

Donation to provide deputies with digital recording devices

Businessman partners with law enforcement, presents \$5K check

By **ALLEN JONES**
ajones@hcnonline.com

Bob Hawthorne, the owner of Hawthorne Steel Buildings in Magnolia, recently donated \$5,000 to Montgomery County Pct. 5 Constable David Hill's office.

Hawthorne donated a portion of proceeds earned from all buildings his company sold during the months of September and October to the Constable's Office Law Enforcement Education and Equipment Fund. The fund is used to help purchase law enforcement equipment and to help fund continuing education which the constable and his deputies are required to attend on an annual basis.

"We sold a total of 49 buildings during the drive," Hawthorne said. "I'm hoping to do this again but get other businesses on board to offer discounts and collect money for the officers who are on the street protecting us on a daily basis."

During those same months, Hawthorne offered all area personnel associated with law enforcement a 10 percent discount off of any of his steel buildings. Hawthorne said he sold 7 or 8 buildings to members of law enforcement during the special promotion.

Constable Hill said he is thankful to Hawthorne and his sales team and added "I'm glad he had a good two months."

Hill is currently looking at using the funds to help purchase digital cameras for precinct vehicles. He said his deputies are currently using aging video cassette tapes in their vehicles.

He said the devices are used to

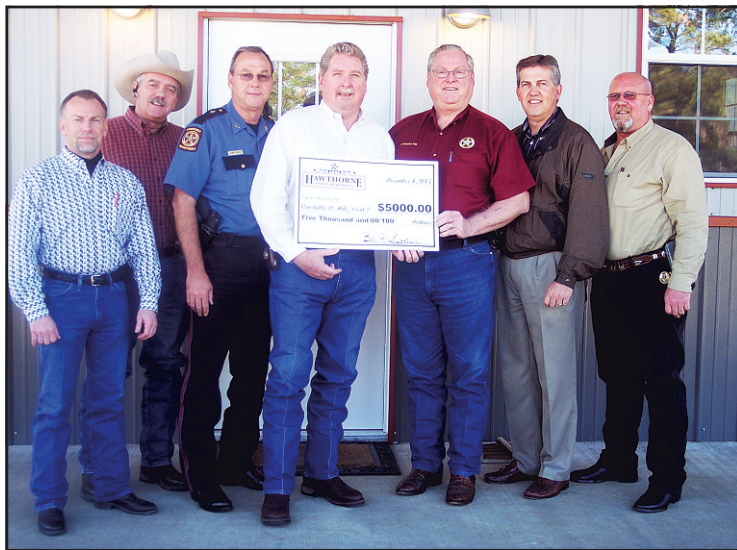


Photo by ALLEN JONES/The Potpourri

Hawthorne Steel Buildings owner Bob Hawthorne presented a 5,000 check to Montgomery County Pct. 5 Constable David Hill. Hawthorne, pictured holding the check on the left, raised the money by donating a portion of steel building sales during September and October. Hill is pictured holding the check on the right. Pictured to the right of Hill are Montgomery County Pct. 2 Commissioner Craig Doyle and Pct. 2 Administrative Assistant Charlie Riley. To the left of Hawthorne are MCCO Deputy David Wood and Hawthorne Steel Buildings salesmen Paul Thompson and Clyde Wimberly.

record traffic stops and are helpful to those pulled over and offer some protection to law enforcement. But, Hill said video cassette tapes are not as reliable due to poor reproduction quality, the expense to maintain video cassette tapes are high because the cassettes tend to wear out more quickly, and he said new digital technology is more user friendly.

"Digital devices are constantly recording and start over every 60 seconds," he explained. "Once activated by a deputy, they would allow us to retain a minute of footage prior to the activation by the officer to see what happened immediately prior to an incident."

Hill said his office may be able to purchase two digital devices only with Hawthorne's donation. The Constable's Office currently has 18 vehicles.

In an interview conducted in July, prior to Hawthorne's sales promotion,

Hill said the Magnolia area needs more community minded businesses owners such as Hawthorne.

"I've always believed if you are going to be in a community, you have to return to the community," Hawthorne previously told *The Potpourri*, prior to his donation. "Just think if half of all businesses would give back to their communities, we'd be living in a totally different place. We need protection. I wouldn't be a good law enforcement officer, but thank God these guys are willing to do the job."

Last week, during a check presentation ceremony at Hawthorne Steel Buildings, Montgomery County Pct. 2 Commissioner Craig Doyle said Hawthorne's donation was exciting because the constable's office did not have enough tax dollars to make the equipment purchases.

"It is exciting to see the public and private sectors partner," Doyle said.