



SHERIFF ERIC ADEN

OKALOOSA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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A MESSAGE FROM SHERIFF ERIC ADEN


With the resurgence of the pandemic due to Covid variants, 2021 proved to be another challenging year. But those challenges didn't stop our progress. In fact, when the first year under my new administration concluded, we had successfully implemented all nine initiatives and goals I hoped to achieve.

The Cadet Program was an initiative I instituted after hearing the benefits from a neighboring sheriff who raved about its success. With all the challenges facing law enforcement in the areas of recruitment and retention, I was determined to create a more robust form of sponsoring and hiring employees. Allowing individuals to go to the Academy as their full-time job can serve to attract more people to work in this career field. It has proven its success and we swore in our first wave of Cadets March 7. We currently have 10 more enrolled. They will be able to plug directly into a sworn capacity upon completing the Academy and successfully passing the state exam.


Training on handling violent encounters is vitally important and the MILO training center's technology, with its computer simulated force on force training scenarios, has proven extremely valuable and worthy of its cost. It's also allowed us to host demonstrations so that various groups can come out and experience the type of scenarios that call for split-second decisions in a violent encounter. Under one of my initiatives, school principals, faith based leaders, and other leadership groups have participated in the training programs and seen first-hand the intensity and complexity of responding to rapidly evolving situations.

Enhancing the capabilities of ICAC or Internet Crimes Against Children is another primary objective we made progress on. The first step taken was to add personnel and realign or reorganize some of those areas in our Criminal Investigations Division (CID). We immediately were able to become more proactive than reactive, resulting in Operation Night Owl and the arrests of 22 individuals for trying to solicit children for sex. We will continue to work to dedicate additional resources to this critically important mission.





Sheriff Eric Aden
OKALOOSA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Service is in our DNA



The observed partial DNA profile is greater than 700 billion times more likely to occur if the sample originated from Richard Elliot Lane than from an unrelated individual.

March 30 , 2021

An arrest has been made in a 38 year old sexual battery cold case - thanks to a DNA hit and the perseverance of Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Investigator Kelly Henderson.

Suspect Richard Lane, who was 21 at the time of the attack in June 1983, is now 58. He was ultimately located in Las Vegas, where he is currently being held until when he can be extradited back to Okaloosa County.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcKV1CFBS8Y>

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Dedication to our Cold Cases is an ongoing priority at the OCSO. In addition to the many current cases that CID has to deal with day to day, I can't say enough for our investigators and their dedication to bringing justice to even the oldest cases on our books. During the last 12 months our CID was able to solve five cold cases to include one sexual battery and four homicides; two of which dated back over 40 years. They did all of this while contending with an increase in violent crime across 2021 involving shootings, homicides, and gang activity.

The Citizens Advisory Board is an initiative I began working on in 2019 and instituted to increase community engagement. The push for open dialogue with members from a cross section of our community is designed to improve communication between the OCSO and citizens representing a wide range of diverse interests and outlooks.

One of the most rewarding initiatives accomplished in 2021 revolved around boosting community involvement, specifically an event at Sylvania Heights Baptist Church. Members of the OCSO went out to serve hamburgers and hotdogs to local residents, joined by the many vendors and support groups we organized to attend and showcase their services. The get together gave many citizens an opportunity to see and interact with us on a personal level designed to build stronger relationships. Overall it was a huge success and we look forward to additional ones in the future. In the pring we also held an ice cream giveaway at the same location, enjoying positive interaction while serving free ice cream to attendees.

Another major achievement for 2021 was the formal dedication of the new Sheriff Larry Ashley Public Safety Training Complex in Crestview. Due to Covid, the event had been postponed for many months, but we were finally able to officially honor and recognize former Sheriff Ashley for his countless contributions to not only the citizens and visitors of Okaloosa County, but the state of Florida.

On the technology side, we were able in 2021 to enhance our public safety capabilities with license plate readers and a system called Star Chase.

The last Initiative we were able to implement prior to the end of the year was the creation and deployment of new community policing positions. The first was our north end community policing K9 Handler Deputy Tim Patterson with his bloodhound sidekick Roscoe Beauregard Parker, affectionately known as K-9 Beau. Brought on board as a puppy, Beau quickly established himself as a beloved addition to the agency and continues to train towards reaching his potential as a searcher and tracker.

As a new Sheriff I can say without hesitation compiling a list of new ideas and initiatives is easier than putting them into action! If it was not for the combined hard work and dedication of the great folks that work at the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, we would not have been able to implement these significant enhancements over a one year period.

I always say Okaloosa County is the best place to be a law enforcement officer in the country.

I am incredibly proud of our great staff and want to thank each of them for their selfless efforts every day. Law enforcement professionals like those here at the OCSO have never wavered in their committed service to our community. I believe that is one reason we are starting to see a resurgence of support for law enforcement across much of the nation. And just as importantly, the steadfast support we receive from our community inspires and motivates our devotion to duty.

Yours in service,
Sheriff Eric Aden



Sheriff Eric Aden



IN LOVING MEMORY OF



DEPUTY MICHAEL NEAU



End of Watch 09.21.2021





2021 ACTIVITY RUNDOWN

SAMPLE CALLS FOR SERVICE

ESTIMATED CALLS

230,265

Security Checks	47,759
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Traffic Stops	25,194
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Agency Assists	10,473
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Welfare Checks	4,411
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Vessel Stops	2,796
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Reckless Vehicles	3,165
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Shots Fired	395
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Road Rage	261
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Suspicious Activity	4,137
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Warrant Service	4,600
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Sex Offender Verifications	1,347
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Child Abuse	1,545
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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 Duke Field on Eglin AFB to Covington and Escambia County, Alabama.

We have a mixture of diversely unique communities in the North District. These communities range from densely populated urban areas in and around the largest city in Okaloosa County, Crestview, to the many acres of farm land, horse ranches and urban residential homes located in the Baker, Holt and Laurel Hill Communities. Many of the citizens of Okaloosa County have found comfort and peace in moving to the many beautiful unincorporated areas in our North District. There is an unprecedented level of growth and development here as many citizens learn what the North District has to offer.



North District Individual Accomplishments:

Life Saving Awards

- Corporal Aaron Pitman
- Deputy Cody Dickinson
- Deputy Kris Staley

Certificate of Commendation

- Corporal Caden Downing received a Certificate of Commendation for capturing two violent felons following a 30+ mile pursuit in which the suspect rammed his patrol car and he subsequently rammed them, ending the pursuit.



- Deputy Brannon Small received a Certificate of Commendation for capturing a homicide suspect and recovering crucial evidence.

Selections for Specialized Units

- Deputy Ray Hamilton selected for the Special Response Team

Promotions in 2021

- Corporal John Jenks promoted to Sergeant
- Corporal Aaron Pitman promoted to Investigator
- Corporal Rob Robinson promoted to Investigator
- Deputy Brannon Small promoted to Investigator
- Deputy Brandon Mundt promoted to Investigator
 - Deputy Todd Sears promoted to Corporal
 - Deputy Matt Wilde promoted to Corporal

North District Community Service Activity in 2021

Service – It's in our DNA!

Attended and participated in Crestview Area Chamber of Commerce Breakfasts

Membership in Crestview Rotary Club

Board Member of First Judicial Circuit Law Enforcement Association

President of the Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute Associates, Inc

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

Liaison to Local Chamber Committees and Civic Groups

Supported Annual Special Olympics Torch Run- Okaloosa County

Attended/ Supported Countywide LEO Memorial Ceremonies

Supported the End of Watch Ruck March Memorial Service for Fallen Officers

Served on the OCSO Recruitment and Retention Committee

Represented their peers to Sheriff Aden on the OCSO Employee Council

Helped resolve standoffs and hostage crisis' in the Crisis Negotiation Unit

Served in the OCSO Special Response Team

Served in the OCSO Honor Guard

Served on the board of OCSO Star Charity

Served as the Vice-President of the Okaloosa County Community Traffic Safety Team

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

Serving on church security teams

Coaching organized sports teams

Mentoring kids

Participating in several civic organizations

Donating their time to the OCSO Star Charity Committee events

Supporting the United Way



North District Statistics of Interest for 2020

(These numbers represent calls for service worked by all agency members within the District.)

Calls for Service	53,978
Traffic Stops	9,081
Warrants Services	2,297
DUI Arrests	49
Probable Cause Arrests	2,086
Narcotics Arrest	331
Citizen Contacts	3,485



2021 North District Highlights

As 2021 began, the North District Team continued to work through multiple challenges to law enforcement related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This situation continued to affect how deputies conducted business, but they were determined to make sure our citizens received great service. 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. Deputies also implemented open air roll calls in a way that allowed them to remain safe, while promoting unit integrity. Many times they could be found sharing an open air meal before a shift began while they conducted shift training and shared important information with each other to remain sharp. This led to an increased sense of teamwork and comradery that positively impacted morale.



During 2021, overdose cases and deaths remained far too common. Violent crimes related to narcotics activity occurred within the North District and the City of Crestview. North District deputies focused 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 the arrest of many major felony narcotics offenders and led to the recovery of multiple illegal firearms seized from the possession of convicted felons.

Serving arrest warrants is a primary duty of an Okaloosa County deputy sheriff and our North District deputies focused additional attention on proactive warrant services during the year. They implemented a District 1 Most Wanted program with high priority offenders displayed for awareness and focused attention. Although this program was implemented late in 2021, it immediately led to the arrest of several felons. In one case a felon wanted for failing to appear in court for the crime of possession of a firearm as a convicted felon was located after being on the run from deputies for approximately 15 months. The program also led to the arrest of several other high priority offenders.



Driving under the influence remains a crime that affects too many of our citizens. Our deputies remained vigilant for impaired drivers and made many arrests during 2021. The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office participated in the Okaloosa County Unified DUI Task Force in a cooperative partnership with every law enforcement agency in the county to prevent or apprehend impaired drivers. This task force proved to be a very effective way to have a positive impact on traffic safety in Okaloosa County on key dates that historically had a high number of impaired driving crashes. Education and prevention are also key components to reducing incidents of impaired driving. Members of the North District partnered with local military and civic groups to provide Traffic Safety and DUI Prevention briefings to thousands of people throughout our community during 2021.



Our North District Front Desk at the Livingston Building in Crestview remained a very popular place for our citizens and visitors to receive services. This desk is staffed by a civilian employee who single-handedly managed a heavy workload of 1,672 citizen contacts, registration of multiple felons and sex offenders to monitor them after their court sentences, fingerprinting for background checks and employment purposes, completion of offense reports, collection and submission of physical evidence, release of reports to citizens, answering general questions, and much more. This employee displayed exemplary service and was nominated for an annual agency award as a result of her professionalism and accomplishments.



We live in a great community in the North District and the citizens here constantly show their appreciation for the work our deputies do daily. The breakroom at the North District Office is often full of donated food and desserts from our community churches, businesses, and private citizens. They overwhelm us with food, baked goods and gestures of support for our dedicated first responders. Many times our deputies sit down to eat in a local restaurant only to find out someone paid their bill anonymously and just asked the server to tell the deputies thank you. 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 from our community is a trademark of the North District citizens and we are forever grateful for their support!

As Christmas arrived, there were many children who were in need and were 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 many needy children. Many North District deputies gathered during their off-duty time to wrap and package presents for the kids and purchased gifts for needy children out of their own funds to make sure a child had a meaningful Christmas.

The North District of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office is staffed by a team of highly dedicated professionals who serve this community with distinction. The residents and visitors to the North District can know that they are protected by some of the best and most dedicated law enforcement officers we know!

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







Central “South” District, also referred to as District 2, encompasses the southwestern portion of Okaloosa County. It is densely populated, with four (4) municipalities (and towns), including City of Fort Walton Beach, City of Mary Esther, Town of Shalimar and Town of Cinco Bayou. The District begins near Okaloosa Regional Airport, covering State Roads 85 and 123, expanding southbound to U.S. Highway 98, across both east and west corridors between Okaloosa Island and Okaloosa/Santa Rosa County line.

The District includes Hurlburt Air Force Base, home to the U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command and the 1st Special Operations Wing, as well as portions of Eglin Air Force Base and U.S. Air Force Armament Museum. It runs adjacent to the Gulf Intercoastal Waterway and includes inlets of Choctawhatchee Bay, Cinco Bayou and more. Each year, this part of the county attracts many tourists, residents and commuters, seeking Florida’s preferred lifestyles and sustainable commerce.

The area has solid economic resources associated with the above military installations, waterways, businesses and industrial entities. It is a “hub” for opportunities, boasting easy access to retail venues and recreation, along with the convenience of residential living close to work and play. It also includes the Sheriff’s Office executive headquarters, with two additional sub-stations for operations.

The District is well-known as a rigorous, yet very rewarding duty assignment. Its proactive environment, along with transitional nature, geography and socio-economical composition, commands unique qualities inherent in deputies. The men and women who work in the District have a variety of skills and life experiences, creating a true melting-pot for innovation, policing experience and problem solving. This allows for “up-style” tempos while adhering to proven tactics. Deputies are encouraged to use teamwork and good policing techniques for catching burglars, helping to identify and arrest drug traffickers, weapons violators, wanted-persons, DUIs, violent felony offenders and much more. They operate daily, with influence and resiliency, as future leaders of the agency.

The priorities for Central District are clear – focus on public safety, deterring crimes and apprehending criminals, with equal enforcement of laws, enhancing trust and confidence with the communities. These deputies are first to respond to emergency situations and critical incidents – sometimes performing immediate life-saving measures, locating missing persons, securing evidence, or providing essential support for the agency’s specialty units and joint operations. At the same time, they are focused on engaging citizens, seeking the best ways to help others. On any given day, many will volunteer their personal time or financial resources to help those in need - without seeking recognition or acknowledgement. This includes buying gas for stranded motorists, providing meals, renting a hotel room for a displaced family during holidays, stopping-in for a neighborhood child’s birthday party when asked, and promoting real conversations to help combat the trends of unjustified social stereotypes of modern-day policing. As a core group, these deputies are intensely dedicated to providing all residents, business owners, and guests in Okaloosa County with incomparable service and protection – every day. This cultivates both trust and confidence in local communities.



The District allocates a total of 49 full-time law enforcement positions, supported by an essential group of civilian employees. In 2021, staffing levels varied, but it strengthened to 85% by December, representing a total of 42 positions being filled. Some new employees actually migrated from agencies across the United States seeking to become Deputy Sheriffs in Florida.



Time after time, Central District is a dynamic environment. In 2021, the District recorded a total of 98,241 calls for service, a slight increase from one year ago. Of these totals, 80,419 were handled specifically by members assigned to the District, generating 4,946 offense reports and 3,819 arrests.

Central “South” District Statistics of Interest 2021

Total Calls for Service	80,491
Offense Reports Generated	4,712
Arrests / Notice-to-Appears	2,811
DUI Arrests	126
Traffic Stops	6,391
Traffic Crashes	1,649
Warrant Served/Attempts	1,762
Florida Baker Acts/Protections	210
Drug Overdoses	113
Robberies/Assaults	130
Homicides	6
Burglaries	321
Drug Violations	1,498
Watch Orders	3,757

The Sheriff's Office also contracts with the City of Mary Esther, providing two full-time deputies within the city limits. In 2021, deputies in Mary Esther handled a total of 7,396 service calls, ranging from keeping crime rates low to responding to 350 traffic crashes within the city jurisdiction, generating 177 arrests/NTAs for crimes and arresting 14 impaired drivers (DUIs).

During the year, deputies worked closely with neighboring agencies such as the Fort Walton Beach Police Department and Shalimar Police, especially during emergency and critical incidents. These partnerships remain vital to providing the very best law enforcement services to protect citizens and solve crimes across multiple jurisdictions.



In October 2021, District deputies and Fort Walton Beach Police worked together during a homicide investigation that crossed between both jurisdictions. Deputies responded to a possible shooting complaint at a local convenience store located in the county. Deputies arrived and discovered the victim, Antonio Robinson, was unconscious, with multiple life-threatening injuries. Deputies secured the scene while trying to help the victim. Unfortunately, he later died from his injuries. Deputies worked together with city police officers, which led to identifying a separate, yet extremely important crime scene within the city's jurisdiction. K-9 Deputy Cutler Peterson located a samurai-sword matching the key injuries sustained by the victim. This joint field work eventually led to the arrest of the suspect, William Patrizi, by police detectives.

In a separate incident in May 2021, Shalimar Police were dispatched to a disturbance call on Mande Court, within the city's jurisdiction. Okaloosa deputies responded as backup, but quickly detained the resident, 51 year-old Randal Ebbighausen, after learning he had just stabbed his wife to death minutes before their arrival. Deputies handcuffed Ebbighausen in the garage, noting blood on Ebbighausen's hands and arms. Deputies, along with Shalimar Police, entered the home where Ebbighausen's wife was found deceased. The first responding deputies, including Corporal (Investigator) Brandon Walters and Deputy Daniel Echols were vital due to their quick actions to detain the suspect and secure the crime scene.



