



2023

Altoona Police Department

Annual Report

Chief Kelly Bakken

February 20, 2023



2023 Altoona City Council

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Table of Contents

Organizational Chart	Page 4
Introduction.....	Page 5
Goals and Objectives.....	Page 6
Staffing	Page 7
Training Report.....	Page 10
Special Assignments	Page 12
Investigations	Page 13
School Resource Officer	Page 14
Community Service Officer Program.....	Page 15
Unmanned Aircraft System - Drone	Page 16
Boat Patrol.....	Page 17
Joint Resources.....	Page 18
Community Outreach.....	Page 21
Therapy Dog.....	Page 23
Fishing with a Cop.....	Page 25
Calls for Service	Page 26
Traffic Report.....	Page 30
Uniform Crime Report.....	Page 33
Grant Report.....	Page 33
Accreditation.....	Page 34
License Plate Readers (LPR)	Page 34
Wellness Program.....	Page 36
Conclusion.....	Page 37

Altoona Police Dept. Organizational Chart

Chief Kelly Bakken

Lt. Scott Kelley

Confidential Administrative Assistant Krista Hamm

Sgt. Jake Henning

Sgt. Tim Peterson

Police/Fire Part-time Administrative Assistant Rachel Redman

School Resource Officer Jared Rico

Detective Jeff Baumgarten

Therapy Dog Donut

Police/Fire Part-time Administrative Assistant Alisha Lange

Officer Joe Kranig

Officer Jon Lauscher

Officer Ed Bell

Officer Mike Madrid

Officer Sandy Bautch

Officer Joel Field

Officer Zach Junker

Officer Kienna Marshall

Officer Evan Dieringer

Officer Max Bembinster

Part-time Officer Amanda Carrier

Part-time Officer Noah Baumgarten

Community Service Officer Lucero Rivas

Community Service Officer Jake Seykora

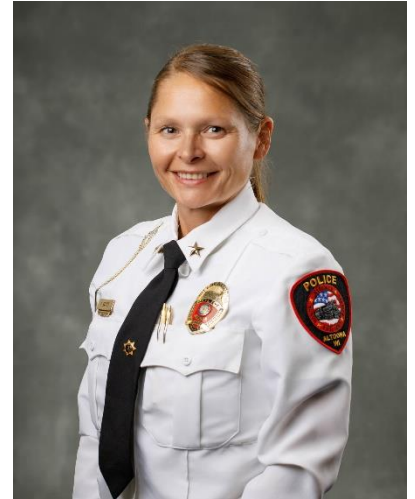
Introduction

I am pleased to present the 2023 Altoona Police Department Annual Report. It is an honor and a privilege to serve the City of Altoona. We have a community of great people who actively ensure Altoona is a great place to live, work, and play. Our police department consists of dedicated, professional men and women devoted to serving the people of Altoona, whom I am proud to serve alongside.

The Altoona Police Department is a proactive department continually seeking innovative strategies to solve community problems and maintain public safety. The police department thrives on problem-solving through building relationships and working with all facets of our community.

Our mission: To provide a safe environment while upholding the rights of all by serving with dignity, compassion, and respect.

We are focused on providing excellent services to the City of Altoona, its community members, businesses, and visitors. Our goal is to provide the highest quality of life to our residents; through a partnership with the community, we address community problems and the needs of the city. By forming relationships, we can prevent and reduce crime, safeguard the rights of all, and improve public safety together.



Altoona Police Department 2023 Goals and Objectives

Department Goals:

1. Enhance public safety.
2. Reduce Crime and disorder.
3. Improve efficiency, effectiveness, and adaptability.

Command Staff Goals:

1. Recruit, hire, and retain professional, diverse staff.
2. Build a culture of leadership, empowerment, accountability, employee appreciation, and innovation.
3. Develop partnerships with stakeholders.
4. Encourage and provide employee wellness opportunities.
5. Provide an opportunity for career development.

Administrative Division Goals:

1. Provide superior customer service.
2. Develop partnerships with community and government partners.
3. Ensure data entry is accurate and timely.

Patrol Division Goals:

1. Enhance criminal enforcement efforts.
2. Maintain a proactive enforcement program.
3. Give back to the community through innovative leadership strategies.
4. Build community partnerships to solve community problems.
5. Expand officer knowledge and improve our level of communication with those in crisis.

Investigations Division Goals:

1. Collaborate with local, state, and federal partners to solve and reduce crime.
2. Continue to be a partner in community crime prevention education.
3. Attend quality relevant investigative education and training.
4. Reduce crime and disorder through innovative investigative efforts.

Staffing Report

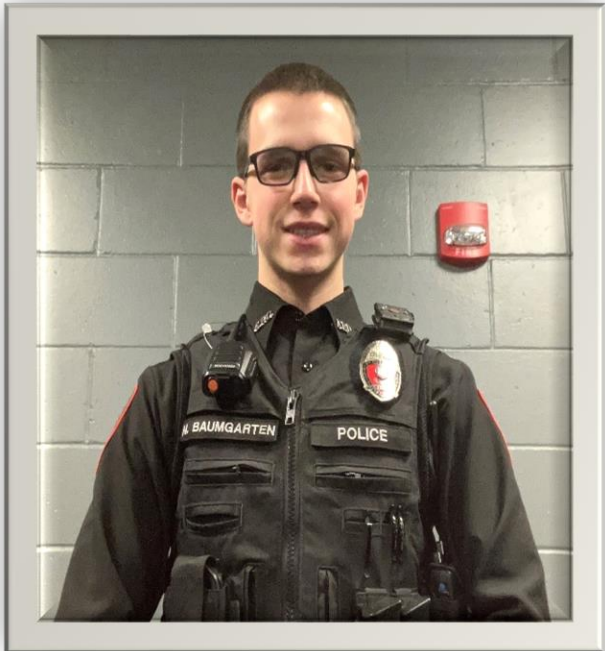


April 2023 Tim Peterson was promoted to the vacant Sergeant position. Sgt. Peterson quickly made the transition and has done a great job on the supervisory team.



Altoona sponsored Max Bembinster through the 2023 summer law enforcement academy. Max was hired to fill a full-time patrol position in July of 2023. Max has recently completed the field training program.

Altoona sponsored Noah Baumgarten through the 2023 summer law enforcement academy. Noah moved from a CSO position to part-time patrol and has successfully completed the field training program.



Alisha Lange was hired to fill a part-time Administrative Assistant position, working for both police and fire.

Rachel Redman was hired as a part-time Administrative Assistant, working for both police and fire.



In August 2023 Lucero Rivas was hired as a Community Service Officer. Lucero is a 2nd year CVTC criminal justice student hoping to attend the summer 2024 academy.



Jake Seykora was hired as a Community Service Officer in October 2023; Jake is a 2nd-year student studying criminal justice at UWEC.

TRAINING REPORT

Staff development continues to be a priority for the police department; we work diligently to ensure our staff is highly trained. 2023 brought excellent leadership training and up-and-coming instructors to our department, capable of leading and training other staff.

The police department utilizes online resources, including Virtual Academy and PoliceOne, to supplement our in-person training. In addition to the training listed below, all staff participated in implicit bias training, effective communications, de-escalation, firearms, EVOC, Pepperball, Taser, and mental and physical wellbeing training. High-quality training provides enhanced service to the community and reduces liability. Along with our 24 hours of recertification required by the state to maintain our certifications, the following staff attended specialized training in 2023.

