

OCSO ANNUAL REPORT

2023



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sheriff-okaloosa.org









2023

CALLS FOR SERVICE



212,441

OFFENSE REPORTS GENERATED



14,941





NORTH DISTRICT

In the spotlight

Calls for Service 49,693

Traffic Stops	5,971
Warrants Services	1,381
DUI Arrests	44
Burglary	180
Theft/Larceny	312
Narcotics Arrests	190
Watch Orders/Security Checks	7,054
Citizen Contacts/911 Calls	9,412



2023 NORTH DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

On January 8th, suspect Joshua Colley committed a domestic violence act with a firearm in Laurel Hill. He left the scene, but was intercepted on Hwy. 393 by patrol units. Colley fled at a high rate of speed until crashing. He then fled on foot with a firearm visible in his hand. Colley was spotted on game cameras, and by the OCSO Drone Unit, still carrying the firearm. He was able to escape through thick brush in a very rural area. The next day, patrol units determined Colley's location to be inside a residence in Crestview. Colley refused to come out and the OCSO Special Response Team was summoned. After several hours, Colley decided to surrender peacefully to the SRT.



The North District had two aircraft Incidents: One single engine airplane experienced engine trouble over the Auburn area of Northern Okaloosa County and crashed upright in a field. Thankfully the pilot was only slightly injured and walked away.



The second incident involved an Army Helicopter that experienced mechanical failure and had to land in a field in the Laurel Hill community.



Both North District CRD (Community Resource Deputies) got the ball rolling to clean up a location in Laurel Hill that had been known for years as an illegal dumping ground.



In February 2023, members of the North District attended the Flashlight Community Walk, hosted by the Crestview Police Department. Members of Law Enforcement and the community joined together to build rapport and walk several blocks together.



On November 29th, deputies responded to a shooting call on Quasar Drive in Crestview. The victim had been shot in the head in an attempted homicide. He survived and the suspect was later arrested in early 2024.



On August 26th, Deputies spotted a stolen vehicle. It fled at a high rate of speed, crashing through a barber shop off Main Street in Crestview. Both suspects were apprehended inside the business. The stolen vehicle then caught fire, which in turn destroyed the barber shop.



March 27th, Community Resource Deputy Deputy Tim Patterson and K9 Beau were called to assist the Crestview Police Department with a missing autistic child. Once on scene, K9 Beau quickly tracked and located the missing child outside nearby.



The Sheriff's Office has a particularly great working relationship with the 7th Special Forces Group. The 7th SFG routinely invites Sheriff's Office members, and sometimes their families, to events they hold at their base.



On December 5th, the Sheriff's Office made national news after responding to a call of two small grizzly bears walking along Old River Road in the Baker Community. FWC was contacted and took over the case.



In November of 2023, the North District held a contest for the best mustache, in recognition of men's health and "No Shave November." The winner was Deputy Michael Blake, with runner up Deputy Eric Keyes. Both mustaches were impressive and the votes came down to the wire! Both deputies walked away with gift cards, bought by the District Captain, as prizes.



The North District has a solid reputation of working well with surrounding agencies, to include the Crestview Police Department, FHP, Fire Departments, and counties on both sides of us, i.e. the Walton County Sheriff's Office and Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office.



The Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement services to the Laurel Hill area.



Laurel Hill is also the home of Okaloosa County's first elected Sheriff, John Monroe Summerlin. Sheriff Summerlin was killed in the line of duty after being struck by a train in 1921. He is laid to rest in Laurel Hill.







CENTRAL DISTRICT

In the spotlight

Central District Statistics of Interest

Calls for Service	71,295
Offense Reports Generated	5,897
Arrests / Notice-to-Appear	1,369
DUI Arrests	176
Traffic Stops	7,299
Traffic Crashes	1,298
Warrant Served/Attempts	1,461
Florida Baker Acts	52
Overdoses	21
Homicides	3
Robberies	4
Batteries/Assaults	275
Burglaries	
Business	36
Residential	149
Vehicle	198
Drug Violations	407

Central District, also known as District 2, encompasses the southwest portion of Okaloosa County. It is densely populated with four municipalities including Fort Walton Beach, Mary Esther, the Town of Shalimar, and the Town of Cinco Bayou. The district boundaries start on the west side at the county line with Santa Rosa County and continue east along the Hwy 98 corridor to Brooks Bridge. Moving north from Hwy 98, the district includes portions of Hwy 85 and Hwy 189 all the way to just south of the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport and up a portion of SR 123.

It includes areas surrounding Hurlburt Air Force Base, home to the U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command and the 1st Special Operations Wing, as well as portions surrounding Eglin Air Force Base and the U.S. Air Force Armament Museum.

The district boundaries run along the Gulf Intercoastal Waterway and includes inlets of Choctawhatchee Bay, Cinco Bayou and more. It also includes the Sheriff's Office Headquarters building in Shalimar, as well as two sub-stations used for daily operations. The district has 50 full-time law enforcement positions, supported by an essential group of civilian employees. 2023 saw varied degrees of staffing but ended strong with 90% of the positions filled as there were only five sworn vacancies.

In 2023, the district had a total of 71,295 calls for service. These calls for service generated 5,897 offense reports, resulting in 1,369 arrests.



The Sheriff's Office also provides law enforcement services to the City of Mary Esther. This includes two full-time deputies who work in the city's incorporated areas. In 2023, OCSO deputies handled a total of 5,844 service calls/incidents within these city limits. This included 247 traffic crashes and 105 arrests and/or notices to appear against criminal suspects. Further, deputies handled 1,203 watch orders and security checks throughout the city at various businesses and private properties.

Community Resource Deputies (CRDs)

In 2023 CRDs answered 1859 calls for service and 274 traffic complaints. They conducted a combined 170 traffic stops associated with those traffic complaints.

Additional Information:

Conducted Three community “town hall” forums:

Wright/Kenwood

West County/Mary Esther City/Cinco Bayou

- Participated in community events, including but not limited to:
 - Big Brothers Big Sisters “Big Scoop” event
- Sylvania Heights Baptist Church “Youth Super Day” event
 - Sylvania Heights “Back-to-School Fun Day” event
 - Wildwood Fall Festival
 - Gregg Chapel Back-to-School Bash
- Bob Hope Village Veterans Day & Christmas events
 - Mary Esther Memorial Day Parade
- FWB Chamber Non-Profit Fair/Community Event
 - Cruisers & Cops Car Show
 - Pre-School Presentations:
 - Cinco Bayou Baptist Church
 - Little Angles Pre-School
 - All Stars Pre-School
 - Advanced Sacred Heart Hope Academy
- Sylvania Heights Community Turkey Drive: Partnered with Pastor Walker and obtained turkeys/hams which to distribute to families in need in the Sylvania Heights community and helped 100+ families in the community enjoy a Thanksgiving meal.
- LEO23 Community Outreach Project: Worked closely with Capt. Grady Carpenter in the coordination and organization of the LEO23 outreach event.





- Environmental Complaints: Resolved 24 environmental complaints (illegal dumping, abandoned vehicles, etc.).
- Traffic Complaints: Responded to 66+ traffic complaints, deployed speed/LPR trailers, coordinated high-visibility enforcement.
- Homeless Encampments: Addressed and resolved 20+ homeless encampments by working with property owners. Most noteworthy was at MLK/Comanche, a joint effort with Eglin AFB. Also established a working relationship with FPL to improve maintenance of easements to deter encampments.
- Project Linus: Worked with Project Linus volunteers to distribute handmade blankets to each district for children in crisis or children involved in difficult calls for service.
- Civilian Active Shooter Preparedness and Response Training: Coordinated and held a training seminar for 500+ employees of Leonaro DRS, Inc. Also provided similar training for FedEx facility employees.
- Skipper/Racetrack Traffic Study: Conducted a comprehensive traffic study in response to numerous traffic crashes; Collaborated with FDOT to facilitate improvements.
- Hurlburt Field DUI Awareness Campaign: Partnered with Sgt. Hackett (Security Forces) for a safety campaign.
- Code Enforcement: Continued a working relationship with Code Enforcement to include periodic meetings, accompanying Code Enforcement Officers on cases, etc.
- CPTED: Completed CPTED surveys and reports for several businesses including all city facilities for the City of Mary Esther.
- Social Media: Began partnering with PIO this year; created and published social media posts and content on an ongoing basis.
- De-Escalation Training Facilitation: Obtained National De-Escalation Instructor Certification and worked with Training to train new recruits.
- Project Lifesaver Training Facilitation: Obtained Instructor Certification and worked with Training to certify all Corporals and CRDs agency-wide.
- Assisted Patrol: Central District CRDs assisted patrol with zone coverage, front desk coverage, and response to calls for service and responded to 2,363 calls (Jan.-Nov.)



EAST DISTRICT

In the spotlight

EAST DISTRICT STATISTICS OF INTEREST

District 3 Calls for Service	71,342
Offense Reports	4,859
Traffic Stops	11,124
Arrests/NTA	2,826
Traffic Crash Responses	1,989
Warrant Service/Attempts	680
Narcotics Offenses	594
Burglaries	241
Homicides	0
Watch orders	3,483





The East District (District 3) makes up the Southeast portion of the county, covering approximately 196 square miles, and stretching from Duke Field to five miles into the Gulf of Mexico, east of Brooks Bridge across Okaloosa Inland, through the City of Destin to the Walton County line. It includes most waterways within Okaloosa County, and has a population of 56,280. 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 16 patrol deputies, two investigators, one marine unit, one community resource deputy, and one deputy assigned to the Stahlman Office front desk.

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 2023, calls for service in the City of Destin reached 44,660.



COMMENDATIONS

Gabrean Grundin	Certificate of Commendation
Austin Wood	Certificate of Commendation
Greg Rubo	Life Saving Award
Dylan Gentry	Life Saving Award
Dylan Gentry	Certificate of Commendation
Corporal RJ Shelly	Certificate of Commendation
Corporal Shelly	Outstanding Performance
TJ Hennis	Life Saving Award
Corporal Tavish Frederick	Outstanding Performance
JJ Morton	District Level Commendation
Trent Zellars	District Level Commendation
William Sewart	District Level Commendation
Austin Wood	District Level Commendation
April White	District Level Commendation
Jerald Rheinhardt	District Level Commendation
Tevin Frederick	District Level Commendation
Brandon Seebeck	District Level Commendation
Lieutenant Brian Parkton	District Level Commendation
Sergeant Kyle Corbitt	District Level Commendation
Sergeant Jessica Trimboli	District Level Commendation X2
Corporal Michael Watts	District Level Commendation
Corporal Lance Williams	District Level Commendation
Eric Stinson	District Level Commendation
Ben Haines	District Level Commendation
Andy Maltais	District Level Commendation
Charles Sprague	District Level Commendation
Casey Dennis	District Level Commendation
Michael Powell	District Level Commendation

Michael Powell MADD “Dirty Dozen Award” for BUI Enforcement
Eric Stinson MADD “Dirty Dozen Award” for BUI Enforcement



PROMOTIONS

Anthony “Tony” Kelly from Sergeant to Lieutenant

Tavish Frederick from Deputy to Corporal

Ethan Elsassser from Corporal to Investigations

Michael Watts from Deputy to Corporal

Michael Watts from Corporal to Investigations



EAST DISTRICT SIGNIFICANT CASES

Eighteen Arrests and Twenty-Four Warrant obtained for Organized Retail Theft Crimes

OCSO23OFF006357 - Organized Retail Theft Belks \$3,336.90 in merchandise two arrested

OCSO23OFF009007- Trafficking in Methamphetamine Arrest

OCSO23OFF015332 - Trafficking in Methamphetamine Poss. of Heroin and Cannabis Arrest

OCSO23OFF006795- 380 Grams of Fentanyl Arrest

OCSO23OFF014719 - Sexual Battery on Child Arrest subject had out of state Murder Warrant

OCSO23OFF002437 -Sexual Battery on Child Arrest

OCSO223OFF013475 - Aggravated Battery with a vehicle Arrest



The East District is also home to several specialty units to include the Beach/Marine Unit and the Dive Team.



