

OKALOOSA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



[WWW.SHERIFF-OKALOOSA.ORG](http://WWW.SHERIFF-OKALOOSA.ORG)

# A MESSAGE FROM SHERIFF ERIC ADEN



2020 proved to be an extraordinarily challenging year. Beginning in the early first quarter, we had to take quick and decisive action to react to the challenges Covid-19 posed to our county, its citizens and visitors, and our staff.

In addition to the pandemic, in early summer we also saw political unrest and social injustice as well as riots and protests in many of our cities across the country. Preparing for potential outbreaks of unrest, while also dealing with the new pandemic, proved to be stressful and demanding for our agency.

To add to it all, Okaloosa County and the OCSO had to weather Hurricane Sally in September.

With the accumulation of all these demands, we were also not immune to the ongoing challenges facing recruitment and retention of qualified law enforcement applicants.

Heroin and opioid continued to plague our community, with 277 overdoses handled by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office alone. Tragically, 24 of those overdoses resulted in a loss of life.

**But despite the tumultuous events greatly affecting our County and staff in 2020, the plain hard fact is our outstanding people were up to the tasks of their mission, to provide quality law enforcement services fairly and equitably.**

There were of course some additional highlights to 2020, to include a smooth transition from Sheriff Larry Ashley's administration to mine during the last quarter of 2020. The change of administration brought several new opportunities for many qualified individuals to be promoted, as well as policy and procedure changes.



Being the outstanding leader he is and due to his dedication to smooth and quality operations by the OCSO, Sheriff Ashley was kind enough to allow us to begin strategizing on changes of both personnel and policies prior to the year's end in order to maintain continuity and efficiency.

I already began implementing several new initiatives to include further enhancing transparency and communication, boosting recruitment and retention efforts, creating a civilian advisory board, offering living wills for employees, re-organizing administrative investigations, creating a secondary route for promotion, adding additional resources to the Internet Crimes Against Children mission, introducing community led policing or intelligence led policing models, acquiring new technology such as advanced license plate readers, restructuring the field training program and manual, creating a command staff ride along program, establishing a retired deputy sheriff group, strengthening relationships with the State Attorney's Office, and growing our Marine Unit with two new vessels and positions.

My 36 year dream of becoming the Sheriff of Okaloosa County first began in the eighth grade. It was the greatest honor of my life when that dream became reality this past year.

These are challenging times to not only be a sheriff but to be in law-enforcement in general. However, with challenge comes opportunity. We have the great blessing of being able to work in a community that believes in us and demands a high level of service while at the same time rewards us with a high level of support. As long as we continue to provide excellent service coupled with transparency, we will continue to build relationships and have the outstanding community support that motivates and sustains us in this demanding career field.

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office will continue to draw the line in the sand between good and evil and right and wrong. We will treat everyone fairly and professionally. We will continue to protect our citizens against injustice and danger, and we will remain steadfast in our mission to hold criminals accountable.

Again I am incredibly honored to be your Sheriff and also honored to work with so many dedicated professionals every day. To the men and women who wear the badge on behalf of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, and the citizens who work to support that effort, I want to say thank you for what you do day in and day out.

It's an honor to serve Okaloosa County, and we will never waver in our chosen duty to protect.



*Sheriff Eric Aden*

**LEADERSHIP IS NOT ABOUT THE ROLE. IT'S ABOUT THE GOAL!**







# 2020 SAMPLE ACTIVITY RUNDOWN

239,377 Est. Calls for Service

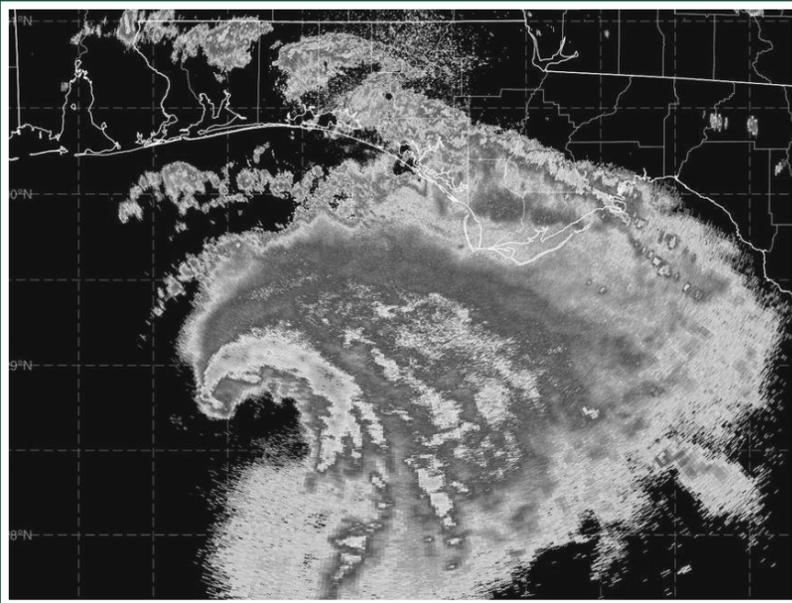
Not including Administrative calls etc.

<b>THEFTS</b>	<b>2,045</b>
<b>TRAFFIC STOPS</b>	<b>26,684</b>
<b>CITIZEN CONTACTS</b>	<b>15,592</b>
<b>TRESPASSING</b>	<b>2,719</b>
<b>SECURITY CHECKS</b>	<b>55,777</b>
<b>INTOXICATED DRIVERS</b>	<b>563</b>
<b>K-9 ASSISTS</b>	<b>2,673</b>
<b>WELFARE CHECKS</b>	<b>4,282</b>
<b>DISTURBANCES</b>	<b>5,439</b>
<b>ROAD RAGE</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>CHILD ABUSE</b>	<b>1,310</b>
<b>NARCOTICS VIOLATIONS</b>	<b>1,476</b>
<b>DISTRESSED SWIMMER</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>SHOTS FIRED</b>	<b>412</b>

# THE YEAR OF COVID-19 CHALLENGES—AND THE ENSUING WAVES OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR FIRST RESPONDERS!



# HURRICANE SALLY/SEPTEMBER 16, 2020



# North District

The North District encompasses approximately 450 square miles in the northern part of Okaloosa County. Our boundaries extend east to west from Santa Rosa to Walton County. Our north and south boundaries extend from Eglin AFB to Covington and Escambia County, Alabama.

We have a mixture of diverse and unique communities located in the North District. These communities range from densely populated urban areas in and around Crestview, the largest city in Okaloosa County, to the many acres of farm land, horse ranches, and residential homes located in the Baker, Holt and Laurel Hill communities. Many of the citizens of Okaloosa County have found comfort and peace in the many beautiful unincorporated areas in our North District.



## **NORTH DISTRICT INDIVIDUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### **LIFE SAVING AWARDS**

Deputy Annalisa Cripe  
Deputy John Edmonds  
Corporal Kristen Genrich  
Deputy Britton Corbin  
Deputy Matthew Langer  
Deputy Josh Hamilton  
Deputy Elliott Howard  
Deputy Colin Savoie  
Deputy Ray Hamilton  
Deputy Nate Bowen  
Deputy David Cain  
Deputy Jody Howard  
Deputy Tyler Colonna  
Corporal Mark Justiss  
Sgt. Marcus O'Sullivan

## Certificate of Commendation

Deputy Josh Hamilton received his award for his bravery and notable actions involving a suspect holding an infant hostage on I-10.

## Selections for Specialized Units

Deputy Colin Savoie selected for the Street Crimes Unit

Deputy David Cain selected for the Street Crimes Unit

Deputy Josh Hamilton selected for the Special Response Team

## Promotions in 2020

Deputy Derek York Promoted to Corporal

## Awards

Deputy Matthew Langer MADD award for Top Three DUI Arresting Officers



## 2020 NORTH DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

The year 2020 presented multiple challenges to law enforcement with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic being the major condition that affected how deputies conducted business. Deputies learned new ways to be safe and used best practices for preventing exposure to the virus and the spread of the virus. Crime does not stop and the brave men and women who serve our North District residents and visitors continued to answer calls for service and conduct patrols for criminal activity.

During 2020, overdose cases and deaths were far too common. Additionally, there were violent crimes related to narcotics activity that occurred within the North District and the City of Crestview. North District deputies increased their patrols and investigations to locate and apprehend narcotics dealers and offenders to deter their ability to pedal poison on the streets of our communities. **This effort resulted in more than a 68% increase in the arrest of felony narcotics offenders.**

**Deputies also attended specialized training in the detection and apprehension of impaired drivers upon our roadways and made a 186% increase in the arrest of impaired drivers.**

While 2020 and COVID-19 presented challenges, they also highlighted the character of the wonderful people in our community who were going through a difficult time themselves, but overwhelmed us with food, baked goods and gestures of support. The support from our community helped to keep our spirits bright and morale high as we conducted the business of the Sheriff's Office. That support and love will never be forgotten!

# NORTH DISTRICT STATISTICS OF INTEREST

(These numbers represent calls for service worked by North District deputies within the District.)

<b>Calls for Service</b>	<b>36,212</b>	<b>10.3% Increase</b>
<b>Traffic Stops</b>	<b>4,965</b>	<b>38.6% Increase</b>
<b>Warrants Services</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>21% Increase</b>
<b>DUI Arrest</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>186% Increase</b>
<b>Probable Cause Arrests</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>15.8% Increase</b>
<b>Narcotics Arrest</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>68.6% Increase</b>
<b>Citizen Contacts</b>	<b>3,456</b>	<b>No change</b>



## NORTH DISTRICT COMMUNITY SERVICE

Attended and participated in Crestview Area Chamber of Commerce Breakfasts  
Membership in Crestview Rotary Club  
Membership in Crestview Kiwanis Club  
President of First Judicial Circuit Law Enforcement Association  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President of the Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute Associates, Inc.  
Liaison to the Guardian Ad Litem Office  
Member of American Legion  
Member American Legion Riders  
Member Benevolent Protective Order of the Elks  
Member Loyal Order of the Moose  
Attended North Okaloosa County Fire Chief's Association Meetings  
Attended City of Crestview Council Meetings  
Attended City of Laurel Hill Council Meetings  
Attended Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners Meetings  
Member Crestview Rotary  
Supported Local Faith Ministries  
Liaison to Local Chamber Committees and Civic Groups  
Supported Annual Special Olympics Torch Run- Okaloosa County  
Attended / Supported County wide LEO Memorial Ceremonies  
Supported the End of Watch Memorial Ruck March Memorial Service for Fallen Officers

# SERVICE - IT'S IN OUR DNA!

The deputies working in the North District do an amazing job supporting the area where we live and serve:

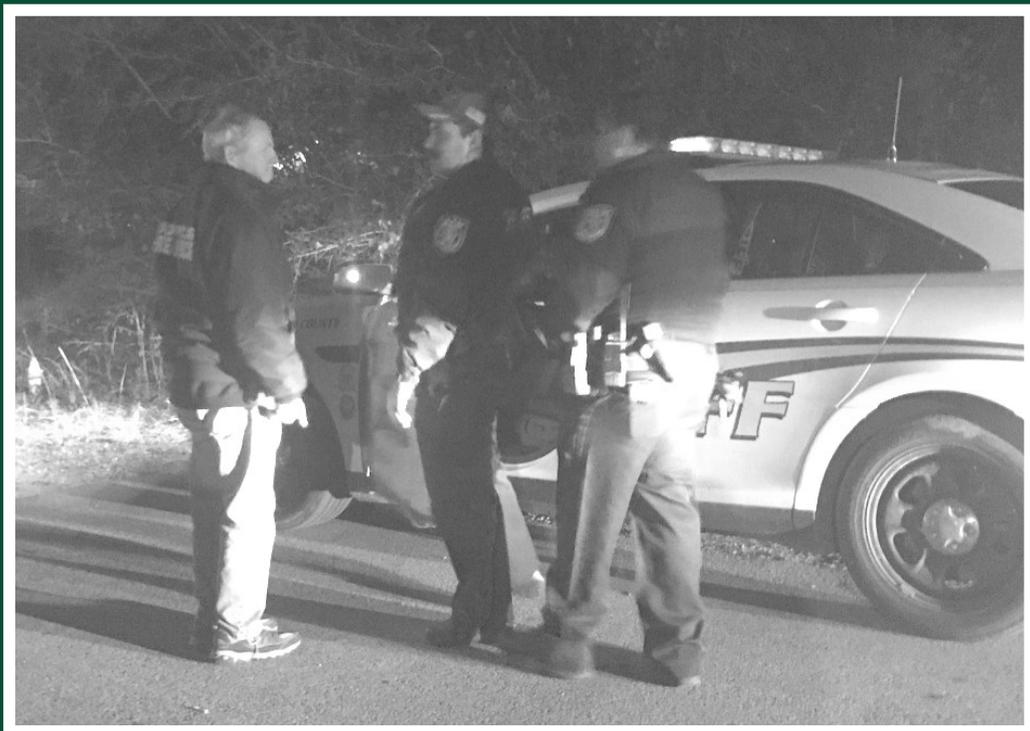
- Teaching classes in their local church or worship center
- Coaching organized sports teams
- Mentoring kids
- Participating in multiple civic organizations
- Donating their time to the OCSO Star Charities Committee events

As Christmas arrived, there were many children who were in need and identified to members of our agency through the Angel Tree Program. North District Deputies supported many of them individually. Deputy Matthew Langer worked with community businesses to use thousands of dollars donated by those businesses to provide a great Christmas filled with gifts for 37 needy children. Many North District deputies gathered during their off-duty time to wrap and package presents for the kids and it took two large trailers to deliver them.

We love the partnership we have with our community and will continue to work extremely hard to maintain the respect and trust they give to us and to keep them safe!







# CENTRAL DISTRICT



Encompassing the southwest corner of Okaloosa County, the Central District is the most densely populated district in the county with nearly half of Okaloosa County's full-time population residing within its boundaries. Similarly, thousands of additional people commute daily into Central District to work at military installations, manufacturing centers, and conduct other means of commerce. The 49 men and women assigned to Central District are committed to providing these residents, business owners, and guests incomparable service and unwavering protection while striving to resolve issues efficiently, safely, and in a timely manner. An illustration of these remarkable deputies' dedication and fervent passion for the job can be seen daily and likewise, their hard work has paid dividends in both the community and in their professional lives. Individuals assigned to Central District have welcomed several promotional appointments and career broadening opportunities which is a testament to their work ethic, compassion, and "service before self" mantra. The talents within this core group are unparalleled and undoubtedly, the future leaders of this agency will be found amongst this group of gifted individuals.

During 2020, normalcy was shattered by the unyielding proliferation of COVID - 19. Our community was relentlessly attacked, resulting in agency policies and operational procedures having to be viewed abstractly to facilitate safe means of conducting business. Tailored tactics were employed agency wide, allowing for efficiency at every level and in every facet; none more so than in the patrol ranks. Notwithstanding COVID-19 limitations hampering a significant amount of community related outreach and collaboration, deputies assigned to Central District maintained a close working relationship with the community, albeit from a distance, to solve issues within their assigned beat.

Central District is a rigorous, yet rewarding duty assignment. It's transitional nature, geography, and socio-economical composition commands specific qualities to be inherent in Central District deputies. The District is dynamic concerning calls for service and is recurrently the busiest district in Okaloosa County. **The county incurred approximately 239,377 calls for service for 2020 and of that total number, 79,120 calls for service were handled by assigned Central District deputies who worked diligently, despite shortages in staffing, to successfully provide service and protection to the citizens of Okaloosa County.** Deputies apprehended wanted individuals, recovered stolen vehicles, interdicted trafficking amounts of drugs, effected arrests of armed individuals, and assisted in homicide investigations in 2020. This is just a glimpse of what deputies have participated in and the measure of their hard work and dedication to the agency and citizens of Okaloosa County. Here are a few additional examples spotlighting their fervent commitment to our profession:

In March, a traffic stop resulted in the arrest of three individuals and the seizure of a trafficking amount of heroin, Alprazolam, Buprenorphine, methamphetamine, and drug related paraphernalia.

In June, deputies responded to an armed, barricaded individual in an apartment complex in Fort Walton Beach. The suspect had threatened a maintenance employee with a knife and then barricaded himself in an apartment. He made threats of harm towards deputies and was later taken into custody following the deployment of chemical munitions.



In August, a homeowner was awakened to a man banging on the front door. Next, the man kicked the door in and strangled the homeowner until the individual became unconscious. He rifled through the home, stole the homeowner's personal affects and left. The homeowner fled after regaining consciousness. The suspect was later apprehended after he returned to the scene of the crime and re-entered the home for a second time.



Lastly, in November, a stolen vehicle was seen traveling in West County. A traffic stop was attempted, however, the vehicle took overt, evasive maneuvers in attempts to flee. It was followed to the area of Hollywood Boulevard where the suspect got out and fled on foot. He was located and after showing defiance and not complying with law enforcement, ultimately tased and taken into custody. A search of the suspect's property resulted in the recovery of cocaine and methamphetamine.



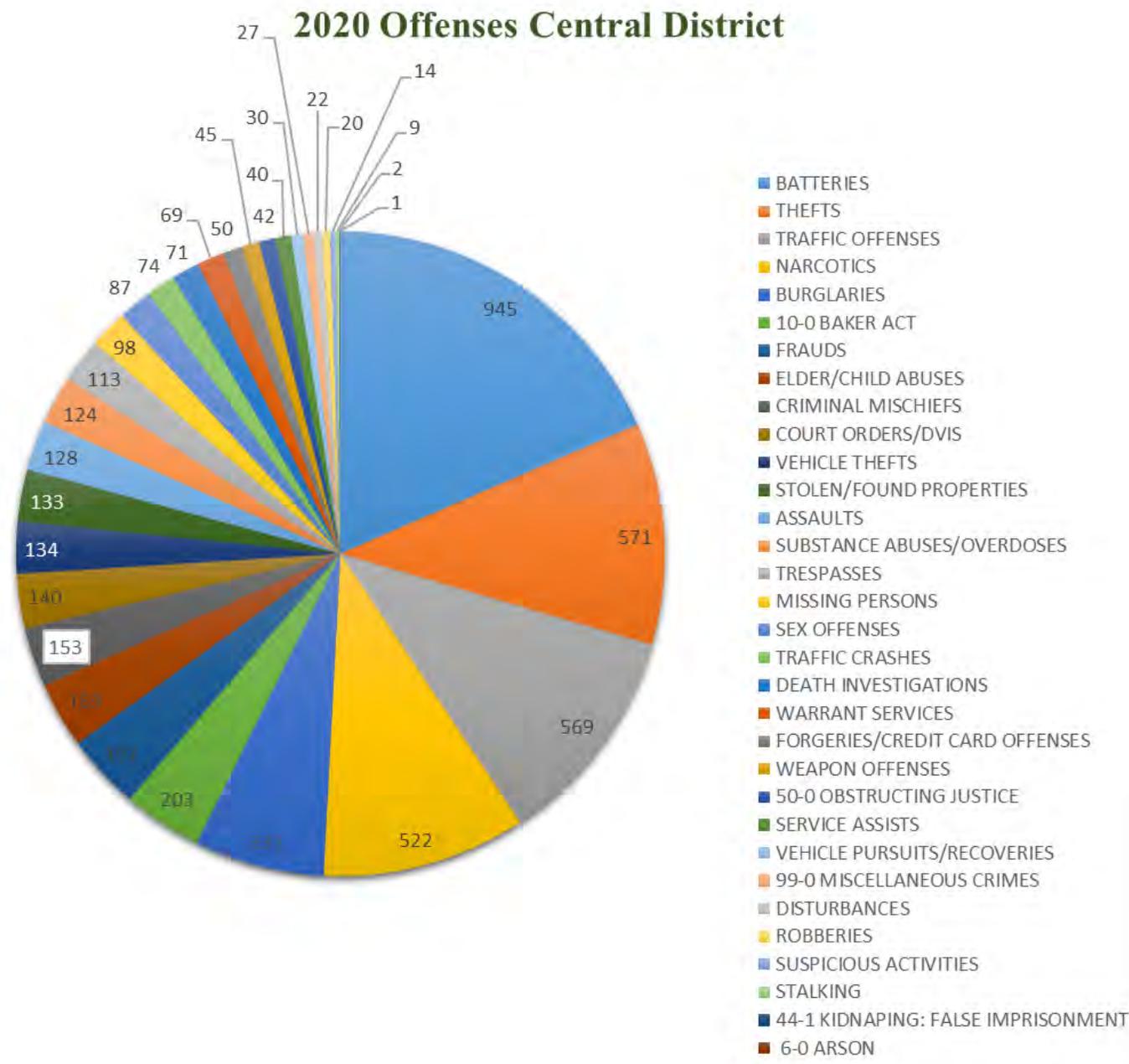
Deputies assigned to Central District strive to better themselves in order to better serve the community. Similarly, they have invested in their respective communities and built social currency which aids in the accomplishment of the overall mission of the agency. **Deputies addressed a myriad of issues within the community in 2020 with one being a focal priority — drugs. Working diligently and cooperatively with the community, deputies have endeavored to meet this issue head on resulting in deputies responding to 818 drug related calls for service, effecting 645 drug arrests, and authoring 646 drug related reports.**

The plaguing effects of drugs and drug related crimes touches every neighborhood and community in the county, yet Central District deputies counter with specialized drug training, developing relationships in the community, and proactive patrols. Their labors have been fruitful and are undoubtedly apparent in the abovementioned statistical data.