- **Chief Bakken:** FBI National Command Course, International Chiefs of Police, Wisconsin Chiefs of Police
- **Lieutenant Kelley:** Wisconsin Command College
- **Sergeant Henning:** WILEAG/CALEA accreditation manager, OWI Instructor, Vehicle Contacts Instructor, White Collar Crimes, Event Security Planning For Public Safety Professionals.
- **Sergeant Peterson:** Supervisor Leadership(LEEDA), First Line Supervisor
- **Officer Bell:** PepperBall Instructor
- **Officer Rico:** Crisis Intervention(CIT), Arson Investigations, Instructor Development, Informed Sexual Assault Training, Drone Training, Internet Crimes Against Children, School Response Protocol
- **Officer Lauscher:** Property Room Management Refresher
- **Officer Field:** Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training(ALERRT)
- **Officer Madrid:** Police Training Officer (PTO), Instructor Development Defense And Arrest Tactics (DAAT) Instructor, Peer Support.
- **Officer Kranig:** ID Card Training

- **Detective Baumgarten:** Internet Crimes Against Children, Informed Sexual Assault Training, Peer Support, Drone Training
- **Officer Bautch:** Police Training Officer (PTO), Instructor Development White collar crimes, Negotiator, Peer Support, Crisis Intervention(CIT).
- **Officer Junker:** Boat Patrol Essentials
- **Officer Marshall:** ARIDE, Special Events Team, Basic
- **Officer Dieringer:** Reid Interview and Interrogations
- **Officer Bembinster:** 720 Recruit Academy
- **Officer Noah Baumgarten:** 720 Recruit Academy
- **Krista Hamm:** Video Redaction, Open Records

Donut continues his certification through the Alliance of Therapy Dogs and has been working to mentor other Therapy Dogs!



Special Assignments/Duties

- **Chief Bakken:** Wisconsin Law Enforcement Standards Board (LESB), Wisconsin Chiefs of Police 2nd Vice President, Chippewa Valley Technical College Foundation Board of Directors, Chippewa Valley Technical College Criminal Justice Advisory Board, West Central Drug Task Force Board of Directors, Area Chief's Group Chair, Public Information Officer Commander, Regional Incident Command Team, Homeland Security Advisory Board, WCPA mental health ad-hoc, WCPA New Chief Mentor, WCPA Forth Class Cities, Towns & Villages board member, FBI National Command Course Association board member, International Chiefs of Police Smaller Section Board Secretary, LESB Physical Readiness Test Sub Committee Chair, and Department of Justice training grant committee.
- **Lieutenant Kelley:** CVRCFL supervisor/examiner, Crime Stoppers LE coordinator, Firearms Instructor, Physical Fitness Assessor, Property Room supervisor, Neighborhood association liaison, Child Abduction Response Team (CART).
- **Sergeant Henning:** Boat Patrol coordinator, Police Training Program supervisor, CALEA coordinator, WILEAG coordinator, Bigs in Blue, Emergency Vehicle Operation (EVO) instructor, Public Information Officer/social media, Regional Incident Command Team, Public Information Officer Eau Claire Emergency Operations, Emergency Services Association Secretary, Peer Support Supervisor.
- **Sergeant Peterson:** Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) supervisor, SWAT negotiator supervisor, Public Information Officer/social media, Child Abduction Response Team (CART), Drug Endangered Children (DEC), Bigs in Blue, Therapy Dog Handler, Multi-Disciplinary Team, Honor Guard Team Supervisor.
- **Detective Baumgarten:** Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) investigator, Drone operator, CVRCFL examiner, Peer Support.
- **SRO Rico:** CVRCFL examiner, Drone operator, social media, Bigs in Blue, Honor Guard.
- **Officer Kranig:** Firearms instructor, department armorer, property room officer, Bigs in Blue, Honor Guard.
- **Officer Lauscher:** Property room officer.

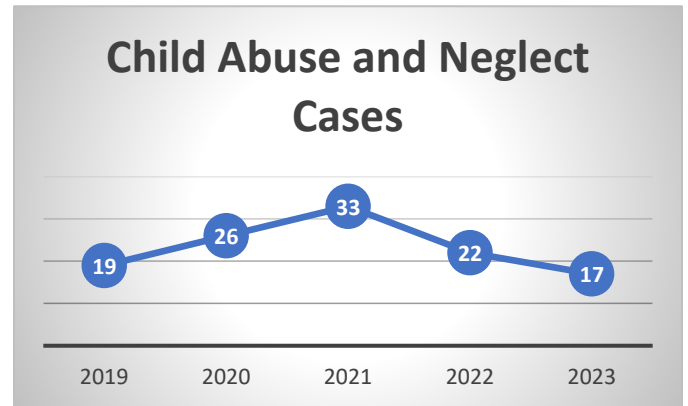
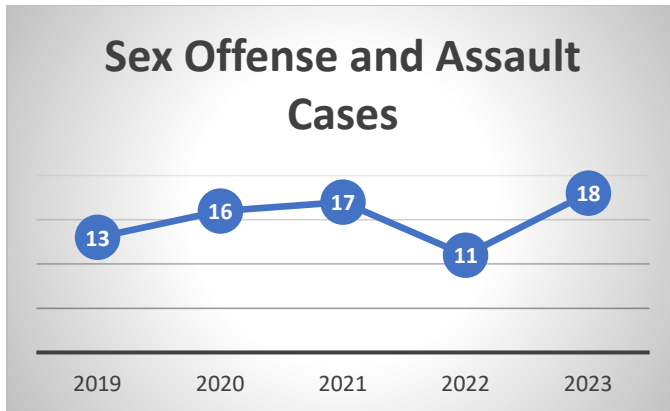
- **Officer Bell:** SWAT, Police Training Officer, STAR program coordinator, Taser Instructor, PepperBall instructor.
- **Officer Madrid:** Police Training Officer, Peer Support, DAAT instructor
- **Officer Bautch:** Drone operator, Police Training Officer, Bigs in Blue, Peer Support
- **Officer Field:** Firearms instructor, SWAT, Tactical Response instructor, Police Training Officer, Peer Support
- **Officer Junker:** Honor Guard

Investigations

The two positions responsible for most of the investigative work done by the department are the detective and the school resource officer (SRO); while these positions often handle cases more sensitive in nature, such as crimes against children and sex crimes, patrol officers also contribute to other types of investigations to help keep caseloads more manageable.

Over the course of the year, many of the cases investigated were in relation to children. Investigators investigated internet crimes against children (ICAC) cases, primarily involving child pornography, child neglect, child abuse, and sexual assault cases. One investigation led to the arrest and federal prosecution of a California man who purchased child pornography from an Altoona child. Investigators also arrested an Illinois man for conversing with an area child and traveling to the area to engage in sex. He was arrested and charged with multiple child sex crimes.

Investigators investigated and made arrests in several other child and adult sex crimes. In addition, investigators assisted area agencies with a rash of vehicle entries where numerous items, including firearms, were stolen. A search warrant was executed at an Eau Claire residence, and the offender was arrested. Florida residents committed other vehicle entries. Officers worked with the public and other agencies to quickly apprehend several suspects. Investigators were able to continue to investigate and identify other out-of-state residents involved in the financial crimes.



School Resource Officer

The Altoona School Resource Officer works closely with school staff and students to ensure a safe and productive learning environment. The SRO has made several safety suggestions to the school, which have been implemented, such as several security cameras in high-risk locations in the district. In addition, the SRO has attended several school-related after-school events such as Football Games, Basketball Games, Concerts, and Dances. The SRO assisted the school in several cases but has kept citations and juvenile referrals as a last resort for struggling students; instead of focusing on enforcement, the priority is diversion and education. The SRO also conducts house visits with school staff for truancy-related issues. The SRO continues to create a strong partnership with the Altoona School District and the Altoona Police Department that will remain strong for years.

With the increasing population of Altoona and the rising student population rates, the SRO caseload has increased. The SRO is responsible for all four schools, making it difficult for the SRO to be present at all the schools as much as the staff and the SRO would like. The SRO works with staff to implement alternative resources to supplement law enforcement resources.



Community Service Officer (CSO)

The Community Service Officer (CSO) program is designed to partner with local colleges to hire criminal justice students. We hire civilian employees, and we then work with them to develop law enforcement skills, learn department policy and procedure, and become familiar with the city. In 2023, Altoona PD hired two police officers who had been CSOs within the department. Both officers had a foundation of knowledge that was highly beneficial during the police training program.

The CSO Program has many job duties and responsibilities. Generally, they focus on parking enforcement and responding to animal nuisance calls, animal bite calls, and ordinance violations. The program is developing and growing as the CSOs become familiar with the city and its needs. Outside of responding to calls, some of the other duties are assisting with community events, keeping found property updated, assisting the front desk, helping the patrol unit when needed, and many more tasks. The CSOs can fill duties that don't require a patrol officer, freeing the patrol officers for proactive patrol and response to severe calls for service.

The CSOs patrol the city to locate possible problem areas and educate the property owners on our ordinances. This allows the CSOs to work on communication and problem-solving skills while improving the quality of life within the city. Their efforts in ordinance enforcement have reduced the time patrol officers and the city planner have spent enforcing such things as junk.