Calls for Service	5,754
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Arrests	93
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Vessel Stops	3,002
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Security Checks	3,525
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Boating Citations	94
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Distressed Swimmers	218
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2023 MADD BUI Dirty Dozen Award Deputy Michael Powell
2023 MADD BUI Dirty Dozen Award Deputy Eric Stinson

Crab Island is a staple destination for the Florida Panhandle and attracts tourists and visitors from all over the southeast. Local businesses operating in the Crab Island Entertainment Area flourish as visitors amass in record numbers.

The boating rental community continues to grow and the coastal waters of Okaloosa County have never been busier. Currently, Okaloosa County has over 20,313 registered vessels that on any given Saturday can be seen traversing the surrounding local waters.

Boating Under the Influence (BUI) enforcement and Boating Safety continue to be a primary focus. **These efforts of diligent patrols coupled with unwavering BUI enforcement resulted in a 77% decrease in BUI arrests for 2023. This was the first marked decrease in BUI since 2017. Additionally, Okaloosa County recorded a 75% decrease in boating fatalities from the previous year.**

These continued efforts resulted in awards from MADD Florida for two Marine Unit members in 2023. Additionally, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office was nominated for small agency of the year for BUI enforcement in 2023.



The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office continues to ensure Crab Island and surrounding waters remain safe for the recreating public. Throughout the Summer, "Takeovers" are often seen advertised on social media encouraging visitors to attend large gatherings and parties at Crab Island. During these times, the Marine Unit, working with other local agencies, monitors these activities and appropriately manages the unsanctioned events to enhance public safety.



DIVE UNIT

The Dive Unit consists of thirteen agency members and one member from the Fort Walton Beach Police Department. Their roles encompass additional duties in addition to their regular assignments.

In 2023, several members retired and these vacancies were filled with new members. Three new divers were selected during this time. These new divers will continue to receive advanced training in diving specialty courses bringing them to Dive Master status. Members received training and certifications in advanced open water, rescue diver, dry suit, Full-face mask, and Nitrox. They also participated throughout the county in several clean-up (removing trash from the underwater environment) dives with non-profit organizations. The clean-up dives were conducted at the Okaloosa Island Pier and the East Jetty.

The Dive Team continues to assist in searching for evidence for the Criminal Investigations Division when these investigations lead to the numerous different bodies of water in Okaloosa County. With the ample amount of coastal beach areas, the Dive Team is consistently called upon to assist and locate missing divers and drowning victims.



BEACH UNIT

Calls for Service	7,011
Arrests	582
Spring Break Arrests	409
Distressed Swimmers	42

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 2023 Spring Break operation started the last week of February 2023 and ended at the end of April 2023.

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 52 days of the Spring Break operation, the members of the Beach Unit initiated 233 of the 409 total arrests.





COMMUNICATIONS COMMUNICATIONS COMMUNICATIONS

In the spotlight

Consolidated Emergency Communications Center

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Consolidated Emergency Communications Center is the primary Public-Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for Okaloosa County. The Communications Center is responsible for receiving and processing all emergency and non-emergency calls for service. The division also dispatches for Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, Northwest Florida State College Police Department, Shalimar Police Department, Okaloosa County Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and all Fire Departments in Okaloosa County except Crestview Fire and Eglin Fire.

The center serves over 213, 255 full-time residents as well as countless visitors in a 1,082-square-mile service area. During 2023, the Consolidated Communications Center processed 135,399 emergency calls and 195,750 non-emergency calls. This means communications officers received an average of 907 calls a day dispatching EMS, Fire, and Law Enforcement within Okaloosa County.

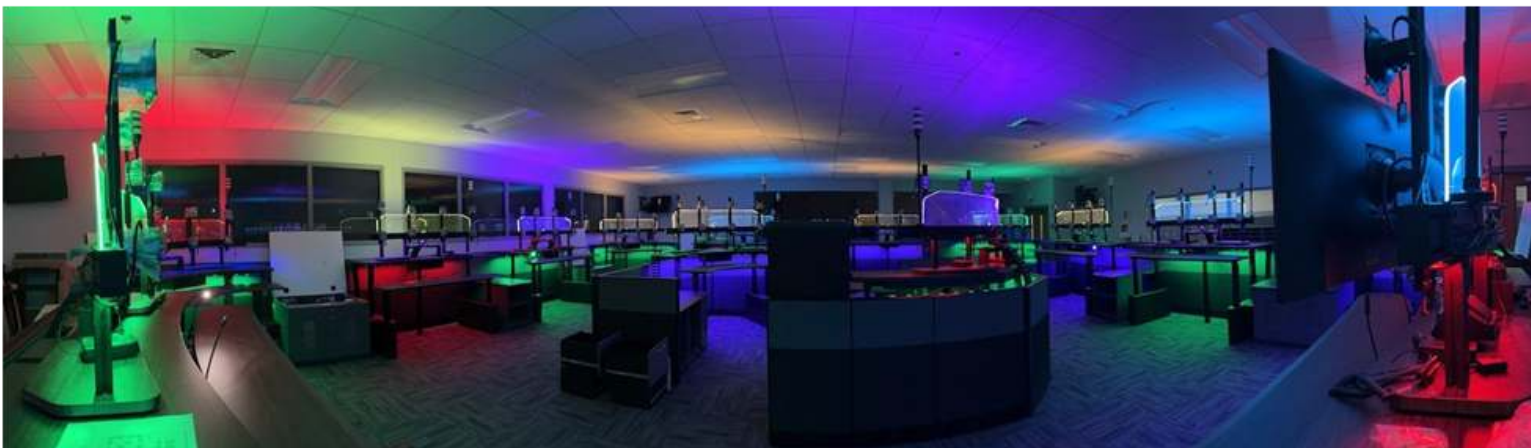
The Sheriff's Office Communications Division is comprised of fifty-four full-time employees, five part-time employees, and one Lieutenant who is responsible for the operations of the center. The center ensures professional dispatching and call answering services by complying with accreditation standards, strict training protocols, and a formal Quality Assurance Program.

- The Communications Center has an ambitious and robust training program. In 2023, the center logged over 9,500 training hours in pursuit of maintaining high proficiency within current standards and protocols. To make training more efficient, the Communications center instituted new training software through Priority Dispatch's AI SkillLab. This software incorporates AI-powered call simulation, allowing dispatchers to receive training calls in the ProQA environment with International Academies of Emergency Dispatch protocols anytime, anywhere, on any computer, speaking directly to an AI-simulated caller.
- The Communications Center is accredited through FLA-TAC, and in August 2023, the center went through the re-accreditation process. The assessment team found the center to be in compliance with all applicable standards. In the accreditation assessment report, the assessment team cited the center was committed to the accreditation process and impressed with all agency members they interacted with as well as taking valuable processes learned back to other centers.
- With the constant advancement of technology, the Communications Center was one of the first agencies in the State of Florida to implement Next Generation 911. NG911 is a digital, IP-based system that replaces the old analog 911 infrastructure. NG911 greatly improves the success and reliability of 911. It enhances emergency number services to create a faster, more resilient system. The NG911 system improves public safety answering points to help manage call overload, and the transfer of 911 calls based on caller location data.



Emergency Communications Center Remodel

The Consolidated Emergency Communications Center consists of approximately 3,520 square feet and was built in 2011. In 2023, the center went through a complete remodel. This remodel consisted of new flooring, lighting, consoles, and design layout, all while the communications staff continued operating in the 365-day 24/7 facility.



Communications Advanced Certification:

- Bravo Supervisor Mona Ciurleo completed FDLE courses, Line Supervision, and Middle Management through Northwest Florida State College.
- Charlie Shift Supervisor Shannon King completed the Florida Leadership Academy through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.
- Ryan Duval, Delta Shift Supervisor, and Assistant Manager Audrey Adams graduated from the FBI Leeda Leadership Trilogy program.
- Assistant Manager Audrey Adams received the Momma Jo Spirt of Excellence Award and was recognized at the Harborwalk's Hometown Hero presentation.



Communications Division Commendations:

Commendation Recipients: Calli Bautista 3, Mike Miller 3, Jonique Reynolds 3, Taylor Burkhart 1, Denise Jones 2, Kary Brown 2, Heather Willoughby 2, Anja Moon 3, Hannah Durette 1, Dean Barrow 1, Cherri Butcher 1, Catherine Clark 1, Scott Cronkhite 1, Heather Derrick 2, Emily Flegal 1, Nina Hawkins 1, Lauren Hockman 2, Ryan Jaycocks 2, Denise Sledge 1, Charley Wyles 1, Shannon King 1, Jennifer Lee 2, Jennifer King 1, Hilton Livingston 1, Hannah Luttrell 2, Steven Moose 2, Eric Salter 2, Naomi Gomillion 2, Julie Strehle 2, Taylor Tasco 2, Catherine Thurman 1, Victoria Vaughan 2, Kristen Sallberg 1, Miki Sowers 1, Caleb Wyles 2, Darian Sparks 2.

Tri-Discipline Certification:

- Catherine Thurman
 - Anja Moon
- Denise Sledge
- Sandy Boyer
- Taylor Tasco

Communications Longevity Certificates:

- Mona Ciurleo celebrated 10 years with the Sheriff's Office
- Julie Strehle celebrated 5 years with the Sheriff's Office
- Jonique Reynolds celebrated 5 years with the Sheriff's Office
- Karly Brown celebrated 5 years with the Sheriff's Office

Communications Promotions:

- Captain Kevin Kirkpatrick was promoted to Major and re-assigned to the Operations Bureau
- Lieutenant Nesli Suhi-Moore was promoted to Captain and continued her assignment in the Communication Center.





AIRPORT SECURITY

In the spotlight

Calls For Service 71,295

In April 2017, the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners contracted with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office to provide law enforcement and security services at the three county-owned airports. The OCSO Airport Security Unit is comprised of deputies, communications specialists, and supervisors providing 24-hour protection for travelers, employees, and other visitors at the county's airports. The Destin – Fort Walton Beach Airport (VPS), Bob Sikes Airport (CEW), and the Destin Executive Airport (DTS) are responsible for an annual economic impact of \$2.9 billion to the local area (FlyVPS.com).

A record number of more than 2.2 million passengers traveled through the Destin – Fort Walton Beach Airport (VPS) in 2023, a 13.6% increase over the previous year.