Deputies assigned to the City of Mary Esther are equally invested in their community and worked diligently with residents to devise plans for Neighborhood Watch programs for this area. Empowerment and safety were two focal points of interest driving these programs, however due to the onslaught of COVID-19, plans and arranged meetings were halted. **This did not deter these deputies who work to make the city a safe place to live and conduct business. Deputies assigned to the City of Mary Esther responded to 10,045 calls for service – slightly more than 12 percent of the call volume seen in all of Central District.** It is noteworthy that two deputies are contracted to work the City of Mary Esther and these two deputies alone handle more than 50 percent of the call volume within the City of Mary Esther.



## 2020 Offenses Central District



The leadership core within Central District is second to none. Emphasis in the areas of professional development, investment in the team and respective team members, and overall troop welfare are paramount and inherent core values held by all. Mentorship is intrinsic within this talented group of **leaders who are persistent in developing professional law enforcement officers and the future leaders within our agency.** **The Central District leadership team has received supplemental leadership training to included Leadership Okaloosa, FBI LEEDA, Supervisor Leadership Institute, and Florida Leadership Academy to name a few.** Likewise, Central District deputies have also endeavored to glean additional training to enhance their abilities. Enrollment in the CJSTC Leadership Academy, Instructor Techniques, DDACTS Strategic Planning, etc. are just some of the training opportunities these deputies received. Equally, deputies have garnered training from the nationally recognized Centrifuge Training LLC. Demanding as this training course is, Centrifuge Training LLC equips deputies with the much needed tools to navigate today's law enforcement environment. Sergeant DJ Folley is one a few selected agency instructors in the aforesaid training tier. With the knowledge gleaned from Centrifuge, Sergeant Folley is providing innovated training opportunities to the agency, which is at the core of his training platform.



There's no argument; the demands of being a deputy can be taxing and extremely arduous at times. It takes a special and talented individual to navigate this profession, yet our deputies have repeatedly shown they meet this criteria and surpass expectations. Moreover, many have chosen to go above and beyond this calling and serve in other capacities in and out of the agency. From Special Response Team and the Field Training and Evaluation Program to serving in the United States Armed Forces and the Unmanned Aircraft System Section, Central District deputies have proven they are multi-faceted, talented individuals. **Equally, these amazing deputies find time and compassion to give back to the community in ways other than public safety. Being cognizant of our community makeup and the diversity that makes our area unique, deputies assigned to Central District are keenly aware community inclusion is essential in problem solving, trust, and empowerment. These deputies recognize the importance of diversity and inclusion and received specialized training to better serve the community.** Additionally, mentoring our youth is a priority shouldered by Central District deputies and volunteering time to plant seed, tend to the youth, and aid them in their growth is admirable.



## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION TRAINING

As mentioned previously, the distinctive socio-economical, geographic, and population composition that is Central District lends to it being the busiest district in Okaloosa County. In 2020, the Sheriff's Office responded to 239,377 calls for service. The Central District saw 79,120 calls for service – nearly 34 percent of the total call volume in Okaloosa County.

## CENTRAL DISTRICT STATISTICS OF INTEREST

<b>Total Offense Reports</b>	<b>6,103</b>
<b>Total Arrests</b>	<b>2,392</b>
<b>Traffic Stops</b>	<b>10,655</b>
<b>911 Verifications</b>	<b>4,881</b>
<b>Disturbances</b>	<b>6,509</b>
<b>Alarms</b>	<b>2,653</b>
<b>Felony Narcotics w/Arrests</b>	<b>319</b>
<b>DUI Arrests</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>Armed Disturbance</b>	<b>544</b>
<b>Weapons Offense</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Death Investigations (Homicide)</b>	<b>6</b>

# NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND EVENTS

Deputies provided honorable and dutiful escorts for 708 local funerals in support of loved ones and friends of the deceased during their time of mourning and need. Deputies also participated in mentorship programs, various community meetings, and lent support to the military community. Additionally, deputies contributed to the agency's Angel Tree program which provides gifts to area children during the holiday season. Deputies participated in community events, city council meetings, and various other organizations throughout the year; two instances of noteworthy mention involve Sergeant DJ Folley and Corporal Matthew Self and highlights their compassion and heart. Both volunteer their time to Big Brother Big Sisters of Northwest Florida mentoring our youth. Sergeant Folley and Corporal Self have been involved in this amazing opportunity for multiple years with Sergeant Folley being recognized for his volunteerism with the "Big of the Month" award.



## SERVICE ABOVE SELF

Emerald Coast Crime Stoppers  
Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute Associates  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida  
Coaching at local schools  
CrossFit Okaloosa coaching

## PROMOTIONS

Corporal Jeffrey Butler promoted to Investigator  
Corporal Pierre Batiste promoted to Investigator  
Corporal Justin Boggs promoted to Investigator  
Deputy Scott Spence promoted to Corporal  
Deputy Derek York promoted to Corporal  
Deputy Royce Brooks assigned to the K9 unit

## AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS/ COMMENDATIONS

Sergeant DJ Folley  
Deputy Adam Fitchett  
Deputy Eric Swain  
Deputy L. Stinson  
Investigator Pierre Batiste



## **SWORN OUTSTANDING PERFORMER OF THE YEAR**

Deputy L. Stinson

### **PROMOTIONS LIST**

Deputy Tia Frembgen (Corporal)  
Deputy Brannon Small (Corporal)  
Deputy Brandon Mundt (Corporal)  
Deputy Tia Frembgen (Investigator)  
Deputy Brannon Small (Investigator)  
Deputy Brandon Mundt (Investigator)  
Deputy Eric Swain (Investigator)

### **SPECIALIZED UNITS**

Deputy Brandon Simpkins transferred to Street Crimes Unit  
Deputy Brad McFall joined the UAS Section as a pilot  
Deputy Brandon Simpkins joined Special Response Team  
Deputy Jake Lichty joined Recruit, Retain, Retire Committee

### **LIFE SAVING AWARDS**

Corporal Scott Spence  
Deputy Brannon Small  
Deputy Brad McFall



# EAST DISTRICT

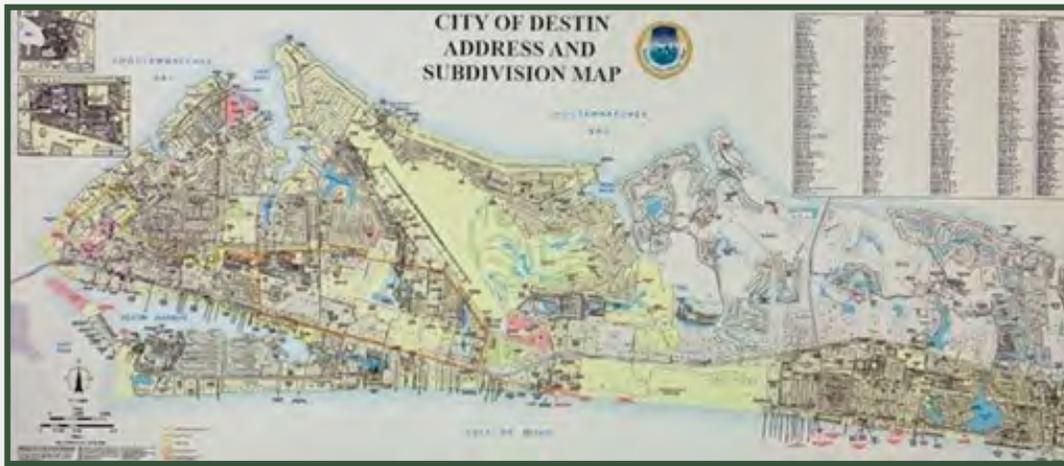


The East District, also referred to as District 3, makes up the Southeast portion of the county, approximately 196 square miles, stretching from Duke Field to the Gulf of Mexico, east of Brooks Bridge across Okaloosa Island, through the City of Destin to the Walton County line and includes most waterways within Okaloosa County.

The East District is home to three municipalities: the City of Destin, City of Niceville, and City of Valparaiso. While Niceville and Valparaiso have their own law enforcement agencies, the City of Destin contracts for law enforcement services with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office. These contracted services provide 21 sworn deputies, which include 17 patrol deputies, two investigators, one marine unit, and one deputy to cover the front desk. **In 2020, calls for service in the City of Destin reached 44,504, an increase of over 25% from 2019.**

In 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the East District remained a top tourist destinations within the State of Florida with millions of visitors vacationing on the crystal white beaches. The beaches, emerald waters, golf courses, and fine dining restaurants are main attractions. The City of Destin encompasses approximately 7.53 square miles, nearly 27.38 waterfront miles, and has a population of 14,247. During the height of the season Destin can swell to as much as 60,000 plus during any major holiday. This massive influx of visitors creates great economic stimulation and growth for the city and surrounding areas.





I



In 2020, East District Patrol Services responded to 60,032 calls for service, completed 4,885 offense reports, and effected 1,703 arrests. Included in those totals were: 390 DUI arrests, 155 felony and misdemeanor narcotics cases, 274 battery arrests, 58 burglary arrests, and 25 grand theft auto arrests. In addition, deputies responded to 2,858 traffic crashes on the roadways, 813 with injuries and nine resulting in fatalities.

Patrol units continued their efforts to address aggressive driving behaviors by saturating problem related areas; with 9,880 traffic stops, 3,287 citations and 2,016 warnings issued to the motoring public.

## EAST DISTRICT STATISTICS OF INTEREST

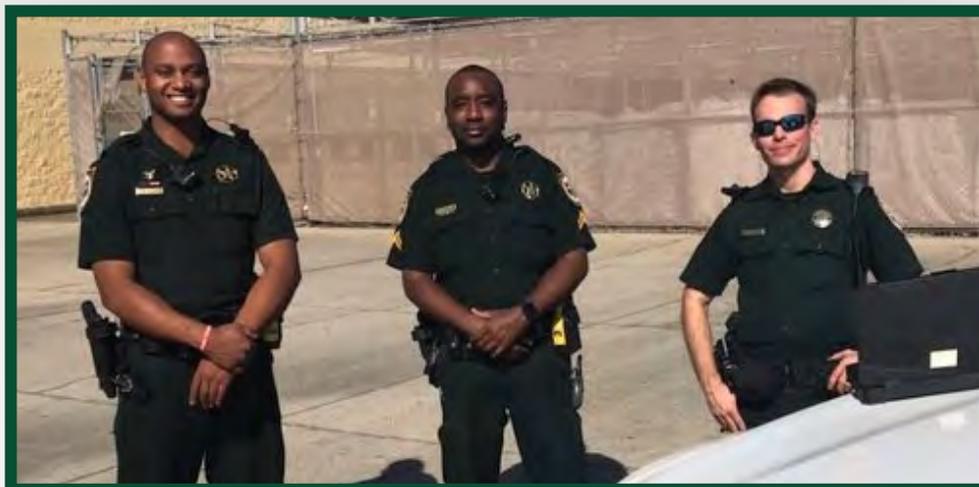
<b>Calls for Service</b>	<b>60,032</b>
<b>Offense Reports</b>	<b>4,885</b>
<b>Traffic Stops</b>	<b>9,880</b>
<b>Arrests/NTA</b>	<b>1,703</b>
<b>Traffic Crash Responses</b>	<b>2,858</b>
<b>Warrant Attempts</b>	<b>596</b>
<b>Watch Orders</b>	<b>2,801</b>

Spring Break 2020 was much slower than previous years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office "Zero Tolerance Initiative" policy during spring break and summer was once again enforced. The "zero tolerance" approach has helped to deter major criminal activity, which normally would accompany underage drinking.



The East District remains the major artery for visitors traveling through the Panhandle and still remains one of the most visited areas in the state throughout the Spring Break and summer months. It is our goal to continue to provide the highest level of law enforcement services to citizens, whether they are residents, motorists traveling through, or visitors vacationing in our beautiful area.

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office continues its partnerships with the Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners and the Mid-Bay Bridge Authority to address major traffic related issues during the tourist season. Residents who live on White Point Road no longer experience traffic related issues they have voiced concerns about in previous years. Funded by the Tourist Development Council (TDC), a traffic detail was carefully planned with Okaloosa County Staff, Mid-Bay Bridge Authority, and the Sheriff's Office. The detail continues to be a success and solves the majority of the traffic related concerns, with no major delays or accidents being reported.





The goal of East District is to continue to stress the importance of proactive enforcement practices and community oriented policing. We encourage all our citizens and visitors to report crimes or suspicious activities. **With all the statistics documented in our Annual Report there is one statistic we will never capture; that is the number of crimes prevented by our presence alone.** Our continued commitment to build community partnerships strengthens our abilities to communicate, educate and provide the professional law enforcement services our citizens expect.



# **EAST DISTRICT COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Attended Chambers of Commerce meetings and Destin and Niceville City Council meetings

United Way Board Member

Kiwanis member

Over 475 volunteer hours with multiple charitable and civic endeavors

Sponsored multiple families at “Operation Angel Tree”

Participated in judging the Hospice Tree decorating contest

Participated in the Destin Christmas Parade

Provided instruction for OCSO Citizens Academy

Provided volunteer coaches for all sports

## **EAST DISTRICT INDIVIDUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Lt. Sean Lynch promoted to Captain

Lt. Lenny Holloway promoted to Captain

Cpl. Tyler Williamson promoted to Investigator

Deputy Rex Thompson promoted to Corporal





# SPECIAL OPERATIONS DIVISION

## CONSOLIDATED EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER



The Consolidated Emergency Communications Center receives all emergency and non-emergency calls for the Okaloosa County Emergency Medical Services (EMS), all Fire Departments in Okaloosa County except Crestview Fire, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, Northwest Florida State College Police Department, and the Shalimar Police Department.

Maintaining a proficient and professional communications center requires constant training of the fifty-four full-time employees, four part-time employees, and one Lieutenant who run the communications center. **This year the communications center conducted 7,655 training hours to ensure the highest level of professionalism possible. These hours were to conduct new hire training, cross-training, and mandated annual certifications.**

The Sheriff's Office Communications Center is accredited through FLA-TAC whose mission is to "award accreditation to compliant Florida Communication Centers in the law enforcement, fire rescue, and emergency medical series disciplines. The Commission strives to improve the ability of Florida Communication Centers to deliver professional public safety services." Your communications center is set to obtain certification again this year to ensure the finest service to the citizens of Okaloosa County.

**In 2020, the communications center answered 100,812 emergency 911 calls and 247,890 non-emergency calls. Combined, this means communications officers averaged 995 calls a day dispatching EMS, Fire, and Police within Okaloosa County to keep our residents and visitors safe.**

During 2020, several improvements were made to the Okaloosa County 911 system. These improvements included a complete refresh of all the 911 hardware, the addition of an Automatic Abandoned Callback server, and a pilot program called Citizen Input.

Your communications center implemented the Automated Abandoned Callback feature through 911. This feature returns abandoned 911 voice calls (hang-ups) and provides the caller with an option to either press a digit on their dial pad, which sends their call into the 911 dispatch center to speak with a live call taker, or opt out, reporting that they are no longer in need of assistance.

**The Citizen Input program allows callers to send video, photographs and recordings directly to dispatchers in the 911 center via their cell phones. Callers are able to provide real-time video access and or digital photo access allowing our emergency responders visual access to what is being reported.**

The Sheriff's Office has further implemented a Quality Assurance Program, a formal assessment process by which actual performance behavior and outcomes are compared against established standards to ensure compliance, consistency, and accuracy in delivering our services. All efforts are taken to ensure our standards and procedures are upheld, providing the highest quality service to our residents and visitors.



# COMMUNICATIONS COMMENDATIONS

Communications Officer Arielle Singleton – Commendation

Communications Training Officer Rhonda Walker – Commendation

Communications Supervisor Lindsay Nix - \*Tri Discipline Commendation

Communications Training Officer George Deshields – \*Tri Discipline Commendation

Communications Supervisor Shannon King – \*Tri Discipline Commendation

Communications Assistant Supervisor Taylor Burkhart – \*Tri Discipline Commendation

*\*Tri-Discipline Definition - Becoming cross-trained on each communications discipline,  
Law, Fire and EMS.*

Since the 2019 merger into one communications center, ten communications officers have obtained this commendation.

# COMMUNICATIONS LONGEVITY CERTIFICATES

Communications Assistant Director Audrey Adams – 20 years

Communications Training Officer Hilton Livingston – 20 years

Communications Officer Denise Jones – 20 years

Communications Supervisor Ryan Duval – 10 years

Communications Assistant Supervisor Taylor Burkhart – 5 years

# COMMUNICATIONS PROMOTIONS/APPOINTMENTS

Communications Assistant Supervisor Mona Ciurleo – Promoted to Communications Supervisor

Communications Training Officer Leslie Wright – Appointed to Communications Assistant Supervisor

Communications Training Officer Taylor Burkhart – Appointed to Communications Assistant Supervisor

# COMMUNICATIONS RETIREMENTS

Communications Officer Thomas Strawser retired after 26 years of service.

Communications Supervisor Marcia Wolford retired after 17 years of service

# COMPLETED THE NWFSC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Communications Supervisor Saher Valcq

Communications Supervisor Lindsay Nix



# MARINE AND BEACH UNIT

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Special Operations Beach/Marine Unit continued to exceed yearly goals. The Marine Unit's calls for service ballooned from 2019 due to a dramatic increase in boaters on the water in 2020. Boat dealerships across the nation advise this has been a great year for boat sales. As a result, the Marine Unit's numbers of calls for service are anticipated to continue increasing into 2021.

With the increase of outdoor activities in 2020, the Marine/Beach Unit continued with aggressive patrols and continued to ensure the safety of those recreating on the waters and on the beaches of Okaloosa County. The Beach Unit continued to be productive, even with the beach closures due to COVID, and were able to issue numerous notices to appears (NTA's) on the beach for underage possession of alcohol and arrests for trespass (vagrants) on vacant properties throughout the East District during the "off-season".

## MARINE AND BEACH UNIT STATISTICS

<b>Calls for Service</b>	<b>7,760</b>
<b>Vessel Stops</b>	<b>1,551</b>
<b>Security Checks</b>	<b>2,287</b>
<b>Boating Citations</b>	<b>244</b>
<b>Distressed Swimmers</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Arrests</b>	<b>711 (NTA's included)</b>



The Marine Unit promotes boating safety through continued participation in several national boating safety campaigns that endorse education and outreach. Members participated in “Designated Skipper” which is a national program through the Sea Tow Foundation. This program promotes safe boating practices nationwide. Units handed out wristbands to children during vessel stops promoting this campaign. Additionally, the Marine Unit participated in the “Wear It” campaign which is a worldwide effort focused on responsible boating. It encourages boaters to always wear a life jacket while on the water. Units promoted this campaign mainly to ensure children under six years old were wearing life jackets while on a vessel under twenty-six feet in length. Several citations were issued throughout the season to rental and private vessels violating this state statute. The Beach Unit assisted Destin and Okaloosa County Life Guards in educating beachgoers on the dangers associated with the currents, the sun, and the rapidly changing weather conditions.

**For the third consecutive year, Okaloosa County ranked in the top ten for vessel crashes statewide. A large number of maritime violations occurring within Okaloosa County are committed by rental vessels. In an effort to help reduce these violations and increase boating safety, Marine Unit members continue to meet with local rental companies to ensure compliance with boating safety state statutes. These continued efforts will ultimately help reduce maritime violations and increase safety for their customers and other boaters.**

Boating Under the Influence (BUI) enforcement in Okaloosa County is always a primary focus and continued into 2020. Members of the Marine Unit participated in enhanced BUI detection training with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.





The Marine Unit participated in the 2020 Operation Dry Water which consisted of 23 law enforcement agencies within the State of Florida. Operation Dry Water is a national event hosted by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators targeting Boating Under the Influence.

