

RR Republican Club – Border Patrol Update

By Conrad Tolson

The Club recently got an update on the border from two special guests, CBP officers.

Border Patrol officers Robert Gumtow and Alex Chaparro attended a recent meeting. Both officers live in Casa Grande and work in CBP's Tucson Sector, which is headquartered here because of easy access to I-10 and I-8. However, this location means that agents can have up to a 2 hour drive each way to/from the border. The Tucson sector is 90% public land and also includes Tohono O'odham land. There is no wall on Tohono O'odham land, just a Normandy fence, which is what the Indians want in order to allow animals and cattle to freely cross the border.

The officers reported that apprehensions this year are down 80-90% and got-aways are almost zero. However, when making apprehensions, an officer can often be outnumbered, and the nearest help can be 30 minutes away. Before this year they were seeing people from all over the world and were just processing and releasing them into the country. Agents are still seeing young men, pregnant women, and children, but detaining them rather than catch-and-release has significantly reduced crossings. The Border Patrol is using underground sensors; drones and radar spaced about every 2 miles to assist in patrolling the border. The Army, National Guard and Sheriffs are helping with resources including helicopters. They anticipate that artificial intelligence will help reduce the need for human agents to physically patrol the border.

In response to a question, they said that most of the CBP traffic stops we see on I-10 are for smuggling. In response to another question, they also said that they now have the resources and support they need to do their job.

Like many law enforcement agencies, CBP is having problems maintaining staffing. Many of their agents joined after 9/11 and are nearing retirement. So CBP is out recruiting if you know someone who might be interested.

After the meeting, the CBP agents demonstrated the use of their Taser gun and explained that officers are trained in proper use. Improper use of the Taser can and has caused serious injury or even death.

The RR Republican Club meets monthly, usually at 9 a.m. on the second Saturday of the month. If you would like to visit our club to learn more about what's going on in our community and state, contact the Republican Club at RRAZRC@gmail.com or watch the Mid-Week Scoop for meeting times and locations.