

## Sheriff to Offer Firearms Training to the Public

The 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment to the U.S. Constitution protects the citizens' right to keep and bear arms. While this amendment allows citizens to bear arms, there are laws in place in an effort to protect us and those around us. Even with the safety laws in place, each year there are thousands of accidents involving firearms that result in serious injury or the death of that person. Having been in the Marine Corps and now in law enforcement, safety rules have been drilled into my head over and over. Since taking office I have been working toward a way to pass this knowledge on to people who may not have handled a gun in the past or are just not comfortable with firearms. Whether you are a new gun owner, have owned a gun for years, or are thinking about purchasing a gun for the first time, I would like to offer you an opportunity to learn more about firearms. Due to my job of signing off on gun permit applications, I know that there are a lot of citizens out there that are using their 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment right to own a gun. With that constitutional right comes the responsibility to use the firearm safely, and I want to be sure that as your Sheriff, I am doing what I can to be sure that guns are used safely in our county.

With that said, I am glad to announce that my office is now offering a class that I hope will be of help to those in a situation of owning a gun, but not real sure what to do with it or are unfamiliar with what the laws say about firearms. The class will be a condensed version of what law enforcement officers go through during the police academy. We will go over types of firearms, basic features of firearms, shooting basics, and various other topics relating to firearms. Most importantly, we will cover safety with firearms while shooting. Foremost, when participants leave this class, I want them to feel confident handling a firearm.

We hope to offer firearms classes to Madison County residents several times throughout the year. To make the class as comfortable and open to discussion as possible, we will be holding separate classes for males and females. The first class, which will be for females, will be held on March 19<sup>th</sup> starting at 0800. The training will be held at the Madison County Sheriff's Office Training Center and firing range. During the training, you will be able to bring your own personal firearm. For those that do not yet own a gun, I will have different types of firearms in different calibers available at the training for you to handle and use for the training. This training is free of charge to the public. Due to safety and space, we will limit the class size to 25 participants. If interest exceeds the limits of this class, we will hold an additional training on a different day. You must sign up in advance, preferably by March 1<sup>st</sup>. To sign up for the class or to obtain more information, please come by the Sheriff's Office or call 706-795-6202 and ask for Major Burns or myself. You may also visit our website ([www.madisoncountysheriffga.org](http://www.madisoncountysheriffga.org)) for more information and to download the firearms training form. A firearms class for men will be held later in the Spring. As always, I welcome your input and/or questions anytime about this or other matters about public safety.

Kip C. Thomas, Sheriff