**The diligence of the members of the Marine Unit resulted in over 56 BUI arrests in 2020 and an overall increase for the third consecutive year. In 2020, Okaloosa County ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in the State of Florida for BUI arrests (total between OCSO and FWC). The 56 BUI arrests by OCSO alone ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in Florida by any sheriff's office or police department.**

The Marine Unit was instrumental in a joint effort with the United States Coast Guard (Mobile, Alabama) targeting illegal marine charters occurring in Okaloosa County waters. The United States Coast Guard Law Enforcement Section from Mobile, Alabama rode with OCSO Marine Units to conduct their operations and assist with BUI enforcement. Over 20 illegal charters were identified and federally charged by USCG personnel for operating illegal charters. USCG LEO officers also provided extra manpower for distressed swimmers, distressed boaters, and BUI's. They were a great asset to have due to all of our vessels having only single operators.

The maritime position funded by the City of Destin continues to enforce the city marine ordinances and regulate the Destin Harbor. This Destin funded position continues to foster relationships with local businesses and is the intermediary for local maritime activities. This position targets areas that regularly receive boating complaints and can be seen throughout the many bayous and waterways of Destin. **The Destin funded position handled over 756 calls for service, generated 252 waterway security checks, initiated 224 vessel stops, 53 citations, and 12 BUI's.**

Deputies assigned to the Tourist Development Council (TDC) marine positions continued to be a consistent presence around Crab Island, overseeing the large crowds and high vessel traffic. **Together these Deputies collectively balanced 2,900 calls for service and initiated 1,147 vessel stops. They continue to be persistent towards enforcing Boating Under the Influence and county wake zones. TDC Marine positions had 42 BUI arrests in 2020.**

The Marine Unit continues to build upon its working relationships with the United States Coast Guard, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the United States Customs Marine Interdiction Unit. Again in 2020, the Marine Unit joined forces with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Mobile Sector. During numerous weekends of the summer, the USCG deployed additional boarding officers to Okaloosa County to assist as a marine force multiplier. This provided additional law enforcement resources to assist with BUI investigations, arrests, and disturbances. Plans for 2021 include working with USCG personnel to continue their patrols with OCSO and also assist and conduct drug interdiction within Destin Pass throughout the year and during the night time hours.

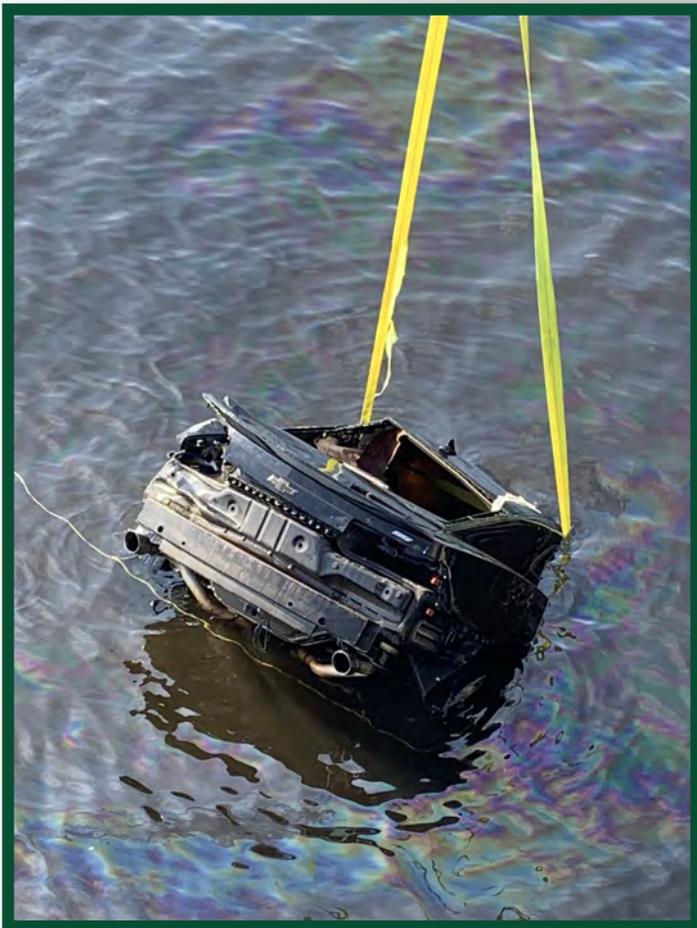
Throughout the 100 days of summer and during the COVID pandemic, the Beach Unit traversed the beaches of Destin and Okaloosa Island. These members maintained high community relations and worked closely with Destin and Okaloosa Island Beach Safety. **In 2020, four members of the unit acquired lifeguard certifications through the United States Lifesaving Association via Destin Beach Safety. These certifications will help them appropriately respond if needed to critical incidents on the beach.**

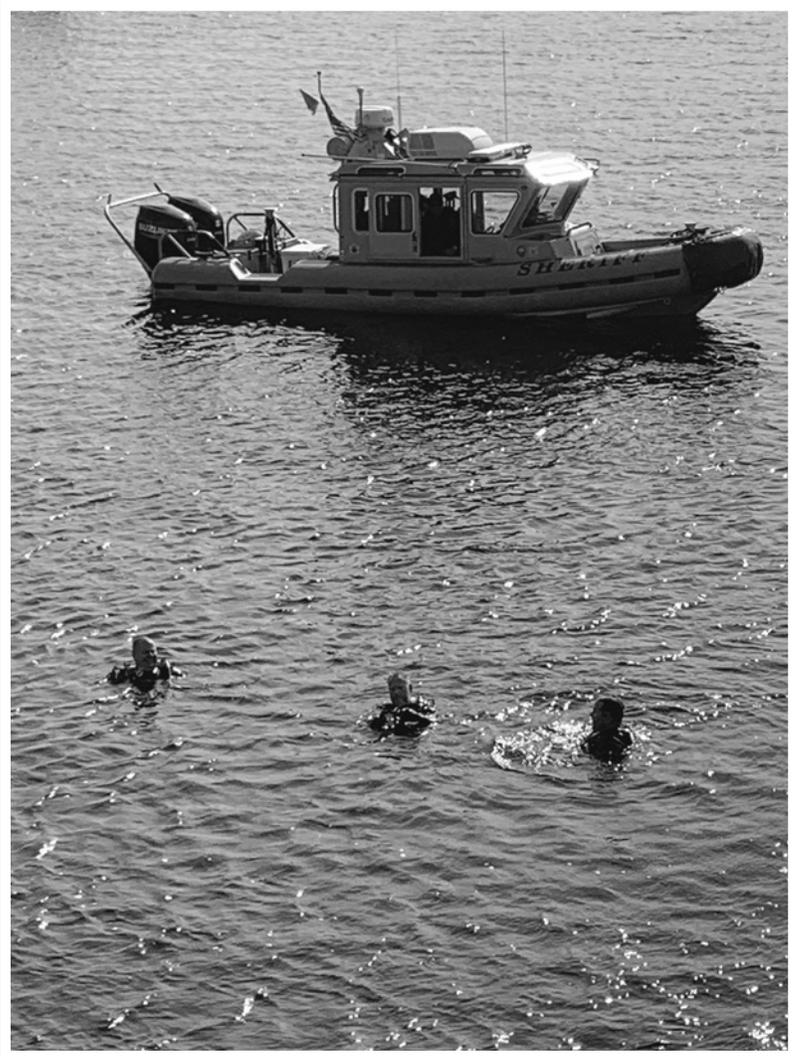
In 2020, several members of the Dive Unit received advanced training in several diving specialty courses to continue to serve Okaloosa County. **Two new members joined the team as auxiliary (part-time) units this year to bring the unit total to ten.** Training consisted of several specialty certifications for all the members.



Sgt. Kyle Corbitt attended advanced instructor training which will save Okaloosa County residents money as he is now able to certify new dive members. He attended the PADI instructor development course at Rainbow Reef in the Florida Keys where he became a PADI Dive Instructor in January. He obtained an instructor certification to teach PADI open water, advanced open water, rescue diver, divemaster, dry suit, full face mask, emergency first response, emergency O2 provider, Nitrox, underwater navigation, search and recovery, and night diver. **Sgt. Corbitt also completed and issued twenty-six certifications to the dive team in order to obtain the PADI master scuba diver trainer certification and also completed the requirements for the PADI public safety diver instructor.**

In 2020, Dive Team members assisted FHP in recovering a vehicle that drove off the Cinco Bayou Bridge and submerged in the bayou. Dive team members also assisted investigations in recovering evidence in several cases.





# CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

The Criminal Investigations Division (CID) is comprised of the following sections: Criminal Investigations Section (Violent/Special Victims Unit, Property Crimes, Crimes against Children, Financial Crimes and Polygraph), Special Investigations Section (Sheriff's Narcotics Unit, Fugitive Warrants, Street Crimes Unit and Internet Crimes against Children/Cyber Unit), Intelligence/Homeland Security Unit (Intel Investigations and Crime Analyst Unit) and the Evidence/Crime Scene Section.

## CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

The Criminal Investigations Division (CID) is comprised of four sections: Criminal Investigations Section (Violent/Special Victims Unit, Property Crimes, Crimes against Children, Financial Crimes and Polygraph), Special Investigations Section (Multi-Agency Drug Task Force, Fugitive Warrants, Street Crimes Unit and Internet Crimes against Children/Cyber Unit), Intelligence/Homeland Security Unit (Intelligence Investigations and Crime Analyst Unit) and the Evidence/Crime Scene Section.

## CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS SECTION

Criminal Investigation Section (CIS)

- In March 2020, Maria Rodriguez- Barnes shot and killed her five month old baby, Jaxxon, inside her vehicle which was parked in the parking lot of The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island. Rodriguez-Barnes attempted to take her own life as well, but was unsuccessful. She was charged with first degree premeditated murder of her son and is awaiting trial.



- In April 2020, Jennifer Castonguay was located in Columbia, Missouri after eight months of being sought for embezzling approximately \$441,500 from a local attorney and lending firm.
- In June 2020, Joshua Foster was involved in a disturbance with George Stefan, which ultimately resulted in Foster shooting Stefan in self-defense. The case was closed as evidence and witness statements indicated Foster acted in self-defense.

- In July 2020, Charlene Begay was discovered beaten to death in a wooded lot located next to the Burger King in Mary Esther. Begay's boyfriend, Daniel Godwin was charged with her murder and is awaiting trial.



- In July 2020, after a lengthy investigation, investigators executed a search warrant on Kevin Foy's residence. Numerous pieces of evidence were uncovered during the execution, which led to the arrest of Foy for sexual battery on a victim under 12, production of child pornography and possession of child pornography.



- In August 2020, Lance Weindel and his wife, Karen Weindel were involved in a physical disturbance at their home in Crestview. Their adult son, Cristian Weindel attempted to intervene in his mother's defense as she was being choked by his father. Cristian ultimately shot and killed his father. The case was closed since evidence and witness statements indicated Cristian acted in self-defense.

- In August 2020, Christopher Freeman was arrested for unauthorized Access of a Computer or Electronic Device, Unlawful Use of a Two-Way Communication Device, and Sexual Cyber harassment. Freeman was an employee of Verizon Wireless, and it was discovered he was copying personal explicit photos from customers' phones and distributing those photos to his friends, acquaintances, and co-workers.



- In September 2020, 19 year old Matthew Gunn shot and killed his 21 year old friend, Hugo Sanchez while they were playing with an AK 47 in Gunn's apartment located in Mary Esther. Gunn was charged with manslaughter for the death of Sanchez and is awaiting trial.



- In September 2020, Janice Porter was arrested for embezzling approximately \$730,356 over a ten year period from her employer, a local attorney. She was also charged with three counts of money laundering.

- In October 2020, Blaise Albertie-Chamberline was shot and killed inside the threshold of a residence in Ft. Walton Beach. It was determined Albertie-Chamberline was attempting a home invasion, and was ultimately shot and killed by the resident.
- In November 2020, OCSO Investigators assisted FDLE with an officer involved shooting that took place when the US Marshals Service Florida Regional Fugitive Task Force attempted to take a wanted individual into custody in the parking lot of McDonalds in Crestview. The suspect, Luis Barboza was wanted out of New Bedford, Connecticut for the kidnapping of his 18 year old pregnant girlfriend. OCSO Investigators assisted New Bedford PD Detectives with their investigation, which led to the recovery of the victim's body in Indian River County, FL.



- In November 2020, Deshaun Frazier was shot and killed inside a residence in Florosa. His death is still under investigation.
- In December 2020, Kreskin Robinson was shot and killed inside of his vehicle in the yard of a residence in Ft. Walton Beach. His death is still under investigation.
- In December 2020, Leon Tillman was severely beaten with a stick by his son Temuchin| "Frank" Tillman. Leon succumbed to his injuries three days later. Temuchin "Frank" Tillman was charged with second degree murder.



# CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

## POLYGRAPH EXAMINERS

In 2020, Investigator Al Vafides conducted 57 polygraph examinations. In March 2020, Investigator Michael Hogan successfully completed polygraph examination school and has conducted 54 polygraph examinations for both criminal and pre-employment purposes.

## INTELLIGENCE UNIT/HOMELAND SECURITY

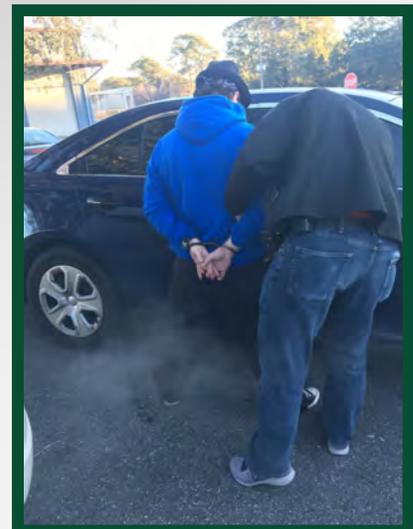
In 2020, the Crime Analyst Unit put together 297 bulletins for distribution, conducted 148 employee background checks and compiled 190 photo lineups. The analysts also reviewed 756 Baker Act reports and created 41 intelligence reports for threat assessments.

In addition, the Intelligence Unit completed 19 Risk Protection Orders (RPOs) and conducted 91 threat assessments/investigations.

## SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS SECTION (SIS)

**SIS Investigators investigated over 416 cases involving drug trafficking organizations, violent crime/fugitive apprehensions, covert operations and cybercrimes. Of the 416 cases, 265 cases were closed, resulting in a 63% closure rate and 117 arrests. This included investigating dangerous predators who engaged in distributing and/or possessing child pornography or exploitation of minors. SIS handled 258 Crime Stoppers/intelligence tips from citizens regarding suspected criminal activity. 79 Crime Stoppers tips were closed out resulting in a 30% closure rate. SIS Investigators authored and/or executed 343 search warrants.**

**Investigators executed over \$236,712 in combined asset forfeitures/seizures and recovered 66 firearms in Okaloosa County either reported as stolen and/or used by drug offenders in furtherance of drug trafficking offenses.**



**The Street Crimes Unit (SCU) handled 5,293 additional service incidents, generating 352 additional cases and 300 arrests, 21 NTAs and 133 warrant services.**

**326 of these cases were closed, resulting in a 92% closure rate.**

**SCU seized over 1.79 kilograms of illegal drugs totaling approximately \$87,270 (estimated street values)**

**Marijuana = 1,145 grams \$6,250**

**Cocaine = 155.20 grams \$15,520**

**Heroin = 120 grams \$30,000**

**Fentanyl = 39 grams \$1,950**

**Methamphetamine = 333.5 grams \$33,550**

**In addition, the Street Crimes Unit (SCU) recovered an additional 27 firearms relative to street-level cases or vice-crimes.**

**TOTAL DRUGS SEIZED BY DRUG INVESTIGATORS = \$1,373,360**

**Based on current estimated street values (and weights) as follows:**

**Marijuana (57.9 pounds) = \$144,750**

**Methamphetamine (2.9 kilograms) = \$293,975**

**Heroin (2 kilograms) = \$523,500**

**Fentanyl (218 grams) = \$10,900**

**Cocaine (3.8 kilograms) = \$389,550**

**And other illegal controlled substances and/or opioids valued over \$10,685**

**(The above figures are separate from the aforementioned SCU totals.)**



Below are a few examples of specific casework by SIS in 2020:

During 2020, SIS members continued joint operations with regional state and federal law enforcement agencies to combat illegal drug activity and felony crimes in the region. These joint missions were executed through vital partnerships with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)/HIDTA, U.S. Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Alcohol Tobacco & Firearms, U.S. Marshals, Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Fort Walton Beach Police Department, Crestview Police Department, Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office, Gulf Breeze Police Department and Florida Highway Patrol.

**The focus remains disrupting and dismantling larger-scale drug trafficking networks affecting the Gulf Coast region.**



Members of SIS also handled casework involving suspect Anthony Miles, who was having multiple pounds of marijuana illegally shipped to Florida from California to distribute. Miles was a primary suspect in illegal human sex trafficking as well. In November 2019, he was taken into custody for sex trafficking offenses. Investigators continued targeting Miles' and his co-conspirators for illegal drug distribution, including Nissa Warren and David Fitzpatrick. During this investigation, it was discovered that Miles (and co-defendants) were involved in credit card fraud schemes and a series of sophisticated identity thefts. Miles and his associates would rent condos in Destin and Sandestin utilizing stolen credit cards obtained from the internet. Miles would then access a victim's email account, airline rewards programs and change passwords. He utilized the victim's rewards points to book flights for co-defendant's and prostitutes. Miles also attempted to purchase a "hack" intended on deleting digital evidence prior to trial. In the end, Miles and his associates obtained credit cards in names of numerous victims and attempted to facilitate loans utilizing each victim's personal identifying information.

Starting in December 2019 and into 2020, Investigators executed additional search warrants at residences in Okaloosa County looking for additional evidence in Miles' schemes. A variety of drug evidence and electronic devices were seized, along with a letter from Miles to Warren outlining how to commit identity fraud/theft. Additional suspects were identified as Aaron Barnes-Burpo and another (co-defendant), who confirmed Miles as the "ring leader" in the schemes. **In June, 2020, Investigators obtained a series of arrest warrants for the individuals for charges ranging from racketeering, conspiracy-possess marijuana with the intent to sell, fraudulent use of credit cards-multiple counts, trafficking in or possessing credit cards, accessing computer/electronics without authority, criminal use of personal identification information, and theft-obtaining credit cards through fraudulent means. In the end, the scheme spanned across the United States and multiple jurisdictions. To date, damages caused by the schemes are estimated at over \$250,000.**

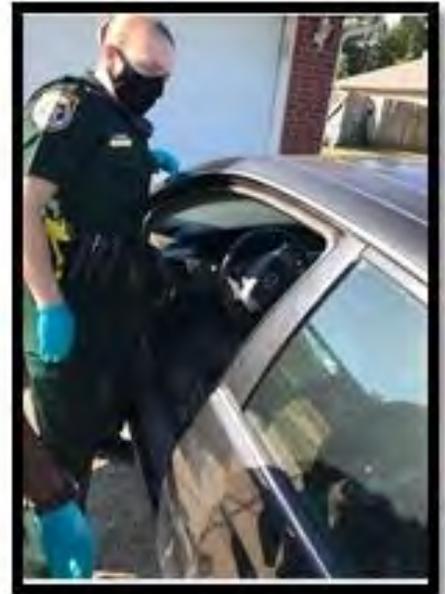


Anthony Miles

De' Jion Kimbrough

## CYBER-CRIMES SPECIAL OPERATIONS

In 2020, Investigators in the Cybercrimes Unit continued to gain attention from local agencies and prosecutors for their exceptional casework. SIS/Cybercrimes Investigators conducted undercover “sting” operations targeting dangerous predators who were attempting to exploit children online in Okaloosa County. **Operation “Home Alone”** targeted individuals who were attempting to solicit and engage minors for unlawful sexual activities. The case resulted in the arrests of five individuals and led to multiple spin-off cases.



## STREET CRIMES UNIT

Members of the Street Crimes Unit (SCU) were invaluable throughout the year. They used proactive measures to accomplish the agency's anti-crime missions. **SCU officers continuously bolstered patrol efforts, and handled specialized assignments alongside Fort Walton Beach Police and Crestview Police Departments, targeting crime suppression and special problems throughout the County.** In October 2020, SCU members found a suspicious vehicle in the rear parking lot of Rooms to Go (after hours) in Destin. They determined that a nearby Lowes store was being burglarized and the suspicious vehicle was actually a "getaway" vehicle used by the suspects. SCU foiled the crime in progress by locating and arresting the primary suspect who was hiding inside Lowes underneath boxes of merchandise. SCU also located another stolen car in the parking lot of Walmart used by the perpetrators. One of the suspects confessed to stealing the car, hiding in businesses until they closed, and using the stolen vehicle as a getaway car to facilitate and transport stolen merchandise between Florida and Alabama.



