

DIXIE GULF ARABIAN HORSE ASSOCIATION

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To: Whom it may concern

February 19, 2017

From: Ben Smith
President Dixie Gulf AHA

Subject: Incident at the Baker Arena on 02/04/17

On February 4, 2017, at approximately 5:00 PM, an incident occurred at the pavilion of the Baker Arena, during the D.G.A.H.A. Open Horse Show. I was not present at the show on that date due to medical problems. I have heard several rumors about the incident and allegations being made that do not appear to be correct.

One of the rumors indicated that a civilian had been threatening someone with a handgun. In speaking with two of the Board of Directors from BARA, who were on the scene, that rumor is not correct. I was advised that no one was threatened and that there were three Deputies from the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office on the scene to investigate the incident. Having served approximately forty three (43) years in law enforcement, I can assure everyone that had anyone displayed, threatened or harassed anyone with a gun, the deputies would have arrested that person on the spot.

I would also like to remind everyone that there is currently a criminal investigation in progress by the Sheriff's Office concerning this incident. In the event anyone has any eye witness testimony they would like to provide to the deputies conducting the investigation, I would suggest that you contact Deputy Joseph D. Sarment, call #138, and provide the information to him for his investigation, reference to case #OCSO17O0FF001368.

One last thing, I want everyone to remember is that rumors are not necessarily facts and should not be spread. I also want everyone to remember that as long as there is an ongoing investigation, the information concerning the incident is, by law, confidential. Once all of the facts are known and the criminal investigation is finalized then, and only then, is the information made public. Again I would ask that all of the rumors, innuendoes and Facebook posts, concerning this incident, **STOP**.

Respectfully
Ben Smith