



Smith County Sheriff Larry R. Smith Candidate for re-election

(903) 521-0195

Paid for by the Sheriff Larry Smith Campaign

**The People of Smith County are served
by some of the most dedicated and experienced
law enforcement professionals I have ever had the pleasure of
working with in my 37 years of law enforcement.**

This will address reckless statements made by the Green campaign and some of their supporters – statements that paint me, my command staff, and the fine women and men who serve in the Smith County Sheriff's Office as a bunch of incompetent, untrustworthy people who don't have the sense it takes to run a law enforcement agency.

It's one thing to differ on issues, and it's fine for Green to take potshots at me, but when it comes to running down my staff, he's gone too far.

Green started his campaign with this statement on his website: "The first priority of my administration will be to bring back to the department, commitment, dedication, professionalism, integrity and accountability."

That statement sunk to a new low with derogatory public comments (such as those made during last week's debate at TJC) about former Department of Public Safety officers who serve on my command staff. He has repeatedly stated that there are just "no patrols" out in the county, and that my command staff just "don't know how to run a jail" and "don't know how to take care of the folks out in the county". In paid ads, we now see the same type of insinuations made by former employees.

Chris Green is welcome to his opinion, but his opinions are not facts. This is my response to attacks made on my staff's credentials, my staffing levels (which must be approved by the Commissioners Court and, where the jails are concerned, must meet Texas Commission on Jail Standards mandates), our agency's integrity, and our record.

The current Smith County Sheriff's Office Command Staff has **significant and remarkable** law enforcement expertise...

Larry R. Smith – Sheriff, 37 years of combined law enforcement experience at the local and federal level, with numerous awards and professional recognitions.

Robert Carlson – Chief Deputy, 36 years of local and state law enforcement experience; achieved the rank of Major.

Deal Folmar – Jail Administrator, 38 years of local law enforcement experience; achieved the rank of Major.

Paul Black – Criminal Investigation Division Lieutenant, 27 years of law enforcement experience; achieved the rank of Lieutenant.

Bobby Strickland – Lieutenant, Human Resources, 33 years of local and state law enforcement experience; achieved the rank of Lieutenant.

Ralph Caraway, Jr. – Captain, Smith County Jail, 11 years of experience at the local level in the Smith County Jail, the Narcotics Division, and the Criminal Investigation Division.

Carolyn Brown – Lieutenant, Smith County Jail, 25 years of experience in the Smith County Jail.

Gary Middleton – Administrative Lieutenant, 30 years of experience at the local law enforcement level.

Ren Ballinger – Lieutenant, Smith County Jail, 20 years of local law enforcement experience - all at the Smith County Sheriff's Office.

John Archer – Lieutenant, Smith County Jail, 23 years of experience - all at the Smith County Sheriff's Office.

John Shoemaker – Lieutenant, Smith County Jail, 12 years of experience with the Smith County Sheriff's Office.

Jeremy Black – Lieutenant, Patrol Division, 16 years of experience in local law enforcement; recent graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy.

This is a total of **308 years of dedicated law enforcement experience** – an **average of 25½ years of experience per command staff member**. *Our command staff average is 5.5 years more than all the years Chris Green has ever had in law enforcement as a game warden.*

Since taking office as Sheriff in 2013, I received four prestigious awards: The 2014 Sheriffs Association of Texas President's Award, the 2013 Liberty Bell Award from the Smith County Bar Association, the 2014 Mothers Against Drunk Drivers Difference Maker Award, and the 2014 National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution Law Enforcement Commendation. I am thankful and humbled by these awards. If I had bad relationships with other law enforcement agencies and a sorry reputation, I hardly think these groups would have made these recognitions.

My agency staffing – fiscal budget year stats:

My command staff consists of twelve (12) personnel out of 389 Sheriff's Office employees. The following table from the 2016 Smith County Budget (available [online](#)) shows the fiscal year staffing for various segments of our operations. Since I took office in 2013, the only staffing increase is in the jail, which was **necessary to STOP** shipping inmates to other counties and start housing them in the new jail. These positions were necessary to comply with Texas Commission on Jail Standards mandates.