## FUGITIVE WARRANTS UNIT

Members of the Fugitive Warrants Unit are a team of experienced Investigators. In 2020, these Investigators proactively tracked and apprehended a variety of felons and fugitives in Okaloosa County. Their work included targeting dangerous fugitives, homicide suspects, drug dealers, burglars, criminal gang members, sexual predators and more. Often they worked together with members of the U.S. Marshals Task Force. **In November 2020, these Investigators worked with the U.S. Marshals to apprehend Luis Roberto Barboza, who was wanted for kidnapping and grand theft of a vehicle. Investigators located Barboza in the parking lot of McDonalds in Crestview in a stolen vehicle. The officers made efforts to apprehend Barboza, but he presented a firearm. Barboza initially shot himself, but later pointed the gun toward officers, causing the officers to shoot Barboza to protect themselves and the public. Ultimately, Barboza was pronounced dead at the scene. Subsequent evidence recovered from the stolen vehicle eventually led law enforcement to the location where Barboza previously killed and discarded the body of the kidnapped victim.**

# CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

## EVIDENCE/CRIME SCENE UNIT

2020 end of year amount of items stored within Evidence Unit: 118,703

Total amount of evidence items received in 2020: 17,390

Total amount of evidence items purged/destroyed: 13,628

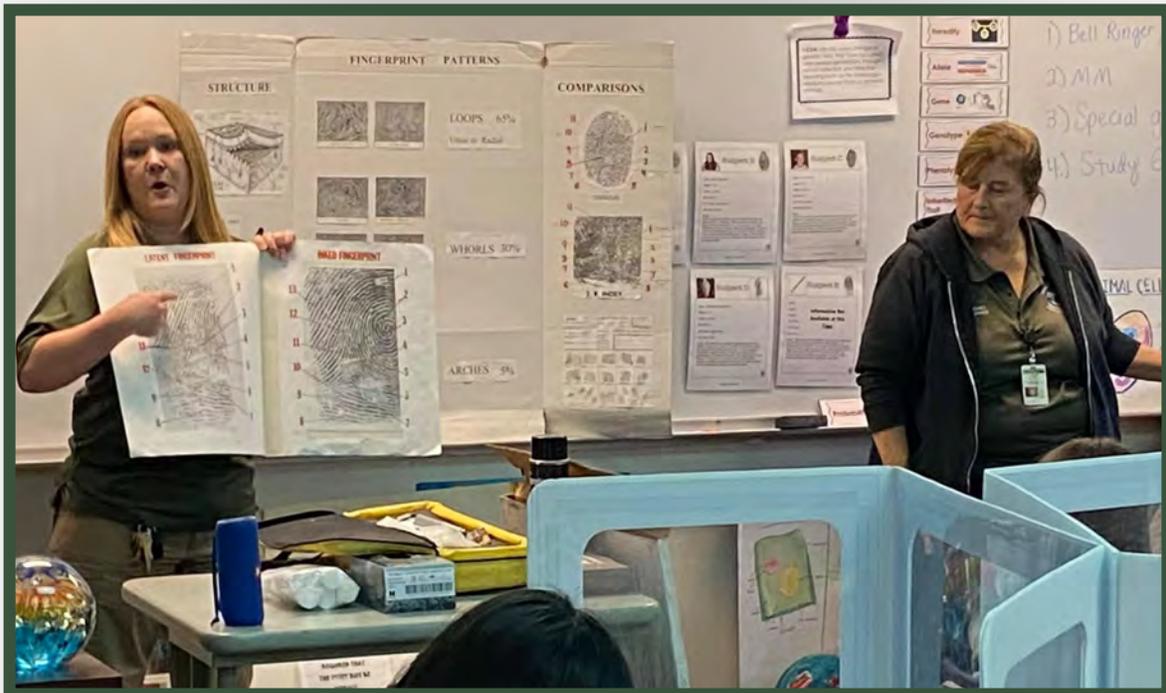
Total requests via Help Desk tickets: 2,267

(This includes requests to check out and review evidence, analyze/process evidence, evidence supply requests, records expungements orders, releasing evidence to owners, entry into impound lot, etc.)

ATF gun traces conducted: 697

FDLE Firearm Eligibility System Checks completed: 229

Court Orders Executed: 17



## INDIVIDUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Sergeant Michael Rader promoted to Lieutenant  
Investigator Casey Isenbarger promoted to Sergeant  
Investigator Martin Jennings promoted to Sergeant  
Corporal Jeffrey Butler promoted to Investigator  
Corporal Pierre Batiste promoted to Investigator  
Corporal Justin Boggs promoted to Investigator

# PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DIVISION

## PROFESSIONAL COMPLIANCE AND ACCREDITATION

### CHAPLAINCY

Calendar year 2020 was one of the most challenging years to date due to COVID-19. Every task had to be re-engineered to integrate COVID -19 protocols into day to day chaplain duties.

**The Chaplaincy grew to ten chaplains total, meeting the ever-increasing size and complexity of the agency. The Chaplaincy in 2020 experienced 2,225 calls for service with COVID—19 procedures of social distancing and other appropriate PPE requirements in place.**

The Sheriff's Office men and women sponsored 92 children at a value of approximately \$19,200.00 in donated funds for the annual Angel Tree Program. The employees developed innovative ways to reach our sponsors, which resulted in 275 miniature Christmas Trees decorated for hospice patients.

OCSO Chaplains continue to provide around the clock service in an always-on-call capacity. Not only did our Chaplains respond in times of crisis, but they also provided training to over 25 police chaplains from around the state with interactive training seminars. Their level of professionalism, mastery of chaplain's skills, and desire to serve has helped countless individuals within and outside the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office.



# PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DIVISION



## CRIME PREVENTION

In 2020, the OCSO Crime Prevention Unit worked to keep citizens, businesses, and visitors safe in Okaloosa County. Due to the COVID virus, the Crime Prevention Unit was not able to be out in the community in person and had to find other ways to educate citizens, tourists, and businesses about crime issues in Okaloosa County.

The Unit worked hard to reach its citizens through a combination of social media and virtual presentations.

**The Crime Prevention Unit taped video presentations and tips on general fraud and scams, as well as vehicle, personal, and holiday safety. These videos were then shared through social media and directly to assisted living facilities.**

The Crime Prevention Unit also partnered with assisted living homes to set up and host informational tables so residents could receive the information safely.

In addition, the CPU attended the Global Leadership Summit virtual training. This valuable training will help the Crime Prevention Unit better supervise our outstanding Sheriff's Office volunteers, for the best service to Okaloosa County citizens, businesses, and tourists.

# CRIME PREVENTION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 37 various safety presentations in person and virtually due to COVID.
- 15 presentations educating senior citizens on how to prevent becoming victims of ID theft, fraud, and scams
- Newcomers briefing for new military members and families
- Numerous scam alerts and safety tips on Nextdoor.com, Facebook, and Neighbors by Ring.
- Partnered with Center of LifeLong Learning, teaching eight week classes to seniors on how to avoid becoming a victim of ID theft, fraud, scams, and computer fraud; along with education on social media, apps, internet, home, boat, car and personal safety.
- Taped ID theft, fraud and scam presentation videos for local senior citizen groups.
- Hosted Sweetheart Scam and holiday safety videos to put on social media and send to assisted living homes.
- Presented on the 1460AM Radio Health Matters Show to discuss fraud and scams in the area.

The Crime Prevention Unit also gave holiday safety tips before the holiday season.

- Attended 16 community events throughout the county handing out safety information to citizens and visitors.
- Worked with 15 local Churches on developing church safety and security plans. The Crime Prevention Unit is proud of the Church Safety program which includes all forms of safety and prevention including medical emergencies, burglaries, domestic violence and active shooter. The meetings and security surveys help churches better protect their staff, members and visitors. Church safety and local drug recognition training was provided to nearly 40 church safety teams in March.



- Organized and conducted seven Neighborhood Watch meetings, educating residents on how to report suspicious activity and ways to deter crime in their neighborhood.
- Hosted Mary Esther Community Meeting. The January meeting was a joint Neighborhood Watch meeting with FL Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Sheriff's Office to teach residents how to deter crime and bears.
- Okaloosa Island Leaseholders Community Meeting in February.
- Shoal River Drive Neighborhood.
- Yellow River Plantation.
- One Water Place.
- Gulf Terence Drive.
- Gulf Dunes Condominium.
- Held a 13 week long Citizens Academy with 30 graduates in person and virtually.
- Attended (in person and virtually) 54 community networking events, chamber breakfasts, luncheons, and Businesses Empowered meetings.
- Provided Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) security surveys to three homes and five condominiums.
- Partnered with Nextdoor.com to improve communication about crimes occurring in neighborhoods. Nextdoor.com is a private social network for individuals to communicate about issues happening in their neighborhood. Using Nextdoor.com, over 36,000 residents in 289 neighborhoods were reached throughout Okaloosa County in 2020.
- In June the Sheriff's Office started partnering with Neighbors by Ring. The partnership with Neighbors allows residents to share video with their neighbors. It also allows residents to share home video with Sheriff's Office Investigators to solve crime in their neighborhoods.
- Advertised, scheduled, and organized four Teen Driver Challenge classes teaching 48 students defensive driving skills in Okaloosa County.



# VOLUNTEERS

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office volunteers completed approximately 650 volunteer hours in 2020. Unfortunately, due to COVID the OCSO had to limit how the volunteers could assist the agency .

The health of our volunteers, employees, and citizens is extremely important, therefore the Crime Prevention Unit could attend only outside community events and limited office help. The CPU would not be able to provide all the free programs and services offered to the citizens, businesses, and visitors of Okaloosa County without the time, talents, and energies of our wonderful group of volunteers.

The 30 OCSO general volunteers gave a total of 173 hours helping the Sheriff's Office with office work, the Citizens Firearms Class, Hostage Negotiations Unit, and the Crime Prevention Unit with 16 community events.

Volunteer Masters Joe Cayer and Tom Gordon provided three free Women's Self-defense Classes and a Kid's Self-defense Class. Participants were able to choose between the Fort Walton Beach or Crestview class offered in February 2020.

Eight RSVP volunteers provided 16 hours, performing CODY Checks on 31 juveniles on probation in the Central District.



THANK YOU  
**Volunteers!**  
We couldn't do it without you

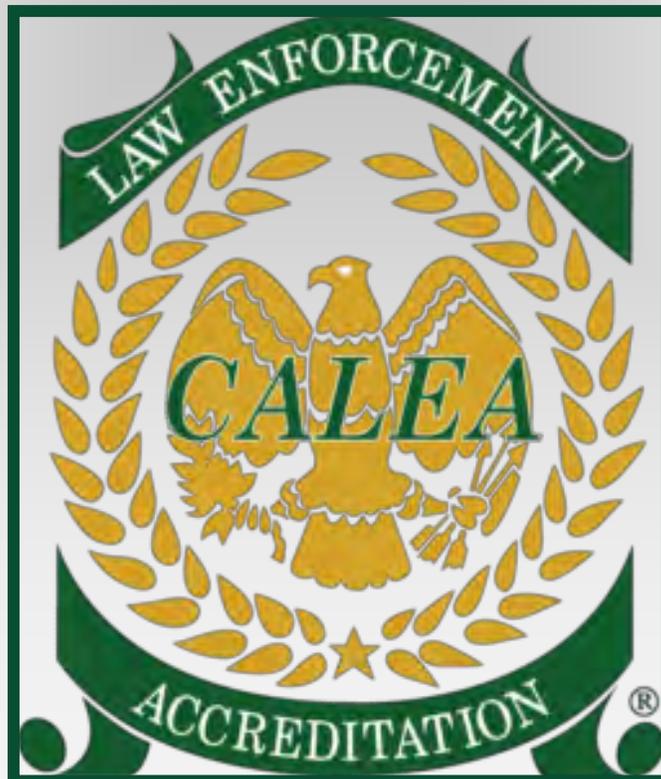
## SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT

In 2020, 202 OCSO deputies covered 4,247 secondary employment jobs totaling over 27,491 hours. This represents a 36% decrease in jobs and a 36% decrease in hours from 2019. These jobs represent requests from the community for off duty services in neighborhoods, condominiums, local businesses, highways, churches, entertainment venues, and schools. This year, July proved to be the busiest month for requests with over 446 jobs scheduled. The secondary employment coordinator does a great job arranging coverage with over 92% of these voluntary assignments being filled.

## ACCREDITATION

**In March of 2020, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office was successfully reaccredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). In December of 2020, the Sheriff's Office had its year one CALEA Service Member (CSM) review, which was successful with no standard issues noted.**

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Communications Center was scheduled for their Florida Telecommunications Accreditation Commission (FLA-TAC) first reaccreditation on-site in the fall of 2020. Given COVID, FLA-TAC cancelled in-person on-sites during the latter half of 2020. That on-site will be accomplished virtually in the spring of 2021.



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Office of Professional Standards Professional Development Unit and the Career Development Program provide career guidance, recognition of accomplishments, and financial incentives for non-supervisory deputies and communications officers within the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office. **It sets out a distinct career track for those who want to go beyond the minimum requirements of their jobs and be recognized and rewarded for their extra efforts to excel.** The program is based upon a system which awards credits in such areas as training, higher education, professional achievement, and community involvement. Currently, there are three levels of advancement for Deputies and five levels of advancement for Communications Officers in the Career Development Program.

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Deputy David Howell achieved Senior Deputy (Step 3)

Communications Officer Ryan Duval achieved Basic Communications Officer (Step 2)

Communications Supervisor Lindsay Nix achieved Journey Communications Officer (Step 4)



## ADVANCED LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Major Shannon Tait – FCJEI Executive Leadership Seminar (completing the FBI-LEEDA trilogy)

Sergeant Elizabeth Roberts - FCJEI Florida Leadership Academy

Lieutenant Lenny Holloway – NWFSC Leadership Okaloosa

Sergeant Jeremy Gilbert – NWFSC Leadership Okaloosa

Corporal Derek York – NWFC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

Deputy Sheriff Jeremiah Dowdy – NWFC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

Corporal Kristen Genrich – NWFC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

Corporal Scott Spence – NWFC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

Investigator Joseph Trimboli – NWFC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

Deputy Sheriff Robert Willis – NWFC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

Deputy Sheriff Ray Hamilton – NWFC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

Deputy Sheriff Matthew Sumner – NWFC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

Communications Supervisor Lindsay Nix – NWFC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

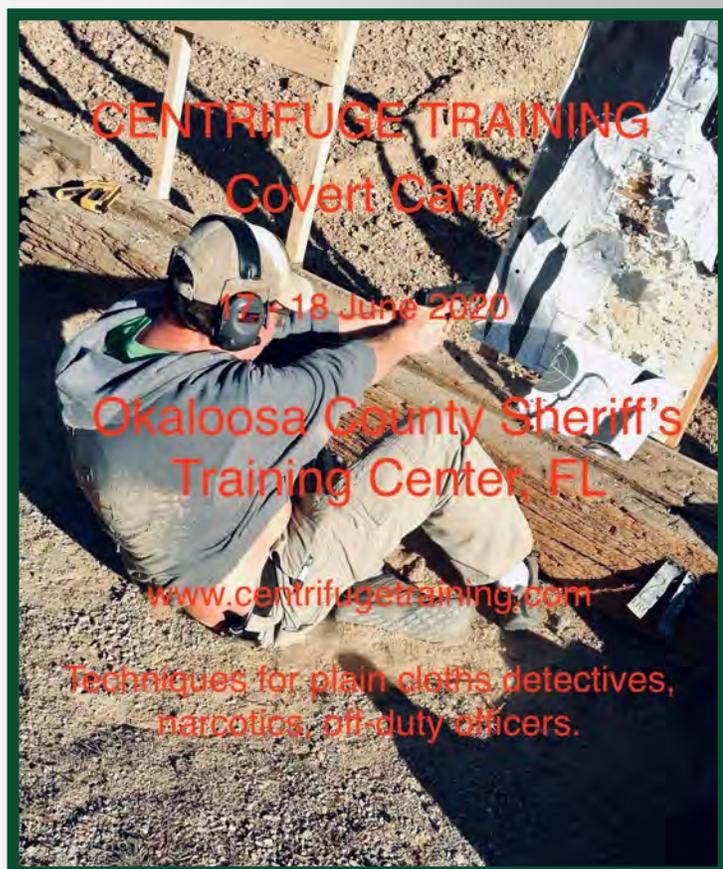
Communications Dispatcher Saher Valcq – NWFC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

# INTRA-AGENCY TRAINING

With the pandemic taking place in 2020, in-person training was modified to meet CDC Guidelines and CISA Recommendations. As with prior years, the unit continued to provide Citizen Firearms training to the residents of Okaloosa County which facilitates the training necessary to obtain a Concealed Weapons Permit. The unit conducted two-day Citizens Firearms Safety Courses, training twenty citizens. This was a reduction from 2019, due primarily to Covid -19 restrictions.

**In 2020, OCSO employees attended 10,979 training hours outside of our agency and 7,883 hours within the agency. This training included a variety of topics such as firearms, defensive tactics, crowd control, vehicle operations, less lethal weapons, Physical Abilities Testing, leadership courses, CrossFit, Crime Scene training, major crimes, interviewing, and other various specialty instruction.**

5,349 hours of online training programs were completed through various websites outside of the agency. Internally, our own "PowerDMS" virtual training system provided 4,140 hours of online training, saving the agency thousands of dollars in tuition, travel and instructor costs, while also reducing manpower shortages and/or overtime costs.



## TRAINING ANNOUNCEMENT

### Ballistic Shield Operator Course

**OKALOOSA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**  
**March 16, 2020 0700-1600 Hours**

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office will be conducting an 8-hour basic Ballistic Shield Operator's Course. The course will be offered quarterly through the calendar year. Only one of the dates needs to be attended for credit.

Students will shoot, move and operate from behind both hard and soft shields. The bulk of the 8-hours will be spent on the range shooting individually and as part of a stack. This is a physically demanding course, please ensure you are rested and hydrated upon arrival for training.

Equipment Required:  
Duty gear/belt  
Pistol  
Training Uniform  
Ballistic Vest  
Hearing and Eye Protection

For non-OCSO Personnel: 270 rounds for duty weapon



**Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Training Facility**  
**325 Grimes Ave., Crestview, FL 32536**  
**POC: Sgt Tom Piaget [training@sheriff-okaloosa.org](mailto:training@sheriff-okaloosa.org)**

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

\* Continued partnering with Fort Walton Beach Medical Center to be an American Heart Association Training Site, offering classes to all employees on Basic Life Support to include CPR, the use of AEDs and Stop the Bleed. Stop the Bleed is a nationally taught course endorsed by the White House to “make our nation more resilient by better preparing the public to save lives if people nearby are severely bleeding.”



\* Partnered with the Northwest Florida State College Public Safety Training Center to support and host several training courses specific to the area of law enforcement education. Continued an annual training program for all sworn members in the area of Active Shooter/ Active Threats.

\* Developed relationships with several national level training organizations, to include Team One, Centrifuge Training, Wright Shooting Concepts, Safariland, IPTM and Tactical Energetic Entry Systems . These relationships have allowed us to host 17 courses, drawing law enforcement officers from as far away as Canada and from throughout the southeastern United States. In addition to bringing in dozens of officers from outside the area, there has been a positive economic impact measuring in the tens of thousands of dollars through hotel stays and restaurant meals as a direct result of these training relationships.

\* Completed the construction and installation of the new, 300 degree MILO simulator. This state of the art system has allowed the agency to effectively train proficiency tasks for deputies in a cost effective and efficient manner. The system has further been instrumental in working with community outreach and in fostering relationships with local clergy and the agency.

\* Completed additional range improvements to include the construction of a new 12-position range, allowing surrounding agencies a place to conduct firearms training without impacting our mission. The firing range has been further modernized with the construction of concrete and granulated rubber backstops. The new backstops will greatly lessen the environmental impact of expended lead, and be another area of saving taxpayer money during remediation activities. A new “breacher’s range” was also built in the area of our rifle bay, creating one of a very limited number of explosive capable ranges in the region.

\* Began construction of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Sheriff Larry Ashley Training Complex 10,000 square foot training building. Once completed, this building will hold offices for the training staff, two large classrooms, and a Defensive Tactics room.

\* Participated in the State of Florida Defensive Tactics re-write. The agency was requested to be part of a DOJ funded, National Defensive Tactics standard development with Polis Solutions.