Unmanned Aircraft System – Drone Program

The Altoona Police Department drone took flight many times in 2023. The deployments included searching for suicidal subjects, searching for suspects that committed crimes, documenting major crime scenes, assisting neighboring agencies in locating suspects, training flights, researching, and documenting community events.



The department has three pilots: Detective Baumgarten, Officer Bautch, and Officer Rico. Each pilot completed the beginner and advanced UAS Operator course at Chippewa Valley Technical College and then passed the Federal Aviation Association sUAS certification.

Officer Bautch and Officer Rico also attended two trainings sponsored by DCI where they learned about using a drone for 3D mapping, and they

practiced using a drone for surveillance during drug buys and covertly following crime suspects. While DCI's software is quite expensive, Officer Rico found various free software for 3D mapping. Officer Rico and Officer Bautch have been experimenting with using the free software for 3D mapping with the department drone. The hope is that the department will be able to use a drone to visualize large outdoor incident scenes.



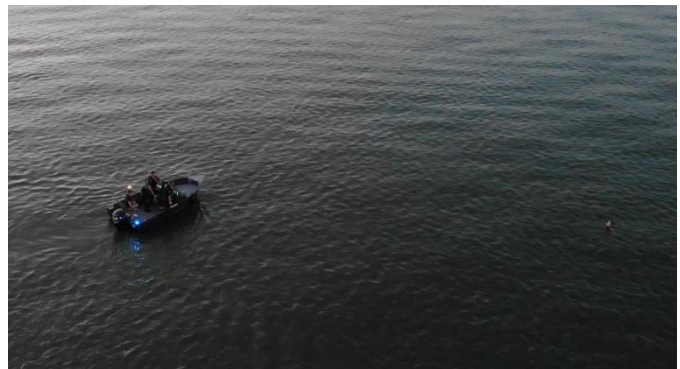
Using the drone for cases provides additional safety for citizens and officers; operating the aircraft from a safe location and providing personnel on the scene advanced notice of concerns—such as approaching vehicles or suspect movement—is very beneficial. It is also an effective means to document large scenes, such as traffic crashes and homicides. One of the most important uses is utilizing the attached camera with FLIR (Forward Looking InfraRed) technology to locate missing children or vulnerable adults.

The drone has proven to be a valuable asset to the department in collecting evidence and locating subjects. The use of the drone has drastically increased as officers

become more familiar with the operation, allowing for the drone to be utilized for various applications.

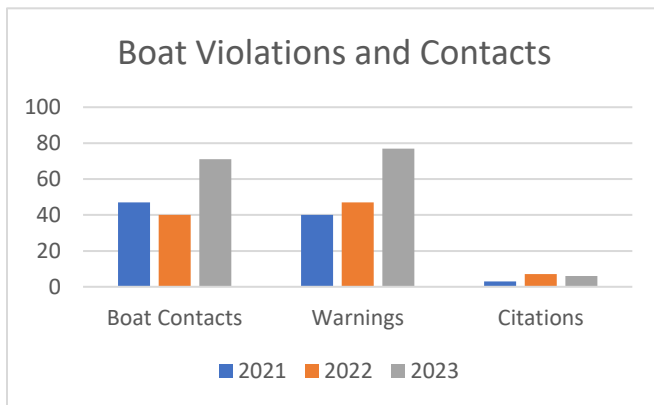
Boat Patrol Program

The boat patrol program was administered from May to September 2023. The department actively patrolled Lake Altoona on 17 days between May and September; for a total of 85 officer hours. Other reimbursable hours included administrative hours for documentation and training time. We continue to operate our 2023 Lund Adventurer patrol boat, which the DNR is reimbursing over a 5-year period.



The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources reimburses the boat patrol program. All costs associated with the program are reimbursable up to 75%. This includes officer wages, mileage, fuel, oil, equipment, and time spent completing required paperwork. Officer fringe benefits are reimbursed up to 50%. The program did not use overtime, so

no additional costs were accrued; these are dollars that would have been spent on officer hours, regardless. Other expenses associated with the program are all reimbursable, including the boat we purchased.



The department recorded 77 warnings issued and six citations. The citations included one PFD violation, two registration and titling violations, two

boaters safety violations, and one for operating without lights after sunset. The rate of inspection and warnings shows the high volume of education provided to recreationists. These positive contacts typically resulted in voluntary compliance, corrective behavior, and increased water safety. The law enforcement presence on the lake continues to be positive, and complaints are lower than in previous years. In addition to enforcement, the department assisted several boaters in distress.

Costs:	
Wages and Fringe Benefits	\$7,433
Equipment, Fuel, and Milage	\$4,557
Total	\$11,990
Depreciated Patrol Boat (Year 2/5)	\$6,391
DNR Reimbursement (@75%)	\$13,786

JOINT RESOURCES

Working together with other agencies is a priority of the police department. The Altoona Police Department utilizes several shared resources with area agencies. Sharing resources offers additional services without the financial burden. The Altoona Police Department has officers on the Regional SWAT team, Regional Special Events Team, Chippewa Valley Computer Forensics Laboratory, Crime Stoppers, Regional Child Abduction Response Team, and Regional Incident Management ICS Team. In the future, we hope to develop a Regional Critical Incident Response Team.

SWAT

The Eau Claire County Regional SWAT team consists of state and local law enforcement agencies throughout northwest Wisconsin, including Dunn County, Eau Claire County, Chippewa County, WI State Patrol, Menomonie Police Department, Chippewa Falls Police Department, Bloomer Police Department, UWEC Police Department, and Altoona Police Department. The team has 21 tactical personnel, two radio communications personnel, one Township Fire Command, ten negotiators, and five medics. The tactical team responds to high-risk situations requiring additional personnel, specialty equipment, and officers training in advanced tactics. The Eau Claire County Regional Team is recognized as one of eight state regional teams through Wisconsin's Emergency Management, Aligned Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT). Altoona Officers assisted with seven call-outs in 2023, an increase of three from the previous year. Sergeant Tim Peterson is a Negotiations Team Leader, Officer Joel Field is a SWAT Team Leader and Ed Edward Bell is members of the SWAT team.

After nine years of service to the regional SWAT team, Altoona Officer Jon Lauscher has retired from the team. We are very proud of the dedicated service and knowledge Officer Lauscher provided to the team over the past nine years.



Special Events Team

The Altoona Police Department is a member of the Eau Claire County Regional Special Events Team. The team, which is coordinated through the Eau Claire County Sheriff's Office was created in 2018 after local and state law enforcement leaders identified the need for a more collaborative and professional response to significant events, including demonstrations and civil unrest. In response, Wisconsin Emergency Management spearheaded a state-wide initiative to create regional response teams

throughout the state. The Eau Claire County Regional Special Events Team was selected to represent the West Central Region.

The immediate response area includes the following counties: Barron, Chippewa Clark, Eau Claire, Dunn, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, St. Croix, and Taylor. There are currently 17 officers assigned to the team. Partnering agencies include: Altoona Police Department, Eau Claire Police Department, Chippewa County Sheriff's Office, Chippewa Falls Police Department, Lake Hallie Police Department, and University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Police Department. The team is funded by grant money obtained through Wisconsin Emergency Management and partnering agencies. Altoona officers assisted with two call-outs in 2023. Officers Kienna Marshall and Jared Rico are members of the Special Events Team.

Crime Stoppers

Altoona is the coordinating agency for Eau Claire County Crime Stoppers. Participating agencies are Eau Claire County, the City of Eau Claire, the UWEC Police Department, and the Altoona Police Department. Crime stoppers provides a platform for anonymous crime reporting with rewards for information leading to an arrest. In 2023, 319 tips were received. Crime Stoppers assisted in solving several crimes throughout the county. Lieutenant Scott Kelley is the coordinator of Crime Stoppers.



**Eau Claire County Crime
Stoppers 715-874-TIPS**

Eau Claire County Child Abduction Response Team

The Child Abduction Response Team is comprised of members from local law enforcement and private businesses within Eau Claire County. The team trains together to form a cohesive and efficient group to respond to child abductions. The team was not utilized for any calls in 2023. Lieutenant Scott Kelley, Sergeant Tim Peterson, and Detective Jeff Baumgarten are members of the Child Abduction Response Team.