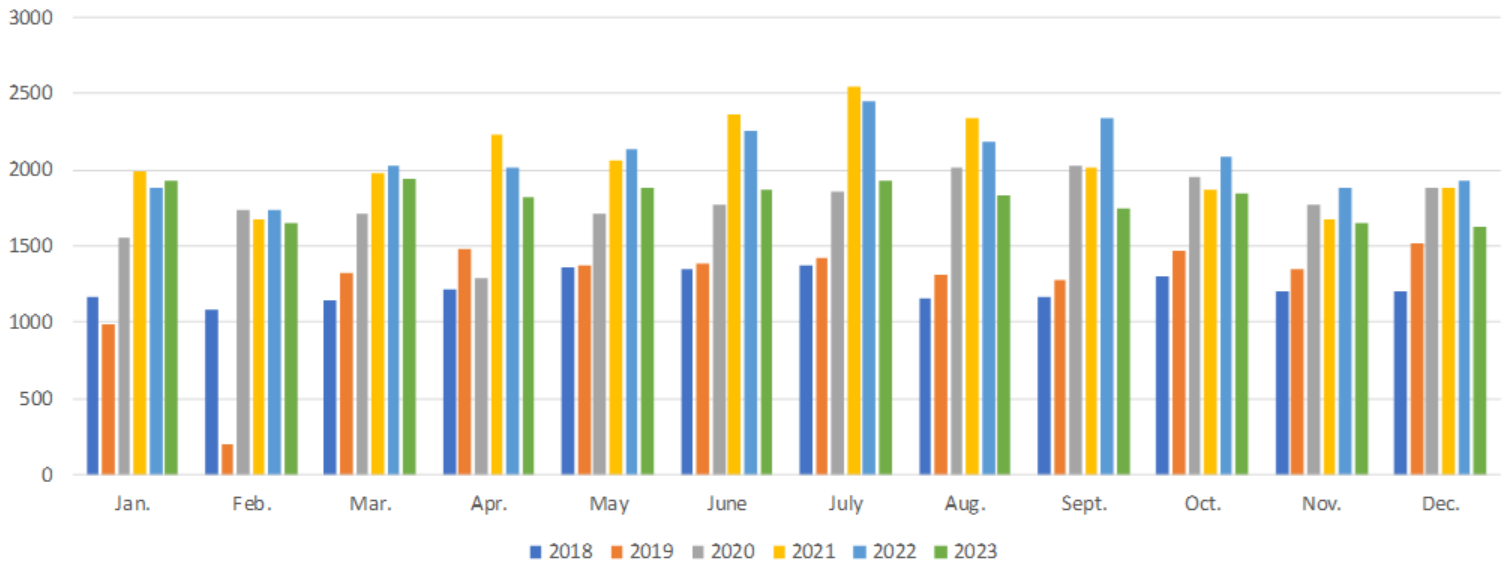


The ever-increasing number of visitors to the airports generates opportunities for ASU deputies to be ambassadors for Okaloosa County and the rest of the Emerald Coast. In addition to traditional law enforcement duties, ASU deputies conduct inspections of vehicles and packages, assist visitors with general information, and perform other tasks required of commercial airports related to security measures. To further enrich the abilities of providing security, an Explosive Detection Canine Team was added in 2019.

Deputy Brian Beyhl and K9 Skye have been an integral part of the ASU for the past several years. During 2023, Deputy Beyhl and K9 Skye achieved several notable awards in training and competitions to include 1st place in two-man interdepartmental teams and 2nd place overall in the United States Police Canine Association (USPCA) Region 1 Trials, 4th place in room searches with a perfect score and 10th place overall in the USPCA National Trials, as well as 3rd place overall in the National Narcotic Detector Dog Association Annual Seminar



ASU Calls for Service 2018-2023



	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
2018	1168	1088	1145	1220	1363	1353	1378	1153	1162	1298	1206	1204
2019	986	195	1321	1485	1372	1384	1421	1308	1271	1466	1353	1519
2020	1558	1741	1708	1288	1711	1774	1854	2011	2025	1954	1770	1877
2021	1985	1676	1981	2232	2066	2370	2541	2343	2015	1874	1679	1875
2022	1886	1739	2031	2012	2134	2261	2451	2179	2340	2086	1877	1935
2023	1926	1646	1939	1815	1877	1867	1933	1834	1751	1845	1652	1627

Activity	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
Calls For Service (VPS)	1853	1594	1864	1759	1838	1840	1905	1846	1772	1852	1661	1629	21413
Calls for service(CEW)	2	2	13	8	1	0	1	2	9	5	8	8	59
Calls for service(DTS)	2	5	13	7	3	2	2	2	12	6	9	15	78
Secure Area Patrol(90)	167	154	185	160	152	128	140	150	144	148	144	170	1842
Non - Secure Area Patrol(91)	179	144	177	174	174	167	167	177	175	184	184	180	2082
Sterile Area Sweep(92)	55	48	65	58	58	60	62	69	62	63	54	57	711
Random Access Point(93A)	189	148	174	174	172	159	168	179	178	190	171	186	2088
Random Access Point(93B)	149	139	138	136	142	135	150	152	150	158	138	175	1762
Gate Access Point(94)	157	125	155	139	139	127	126	143	131	150	135	141	1668
Sterile Area Patrol(95)	174	153	181	178	171	173	210	202	185	183	171	175	2156
SIDA Violations(96)	14	3	7	5	9	5	10	1	7	7	7	3	78
TSA Assist(97FFDO)	46	46	77	60	76	81	31	1	0	1	0	0	419
TSA Assist(97LEO)	25	31	54	49	58	72	55	50	36	46	33	33	542
Airline Assist(98)	0	0	4	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	4	5	17
Vehicle / Vendor Inspection(99R)	0	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	7
Vehicle / Vendor Inspection(99)	491	420	368	350	368	399	410	387	423	365	353	237	4571
Traffic Crash	2	3	2	3	0	3	7	2	4	3	1	4	34
Medical Emergency	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	4
Ordinance Violation	9	6	9	6	10	19	11	17	4	10	6	3	110
Arrest	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	8



Criminal Investigations Division

In the spotlight

The Criminal Investigations Section is made up of one Lieutenant, two Sergeants, five Senior Investigators and fourteen Investigators. The section is divided into two specialties: Major Crimes/Special Victims Unit and Fraud/Property Crimes Unit.

There is one full-time and one part-time Polygraph examiner. There are two full time and one part-time civilian clerical Investigative technicians who assist with background investigations for new employees, crime prevention, administrative duties, and much more.

The CIS conducted approximately 1,752 felony criminal investigations in 2023. Of the 1,752 investigations opened 1,402 cases were closed, for an 80% case closure rate. Investigators made 114 arrests in 2023. Our Polygraph Examiners conducted four criminal and 110 pre-employment polygraph examinations.



Over the past year there were three officer involved shootings in Okaloosa County.
All were investigated by the Criminal Investigation Section.
100% of these cases were successfully closed.

On 9/14/1994 the skeletonized remains of a murdered female victim were found along I-10 in Holt. Investigators were able to determine the murderer was Keith Hunter Jespersen, a serial killer known as the “Happy Face Killer” who confessed to murdering the victim. However for 29 years the victim remained unidentified. The Major Crimes Unit worked closely with the District One Medical Examiner’s Office along with Othram Labs to analyze the remains. Utilizing familial DNA Othram labs was able to locate potential family members of the victim in Wisconsin. Members from the Major Crimes Section contacted the family and confirmed the victim in this case was Suzanne Kjellenberg. The Major Crimes Section along with Special agents from FDLE and members of the States Attorneys Office flew to Oregon State penitentiary to interview Jespersen. They obtained a complete confession from Jespersen, closing this 29-year-old case.



AWARDS

In 2023, members of CIS obtained the following accolades and/or promotions:

Senior Investigator Kelly Henderson awarded "Investigator of the Year 2022" as well as Destin Hometown Hero
Twelve Members of CIS awarded "Certificates of Commendation"
Investigator Jarret Bristol promoted to Sergeant
Investigator Brannon Small promoted to Sergeant



SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS SECTION (SIS)

The Special Investigations Section is made up of one Lieutenant, three Sergeants, three Senior Investigators, ten Investigators, and five deputies. The section is divided into five specialties: Multi-Agency Drug Task Force, Fugitive Warrants, Cyber Crimes/Homeland Security, Street Crimes (SCU), and Real Time Crime Center (RTCC).

There are four civilian employees employed within the RTCC.

In the year 2023, members of SIS continued joint operations with regional, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to combat illegal drug activity and other felony criminal activity in the region. These joint operations were executed through partnerships with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Marshal's Service, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Fort Walton Beach Police Department, Crestview Police Department, Niceville Police Department, Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office, Walton County Sheriff's Office, Florida Highway Patrol, and other agencies. These operations focused on the disruption and dismantling of problematic large-scale narcotic trafficking networks directly affecting Okaloosa County and the Gulf Coast region.

Below are a few examples of specific casework conducted by members of SIS in 2023:

SIS Multi-Agency Drug Task Force Investigators conducted 127 investigations involving drug trafficking organizations, fugitive apprehensions, and covert operations; with a total of 113 arrests. Investigators authored 187 search warrants in casework, with 41 of those search warrants being residential. Investigators received 165 Crimestoppers/intelligence tips from citizens in reference to suspected criminal activity; 63 Crimestopper tips were closed during this year. Investigators recovered 66 firearms from narcotics violators and/or weapons-related offenders. Additionally, the above-mentioned investigations led to 13 federal indictments for narcotics and weapons related offenses.



Total narcotics/contraband by investigators in operations= \$922,000.00, based on current estimated weights are as follows: Methamphetamine (8 kilograms); Fentanyl (10 kilograms); Cocaine (8 kilograms).

Asset forfeitures/seizures were valued at approximately \$420,000.00.

*The above figures do not include SCU totals.



The Street Crimes Unit (SCU) recorded 1,741 calls for service during 2023, despite only working half of the year. SCU members generated 93 offense reports, resulting in 140 arrests and the seizure of approximately \$131,000.00 in assets.

The Fugitive Warrants members successfully tracked, targeted, and/or apprehended suspected criminal gang members and/or felony offenders wanted for homicide, aggravated battery, weapons offenses, sex crimes, narcotics trafficking, burglary, probation violations, and more.

The Cyber Crimes Unit/ Homeland Security Unit executed multiple “sting” operations, as well as multiple multi-jurisdictional operations targeting perpetrators and sex offenders who were attempting to exploit children online.