\* Managed the Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP), the initial on the job training program for newly hired deputies. The FTEP is a court tested and E.E.O.C. consistent program because it is part of the selection process. It reduces civil litigation alleging negligent hiring and retention of trainees and is a cost-effective way of eliminating non-effective, non-productive personnel. 29 sworn members entered the program in 2020.

\* Recruited and helped develop five new successful Field Training Officers as part of the OCSO FTEP.

\* Facilitated the promotional process for Corporal, Investigator and Sergeant for the year 2020.

\* Added the position of Communications Supervisor to the promotional process with the OCSO Consolidated Dispatch.



# K9 UNIT

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office K9 Unit currently consists of nine certified teams. Seven of the teams are dual-purpose canines certified in patrol work (Search and Apprehension) and narcotics detection. One team is a single purpose canine certified in narcotic detection and is attached to the Youth Service Division. One team is a single purpose canine certified in explosive detection and assigned to the Airport Security Unit.

## STATISTICS

Calls for Service	8,288
Traffic Stops	1,187
K-9 assists	1,901
Narcotic Checks	1,134
Explosive Checks	627
Suspect Searches	161
Warrant Services	106
Arrests	425
Stolen Firearms Recovered	15

## AWARDS/COMMENDATIONS

In early April, Deputy Jonathan Duenas was awarded the coveted United States Police Canine Association "Patrol Case of the 1st Quarter" award for an apprehension he and K9 Axel made on an armed robbery suspect at a local eatery in Niceville.



## A K9 UNIT YEAR IN REVIEW

The K9 Unit overcame many changes and challenges in 2020, including new handlers, new assignments, and new canine partners.

Beginning in late December 2019 and into the first six months of 2020, the K9 Unit went through a drastic change due to new state legislation related to hemp products and the legalization of medical marijuana. Because of the similar smell of hemp and marijuana products, the K9 Unit retired seven (7) canines trained in marijuana odor detection and replaced them with new dogs that would not be trained to detect marijuana or hemp odor. **All of the dogs (Axel, Bady, Esuda, Gunner, Miro, Nico, and Titan) were awarded to their OCSO handlers to enjoy their well-deserved retirement.**



The replacement of multiple working dogs allowed the Sheriff's Office to honor their fallen officers by naming the new K9's after fallen Okaloosa County deputies. Deputy Jon Duenas, who serves as the SRT K9 handler, was assigned K9 Forg in honor of fallen deputy and SRT team member Anthony (Tony) Forgione. Deputy Zach Putnam was assigned K9 Burt in honor of fallen deputy Burton "Burt" Lopez. Deputy Tony Costantini was assigned K9 Skip in honor of fallen deputy Warren "Skip" York. Deputy Cutler Petersen was assigned K9 Merlin in honor of Sheriff John Summerlin. Deputy Joey Haun was assigned K9 Figment in honor of Deputy William "Bill" Myers. The name "Figment" was selected by Bill Myers's granddaughter, who chose the name from her favorite Disney character to honor her beloved grandfather.

Deputy Royce Brooks joined the unit in January and was assigned K9 Bruno, a 19-month-old Belgian Malinois. Deputy Joey Haun transferred from the Youth Services Division K9 position and was assigned to the patrol division with K9 Figment, a 14-month-old German Shepard. Both handlers and their K9 partners completed over 500 hours of basic canine school and certified as the county's newest K9 teams in April 2020.

In April and May 2020, K9 Merlin (a 2-year-old Belgian Malinois/German Shepard Mix), K9 Burt (a 14-month-old Belgian Malinois), and K9 Skip (an 18-month-old Belgian Malinois) were purchased and given to their handlers. The handlers attended a transition school and hit the streets in late May after certification.

Mid-May saw the beginning of Deputy Tony Rigdon's career with the unit. He was selected as the K9 handler attached to the Youth Services Division. Deputy Rigdon was assigned K9 Marley (a 2-year-old Golden Retriever). Deputy Rigdon and K9 Marley completed their Narcotics training and certified it just in time for the new school year.

In July, the last of the new canines was purchased and began training. Deputy Duenas and K9 Forg (a 14-month-old Belgian Malinois) quickly completed their training and certification. The team hit the streets ready for action in mid-August.

Since becoming active, the new K9 teams have made their presence felt. Numerous high-profile arrests and large narcotic seizures have been made due to the teams' experience and tenacity.



In October, the K9 Unit hosted the United States Police Canine Association 2020 Narcotics Mini -Trial and Certification. The event was successful, drawing close to 40 teams from all over the Florida panhandle and south Alabama.

As 2020 came to a close, the K9 Unit began preparations for 2021 and the challenges and opportunities it will provide.



# HUMAN RESOURCES UNIT

The OCSO Human Resources Unit (HR) is committed to the effective design of regulated systems that ensure a pool of talented employees is available to provide the law enforcement needs of Okaloosa County. The OCSO HR Unit provides advice and service in Strategic Management, Employee Benefits and Reward Systems, Policy, Classification and Compensation, Employee Relations, Workforce Planning and Employment, as well as a portion of Risk Management, to over 325 sworn members and over 140 non-sworn, civilian employees.

During 2020, the OCSO HR unit was responsible for filling 31 sworn deputy vacancies. The unit culled through approximately 149 applications to ensure only the most qualified person was hired. It also sorted through approximately 144 applications in order to fill 27 non-sworn civilian member vacancies. On average, it took nearly 30 days to fill a vacant position. The unit also partnered with the Professional Development Section to facilitate the promotional process for Corporal, Investigator, and Sergeant.

This year came with its challenges due to the COVID - 19 pandemic. The HR Unit however was able to work through masks, social distancing, and zoom meetings, to provide the best customer service possible. The HR Unit continues to work tirelessly to keep a high quality pool of applicants available to fill positions as they become available.





# Judicial Services

## COURT SECURITY/DETENTION

Calendar year 2020 was exceptional for the Court Security and Detention Sections.



Many personnel changes occurred in 2020, to include the retirements of Deputy David Johnson and Deputy Stephen Baldwin after years of selfless service to the Sheriff's Office and citizens of Okaloosa County. In August, Sergeant Rodney Owens began supervision of the Detention Unit and Sergeant Joe Milonas transferred to supervise Charlie Shift, East District.

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, Sergeant Jeremy Gilbert was promoted to Lieutenant and assumed Watch Commander responsibilities for Alpha/Charlie, East District. Deputy Dale Carter was promoted to Sergeant and assumed command of Court Security (South).

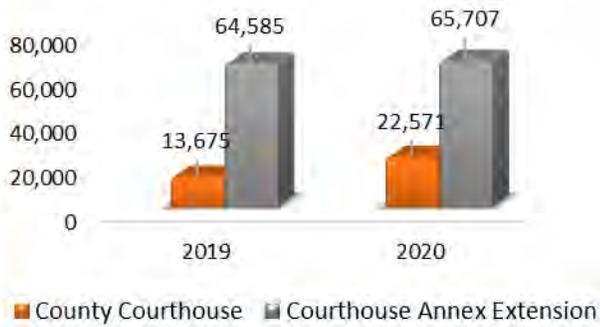
Aside from dealing with the paradigm shifts resulting from COVID-19, the units continued to stay extremely busy with their daily workloads. In a four month period alone, Detention located an amazing 21 items of contraband during the suspect booking process; resulting in even more criminal charges.

**Court Security (North) handled 22,571 cases or hearings, screened 23,209 individuals through the Single Point of Entry, and seized seven items of contraband or weapons.**

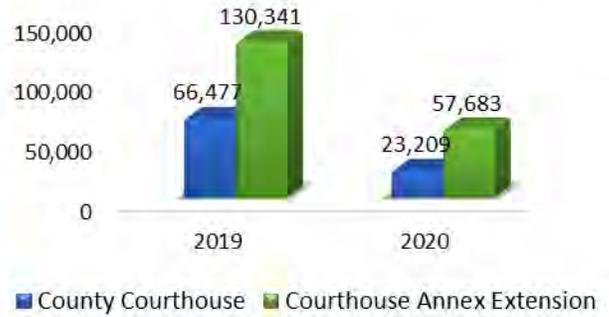
**Court Security (South) handled 65,707 cases or hearings, screened 57,683 citizens through the Single Point of Entry, and seized 58 items of contraband or weapons.**

*\*Of note, the number of people screened at this location equates to more than 221 people per day.*

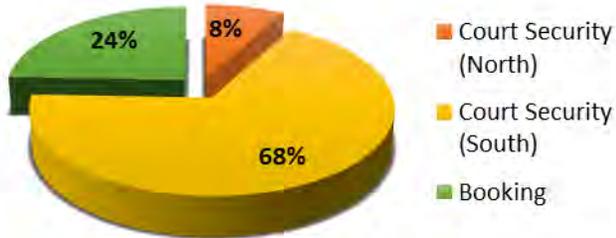
### Cases and Hearings



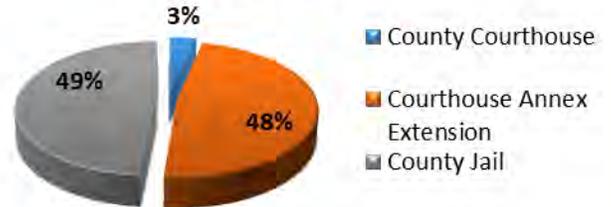
### Individuals Screened



### Contraband Seized



### DNA



Detention processed 12,547 subjects into the OCCAE Booking Facility transported 5,019 inmates; including those scheduled for court, and registered 1,201 felony/sexual offenders.

### Intakes



### Activity

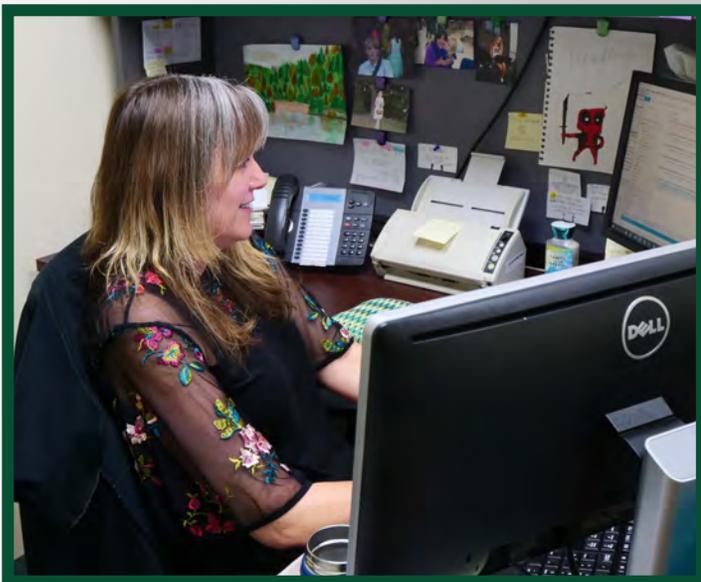


Court Security and Detention processed 1,097 of the state-mandated DNA collections!

# WARRANTS

The Warrants Unit processes all agency arrest warrants and civil commit orders issued by the courts in Okaloosa County. They also intake warrants and civil commits issued by other jurisdictions where the defendant may be in Okaloosa County. The Warrants Unit coordinates with other agencies for the execution of warrants outside Okaloosa County and arranges transport of prisoners from other jurisdictions. They also transport or coordinate transportation of prisoners housed in confinement institutions outside of Okaloosa County for judicial hearings. The Warrants Unit is currently managing more than 3,794 outstanding warrants and orders to take into custody for the arrest of fugitives

**During 2020, the Warrants Unit processed more than 5,316 warrants, executed 3,129 warrants and transported 318 prisoners at a cost of \$76,245.16.**



## Outstanding Warrants

*Search Active Warrants*

Last Name:

First Name:

Middle Name:

submit

# RECORDS

Public Records Emails – 11,680

Scanned Entries – 22,825

Notices To Appear – 1,025

MI Records Merged – 3,020

Mug shots upload by Records – 2,675

Video Compiled for SAO, DUI Review Board or Public Records Request -6,719

BWC Videos uploaded 2020– 206,371 – 95,552 still active

Offense Reports – 17,128

Arrests only (does not include NTA's, Warrants, or Summons) – 4,351

DUI Citations – 429 in MobileForms

Traffic Crash Reports – 1,276 in MobileForms

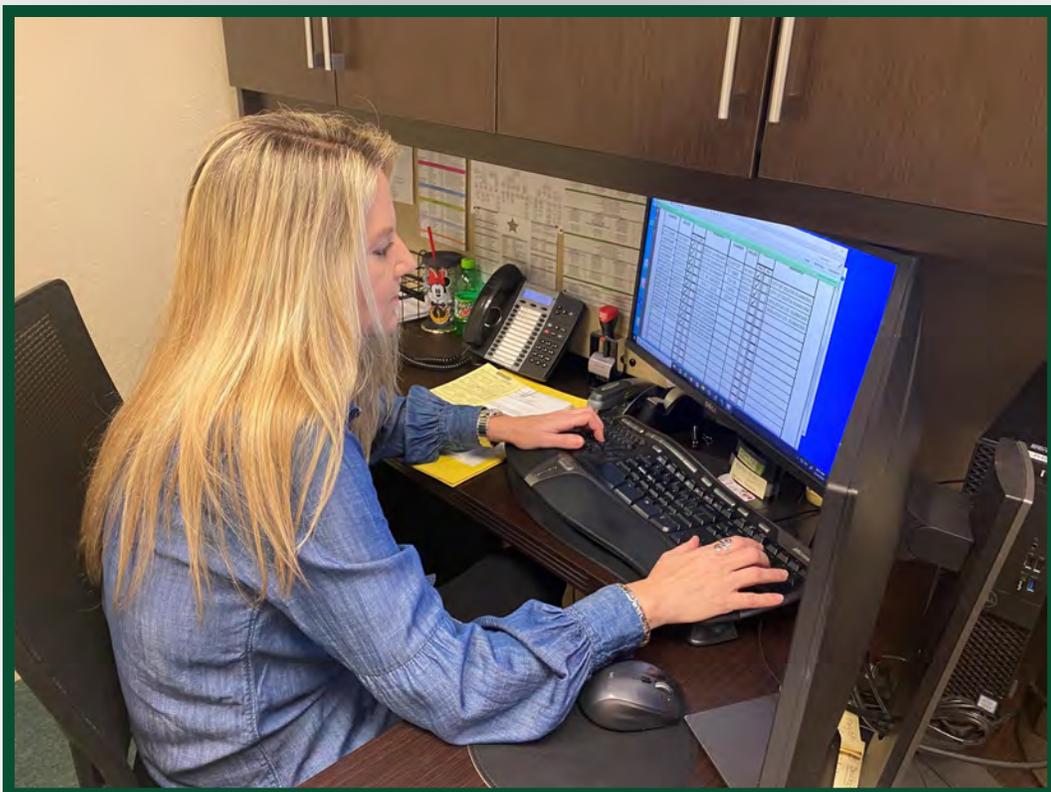
Traffic Warnings – 7,271 logged in MobileForms; 20,912 calls closed 78-0 M-Verbal warning, not written

Traffic Citations – 6,456 logged in MobileForms

\* All Offense Reports and Arrests/NTA's are reviewed for UCR data on a daily basis.

\* Domestic Violence Reports are sent on a daily basis to Shelter House

\*All new MNI entries are reviewed for duplicates daily and merged if needed.



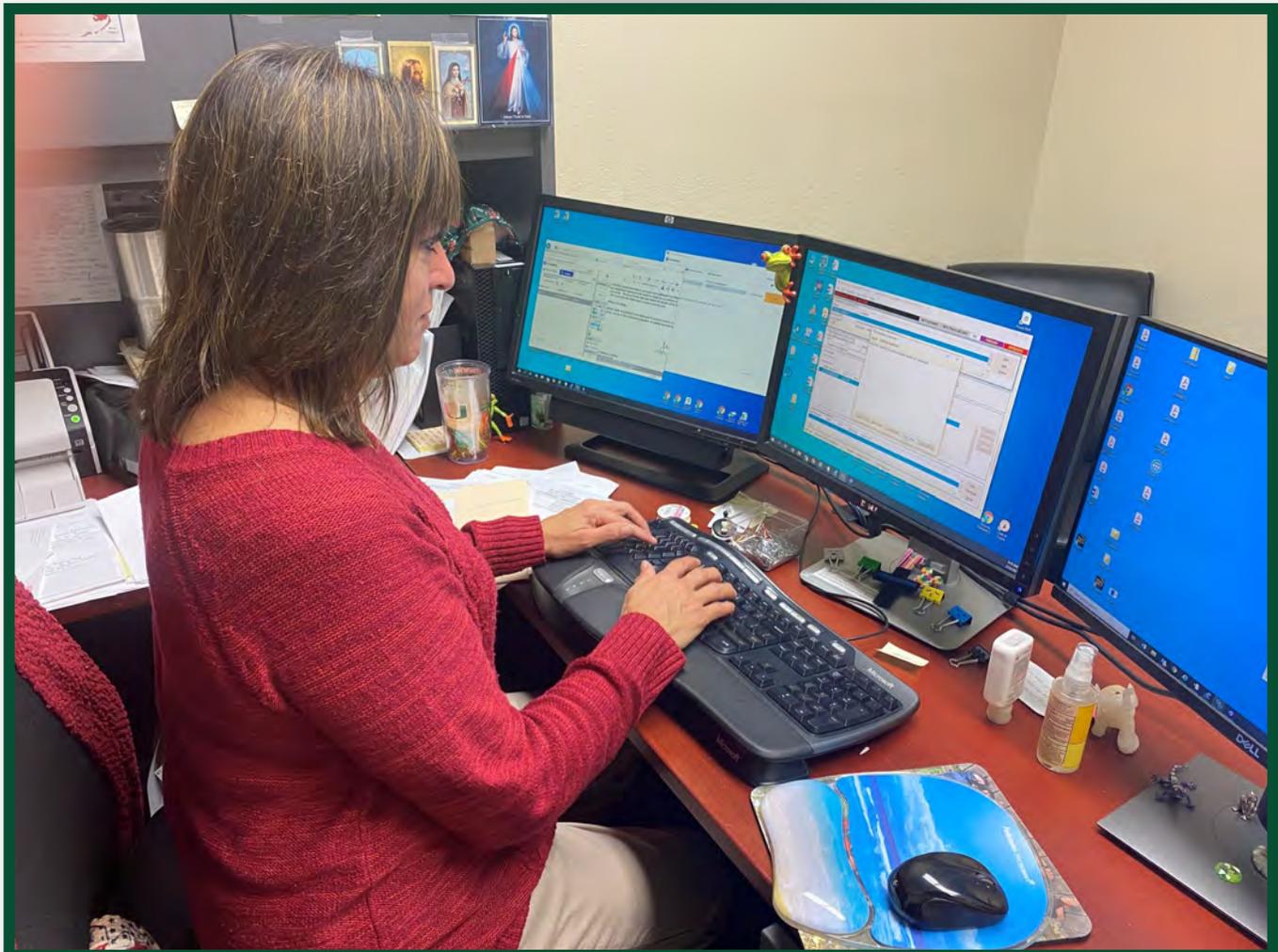
# CIVIL PROCESS

The Sheriff or his deputies are required by the Florida Constitution and statutes to serve orders from the court that are delivered to his office. Civil Process receipts in and processes all enforceable and non-enforceable orders from the court. This includes but is not limited to Domestic Violence and other protective orders, summons and complaints, criminal and civil subpoenas, Writs of Possession, Replevin, Garnishment, Attachment, etc.

Civil Process also collects the applicable service fees required by statute. Civil Process deputies execute evictions, child custody orders, Levy's, and Replevins, seize property, and hold sales of property seized in Levy's.

## DURING 2020 THE CIVIL PROCESS UNIT:

- **Managed more than 2574 Domestic Injunctions and protection orders**
  - **Processed more than 9,918 and served 9,711 pieces of civil process**
- **Processed and served 1,533 domestic violence and other protective orders**
  - **Processed and served 4,585 criminal subpoenas**



# COMMUNITY SERVICE ACTIVITIES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Court Security and Booking Units are serious about their obligation and privilege to serve the citizens of Okaloosa County.

Considering a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, the Court Security and Booking Units made training their top priority. Aside from remaining proficient in the core disciplines of CPR, AED, Stop the Bleed, NARCAN, and Active Shooter, they received formalized training in Explosives Recognition, Characteristics of Weapon Concealment, Pre-Attack Indicators, and Tactical Movement and Entry.

In his role as a Court Security's Active Shooter Instructor, Deputy Mike Nichols hosted nine Active Shooter Response training sessions in 2020.