Chippewa Valley Regional Computer Forensic Lab

The Chippewa Valley Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory is a shared service between the Eau Claire Police Department, Eau Claire County Sheriff's Office, and Altoona Police Department.

Forensic examiners assigned to the lab receive hundreds of hours of training. They are skilled in examining digital evidence from computers, cellular phones, vehicles, storage devices, surveillance systems, etc.

Data stored in these devices provide evidence in the form of photos, text messages, call logs, internet browsing history, location data, and other evidence. Over the past ten years, having the ability and resources to download digital evidence has become a critical part of a successful investigation. The need only continues to grow as technology continues to evolve.

The Altoona Police Department forensic examiners are Lieutenant Kelley, Detective Baumgarten, and Officer Rico. In 2023, Altoona staff examined approximately 30 devices related to Altoona cases. These cases include such things as burglary, domestic abuse, theft, financial crimes, battery, child pornography, homicide, child enticement, drug cases, and missing person cases.



West Central Drug Task Force

The West Central Drug Task Force (WCDTF) comprises law enforcement representatives from six counties stretching from the Mississippi River to the middle of Wisconsin. Membership includes the Sheriff's Offices of Clark, Chippewa, Eau Claire, Dunn, Buffalo, and Pepin; the Municipalities of Chippewa Falls, Fall Creek, Eau Claire, Altoona, and Menomonie; and the State Agencies of the Wisconsin State Patrol, the Department of Criminal Investigation, and the Universities of Stout and Eau Claire.

Nine full-time, three part-time Drug Investigators and one part-time Administrative Specialist are assigned to the Task Force from the member agencies. The Eau Claire County Sheriff's Office has served as Project Director since the inception of the Task Force in 1988.

The Task Force acts as a regional repository for illegal drug-related criminal activity and a coordinator of enforcement action against this activity. This action is coordinated within the Task Force by an Oversight Committee comprised of members' representatives. Day-to-day operation is supervised by a Field Operations Supervisor and Supervisors from the jurisdiction where an action occurs. Using its regional resources, the Task Force can direct equipment and personnel anywhere within the six-

county area and sometimes, when needed, to assist in actions outside the boundaries of the Task Force.

Although Altoona has no officer assigned to the drug task force, we are a member agency and share the resources. Our supervisors, detective, and patrol officers often work closely with the drug task force to investigate and apprehend drug offenders within the City of Altoona. Chief Bakken is a participating board member of WCDF and is the coordinator for the task force drug testing.

Community Outreach

We continue building a trusting relationship with the community through community involvement. This trust is the platform that furthers our mission to work with the community to solve community-based problems. Community involvement also allows the officers to interact positively rather than the often negative situations they handle daily. We hope to continue to build our community outreach through more youth-based activities throughout the summer.

The police department hosted our annual bike rodeo, Fishing with a Cop, the spring and fall prescription drug take-back day, and National Night Out. We also enjoy our partnerships with neighborhood organizations and clubs. In 2023, we continued to participate in and expanded our participation in the Chippewa Valley area Bigs in Blue program, partnering with Altoona School District and Big Brothers Big Sisters to mentor Altoona students. We were invited to speak at the Sunrise Exchange Club, which focuses on supporting child abuse prevention programs, veterans' issues, and Americanism for our youth. We also provided several safety presentations to local businesses and to school staff.

We also enjoyed participating in the Back-to-School Ice Cream Social, River Prairie Easter Egg Hunt, Frosty Toona, Mock Prom Crash, the Ginormous Pumpkin Festival, Fall Frenzy, Homecoming Parade, Cinder City Days Parade, State Fair Bike Rodeo, Concerts in the Park, the Association of Altoona Emergency Services Pancake breakfast and Spaghetti Feed, as well as many more.

We had fun supporting other local non-profit groups while doing some off-duty team building. We participated in the Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowl for Kid's Sake, Special Olympics Cop on a Rooftop, Walk for Hunger Nyre, Back to School Back Pack Event, and Kids 'N Cops.

Altoona Police Department 2023 Annual Report



Therapy Dog Donut

In March 2020, the Altoona Police Department obtained a 12 -week-old Labradoodle from Blueberry Cottage Labradoodles for the purpose of training him to be a therapy dog. Donut was certified when he reached one year of age through the Alliance of Therapy Dogs.

Donut is assigned to handler, Sergeant Tim Peterson; however, Donut is still being utilized in the school daily. Donut is trained so that any officer can handle him. Having Donut at the school benefits Officer Rico, the students, the staff, and Donut! Sergeant Peterson continues to work with Donut to ensure he maintains his certification as a therapy dog.

Outside of the school district, Donut has assisted with interviews of victims, including domestic violence, sexual assaults, and other complex topics. He has been utilized in mental health cases to calm the patient when needed. Many different departments, businesses, non-profits, and events have requested Donut visit and be present at events.

This year Donut was able to team up with The Miracle League of the Chippewa Valley to attend the all-star game. This is an organization that gives children with disabilities the opportunity to play baseball. Donut was on the field, interacting with the children and building a relationship with them.

Through a training in Green Bay, WI Donut visited the historic Lambeau Field for the first time. Sergeant Peterson had hyped it up for several weeks, and Donut wasn't disappointed.

Donut is present at most city events; in addition, Donut is on our social media page and is loved by the community.

Donut also spends a fair amount of time in the Altoona Emergency Services building, greeting law enforcement officers, civilian visitors, and fire and EMS staff. The staff appreciates having Donut in the office; several have mentioned they wanted to work for Altoona because Donut is in the office. Having Donut to pet after a rough call for service has been valuable to the well-being of our staff.

The cost of a therapy dog has been minimal; Donut was donated to our department. In addition, a local veterinarian donates his vet care, and a local pet store donates his dog food. Some of his training has also been donated, and the training that was not donated was of minimal cost. The certification was also minimal cost.

The value of therapy dog programs has become more known within law enforcement because of Donut and what he does. Altoona Police Department has proudly assisted

multiple other agencies in obtaining therapy dogs; Donut is the leading example within the Wisconsin law enforcement therapy dog program.

Donut has been recognized many times in the Chippewa Valley for his good deeds in our community and the surrounding Chippewa Valley.