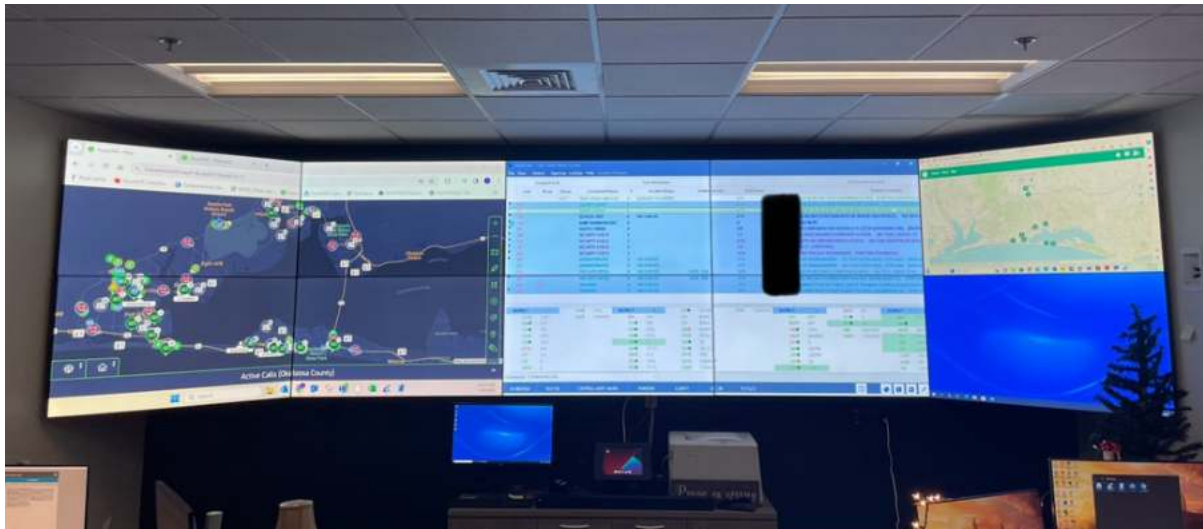
In 2023, Investigators conducted a total of 649 forensic extractions or downloads of cellular devices, handheld devices, and/or computers. In addition, Investigators initiated 348 investigations, executed 13 residential search warrants, conducted 230 electronic search warrants, served 20 Risk Protection Orders, and received 404 NCMEC tips; all resulting in 22 arrests.





In the fourth quarter of 2023, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office adopted a K9 (E-Dog) that is being formally trained in the detection of electronics capable of storing digital files and media.

The Real-Time Crime Center (RTCC) is currently staffed by four full-time Criminal Analysts who specialize in information/intelligence gathering. In the event of an emergency, analysts in the RTCC can view surveillance cameras, License Plate Readers, and body-worn cameras to aid in providing deputies with real-time information and assist in their investigations. The RTCC is a force multiplier and the unblinking eye that helps the deputy be side-by-side with the suspect instead of being a step behind.



In 2023, members of SIS obtained the following accolades and/or promotions:

- Sergeant Sterling Eslinger awarded “Supervisor of the Year 2022”**
- Criminal Analyst Katie Parker awarded “Administrative Employee of the Year 2022”**
- Nine members of SIS awarded “Certificates of Commendation”**
- Investigator Colin Savoie promoted to Sergeant**
- Sergeant Edward “Sterling” Eslinger promoted to Lieutenant**

CRIME SCENE AND EVIDENCE

This section is comprised of four full time Crime Scene Technicians and four full time Evidence Clerks.

The Crimes Scene investigators attended 45 autopsies, responded to 112 crime scene processing call outs, processed numerous high profile crime scenes, and processed 27 search warrants.

They assisted local municipal agencies with 14 investigations, processing expended shell casings from their shootings, linking weapons and suspects from their crimes in their various jurisdictions with crimes investigated by OCSO.
2023 end of the year total amount of items stored within the Evidence Unit: 126,470

Total amount of evidence items received: 14,323

Total amount of evidence items purged/destroyed: 15,114

First time ever OCSO has disposed of more items than taken into evidence and the first time have disposed of 15,000 items in one year

Partial inventory of select items completed with no discrepancies noted.

Total requests via Help Desk tickets: 2,698. This includes requests to check out and review evidence, analyze/process evidence, evidence supply requests, record expungements orders, releasing evidence to owners, etc.

Help Desk Tickets Created: 2,046

FDLE Lab Processing: 1256

FDLE Firearm Eligibility System Checks completed: 310

ATF gun traces conducted: 473 Court Orders Executed: 32

Entry of Personnel Into Impound Lot: 362 Bicycles donated to charity: 49

Vehicles Processed Thru Impound Lot: 62







Youth Services Division

In the spotlight

The Youth Services Division is responsible for ensuring school safety within Okaloosa County through the School Resource Officer program (SRO). This vital duty is carried out by 58 deputies who provide contractual law enforcement services to 42 public and charter schools.

These dedicated men and women serve a student population of over 30,000 and more than 3,000 educators, school faculty, and support staff members.

Their unwavering commitment to our youth is unparalleled, and their hard work has yielded positive results for the community we serve and the lives of the children they have sworn to protect.



The Youth Services Division is a highly skilled group with a common vision and is the leading School Resource Officer (SRO) program in Florida. While school security is a critical aspect of the SRO program, it is not the only objective. SROs use the Triad method, which prioritizes teaching, informal counseling, and law enforcement. This approach allows SROs to integrate into the educational environment and provide resources to students and faculty.

OCSO SROs participated in several classroom instructions on drug awareness, cybersafety, bullying, related crimes, school drills, and more. Additionally, they provided security for after-school sporting events, coordinated school functions, attended teacher and faculty meetings, and helped with other school-related tasks.





Community Involvement

The SRO program is a crucial link between local law enforcement and the community. By blending community-oriented policing with the Triad, SROs exemplify the values of intentionality, investment, and trust-building. This approach fortifies the relationship between law enforcement and the community, creating social currency that benefits the agency and our community partners. Our SROs actively engage with the community and voluntarily dedicate countless hours in support.

They organize various community-based events, some of which include:

- Charity Golf Tournament for Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranch (Raised over \$10,000).
- Angel Tree campaign providing Christmas gifts to nearly 300 children and their families.
- Hospice Tree Program providing more than 200 Christmas trees to local Hospice facilities for Christmas.
- “Hop with a Cop” (Surge Trampoline Park) where nearly 200 students of all ages were provided entry vouchers into the park, free food, drinks, bike safety course, free helmets, and carnival games
- “Cruisers and Cops” car event
- Youth Week
- Prom Dress Closet providing prom dresses free of charge

These examples highlight the dedication of amazing SROs involved in various programs and community projects. They find time to give back to their community and recognize the need to support organizations outside their local area. The Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches is one organization that needed counselors for their newly established year-round retreat for at-risk youth at Camp Sorenson. OCSO SROs stepped up and provided staffing by working as counselors.

This outreach allowed the camp to accommodate up to 1,500 young men and women. Through their selfless service, these SROs have positively impacted the lives of numerous young people. To add to that, the SROs also identified a financial shortfall incurred by the camp and responded by hosting a charity golf tournament which raised over \$10,000 for Camp Sorenson.

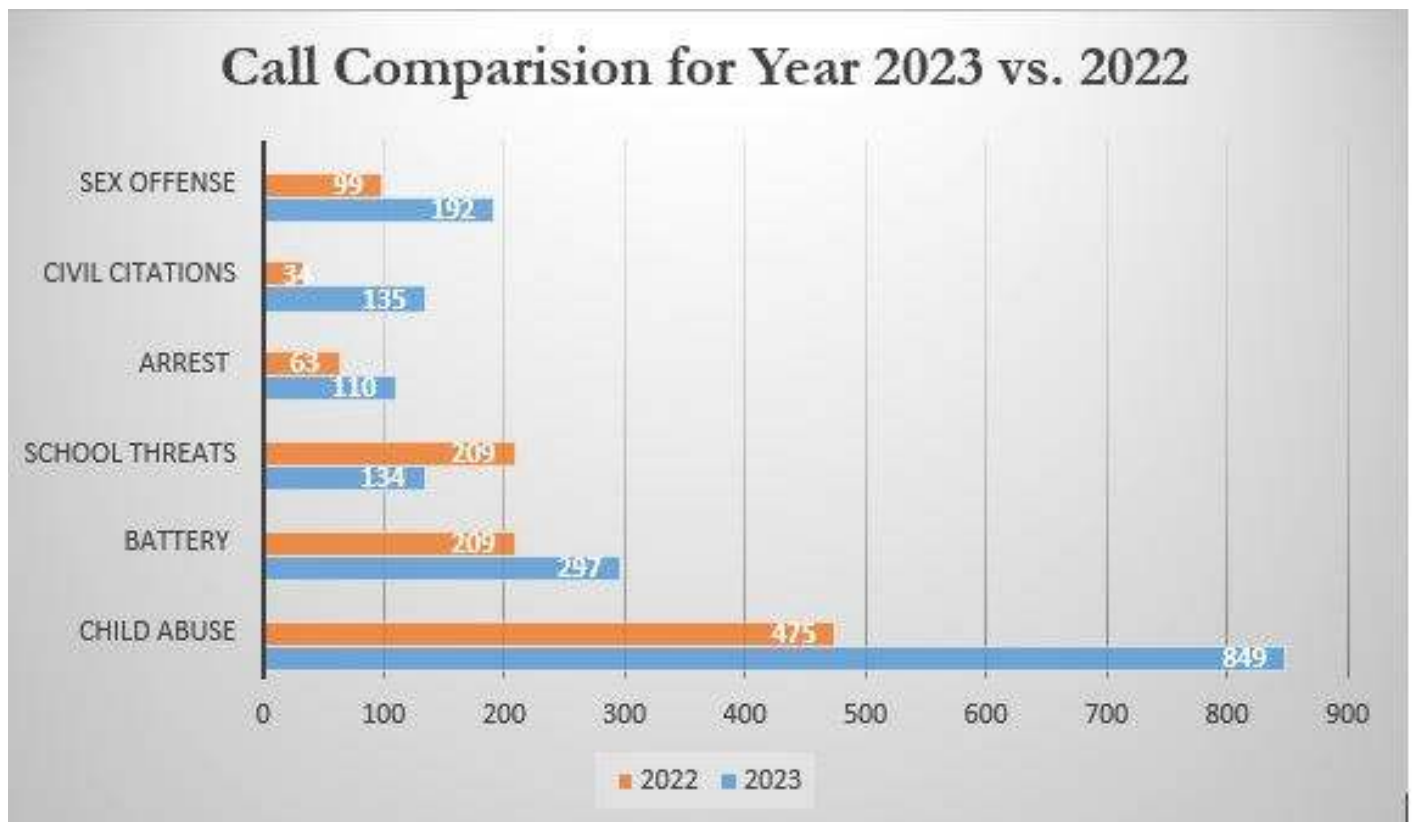
School Safety and Involvement

SROs play a crucial role in creating a safe and secure learning environment for students. They provide their expertise on a routine basis to help students and staff members. Before the beginning of every school year, SROs offer essential training in assailant response, school crisis mitigation, and a host of other pertinent topics. They also perform safety assessments of all school sites and report their findings to the Office of Safe Schools. The SROs and School District work collaboratively to address any areas that require attention.

Ensuring school safety is paramount, and OCSO SROs are committed to proactively identifying and addressing any potential threats. The Unit's creed, "This We Will Defend," is ingrained in its approach and guides its safety protocols. The Youth Services Division has provided statistical data for the period between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2023, which is as follows:

Youth Services Division Statistics of Interest for 2023





Training

School safety is paramount; nothing is more important than protecting those we have sworn to defend—our youth, teachers, and school faculty personnel. As "iron sharpens iron," our SROs strive to sharpen their skills to be better than yesterday. The Youth Services Division has and continues to shape the landscape of school-based policing with challenging school protocol responses through countless hours of supplemental mental health, tactical, leadership training. Similarly, through small-unit leadership, the SROs have streamlined organizational leadership and empowered every SRO from junior grade up. This practice has resulted in better peer-level leadership, which has reaped "good fruit" in our schools and produced more well-rounded SROs.