Stop the Bleed is a nation-wide initiative to train and equip citizens to successfully stop the unnecessary loss of life from blood loss. As a Stop the Bleed instructor, Sergeant Dale Carter led the charge to expertly teach three classes at the Annex Extension.

For the sixth year, Court Security sponsored blood drives with "One Blood" through the efforts of Deputy Kenny Driscoll. 2020 was the second year in which we ran simultaneous blood drives; one at each courthouse.

Lieutenant Jeremy Miller was designated a Subject Matter Expert in Court Security by the Florida Sheriffs Association and tasked by the organization to develop Florida's certification program for Court Security Officers.

Sgt. Rodney Owens was presented a Life saving award for saving a female overdosing in the parking lot of a local dentist office.

In the Judicial Process Section, Deputy Tim Patterson performs as a Judge/Certifier for the United States Police Canine Association during regional trials. Deputy Winkler runs a non-profit organization to assist veterans with suicide awareness and prevention where he spends approximately 200 hours of his personal time a year.



The men and women of the Judicial Services Division had a total of 120 volunteer hours for 2020. Judicial Services employees are members of or volunteer for the following organizations/activities:

FOP State LE Memorial Role Call of Honor Reader  
Public Safety Coordinating Council  
Florida Sheriffs Association, Court Security Initiative  
Okaloosa County Mental Health Pre-Trial Program  
Court Emergency Management Team  
First Judicial Circuit Law-Enforcement Association  
OCSO Teen Driver Challenge  
OCSO Sheriff's Star Charities  
AMI Kids Emerald Coast  
Emerald Coast Motorcycle Challenge  
Safe Connections  
Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run  
Fraternal Order of Police  
Mental Health Association of Okaloosa/Walton Counties  
Emerald Coast Crime Stoppers  
Okaloosa USO  
Vitas Healthcare (Hospice Care)  
Guardian ad Litem

Congratulations to Sergeant Dale Carter on his selection as the Administration Bureau's Sworn Outstanding Performer of the Year for 2020!

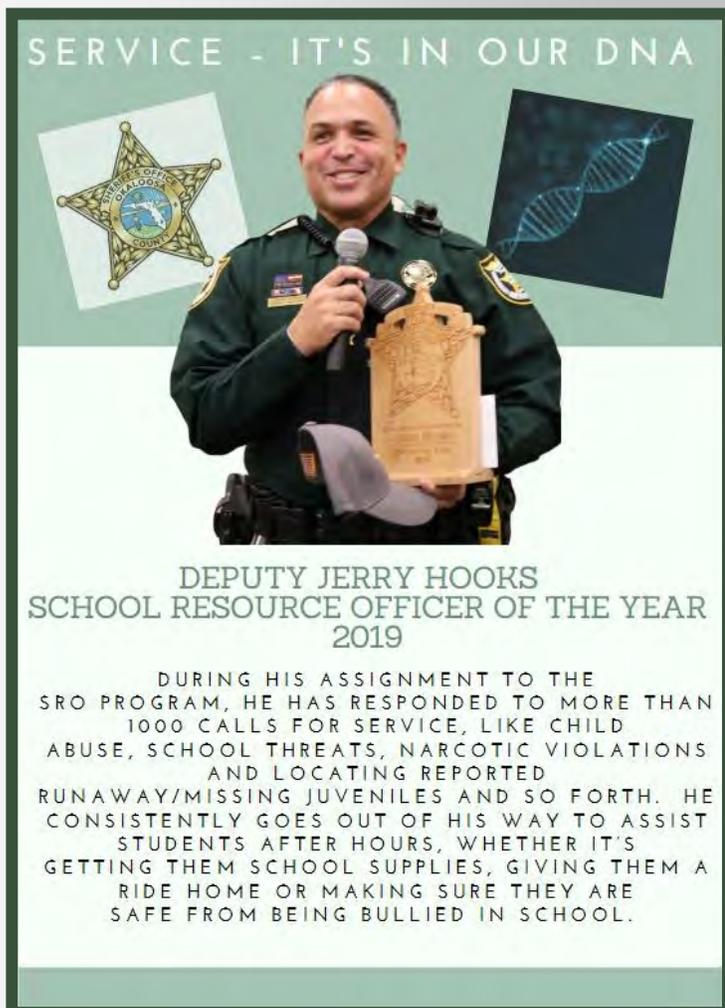




# Youth Services

The Youth Services Division is responsible for providing sworn law enforcement officers to ensure school safety to 41 public and private schools. The division serves and protects a student population of 33,000 students, along with 2,500 faculty and staff. Sheriff Eric Aden and the Okaloosa County School District have ensured that all public schools retain a law enforcement officer also known as School Resource Officers (SRO) on every school campus.

The year 2020 was an amazing year for the Youth Services Division. One of the highest honors of doing the job right is being recognized for your outstanding efforts. The unit was recognized by Florida Representative Mel Ponder on the Florida House floor during the session as being a leader in school safety. Deputy Jerry Hooks was awarded Florida's SRO of the Year for 2020. With Florida having nearly four thousand SROs and Deputy Hooks competing against some of the best SROs during a pandemic, this was quite the achievement. Since 2012 the unit has been awarded Florida SRO of the Year four times, and Florida Unit of the year twice since 2014. It also received a 2015 National Model agency award as well as having an SRO win another national award.





The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Youth Services Division is by design a very diverse and ambitious unit. The selection process is rigorous and training is advanced because there's no compromise in the defense of our schools. We achieve our goals by recruiting uniquely trained deputies who bring exemplary skills and experience to our team. This is accomplished through relentless tactical and threat readiness training.

The OCSO Youth Services Division is the leading SRO unit in the state of Florida because we are built on an extremely strong foundation of experience, skill, and commitment.

When it comes to school safety and service to youth, the Okaloosa County SRO Unit is a trendsetting unit. We do not lie in wait for what might come, we envision what could happen and prepare for it. We are the tip of the spear and we are ever sharpening it...for if not us, then who?

Since the beginning of school, all students and staff have received training in ALICE Safety (lockdown/lockout procedures), SRP (standard response protocol), and Stop the Bleed (proper medical response). A safety assessment was conducted on every campus and the results were compiled in a written report to the Okaloosa County School District along with plans in motion for enhancing school safety.

Our SRO's receive annual training on Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) in schools. They have also received training in the proper use of restraints for the most special student population, Exceptional Student Education (ESE) and the Emotional & Behavioral Disabled (EBD), especially those students on the autism spectrum. SRO's attend monthly district training to maintain and refresh their skills in various areas such as child abuse/neglect, cybercrimes, sex offenses, enforceable orders, interviewing children and understanding trauma victims. We were able to implement expert guest speakers using the zoom application due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Our SRO's lead by example when it comes to displaying positive character traits. Community involvement is a primary tenet of our Youth Services program and each SRO embraces this concept wholeheartedly by initiating and/or participating in numerous school and community-based events/programs. In 2020, our SRO's represented the Youth Services Division with 959 volunteer hours outside of school hours.



Train, Train, Train!

For Thanksgiving, the Central North SROs provided 113 meals to local families!





Crestview High SRO Deputy Amy Mertens was invited to the New Life International Worship Center's annual Women of Valor Conference where she was recognized for her service and her part in the summer lunch delivery service! She is pictured below with Pastor Compton and Pastor Sherrell.

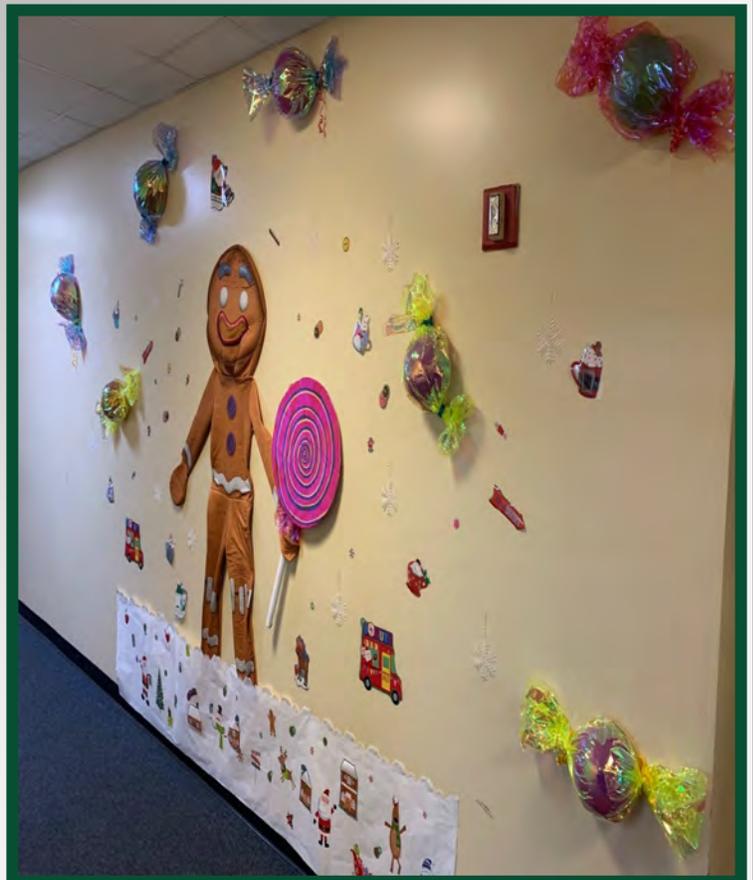


This group of Deputies never stops doing. They also participated in the annual Trees for Hospice. The SROs and their schools decorated 234 trees to be presented to patients who are currently in hospice care.

The unit also co-sponsored the Angel Tree program within the Sheriff's Office, in which nearly one hundred underprivileged students were provided gifts at Christmas.



Deputy Tom Henry and Deputy Rich Alexander spent their weekend decorating the halls for their students.





## TEEN DRIVER CHALLENGE

The Florida Sheriffs Association's Teen Driver Challenge (TDC) was created in 2007 to address the primary factors affecting teen drivers – speeding, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, texting while driving, and distracted driving. The program is offered at no cost to teen drivers in 39 counties across the state and led by sheriffs' deputies licensed as commercial driving school instructors. The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office is dedicated to the program and the teen drivers of Okaloosa County. Each year, over 120 teens attend the two-day course to become better, more aware, defensive drivers - making our roads safer for us all. To date over 2,000 students have been trained.

In 2020, due to Covid -19 restrictions, the program was postponed. In the first 3 months of 2020, 45 students completed the program.



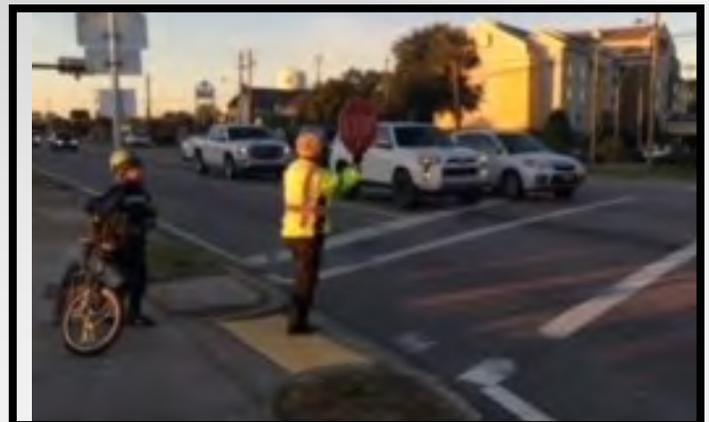
# SEXUAL OFFENDER/PREDATOR UNIT

In 2013, the Sex Offender Predator Unit was realigned into the Youth Services Division based on the philosophy and best practice that the School Resource Officer (SRO) is the most effective and efficient resource to monitor offenders/predators residing and/ or located within Okaloosa County. The Sexual Offender/Predator Unit (SOPU) is comprised of members of the Youth Services Division tasked with monitoring, tracking, and verifying all sexual offenders/predators within Okaloosa County. They go to offenders/predators residences and verify they are reporting the correct information on their sex offender registrations . Non-compliant offenders/predators are arrested. More than fifty SROs, spread across three districts, worked to verify approximately 360 offenders/predators within Okaloosa County. From January 1, 2020 to November 29, 2020, 1,115 verifications were attempted or verified. 57 reports were generated with potential violations with more than 14 arrests falling under the category of FSS 943.0435 (failure to register). Partnerships have been fostered with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Office of the State Attorney, and U.S. Marshals Service in this significant task. These relationships have assisted with maintaining statutory requirements, offender compliance, and continuing training. These men and women excel at their mission, while maintaining a standard unsurpassed in their primary function—school-based policing.

## SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS

As a result of a steadily growing county population combined with a related increase in traffic flow, large numbers of children are put at risk attempting to cross intersections to attend school. School Crossing Guards assist students to safely and expeditiously cross busy streets at designated school crossing guard sites. School Crossing Guards are part-time civilian employees assigned to the Youth Services Division.

This group of dedicated employees can be seen on any given school day, rain or shine, standing ready to provide a safe crossing for the students of Okaloosa County.





The SRO Unit provided security detail and worked along side the FDLE when Governor Ron DeSantis attended a football game at Niceville High School.

The Youth Services Division will maintain its high standards. These amazing personnel will continue to reach out to our youth and serve as role models, creating an atmosphere to cultivate good citizenship and respect for people, property, and the community we serve.

We would like to thank the citizens of Okaloosa County for their continued support. We are blessed to live in such a great county and honored to be entrusted with protecting our most precious gift, our children.



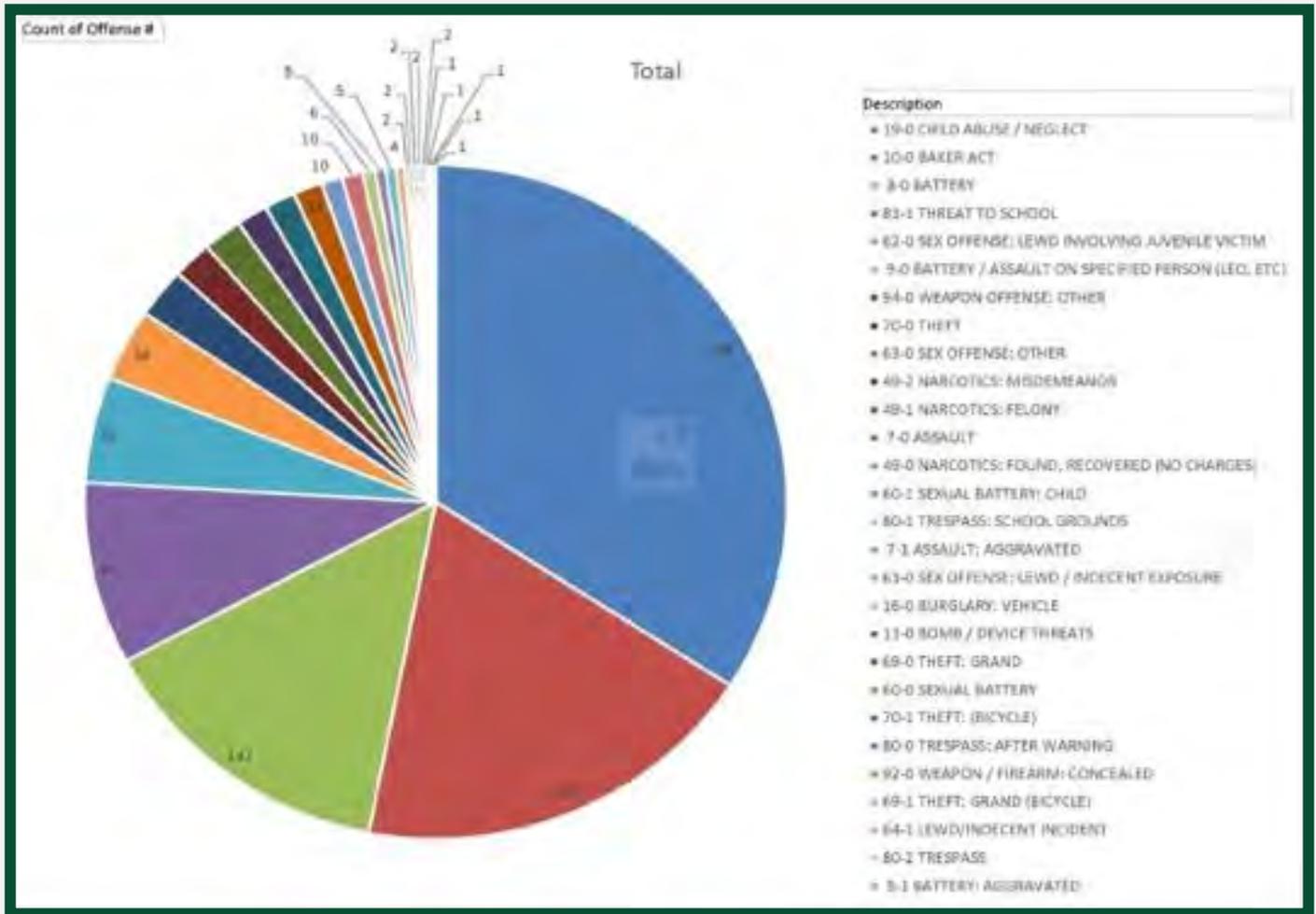


1st Days  
of  
School



PIC COLLAGE

# SRO UNIT DATA 2020



# Airports Security Unit

Destin - Fort Walton Beach Airport (VPS) is the preferred aviation gateway to Florida's Gulf Coast and is an excellent option when making travel plans to Northwest Florida. Convenient and centrally located within the top ten places to live and do business throughout the United States, Destin - Fort Walton Beach Airport (FlyVPS.com) is an exceptional resource for travelers who favor distinct modern amenities without congestion. The award-winning airport terminal accommodates passengers from around the world with over 50 non-stop flights daily to primary hub cities across the nation, making domestic and international connections easy.



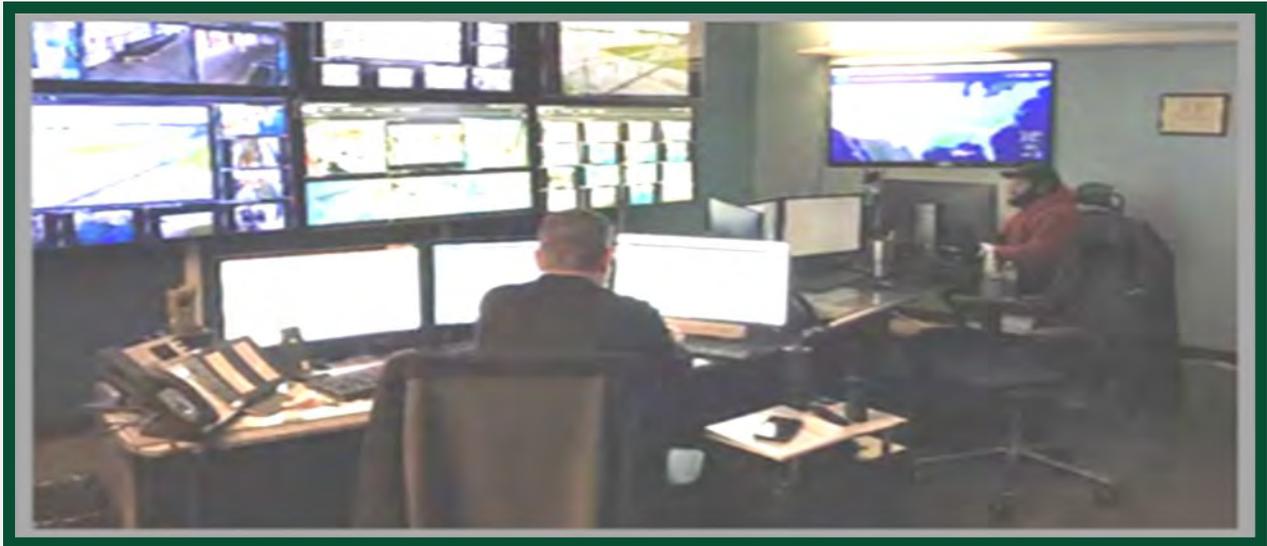
The Airport Security Unit (ASU) within the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) is a dedicated law enforcement unit contracted by the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners to perform all essential functions related to the safety and security of passengers, employees, and visitors. Funding for this endeavor is generated solely from revenues received by the Okaloosa County Airport System. Despite the fact that COVID-19 hit the travel industry hard in 2020, VPS still had nearly 1,000,000 passengers come through and utilize its services.



