



PERSPECTIVES 11A

ONE TEACHER'S MISSION TO SAVE YOUNG BLACK MEN



LOCAL & STATE 1B

Local guard troops deploying

Area agencies mostly reflective of population

## DIVERSE FORCES



Wilmington Police Department officers at a shooting on Castle Street in July. In Wilmington, 76.7 percent of the population is white and 18.4 percent of the population is black. At the WPD, 80.3 percent of employees are white and 15.7 percent are black. StarNews file photo

### WPD hiring leader says diversity helps force do better job

#### RACIAL MAKEUP

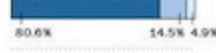
Compare the racial distribution among law enforcement employees with the racial makeup of their jurisdictions.

White Black Other

New Hanover County Sheriff's Office



New Hanover County



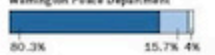
Brunswick County Sheriff's Office



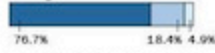
Brunswick County



Wilmington Police Department



Wilmington



SOURCE: U.S. Census, respective agencies

See how our area stacks up against other cities - including Ferguson, Mo. Page 4A

Graphic by Stacie Greene Hildek

By Adam Wagner

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**S**outheastern North Carolina's largest law enforcement agencies closely match the racial demographics of the populations they cover, according to data provided by the agencies and from 2013 U.S. Census estimates.

In Wilmington, for example, 76.7 percent of the population is white and 18.4 percent of the population is black. Of the Wilmington Police Department's 315 employees, 80.3 percent are white and 15.7 percent are black.

"I think sometimes it's easier for people to relate with someone they think has something in common with them," said Lt. Ben Kennedy, who is in charge of recruitment and hiring for the Wilmington Police De-

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### New Hanover deputies will wear cameras

By Adam Wagner

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Video of encounters with law enforcement is about to become more common in the Cape Fear region, as the New Hanover County Sheriff's Office expects to soon become the largest law enforcement agency in the area to equip all patrol deputies with body cameras, according to Sheriff Ed McMahon.

There are still details to finalize and McMahon said he would not rush into a decision. He does, however, hope to have the roughly 116 cameras purchased by the end of the year. Buying the cameras alone is expected to cost between \$120,000 and \$130,000, and there could be additional expenses for supporting technology. Funds are expected to come out of the sheriff's existing \$40.74 million budget.

"I think it's good for the officer, it's good for whoever we have an encounter with and it's good for the citizens because



Wrightsville Beach police have 19 body-worn cameras available to officers. The New Hanover County Sheriff's Office expects to soon become the largest law enforcement agency in the area to equip all patrol deputies with body cameras. Photo by Matt Born

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## DIVERSITY

*Continued from 1A*

partment. Kennedy said that mentality is applicable not only to race but also in situations such as veterans or other groups.

Minority representation in law enforcement agencies across the nation was spotlighted after the August killing in Ferguson, Mo., of Michael Brown, an unarmed black teen, by Darren Wilson, a white Ferguson Police Department officer. The slaying brought into question underlying problems in the area, including the overwhelmingly white department's policing of an overwhelmingly black city.

In Ferguson, for instance, 64.9 percent of the town was black, according to 2010 census information, but, according to a 2007 study, 11.1 percent of full-time officers were.

"It's exceptionally important that law enforcement reflects the communities they protect and serve," said Chris Brook, legal director of the ACLU of North Carolina. "I believe that it would make law enforcement

more effective. It's going to broaden perspectives on the experiences different people have in the community, which can only result in better law enforcement decisions and strategies."

The NAACP and other local organizations criticized the Wilmington Police Department after several incidents in late 2013 involving black men and white officers. Deborah Dicks Maxwell, president of the New Hanover County NAACP, said the black community is represented well in WPD, but progress means more than hiring for diversity.

"We also need people to be culturally sensitive of who they're working with, regardless of their ethnicity," Maxwell said.