Sex Offender/Predator Tracking Unit

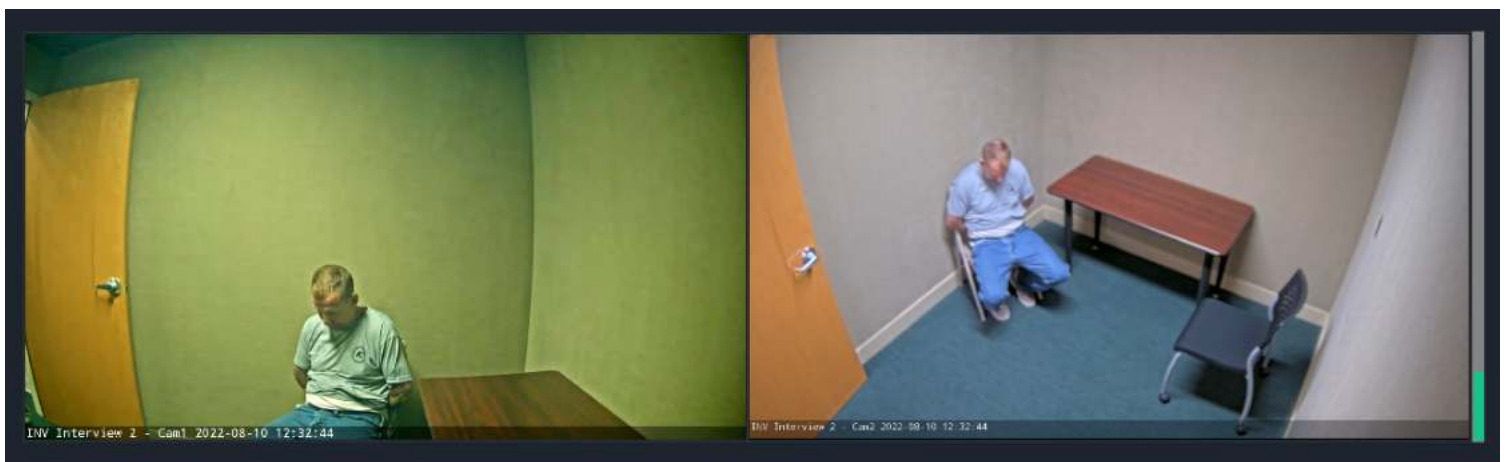
The Sex Offender/Predator Tracking Unit (SOPU) consists of SROs who are charged with ancillary duties that include monitoring, tracking, and verifying all sexual offenders/ predators within Okaloosa County.

Shouldering this responsibility since 2013, the SROs have continually garnered compliance from this population.

Year 2021 versus Year 2022 Statistics



Total number of Offenders	411	415
Address Verifications	1634	1314
Investigations	74	80
Arrest Warrants	77	55



Explorer Post #245

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Explorer Post #245 seeks civic-minded young men and women in Okaloosa County. Led by SROs, the Post instills pride and fosters self-esteem in our youth. The Sheriff's Office Explorer Post #245 has five SRO advisors who mentor fifteen explorers. The main goal is to teach, guide, and counsel these participants to set them on the path to success. The Post logged numerous training hours for 2023 and participated in multiple community-focused events.





School Crossing Guards

Dedicated crossing guards stand ready to escort our children safely across busy Okaloosa County intersections. No matter what the weather may bring, these dedicated men and women are steadfast guardians of our youth. With the consistent population rise and proportionate increase in vehicular traffic, our school crossing guards are invaluable resources for our children's safety.



Noteworthy Accomplishments

The SRO program is a model school resource program for the State of Florida. The Youth Services Division has been recognized in Florida and nationally for its outstanding efforts in school-based policing, innovative methodology, and best practices as an SRO program. Talented individuals from all walks of life compose the SRO program. This collection of life experiences engenders a large and eclectic division that can handle any situation. Members of the Youth Services Division have received agency-wide recognition for the year 2023. These accolades range from divisional commendations to promotions in rank:

- **Lt. Sterling Eslinger – Promotion to the rank of Lieutenant**
- **Investigator Ariel Plank – Promotion to the rank of Investigator**
- **Deputy Willie Foster – School Resource Officer of the Year**
- **Lt. Sterling Eslinger – Certificate of Commendation (School swatting incident)**
- **Deputy Mark Kane – Certificate of Commendation (School swatting incident)**
- **Deputy Jeremy Hawkins - Certificate of Commendation (School swatting incident)**
- **Deputy Matt Christmas - Certificate of Commendation (School swatting incident)**
- **Deputy Patrick Legions - Certificate of Commendation (School swatting incident)**
- **K9 Handler Tony Rigdon - Certificate of Commendation (School swatting incident)**
 - **Deputy Shelby Buri – Certificate of Commendation (Community event)**
 - **Deputy Nichole Ragusa – Certificate of Commendation (Community event)**
 - **Deputy Ryan Burke – Certificate of Commendation (Community event)**
 - **Deputy Miguel Rojas – Certificate of Commendation (Community event)**
- **Deputy Amber Flanagan – Certificate of Commendation (Noteworthy performance)**



An incident of note that took place in 2023 involved a swatting call to two separate schools. The perpetrator called a municipal police department, stating multiple armed assailants were present in one of the two schools. While responding to the school in question, 911 calls were received indicating a potential assailant was present at the secondary school. Numerous law enforcement assets were utilized to render both scenes safe.

The SROs at both schools demonstrated extreme bravery, tenacity, and resolve and, similarly, played integral parts in resolving the potentially deadly encounters. Lieutenant Eslinger and Deputies Christmas, Legions, Kane, Hawkins, and Rigdon were all awarded commendations for their selfless acts. SRO Lieutenant Findley was also recognized for his outstanding actions during the incident.







JUDICIAL SERVICES

In the spotlight

The Judicial Services Division is comprised of Judicial Services and Judicial Process.

Judicial Services consists of Court Security and Booking, while Judicial Process consists of Civil Process, Warrants and Records.

The Court Security Unit is responsible for the safety of Judges and judicial staff, as well as citizens. Bailiffs ensure a smooth flow of the judicial process while maintaining order in the court. Court Security is also responsible for security for other county elected officials and meetings. Court Security Screeners ensure the safety of both courthouses by manning the single point of entry.

The Detention Unit is responsible for the safe transfer of inmates from the county jail to perspective courthouses for proceedings. They also handle the transportation of inmates booked on new charges by deputies in the field to the county jail if arrested in Districts 2 or 3. Detention deputies are responsible for criminal and sexual registration functions as well.

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

The Warrants Unit processes all agency arrest warrants and other commitment orders issued by the County and Circuit Courts in Okaloosa County. It also intake warrants, and commitment orders 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; as well as coordinating transportation of prisoners housed in institutions outside of Okaloosa County for judicial hearings.

The Records Management Unit is responsible for processing, filing, indexing, storage and retention of all records and reports received. They are also responsible for public records requests and digital media handling (e.g. body camera video).



COURT SECURITY/DETENTION

Court Security (North) handled 14,458 cases or hearings, screened 41,562 individuals through the Single Point of Entry, and seized five items of contraband or weapons.

Court Security (South) handled 44,761 cases or hearings, screened 87,375 citizens through the Single Point of Entry, and seized 16 items of contraband or weapons.

Detention processed 5,465 subjects into the Okaloosa County Courthouse Annex Extension Booking Facility, transported 8,146 inmates; including those scheduled for court, and registered 1,398 felony/sexual offenders.

Court Security and Detention processed 549 of the state-mandated DNA collections!

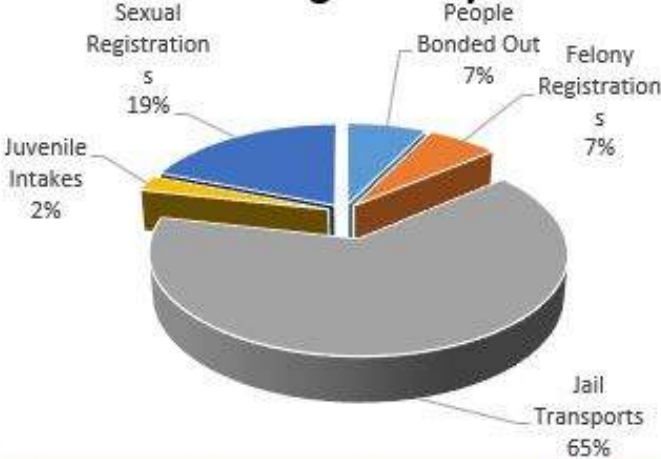
Individuals Screened



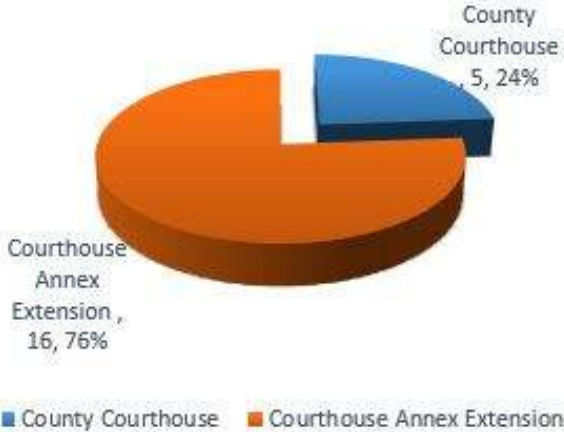
Cases and Hearings



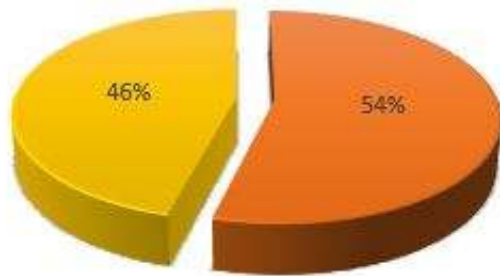
Booking Activity



Contraband Seized

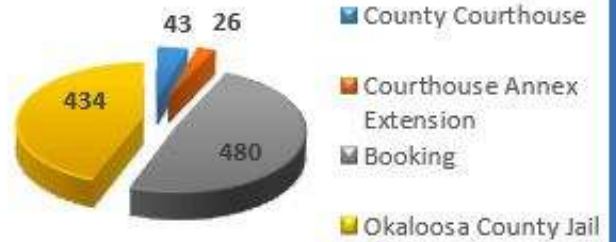


Booking Intakes



■ Daily Intake ■ Court Inmates

DNA



■ County Courthouse
■ Courthouse Annex Extension
■ Booking
■ Okaloosa County Jail

Civil Process

During 2023, the Civil Process Unit:

- Monitored 2,532 Domestic Injunctions and Protection Orders with an additional 735 that expired or were recalled during the year
 - Processed more than 10,943 and served 10,738 pieces of civil process
- Processed and served 1,204 domestic violence and other protective orders
 - Processed and served 4,342 subpoenas for criminal cases
 - Collected over \$125,740.00 in Sheriff's fees

Outstanding Warrants

Search Active Warrants

Last Name:

First Name:

Middle Name:

Warrants

During 2023 the Warrants Unit processed more than 6,228 warrants, orders to take into custody (OTTIC), and other commitment orders. Of these, 3,985 were served/executed.