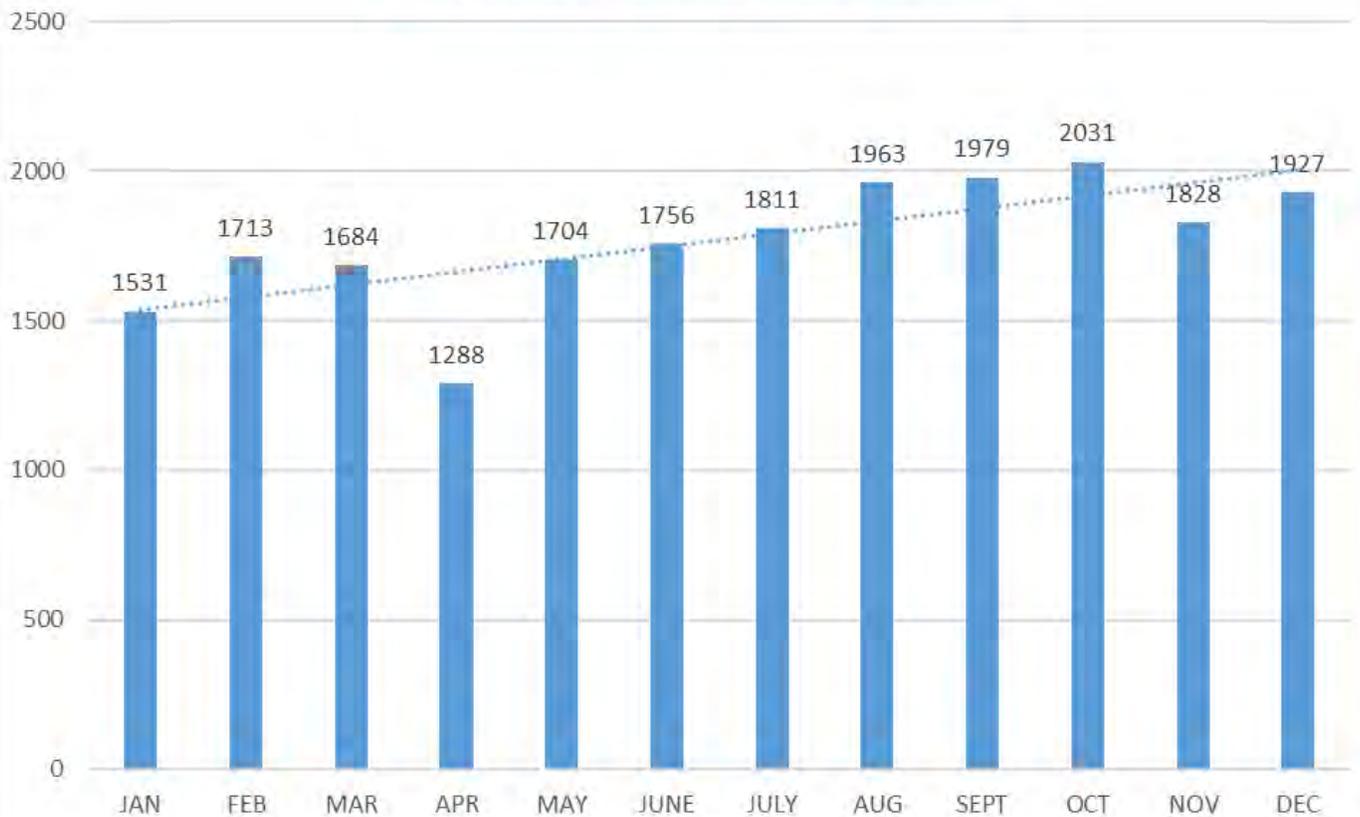
Beyond VPS, the ASU also provides law enforcement services at Destin Executive Airport (DTS) and Bob Sikes Airport (CEW). DTS (FlyDTS.com) is located at the south end of Okaloosa County and is a community airport that serves general aviation needs with a 5,000 foot runway and full service amenities for travelers and pilots alike. CEW (FlyCEW.com) is located in the north end of Okaloosa County and is a haven for defense and industrial aerospace development as well as modification and conversion companies due to its 8,000 foot runway. Both DTS and CEW are owned and operated by Okaloosa County and are not dependent on ad valorem taxes.



In 2020, even with a reduction in passengers compared to 2019, ASU deputies found a variety of ways to service the airports in very proactive manner. Evidence of this can be found in the ASU's increase in calls for service that ended approximately 34% higher than in 2019. **In 2020, ASU generated 21,215 calls for service which consists of everything from security checks of secured areas to felony arrests.** In addition to these law enforcement related calls for service, the ASU manages the "eye in the sky" or Airport Operations Center (AOC). The AOC is tasked with the Communications aspect of the ASU and the overall entities connected to Okaloosa's Airport Systems. In 2020, the AOC engaged in approximately 4,439 calls for service that largely go beyond law enforcement activities and includes such things as general aviation questions, maintenance needs, flight information, contractor logistics, interagency information sharing, security camera observations, and so on.



### 2020 ASU CALLS FOR SERVICE TOTALS



ACTIVITIES	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTALS
Calls For Service (VPS)	1432	1616	1586	1214	1593	1689	1751	1908	1920	1954	1770	1877	20310
Calls for service(CEW)	49	36	39	32	50	30	28	24	28	40	34	26	416
Calls for service(DTS)	50	61	59	42	61	37	32	31	31	37	24	24	489
<b>TOTAL CALLS</b>	<b>1531</b>	<b>1713</b>	<b>1684</b>	<b>1288</b>	<b>1704</b>	<b>1756</b>	<b>1811</b>	<b>1963</b>	<b>1979</b>	<b>2031</b>	<b>1828</b>	<b>1927</b>	<b>21215</b>
Secure Area Patrol(90)	199	196	207	181	228	185	175	177	197	202	186	180	2313
Non - Secure Area Patrol(91)	181	179	178	142	212	188	191	204	191	189	183	192	2230
Sterile Area Sweep(92)	31	30	33	30	31	31	31	31	29	30	30	31	368
Random Access Point(93A)	138	132	132	122	137	132	127	142	142	144	145	168	1661
Random Access Point(93B)	101	102	107	108	137	135	137	150	145	153	144	154	1573
Gate Access Point(94)	103	100	104	123	137	134	136	141	132	138	134	146	1528
Sterile Area Patrol(95)	180	164	153	131	153	138	138	161	169	171	156	175	1889
SIDA Violations(96)	2	5	7	5	7	10	1	4	10	13	6	3	73
TSA Assist(97FFDO)	44	25	37	22	35	34	60	76	52	57	42	53	537
TSA Assist(97LEO)	34	23	23	2	8	9	18	20	25	26	15	6	209
Airline Assist(98)	8	10	2	1	1	7	6	0	2	2	1	0	40
Vehicle / Vendor Inspection(99R)	16	98	11	0	20	21	14	18	20	16	17	21	272
Vehicle / Vendor Inspection(99)	332	548	494	300	400	521	581	600	611	633	546	560	6126
Traffic Crash	2	3	5	0	2	2	1	1	4	3	2	2	27
Medical Emergency	5	9	5	3	1	4	4	8	5	6	6	1	57
Ordinance Violation	1	3	4	4	3	0	3	2	1	1	5	5	32
Arrests	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	4	0	10

## ASU VIGILANCE/TRAINING

Throughout 2020, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) reported an increase of firearms seized at screening check points throughout the United States. Okaloosa County was no different, with various firearms and ammunitions seized from would be passengers. ASU was a leading unit for the region with related arrests.



In 2019, the ASU began its Explosive Detection Canine program. 2020 presented various training and real life situations to continue growing this initiative, as well as, various other learning opportunities for the entire ASU team. Of course we always take time for our kiddos!



# ASU TEAMWORK

2020 was tough for everyone for many reasons, but team members of ASU made time to accomplish their goals despite the odds. As an example, Sergeant Elizabeth Roberts graduated from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Florida Leadership Academy, a four week training program designed to build future leaders.

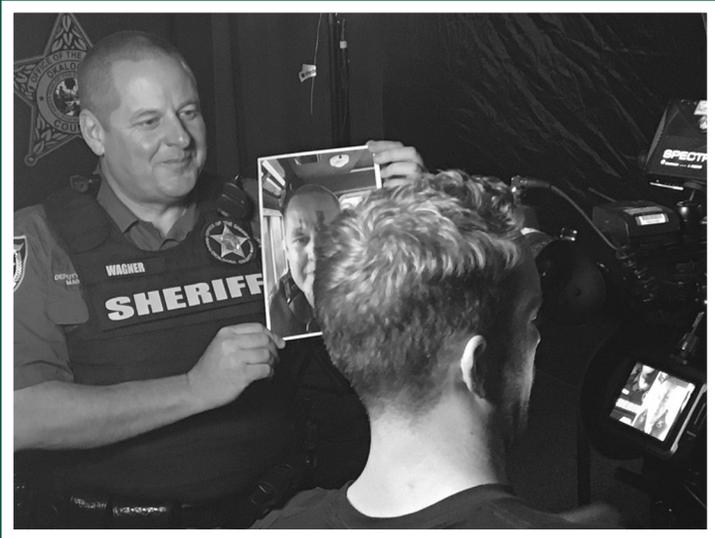


In the end, 2020 brought a chance for ASU to adapt, overcome, and focus on the best ways to keep the traveling public safe. Given all the uncertainties and new situations encountered, ASU made good on taking a special trip to enjoy some fellowship during a rather windy day of fishing together!









# FINANCE



The Finance Department experienced some new opportunities this year. Employees worked remotely, staggered shifts and self-quarantined for the safety of the staff. On top of that, one long-time and much respected member retired and two new team members were added on.

The Finance Department is small but filled with individuals with many years of experience and a depth of talent to handle an impressive workload.

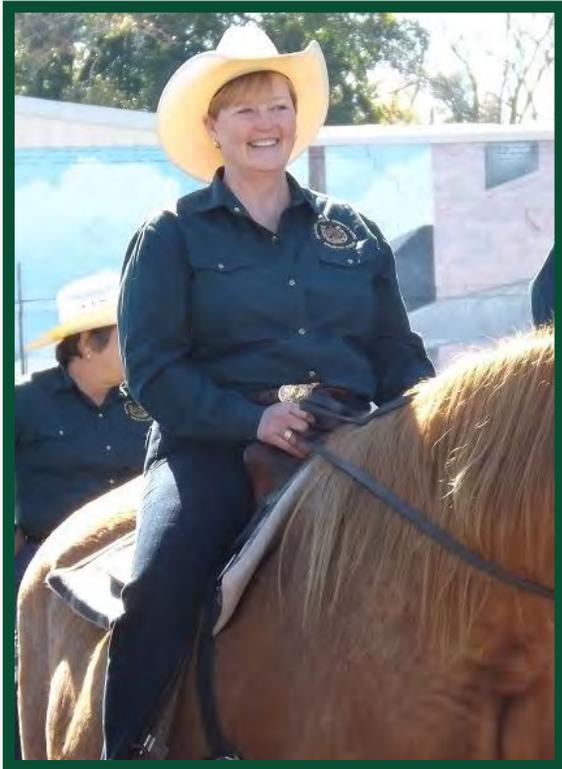
**The department managed 20 grants and helped negotiate seven new contracts for FY 2021. There were 369 purchase orders processed and a total of 138 check batches processed. In addition, there was a total of 30 payroll processes completed.**

Finance also helped the OCSO transition from a manual requisition process to one that is entirely online and automated.

In addition to the steady workload, the department worked through being displaced for more than a month due to COVID 19 - yet true to form, never missed a deadline!

Hurricane Sally in mid-September put additional demands on the department, specifically payroll, but again teamwork, experience, and dedication got it through all the challenges it faced.

Finance said goodbye to Kathy Murray after working with her for nearly 14 years as she set out to enjoy her retirement years. Originally hired as a part-time clerk to work in the IT Department, she eventually found her home in Finance. The agency is forever grateful for all she did and will miss her terribly. Even in her retirement however, she is only a phone call away and we continue to see her through her ongoing volunteering with the Sheriff's Office Mounted Posse.



Finance welcomed Heidi Walters and Tamara Adams. Heidi joined the team in mid-October. She is currently handling our online requisitions, purchase orders and keeps track of all of our fixed assets. In addition, she is learning many new processes and will become a backup for Accounts Payable and cash receipts. Tamara Adams officially joined us January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, taking over grants administration. The OCSO is happy to have both these outstanding new additions.

Members of the team attended online continuing education training during the year, dedicated to routinely operating at the top of their field.

The Finance team continues to volunteer with various organizations and committees such as the Mounted Posse, Christmas Trees for Hospice, OCSO Employee Council, Saving With Soul Pet Rescue of Northwest Florida, Junior League of the Emerald Coast, Shelter House and Finance has maintained outstanding service and professionalism.

Our team is very dedicated and works in unison to provide the best financial services possible.

# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

**2,603 IT Help Desk Tickets were entered for 2020**

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Information Technology Section takes a proactive approach to system health and user satisfaction. This operational philosophy requires regular preventative maintenance, routine hardware refreshes, timely software upgrades and patches, and continuous awareness of evolving cybersecurity concerns.

The Covid Pandemic brought with it an exponential increase in the number and variety of cyber threats, many aimed at government institutions. Information Technology deployed several security solutions to combat the growing threat and ensure the integrity of agency data.



## HELP DESK TICKETS

The Information Technology Section utilizes an electronic help desk system to receive and manage routine IT requests from agency members. In 2020, IT received and responded to 2,603 requests for service submitted via the portal.

## PROJECTS

- \* Succeeded in rapidly configuring and deploying 25 laptops to administrative staff, allowing them to work remotely at the onset of the Covid Pandemic.
- \* Configured and deployed a new firewall appliance to bolster cyber security protection.
- \* Configured and deployed 17 network switches with enhanced functionality to bolstering network infrastructure and cyber security protection.

## HARDWARE REFRESH

- \* Configured and deployed 104 new desktop computers and 123 new mobile computers as part of our hardware replacement plan aimed at overall system health and functionality.

# FLEET SERVICES

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Fleet Services Section is responsible for procuring, equipping, and maintaining all agency vehicles, vessels, trailers, and machinery. Fleet Services Staff keep the wheels and props turning with dedication to the safety of our First Responders and a standard of excellence.

Additionally, the Supply component of Fleet Services works with trusted vendors to acquire necessary uniforms, PPE (personal protection equipment), office supplies, services, and other equipment as needed.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2020, agency members racked up over five million miles as they responded to calls for service and patrolled the streets of Okaloosa County. With a shop staff of three, keeping the fleet functional and safe was no small undertaking; however, through the leadership of Fleet Manager Eddie Thompson, the job was successfully accomplished.

**The OCSO has a detailed preventative maintenance plan to maximize the lifespan of each vehicle, but nothing lasts forever. In 2020 Fleet Services commissioned fifty new vehicles into service. Each patrol car requires specialized equipment such as radio communications, emergency lighting, and prisoner separation. Our Fleet Services & Supply team ensured all components were on-hand and available for installation.**

Early in 2020, Supply Specialist Tiffany Carpenter's duties compounded with the immediate need for specialized PPE in the face of the Covid Pandemic. Working with vendors both new and existing, as well as FLDMS, she made sure our members were equipped with all necessary PPE to respond with confidence no matter the call.

As 2020 came to a close, the agency prepared for a change in command with the retirement of Sheriff Larry Ashley and election of Sheriff Eric Aden. Our Supply Section played a key role in planning for and procuring tangible items needed for a smooth transition.



# FACILITIES

**With duties including preventative maintenance, range development, construction, HVAC, and project management, the Facilities Services Section works diligently year round to ensure OCSO members have efficient facilities in which to conduct business.** These include the three main district offices in Shalimar, Crestview, and Destin as well as ten additional satellite offices and substations.

A major project accomplishment of 2020 was the addition of a new building at the OCSO Firing Range in Crestview to house a state-of-the-art force simulator (MILO Range). This simulator provides the ability for year round training of area law enforcement personnel in skills including de-escalation, communication, threat awareness, and marksmanship. Facilities staff saved the agency thousands of dollars by handling many aspects of construction and wiring with in-house expertise.



Much effort was placed on firing range improvements in 2020. In addition to the MILO building, Facilities staff supported a tactical breaching course for Special Response Team members by constructing and replacing doors and doorways for use in the course. Facilities Manager Angel DeJesus and Richard Bowden are recognized for their contribution to the success of the course.

# Public Information



2020 was a year when dissemination of public safety information included a prolonged, sustained effort to educate citizens on the dangers of the national health emergency created by Covid-19, and how to protect themselves and their loved ones.

Sharing valid information from legitimate sources on social media was a priority, along with keeping residents up to speed on steps being taken to protect both public health and civil liberties.

From the ripple effect of beach and business closures to forwarding scam related information involving the pandemic, 2020 was a challenging year for public information as alongside the national health emergency came the regular demands of crime-related news releases, social media posts, and responding to public and media inquiries.

**With the successful push to share information came another surge in Facebook followers, resulting in the OCSO page passing the 100,000 followers mark in 2020. A short video placed on the page garnered 12 million views during the year! Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram remained priorities as well, with YouTube followers approaching the 30,000 mark by the end of the year.**

One of the joys of 2020 was sharing on our social media the extraordinary amount of community support that flooded the agency as our deputies continued to put the safety of others before their own despite the Covid-risks.

Hundreds of residents of all ages came forward with donations ranging from face shields, masks, and gloves to meals, cookies, hand sanitizer and even - toilet paper!

# Emerald Coast Crime Stoppers

Emerald Coast Crime Stoppers is a nonprofit organization operated on a local level. It is built on a solid partnership between law enforcement, the media, and a team of volunteers working together to solve crime. The organization encourages citizens to become involved in solving crimes. It offers cash rewards and anonymity to those who furnish valuable information leading to the arrest and/or indictment of criminals.



## 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

### 1,246 Tips Received

### 64 Arrests

### 69 Cases Cleared

### \$15,875 Rewards Approved

This banner features a black background with white and red text. On the left, a hand holds a white smartphone displaying the P3 Tips app interface. The text 'Report Crime 100% Anonymously' is at the top in white. Below it, 'P3 Tips Mobile App' is written in white. In the center, there is a blue square with a white 'P3' logo. To the right of the logo, 'EMERALD COAST CRIME STOPPERS' is written in white on a black background. At the bottom left, '863-TIPS' is written in large, bold, red letters, with 'PD By CSTF' in smaller white letters below it. On the far right, there is a smaller version of the Emerald Coast Crime Stoppers logo featuring handcuffs and a smartphone.

# POSSE

The Okaloosa Sheriff's Posse is a group of civic-minded citizens who donate their time to assist the OCSO with a multitude of functions. Members wear uniforms similar to those of a deputy and are authorized to wear badges and carry firearms.

**The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Posse had 19 Reserve and Auxiliary Deputies in 2020 who donated their time and service to the citizens of Okaloosa County.**

The Sheriff's Posse performs a myriad of functions volunteering for duties including:

- Serving civil papers
- Front Desk at HQ and Destin
- Court Security
- Crime scene security
- Traffic control for parades, ball games, and running races
- Marine Unit backup
- Concert security

Posse members attended either Law Enforcement Standards (770 hours) or Auxiliary Law Enforcement Standards (364 hours) and must complete many of the regular annual training hours required of full-time Deputy Sheriffs.

The number of hours the Posse volunteered this year decreased due to COVID-19 and the cancellations of many civic events in our community. The Posse worked details during the summer months at outdoor concerts and by directing traffic for the Fort Walton Beach and Destin Christmas Parades despite the many event cancellations.

**This year, the Posse totaled 2,510 volunteer hours to the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office and this great community!**



# Mounted Posse

The 30 Mounted Posse volunteers donated nearly 450 hours, promoting good will and creating a positive impression of the role of the Posse in supporting the law enforcement mission. Along with achieving that goal, they also say a primary motivation for their participation is seeing the smiles on the faces of children, as well as the adults. They participated in two parades and six training sessions in 2020.



# OCSO Explorer Post 543

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Explorer Program is a career-oriented program that allows young adults to explore a career in law enforcement. The Explorer troops can train with Deputy Sheriff's whereby they are exposed to many of the daily functions of a law enforcement officer.

**It was quite an awesome year watching this amazing and dedicated group as they developed into tomorrow's leaders. In December 2020, they joined forces to provide 32 families with full Christmas dinners!**





**CPL. TYLER WILLIAMSON**  
OKALOOSA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

**SGT. BRANDEN FINDLEY**  
OKALOOSA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE





# *Employee Recognitions*

## **DEPUTY OF THE YEAR BRANDON MUNDT**



Nine-year law enforcement veteran Brandon Mundt is a dedicated family man who prioritizes his family and places a strong focus on high volume, proactive police work. He is a professional team player, morale booster, and someone who consistently presents a can-do outlook.