Smith County Position Schedule (Full-time Employees) for Sheriff's Office & Operations

FY10 FY11 FY12 **FY13** **FY14** **FY15** **FY16**

Environmental Crimes Unit	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Sheriff	110	110	110	110	107	106	106
Dispatch	28	27	27	27	27	27	27
Jail Operations - new jail opened	215	215	215	215	226	239	254

Making Changes to Keep My Promises to the Voters

When I took office in January 2013, some difficult decisions were required relating to existing personnel. The decisions were not popular with everybody, but they were necessary to move the office forward and to make it more effective, efficient, and responsive to the citizens.

My predecessor had held the Office of Smith County Sheriff for 36 years. I did not run on a platform to keep running this office exactly the same way he did. I also have not publicly criticized the former sheriff, nor have I blamed him for any issue. *Mr. Green has repeatedly accused me of blaming my predecessor, but every time he has been challenged to produce the evidence, he has failed to do so.*

This office does not belong to any elected official. It belongs to the people of Smith County, and that's how I run it. Any mistakes made are mine, and the buck stops with me. We have put improved policies and procedures in place to make every effort not to repeat mistakes.

Fighting internal corruption

I promised to fight corruption inside the agency. That is exactly what I've done, and I will make no apology for it. After being in office for only two days, I was challenged with employees who were breaking the law. The first one was for aggravated assault. A few months later, it became necessary to deal with another Smith County Sheriff's Office employee who was selling drugs from a Smith County Sheriff's Office Patrol car. Later, we would deal with three additional Smith County Sheriff's Office employees due to assault, family violence, and possession of a controlled substance inside a penal facility.

At least 14 employees resigned or were terminated as the result of an internal investigation into falsification of jail documents. After my command staff brought it to my attention, I called in the Texas Rangers to conduct an independent investigation. **Falsifying a government document is a criminal offense.** This also puts the Sheriff's Office and Smith County taxpayers at great risk. If a death had occurred because of this, the county would have been civilly liable. There is no place in law enforcement for employees who are dishonest and no longer possess character or integrity. ***I will not apologize for terminating employees for lying about information they record on official documents. They will not work for me.***

Holding employees accountable to a very high standard comes with some resistance, but once the standards are raised and enforced across-the-board, this yields an increased sense of integrity, strength of character, and accountability in the agency. After about two years, this began paying great dividends because we were able to attract professional law enforcement officers who sought employment with us because they wanted to be a part of the new team. This helped us fill vacancies with high-quality, dedicated law enforcement officers.

Our Record: Increased Patrols, Improved Response Time, and Cleared Cases

I put more deputies out on patrol by reorganizing and repositioning staff. We have 51 patrol officers, compared to 45 when I took office.

We have worked to improve response times to calls for service. Since January 2013, we've responded to over 92,000 calls. Our average response time is 15 minutes in a county that covers more than 960 square miles!

We have successfully managed numerous high profile, long-term homicide investigations. Four years ago, there were 25 unsolved homicides. Now, we have a 100% homicide clearance rate, with two additional cold cases cleared, and more in progress. This requires a tremendous level of knowledge, tenacity, vision, training, and experience.

We have an exemplary clearance rate for all other crimes and have arrested multiple individuals in the process of committing violent crimes due to improved patrol response times.

We have passed the State Jail Inspection every year, having just passed one earlier this month. We helped oversee the construction of the new jail facility, while continuing to operate the existing facility.

We have teamed with other local, state, and federal agencies, successfully curtailing large illicit drug networks operating in Smith County and surrounding areas.

Misrepresentations, Distortions and Falsehoods

Green's Claim: Four employees resigned and several others placed on administrative leave, all at expense to the County for falsifying records

Sheriff Smith – The Facts: At least 14 employees resigned or were terminated as the result of an internal investigation into falsification of jail documents. I called in the Texas Rangers to conduct an independent investigation. Falsifying a government document is a criminal offense that also puts the county at risk for more lawsuits. *There is no place in law enforcement for dishonest employees, and I will not apologize for terminating them for lying about official documents.*

Green's Claim: 6 jail deaths in 3 years

Sheriff Smith – The Facts: Based on autopsies, three of these deaths were from natural causes. Two took place at a local hospital – *not in the jail*. Inmates are not specimens of perfect health. A majority are in poor physical and/or mental health. Many are long-term substance addicts. A 20% running average of inmates have mental health problems. Three of the other deaths were from suicide. My detention officers have also rescued three inmates from suicides, saving lives. Smith County jail suicides, while regrettable, are not above the Texas statewide average.

