

More than 200 law enforcement officers train at Geneva seminar

Ebony Horton

ehorton@dothaneagle.com

GENEVA — Geneva County Chief Sheriff's Deputy Tony Helms skimmed over hundreds of law enforcement officials at Maple Avenue Baptist Church on Friday. He offered a small smirk every now and then that symbolized his excitement.

A casual conversation between Helms and Dale/Geneva County District Attorney Kirke Adams is what led to more

than 200 law enforcement officers training at the church on Friday during the first Wiregrass Law Enforcement and Prosecution Seminar.

Adams said more than 40 different agencies responded to the free training, which was sponsored by his office and the office of Houston County District Attorney Doug Valeska.

Classes included lectures on crime scene investigations, updates on search and seizure laws,



Jay Hare / jhare@dothaneagle.com

Area law enforcement personnel attend a law enforcement seminar in Geneva on Friday sponsored by Doug Valeska and Kirke Adams who offered the training to more than 200 law enforcement officers.

See TRAIN, 3A



Train

continued from 1A

child sexual abuse investigations, and lessons learned from past incidents in the Wiregrass.

Helms said the training accounted for more than half of the annual continued training required for law enforcement, something Helms said his department might not have been able to have this year without the seminar.

"A department like ours, you send five, six guys to it and that's half your staff, plus you've depleted what little training budget that you have. I had asked Kirke about having something like

this a couple times, and you see here that it's been invaluable," Helms said.

Adams said money from pretrial diversion programs in his and Valeska's offices covered expenses for the seminar.

While he said he did not expect as many officials to respond to the free training, the church and organizers were prepared for the crowd.

"Really we were only expecting maybe 50 folks, but we are ecstatic to have the number we do here today because it shows that these officers and investigators want to learn and that they want to work with us as prosecutors to make sure justice is served in our communities," Adams said.

Houston County Sheriff's

Capt. Antonio Gonzalez said the training deputies received was beneficial even for larger departments.

Geneva County Sheriff's Deputy Josh Myers agreed.

"If you as a law enforcement officer break the law by not knowing the rules and try to arrest someone who is breaking the law, then you've wasted time and money. You need classes like this to keep an update on the laws that change, because they literally change every year sometimes."

Geneva County Assistant District Attorney Stephen Smith said the training was appropriate to be held at the church.

"In my heart, we do God's work, so we were thankful for this location," Smith said.

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