Deputy Mundt is a field training officer. In 2020, he trained nine newly hired deputies for a total of 1,164 hours - which accounts for more than 50% of the hours he worked throughout the year. He and his trainees accounted for 2,173 calls for service, 223 offense reports, and 108 arrests. He became a Stop the Bleed instructor and volunteered to teach this material and MCT/Mobile Forms training to newly hired deputies. He sought out additional volunteer opportunities throughout the year, however they were cancelled due to Covid-19.

Deputy Mundt tested for promotion to corporal and investigator and was selected for both promotion lists. He is focused on continuing education and completed 140 hours of training, many of which were focused on a leadership academy to prepare him for a promotion to corporal.

He was involved in several high profile cases in 2020. In July he assisted with a homicide investigation where Daniel Godwin was identified as a person of interest. Deputy Mundt helped with scene security. Several hours into the investigation and while maintaining the perimeter, he saw Godwin walking down the street and detained him. Godwin was subsequently charged for the homicide.

In September, Deputy Mundt was one of the first to arrive at a home invasion robbery with shots fired. He gathered and sent out detailed suspect descriptions, which led to the Fort Walton Beach Police Department detaining three people of interest. Deputy Mundt reviewed surveillance footage of the incident and positively identified the three suspects, directly contributing to their arrests.

On Christmas Eve, Deputy Mundt was one of the first officers to the scene of an armed residential burglary in progress. He challenged the suspect as the individual exited the home, causing him to retreat back inside. Deputy Mundt helped contain the location until the Special Response Team arrived and took the suspect into custody using more advanced tactics. His actions directly contributed to the successful outcome.

Deputy Mundt has shown a devotion to the agency, his peers, and his community. His professional actions demonstrate his abilities to continually succeed, regardless of circumstances or potential dangers. And he routinely volunteers his time for the betterment of those around him.

# INVESTIGATOR OF THE YEAR

## ELISA JERARD



Investigator Elisa Jerard, a member of SIS since 2018, specializes in internet related crimes against children and other forensic duties.

She is motivated, goal oriented, smart and professional with an outstanding attitude and work ethic. She often balances multiple assignments inside a demanding task force environment. She excels when challenged and her exemplary work has helped propel the agency's top profile cases throughout 2020.

She regularly volunteers for training to advance her professional development and skills for her team in order to help protect children in Okaloosa County. In 2020 alone, Investigator Jerard sought-out and obtained specialized certifications with BitTorrent, OsTriage, and Celebrite, increasing our capacities in modern law enforcement techniques and advancing forensic examination, triage, and download of electronic devices, to aid ongoing investigations.

Investigator Jerard maintains a significant case load, but is regularly found volunteering to assist other agency members (across multiple districts/sections) with their investigations. Over the past year, she initiated or was assigned sixty-one (61) direct investigations ranging from sexting to child pornography and production. These type cases are often the most demanding and intensive in law enforcement. However, she maintained a 64% percent case closure rate, directly holding numerous individuals accountable for predatory child related crimes. In addition, she personally authored nearly eighty-seven (87) individual search warrants within the past twelve months, not including her personal assistance to her team and other agency members. As many know, these types of search warrants often uncover some of the grimmest vices an individual officer must be willing to investigate. Investigator Jerard regularly accepts that challenge.

There are numerous examples of her outstanding work. Here is just one:

An investigation involving a man soliciting a nine (9) year old for sex through social media platforms and a texting application. Her casework ultimately identified the suspect, a registered sex offender in Michigan. After completing the case, she presented it to the Department of Homeland Security for adoption and prosecution in May. In June DHS executed search warrants on the suspect's residence, discovering more than twenty-eight (28) additional victims and leading to thirty-four (34) charges, including production of child pornography and solicitation of a child for pornography.

Investigator Jerard performs her work with commitment and professionalism on a daily basis within one of the most demanding disciplines in law enforcement. She has a passion for her job and operates at impressively high levels - with a focus on preventing the next child from falling victim to dangerous online predators.

# *SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR*

## **SERGEANT BETH ROBERTS**



Sgt. Roberts is altruistic, conscientious, and popular with both her peers and the community.

In the volunteer scope, she's served as a mentor to pregnant teens and supported the collection of blankets for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Sacred Heart Hospital. She is an active committee member representing the agency with Emerald Coast Crime Stoppers, understanding the importance of involving the community to help locate fugitives hiding from justice.

Sgt. Roberts brings the same compassion and dedication she displays for her community to her role within the Airport Security Unit. Unlike her peers in other units, she has the responsibility of overseeing two different shifts that extend beyond her duty hours. This often means handling issues that arise in her off duty time. Under her guidance and mentorship, her shifts have performed at a high level of efficiency and professionalism.

Sgt. Roberts spends time enhancing the agency's field training program. While not her primary role, she has taken on the responsibility of new hires assigned to the unit while they await placement in the agency Field Training and Evaluation Program. She takes pride in preparing these employees for Patrol and integrating them into the unit to broaden their skill set.

On the other end of the spectrum, she is an active member of the Retirement Committee, to ensure that those agency members are shown the admiration and the respect their service deserves.

Sgt. Roberts is no stranger to the detection and deterrence of crime. While engaged in conversations with employees of a rental car company at the airport they casually spoke of a recent incident. Someone had been trying to rent a vehicle with a credit card that had the name and numbers scratched off. Although they didn't report the incident at the time, Sgt. Roberts immediately recognized the potential significance and started an investigation. She guided her shift to identify and locate the victim, who advised his business accounts had been compromised and he had multiple open cases in other jurisdictions where he had lost thousands of dollars in losses in fraudulent charges. It was her determination to lead by example that pushed her team to not only identify the suspects in this case, but make multiple arrests.

To maintain credibility amongst her troops and to further her professional development, she attended the agency's rifle course to enhance her tactical skills. She is one of only a handful of agency members who have completed the newly formulated Northwest Florida State College Law Enforcement Leadership Academy consisting of 120 hours. Even amongst the trials and tribulations associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, she still successfully completed the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Florida Leadership Academy.

Sgt. Roberts is a true leader who always supports her troops in times of need, while simultaneously holding them accountable.

# *SRO OF THE YEAR*

## **DEPUTY JENNA SEEBECK**



Pryor Middle School has a very diverse population of nearly 760 students and about 75% live in poverty. This unfortunate statistic calls for an atmosphere where hope resonates, even in the midst of uncertainty.

School Resource Officer Jenna Seebeck, who had spent a decade serving her country as an outstanding Marine, has been that school's needed beacon of hope and encouragement. Employed with the OCSO since July 2019, she was assigned to the SRO Unit in February 2020 as the Covid-19 pandemic began to spike. Initially assigned to Longwood Elementary School, she next went to Pryor in August of 2020. Both are Title 1 schools with higher concentrations of low income students, forced to endure exacerbated poverty issues caused by the pandemic. However, SRO Seebeck always promotes community, connection, and positivity with every student and staff member she encounters.

She consistently works two of the busiest school zones within Central District, ensuring that students arrive safely. She personally handled 1,431 calls for service since her affiliation with the SRO Unit, accounting for the highest calls for service for any SRO in our 50+ man unit; a unit which averages 500600? calls for service. She generated 100 offense reports ranging from Domestic Violence Battery and Child Abuse/Neglect to Sex Offenses and Baker Acts.

She is dedicated to maintaining physical fitness for her job, currently holding the highest female Physical Assessment Test score in the unit.

She's become a leader in School Safety and was recently commended by the OCSD Safe Schools Specialist for her "superior performance and exceptional dedication". Due to pandemic restrictions, she made major contributions to the 2020-2021 District-wide "Active Assailant" training evolution, creating digital presentations to boost training. She created laminated Lockdown Pocket Cards for the SRO's and school staff to carry on their person for easy retrieval. In addition, she worked vigilantly to improve the School Crisis and sports events Operation Plans.

Due to SRO Seebeck's exceptional interpersonal skills, the Pryor Principal says their "school has never felt safer."

In a one month time period, she mentally evaluated 5 students who met Baker Act criteria, making her school one of the highest in reported Baker Act evaluations in our county. She works hand in hand with Mobile Response Team (MRT) personnel and multiple school mental health counselors, showcasing a devotion to her students.

In the past school year she implemented a Monthly SRO Staff, Students, & Parent Newsletter, Good Deed Citations, a Clothing & Hygiene Closet, Chat with a Cop, the Gobble Giveaway Event and much more.

Outside the school setting, she serves as an Executive Officer with the Emerald Coast Young Marines Organization. Even with pandemic restrictions, she managed to accomplish 196 volunteer hours, 104 hours of adult Drug Demand Reductions (DDR) training, 284 hours of youth DDR training, and 156 hours of community service. She periodically volunteers her military services to the school's R.O.T.C. program. And last but not least, she also volunteers as an usher with her church and leads a social media women's Bible study.

# *ADMINISTRATIVE SWORN OUTSTANDING PERFORMER* **DEPUTY DALE CARTER**



Dale is a role-model member of the Administrative Bureau who excels at each and every one of his duties and responsibilities.

As Lead Bailiff for the Honorable Judge William F. Stone, he sets the example by maintaining a safe courtroom on a daily basis".

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much... " Dale is a motivated leader who's always willing to ensure the unit's mission is completed professionally and efficiently. He's highly sought-after due to his knowledge of court security. His willingness to use and share that knowledge has proven invaluable to his peers, supervision, the Judiciary, and to the overall successful operations of Court Security.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dale worked closely with the Administrative Judge, Clerk of Court, and Court Security supervision to ensure courthouse operations continued safely. He was instrumental in developing intelligent courthouse protocols and procedures which are currently still in use.

Stop the Bleed is a nation-wide initiative to train and equip citizens to successfully stop the unnecessary loss of life from blood loss. As a Stop the Bleed instructor, Dale developed and implemented a plan to teach personnel at the Annex Extension. Even with the restrictions on "in-person" gatherings due to the COVID19, he was able to expertly teach three classes comprised of 3 deputies, 2 judges, 7 judicial assistants.

In addition to his required Sheriffs Office training, Dale earned an 252 additional hours of training; including Instructor Techniques, Firearms Instructor, the Reid Technique, and Middle Management.

Dale's Servant Leadership is evident through his 8-year membership on the Employee Council and his garnering over 33 hours of volunteer service in 2020 with events such as the OCSO Star Charity 2 Gun match and Citizens Concealed Weapons classes. He also assisted in teaching 5, 8-hour Active Shooter Response classes.

# OPERATIONS SWORN OUTSTANDING PERFORMER DEPUTY COLIN SAVOIE

Deputy Colin Savoie has worked for the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office since August 2018, following an honorable discharge from United States Army in 2012 and serving for the Crestview Police Department for two years. Deputy Savoie responded to 2,877 calls for service, made 136 arrests, and wrote 117 offense reports. In those arrests, 54 of them were narcotics arrests.

Deputy Savoie is the first to help his peers, to include being a back-up officer when needed or to help package evidence when others are working late. Deputy Savoie is hard-working, self-motivated, and an exemplary team player. Deputy Savoie continues to self-educate by studying policies and statutes in order to be well versed.

Deputy Savoie has served our agency well, not only is he a driven Deputy, he is on the Special Response Team and is a Field Training Officer.

FTO Savoie helped train 7 new Deputies for our agency in 2020. FTO Savoie and his trainees made 59 additional arrests under his tutelage. FTO Savoie ensures each one of his trainees learn the job the right way, which is to be honorable, to aid our citizens when in need, and to be fair and just.

Due to being such a tenacious and proactive Deputy in 2020, Savoie has recently been selected to the agency's Street Crimes Unit.

Deputy Savoie is committed to excellence, he goes above and beyond for the citizens of this county, and Deputy Savoie is the epitome of what being a Deputy in this agency should be.

Total numbers for Deputy Savoie in 2020:

Primary calls-1,833

Back up calls-1,044

Offense reports-117

Warrant services-54

Arrests-70

NTA's-12

DUI's-1

Citizen Contacts-60

Suspicious activity-6

Suspicious vehicles-14

Felony narcotics-44

Misdemeanor narcotics-10

Vehicle stops-339

Citations-83

Traffic stop warnings-402



# ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

## AMBER MILONAS



Amber Milonas, the go-to person for anything dealing with personnel matters, is our OCSO Administrative Employee of the Year for 2020. She's a Human Resources (HR) Generalist in the Professional Standards Division and undoubtedly prioritizes the care of roughly 450 full-time, 30 part-time, and numerous volunteer OCSO members.

When we consolidated multiple communications functions in Communications and the Airport Security Unit it led to nearly 30 new full-time employees. Ms. Milonas volunteered to make certain each knew their pay and benefit entitlements. Due to shift schedules, she went on-site at various times of the day and night so these new employees got the support they needed. The merger went through without a hitch.

Ms. Milonas routinely arrives early and stays late as needed. An untiring machine with a constant smile, she never lets the stress of her duties affect her positive attitude. As peer leader, she selflessly takes time from her own duties to train other H-R staff to ensure they can complete their tasks.

Ms. Milonas determined a need to conduct weekly audits of changes to member's health care and benefit elections. Her goal was to confirm they were making changes and election options in their best interests. When she saw anomalies, she contacted members to validate their intentions and possibly save them future issues. Although all members are provided information on benefits, they can routinely be found requesting assistance in a time of need, as they seek guidance. They will drop by without notice and Ms. Milonas will set aside her normal tasks to focus on the best solutions.

She is a member of the agency's recruiting committee and provides meaningful input to the members. Ms. Milonas is without rival the agency's clear choice for Administrative Employee of the Year for 2020.

# COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER OF THE YEAR

## LINDA CIURLEO



Mona consistently excels in her responsibilities as an Okaloosa County Communications Officer, with unparalleled professionalism and a heart of servitude!

In Communications, Mona has been a valued telecommunicator, TERT team member, Communications Training Officer, Assistant Shift Supervisor and most recently (since December 2020), Communications Supervisor assigned to Alpha shift. Mona's consistent quality of work, motivation, leadership and dedication sets her up for success as an influential leader.

To date, she's exceeded 410 hours this year alone training new hires and cross training veteran employees.

Mona's attention to detail, ability to multi-task and veteran EMS/FD knowledge makes her a wealth of invaluable information to our center. With our recent consolidation in 2019, we adopted 2020 as our year of "Details Matter". Mona's prior Public Safety knowledge and experience has been instrumental in successfully combining our EMS and FIRE policies. Her insight helps allow us to maintain top quality service in all our 911 and dispatching services. In addition, Mona's call taking and dispatch skills are top notch, professional and regularly in high compliance - setting the standard of excellence for us all.

In combination with dedication to her job, Mona regularly cooks and prepares meals for those within her church home and our transient community, as well as makes countless shopping trips on behalf of others with mobility issues.

Even with the COVID-19 pandemic, while taking proper safety precautions, Mona spends days off cooking meals and shopping for the elderly. She not only ensures they have what they need physically, but feeds their spirit with joyful fellowship.

Mona proves herself daily to be an invaluable communications team member. Her work ethic and dedication are above reproach. Her positive influence, demeanor and caring nature extends to her co-workers as she's always cooking meals for staff whether there be a storm coming through or simply to put a smile in someone's day.

# OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

## DR. ERIC GOLDBERG



Dr. Goldberg is a board-certified psychiatrist with over 23 years of experience in the medical field. In addition to his grueling schedule as a psychiatrist he has also volunteered his time with the OCSO since 2013, serving as an advisor on the Crisis Negotiations Unit. He is on-call continually and can be counted on to respond to CNU call outs regardless of time or location.

His mental health expertise is invaluable to the CNU during the negotiations process. He sits in the Negotiation Operation Center (NOC) with the primary negotiator and is able to observe the negotiators and listen to the dialogue in its entirety. This allows him to provide actionable intelligence to the team leader on the mental state of the person in crisis. He is able to identify if the subject is becoming more or less of a threat to himself or others and what negotiation tactics are working and what are not. Dr. Goldberg also has access to Dragonforce which allows him to monitor a crisis negotiation if he is not able to respond in person.

Dr. Goldberg's medical expertise is also invaluable to the team. During negotiations, we often get a list of medications the subject is prescribed or may be taking from family members. He is able to quickly inform the team leader of the underlying medical condition that would require the given medication, as well as the side effects of the medication to allow leadership to tailor the negotiation tactics to fit the situation.

Dr. Goldberg attends all of our team's monthly training and is regularly asked to provide lectures to the team on a variety of topics. A conservative estimate of the amount of time he has given to the Sheriff's Office and citizens of Okaloosa County would be 450 – 500 hours over the last 7 years. The CNU relies on his expertise in every situation that we are called to assist in, and the success of our team is a direct result of the generosity of Dr. Goldberg's volunteer contributions.

# *POSSE MEMBER OF THE YEAR*

## **WES FIELDS**



Wes Fields currently serves on the Posse Board of Directors as the Corporal at Large and is a strong leader who leads by example. Wes has been an active Posse member for a combined total of 17 years. In his prior position as the security chief at the Emerald Coast Convention Center, he coordinated hundreds of hours of Posse and deputy details there.

For many years, he regularly volunteered to perform backup for East District during emergencies, high-volume situations, and manning shortages. He freed up deputies by assisting with traffic control for crashes, hazardous spills, detours, and other congested road conditions. Wes has been recognized by East District Supervision several times in 2020 for directing traffic when a vehicle accident with hazardous material closed traffic on Marler Bridge, for performing backup on Labor Day weekend, and for diverting traffic when parts of Highway 98 were closed due to flooding waters during Hurricane Sally.

Wes is a decorated combat veteran who served in the Air Force for 24 years. As a military retiree, he provided security and logistical support for the famed Doolittle "Tokyo" Raiders and was an escort for other WWII veterans to events worldwide.

He was a Florida Highway Patrol Auxiliary Trooper for 5 years and was a Florosa Fire Department Volunteer firefighter. Currently, Wes is employed by the local Tourism Development Council where he provides a warm welcome and information to visitors.

Wes Fields is a true professional in all aspects of his life.



# WELL EARNED RETIREMENTS



**AFTER MORE THAN THREE DECADES OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE OKALOOSA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, INCLUDING TEN YEARS AS SHERIFF, LARRY ASHLEY PUT UP HIS UNIFORM AND BADGE ON DECEMBER 31ST, 2020.**

**HIS LEADERSHIP AND VISION LEFT A LEGACY OF PROFESSIONALISM AND UNITY OF PURPOSE, AS WELL AS A ROADMAP FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS.**

# WELL EARNED RETIREMENTS



ALONG WITH SHERIFF ASHLEY, CHIEF DEPUTY ARNOLD BROWN AND ADMINISTRATIVE BUREAU MAJOR MICHAEL CARD ALSO SPENT MORE THAN 30 YEARS SERVING AND PROTECTING THE CITIZENS AND VISITORS OF OKALOOSA COUNTY. FROM PATROL AND INVESTIGATIONS TO TOP RUNG AGENCY ADMINISTRATORS, THEIR COLLECTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS WERE COUNTLESS AND HELPED SHAPE THE OCSO'S PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.



*Happy  
Retirement,  
Major Michael  
Card*

Thank you for 31 years of  
dedicated service!



# WELL EARNED RETIREMENTS



**CAPTAIN PAUL ABBOTT**



*Happy Retirement Undersheriff Harker!*

WISHING YOU HAPPY ADVENTURES IN EVERY JOURNEY AHEAD

**UNDERSHERIFF STEVE HARKER**



**SGT. HAROLD MASON**



**SGT. NOLAN WEEKS**

# WELL EARNED RETIREMENTS



DEPUTY DARYL CULBERSON DEDICATED THIRTY YEARS TO THE OKALOOSA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND SPENT THOUSANDS OF HARD-EARNED HOURS PATROLLING AND PROTECTING OUR AREA WATERS AS AN EXTRAORDINARY MEMBER OF THE OCSO MARINE UNIT AND DIVE UNIT.



DEPUTY STEVE BALDWIN



DEPUTY DAVID JOHNSON

Additional retirements with no photo available:

Sgt. John Armstrong

Deputy Patrick Coveney  
Deputy Michael Peters

Deputy Thomas Nieft  
Deputy Thomas Reitz

# WELL EARNED RETIREMENTS



**TOM STRAWSER**



**KATHY MURRAY**



**MARCIA WOFFORD**



**DEPUTY TREY ELLISON**



**DEPUTY JD BURNHAM**



**FRANKIE BURGESS**

NATIONALLY & STATE ACCREDITED



**SERVICE**  
IT'S IN OUR DNA

