

## IN THE NEWS



### Wiregrass Law Enforcement Seminar in Geneva

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# 'Sovereign citizens' movement addressed at seminar

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Nearly two years after his police officer son was killed in the line of duty, Bob Paudert is getting the word out about why his son was killed and who his assailant really was.

Paudert, a retired police chief from West Memphis, Ark., was one of several guest speakers at the third annual Wiregrass Law Enforcement Seminar, which was held at Maple Avenue Baptist Church and sponsored by the District Attorneys Kirke Adams of Geneva and Dale counties and Doug Valeska of Houston County.

At the seminar, Paudert discussed how Joe Kane, his son's 16-year old killer, had associated himself with the sovereign citizen movement, whose code of beliefs being immune to federal government jurisdiction.

"These people are just as dangerous as international terrorists," Paudert said. "They've become a serious problem in our country."

Paudert explained how his son, Brandon Paudert, of the West Memphis Police Department and fellow officer Bill Evans had pulled over a church van on May 20, 2010 driven by Kane and his father. Within mo-

ments, Kane had shot and killed the two officers. It was later found out that the van was registered to "The Kingdom of Heaven". The Kanes were later killed in the city's Walmart parking lot.

Officers need to exercise considerable care dealing with members of this movement.

"The more encounters they have with officers, the more they feel they are being harassed," he said.

Relaying back to his experience with the movement, Paudert said that sovereign

citizens are similar to terrorists in that they meld religion with their own political beliefs, believing they are accountable to no government official.

"This is what is getting officers killed," he said. "I want to make it known to as many people as we can."

According to a 2010 report from the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, there are an estimated 100,000 radical sovereign citizens nationwide and 200,000 mild converts to the movement.

Speaking about the benefits of the seminar, Adams said the purpose of the all-day event was to cheaply allow officers in the Wiregrass the opportunity to attend seminars and learn of the new dangers facing Alabama today.



**Bob Paudert spoke at a police seminar Friday, where he discussed the threat of sovereign citizens around the country. In 2010, his son was killed in the line of duty by sovereign citizens.**

"We know it is a success because it has been growing every year," Adams said. "We're very proud to bring this to them at no cost."

Assistant District Attorney Bill Filmore said that for many officers, it can be difficult to find a place to earn an education credit and network with fellow officers.

"One of the main reasons we do this is because it is difficult for them to find time to do it," Filmore said. "We just appreciate all the help we have gotten over this."

Besides sovereign citizens, the all-day seminar detailed other subjects as well, such as internet crimes against children as well as pardons and paroles. Over 200 officers from various agencies participated in the event.