2021 – Volume One’s Favorite Local Celebrity winner

2022 – Volume One’s Favorite Local Celebrity runner up

2023 – Volume One’s Favorite Local Celebrity winner



Fish with a Cop

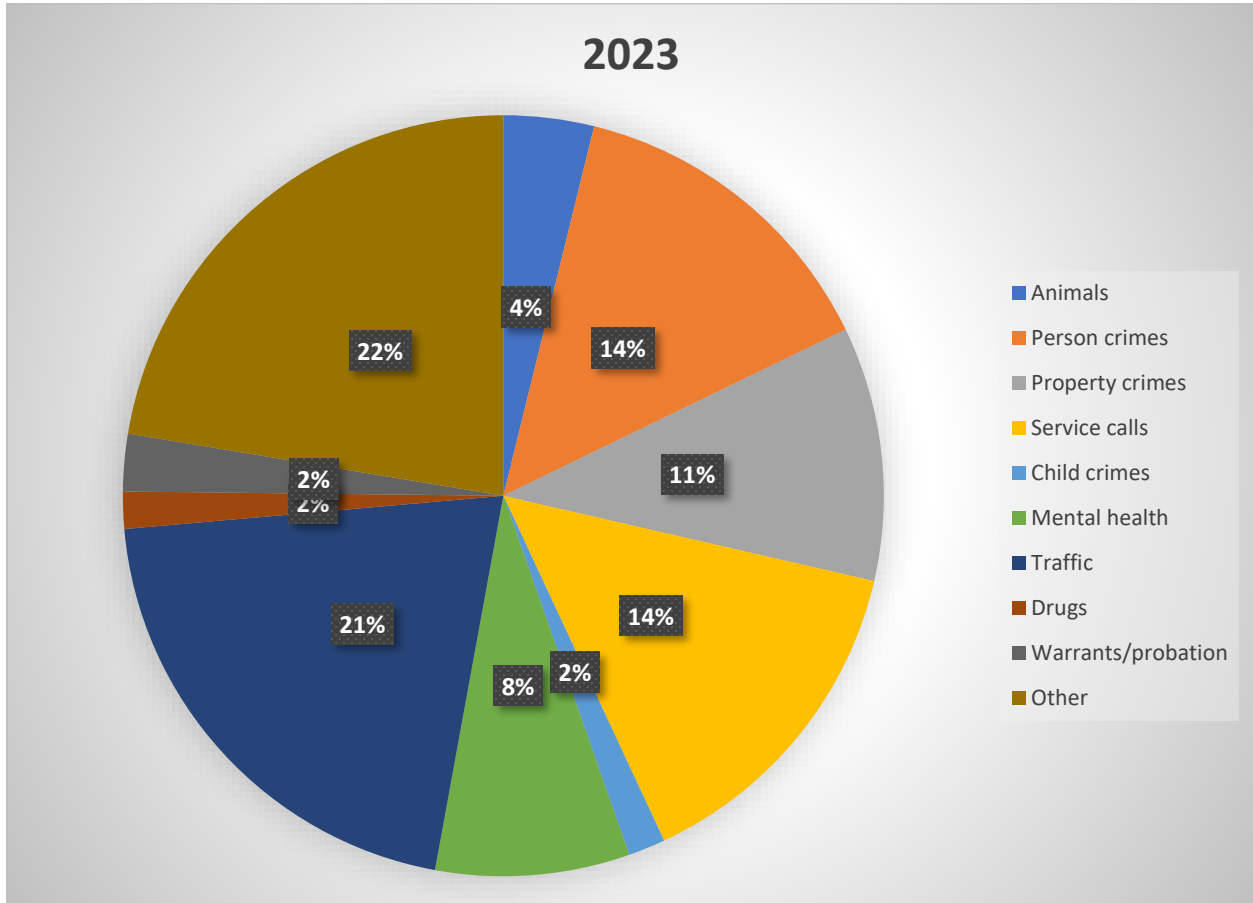
We hosted our second annual Fishing with a Cop program, aimed to work with at-risk youth, allowing them to get hooked on fishing while bonding with law enforcement officers who love to fish.

We teamed up with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to make this event extra special for the kids. The officers obtained donations and utilized the funds to purchase tackle and fishing rods for each kid. The kids were taught different fishing techniques and were given boat rides. We continued our invite-only event to target high-risk youth but hosted a public event in the afternoon.



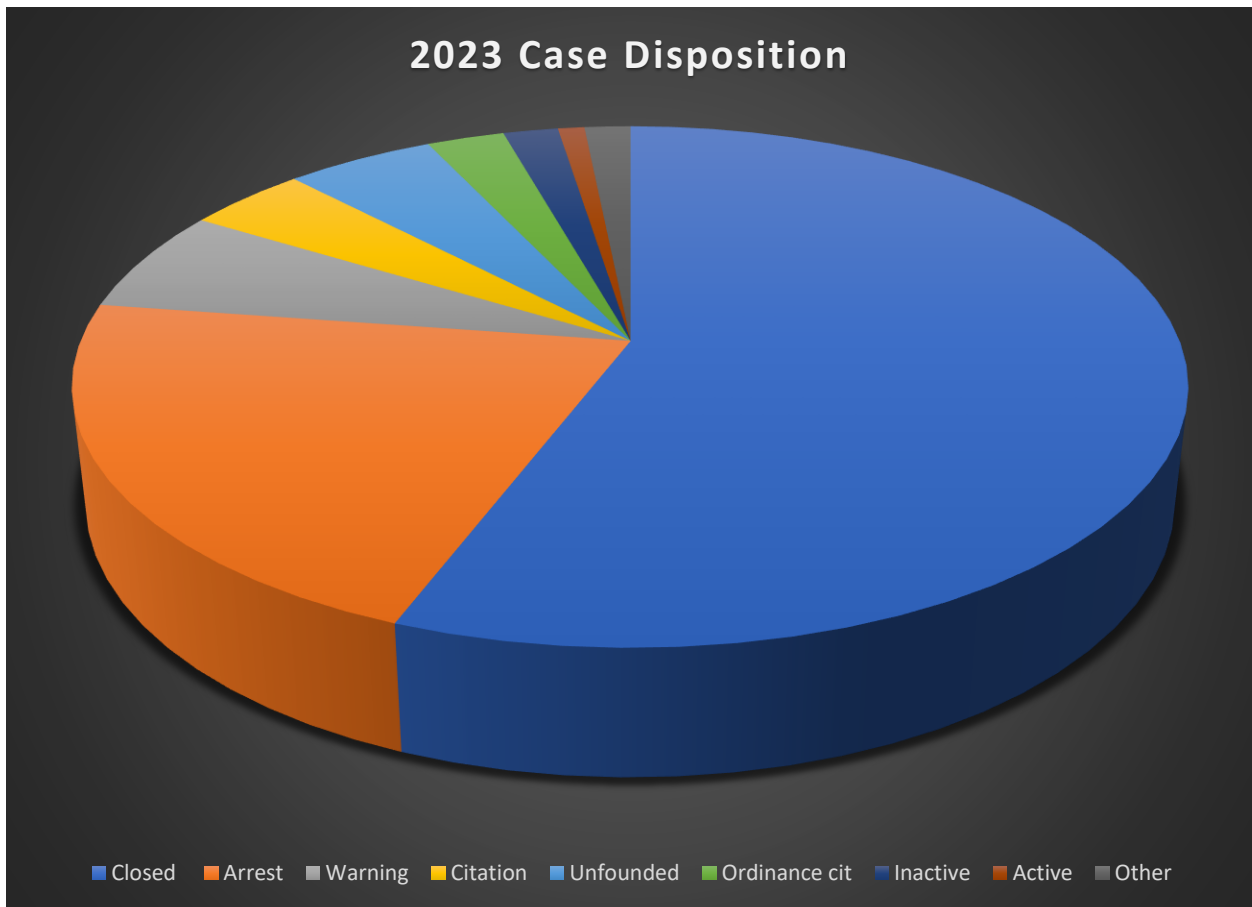
Calls for Service

2023 proved to be a busy year for law enforcement; we responded to a total of 3845 calls for service, an increase of 24.5% from 3089 in 2022.

