

Statement of Charlie Morris
March 2, 2009

As you might imagine, this is a very difficult time for me and my family. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the many members of the community who have reached out to offer their support and concern. There has been an outpouring of support from many people, including personal friends and many good citizens whose lives, families and businesses I have sought to protect and serve during my many years working for the people of Okaloosa County. My family and I are very grateful.

I know that every member of the Sheriff's Office will continue to perform the outstanding, dedicated and professional job for which they are known. I encourage my former colleagues to give their full support to Interim Sheriff Ed Spooner to ensure a smooth and safe transition.

The allegations against me are serious and I have retained counsel to represent me. I have cooperated with the government in its investigation and I look forward to a full and fair hearing on the charges. My attorneys have advised me not to answer any questions at this time, and I am following the advice of my lawyers. As the judicial process unfolds, I humbly ask every citizen to continue to support the Sheriff's Office and to continue to respect the men and women who work so hard, and often put themselves in harm's way, to protect our beloved community.