544 prisoners were transported and/or extradited at a cost of \$131,733.20.

The Warrants Unit is currently managing more than 4,084 outstanding warrant, OTTIC, and other commitment orders.

Records

In 2023, Records processed the following:

- Public Records Emails – 17,080
- Scanned Entries – 26,194 (5,394 in Docuware Warrants; 232 in Civil Commits; 8,428 in Injunctions; 8,766 in Incident Reporting; 3,066 in RMS Warrants; 308 in MNI.)
 - Notices to Appear – 904
 - Master Index Records Merged – 2,909
 - Mug shots uploaded by Records – 1,309
- Videos Compiled for SAO, DUI Review Board or Public Records Request - 5,963
 - BWC Videos uploaded – 222,796 with over 600,000 still active
 - Offense Reports – 15,014
- Arrests only (does not include NTA's, Warrants, or Summons) – 3,465
 - DUI Citations – 309 in MobileForms
 - Traffic Crash Reports – 1,202 in MobileForms
 - Traffic Warnings – 3,511 logged in MobileForms;
 - Traffic Citations – 5,216 logged in MobileForms



All Offense Reports and Arrests/NTA's are reviewed daily for NIBRS/FIBRS (National/Florida Incident-Based Reporting System) data.

- DOMV Reports are sent daily to Shelter House.

-All new Master Name Index entries are reviewed daily for duplicates and merged, if needed.



Public Information

In the spotlight

2023 Numbers of Note:

Produced more than 100 News Releases

**Produced more than 70 OCSO YouTube
Videos
for 34,800 Subscribers**

**Produced Thousands of Social Media Posts
for Facebook (190,000 Followers),
X (13,800 Followers,
and
Instagram (12,800 Followers)**

**Produced Dozens of Print and Video
Recruiting Ads**

**Worked with Local, State, and National
Publications and Television Shows to
Showcase High-Profile Cases Ranging from
OCSO arrests, to the Happy Face Killer Victim
Identification,
to Spotlights on Cold Cases**



2023 Annual Data

948 - Completed maintenance and repair work orders

97 - New vehicles commissioned and put into service

66 - Vehicles decommissioned including de-stripping and removal of emergency equipment (radio, lights, siren etc.) and sent to auction or donated

107 - Vehicle accidents or incidents handled

45 - New hires onboarded and completely outfitted

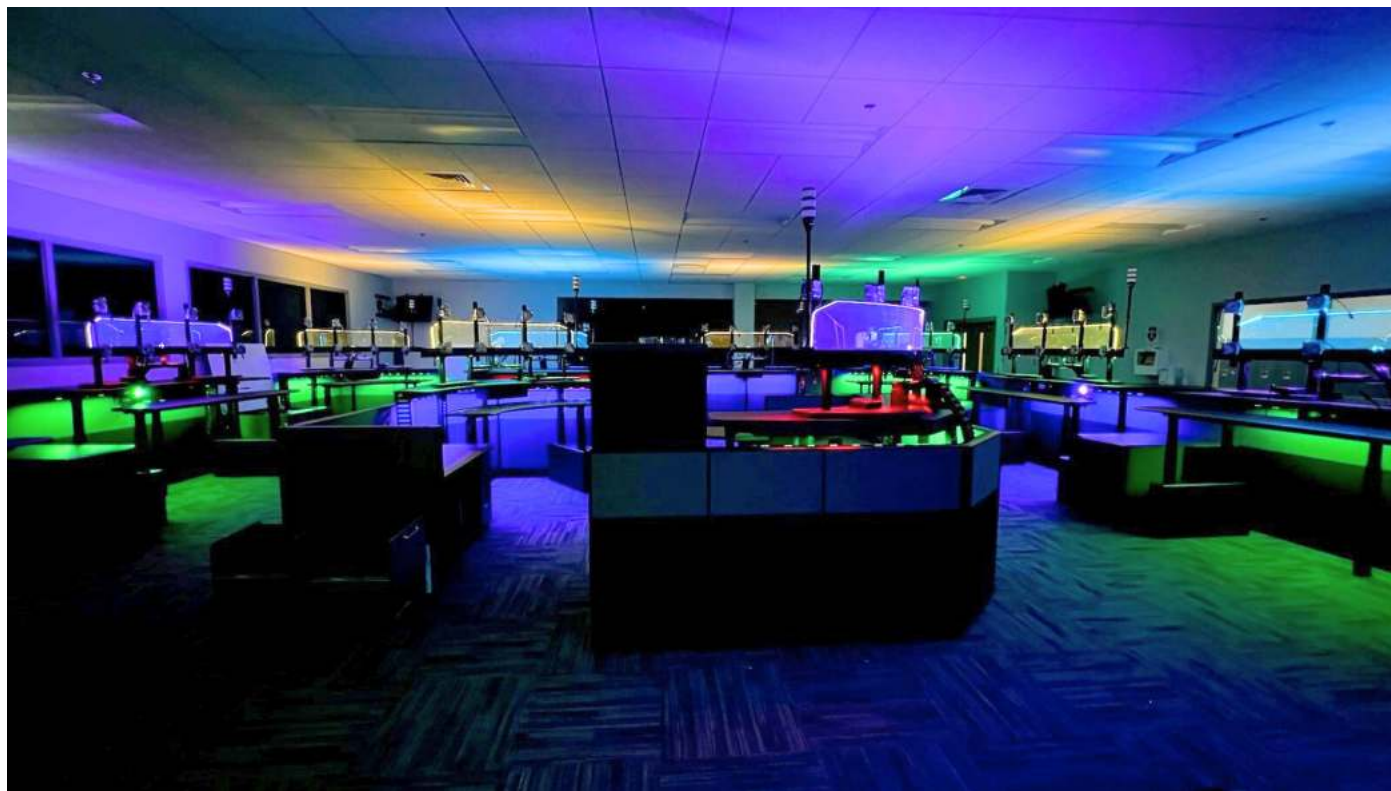
43 - Members out-processed

At the end of May 2023 our help desk ticket system was set up for supply requests. In the seven months of use, Supply responded to 278 requests for supplies.

Fleet & Supply

In the spotlight

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



Facilities

In the spotlight

Significant projects in 2023 include:

- **Completed 377 work tasks generated via our ticketing system.**
- **Deployed with sworn members to the Hurricane Idalia relief effort giving them the ability to use our heavy equipment and chainsaws to safely open roads thus allowing search and rescue operations to continue.**
- **Repainted the headquarters building in Shalimar.**
- **Managed the installation of an emergency standby generator and automatic transfer switch at the Sheriff's Public Safety Training Center thus giving ensuring continuity of operations.**
- **Assisted heavily in the renovation of the Emergency Communications Center.**
- **Assisted CID in searching for a missing cold case homicide victim by utilizing our heavy equipment expertise to remove approximately 100 cubic yards of soil and debris.**

The Okaloosa P25 Advanced Public Safety Emergency Communications System (APECS) project made significant strides this year as Williams Communications, Inc. erected 10 out of the 12 tower sites with the last 2 towers expected to be completed by January 2024. With the next steps of delivering and installing the radio infrastructure, we are still expected to go live by the end of FY24.

The LMR technician utilized the first full year in his position preparing for the new L3Harris radio system by completing multiple classes in radio programming, maintenance, and administration. During that time, the LMR technician learned about the current radio system's infrastructure to process the 191 tickets received this year.



2023 Highlights

Jan-Mar 2023

Finished installation of Symphony consoles in dispatch and transitioned to their utilization.

Performed mass programming of all deputy radios.

Installed towers for the North Fort Walton, Crestview, and Baker sites.

Apr-Jun 2023

Configured BeOn into the Real Time Crime Center, which allowed analysts to monitor the radio via their desktops.

Installed towers for Laurel Hill and Garden City.

Jul-Sept 2023

Responded to Hurricane Idalia for support services.

Installed Florosa tower.

Oct-Dec 2023

Installed towers for Niceville, Fort Walton PD, Blackman, and Dorcas.

Ryan Jacobs began training as a Communications Technician for the State Emergency Response Team.

Land Mobile Radio

In the spotlight



1,202 TIPS



47 ARRESTS



61 CASES CLEARED



**\$19,800 REWARDS
APPROVED**

2023



www.EmeraldCoastCrimeStoppers.com

RETIREMENTS

MAJOR MIKE HOWELL

31 YEARS LAW ENFORCEMENT



CAPTAIN GRADY CARPENTER



SGT. DAVID BOWELL



SGT. JEFF MORGAN



DEPUTY PAT JENKINS

32 YEARS LAW ENFORCEMENT



LT. JEREMY GILBERT



Lieutenant Jeremy Gilbert

Thank you for 25 years of service to
the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office!

DEPUTY FRANK BERGERON



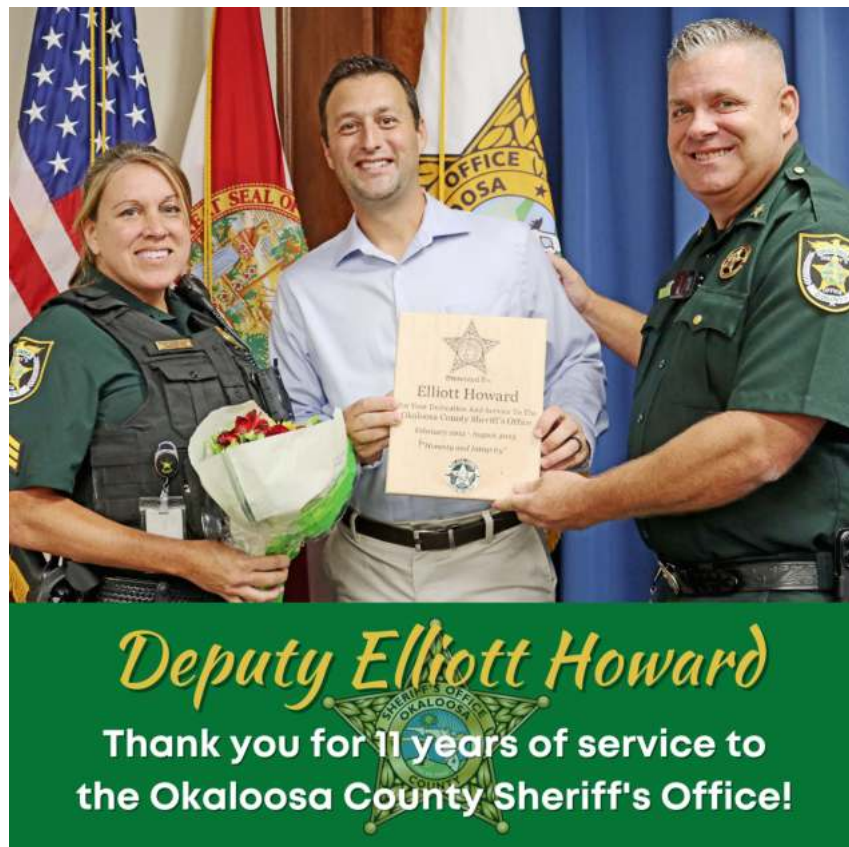
Deputy Frank Bergeron

Thank you for 23 years of service to
the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office!