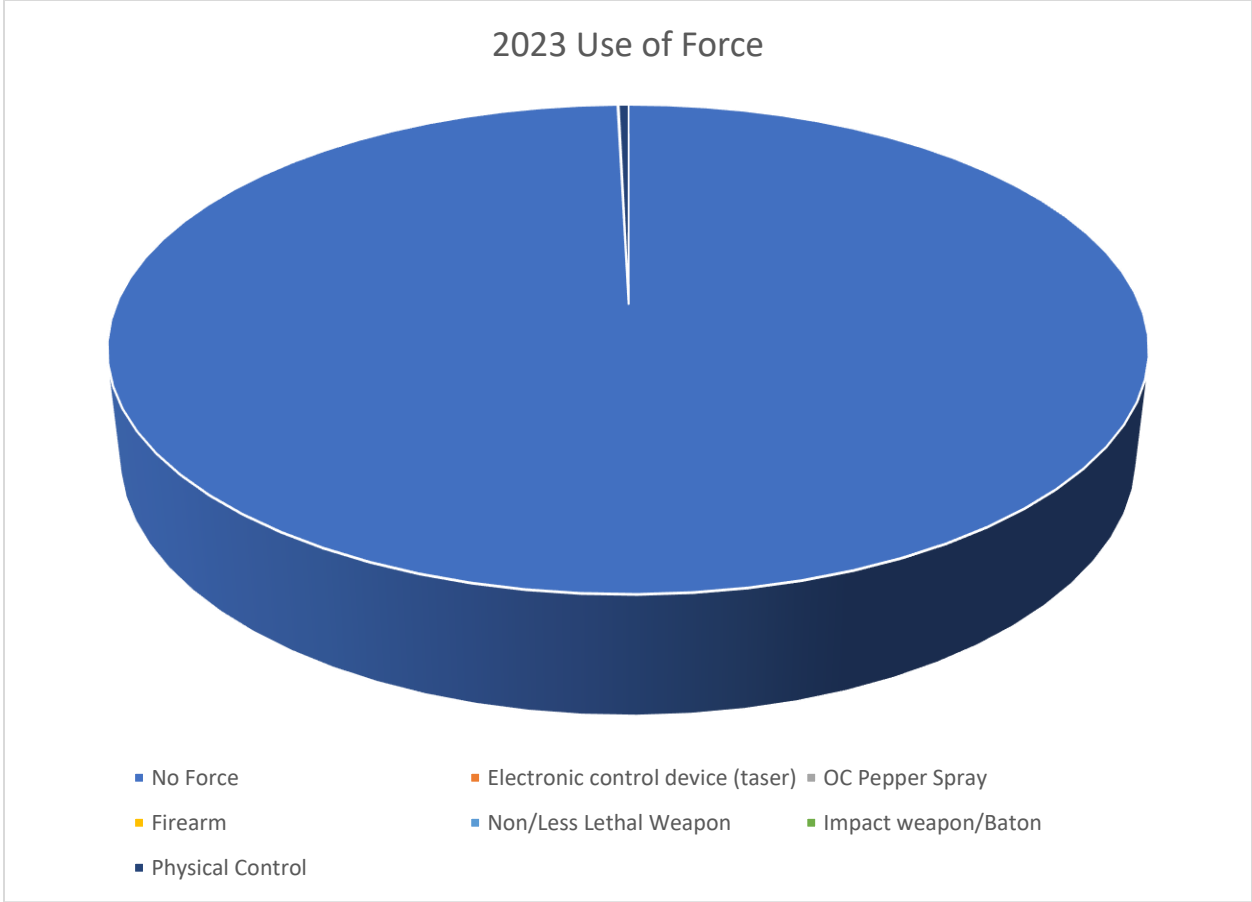


	2022	2023
Uncategorized	33	352
Animals	117	134
Person crimes	294	488
Property crimes	368	377
Service calls	415	505
Child crimes	145	55
Mental health	78	288
Traffic	776	724
Drugs	38	55
Warrants/probation	70	85
Other	755	782
Total	3089	3845

Of the 3845 calls for Service, 2582, or 55.8%, were closed with no other action taken; these cases were closed for several reasons, including such things as no crime was committed, the victim did not want to pursue charges, or was uncooperative, there was not enough information provided, etc. Of the 3845 calls for service, 995, or 21.5% of the calls, resulted in the offender being arrested, and 191 resulted in a citation. The 2023 arrests were about 10% higher than 2022, with more citations issues. This appears to be in relation to the increase in calls for service and the increase in crimes against persons.

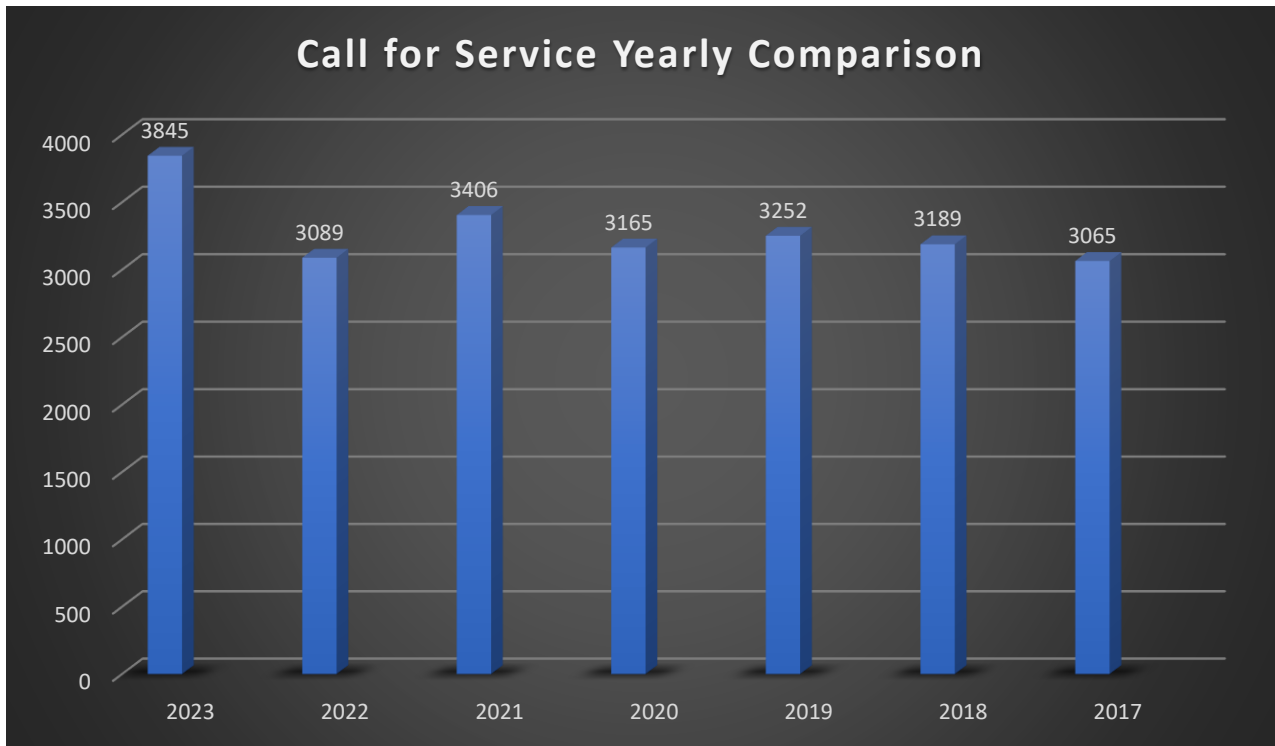


Of the 3845 calls for service in 2023, 16 calls resulted in a use of force incident. A total of 0.4% of our calls for service resulted in the use of force, down from 0.5% in 2022.



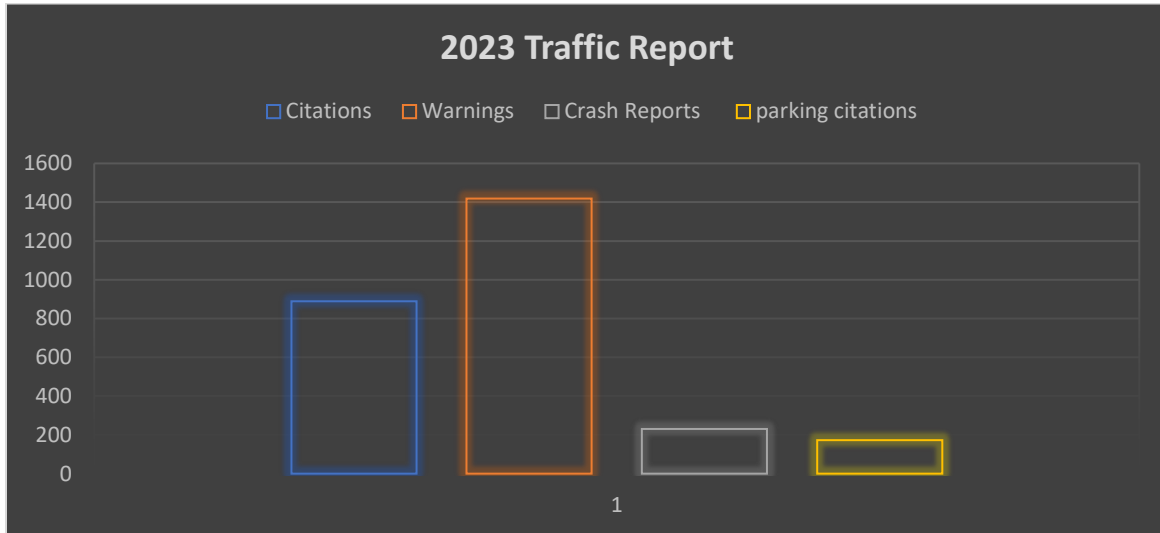
USE OF FORCE REPORT	2023	2022
No Force	3829	3073
Electronic control device (taser)	2	4
OC Pepper Spray	0	0
Firearm	0	1
Non/Less Lethal Weapon	0	0
Impact weapon/Baton	0	0
Physical Control	14	11
Total	16	16