Many times, law enforcement officers can be the difference between tragedy and rescue – not only responding to calls, but also by their intangibles, professionalism, and compassion toward fellow citizens - sometimes unbeknownst to the officer themselves, as explained below:

In early 2021, Sergeant John Jenks was patrolling his assigned area. He stopped at a local business and encountered a patron inside. Sergeant Jenks engaged the patron briefly before leaving. Weeks later, it was learned that the patron (a military veteran) had been suffering from adverse effects with medications. At the time he encountered Sergeant Jenks, the veteran's medications were leading him into depression and even suicidal tendencies. Shortly after the encounter with Sergeant Jenks, the veteran contacted the Sheriff's Office with appreciation. He attributed Sergeant Jenks' timely smile and willingness to say "hello" to changing the trajectory of his life, giving him a chance to regroup and abandon thoughts of suicide. Subsequently, he began working with doctors to change medications, which began improving his quality of life. Incredibly, this was the second time he and Sergeant Jenks had met within several weeks – unbeknownst to them at the time. The first time, the veteran saw Sergeant Jenks at a traffic light inside a patrol car when they exchanged a simple "nod" acknowledging each other – citizen and law enforcement.



In 2021, deputies continued to be in the right place at the right time. In November, Lieutenant Todd Watkins and Corporal Kristen Genrich, along with Sergeant Richard McCoy and Deputy Amy Ates, were instrumental in saving the life of a 4 year-old-child. Corporal Genrich was working off-duty at Denton Boulevard and Racetrack Road when the mother of the little girl flagged down Corporal Genrich. The mother explained that her daughter was having difficulty breathing because the child had swallowed a plastic-marker cap. Corporal Genrich quickly assessed the child and it was clear she needed immediate emergency help. Corporal Genrich tried to stabilize her in preparation for life saving measures. Lieutenant Todd Watkins (along with Sergeant Richard McCoy and Deputy Amy Ates) arrived momentarily and began to help. The child however did not respond and was declining due to lack of oxygen. The situation became grave. Noticing the child's condition was deteriorating, Lieutenant Watkins (supervisor) made the decision to quickly transport her in his patrol car directly to Fort Walton Beach Medical Center/Emergency Room. Upon arrival, he carried the child inside where hospital staff took over, diligently working to dislodge the cap from the child's airway. As a result, the child's oxygen levels returned to normal and she was expected to make a full recovery.

While working in the District, deputies strive to apprehend dangerous criminals while helping victims, using good policing and responsiveness. In April 2021, a report of kidnapping sparked a vehicle pursuit by deputies, ultimately ending with the arrest of two individuals, plus recovery of a stolen handgun and illegal drugs. Deputies charged 29-year old Marcquies Jashun Key, and passenger, 17-year old Brashawn Lamar Alexander, with multiple felonies following a pursuit through Mary Esther. Both were charged with false imprisonment and aggravated assault with intent to commit a felony. Key was also charged with carrying a concealed weapon, fleeing and eluding law enforcement officer, possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, possession of drug equipment and attaching a license plate not assigned. Originally, deputies spotted the suspect vehicle near Hurlburt Field and attempted a traffic-stop. The driver accelerated and a pursuit occurred through Mary Esther. The vehicle spun out on Mary Esther Boulevard and the driver continued northbound in reverse, crashing into a deputy's patrol car, before being pinned-in-place by other deputies. The suspect was arrested accordingly. Deputies seized a stolen firearm as well as illegal marijuana and drug paraphernalia from inside the vehicle. Investigation revealed that both Key and Alexander had held the victim at gunpoint during the day over a drug transaction. Further, Key had eluded a nearby law enforcement agency earlier before entering Okaloosa County with the victim.



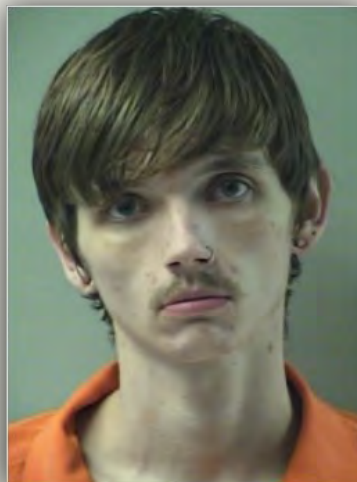
Patrol deputies and specialty units often work together to combat illegal drugs and violence in Okaloosa County. In May 2021, patrol deputies, working in collaboration with investigators, arrested two suspects following a drive-by shooting on Lowery Drive. The suspect vehicle, driven by Nija Gamble, later fled from deputies in reverse, striking a car and then continuing to flee at high speeds through the nearby Sylvania Heights community. With the car still in motion, the passenger, 31-year old Lekendrick Ingram, got out and took a tumble before running through local neighborhoods. Gamble then jumped out of the driver's side, recklessly leaving the car in drive before it struck a nearby tree on Oak Street. Both suspects fled through neighborhoods while deputies and Fort Walton Beach Police worked to catch them. Ingram was found on Hickory Street and taken into custody. Gamble entered a nearby home on Earl Street and refused to exit. With the help of an OCSO K9 Officer and canine, Gamble was found hiding inside the home and was arrested. A black bag was recovered nearby that he had possessed. The bag contained quantities of cash and illegal narcotics. In the end, Gamble was charged with resisting an officer, driving with a suspended license, possession of a controlled substance, trafficking in hydrocodone, trafficking in methamphetamine, trafficking in heroin, and more. Ingram was charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and resisting an officer.

In September, 2021, Deputies Jake Litchy and Deputy Rachel Tisdale responded to a structure fire at a local apartment complex. Two apartments were burning, but the deputies could not determine if anyone was trapped inside. The deputies breached the door and entered the residence trying to locate any victims. They determined no one was there except for a small dog, and they rescued the animal from inside. During the same incident, two citizens also entered a second unit, locating another dog inside. The second dog was determined to be a service animal and the dog was later reunited with the owner. Ultimately, the fire spread to four apartments, with two apartments as a total loss.



In July 2021, a suspect driving a stolen car led deputies on a chase near Eglin Air Force Base, Shalimar and Wright, ramming a deputy's patrol car before deputies ended the pursuit by pushing him off the roadway with their vehicles and arresting him. The suspect, 39 year-old Wendell Wright, drove into oncoming traffic and began trying to run cars off the roadway before trying to hit a patrol car. Supervisors quickly decided to end the pursuit by pushing Wright off the road with their patrol vehicles, before Wright could continue onto State Road 85 into Shalimar. No deputies or victims were injured. Wright was charged with fleeing and eluding with disregard to the safety of people or persons, grand theft of a motor vehicle, aggravated battery upon a law enforcement officers (with vehicle), possession of cocaine and other substances, and driving with a suspended license.

Citizens and law enforcement often work together – especially when children are endangered. Two individuals were found unconscious inside a car in a Mary Esther parking lot. A five-month old unrestrained child was in the back seat within reach of drug paraphernalia. The male and female, parked off Page Bacon Road, appeared to be overdosing on illegal narcotics and paraphernalia. Deputies responded and recovered two loaded syringes which tested positive for fentanyl, with a total weight of 31 total grams. Heroin also was located along with numerous prescription medications. Charges against Navarre area residents 23-year old Randy Smith and 22-year old Alexis Freeman include trafficking in fentanyl, possession of heroin and oxycodone, child neglect, and more. The child, who had been removed from the car by concerned bystanders before law enforcement arrived, was evaluated and found to be uninjured.



On December 10th 2021, Deputy Jordan Gleneck was dispatched to a simple noise complaint. While responding to the complaint, Deputy Gleneck identified a suspect as well as two potential vehicles connected to an armed burglary that had taken place in Walton County. When it was over, Deputy Gleneck had identified four suspects and vehicles in connection to the armed-burglary. His work eventually led to the recovery of all stolen property, as well as the arrests of the suspects involved.

Noteworthy Community Accomplishments

During October 2021, several members assigned to Central District helped support community causes and shopping for food each week. Deputies coordinated with volunteer members at Sylvania Heights First Baptist Church who helped cook meals and deliver food to approximately 255 people in weekly cycles during the month, including elderly and homeless, and families and children within the local area. This was a joint effort between law enforcement and self-less citizen volunteers, promoting one-to-one opportunities for deputies to engage in dialogue and fellowship concerning local issues.

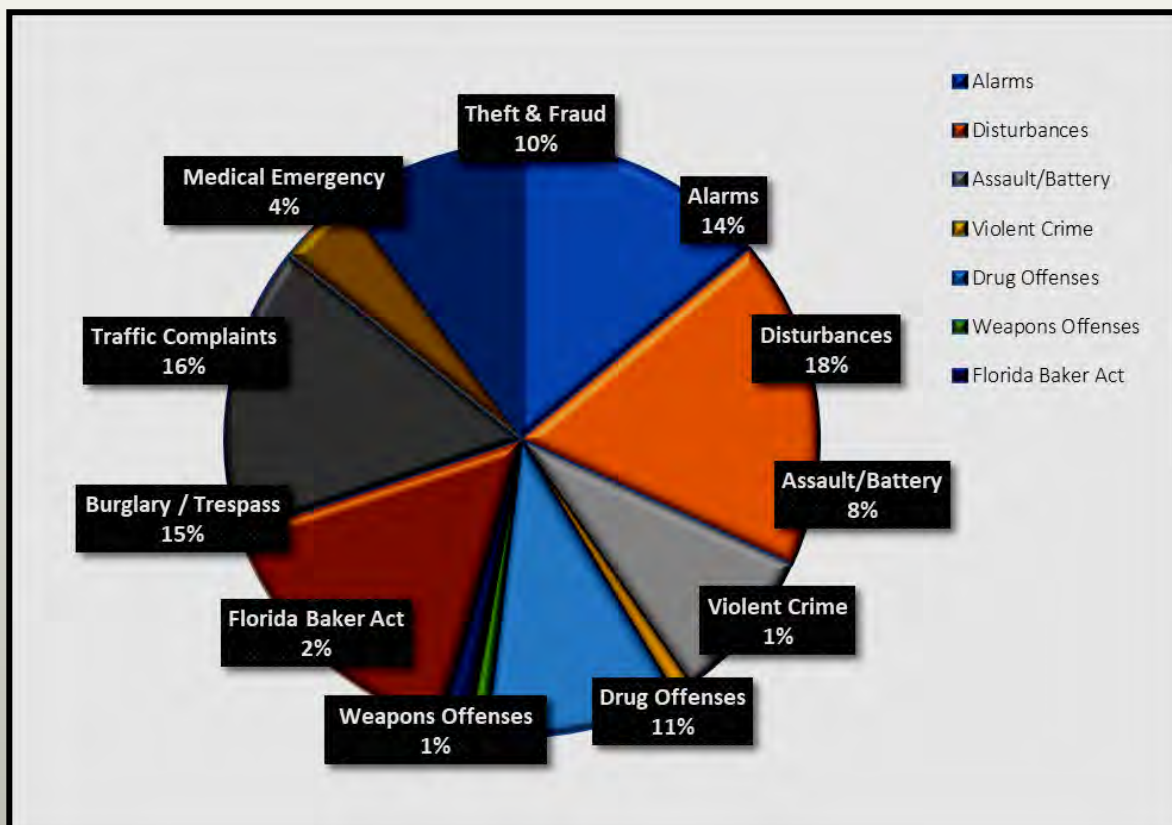


During 2021, Sergeant Donald Folley was recognized as 2021 “Big-of-the-Year” (Big Brothers and Big Sisters of NWFL). He also received special recognition from Board of County Commissioners recognizing 10 years of training and service, regarding active shooter and workplace violence.

Through the year, deputies from District 2 joined and/or participated in various specialty teams in addition to their normal duties. This includes, but is not limited to: Okaloosa County Special Response Team (SRT), Okaloosa County Sheriff’s Office Underwater Investigation Unit, Hostage Negotiation Unit (HNU), as well as agency instructors, liaison work, field training officers and more. In addition, deputies and supervisors alike worked to support civic organizations and regional fundraising / charitable entities. This includes, Deputy Eric Sheldon who recently obtained certification as a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE), useful in detecting impaired drivers in under the influence of controlled substances in addition to alcohol impairment.

Deputies provided honorable escorts for 171 local funerals with respect to family and friends of deceased persons. 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 and supported financial donations to local food charities. Deputies also participated in community events, council meetings, and various other organization events throughout the year.

Central “South” District 2
Calls Received Ratios



Central District Community Service and Activity

Assistance with Emerald Coast Crime Stoppers and Crime Prevention
Participation in Sheriff's Community Outreach Projects, Sylvania Heights
Participation in End of Watch Memorial Ruck March
Participation in Around the Bay 5K Run
Participation in 911 Memorial Tribute(s) for First Responders, with Fort Walton Beach Police
Homeowner Neighbor Association Meetings
Military Support with 7th Special Forces / Drunk Driving Recognition Class
Breast Cancer Awareness Month/Logistic Support for Motorcycle Fundraising Event
Leadership Program - Okaloosa
Attendance/Participation in Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce Meetings
Mary Esther Community Meetings / Participation in City's Vision Planning
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida
Agency Instructors and Coordinators
Christmas and Veterans Day Parades
Coaches for youth sports
Lifeguards

Promotions

Deputy Ethan Elsasser promoted to Corporal
Deputy Tia Frembgen promoted to Investigator
Corporal Brad McFall promoted to Investigator
Deputy Eric Swain promoted to Investigator
Deputy Lance Williams promoted to Corporal
Deputy Taylor Woodard promoted to Corporal
Corporal Brandon Walters promoted to Investigator
Lieutenant Donald Folley promoted to Lieutenant
Lieutenant Grady Carpenter promoted to District Captain (Central "South")
Lieutenant Todd Watkins promoted to District Captain (North) *

Commendations

Deputy Taylor Woodard -(5 years of Service Award)
Deputy Tia Frembgen (5 years of Service Award)
Deputy Casey Dennis (Medal of Merit)
Deputy Steve Weyer (Medal of Merit)
Sergeant Donald Folley (2021 "Big of the Year") Big Brothers/Big Sisters of NWFL
And 10 Year Service Recognition by BOCC for Active Shooter/Workplace Violence Training
Deputy Chad Bernacki (Performance Award)





The East District (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. It 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 assigned to the Stahlman Office front desk.

In 2021, as we continued through the COVID pandemic, Florida remained open and the East District was a top tourist destination within the State. 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 an approximate population of 14,000. During the height of the season, the tourist population in 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. In 2021, calls for service in the City of Destin reached 39,062.

EAST DISTRICT STATISTICS OF INTEREST

District 3 Calls for Service 70,831

Offense Reports	3,840
Traffic Stops	7,758
Arrests/NTA	1,378
Traffic Crash Responses	2,233
Warrant Service/Attempts	688
Narcotics Offenses	491
Burglaries	272
Homicides	4
Watch Orders	3,503



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 the goal of Sheriff Aden and his staff 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.

East District deputies continuously balance the importance of proactive enforcement practices and community oriented policing. 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

Provided United Way Board Member

Provided Kiwanis member

Over 96 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

EAST DISTRICT INDIVIDUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

District Commendations

Deputy Roberts Willis x2

Deputy Justin Spence

Deputy Keegan Behrens

Deputy Michael Powell

Deputy Niklas Mlynarski

Deputy Shane Bininger

Deputy James Atkins

Promotions

Capt. Michael Howell promoted to Major

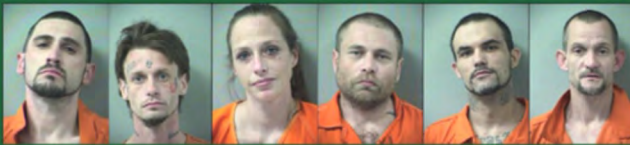
Lt. Matthew Abbott promoted to Captain

Dep. Jarret Bristol promoted to Corporal then to Investigator





NARCOTICS SEARCH WARRANT



Corey Jones Billy Williamson Elizabeth Brown Kelly Hutto Roy Chammiss Jeffrey Hawkins



CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION



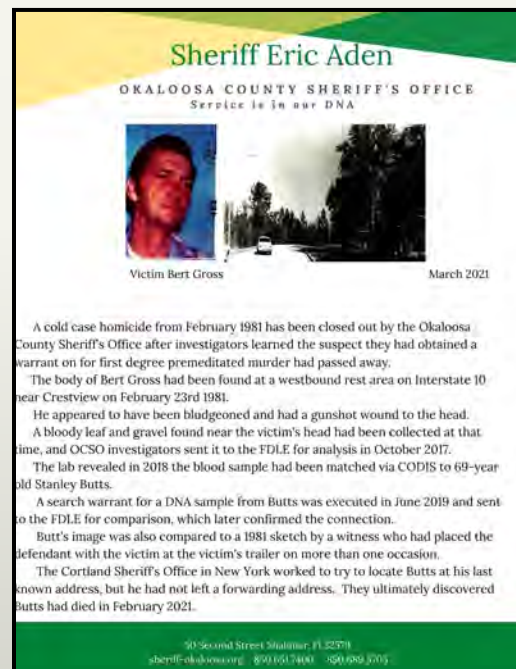
The Criminal Investigations Division (CID) is comprised of five sections: Criminal Investigations Section (Violent/Special Victims Unit, Property Crimes, Crimes against Children, Financial Crimes and Polygraph), Special Investigations Section (Multi-Agency Drug Task Force, Fugitive Warrants, Homeland Security Unit and Street Crimes Unit), Crime Prevention, and the Evidence/Crime Scene Section. Many of our Investigators participate as Federal Task Force Officers with our federal partners to include Federal Bureau of Investigations, Drug Enforcement Administration, Alcohol Tobacco & Firearms, Office of Homeland Security, United States Marshal Violent Fugitive Task Force, and the Internal Revenue Service. Participation in the task forces allows our agency to utilize the resources and authority of the federal government to help arrest and prosecute defendants who conduct criminal activity outside of our county and state but have a direct impact on the citizens of our county.