DEPUTY JOE SARMENT



DEPUTY ELLIOTT HOWARD



DEPUTY WARD SHUTE



Deputy Ward Shute

Thank you for 35 years of service to
the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office!

DEPUTY RICHARD WINKLER



Deputy Richard Winkler

Thank you for 16 years of service to
the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office!

ROBIN GRIFFITH



**“Thank you all for
your countless
contributions to
our agency and
our community!”**

JOINT NEWS CONFERENCE



1994 "JANE DOE" HAPPY FACE KILLER VICTIM IDENTIFIED

October 3, 2023 10:00 a.m.



Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office
50 Second Street
Shalimar

Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office
District One Medical Examiner
State Attorney's Office
FDLE
Othram Inc.



Suspect Keith Jespersion



JOINT OCSO & OKALOOSA SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS CONFERENCE

Baker School Swatting Investigation Results



Sheriff Eric Aden

Supt. Marcus Chambers



December 21 - OCSO Headquarters 50 Second Street, Shalimar



2 p.m.

In Florida, swatting related charges are
second degree felonies,
punishable by up to 15 years in prison.





ANNUAL AWARDS

DEPUTY OF THE YEAR DEPUTY GREGORY RUBO

Deputy Gregory Rubo joined the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office in January 2022 and has exhibited extraordinary commitment, professionalism, and exceptional service. Before joining our agency, Deputy Rubo courageously served his country in the United States Air Force.

Deputy Rubo is active in many areas within the Sheriff's Office. He is a member of the Special Response Team, a Field Training Officer, and a member of the Employee Council.

Deputy Rubo is a Courtesy Officer for his neighborhood, a position he takes extremely seriously. He works tirelessly to ensure he provides the sense of peace and safety his neighbors expect no matter the inconvenience it poses to his personal time.

Deputy Rubo's exceptional lifesaving efforts were recently recognized with an OCSO Lifesaving Award. In collaboration with another Deputy and an Off-Duty Fireman, Deputy Rubo provided vital lifesaving measures to a male who had collapsed from a heart attack. Their prompt and effective CPR, along with AED shocks, ultimately saved the gentleman's life and earned them praise from medical staff.

In 2023, Deputy Rubo responded to 2,222 calls for service, made 93 arrests, and conducted 397 traffic stops for various violations. Deputy Rubo is passionate about identifying and enforcing DUI violations, leading to 16 DUI arrests. His constant pursuit of perfection has led Deputy Rubo to a 100 percent conviction rate on all DUI cases.

In July, Deputy Rubo responded to an unknown problem to find parents who discovered their child was conversing with an adult online who was supposedly on his way to pick up the child. Within moments, the suspect's vehicle drove past Deputy Rubo and continued driving toward the back of the complex, where deputies contacted the driver. He was later arrested by Deputy Rubo. The suspect was linked to numerous other sexual offenses involving juvenile victims.

Deputy Rubo has been described as passionate, reliable, selfless, a true team player, role model, mentor, and shift leader. While statistical numbers and accommodations are essential measures of success, what helps sets Deputy Rubo apart is his unrelenting pursuit of excellence and selflessness.



ANNUAL AWARDS

INVESTIGATOR OF THE YEAR TODD PADILLA

Todd Padilla served eight years in the United States Marine Corps as an Infantry soldier before joining the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office in June 2016. In 2019, Deputy Todd Padilla was promoted to Investigator and is currently assigned to the Multi-Agency Drug Task Force. He has quickly established himself as a leader, demonstrating a patient, proactive, and knowledgeable approach to combatting Drug Trafficking Organizations operating in and around Okaloosa County.

In December 2022, Investigator Padilla began investigating a large-scale narcotics organization. This investigation took approximately eight months to complete, ending with Investigator Padilla authoring numerous search warrants resulting in the seizure of over 20 pounds of crystal methamphetamine and approximately \$83,000.00 in assets. This investigation was documented as one of the largest methamphetamine seizures in Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office history.

Simultaneously Investigator Padilla was investigating another large-scale narcotics organization that took 11 months to complete and resulted in the seizure of over six kilograms of fentanyl, 5.5 kilograms of cocaine, and approximately \$130,000 in assets. The above-mentioned investigation was also historical in nature, as it was documented as the largest fentanyl seizure in Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office history.

The Drug Enforcement Administration statistics indicate that one kilogram of pure fentanyl has the potential to kill approximately five hundred thousand people. Following this seizure, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office saw an immediate decrease in fentanyl related overdoses and overdose related deaths.

Investigator Padilla's leadership, work ethic, commitment, and vision routinely go above and beyond what is expected of a deputy sheriff and investigator.



ANNUAL AWARDS

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER OF THE YEAR DEPUTY WILLIE FOSTER

Deputy Willie Foster began his law enforcement career with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office in 2005. He is currently assigned to the School Resource Officer Division and is known for his professionalism and tenacity. He is also highly regarded for his generosity and caring nature towards the staff, students, and parents.

He maintains pride in helping others and is often fixing broken items at the school during his off time with money out of his own pocket.

Each day Deputy Foster greets the students with a friendly smile or special handshake. He counsels them during times of hardship, eats lunch with them, and provides support and encouragement when needed. The children look up to him as a best friend, a mentor, and a role model. Deputy Foster has made kids want to strive to achieve new goals, pursue their hobbies, improve in their academics, and become more respectful and caring.

Deputy Foster volunteers his personal time in the community speaking at civic groups and organizations such as the Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Mary Esther Methodist Church, and Hurlburt Field Air Force Base Youth Center.

Deputy Foster's supervisor wrote, he "truly demonstrates the very essence of what a Deputy Sheriff and SRO should be and how they should conduct themselves. Deputy Sheriff Foster is an exemplary Deputy Sheriff who displays strong ethics, values, common sense, due diligence, respect for others, and possesses an appreciation for the role of public servant which cannot be taught."



ANNUAL AWARDS

SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR SGT. KYLE CORBITT

Sergeant Kyle Corbitt was promoted in 2021 and serves as the Special Operations Unit Supervisor.

He is responsible for the operations of the Marine, Beach, and Dive Units.

The Special Operations Unit is funded by the Sheriffs Office and Tourist Development Department. Utilizing these funds, Sgt. Corbitt plans scheduling for the White Point Road and Spring Break Beach Details, focusing on security for the public at Public Beach Parks and Crab Island.

In 2023, two Marine Unit members received state recognition at the Florida Mothers Against Drunk Driving awards ceremony, and the Okaloosa County Sheriffs Office was nominated for small agency of the year. For the first year since 2017, BUI arrests decreased by 77%. Okaloosa County sustained only one alcohol related fatality vessel crash in 2023.

The Marine Unit continues to set the standard for marine law enforcement in the panhandle of Florida and southeast Alabama. Other marine law enforcement agencies continually contact Okaloosa County seeking operational direction and recommendations on vessel platforms and marine related electronics. Considering the size of other Marine Units, this is a significant accomplishment. Sgt. Corbitt also attends meetings with the Okaloosa Watersport Operations Coalition to discuss water safety and applicable laws with our local business owners and residents.

In addition to these duties Sgt. Corbitt takes time for his community and for progressing in his career. He has also volunteered over 196 hours towards coaching youth sports in Crestview and has completed the FBI-LEEDA Trilogy Leadership series.



ANNUAL AWARDS

LT. “MOMMA” JO HUNTER SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARD DEPUTY KRISTOPHER STALEY

Deputy Kristopher Staley started his path to success by being a history teacher at Floral High School. He then moved to Florida and started working at the Guardian ad Litem where he mentored and spoke on behalf of the children. Deputy Staley left the Guardian ad Litem and started working at the Department of Children and Families (DCF) where he served as an investigator in the sexual abuse department at the Children's Advocacy Center for approximately five years. During this time, Deputy Staley felt a calling to start his career in law enforcement.

In 2018, Deputy Staley started working with the OCSO as a patrol deputy and then as a school resource officer. In 2022, he was assigned to Shoal River Middle School where his presence made an immediate impact. His innate communicative abilities enabled him to quickly establish a rapport with students and faculty members, and they love and respect him.

His compassion towards his students led him in 2023 to look for ways to reach those repeatedly getting in trouble and at risk of placement elsewhere. He started a restorative justice book study program to help them remove or reduce assigned discipline and help give them a second chance. He recognized that many of the students are facing outside influences, from social media to peer pressure, and are in need of a mentoring program. His program focuses on helping students become better prepared to handle everyday situations.

Deputy Staley and the school administration identify students who have difficulty making positive decisions. Once a student has been identified, he or she then attends a one-hour weekly meeting with Deputy Staley and an administration representative after school for six to seven weeks. The first group had an over 50% success rate!

Deputy Kristopher Staley is the 2023 recipient of the Lieutenant “Momma” Jo Hunter Spirit of Excellence Award, presented to the agency member who demonstrates a spirit of excellence in everything they do both on and off duty.



ANNUAL AWARDS

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER OF THE YEAR JENNIFER KING

Jennifer King began her career as a telecommunicator with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office in December of 2019. Dispatchers are responsible for taking emergency and non-emergency calls, and dispatching for Emergency Medical Services, 16 Fire Departments, and three law enforcement agencies.

In September 2022, Jennifer excitedly took on the role as a Communications Training Officer and has spent well over 1,200 hours training new communication officers. Jennifer radiates positivity every day, even during the toughest times.

Her passion was evident during a 9-1-1 call she took in April for a young victim who nearly drowned while swimming in the ocean. During the initial 9-1-1 call, the caller was extremely upset and emotional, but Jennifer maintained a calm demeanor and reassured the caller help was on the way. As the first responders arrived, the victim was alert and coughing up water.

Jennifer regularly attends local and regional events, inspiring quality applicants to pursue employment in the emergency dispatch field. She also participates in local school events like Youth Week and Career Days where she explains the importance of 9-1-1 telecommunicators and their role within public safety.

Jennifer has received multiple Commander Commendations for her efforts in helping the citizens and visitors to Okaloosa County in their time of crisis.

During her off time, Jennifer pursues her passion to become a writer and was published in her first book "Realms of the Fantastic", a collection of Fantasy Stories compiled into a single book by multiple authors. Jennifer is actively writing another fantasy story for a second publication.

Jennifer embodies the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office core values of service and integrity. She continually demonstrates going above and beyond, which is evident in her daily work ethic.



ANNUAL AWARDS

OPERATIONS OUTSTANDING PERFORMER OF THE YEAR DEPUTY KEVIN LOONEY

Deputy Kevin Looney joined the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office in August 2021 and quickly asserted himself as a top performer with his commitment to excellence in all aspects of his duties, ranging from patrol operations and case work to Special Response Team operations.

Deputy Looney works in one of the busiest zones while being the most proactive deputy on his shift.