Calls for Service Yearly Comparison



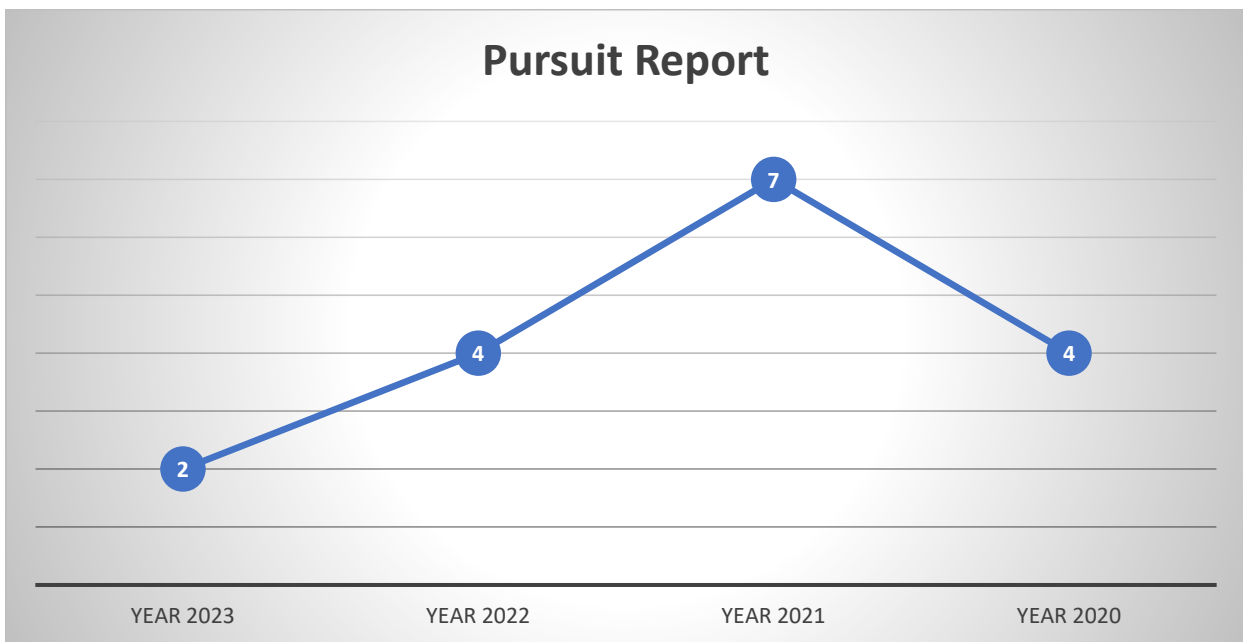
In 2023, we saw a fairly significant increase in call volume, a 24.5% increase from 2022 and an increase of 12.9% from the previous highest year of 2021. We saw a increase in crimes against persons, resulting in a higher number of overall arrests for the year.

2023 Traffic Report

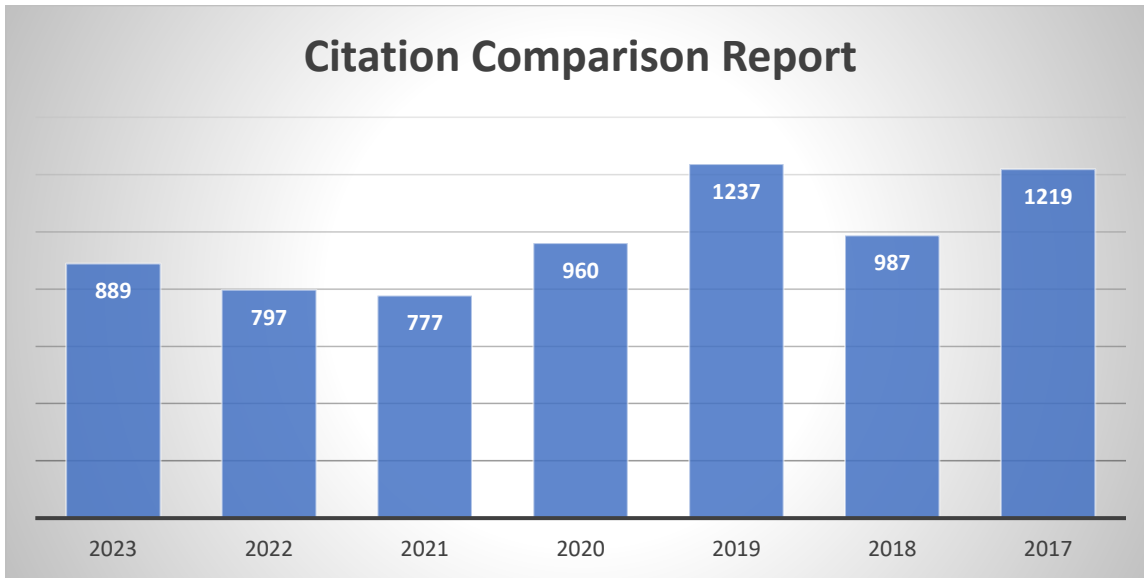


	2023	2022
Citations	889	797
Warnings	1419	1540
Crash Reports	231	193
Parking citations	172	170

Pursuit Comparison Report

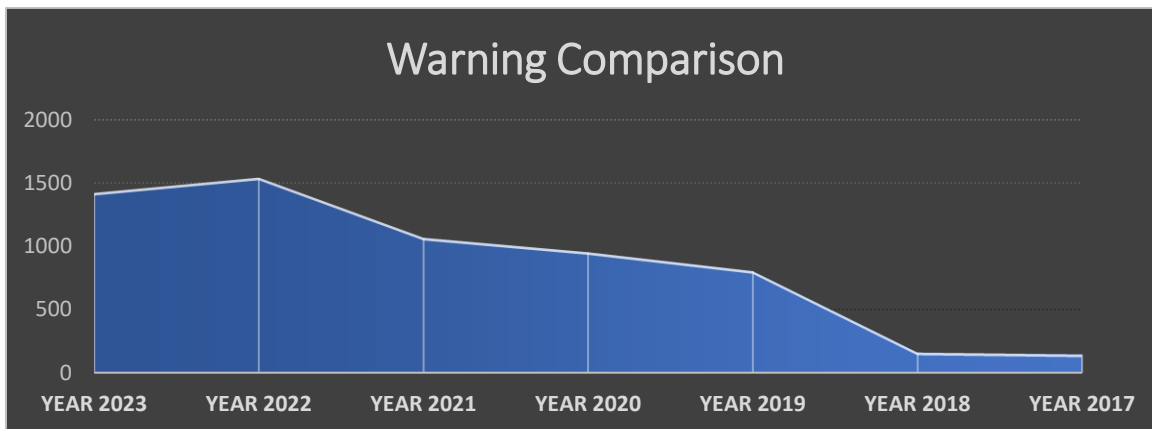


Citation Comparison Report

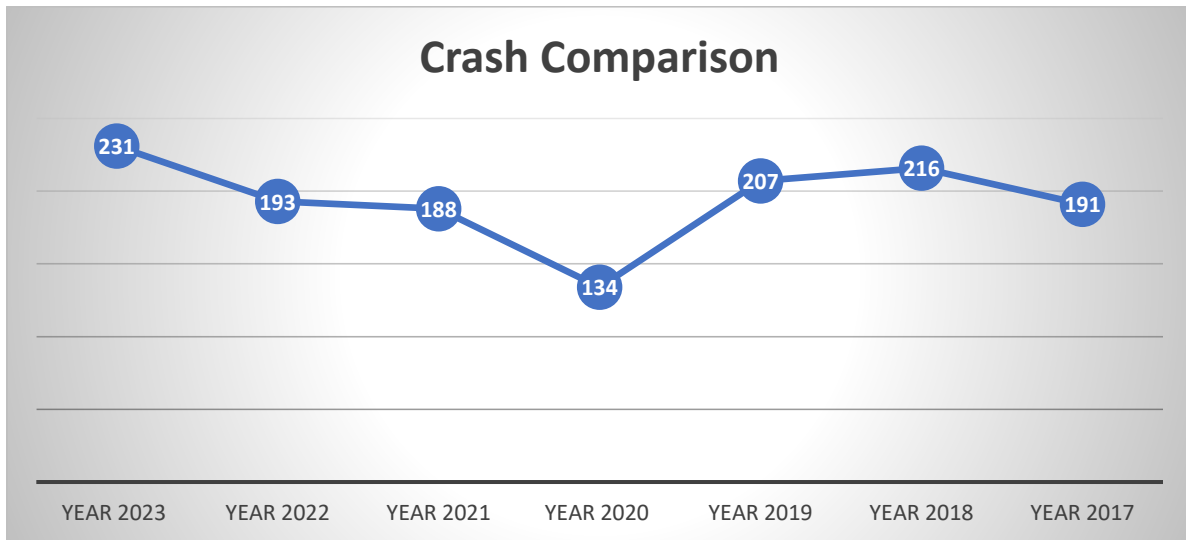


Our 2023 number of citations ended the year with an 11.5% increase over 2022.