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS SECTION (CIS)

In 2021, the Criminal Investigations Section conducted approximately 2,313 felony criminal investigations. Of the 2,313 investigations opened, 1,381 cases were closed, for a 60% case closure rate with 263 arrests.

Investigator Mike Hogan and Investigator Al Vafides conducted 112 polygraph examinations. These Investigators not only conduct polygraphs for criminal investigations but primarily conduct polygraphs for those seeking employment with our agency.

Criminal Investigations Section made agency history by solving an unprecedented four Cold Case Homicides and one Cold Case Sexual Assault occurring as long ago as 1981. Teamwork, advancement in technology, and the new partnership with the Office of the State Attorney led to the arrest of seven defendants for Homicide charges and one defendant for Sexual Battery. The closure of this many Cold Cases in one year has never happened before in agency history and is a testament to the tenacity of the Investigators and cooperation amongst our partners with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Office of the State Attorney First Judicial Circuit.



Defendant: Stanley Butts

Victim: Bert Gross

Cold Case (1981)

DNA evidence was obtained in the 1981 murder investigation of Bert Gross which identified the defendant, Stanley Butts. Evidence was presented to the Office of the State Attorney and an arrest warrant was submitted for Butts who resided in New York. Investigators found the defendant Butts died of natural cause's weeks before the arrest warrant was approved. This case was closed with the death of the offender.



Defendant: Mary Liza Victim: Marseline Liza Cold Case (2002)

The defendant, Mary Liza, was charged with the 2002 death of her 2-year-old daughter Marseline Liza. New evidence was presented to the Office of the State Attorney which showed the defendant caused the death of her 2-year-old daughter by what is commonly referred to as "Shaken Baby Syndrome." Liza awaits trial for the charge of Felony Murder.

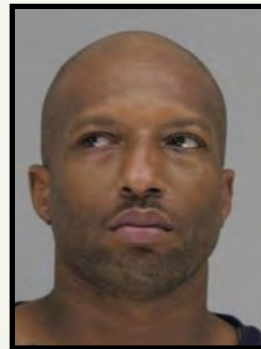


Defendant: Cornelius Lee Victim: Eric Roberts Cold Case (2007)


The defendant, Cornelius Lee, was charged in the 2007 stabbing death of Eric Roberts which occurred at an Okaloosa County nightspot. New evidence in the case was presented to the Office of the State Attorney which resulted in the arrest of Lee. Lee awaits trial for the charge of Felony Murder.

Victim: Lois Gonzalez Cold Case (2005)


Defendants: Victor Stanton, Adrian Watson, Marcus Snowden, Bennie Richardson



The four defendants in this case were charged with the 2005 shooting death of victim Lois Gonzalez. New evidence and witness testimony were obtained and presented to the Office of the State Attorney which resulted in the arrest of the four defendants. All four defendants are currently awaiting trial for Felony Murder.



Sheriff Eric Aden
OKALOOSA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Service is in our DNA



The observed partial DNA profile is greater than 700 billion times more likely to occur if the sample originated from Richard Elliot Lane than from an unrelated individual.

March 30, 2021

An arrest has been made in a 38 year old sexual battery cold case - thanks to a DNA hit and the perseverance of Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Investigator Kelly Henderson.

Suspect Richard Lane, who was 21 at the time of the attack in June 1983, is now 58. He was ultimately located in Las Vegas, where he is currently being held until when he can be extradited back to Okaloosa County.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcKV1CFBS8Y>

50 Second Street Shalimar, FL 32579
sheriff-okaloosa.org 850.651.7400 850.689.5705



Defendant: Richard Lane

Sexual Battery Cold Case (1983)

The defendant, Richard Lane, was arrested for committing a sexual battery in 1983. New DNA evidence was obtained in the case which ultimately identified Lane as the suspect. Lane was arrested and is currently awaiting trial for the charge of sexual battery.

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS SECTION (SIS)

SIS Investigators conducted investigations on over 333 cases involving drug trafficking organizations, violent crime/fugitive apprehensions, covert operations and cybercrimes. Of the 333 cases, 203 cases were closed, resulting in a 61% closure rate and 96 arrests. This included investigating dangerous predators who engaged in distributing and/or possessing child pornography or exploitation of minors. SIS handled 197 Crime Stoppers/intelligence tips from citizens regarding suspected criminal activity. 94 Crime Stoppers tips were closed out resulting in a 48% closure rate. SIS Investigators authored and/or executed 176 search warrants.

Investigators executed over \$1,700,307.00 in combined asset forfeitures/seizures. Investigators recovered 24 firearms in Okaloosa County either reported as stolen and/or used by drug offenders in furtherance of drug trafficking offenses.

NARCOTICS SEARCH WARRANT



Corey Jones

Billy Williamson

Elizabeth Brown

Kelly Hutto

Roy Chamniss

Jeffrey Hawkins



**Below are a few examples of specific casework by SIS in 2021.
Although some cases began in 2019 and 2020, most were ongoing through 2021:**

During 2021, 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 and Crestview Police Departments, Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office, Gulf Breeze Police Department, Florida Highway Patrol and others. They focused on disrupting and dismantling problematic and larger-scale drug trafficking networks affecting the Gulf Coast region.

“Operation Whipslider”



Beginning in June 2019, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, partnering with the Drug Enforcement Administration, began investigating a Drug Trafficking Organization responsible for the transportation to and subsequent distribution of kilogram amounts of cocaine, along with various other narcotics, within Okaloosa County. Throughout the course of this investigation to date numerous search warrants were executed, resulting in the seizure of approximately two kilograms of cocaine, 272 grams of heroin, 1245 grams of marijuana, 678 grams of various prescription pills, and six firearms. Furthermore, a total of \$780,268 in US Currency and assets were seized (\$245,928 in US Currency, \$264,290 in Jewelry, and \$270,050 in vehicles).

This investigation is still on going and numerous arrests are expected.

“Operation Paint Shop”



In May 2020, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office and the Drug Enforcement Administration began investigating a Drug Trafficking Organization responsible for distributing large amounts of methamphetamine and fentanyl pills. One overdose death was linked to this Drug Trafficking Organization. Through various investigative techniques, numerous search warrants were executed, resulting in the seizure of approximately one (1) kilogram of fentanyl. More than two hundred (200) grams of methamphetamine were also seized. Along with the narcotics, a total of \$191,439.52 in US Currency and assets were seized (US Currency \$114,264.52; Vehicles \$77,175.00).

“Operation Press Your Luck”



In October 2020, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office and the Drug Enforcement Administration began investigating the distribution of counterfeit prescription pills, containing fentanyl. Through various investigative techniques numerous search warrants were executed, which resulted in the seizure of over \$10,000 suspected fentanyl pills, forty (40) grams of methamphetamine, a pills press, and various other unidentified powders used in the manufacturing of counterfeit prescription pills. Also, approximately \$275,000 in US Currency and assets were seized (approximately \$115,000 in US Currency, \$82,975 in vehicles, and an estimated \$75,000 in jewelry). So far, one arrest has been made, but others are expected.

“Operation You’ve Got Mail”



Operation “You’ve Got Mail” began when SIS Investigators were alerted to suspicious mail packages entering Okaloosa County from Puerto Rico. Information was received that the defendant, Kendall Brown, was receiving multiple kilograms of cocaine through the mail. These packages were being sent to multiple locations throughout Okaloosa County and to one of Brown’s residences located in Atlanta, GA. As a result of the investigation the following seizures occurred after the execution of search warrants during a joint operation with the Drug Enforcement Administration: twelve kilograms of cocaine, five firearms, over \$20,000 in US Currency, and three vehicles purchased with drug proceeds. The defendant Brown and an accomplice were ultimately arrested on trafficking in cocaine and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. He and his accomplice are awaiting trial.

HOMELAND SECURITY/INTELLIGENCE UNIT

The Homeland Security Unit is comprised of four Intelligence and Cyber Crimes Investigators, four Criminal Analysts, and one Civilian Forensic Technician. The unit investigated 256 cases and made 88 arrests during 2021. Its investigations focus primarily on Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC), Human Trafficking, Criminal Intelligence gathering, and digital forensics.

Below are two of the operations the unit conducted in 2021:

“OPERATION NIGHT-OWL”

This four-night multi-agency undercover chatting operation resulted in 14 arrests for various crimes involving the solicitation of minors for sex.



The poster for Operation Night Owl features the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office logo and Sheriff Eric Aden's name. It displays 12 mugshots of suspects in a 3x4 grid. The text on the poster includes the date August 13, 2021, and a detailed description of the operation, which targeted online solicitation of children by sexual predators. The poster also lists participating agencies and provides contact information for the Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff Eric Aden
OKALOOSA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Service is in our DNA

OPERATION NIGHT OWL

OKALOOSA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
SHERIFF OKALOOSA.DRG

August 13, 2021

A five day operation this month targeting the on-line solicitation of children by sexual predators has already netted a dozen arrests and counting, with charges pending against numerous other individuals and more suspects to be identified.

Undercover law enforcement officers posed as juveniles in popular chat groups, social media apps, message boards, and gaming apps and were contacted by adult males who solicited them for sex and/or sent sexual images.

The men were arrested when they turned up at specific pre-designated locations for what they thought would be sexual contact with the juveniles.

Charges range from traveling to meet a minor for sex to use of a computer to seduce, solicit, and lure a child.

"We can never let down our guard for a second when it comes to protecting our children from these sexual predators who are always looking for opportunities to prey on them," said Sheriff Eric Aden.

"I want to thank all the participating agencies in our regional Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force who took part in Operation Night Owl and who focus on this mission daily."

Agencies include the OCSO, Office of the State Attorney, FDLE, Walton, Escambia and Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Offices, Crestview Police Department, U.S. Office of Homeland Security, Air Force Office of Special Investigations, and Naval Criminal Investigations Service out of Jacksonville.

50 Second Street Shalimar, FL 32579
sheriff-okaloosa.org 850.651.7400 850.689.5705

“OPERATION SAFETY NET”

During this operation, members of the Homeland Security Unit teamed up with the School Resource Officers to locate registered sex offenders operating unregistered social media accounts. The operation resulted in the arrest of 24 individual sex offenders.

STREET CRIMES UNIT

During 2021, Street Crimes completed 418 offense reports along with making 369 arrests. Due to a spike in gang related homicides in Okaloosa County in 2021, the Street Crimes Unit focused efforts on suppressing violent gang activity by conducting pro-active patrols in high-crime areas and also worked jointly with Probation and Parole to conduct house checks of known violent offenders. They also partnered with the Department of Juvenile Justice to conduct house checks of juveniles on probation who are known violent offenders and burglars. Due to low manning on Patrol and the School Resource Officer Program, the Street Crimes Unit willingly stepped up and filled these vacancies for a good portion of 2021.



EVIDENCE AND CRIME SCENE UNIT

2021 end of the year total amount of items stored within the Evidence Unit: 120,477; Total amount of evidence items received in 2021: 18,456; Total amount of evidence items purged/destroyed: 16,686. Total requests via Help Desk tickets: 2,388. 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: 896

FDLE Firearm Eligibility System Checks completed: 298

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION PROMOTIONS

Sergeant Michael Smith promoted to Lieutenant

Sergeant Dennis Fields promoted to Lieutenant

Sergeant Heath Hehl promoted to Lieutenant

Investigator Nick Grundin promoted to Sergeant

Investigator David Finke promoted to Sergeant

Investigator Garret McCoy promoted to Sergeant

Investigator Joe Trimboli promoted to Sergeant

Investigator Bob Thacker promoted to Sergeant

Investigator Jessica Trimboli promoted to Sergeant

Corporal Tyler Williamson promoted to Investigator

Corporal Jarret Bristol promoted to Investigator

Deputy Sheriff Tia Frembgen promoted to Investigator

Deputy Sheriff Eric Swain promoted to Investigator

Deputy Sheriff Brad McFall promoted to Investigator

Deputy Sheriff Brannon Small promoted to Investigator

Corporal Rob Robinson promoted to Investigator

Deputy Sheriff Aaron Pitman promoted to Investigator

Corporal Brandon Walters promoted to Investigator

Deputy Sheriff Colin Savoie promoted to Investigator

Deputy Sheriff Brandon Mundt promoted to Investigator





Consolidated Emergency Communications Center

The Consolidated Emergency Communications Center receives all emergency (911) 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. The Communications Division is staffed with fifty-four full-time employees, four part-time employees, and one Lieutenant.



The Communications section obtained reaccreditation in 2021 from the Florida Police Accreditation Coalition as a FLA-TAC certified agency. FLA-TAC's mission is "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." The Sheriff's Office Communications section obtained accreditation to ensure we provide our citizens and guests with best standards and practices available from our center. The Sheriff's Office also has 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 of service to our residents and visitors alike.

Calls Answered

911 Emergency Calls - 138,099 (37% call increase compared to 2020)

Non-Emergency Medical, Fire, and Law Calls – 215,514 (13% call decrease compared to 2020)



Total Communications Officer Training

New hire training - 4558 hours

Cross-training towards Tri-Discipline Certification - 1971 hours

Public Safety Telecommunicator Certification training - 240 hours

Communications Training Officer Certification - 72 hours

Total: 6,873 hours of training. This training ensures the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Communications Division maintains a proficient and professional Communications Center.

Phone calls to the Communications Center - 353,613 (Averages 955 calls per day)

Communications Promotions/Appointments

911 Coordinator Christine Cooper appointed to the 911 State Board by Governor Ron DeSantis.

Communications Assistant Supervisor Ryan Jaycocks promoted to Communications Supervisor.

Communications Training Officer Ryan Jacobs appointed to Communications Assistant Supervisor.

Communications Training Officer Jade Prokop appointed to Communications Assistant Supervisor.

Communications Longevity Certificates

Communications Supervisor Shannon King – 30 years

Training Coordinator Jennifer Lee – 20 years

Communications Training Officer Heather Derrick – 20 years

Lieutenant Nesli Suhi-Moore – 15 years

Mike Miller – 15 years

Communications Supervisor Ryan Jaycocks – 15 years

Communications Officer Steven Moose – 5 years

Communications Officer Cherri Butcher -5 years

Communications Officer Jordan Denius – 5 years



Leadership Training Courses

Communications Supervisor Ryan Duval graduated from Leadership Okaloosa from Northwest Florida State College.

Communications Assistant Manager Audrey Adams graduated from the Florida Leadership Academy hosted by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

Communications Officer Commendations

ROSC Award - In June of 2021, Okaloosa County Communications partnered with Okaloosa County Emergency Medical Services in response to the ROSC program. ROSC is accomplished by performing CPR on a patient who no longer has effective breathing or is in Cardiac Arrest. The patient is considered a life saved when they have been discharged from the hospital and have a favorable neurological outcome.

Awarded to: Lauren Hockman (twice)

Taylor Burkhart (twice)

Lindsay Nix

Anja Moon

Tri –Level Discipline Commendation - In January 2019, our agency consolidated dispatch services with Okaloosa County Public Safety (EMS/Fire). Earning this commendation means that a Communications Officer has completed training and received a competency-based sign-off evaluation for all three radio disciplines including EMS/FD/ and All three primary Law Enforcement radio channels. To obtain Tri-Level discipline the Communications Officer must also be trained and received a competency-based sign-off evaluation for answering all phones lines and 911 calls. Completion of this level of training takes a minimum of eight months to obtain.



District/Division Level Commendation

The District/Division Level Commendation may be presented to any member of the agency for noteworthy effort and diligence in the performance of their assigned duties.

Awarded to: George Deshields, Taylor Burkhart, Julie Strehle (awarded twice), Mike Miller (awarded twice), Rhonda Walker, Jordan Denius, Casey Bilbrey (awarded three times), Denis Jones, Jennifer Cabral, Kristin Irons, Lauren Hockman, Ryan Jaycocks, Jennifer King, Brian Freeman, Karly Brown, Isaac Roberts, Deputy Shelby Carroll



Marine/Beach/Dive Team



The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Special Operations Beach/Marine Unit exceeded yearly goals. As was the case in 2020 and due to continued COVID concerns, outdoor activities continued to increase in 2021. The Marine/Beach Unit continued with aggressive patrols and ensured the safety of those recreating on the waters and on the beaches of Okaloosa County. The Marine/Beach unit activity increased in 2021 due to the busiest tourist season in the history of Okaloosa County.

Calls for Service	7,091
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Vessel Stops	2,660
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Security Checks	1,782
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Boating Citations	324
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Arrests	721 (NTA's included)
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Distressed Swimmers	210
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The Marine Unit promotes boating safety through continued participation in several national boating safety campaigns which 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 wrist bands to children during vessel stops promoting this campaign. Additionally, the Marine Unit participated in the “Wear It” campaign, a worldwide effort focused on responsible boating. It encourages boaters to always wear a life jacket while on the water. Units were promoting this campaign mainly to ensure children under six years old were wearing life jackets when they were on a vessel under twenty-six feet in length. Several citations were issued throughout the season to livery (rental) and private vessels violating this state statute. In association with The Boardwalk (Saltwater Restaurants, Inc.) and the “Wear It” campaign, the Marine unit had shirts made and then handed them out to children on vessels who were properly wearing their life jackets.