Green's Claim: \$1.25 million paid out in litigation for wrongful jail deaths and punishing a whistleblower on the bogus degree case

Sheriff Smith – The Facts: Smith County Commissioners Court spent \$50,000 (not \$1.25 million) to settle a pre-lawsuit claim related to a jail suicide and did so without consulting the Sheriff's Office about the merits of the case or the advisability of settling. The Commissioners Court decided it was cheaper to settle for \$20,000 than to incur legal fees in the "so-called whistleblower" case where the sergeant was not punished, but kept her same rank and pay. After my requested Texas Ranger investigation was completed, the DA and attorney for the employees involved in the bogus degree case reached an agreement in which both employees resigned, and the officer surrendered his Peace Officer's License permanently. All salary paid as a result of the bogus degree was paid back to the county.

Had I or any member of my command staff been involved in illegal conduct, the independent Texas Ranger investigation would have brought that information to the District Attorney and these individuals, including me, would have been charged.

Green's Claim: 12 of 13 alleged sex offenders "no billed" for lack of evidence in November 2014

Sheriff Smith – The Facts: Sex offenders were rounded up for technical parole violations, not additional sex crimes. *Since Grand Jury deliberations are secret, Mr. Green has no legal way of knowing why they were no billed*. Most likely, the sex offenders were "no billed" because the offenses were legal technicalities, not new crimes. I have a **99% conviction rate** over a 37-year law enforcement career. That kind of record is not built on sloppy law enforcement.

Green's Claim: 20 suspected felons released for failure to file paperwork to the DA within 90 days

Sheriff Smith – The Facts: Mistakes were made, and I owned them, but the releases from jail *did not result in the dropping of charges*. Several of those released were re-arrested and are now serving lengthy prison sentences. The filing deadline problem resulted from a combination of poor coordination between the Sheriff's and District Attorney's personnel, our

lack of access to relevant computer information, and human error. I made extensive changes in policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences; however, current county software will not provide 100% certainty. My staff goes to extra lengths to keep manual records as a backup to the computer system.

Green's Claim: \$110,000 paid to other counties to house inmates out of county last year as a result of short staffing

Sheriff Smith – The Facts: I have repeatedly presented budget-staffing requests to the Commissioners Court that comply with the required detention officer-to-inmate ratios mandated by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards. The Commissioners Court, not the Sheriff's Office, determined the staffing levels that forced me to transport inmates out of county because we didn't have enough detention officers to maintain compliance.

Green's Claim: The Sheriff made \$2 million additional budget requests

Sheriff Smith – The Facts: Additional funds were required to update patrol vehicles approaching odometer readings of 200,000 miles and incurring excessive maintenance costs. The rest was for salary and benefit increases voted by the Commissioners Court to help retain staff being lost to higher paying counties and law enforcement agencies. Additional staffing for 384 new jail beds was requested to meet detention officer-to-inmate ratios mandated by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards. I requested additional staff to prevent shipping inmates out to other counties.

Green's Claim: Obama/Clinton Washington Mentality...blames previous Sheriff and alleged corruption of previous administration to excuse his mistakes

Sheriff Smith – The Facts: When I took office in January 2013, some difficult decisions were required relating to existing personnel. The decisions were not popular with everybody, but they were necessary to move the office forward and to make it more effective, efficient, and responsive to the citizens.

I did not run on a platform to keep running this office exactly the same way as my predecessor had for 36 years. I also have not publicly criticized the former sheriff, nor have I blamed him for any issue. *Mr. Green has repeatedly accused me of blaming my predecessor, but every time he has been challenged to produce the evidence, he has failed to do so.*

This office does not belong to any elected official. It belongs to the people of Smith County, and that's how I run it. Any mistakes made are mine. The buck stops with me. We have put improved policies and procedures in place to make every effort not to repeat mistakes.

Green's Claim: Lack of trust and transparency

Sheriff Smith – The Facts: I have held 16 town hall meetings in every part of Smith County since taking office. The Sheriff's Office and Jail budgets are available on-line on the Smith County website and additional information is available on the Sheriff's Office website. Pastor David Dykes, State Representative Matt Schaefer, and self-retired County Commissioner JoAnn Fleming – a long-time government accountability hawk – are three of many who publicly endorse and trust me.

Conclusion:

I deeply appreciate my friends and supporters and am humbled by the strong support you have shown to me and my best supporter – my wife, Leslie. A friend of mine says the definition of integrity is the distance between what you say you believe and what you do about it. My prayer is that I will always walk humbly with my God and live a life of integrity.

