

# MSA's Shooting Star Competition

MSA Update:

Here are some photos from the 2nd annual Chief Deputy Shawn R. Donahue "Shooting Star" Competition from the 10th of June. It was held at the Capitol City Rifle and Pistol Club in Augusta. A very good turn out with sheriffs and chiefs from all over arriving to join in. Sheriff Nichols even competed and did very well. It was great to have the Donahue family join us with Shawn's brother, Chris of Washington County competing. Great competition and fellowship was enjoyed by all. Penobscot County is the team to beat next year, taking the overall trophy home to Bangor. Individual event winners included Sgt. Kyle Kassa from York winning two events, rifle and stress/fine motor skill. Dep. Steve Saucier of Penobscot County winning the pistol course event. Dep. Chad Gilbert won the dueling tree event.





## Shooting Star Competition

# Winslow shooting competition honors late sheriff's deputy

Competitors from 10 Maine sheriff's departments tested their skills in four events while getting to know their colleagues from other departments better.

BY JESSE SCARDINA STAFF WRITER

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WINSLOW — Crack shots from 10 sheriff's departments convened Wednesday at the firearms range on Abbott Road to compete to see which agency has the best marksmen.

The Maine Sheriffs Association held its inaugural Shawn Donahue Memorial “Shooting Star” Competition, recognizing the best shots in the state and the best-shooting sheriff's department.





The competition, which is intended to become an annual event, honors Donahue, who was Washington County's Chief Deputy when he died unexpectedly in May.

"I think it says a lot of the law enforcement community to all come together with the camaraderie of all this and the support of Kennebec County to put this together," said Chris Donahue, a corporal in the Washington County department and brother of Shawn. "He would have been very humbled by all this."

Donahue was a 19-year veteran of law enforcement, holding posts throughout Maine, including stints as police chief in Baileyville and chief deputy at the Washington County Sheriff's Office.

The all-day event pitted 10 of the state's 16 sheriff's departments against each other in a friendly competition to see which county's deputies shoot the most accurately. It was also a networking opportunity for officers from various departments to interact while paying tribute to one of their own.

"It's not often that we get to socialize with other departments like this," said Randall Liberty, sheriff of Kennebec County.

Dennis Picard, a captain in the Kennebec County Sheriff's Office, said when his agency started organizing the event, it expected maybe five or six counties to participate and ended up with 10.

"From our perspective, it's also training," Picard said. "Our officers are replicating what they may encounter in the field. It's a good use of time."

Picard said the hope is to make the competition an annual event and to have all 16 counties in the state represented.

"That is definitely the hope," he said.

Teams of two either were chosen by their department or volunteered for the competition in four events: sidearm proficiency, rifle proficiency, a divided-attention endurance event in which competitors sprinted 200 yards before assembling their pistols and shooting at the targets, and a head-to-head duel, involving deputies competing against another in target practice.

Four individual winners were crowned in each event, and the Sagadahoc County Sheriff's Office took the Donahue Cup as champions, earning bragging rights for the year. The winner of the sidearm event was Deputy Sarosh Sher, of Chelsea, in Kennebec County. Lt. Travis Willey, of Washington County, won the rifle event; Deputy Jeremy Joslyn, of Knox County, won the endurance event; and Deputy Justin Drake, of Lincoln County, won the duel competition. The 10 counties represented were Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Sagadahoc, Somerset, Waldo and Washington.

Sher, winner of the sidearm competition, had been nominated to participate, as had his partner, Brittany Morin, of Winslow, the only woman to compete Wednesday. Sher didn't know Donahue personally, but he said you don't have to know a fellow officer personally to consider him or her family.

"We know him because he's blue family. He's a part of the law enforcement family," Sher said. "We're all related in that way."

Sher, who has been with the department since 2012, said it would have been nice to bring the cup to the Kennebec office, but the event was more a chance to bond with comrades from other counties.

"I'm here to have a good time, and obviously winning would be the cherry on top," he said. "I'm here to meet with my brothers and sisters from other agencies. Events like this bring us all together."

The event was open to families, and a few deputies brought their children or parents or significant others along, while several sheriffs and firearms instructors were on hand to coach and provide instruction.

In the first round of sidearm proficiency, four groups of two lined up anywhere from three to 25 yards from their target, depending on the drill. Sgt. Alfred Morin, from the Office of Professional Review at the Kennebec County Sheriff's Office, was the lead instructor, belting out commands to the competitors between rounds of thunderous gun fire.

“Fire two shots at the body and one to the head,” Morin said. “Take time on the head shot. Make it count.”

After the first round of shooting, the competitors examined their targets.

“How do I miss a head shot?” Morin quipped.

Donahue, who was partnered with Somerset County Deputy David Cole because Cole’s intended partner was away, admitted that his brother probably had the better shot and that he would have enjoyed an event such as the one in Winslow.

“Oh, absolutely, he would have been here,” Donahue said. “I don’t know if he would have shot, but he would be here to represent the county. He was very proud of where he worked and what he did.”

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