Boating Under the Influence (BUI) enforcement in Okaloosa County is always a primary focus and continued into 2021. Several of the new members of the Marine Unit participated in enhanced BUI detection training with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Sgt. Kyle Corbitt attended a NASBLA BUI/Seated SFST instructor course in July 2021 to become a certified instructor and can now instruct OCSO deputies on BUI detection and Seated Standardized Field Sobriety Exercises.



The diligence of the members of the Marine Unit resulted in over 83 BUI arrests in 2021 and an overall increase for the fourth consecutive year. In 2021, Okaloosa County ranked 1st in the State of Florida for BUI arrests (total between OCSO and FWC). The 83 BUI arrests by OCSO alone ranked 1st in the entire state of Florida by any sheriff's office or police department.



The Marine Unit participated in 2021 “Operation Dry Water”, which consisted of 23 participating 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. At its conclusion, Deputy Daniel Williams was selected by NASBLA as the Okaloosa County Sheriff’s Office “Operation Dry Water Deputy of the Year” for his efforts in boating safety and BUI enforcement.

For their efforts in BUI enforcement, Deputy Daniel Williams (month of November) and Sgt. Kyle Corbitt (month of September) were recognized nationally as the MADD National Officers of the month.



The members of the Marine Unit were essential in supporting the Emerald Coast Powerboat Poker Run and the annual Billy Bowlegs Pirate Festival. Both events draw vessels to Okaloosa County from across the nation. The Billy Bowlegs Pirate Festival is one of the nation’s longest-running and most popular pirate festivals. The Marine Unit again was tasked during this event to address unsanctioned events occurring in the shallow waters between the Fort Walton Beach Landing and the Intracoastal Waterway. These unsanctioned activities attract approximately 1,000 vessels and upwards of 10,000 people.

A large number of marine 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 liv-eries (rental companies) to ensure compliance with boating safety state statutes. These continued efforts will ultimately help reduce marine violations and increase safety for their customers and other boaters. Okaloosa County ranked number six for vessel crashes statewide.



The Marine Unit participated in and 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 to also assist with BUI enforcement. Numerous illegal charters were identified and charged federally by USCG personnel for operating illegal charters. USCG LEO officers also provided extra manpower for distressed swimmers, BUI's, and distressed boaters. They were a great asset to have due to all of our vessels having single operators.

One maritime position is funded by the City of Destin and continues to enforce the city marine ordinances and regulate the Destin Harbor. This funded position fosters relationships with local businesses and is the intermediary for local maritime activities. The deputy assigned to 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 1,241 calls for service, generated 574 waterway security checks, initiated 435 vessel stops, issued 70 uniform boating citations, and had 14 BUI's.

Deputies assigned to the Tourist Development Council (TDC) marine funded positions continue to be a consistent presence around Crab Island, overseeing the large crowds and high vessel traffic. Together these Deputies collectively balanced 1,843 calls for service and initiated 1,180 vessel stops. They continue to be persistent towards enforcing Boating Under the Influence and county wake zones. TDC Marine positions had 29 BUI arrests in 2021.

One of the Marine TDC positions participated with the local “Snowbird” community and attended meetings to address their concerns. Deputies attended meetings to educate the “Snowbird” visitors on trending crimes, crime prevention, and personal safety.

The Marine Unit continues to build upon our 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 providing additional law enforcement resources to assist with BUI investigations, arrests, and disturbances.



Beach Unit

Year after year, Okaloosa County continues to be a “Hot Spot” for Spring Break activities. Members of the Beach Unit were tasked with managing the busy Okaloosa County beaches and ensuring safety for locals, tourists, and spring breakers. The 2021 Spring Break operation started at the beginning of March 2021 and ended at the end of April 2021. When OCSO enacted the operation and daily patrols, they addressed underage possession of alcohol, narcotics, and miscellaneous calls for service. Over the course of the 51 days, the members of the Beach Unit initiated 422 of the 700 total arrests.



During 2021, the beach unit consisted of two deputies funded by the TDC. Together these Deputies collectively balanced 2,352 calls for service and initiated 727 security checks. The beach units initiated 564 arrests during 2021.

Throughout the 100 days of summer, 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. The Beach Unit was instrumental in assisting Destin and Okaloosa County Life Guards in educating beachgoers on the dangers associated with the currents, the sun, and the rapidly changing weather conditions.

Dive Team



The Dive Unit consists of twelve agency members who attend training and respond to dive rescue incidents in addition to their regular assignments. In 2021, all members received advanced training in several diving specialty courses. Members received training and certifications in advanced open water, rescue diver, dry suit, full face mask, emergency first response, emergency O2 provider, Nitrox, underwater navigation, search and recovery, and night diver. Members also participated throughout the county in several clean-up (removing trash from the underwater environment) dives with non-profit organizations.



In 2021, Dive Team members were unfortunately required for the recovery of several drowning victims. Members were able to recover three drowning victims throughout the year, which helped provide closure to the victims' families.







Professional Compliance and Accreditation

Chaplaincy

The Calendar year 2021 continued to press the Chaplaincy to new levels of service. Over **2,992** calls for service hours were completed throughout the year. With fewer available chaplains, the majority of those hours were completed by Head Chaplain Larry Carter and Chaplain Timothy Sheldon. A breakdown of calls for service logged in the CAD are as follows:

District One	25 Calls for Service
District Two	82 Calls for Service
District Three	27 Calls for Service

The Sheriff's Office men and women sponsored almost 250 children at a value of approximately \$65,000.00 in donated funds for the annual Angel Tree Program, an increase of twice the number of children and of nearly \$46,000.00 from the previous year. Agency employees also reached a new level of participation in the annual Christmas Tree decorating contest when 360 miniature Christmas Trees designated for Hospice patients were completed.

Special Note: Losing Deputy Michael Neau in 2021 was also a major event for the Chaplaincy. From Deputy Neau's entrance into the hospital to his burial, his family received around the clock service while simultaneously meeting the daily demands of agency.

To end the year, an employee's home was consumed in a fire for a total lost. The Chaplaincy took the lead in coordinating housing and relief funds within hours of the event. As result, the employee and his family were able to enjoy the Christmas season with minimum interruption.

OCSO Chaplains continue to provide stellar service with less Chaplains. Their level of professionalism, mastery of chaplain's skills, and desire to serve has helped countless individuals within and even outside of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office.





Accreditation

In May 2021, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Combined Communications Center had its first Florida Telecommunications Accreditation Commission (FLA-TAC) reaccreditation onsite. The onsite was flawless and noteworthy for a few reasons. First, an agency's first reaccreditation onsite is always the most difficult as it is the first-time compliance must be proven for the preceding three years. Next, COVID continued to create unique challenges for onsite logistics. Our onsite was conducted entirely remotely. We utilized dedicated staff members to carry electronic devices around the Communications center while hosting assessors over Zoom. This allowed remote assessors to conduct in-person interviews with staff members and to observe those items required for accreditation. Finally, the FLA-TAC Program Manager asked our agency to be the first agency to conduct the onsite assessment by using the newly developed PowerDMS Assessment for FLA-TAC.

Our agency was asked to be the first because of our agency's reputation with accreditation excellence. Historically, all FLA-TAC onsites were conducted with paper files. In addition to building flawless files, Inspector Roberta Wagner and Assistant Manager Audrey Adams were asked to speak at the June conference to FLA-TAC commissioners and staff about the PowerDMS product and how it could be made better.

The process of shifting from full Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) accreditation and comparative compliance Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation (CFA) accreditation to full CFA accreditation was begun. There were challenges to building the newly added files associated with full CFA accreditation. Once the CFA onsite in April of 2022 is complete, the accreditation process for the Sheriff's Office will be streamlined, more relevant, and less expensive.



Professional Development Unit

The Professional Development Unit within the Office of Professional Standards and the Career Development Program provides career guidance, recognition of accomplishments, and financial incentives for non-supervisory deputies and Communications officers within the Sheriff's Office. It sets out a distinct career track for those who want to go beyond the minimum requirements of their jobs and to be recognized and rewarded for their extra efforts to excel. The program is based upon a system that 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.

2021 Career Development Program accomplishments

Deputy Lisa Worth achieved her Career Deputy I

Deputy Thomas Henry achieved his Career Deputy II

Ryan Jacobs achieved his Basic Communications Officer

Taylor Burkhart achieved her Advanced Communications Officer

Ryan Duval achieved his Advanced Communications Officer

Tiffany Prokop achieved her Advanced Communications Officer

Lindsay Nix achieved her Master Communications Officer

2021 Advanced leadership training

Chief Deputy Kenneth Lapee – FCJEI Chief Executive Leadership Seminar

Major Michael Howell – FCJEI Executive Leadership Seminar

Captain Lenny Holloway – FBI-LEEDA Executive Leadership Institute (completing the FBI-LEEDA trilogy)

Captain Chad Rewis – FBI-LEEDA Supervisor Leadership Institute

Captain Kevin Kirkpatrick – FCJEI Senior Leadership Program

Captain Matthew Abbott – FCJEI Senior Leadership Program

Communications Assistant Director Audrey Adams – FBI-LEEDA Supervisor Leadership Institute

Communications Assistant Director Audrey Adams – FCJEI Florida Leadership Academy

Records Supervisor Regina Godwin – NWFSC Leadership Okaloosa

Sergeant Travis Topolski – FCJEI Florida Leadership Academy

Sergeant Branden Findley – NWFSC Leadership Okaloosa

Sergeant Debra Stevenson – NWFSC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

Sergeant Mark Kuntz – NWFSC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

Investigator Aaron Pitman – NWFSC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

Investigator Jarret Bristol – NWFSC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

Corporal Tony Wilhelm – NWFSC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

Corporal Ethan Elsasser – NWFSC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

Deputy Sheriff Brian Muhlbach – NWFSC Criminal Justice Leadership Academy

Intra-Agency Training

With the pandemic taking place in 2021, in-person training was modified to meet CDC Guidelines. As with prior years, the unit continued to provide firearms training to the citizens of Okaloosa County which facilitates the training necessary to obtain a Concealed Weapons Permit. The unit conducted 6 two-day Citizens Firearms Safety Courses, training 60 citizens, this reduction is largely due to CoVID-19 restrictions.

In 2021, OCSO employees attended 9,491 training hours outside of our agency and 5,500 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.

6,727 hours of online training programs were completed through various websites outside of the agency. Internally, our own “PowerDMS” virtual training system provided 3,933 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.



Other Professional Development Section Accomplishments

- Continued partnering with Northwest Florida State College 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 help educate the public on the dangers of 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, including Team One, Centrifuge Training, Wright Shooting Concepts, Safariland, IPTM, and Tactical Energetic Entry Systems to name just a few. These relationships have allowed us to host multiple courses, drawing law enforcement officers from as far away as Denmark, and from throughout the Southeastern United States. In addition to bringing in dozens of officers from outside of 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, MILO 300 Theatre simulator. This “state-of-the-art simulator” 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.

- Further range improvements completed in 2021 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 one more area of saving taxpayer money during remediation activities. A new advanced “breacher’s range” was also built in the area of our rifle bay, creating one of a very few explosive capable ranges in the region.

- Construction of the Sheriff Larry Ashley Training Complex 10,000 square foot training building was completed. The training building is now fully operational and consists of offices for training staff, two large classrooms, and an area for defensive tactics.



- Managed the Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP), which is 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. 46 sworn members entered the program in 2021. We also recruited and helped develop five (5) new successful Field Training Officers as part of the OCSO FTEP.

- Facilitated the promotional process for Corporal, Investigator and Sergeant for the year 2021. With the Sheriff's Office Consolidated Dispatch we added the position of Communications Supervisor to the promotional process.



K9 Training Program

The Sheriff's Office K9 Unit currently consists of eight certified teams. Six 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.

<u>Statistics:</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
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Calls for Service	8288	10,217
Traffic Stops	1187	1792
K-9 Assists	1901	2180
Narcotic Checks	1134	1071
Explosive Checks	627	1503
Suspect Searches	161	323
Warrant Services	106	143
Arrests	425	517
Stolen Firearms Recovered	15	29

The K9 Unit overcame many challenges in 2021, including new assignments, new patrol deputies supporting them and new supervision. The teams quickly adapted to the changes and excelled in their production throughout the year. The K9 Unit exceeded production in almost every area over the previous year. Because of the efforts of the K9 Unit, a large number of criminals were arrested, and even better, a large number of illegal narcotics were removed from the streets of Okaloosa County.

In March, the unit traveled to Pensacola, Florida for the United States Police Canine Association Patrol Dog Trial. The patrol certification consisted of 4 days of stringent certification tests in areas such as obedience, agility, search work, and apprehension work. The narcotics detection phase of the certification consisted of searches of vehicles and buildings. The explosive detection phase of the certification consisted of successful passing of the FBI's Odor Recognition Test (ORT), parcels, buildings, and vehicles.





Of the eight OCSO teams in attendance, all achieved certification without issue and seven of the handlers walked away with awards for their performance. Sergeant Tony Kelly- K9 Rico placed 14th in Patrol, Deputy Royce Brooks- K9 Bruno placed 14th in patrol, Deputy Cutler Petersen- K9 Merlin placed 15th in Patrol. Deputy Tony Costantini- K9 Burt along with Deputy Joey Haun- K9 Figment took 4th place in the 2-Man Departmental Team. Sergeant Tony Kelly- K9 Rico, Deputy Zach Putnam- K9 Skip, Deputy Cutler Petersen- K9 Merlin, and Deputy Royce Brooks- K9 Bruno took home 2nd place in the 4-Man Departmental Team. Deputy Brian Beyhl and his explosive canine, K9 Ivory took 1st place in Indoor search, 5th place overall in explosive detection, and 2nd place in the 2-Man Interdepartmental team with his partner from Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office. It was a great showing from all teams.



Later in March, the OCSO K9 Unit hosted the world-renown Franco Angelini, better known as the K9 Bite Doctor. Angelini taught an exhaustive 4-day class on the proper techniques of being a professional K9 decoy. At the end of the week, the 13 handlers from all over the South walked away with certificates and a better appreciation for how important the art of decoying truly is to the development of a successful K9 team.

In May, Sergeant Kelly and Deputy Duenas hosted and instructed the 2-week Florida Department of Law Enforcement K9 Team Instructor Course to 10 handlers from all over the state of Florida. This was the first time the course had been hosted in our area.

In November, the unit hosted the United States Police Canine Association 2021 Narcotics Mini Trial and Certification. The event was successful and saw over 40 teams, from all over the panhandle and South Alabama, in attendance. The certification consisted of narcotics searches of rooms and vehicles. The certification proved challenging for many but all OCSO teams certified with no issues.





Awards/Commendations:

In April Sergeant Kelly- K9 Rico, Deputy Joey Haun- K9 Figment, and Deputy Brooks- K9 Bruno all received recognition for their efforts on combating crime through the United States Police Canine Association. All three were involved in criminal cases which were recognized as USPCA Case of the 1st Quarter.

Deputy Haun- K9 Figment - Detector Case of the Quarter

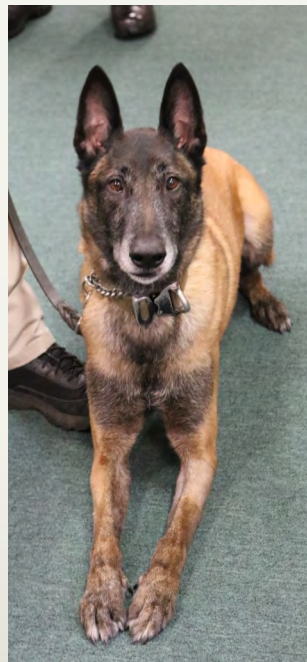
On 03/22/21, deputies with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office conducted a traffic stop on the suspect's vehicle for having an activated underglow blue light kit on the car. Once the vehicle stopped, the suspect tried to exit the vehicle and enter a residence before being physically detained. Deputies requested the assistance of Deputy Sheriff Joey Haun and his K9 partner, FIGMENT. K9 Figment conducted a free air sniff of the suspect's vehicle and gave a positive alert to the presence of narcotic odor emitting from the car. During a search of the vehicle, deputies located 62 grams of crystal methamphetamine packaged for sale, 1 gram of cocaine HCL, 76 tablets of Alprazolam, two grams of suspected heroin/fentanyl mixture, and paraphernalia associated with distribution. The suspect was charged with trafficking in methamphetamine, possession of a controlled substance—three counts, and possession of drug paraphernalia. Thanks to the actions of Deputy Haun and K9 Figment, these dangerous drugs were taken off the streets and were unable to cause further harm to the citizens of Okaloosa County.

Deputy Brooks - K9 Bruno - Patrol Case of the Quarter

On 03/10/21, the suspect violated a No Contact Domestic Violence Injunction (DVI) where the suspect's wife and one of his juvenile daughters were identified as the petitioners/victims. The suspect broke into the residence through a locked back door but fled upon being discovered by a witness. On 03/12/21, the victim received a telephone call stating the suspect was going to kill her. Upon arrival, deputies were unable to locate the suspect. On 03/20/21, the suspect entered the victim's residence and awaited her return to the home. The suspect fled from the residence when his juvenile daughters discovered him within the residence. Deputies with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office immediately set up a perimeter around the victim's residence to include a large parcel of a wooded area nearby. Deputy Sheriff Royce Brooks was requested to assist with the track and apprehension of the suspect. Deputies on-scene relayed information to Deputy Brooks that the suspect threatened to be armed in the past and currently had active warrants for violating a DVI and burglary. Deputy Brooks arrived at the incident location and initiated a track with his K9 partner, Bruno. Deputy Brooks deployed K9 Bruno at the corner of the residence and continued to the wooded parcel's wood line. K9 Bruno tracked into the wooded area and continued west, paralleling a creek bed. The active track circled back towards the residence before taking a southern turn in the direction of the creek.



