. Registration for a team up to 10 members — only three men per team can play at a given time — is \$30. First and second place trophies will be awarded at the tournament. You may register the day of the event beginning at 11 a.m., or contact county employee Jessica Jara at (575) 694-4590 to register in advance.

In November, a bowling tournament will be held at Luna County Starmax.

“For me, it’s stressful up until the event,” Lt. Cowles said. “But once it happens, it feels good to see the expressions on their face.”

For more information about the program, or to get involved, contact him at (575) 546-2655.

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