

Sheriff Jerry Speziale, Passaic County, New Jersey

Sheriff Speziale officially took office on January 1, 2002, for his first three-year term. Prior to being elected Sheriff of Passaic County, he served as Chief of Department at the Bergen County Sheriff's Office, beginning in September 2000. While there, he managed and supervised the Uniformed Services Division, which included the Corrections Division, Warrant Division, Court Security Division and Special Services Division.

Prior to joining the Bergen County Sheriff's Office, Sheriff Speziale served as the Chief of Police for the New Hope, Pennsylvania Police Department. In a community of just over 4,000, Sheriff Speziale oversaw the day-to-day operation and administration of that Department's 18-member workforce.

The Passaic County Sheriff's Department is not new to Sheriff Speziale. From August 1997 through the year 2000, he was the Commander of Field Operations for the Sheriff's Department's Narcotics and Money Laundering Unit. In that capacity, he supervised the 15-member investigative squad and successfully concluded numerous high-profile drug trafficking cases.

Sheriff Speziale began his career in law enforcement with the New York City Police Department in 1982. A member of the Organized Crime Control Bureau, he supervised the 15-member detective squad and conducted numerous multi-jurisdictional drug trafficking and organized crime investigations.

A graduate of the Passaic County Community College, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and the University of Louisville Southern Police Institute, the Sheriff resides in Wayne, New Jersey with his wife and two children.

*Passaic County Sheriff Jerry Speziale
Preparedness Talking Points - Background
Needs, Goals and Priorities*

The top equipment priority is to provide personal protective equipment to every first responding officer. Right now they have the uniform and badge that they wear and nothing else to protect them from a terrorist chemical, nuclear or biological attack.

Law enforcement is the least prepared of the first response community in this regard.

You send the troops into battle in Afghanistan and Iraq prepared with protective equipment in case of a chemical/biological attack but we send our homeland security troops and our law enforcement into battle in the war against terror with just the shirt on their backs. Think of the images of the officers and everyone choking as they inhaled untold hazards in the debris cloud at the trade center attack. All this time later and Officers in New Jersey have nothing but promises that they MAY get some sort of protection in the future.

And there are little or no plans to provide the first officers on scene with any kind of detection equipment to allow them to detect poisons in the air. So they have to wait until they start seeing bodies and feeling sick themselves to realize they have been exposed. Even the workers in soviet Russia had dose meters at Chernobyl. Jersey cops are worse off.

INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM-

It is widely known and bears repeating that during the Sept. 11 attacks a helicopter transmitted a warning regarding the pending collapse of the towers and this was heard by many NYPD officer's who had this radio frequency in their radios-- this contributed to saving lives. However their brothers in the fire department never heard this warning because there was no interoperability. Surely we can only speculate if the transmission was heard by everyone how many more lives would have been saved but we may never really know. Still today, when officers from some adjoining jurisdictions want to talk to one another they have to pull their cars along side one another to talk. As a recent article from the New York press wrote:

(NEW YORK CITY-*Hundreds of firefighters and police officers rushed to a devastating, chaotic scene to rescue victims from the attack on the World Trade Center. As police and firefighters swarmed the building searching for survivors, incident commanders outside were hearing warnings from helicopters circling the scene from above that the towers were beginning to glow and were dangerously close to collapse. Radio communications were a lifeline for the hundreds of police officers who received the word to evacuate the building-all but 60 police officers escaped with their lives. Tragically, hundreds of New York fire-fighters didn't receive that warning because they were using a different radio communications system. Totally unaware of the impending collapse, at least 121 firefighters, most within striking distance of safety, according to The New York Times, died. A report from the University of New Hampshire-based ATLAS Project stated, "From numerous interviews gathered as part of a fire department inquiry into the events of September 11th, it would appear that non-interoperability was at least partially responsible for the loss of 343 fire-fighters at the World Trade Center."*

Another major concern is INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY-

Currently a detective working a case in Little Falls New Jersey and a detective in Anaheim California may have two pieces of a puzzle on a terrorist act but no way to realize it through a national clearing house or data base. A terrorist-tracking database with data bridges for information exchange with existing systems like EPIC and MADDIS is needed. In today's world, software can be designed to securely link some of the most powerful law enforcement investigative tools and bring them to bear against the war on terrorism, with the ultimate goal of arresting the offender before they carry out their terrorist conspiracies.

Last but not least- ADEQUATE PERSONNEL

FUNDING to carry out these mission--, provide the site protection needed, perform the training required to meet standards. Let's not look to relax standards for equipment usage-- we have these standards for a reason such as the OSHA respiratory

protection standard. We should improve and enhance these standards of protection and provide funding for the training to meet the standard.

*And as everyone knows there is just no replacing **the officer out in the community** who interfaces with the people and gathers the most important intelligence directly from the street fresh. **We need to fund, protect, allow them to communicate and coordinate their intelligence and investigatory data to improve our nation's security and defeat the terrorist in their mission.***