Once near the creek, K9 Bruno raised his head and began indicating the suspect was close. At this time Deputy Brooks observed the suspect's foot partially protruding from under a fallen tree limb. Deputy Books and a cover deputy gave the suspect commands to exit his hiding place, but he refused. Deputy Brooks released K9 Bruno to apprehend the suspect. The suspect immediately stated he did not want to be bit and would surrender. Deputy Brooks gained control of K9 Bruno, and the suspect was taken into custody. Thanks to the great teamwork and tenacity of on-scene deputies, Deputy Brooks and K9 Bruno, a potentially violent and volatile situation was safely brought to a conclusion without injuries to the victims or deputies.



Sergeant Kelly- K9 Rico- Detector Case of the Quarter

On 03/26/21, Investigators with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office's Multi-Agency Drug Task Force identified a known narcotics trafficker traveling out of the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport.

Investigators requested the assistance of Sgt. Tony Kelly and his K9 partner, Rico. The suspect was determined to have checked luggage before his flight's departure. K9 Rico conducted a free air sniff of the baggage belt, which included the suspect's checked luggage. K9 Rico gave a positive indication of the presence of narcotic odor emitting from the suspect's luggage. Investigators obtained consent to search from the suspect and located close to \$70,000.00 in US currency concealed in numerous pants pockets and shoes within the luggage.

The suspect could not provide a logical explanation for the origin of the money, and his reason for traveling with a large amount of currency changed several times during his interview. The currency was seized based on the circumstances surrounding the investigation and K9 Rico's positive alert. Based on the behaviors of the suspect coupled with his extensive background in trafficking large amounts of illegal narcotics within our area and throughout the United States, it is reasonable to believe the money was destined to purchase more narcotics. Thanks to the efforts of Sgt. Kelly and Rico, the suspect's actions were derailed and he was unable to travel to his planned destination and purchase the narcotics. In June, Sergeant Kelly and Deputy Duenas both achieved recognition as certified K9 trainers through the United States Police Canine Association. Sergeant Kelly received certification as a Level 1 Patrol Dog Trainer and a Detector Dog Trainer. Deputy Duenas received certification as a Level 2 Patrol Dog Trainer and a Detector Dog Trainer. These certifications were very difficult, labor, and time intensive to achieve, requiring the training of vast amounts of K9 teams, and years of service to the profession.



As 2021 came to a close, the K9 Unit said goodbye to Sergeant Tony Kelly and K9 Rico. Rico was retired on 12/31/2021. He served the citizens of Okaloosa County faithfully for more than 5 years. He will remain with Sergeant Kelly, and begin his new career as a pet and protector of Sgt. Kelly's family. The unit will remain in good hands with long time handler and unit member, Deputy Jon Duenas at the helm as the trainer. Deputy Duenas has an extensive training resume and will greatly benefit and push the teams in the coming years. Deputy Duenas and the Unit are already beginning preparations for 2022 and the challenges and opportunities that it will provide.

Secondary Employment

In 2021, 225 OCSO deputies covered 3825 secondary employment jobs totaling over 24,561 hours. This represents a 1% decrease in jobs and a 1% decrease in hours from 2020. These jobs represent requests from the community for off duty services in neighborhoods, condominiums, local businesses, highways, churches, entertainment venues, and schools. July 2021, proved to be the busiest month with over 365 jobs performed. Due to COVID-19, the percentage of unfilled jobs grew exponentially from 340 in 2020 to 1615 in 2021.



Secondary Employment Services Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office

Contact Information:

Business/ Requestor: _____			
Mailing Address: _____			
City: _____	State: _____	Zip: _____	Website: _____
Point of Contact: _____		Title: _____	
Main #: _____	Office #: _____	Cell #: _____	
Email: _____	Fax #: _____		

Please only fill out the below section if you have a management company who will be remitting checks.

Management Company:

Company Name: _____			
Mailing Address: _____			
City: _____	State: _____	Zip: _____	Website: _____
Point of Contact (accounting): _____		Title: _____	
Main #: _____	Office #: _____	Cell #: _____	
Email: _____	Fax #: _____		

Human Resources Unit



The OCSO Human Resources Unit (HR) is responsible for managing the employee life cycle, which starts from the application process and continues through employment into retirement. The OCSO HR Unit researches and recommends recruitment strategies to drive more diversity to the agency. Through strategic partnerships and collaboration, the OCSO HR Unit attracts, develops, and retains a high performing, inclusive and diverse workforce, which is made up of about 350 sworn team members and about 150 civilian team members.

The OCSO HR Unit also researches and recommends benefits that would enhance the agency member and family members' lives. We are dedicated to fostering a healthy, safe, and productive work environment for employees, their families, retirees, and surviving family members in order to maximize their potential, expand organizational capacity and position OCSO as an employer of choice in the area. OCSO conducted an extensive analysis of our benefits for several months during the year. As a result, we determined a change to our healthcare plan was needed in order to ensure our agency members were provided with the best medical options.

The OCSO HR Unit received 144 full-time deputy applications which resulted in hiring 45 of the candidates. There were 4 part-time deputy applications received and 3 of those were hired. There was a total of 6 auxiliary/posse applications submitted resulting in 2 being hired. It also reviewed 172 civilian applications and successfully hired 28 candidates.

OCSO is very proud and excited for our new Cadet program. There were 90 applications received for the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 Academy session and we successfully hired 6 for the Fall session and 10 for the Spring session.

The OCSO HR Unit continued to face challenges from COVID-19. The OCSO HR Unit continued to work through wearing masks, social distancing, and zoom meetings to continuously protect, serve, and support the agency from the inside while all others work to protect, service, and support the community on the outside. During the 2021 COVID challenges, OCSO endured the loss of an officer as a result of COVID-19 and the HR Unit put in countless hours of research and assistance to ensure the fallen officer's family received the maximum amount of benefits for all the family members.

In all areas of work, the HR Unit upholds confidentiality, accountability, and trust.







JUDICIAL SERVICES



COURT SECURITY/DETENTION

The calendar year of 2021 was extraordinary in many ways for the Court Security and Detention Sections. The COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020 but made its largest, most personal impact in the 2021 year. There were so many daunting, yet rewarding, moments throughout the year that proved the strength, dedication and resilience of those within Court Security and Detention.

Many impactful personnel changes occurred in 2021. Two major retirements from the unit being Sergeant James Hoisington and Deputy Michael Gallagher after careers of selfless service to the Sheriff's Office and citizens of Okaloosa County.

On January 1st, Deputy Dale Carter promoted to Sergeant of Court Security (South Annex).

On August 1st, Sergeant D.J. Folley was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and assumed command over Court Services and Detention replacing Lieutenant Jeremy Miller who separated from the agency.

On November 29th, Sergeant Jessica Trimboli transferred from School Resource to Detention, making her the 4th Detention Sergeant of 2021.



During 2021, the Sheriff's Office, and especially Detention, suffered a great tragedy with the loss of one of their own. On September 5th, 2021, after a brave battle with Covid-19, Detention Deputy Michael Neau passed away, leaving behind his beloved wife and six children. Deputy Neau was a dedicated member of the Sheriff's Office for many years and was assigned to Detention at the time of his death. This proved to be extremely difficult for those who worked with him.

Co-worker and friend Deputy Heather Rominger made sure the Neau family was supported at all times by creating a "Meal Train", collect funds that were donated and volunteering her time to assist her supervision in collecting data needed to demonstrate that D/S Neau contracted the illness while serving in his official capacity. This helped designate Deputy Neau's death as an "In the Line of Duty Death", which allowed for his beneficiaries to receive proper entitlements. She further assisted with the funeral arrangements, the burial, and the collection of D/S Neau's duty gear, which proved to be extremely difficult for her. We are proud of Deputy Rominger's actions during this difficult time and are proud that she is part of our family.

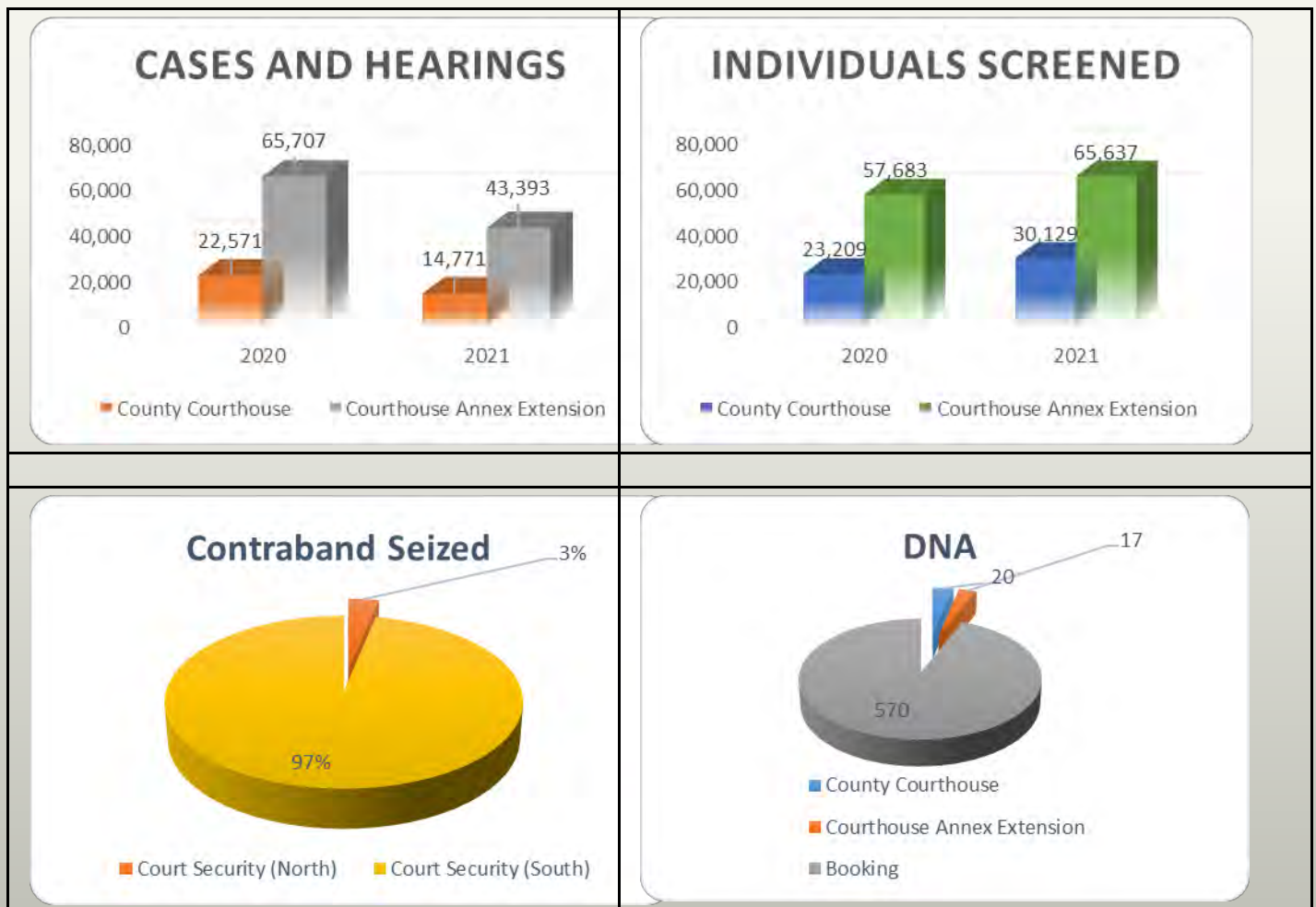
During 2021, Court Security (North) handled 14,771 cases or hearings, screened 30,129 individuals through the Single Point of Entry, and seized 4 items of contraband or weapons.

Court Security (South) handled 43,393 cases or hearings, screened 65,637 citizens through the Single Point of Entry, and seized 120 items of contraband or weapons.

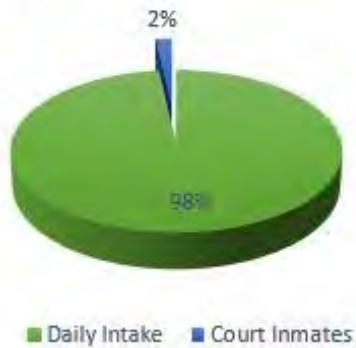
**Of note, the number of people screened at this location equates to over 252 people per day.*

Detention processed 6,117 subjects into the OCCAE Booking Facility, transported 4,000 inmates (including those scheduled for court) and registered 1,300 felony/sexual offenders.

Court Security and Detention processed 1,158 of the state-mandated DNA collections!



Booking Intake



Booking Activity



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 of 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 3,223 outstanding warrants and orders to take into custody for the arrest of fugitives

During 2021 the Warrants Unit processed more than 5,325 warrants, 3,352 warrants were executed and 572 prisoners were transported at a cost of \$129,594.63

RECORDS

The Records Unit processes all reports, videos, traffic citations, DUI's and Crash Reports for the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office. This unit is the custodian and point of contact for all records related information for internal, public records requests, agency produced videos, and judicial process such as court and DUI administrative hearings. They also conduct quality assurance on offense reports and compile the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) statistics.

Public Records Emails – 14,902

Scanned Entries – 21,925

NTA's – 1,047

MI Records Merged – 3,457

Mug shots upload by Records – 2,772

Video Compiled for SAO, DUI Review Board or Public Records Request -6,560

BWC Videos uploaded 2020– 208,158 – 494,543 still active

Offense Reports – 17,287

Arrests only (does not include NTA's, Warrants, or Summons) – 4,441

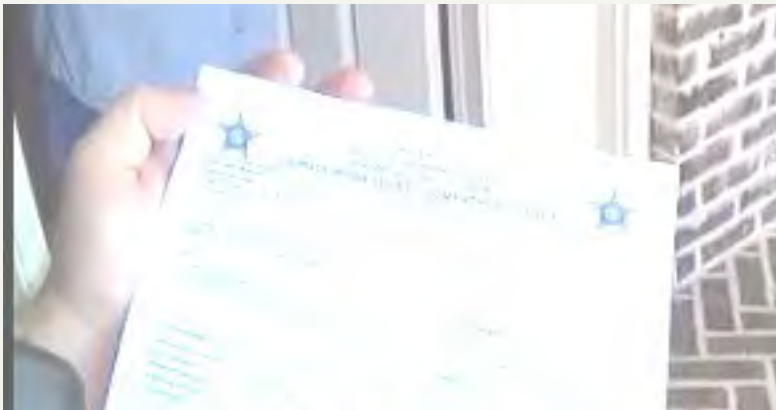
DUI Citations – 376 in MobileForms

Traffic Crash Reports – 1,454 in MobileForms

**Traffic Warnings – 5,993 logged in MobileForms; 20,254 calls closed 78-0 M-Verbal warning,
not written**

Traffic Citations – 5,440 logged in MobileForms

- * All Offense Reports and Arrests/NTA's are reviewed for UCR data on a daily basis.
- * DOMV Reports are sent on a daily basis to The Shelter House
- * All new MI entries are reviewed for duplicates daily and merged if needed.



CIVIL

PROCESS

The Sheriff or his deputies are required by Florida Constitution and statutes to serve orders from the court that are delivered to him. Civil Process receipts in and process 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, and so on. Civil Process also collects the applicable service fees required by statute. Civil Process deputies also execute evictions, child custody orders, Levy's, and Replevins, seize property, and hold sales of property seized in Levy's. These are a few examples of their day to day duties.

During 2021 the Civil Process Unit:

Continued to manage more than 2,225 Domestic Injunctions and protection orders

Processed more than 10,457 and served 10,259 pieces of civil process

Processed and served 1,690 domestic violence and other protective orders

Processed and served 5,307 criminal subpoenas

And collected more than \$104,210 in Sheriff's Fees

Activities/ Achievements and Community Service

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

The Court Security and Booking units always try to make training their top priority. Although Covid-19 negatively affected training, personnel within the unit were still able to conduct core disciplines such as CPR, AED, Stop the Bleed, NARCAN, Active Shooter, as well as receive “WRAP” Restraint System Training, Weapon Mounted Red Dot Training, and Advanced Rifle Training.

In his role as Court Security’s Active Shooter Instructor, Deputy Mike Nichols hosted eight Active Shooter Response training sessions in 2021.

Court Security Deputies Mike Nichols and Steve Williams created “Courtroom Demeanor”, a training course they designed from their own observations and experiences in Court Security. The course is aimed at educating deputies on all things pertaining to courtroom etiquette, such as proper attire, how to connect with the jury, and effective testimony.

During 2021, Lieutenant D.J. Folley developed and implemented the Advanced Patrol Rifle Course. This course was adopted by the OSCO and is now regularly taught by Lt. Folley and Sgt. Dale Carter to agency members and other law enforcement officers throughout the panhandle.