Deputy Looney responded to a total of 1,405 calls for service as the primary unit. Of these, Deputy Looney proactively initiated 234 traffic stops leading to traffic citations, warnings, and numerous arrests. During Deputy Looney's traffic enforcement, most of his narcotics investigations began from minor traffic violations. In total, Deputy Looney investigated 56 narcotics investigations, 40 of which were felony narcotics and 16 were misdemeanors. Deputy Looney made a total of 152 arrests consisting of 56 warrant services, five civil commitments, 11 warrant affidavits, and 80 arrests consisting of batteries, aggravated assaults, fleeing and eluding, and other charges.

Deputy Looney maintains a proactive approach to his regular patrol assignment and participates as a member of the Sheriff's Office Special Response Team. For the 2023 year, Deputy Looney attended training totaling 232 hours and 60 hours of overtime for callouts to high-risk search warrants and barricaded subjects.

While conducting normal patrol operations, Deputy Looney encountered many individuals experiencing crisis and mental health episodes. He is often observed by his peers and supervision going above and beyond to build a positive rapport with these individuals, which has led to a positive and safe outcome for those involved.

Deputy Looney was publicly commended on the OCSO Facebook page for a "citizen kudos" email. It states: "On August 22nd, I requested a deputy to assist a mother and minor child who were experiencing a crisis on the roadside in Poquito Bayou. Besides the emotional stress, it was blazing hot and the family was having a terrible day. From the moment Deputy Looney arrived, he conveyed genuine concern through both nonverbal (communication) and his attentive listening. His demeanor was both professional and human. His actions were what anyone would want if their own family members were in a similar situation. The bottom line is that he made things better. My commendation to Deputy Looney. Well done!"



ANNUAL AWARDS

ADMINISTRATION BUREAU SWORN OUTSTANDING PERFORMER OF THE YEAR DEPUTY STEPHEN STALLINGS

Deputy Stephen Stallings began his career with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office in January 2022 after serving 24 years in the United States Air Force. After completing field training, Deputy Stallings transferred to court services and was assigned as a bailiff at the Okaloosa Courthouse Extension.

In 2023, Deputy Stallings was selected as a member of the Honor Guard, where he represents the Sheriff's Office at law enforcement funerals, parades, and other ceremonial events.

As a court security bailiff, Deputy Stallings is continually searching for ways to improve court services. He recognized there was not a formalized training program for those newly assigned to court security. He pointed out that the lack of a training program could create inconsistencies, which would in turn poorly affect efficiency and work product. Deputy Stallings volunteered to create a formalized training program, which is currently being utilized. He is also the unit's training officer, responsible for mentoring and preparing those newly reassigned to court security. As a result of his efforts, his supervision witnessed a major improvement in the time it takes for newly assigned bailiffs to understand and carry out the multitude of different tasks assigned to them.

Deputy Stallings is continuously contributing to the unit, from volunteering to make the schedule when supervision is unable, to updating the way in which the morning and evening security sweeps are done at the courthouse, or helping with policy updates.

Deputy Stallings is truly an asset to the unit and is respected by his peers and supervision. He is devoted to his family, his church, and his profession. Deputy Stallings has vision, and a great work ethic that continuously contributes to the growth and success of court services.



ANNUAL AWARDS

ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR TIFFANY CARPENTER

Serving as the agency's only Supply Specialist, Tiffany Carpenter has consistently exceeded all expectations in performance and customer service to our members. The supply function is more efficient than ever due to her dedication, professionalism, organization, follow through, pleasant demeanor, and genuine concern for the members of the Sheriff's Office and community.

Every year, Tiffany processes hundreds of material requisitions for every facet of this great organization. She flawlessly tracks a multitude of requisition statuses, and updates all involved parties as materials are received. Despite the stress added by tight timelines, Tiffany maintains her patient and calm demeanor while interacting with both internal and external customers and vendors.

Tiffany routinely steps up to support the Fleet Manager by tracking all agency vehicles and assignments and assists in titling new vehicles and keeping registrations up to date. She tracks vehicle crashes and reports and works with insurance companies to ensure timely repairs are made to keep our vehicles in service.

Tiffany works around other members' schedules, even if it means getting off late to get a project completed, such as vest fittings or uniform issues.

Without exception, Tiffany Carpenter projects a joyful demeanor at the opportunity to serve others and ensure our overall success.



ANNUAL AWARDS

OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR LESA VAUSE

Lesa Vaughn began volunteering with the Sheriff's Office in July 2019, after completing the Sheriff's Office Citizens Academy. She immediately became an asset to the Crime Prevention Unit and has always been available to help whenever needed.

In 2023, she contributed 110 hours to the Sheriff's Office and the citizens of Okaloosa County. Lesa worked every scheduled community event on a Saturday and assisted with all fifteen Citizen's Academy classes. She helped Community Resource Deputy Muhlbach hand out turkeys and hams in the Lovejoy neighborhood before Thanksgiving.

Lesa has a love for the OCSO, and it shows as she is a role model for other volunteers. She also joined the Reserve Sheriff Volunteer Program which requires spending time during the evening hours checking on juveniles on probation to make sure they are where they should be.

Lesa's innovative thinking, character, and readiness to serve are an enormous asset to the Sheriff's Office.



ANNUAL AWARDS

POSSE MEMBER OF THE YEAR LT. LYNN GRAY

Lt. Lynn Gray is the Posse Member of the Year for 2023. He is a member of the Posse Board of Directors and serves as the Lieutenant for all districts. He is a strong leader who leads by example and he readily accepts responsibility and has demonstrated competence in all areas served by the Posse.

Lynn has volunteered for a wide variety of Posse details, many on short notice. In support of a smaller Posse in 2023, with numerous requests for service from the public, Lynn has frequently worked two different details in one day. He has provided traffic control for parades, festivals, motorcycle rides, and many early morning charity runs and he frequently accompanies the deputy who provides out-of-county prisoner transport. He also substitutes as an entry point security scanner at the courthouse and has served as a bailiff and a civil process server. Lynn also brings years of life experience to the Posse as an U.S. Army retiree, with a Military Police background.

His service in 2023 consisted of 452 hours.

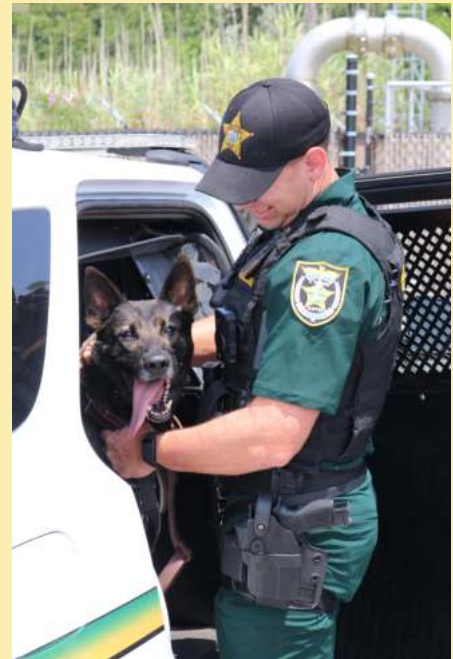
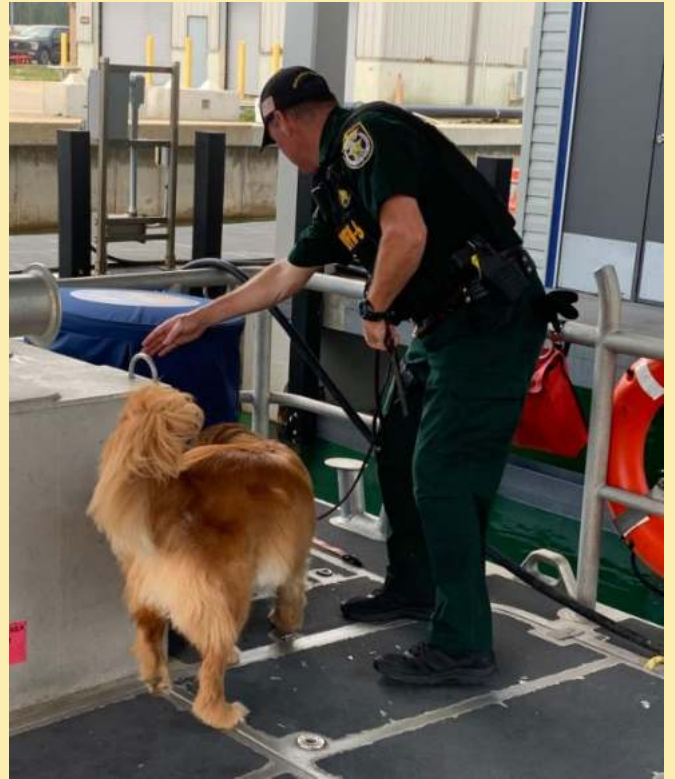




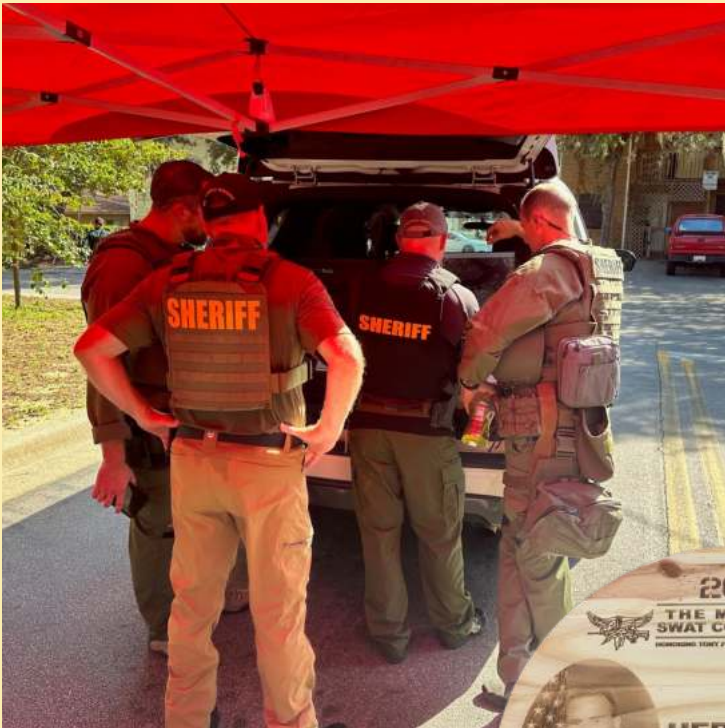
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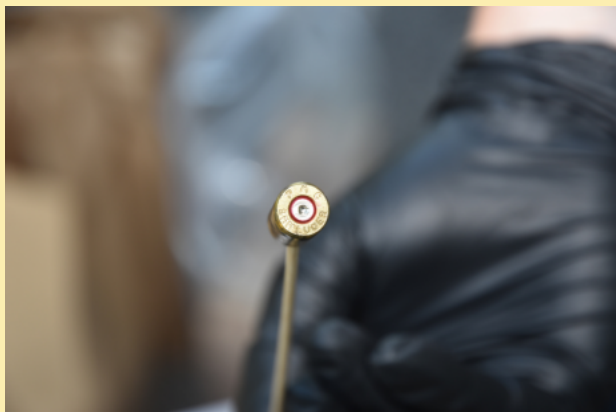


K9 Unit



Special Response Team









Honored to Serve



Duty to Protect

