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WPD hosts two days of driving certification tests



Cooperating with a visiting journalist by posing upon request on Tuesday are some of the drivers of the moment. They are (from left) (instructor) WPD Sgt. Det. James Bond; (instructor) WPD Deputy Chief Clay Connolly; LCSO Deputy K. Davis; LCSO Cpl. Mike Bell; (instructor) LCSO Lt. Scott Finnen; Chiefland Police Officer Tyler Brown; and CPD Officer Ella Anderson. Several other drivers participated in the exercises on Tuesday and Wednesday (Dec. 15 and 16). Although invited to participate with a late model Jeep Compass, the journalist politely declined, thanking the instructor for the potential opportunity.

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WILLISTON – The Williston Police Department hosted the testing of the driving skills of officers from various agencies on Tuesday and Wednesday (Dec. 15 and 16).

In addition to WPD officers and staff, drivers from the following agencies were invited as well – Cedar Key Police Department, Chiefland Police Department, Levy County Sheriff's Office and Levy County Department of Public Safety.

The certified driving instructors who administered the testing were WPD Deputy Chief Clay Connolly, WPD Sgt. Det. James Bond and LCSO Lt. Scott Finnen.

There were three sections of the course, and in all of the tests one objective was to not hit orange-colored cones. In one section, the driver was required to drive back and forth in a serpentine route between cones at the speed of 20 miles per hour. Then the driver had to do the same action in reverse.

In another section of the three-section course, the driver had to reach a speed of 35 mph and apply the brakes starting at a marked point, and not hit the cone at the end of the distance for this threshold braking exercise. Then the driver had to back straight out of the course.

In that same section, the driver went through the process again, first cutting quickly to the left and then again to the right at 35 mph and then reaching the point of braking at the threshold and not hitting the cone at the end.

In the third section, the driver was required to make a 90-degree right turn within the limits marked by cones. Then, without more than one backing motion, the driver was required to back out of the spot and continue away from that section.

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WPD Police Chief Dennis Strow was among the successful drivers who earned certification on Tuesday.

WPD Deputy Chief Connolly said the serpentine test, the right and left evasive driving, the threshold braking and the intersection turning and backing exercises are among the 13 skills drivers can learn in an expanded version of the testing process.

Among the tests that were not applied on this two-day session were on a figure-eight cornering course, tactical backing, nighttime evasive driving, the wet skid pad course and off-road recovery driving. Off-road recovery driving is when a vehicle goes off of the road and the driver needs to reenter the roadway without losing control.

Connolly said he would like to see the city have an area in Horseman's Park for driving tests. On Tuesday and Wednesday an old runway off of the main Williston Municipal Airport area was used.

Students in Levy County Schools, Connolly said, would benefit especially from learning how to recover from an unplanned off-road incident. In fact, Connolly said he believes there could be a type of teen challenge driving program established in Levy County to help reduce the number of injuries and fatalities in traffic accidents.

Like the city-owned driving course, a countywide teen challenge safe driving course does not exist yet in Levy County. However there is an excellent private driving school named Nature Coast Driver Improvement. The ad for this business is on the [Home Page](#).