During 2021 Deputy Ward Shute was recognized for his 30 years of service to the agency. In addition, Deputy Michael Nichols was recognized for his 20 years of service to the agency.

For the sixth year, Court Security sponsored blood drives with “One Blood” thanks to the efforts of Deputy Kenny Driscoll.

Court Security Deputy Pat Jenkins was chosen for the reading of the “Roll Call of Heroes” for the 2021 Law Enforcement Memorial Service in Tallahassee.

Court Security Civilian Stephen Baldwin volunteered and served as MC during the 2021 Emerald Coast Motorcycle Challenge benefiting Star Charities.

During 2021, Lieutenant Folley was awarded by the Okaloosa County Board of Commissioners for volunteering to provide workplace violence and active shooter response to county supervisors for the past 10 years.

Lieutenant Folley was also named 2021 Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Northwest Florida “Big of the Year” for his three years of committed service to the program and continued mentorship he has provided to his “little brother”.

Detention Deputy Josef Hall continues his notable service to others as he embarks on his sixth year as a proud member of the OCSO Honor Guard.

Sgt. Jessica Trimboli currently serves as co-chair for the Okaloosa Drug Endangered Children Alliance-A Department of Health Community Health Improvement Plan Committee, as well a member of the Boys and Girls Club Safety Committee – since 2017. Sgt. Trimboli has also been a member of the OCSO Hostage Negotiation Unit since 2017

On September 11th, 2021 Sgt. Trimboli coordinated the 20th Anniversary 911 Tribute Stair-climb event which took place at the football stadium located at Niceville High School. The event not only drew the attention of many community members but also attracted several local public entities such as several Fire Departments, Emergency Medical Services, and various law enforcement agencies who jointly participated to raise aware and pay tribute to those that lost their lives during the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

Civil Clerk Cassie Lieb volunteers through First Baptist on Bayshore and assisted providing over 650 meals to families in need during Thanksgiving.



The men and women of Judicial Services are great stewards of service and commitment to the community and the agency. These employees have volunteered countless hours of dedicated service and are members of a number of other organizations and/activities such as:

Okaloosa County Mental Health Pre-Trial Program

Court Emergency Management Team

OCSO Teen Driver Challenge

OCSO Sheriff's Star Charities

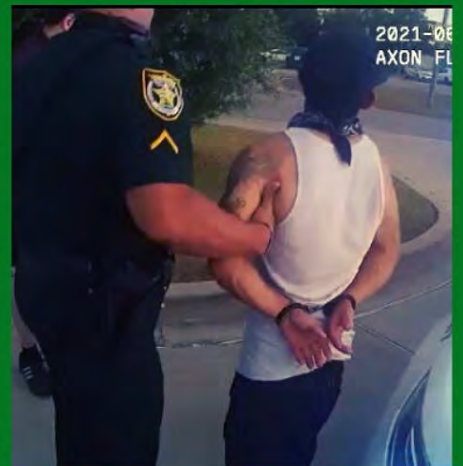
AMI Kids Emerald Coast

Emerald Coast Motorcycle Challenge

Fraternal Order of Police

First Baptist Church of Shalimar







The Youth Services Division, commonly referred as the School Resource Officer program (SRO), is primarily tasked with the safety and security of schools within Okaloosa County. This undertaking currently comprises of (57) fifty-seven, full-time sworn employees that provide contractual law enforcement services to (40) forty public and charter schools. These dedicated men and women service more than 30,000 students and approximately 2,500 educators, school faculty, and support staff members within the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Okaloosa County. Their unwavering commitment and fervent passion to school based policing are unsurpassed, and their hard work has paid dividends in the community we serve and the lives of the children we have sworn to protect. These talented individuals have welcomed promotional appointment(s), agency recognition, and career broadening opportunities. The above is a testament to these SROs' work ethic, compassion, and acts of selfless dedication and; unquestionably, the future leaders of this agency will be counted among this gifted group.

COVID-19 continued its devastating proliferation through our community during 2021 and; as such, the SRO program had to be preemptive and abstractly address this perpetual problem in the interest of safety for both our agency members and those we are serving. Albeit the hampering influences of COVID-19 were felt and continue to adversely tailor our daily lives, the SRO program remains steadfast and maintains an intimate relationship with the Okaloosa County School District, our community, and our students. The SRO program continues to maintain its nationally recognized high standards while providing unparalleled service all the while meeting adversity head on during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Our School Resource Officers

The SRO program is a diverse division comprised of gifted and motivated individuals sharing a common vision. Through rigorous recruitment and arduous training, the SRO program has garnered purposely trained individuals exhibiting a unique skill set that complements the specificity of the assignment. The exemplary nature and a resolute drive exhibited by these SROs is the reason why the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Youth Services Division is the leading SRO program in the State of Florida.

When thinking of an SRO, thoughts of an armed guard or sentry may come to mind. Though school security is an exceedingly important piece within the operational model of the SRO program, it is not the sole objective of our SROs. School based policing, in itself, is multi-faceted and the SRO program employs the *triad* method. Our SROs exercise concepts within this method and focus their energies in the areas of teacher, informal counselor, and law enforcer. The methodology behind the *triad* enables our SROs to become integrally involved in the educational environment as a resource to both our students and the school faculty. Our SROs participated in more than 132 classroom instructions varying from drug awareness, cyber related crimes, bullying, etc. Equally, they provided assistance to school faculty members with 1,707 calls for service in areas relating to afterschool sporting events, school planned events, teacher/faculty assists, and various other school associated functions. Static displays utilizing agency assets and face-to-face interactions with agency members/sections were also arranged at various schools as a means of further building community relations.





Community Involvement

The SRO program, by its very nature, bridges the gap between law enforcement and the community we serve. Blending philosophies rooted in the community oriented policing model and the *triad*, the SROs stand on the frontlines to ensure investment and trust building are present between law enforcement and our communities. This intentionality has built social currency between the two which positively impacts our and the agency's overall vision. Our SROs are proactive in community relations and hold community involvement as a focal tenet. They have organized and/ or participated in a number of community based events as an effort to further trust building and relationships. The SROs have enthusiastically volunteered countless hours of service beyond those that are expected at their respective schools to include but are not limited to: SROs have organized campaigns to raise goods for the Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranch Associations; they play a major role in the Angel Tree campaign that brought Christmas to 262 deserving children and their families; they provided more than 321 Christmas trees to our local Hospice facilities, and much more. Additionally, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Explorer Post #245 in collaboration with the SRO program delivered ten meals to families in need during the holidays.



Furthermore, the Explorer Post and SROs humbly participated in the Wreaths Across America in the month of December. Wreaths Across America strives as a mission to remember, honor and teach the stories of those brave servicemen and servicewomen who laid down their lives for freedom. The annual tribute coordinates wreath-laying ceremonies at more than 2,500 locations across the United States, at sea and abroad. Our SROs and Explorer Post took part in placing wreaths at veterans' graves at Beal Memorial Cemetery.



Finding time to give back to our community is second nature to our SROs and something they are passionate about. Similarly, giving back to organizations outside our local area is just as important and when the Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranches needed assistance with a newly created youth ranch in the Jacksonville area, our SROs jumped at the opportunity to lend assistance. Camp Sorenson, a newly acquired retreat center, targets at-risk youth and provides a safe, camping retreat area to use year round. The camp can accommodate 1,500 young men and women and was in need of items to stock the camp. So, our SROs did what they are known to do time and time again—selflessly gave. Our SROs acquired items to include but not limited to canoes, life jackets, sporting items, bug spray, towels, etc. and hand delivered the items to Camp Sorenson. If that was not enough, a handful of our giving SROs donated their time and worked at the camp as counselors giving back to our youth and lending a hand to the full staff at the camp.

This is just a glimpse into the heart of our SROs and, likewise, just scratching the surface when speaking of the myriad of programs and community-based events these remarkable individuals are involved in and lend their talents to. Thus, the SRO program has proven vitally successful in their sowing efforts as a community liaison which has brought forth *good fruit* in terms of bringing the community and law enforcement closer.



School Involvement

The SRO program, as mentioned previously, is crucially important to the overall learning environment. As such, the SROs play an active role in the training aspect and lend their expertise to their respective student bodies and educational staff members. Prior to the start of the school year, training in the areas of ALICE Safety (Alert, Lock-down, Inform, Counter, Evacuate – lockdown/lockout procedures), SRP (Standard Response Protocol/School crisis mitigation), and Stop the Bleed (proper trauma medical response) is provided by the SRO program. Similarly, safety assessments are conducted on every campus by the respective SRO and the findings are compiled for the School District's review. Following recommendations by the SROs and working in concert with school faculty and district members, safety enhancements are implemented in areas of need which subsequently bolsters overall school safety.

Safety is not the only aspect of an SRO's duties; rather, building relationships, trust, and mentorship is just as important and is hugely vital to what our SROs do daily. SROs wear many hats and fill many vacancies whether professionally or personally. These extraordinary men and women are teachers, mentors, friends, even pseudo fathers and mothers to some of our students. The bonds they build are lasting and the stories that are told from their

previous students about their respective SROs and the impact they had on their lives is immeasurable.

These stories are told often and speak volumes of our SROs compassion. They bear witness to the importance SROs play in the lives of our youth, as well as epitomizing their professionalism. Likewise, these amazing accounts underscore our SROs' hearts and caring nature.

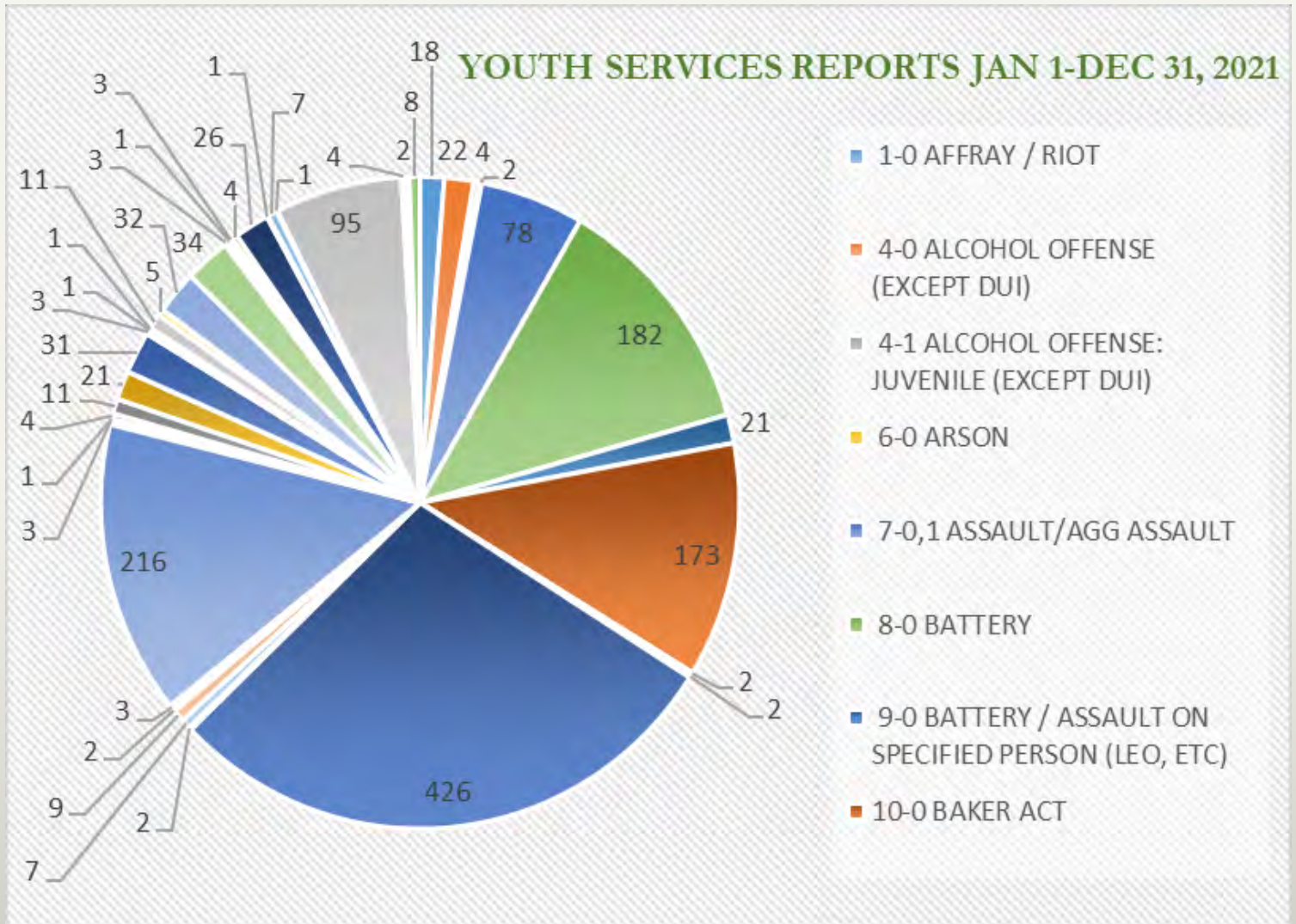
Now, all of this may seem a bit overwhelming; however, our SROs are wholly committed and give 100 percent every day. Even if that means bringing our talents to a newly minted school in Destin. August 10, 2021, marked the first day for Destin High School; a new charter school based in the heart of Destin and the first high school in Destin's history. What better way to usher in a new school than to add a seasoned SRO to its staff.



School Safety

Our SROs strive to be proactive when addressing school safety and do not take this aspect of their duties lightly. Although a different approach is needed when employing school based policing, the specificity concerning our duties remain the same—SROs are law enforcement first and foremost. From January 1, 2021, to December 31,

Youth Services Division Statistics of Interest for 2021



Calls for Service: 23,333

Offense Reports Generated: 1,763

Child Abuse/Neglect: 426

Assaults: 78

Batteries: 203

Bomb Threats: 2

Drug Overdose: 2

Sex offenses: 83

School Threats: 95

Arrests: 47

NTAs/Civil Citations: 35

Narcotic Violations: 52



Members from the SRO program also were given the opportunity to provide security, in collaborations with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, for Governor Ron DeSantis during his visit to two Okaloosa County schools. Governor DeSantis paid a visit to Destin Elementary School and applauded efforts by both the student body and educators for their commitment to in-person instruction. Likewise, the Governor visited Ruckel Middle School for a round table discussion with Education Commissioner Richard Corcoran, Superintendent of Schools Marcus Chambers, Okaloosa County Teacher of the Year Jessica Landry, and two Ruckel Middle School parents.



Training

When speaking of school safety and the protection of our most valuable treasure—our youth—the SROs are *top notch* and strive daily to be better than yesterday. To say the Youth Services Division is trendsetting is an understatement, our SROs are the *tip of the spear* and “as iron sharpens iron,” each SRO holds their teammates accountable, sharpening one another, for the betterment of the team in the service of our youth. Our SROs receive a plethora of supplementary law enforcement and leadership training to better hone their skills. Equally, training in school based policing is accentuated in order to produce a better rounded SRO. They receive annual training in areas to include Crisis Prevention Intervention, Exceptional Student Educating (ESE), Autism Spectrum Disorder, and pre arrest diversion programs to name a few. Guest speakers lending their expertise have also been called upon to provide quality training to our SROs. Furthermore, the SROs attend monthly district trainings in their respective areas of operation as a way to maintain and/or reinforce their skill sets. Response to active school threats, child abuse/neglect investigations, cybercrimes, sex offenses, enforceable court orders, and interviewing child and trauma victims are example of topics that are visited during these training opportunities.

Sex Offender/Predator Tracking Unit

In 2013, the Sex Offender/Predator Tracking Unit (SOPU) was absorbed into the Youth Services Division. The SOPU is comprised of SROs who are tasked with monitoring, tracking, and verifying all sexual offenders and/or predators within Okaloosa County. More than fifty SROs, spread across four respective districts, diligently work to verify more than 360 offenders/predators within the county. From January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021, 1,356 offender verifications were conducted, (76) seventy-six offense reports were generated, and (8) eight arrests for violations concerning failing to register as a sexual offender were made. The extraordinary efforts demonstrated by the SROs have facilitated for the proper compliance exercised by the offender population residing and/or visiting Okaloosa County and assisted the agency in maintaining statutory requirements regarding The Florida Sexual Predators Act and the stipulations found therein.



Explorer Post #245

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Explorer Post #245 is a program that offers pride and self-esteem for community minded, young men and women in Okaloosa County. Chartered by the Boy Scouts of America in 1979, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Explorer Post sets our youth on the right track of becoming productive law-abiding citizens and also provides the chance for them to explore a possible career in law enforcement. Equally, the aim of the Explorer Post is to build community investment and leadership skills in our young men and women while providing training opportunities in all areas of law enforcement. This includes but is not limited to police sciences, guest speakers, lecturers, hands on training, vehicle operations, scenario based training, etc. Explorer Post #245 is proud to announce two of their very own being selected to enter into the agency's Cadet Program!

