



PRESS RELEASE

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CORCA NAMES CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG OFFICER “NC LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THE YEAR”

Raleigh, NC (October 10, 2023) - The Carolinas Organized Retail Crime Alliance (CORCA) awarded Officer Bryan Walker as the 2023 North Carolina Law Enforcement Officer of the Year at their annual conference in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Officer Walker is a thirteen year veteran of law enforcement and has worked the last three years with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's (CMPD) Organized Retail Crime Task Force. From June 1, 2022 to June 1, 2023, Officer Walker had 299 cases assigned to him and cleared 152 of those resulting in the successful closure of over \$800,000 in reported loss cases and over 100 felony arrests. Officer Walker was able to achieve a case closure rate of approximately 52% while being the only full-time officer assigned to cover a large, high-visibility and high-end retail area in the city of Charlotte. Officer Walker handled calls for service ranging from in-progress theft incidents to obtaining by false pretense investigations, credit fraud, burglary, identity fraud, and organized retail theft investigations involving multiple retailers and multiple suspects.

In addition, Officer Walker frequently engaged with both mall management and retailer management to discuss theft trends, theft mitigation, and safety best practices. He attended multiple meetings hosted by Charlotte-area retailers to discuss ongoing organized retail crime trends and identify common offenders and helped to coordinate solutions to ongoing investigations that spanned multiple jurisdictions as well as retailers.

Officer Walker values relationship building and open sharing of information in his job.

“The biggest asset I have is creating hyper local information networks that connect civilian company investigators with each other and with Police Investigators in real time for information sharing. These hyper local networks (i.e., shopping centers, shopping malls) are then connected to a larger network that covers an entire region for good information sharing between agencies,” he told us.

Officer Walker was nominated by Brendon Cutler, Market Investigator with Dick’s Sporting Goods.

“Officer Walker has taken it upon himself to learn as much as he can about the retailers’ point of view when it comes to retail theft and organized retail crime so that when he presents ideas to his retail partners in an effort to mitigate future theft incidents, he’s able to do so with retailers’ perspective in mind,” Cutler shared in his nomination. “He has also taken the time to gain an in-depth understanding of a myriad of theft and fraud related charges and laws in order to not only better investigate and resolve cases, but also enable him to provide insight to retail partners as to why a particular incident is being charged under one statute but not another statute.”

Officer Walker’s supervisor, Administrative Sergeant Rober Dano also has high praise of Officer Walker’s work.

“I have supervised Officer Bryan Walker for several years. Not only do I find his work product to be exemplary I also find his efforts to be highly effective. Officer Walker was awarded the SPU (Special Patrol Unit) of the year award for the Providence Division for 2022. The award was presented to Officer Walker due to his determined and impactful efforts to deter and investigate crime at one of the largest facilities in the Charlotte region, South Park Mall,” Sergeant Dano shared with us in support of the nomination. “Officer Walker has conducted hundreds of investigations over the last 2 years with an impressive clearance rate of 58.7%. Officer Walker’s rate of recovery is equally impressive. He has conducted several in depth investigations ranging from Larceny, lude activity, gambling, varying classifications of larceny, fraud, and other quality of life issues. In each one of these cases I truly feel that Officer Walker took them all to limit of solvability.”

According to Cutler, “Officer Walker has proven himself to be an invaluable contributor to the fight against retail crime in general and organized retail crime specifically for several years, and his contribution over the last year was exceptional.”

When Officer Walker isn't catching bad guys, he is catching fish. An avid fisherman, Officer Walker and his sister have their own YouTube channel called "Fishtasy" that they upload to almost weekly.

Police work and fishing may take a lot of Officer Walker's time, but "the two most important things in my life are my faith and my family," he told us. And that family will grow a bit bigger in November when he and his wife, Mandy, welcome their first child, a son, to be named Landon Scott Walker.

Organized retail crime goes far beyond common shoplifting, bad checks and fake gift cards. It is the large-scale theft of retail product usually driven by a criminal enterprise employing a group of individuals who steal mass quantities of merchandise and then resell the merchandise to convert the stolen goods into cash. Organized rings are often involved in other crimes within the community, including narcotics, money laundering and human trafficking. According to the National Retail Federation's latest National Retail Security Survey, organized retail crime was a primary driver in retail losses which reached over \$112 billion nationwide in 2022.

CORCA, a collaborative effort in the Carolinas between retailers and law enforcement to reduce organized retail crime, is managed by the North Carolina Retail Merchants Association (NCRMA) and supported by the South Carolina Retail Association (SCRA). NCRMA and SCRA represent chain and independent retailers of all types throughout the Carolinas. Through CORCA, retailers and law enforcement have found a way to bridge communication and fight the growing problem of retail crime on a unified front.

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About CORCA Law Enforcement Officer of the Year:

Each year, the CORCA Board of Directors accepts nominations to recognize an outstanding officer, one each from North and South Carolina, who has distinguished themselves through: their assistance to the retailers in their community specifically through their retail crime work, their dedication to their community at-large both as a professional officer and as a community volunteer, and achievements, accolades or honors they have received. The Board then reviews the nominations with those criteria in mind, to recognize two law enforcement officers, one representing North Carolina and one representing South Carolina, who have distinguished themselves and are deserving to be named CORCA Law Enforcement Officer of the Year for their state.