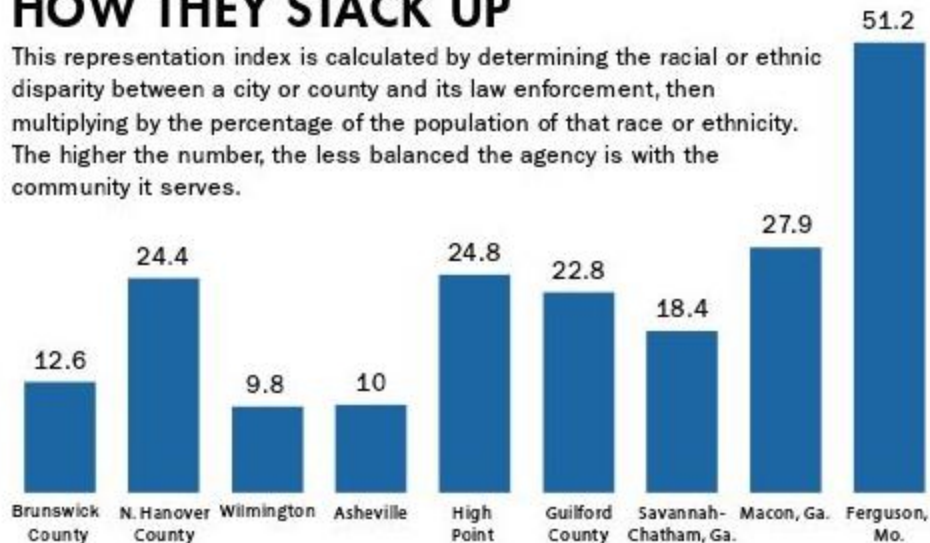
Juvenile minority sensitivity training is one area of focus during WPD's state-mandated in-service time.

"Everything we do is about understanding, knowing what's going on to help us better do our jobs and maybe not make rash decisions," Kennedy said.

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## HOW THEY STACK UP

This representation index is calculated by determining the racial or ethnic disparity between a city or county and its law enforcement, then multiplying by the percentage of the population of that race or ethnicity. The higher the number, the less balanced the agency is with the community it serves.



SOURCES: 2007 Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics and American Community Survey

Graphic by Stacie Greene Hidek

## CAMERAS

*Continued from 1A*

everybody can see what we're doing," McMahan said.

The Wilmington Police Department is one of the local agencies that has already dabbled with the cameras, buying 37 for officers who are likely to have significant face-to-face contact with the public. The WPD also is considering expanding the program, said Linda Rawley, a spokeswoman, but nothing has been finalized.

The Leland Police Department also has used cameras, buying a set of four for its detectives before deciding they broke too easily.

The Brunswick County Sheriff's Office is considering body-worn cameras, according to a statement from spokeswoman Emily Flax. She said Brunswick has not committed to any particular plan yet and no action would be taken until next June, at the earliest.

The Wrightsville Beach Police Department is the only department in the region to equip all officers with body-worn cameras.

"It has been a great investigative tool, it has been great at de-escalating situations and then, of course, it has made our internal affairs process very good," said Dan House, chief of the Wrightsville Beach Police Department.

Wrightsville Beach bought the cameras in late 2012 in part because of increasing complaints against officers. Since cameras became part of the uniform, House said, there has been a marked decrease.

That change is typical for law enforcement agencies that use body-worn cameras, said Chris Brook, legal director for the ACLU of North Carolina.

"I think everybody tends to be on their best behavior when they're on camera," Brook said. "That goes for both the public and law enforcement."

Ensuring everyone remains civil is difficult, Brook added, unless there are written policies in place outlining when an officer should turn his or her camera on.

"There need to be real strong rules about when body-worn cameras are activated, and we should default toward recording the vast majority of interactions between law enforcement and the public," Brook said. Ideally, he said, there eventually would be a technological trigger to turn the camera

on, akin to a police cruiser's dash camera beginning to record when a blue light is switched on.

Part of the reason a trigger would be ideal, Brook said, is to avoid capturing personal moments such as phone calls or time spent in locker rooms while also guaranteeing that all contact with the public is captured.

In Wrightsville Beach, officers control the cameras and must turn them on if law enforcement activity is taking place in a public space. The sole exception to that policy is if an officer is entering someone's home, at which point they must ask for permission to film.

"If you're interacting with people outside of, 'Hey, Joe, how are you?' we want you to turn it on," House said.

While the New Hanover County Sheriff's Office doesn't have the cameras in hand yet, McMahan's ideal vision for the cameras' use is very similar to House's.

"What I want to do is any time they're getting out on business, the basic things they do, that they automatically push the button," McMahan said, adding that a strong policy and good training are crucial to the cameras' success.

Also important, Brook said, are policies outlining how long the footage is kept and who has access to it.

"The vast majority of footage from a body-worn camera is not going to be important to an investigation," Brook said, "and as such should be kept for days and weeks instead of months or years."

The Wrightsville Beach Police Department keeps footage from body-worn and dash cameras for 90 days.

Another factor is buy-in on officers' ends, beyond having a written policy.

Some New Hanover sheriff's office deputies working in public housing or downtown units alongside WPD officers wear the police department's cameras. Their positive experiences with the devices are helping the idea gain traction internally, McMahan said.

In Wrightsville Beach, officers initially posed some resistance to the cameras, House said, but much of that disappeared following a test run.

"I'm sure there are some people who don't like wearing them," House said, "but the test program really showed the guys it's out here, it's helping you do your job."