Teen Driver Challenge

The Florida Sheriff's Association Teen Driver Challenge was created in 2007, with a focus on speeding, driving under the influence of alcohol and/or a controlled substance, texting while driving, and distracted driving. The program's principal target audience is teenaged drivers, and education concerning the above topics has been identified as a necessity to alleviate the potential of motor vehicle accidents relating to the above areas. Teen Driver Challenge is offered at no cost to teenaged drivers and is held in (39) thirty-nine counties across the State of Florida. The program is led by deputies who are commercially licensed driving instructors; they have assisted nearly 120 teenaged drivers, yearly, with a two-day course that consist of classroom and hands-on practical instruction. Our instructors impart the necessary knowledge so our teenaged drivers so they can become better aware and defensive in their driving habits. More than 2,000 participants have been trained and reap the benefits of this amazing program.





THANK YOU FOR PROTECTING OUR KIDS!



Crossing Guard Appreciation Day



Rain or Shine - Cold or Hot- You're out there.
Thank you for everything!

School Crossing Guards

These dedication individuals are employed in a part-time capacity and managed by the Youth Services Division. Rain, sleet, or shine, our crossing guards are present manning the cross walks to ensure our children are properly and safely escorted across designated school crossing intersections. With the steady rise in our population coupled with the increase in vehicular traffic on our roadways, our school crossing guards are invaluable and are instrumental to our children's safety.

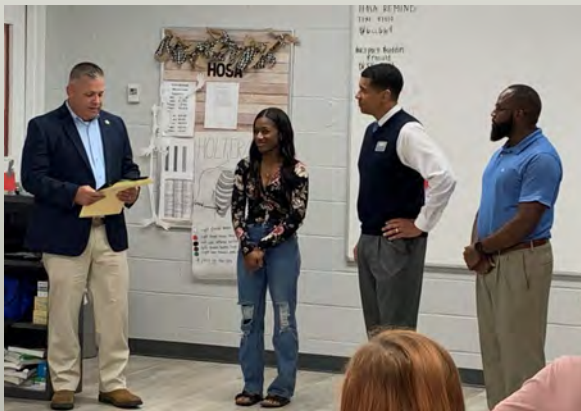


Noteworthy Accomplishments

The SRO program is an established, highly recognized, model agency/section for the State of Florida. The Youth Services Division has been recognized for numerous awards for our outstanding efforts, best practices, and overall operational modality as an SRO program. Since 2012, the Youth Services Division and several SROs have garnered awards ranging from Florida School Resource Officer Program of the Year (on two occasions), Florida School Resource Officer of the Year (on four occasions), National Model Agency, a National Award for one of our School Resource Officers, and an Exceptional Service Award from the National Association of Resource Officers for a second agency SRO. These awards represent the very best in our profession and underpins our SROs and division as being the best in the State of Florida.

The SRO program has been extremely blessed with talented SROs that come from different walks of life, with contrasting skill sets. This makes for an eclectic, well-versed division that can navigate any situation that might present itself. Equally, with the incredible talents exhibited with this group, aptitude for promotional assignments are expected. The SRO program and its deputies have seen its share of agency wide recognition with the latest being Sergeant David Howell's promotion to the rank of Sergeant. Other highlights include Deputy Randal Joiner and Deputy Tori Mason being selected to the sergeant and investigator's list respectively.

On September 9, 2021, a medical emergency occurred in a Crestview High School restroom involving a student who stopped breathing and had no pulse. Due to the speedy, level-headedness of a fellow student and Deputies Mark Kane and Shelby Buri, CPR techniques were conducted which ultimately saved the student's life. All three were awarded commendations for their actions that day; the agency Community Service Award was presented to the student and lifesaving commendations were given to Deputies Kane and Buri.





Accolades are nothing new for the Youth Services Division and in every instance where our team and teammates are recognized is a humbling occasion, and our SROs modestly subscribe to the adage that the work they do is not work, rather a passion. This indelible mantra is apparent none more so than in Lieutenant Demeika McClendon. Awarded Northwest Florida Person of the Year for 2021 and the International Association of Chiefs of Police 40 under 40, Lieutenant McClendon embodies the very nature of what our SROs and program stands for. Employing passion, understanding, and tenacity is second nature to her and all our SROs and is a testament to our moral compass and willing disposition to intercede on behalf of our youth. Our resolute labors are purposeful, transactional, and most importantly—intentional.



The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Youth Services Division unquestionably has the best and brightest individuals this agency has to offer. We are blessed to have this amazing group of people who exercise compassion and relationship building as the backbone of their mission statement. These incredible men and women willingly serve as role models and mentors to our youth and create a conducive atmosphere that cultivates citizenry and respect within our children. Our SROs are an important part of both the education environment and in our children's lives and are here to bridge the gap so our youth have the best opportunity to grow as people and become successful in their respective lives.





In 1957, The Okaloosa County Air Terminal opened on Eglin Air Force Base in building 89 with 3 just personnel. Southern Airways was the only passenger airline and offered direct service to Atlanta, Georgia. Passengers entered the base through the East Gate near Valparaiso, thus the airport code of VPS.

Over the past 64 years, many changes have occurred at VPS including several names changes. In 2015, VPS was renamed The Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport and since then, it has earned the reputation of being the preferred aviation gateway to the Florida Gulf Coast.

In 2018, VPS was named the fastest growing airport in America and has stayed in the top 15 since and is currently ranked at number 12. With 5 major airlines offering service to over 50 destinations, it's no wonder why two million passengers a year choose VPS.



To meet the growing law enforcement and security needs of the airport, The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office was contracted by the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners in 2017. The Sheriff's Office created the Airport Security Unit (ASU) with the sole purpose of the development and implementation of a dedicated law enforcement unit to service the needs of Okaloosa County's Airport System. The Airport Security Unit is funded solely from revenues generated by the Okaloosa County Airport System. Operating revenues are generated from commissions received from a percentage of gross sales, public parking fees, car rentals, retails/concession sales, aircraft landing fees and rental agreements.

ASU deputies respond to a wide variety of calls ranging from assisting passengers with lost baggage, criminal investigations and aircraft incidents. In 2021, the ASU responded to the Transportation and Administration (TSA) Screening checkpoint 11 times for weapons violations arresting six people for trying to carry a firearm to the airplane.



In addition to VPS, the ASU also provides law enforcement services to the Destin Executive Airport (DTS) located in Destin, Florida and Bob Sikes Airport (CEW) located in Crestview, Florida.



Destin Executive Airport (DTS)



Bob Sikes Airport (CEW)

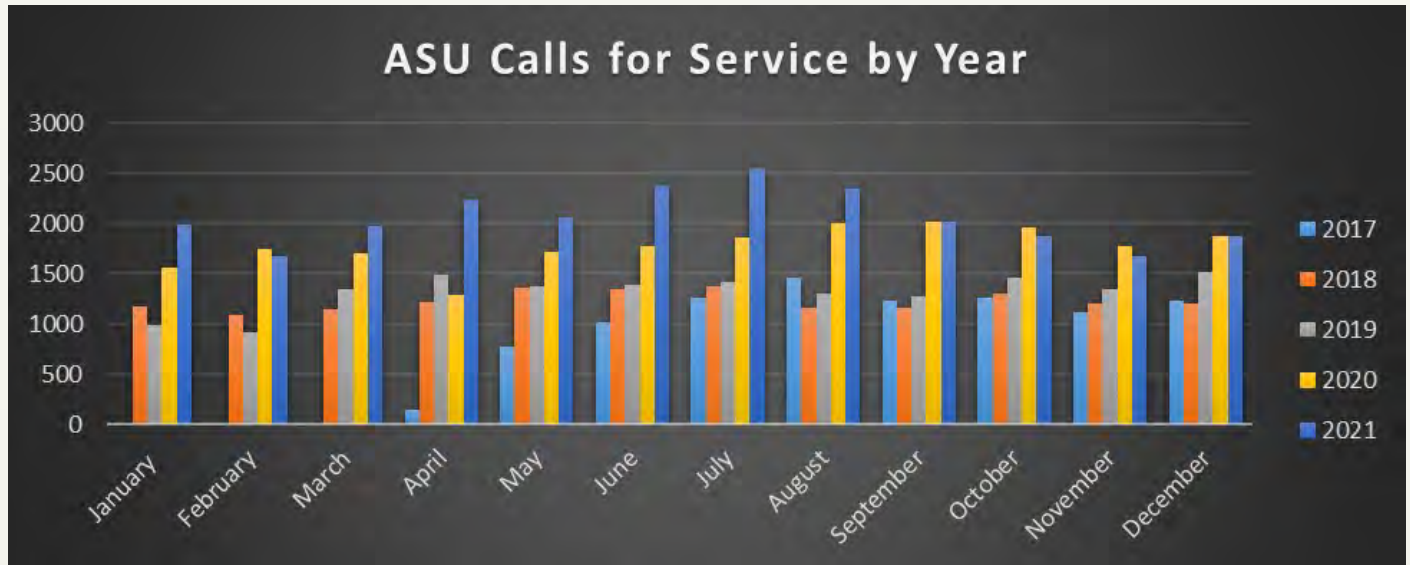
DTS is a general aviation airport serving the community with a 5000 foot runway and a full array of amenities for travelers. CEW is ideal for Department of Defense and Aerospace Industry leaders as it is fairly remote and can accommodate any size aircraft with its 8000 foot runway. Both DTS and CEW are owned and operated by Okaloosa County and are not dependent on ad valorem taxes.

The ASU also encompasses the Airport Operations Center (AOC) which is the “Central Nerve Center” of the airport's system. Aside from dispatching deputies to calls for service, the AOC is tasked with duties and responsibilities that go well beyond law enforcement activities. These include such things as general aviation questions, dispatching maintenance technicians, managing flight information, contractor coordination, interagency information sharing, monitoring security cameras and access points as well as acting as a liaison with Eglin AFB on various issues.



2021 In Review

Operations at VPS in 2020 dropped dramatically by nearly 45% from 1.6 million passengers to 950 thousand due to the pandemic. 2021 saw a resurgence while airlines attempted to recoup lost revenue and Americans sought to escape to the beach after a year of quarantine. As a result, VPS experienced a 112% increase over 2020 to nearly 2 million passengers! In that time, the ASU saw an increase in calls for service of nearly 20% responding to 24,837 calls, up from 21,271 calls in 2020. This was a 56% increase over 2019 when there were 15,831 calls for service.



ASU Calls for Service - 2021													
Activity	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTALS
Calls For Service - Total	1,985	1,676	1,981	2,232	2,066	2,268	2,544	2,344	2,049	1,913	1,717	1,934	24,837
Secure Area Patrol(90)	219	184	210	224	192	174	208	160	156	143	134	175	2,179
Non - Secure Area Patrol(91)	203	207	179	203	186	205	208	191	160	186	184	200	2,312
Sterile Area Sweep(92)	31	18	25	30	31	30	31	30	29	31	31	31	348
Random Access Point(93A)	199	139	140	172	157	170	185	154	158	170	148	165	1,957
Random Access Point(93B)	192	131	131	164	142	157	171	159	150	145	138	161	1,841
Gate Access Point(94)	154	125	129	136	136	137	138	136	114	124	120	141	1,590
Sterile Area Patrol(95)	205	146	144	162	157	174	201	176	158	166	166	177	2,032
SIDA Violations(96)	4	7	7	13	6	16	19	7	6	14	0	14	113
TSA Assist(97FFDO)	58	35	44	50	68	126	102	98	103	98	70	65	917
TSA Assist(97LEO)	14	13	30	27	34	48	71	70	51	39	18	21	436
Airline Assist(98)	2	5	0	1	2	12	1	3	1	1	0	1	29
Vehicle / Vendor Inspection(99R)	17	14	14	10	15	11	11	13	3	1	0	0	109
Vehicle / Vendor Inspection(99)	518	528	735	822	601	620	624	586	643	465	443	494	7,079
Traffic Crash	0	4	0	0	5	7	7	5	4	5	2	1	40
Medical Emergency	5	1	5	0	2	26	24	21	8	9	5	3	109
Ordinance Violation	1	1	4	11	11	8	15	9	14	12	10	6	102
Arrest	1	0	4	2	3	1	2	3	3	0	2	1	22
Passengers (VPS)	47,433	51,201	101,499	132,559	213,069	284,912	316,369	252,815	175,066	182,262	128,316	-	1,885,501

In 2019 the ASU enhanced our threat mitigation capabilities by adding an Explosive Detection Canine Team. In 2021 Deputy Sheriff Brian Beyhl and K9 Skye attended their first certification with the United States Police Canine Association Trials. They had an outstanding outing and consistently placed in the top 5 against many other teams from the region with more experience. They even placed first in the indoor detection event.





FINANCE

Finance welcomed two new members to the team. Tamara Adams facilitates all of our grants and law enforcement contracts. Sonya Hughes, who transferred from Civil Process, handles our online requisitions, purchase orders, retiree insurance and she keeps track of all of our fixed assets.

The department managed 15 grants and helped negotiate six law enforcement contracts for FY 2022. Finance also facilitated financial reporting for 8 task forces and submitted all of the required documentation for reimbursement of expenditures as a result of Hurricane Sally. Working with FDEM and FEMA can feel like a job all by itself. There were 417 purchase orders processed and there was a total of 153 check batches processed. In addition, there was a total of 29 payroll processes completed.

We said goodbye to Heidi Walters after working with her for only a few months. We were sad to see her go but happy that she was moving on to bigger and better things.

During our recent staffing changes, each of the Finance team members took the opportunity to continue to cross train into other positions within the department to ensure continuity of service if the need were to arise. Members of our team attended online continuing education training during the year, which kept us at the top of our field.

The Finance team continues to volunteer with various organizations and committees such as Christmas Trees for Hospice, OCSO Employee Council, Saving With Soul Pet Rescue of Northwest Florida, Shelter House, Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance and Cinco Bayou Town Council.

Changes in personnel and continuous training did not get Finance down. We continued to provide outstanding service and professionalism. We are very dedicated and we work well together to provide the best financial services possible. We look forward to another year of serving.





Public information includes handling everything from answering questions on the phone, to writing news releases, producing videos, creating flyers and pamphlets, and creating an Annual Report.

But on a daily basis, the role of social media in keeping people informed remains the critical link between the OCSO mission and activities and the public. Feedback and engagements reached record levels in 2021, with the 28 day period between September 14th and October 11th alone showing a reach of more than 69 million people and nearly six million engagements on Facebook alone. Facebook remains the most popular outreach method with the number of followers passing the 160,000 mark.

Another huge milestone has to do with the number of YouTube subscribers to the OCSO, surpassing 30,000 people to rank among the most popular law enforcement channels in the state of Florida.

Transparency, engagement, interaction and education are primary missions of the Public Information Office. To that end work began in 2021 on the addition of a new platform to add to our efforts to make information easily accessible to our public – the OCSO Sheriff's App, which launched in early 2022.



2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

22,300

REWARDS APPROVED



www.EmeraldCoastCrimeStoppers.com



Available on the
App Store



ANDROID APP ON
Google play

1,301

TIPS RECEIVED

66

ARRESTS MADE

85

CASES CLEARED







Employee Recognitions Annual Awards

Deputy of the Year Eric Swain



After being hired in 2016, Deputy Swain began working in patrol on Alpha Shift/Central. He instantly became “that deputy” on shift, a solid officer and significant resource for supervisors and teammates.

Often, he is essential for helping to promote squad cohesion and professional relationships with the groups.

Deputy Swain is well known as a quality field training officer. He remains highly motivated and has excellent interpersonal skills, common sense, professional aptitude and genuine humility. Among all, he has the best positive attitude to get things done.

His supervisors know any assignment given him will be handled appropriately, professionally, efficiently and timely. Inasmuch, Deputy Swain recently achieved a well-deserved promotion to investigator in late December, 2021.

During 2021, Deputy (Investigator) Swain trained a total of 10 newly-hired deputies, providing over 1,680 total training hours. His total duty time was over 1,830 hours. Further, he consistently mentored shift mates, yet still found time to handle his own casework. He arrested 41 law violators and generated 88 offense reports outlining his investigations. All that's in addition to the trainees receiving credit for cases under his influence or helping others.

In 2021, Deputy Swain was voted on by his shift mates and supervisors for his nomination. Supervisors noted his constant proactive attitude, knowledge, and willingness to put the shift first.” Others commented on how he is “highly respected and sought-out by his peers and supervisors alike.” Another called him a gentle giant –someone you want at scenes with you as backup and, at the same time, someone who wants to help you with cases and help victims – any and every time.”

Deputy Swain adapts quickly when situations arise and brings the best out in others – supervisors and co-workers alike.

Here is just one example of his countless cases of solid work: he responded to a business burglary, canvassing the area for video. He located footage and identified a suspect, Christopher Bobbin. He then located and interviewed Bobbin obtaining a confession. Bobbin had committed several burglaries to the business.

Deputy Swain is known for proactive traffic stops and finding illegal narcotics. This includes cases resulting in seizures of street level quantities of methamphetamine and fentanyl, among others.

Outside the agency, Deputy Swain is also a committed role leader in the local community, coaching a local tee ball team.

Investigator of the Year Michael Hogan



Investigator Hogan began his career with the Fort Walton Beach Police Department in 1996 and came to the OCSO in 2016. His first assignment here was Court Security. He was ultimately promoted to "Investigator".

In January 2021, he was named "Senior Investigator" within the Criminal Investigations Bureau, where he's one of the most experienced and well-versed investigators on staff.

Investigator Hogan continually studies agency policy and Florida Statutes, all while taking several advanced training courses - to include the intensive polygraph course.

Although Investigator Hogan is the polygraph examiner, he is still assigned cases, including the infamous "Dos Negros" cold case homicide from 2005. Although it had passed through the hands of several investigators, he dug in. After countless hours, search warrants, subpoenas, and interviews, his perseverance paid off. In 2021, he applied for and was granted four arrest warrants in the murder.

In August 2021, Investigator Hogan began looking into a spree of Shalimar vehicle burglaries. He identified a postal package ordered with a stolen credit card from one of the burglaries and where the package was going. He put together a surveillance team which located the suspect's residence and identified the package on the doorstep. Hours later, the suspect was spotted leaving. Investigator Hogan prepared a search warrant, which recovered stolen property, a cache of controlled substances, and counterfeit money. Three subsequent arrests led to the closure of six burglary cases and other credit card fraud cases. In addition, Investigator Hogan was involved in the investigation of an armed robbery that had taken place days earlier.

He is the current Vice President of (OCSO) Star Charities, showing his dedication to the well-being of his co-workers and their families.

As an exemplary investigator who displays strong ethics, great judgment, and respect for others, Investigator Hogan embodies professionalism.

Supervisor of the Year Ryan Duval



Ryan Duval has been a member of the OCSO since December 2010, a Communications Training Officer since January 2018, and a Delta Shift Communications Supervisor since December 2019.

He's involved in the Communications Career Development Program, having already achieved Advanced Communications Officer, and is currently working towards his Journeyman level. While an optional program, this program requires additional hours and credits in training, professional achievement, and community involvement.

Additionally, Ryan participated in a podcast for Motorola Solutions, assisting our agency with educating our citizens and other agencies of critical advancements in 9-1-1 such as the Citizen Input program. Ryan is also currently enrolled in Leadership Okaloosa through the Northwest Florida State College to further advance leadership skills and community awareness.

Ryan is a high performing leader with a caring and compassionate nature. He displays strength of character, never failing to lead his shift with positivity, motivation, and respect for his team and fellow supervisors while maintaining adherence to policies and procedures. Ryan is one who always accepts responsibility for any actions and decisions and can be depended upon to display professional and appropriate behavior in any given situation. Ryan understands the responsibilities of each member of his team, making him a knowledgeable resource to oversee each of his team member's work performance.

Outside of his professional duties, Ryan is heavily involved in Saving with Soul, a shelter for dogs and cats in the region. He currently fosters numerous K9's providing them with safe shelter and a loving home.

Ryan's dedicated nature in serving others both professionally and personally, his reliability to exceed expectations in operations, and his commitment to enhancing his work performance, as well as the goals of others in his responsibility, make him worthy of our 2021 Supervisor of the Year.

SRO of the Year Deputy Tori Mason



Deputy Tori Mason began serving her community in 2013 as an investigator with DCF. Wanting to enter law enforcement, she completed the **Florida Criminal Justice Standards Program** and began working with the **Escambia County Sheriff's Office** in 2016. In 2018, she transitioned to the OCSO, continuing to follow her calling and becoming a School Resource Officer.

When she was assigned as the SRO for Plew Elementary School she quickly built a rapport with everyone there. In early 2021, looking for new challenges, Deputy Mason requested to transfer to Niceville High School.

With her skillset and personality, she earned the trust of the administrative staff and built great working relationships. After the start of the 2021-2022 school year, that trust effectively led to the closure of numerous school cases. Working as a team, Deputies Mason and Hudson shared approximately 69 reports with eight teen court referrals.

One significant case involved the TikTok "Devious Licks" challenge where students competed nationwide to video themselves stealing or destroying school property. Niceville High was not immune. The administration worked alongside Deputies Mason and Hudson as they researched tips, interviewed witnesses and suspects, and reviewed video. Deputy Mason's technology expertise sped up locating evidence on social media apps and phones, as well as navigating the trail of suspects. As a result she was able to identify suspects and stifle the challenge, limiting damage and loss.

Another major contribution was a case involving a teacher that went public when parents spoke out during a school board meeting. Deputy Mason was tasked with completing the report reflecting the investigation's outcome. All who read the report, from Investigators to Captains and Majors, praised her thoroughness. The findings from an investigation by CID upheld the original determination by Deputies Mason and Hudson.

Deputy Mason has a compassionate heart demonstrated by the numerous proactive measures she took when she learned a student was planning to take his own life. One important element of his despair was not feeling noticed. However he noted Deputy Mason knew his name and spoke to him in the halls. This turned out to be a key factor that kept him from following through on his intentions.

Deputy Mason has been the Sex Offender Coordinator for the East District since 2019 and oversees 38 offenders. In addition, she became a member of our Dive Team, recently helping with the recovery of a missing free diver to bring closure to his family.

Over the summer, she posed as an undercover juvenile as part of an ICAC operation, leading to the arrest of two "travelers" and laying the foundation for the arrest of a third.

Deputy Mason has been a Teen Driver Instructor since 2019 and instructs approximately 90% of the classes each year. Heading home from work one day, she stopped to help a panicking young driver at a traffic crash. The mother of the driver was so impressed with her actions, she emailed the Sheriff and signed up her daughter for the Teen Driver Challenge.

Deputy Mason contributed to the Angel Tree program, donated funds collected at her school to purchase a canoe for a **new Sheriff's** Youth Ranch camp, and helped solidify the local chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Peace Officers where she is now Chapter President. She volunteers as a Big Sister for the Big Brothers/Big Sister program. On top of all this she is actively pursuing **her Master's Degree** in Public Administration. She recently achieved a certificate in Leadership in Public Service and Non-Profit Administration while maintaining a 3.9 grade point average.

Deputy Mason was not only a recipient of the Florida CGI – **"Celebrating Strength Award"**, which recognizes heroes across Florida **"who go above and beyond"**, she earned the grand prize.

Last but not least, she was nominated for the National Association of School Resource Officers Regional Exceptional Service Award naming **"individuals for continuous and sustained service to the school community above and beyond that expected of a normal SRO."**

Administrative Sworn Outstanding Performer

Deputy Chad Biernacki



Deputy Chad Biernacki has demonstrated exemplary professionalism and dedication in the performance of his duties as a Deputy Sheriff throughout 2021. A hard worker who never shies away from his responsibilities, he also routinely assists supervisors and Deputies with administrative tasks.

Deputy Biernacki has been involved in over 2,100 calls for service, 269 of which required a written report. He has recorded at least 202 arrests with only 36 being warrant services. He has 51 felony narcotics cases and 23 misdemeanor narcotics cases this year. He's seized approximately 54 grams of meth, over 11 pounds of marijuana, 31 grams of cocaine, numerous prescription pills and MDMA, 7 grams of heroin, and 16 grams of fentanyl. His efforts undoubtedly helped to reduce the number of overdose related incidents in Okaloosa County and surrounding counties.

Deputy Biernacki has been instrumental in reducing the number of convicted felons with firearms, making five arrests of felons in possession of firearms. At least 1 had been reported stolen. He identified and charged 4 subjects carrying concealed firearms without permits.

His investigations go above and beyond narcotics and firearms cases. During July he conducted a welfare check of a man on the ground. Later he got a call of a burglary including a bicycle theft. Watching surveillance video, he recognized the male he conducted a welfare check on as the suspect in the burglary. He went back to where the suspect was last seen, confirmed he was still in possession of the stolen property, and arrested him.

In April, Deputy Biernacki showed tremendous bravery, professionalism, and care after receiving a call of a shooting. He and other Delta Shift deputies stopped a suspicious vehicle. A 15 year old victim was inside. Deputy Biernacki immediately rendered aid with chest compressions while simultaneously sealing an open chest wound. In addition, he assisted with an ambulatory bag until EMS personnel arrived.

Deputy Biernacki showed a willingness to learn and not give up on an investigation after being involved in a pursuit with a subject who tossed out numerous narcotics in residential and business areas. He learned how to author search warrants for electronic devices to identify the subject, who was later found to have active warrants for 2 counts of vehicular homicide by the FHP.

Deputy Biernacki showed compassion and a willingness to go above and beyond when he was dispatched to a domestic violence incident. Once he de-escalated the situation he noticed the husband was trying different tactics to prevent the wife from leaving for a safer location. **Deputy Biernacki met the victim at a gas station and filled up her gas tank so she would safely make it to a family member's residence out of county.**

Deputy Biernacki has received 3 commendations this year for his bravery and professionalism. He assisted in keeping children safe at the Fort Walton Beach Medical Center during a shooting investigation. Without hesitation he assisted an OCSO employee in changing a tire on their personal vehicle during the summer heat. He was also praised for his professionalism and de-escalation techniques during a domestic dispute.

Deputy Biernacki maintains a positive professional image as well as a professional attitude. He produces a high quality and quantity of work and is often relied upon by his peers for guidance. Deputy Biernacki has proven himself to be an outstanding role model for this agency and the community he serves.

Administrative Employee of the Year

Christine Cooper



Christine has been with us since our Communications Consolidation in 2019 and was Okaloosa County's 9-1-1 Coordinator prior to that. Her credentials also include Vice President of the West Florida National Emergency Number Association and the current conference chair for the Florida National Emergency Number Association.

Christine is the primary point of contact for all 9-1-1 system implementations and upgrades as well as being responsible for the day to day management of Okaloosa County's 9-1-1 system.

This year, she obtained a grant for DataMark GIS remediation as well as a grant for Rapid Deploy Radius 9-1-1 mapping. She has been instrumental in spearheading the implementation of many 9-1-1 advancements for our center such as Citizen Input, a cloud based service that allows citizens to send video and photographs directly to our 9-1-1 center.

Smart Transcription is another program Christine was instrumental in acquiring for our center. This feature transcribes voice audio of 9-1-1 callers into a searchable text transcript, providing Communications Officers another method to verify caller information. Additional 9-1-1 applications as a result of her vision for enhancement include: What3Words; as well as RapidSOS Alerts; a web based notification system that sends alarm activation alerts directly to our 9-1-1 center. Christine oversees our county's continued advancements towards the Regional 1 Next Generation Core Services project to usher in secure, affordable and state of the art 9-1-1 technology to our community.

Christine is a passionate and engaged employee dedicated to each caller - and every Communications Officer receiving 9-1-1 calls. She ensures availability of 9-1-1 services without fail - and accurate device location technology within our system.

On December 20, 2021, Governor Ron DeSantis appointed Christine and four others to the E9-1-1 Board. She'll serve a four year term. This is a prestigious appointment befitting a person of Christine's character, integrity and innovation. For her continued dedication, hard work and love for her community, Christine Cooper is selected as the 2021 Administrative Employee of the Year.

Administrative Employee of the Year

Chaplain Timothy Sheldon



Chaplain Tim Sheldon's is compassionate, patient, selfless, approachable, humble, thoughtful, versatile, and prepared. He continuously seeks methods and opportunities to serve his fellow man and ministers in prayer, counsel, fellowship, and encouragement.

He's a dedicated professional and takes a leading role in many programs throughout the organization. Despite challenges presented by COVID, he developed alternative means of accomplishing wellness programs to keep us connected without sacrificing safety. With software programs such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom, the chaplaincy sustained many of its programs, which became vital when employees worked from home.

Our Angel Tree and Annual Hospice Tree Programs flourished under his leadership.

Chaplain Sheldon volunteered over 275 hours for the year, more than five times the 48-hour yearly goal. Those hours included office visits, shift briefings, planning and conducting funerals, and hospital visits. He is often the Chaplain contacted for unattended death call-outs. Deputies ask for him by name because of his calming demeanor in interacting with emotionally distraught citizens. Throughout all this service, Chaplain Sheldon simultaneously provided spiritual leadership to two churches as their full-time pastor.

We can't say enough about Chaplain Sheldon's devotion to Deputy Michael Neau and his family after Deputy Neau tested positive for Covid. He provided on-time care to him, his wife, and both sets of parents. The pastoral care in the hospital consisted of many hours of bedside ministry and meal coordination. Often, Chaplain Sheldon would run errands for the family so they could remain at the hospital. Unfortunately, things took a turn for the worse, and Deputy Michael Neau succumbed to his illness. The comfort Chaplain Sheldon supplied to the parents and Mrs. Neau was monumental. His assistance was pivotal in the funeral planning with Davis Watkins Funeral Home and the Sheriff's Office. He authored the funeral service program and coordinated with all guest speakers as well as the OCSO Honor Guard. In addition, his heartfelt eulogy brought much comfort to the family and public. And while staffing the Neau Family funeral, he simultaneously planned another funeral for a member of his church.

Sworn Administrative Employee of the Year

Deputy Heather Rominger



Deputy Heather Rominger has been a Court Transport Deputy since 2014. She is an essential component of Court Transport, an irreplaceable member of the Detention Section, and a benevolent humanitarian. During 2021, the Detention Section experienced several leadership changes. With those changes she looked for ways to increase efficiency. She volunteered to assume numerous additional responsibilities:

- * Preparing court dockets and transport lists
- * **Accounting for all arrest reports being scanned to the Clerk's Office Case Initiation**
- * Ensuring Accurate accountability of retention files
- * Completing daily checks of the facility to ensure maintenance is up-to-date, including court feeds on all three levels of the court-house annex

And those are just a handful of examples.

She's an active member of the OCSO Deputy Counsel, serving as the sole liaison between Judicial Services and Sheriff Aden.

Deputy Rominger cares deeply for her peers and their families. She made sure Deputy Neau's family was supported at all times after he became ill. She created a "Meal Train" through an online website and raised over \$3000 for the Neau family. After his passing she volunteered to help in the collection and analysis of data needed to show Deputy Neau contracted his illness while serving in his official capacity and was an official "In the Line of Duty Death", making his family eligible for proper entitlements.

To date, she stays in constant communication with the Neau family. Deputy Neau's wife Mechelle asked to add a few words about the impact Deputy Sheriff Rominger has had on her family:

"Heather has been a God-send to us. She worked with Michael in booking and he would always have stories about how she kept them all straight at work. I had never met her, though. When Michael was admitted to the hospital, she came to see him and immediately became a part of my family. She checked on me and the girls, organized a meal train on our behalf, and helped with everything we needed. She became the liaison for me when it came to working with the agency. I couldn't have gotten through, especially the first month, without her by our side. Heather is family now. The girls love her, I love her, and she has been the best thing for us."

Deputy Sheriff Heather Rominger exhibits professionalism, reliability, loyalty and concern for others.

Communications Officer of the Year Jade Prokop



Jade Prokop started with us in Communications in January 2017 and quickly became a valuable asset. She handles all aspects of the job efficiently, with courtesy and empathy for the citizens she serves. Jade uplifts those around her, even during the toughest times.

In January 2019, we consolidated dispatch services with Okaloosa County Public Safety (EMS/Fire). We inherited a manpower shortage, forcing us to develop a strategy to train several new communications officers while still providing professional dispatch services to citizens.

One of the most important goals of the consolidation is cross training. Some go the extra mile to cross train on every facet of tri-discipline dispatching. Jade is one of those. In June 2021, she fully cross trained on Law, Fire and EMS, which is no easy feat. Her attention to detail and ability to multi-task is invaluable to our operations.

Jade's love for the job is apparent in her enthusiasm for training others. She's been a Communications Training Officer since July 2020 and has already completed over 300 hours of training. She is on the Communications Policy Update Committee, Employee Council Committee, and the Recruitment Committee. She has applied for Advanced Communications Officer within the Communications Career Development program.

In September 2021, Jade completed the Communications Supervisor promotional process, promoting to Assistant Supervisor on December 3rd.

Jade is one of our top performers consistently receiving "high compliant" Quality Assurance evaluations. Before being promoted, Jade often sat as the Officer in Charge displaying her leadership abilities by making decisive decisions and making appropriate notifications.

During her off time, Jade volunteers for many events, from K-9 trials and the Star Charity Gun Match to the Motorcycle Challenge, Christmas Trees for Hospice, and The Angel Tree program. She is always willing to lend a helping hand whether on duty or off.

Her can-do attitude, quality of work, and tenacity demonstrates she's the epitome of what a Communications Officer should be.

Outstanding Posse Member of the Year

Cheryl Doughty



Cheryl Doughty is our outstanding Posse Member of the Year 2021.

She's been an active member since 2019. Cheryl has steadfastly volunteered for a wide variety of details, including traffic and crowd control at parades, festivals, high school football games, and early morning charity runs. Additionally, she represented the **Posse at the Okaloosa County Women Veterans Memorial Ceremony**. **That's not all** - Cheryl assisted the Marine Unit throughout the 2021 tourist season by working alongside the Marine Unit deputies on regular patrol. Her service in 2021 consisted of 175 volunteer hours.

Cheryl brings a variety of skills to the Posse. She worked full-time for the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, starting her career in 1995 as a dispatcher; she became a full-time deputy and then a part-time deputy. Upon her retirement from the Agency in 2019, she joined the Posse. She retired as a Senior Master Sergeant, with service in the Air Force, followed by active and regular duty in the Air Force Reserve. She is a government civil service engineer technician.

Cheryl Doughty is a giver – serving her country and community for many years. You can always count on her to perform all her duties in a professional and courteous manner - and to go above and beyond.

Her efforts in support of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Posse are no exception, and that's why Cheryl Doughty is our 2021 Posse Member of the Year.

MISSION STATEMENT:

We are committed to upholding the Constitution of the United States and the laws of Florida with excellence and integrity. We strive to reduce crime while providing fair and equal treatment for all. We are honored to serve and protect.



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