Warning Comparison Report

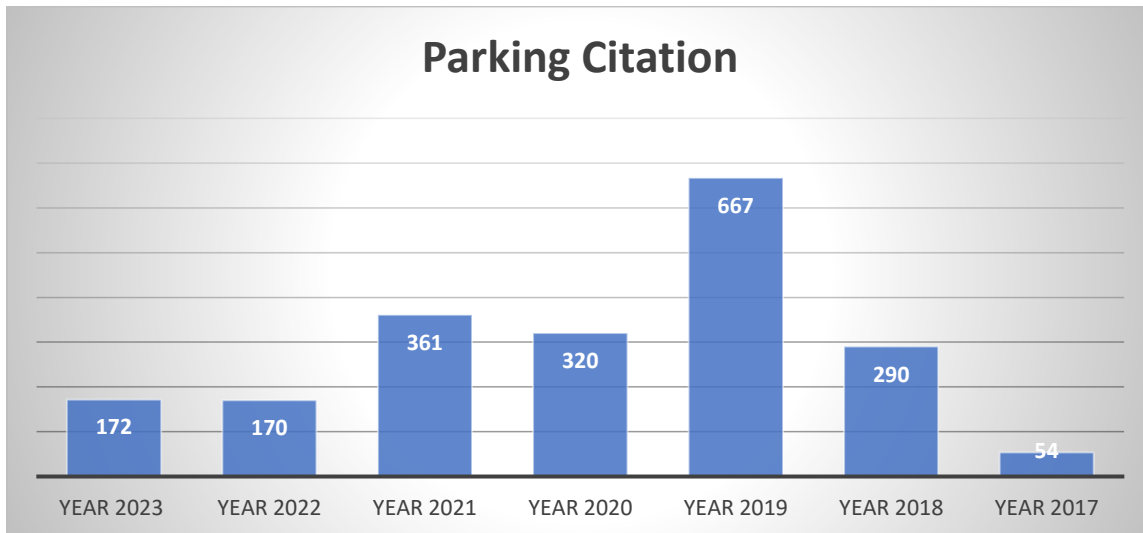


Crash Comparison Report



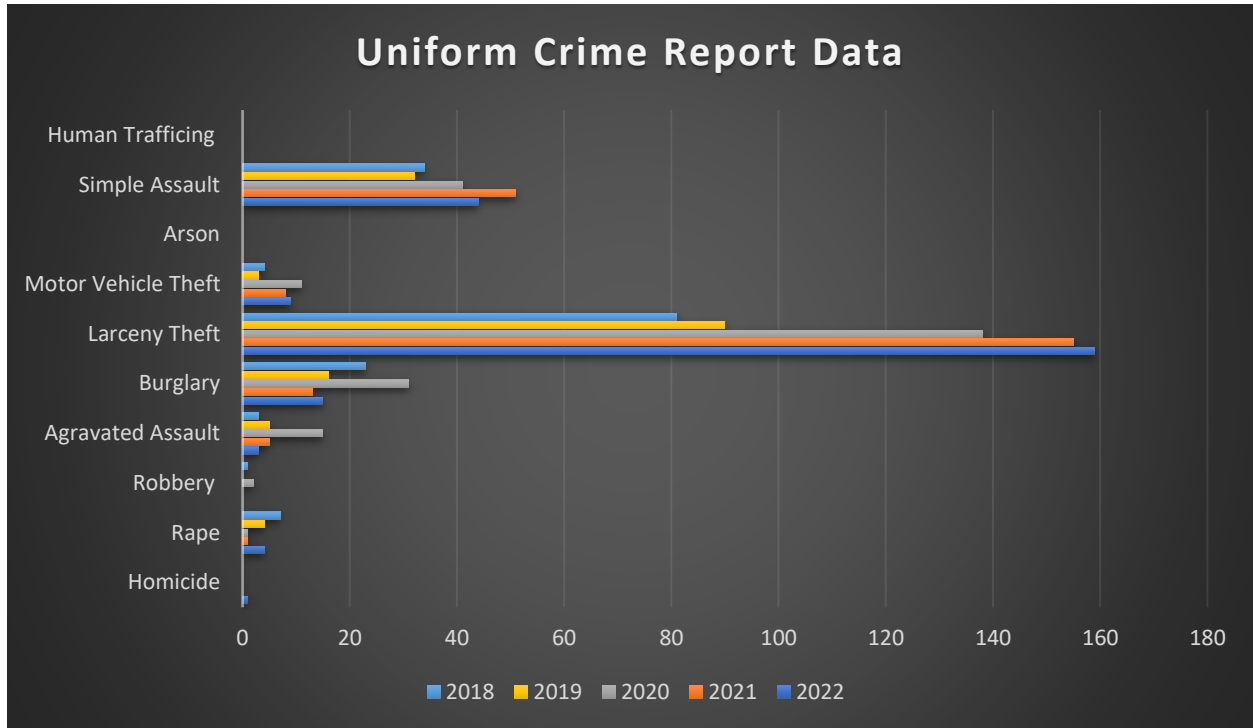
We ended 2023 with 38 more crashes than in 2022.

Parking Citation Comparison Report



Parking citations were consistent with the previous year despite changes to River Prairie parking and mild winter weather conditions.

Uniform Crime Report



Uniform Crime Report data indicates that larceny theft has increased while robbery and aggravated assault have decreased.

Grants

The Altoona Police Department partnered with the Eau Claire, Fall Creek, Augusta Police Departments, and Eau Claire County Sheriff's Office and was awarded a \$75,000 speed enforcement grant through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The primary purpose of the grant was to enforce traffic violations in problematic areas from June through September.

Our low staffing numbers through the summer months limited staff availability, resulting in lower-than-expected use of the grant funding. Altoona officers worked 30 traffic grant shifts, resulting in 167 traffic stops. Officers wrote 34 citations and 156 warnings. We were reimbursed \$6,470.69 from the grant. This is a significant decrease in hours from the previous two years.

Traffic grant funding allows additional overtime hours to be allocated specifically for enforcing traffic offenses. Officer overtime hours are 100% reimbursed by Wisconsin DOT, not costing the city anything. Grant funding for traffic enforcement allows the department to focus on traffic enforcement that would not otherwise be enforced

because of staff availability. We have applied and anticipate receiving grant funding again in 2024 for traffic enforcement.

Accreditation

The department has undertaken a project to become an accredited agency. Accreditation is achieved by meeting set standards developed for law enforcement agencies. Altoona Police are working towards accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) and Wisconsin Law Enforcement Accreditation Group (WILEAG). CALEA provides accreditation standards for law enforcement agencies in North America. WILEAG sets standards for Wisconsin agencies.



We recently completed our WILEAG Accreditation and are waiting for our assessment.



The assessment is where the accreditation body reviews our documents and determines if we meet the set standards. We are nearing the end of our self-assessment period for our CALEA accreditation. In 2024, we will receive a mock assessment from another accredited agency to address deficiencies. Following that we will be assessed by a CALEA assessor. If everything goes well, we hope to receive that accreditation status in 2025.

We continue to update our policies and practices. We did a complete policy manual review and are now scheduled to review our policies regularly. We also updated several practices around the use of force, personnel management, and evidence/property management. This process has allowed us to identify our deficiencies and correct those deficiencies to best practice standards. Overall, having policies and procedures that are best practice will help the effectiveness of our agency by increase agency oversight, reducing civil liabilities, and increasing our ability to maintain high standards.

License Plate Reader (LPR) Cameras

In 2023, Altoona Police Department partnered with Flock Safety to implement an LPR program. We initially purchased six cameras and strategically positioned them to capture vehicles entering and exiting the city. We later received donations from four different donors to purchase five additional cameras. Those additional cameras were placed near specified businesses and schools. The partnership with Flock has increased our efficiency in detecting and solving crime.

The cameras are designed to photograph passing vehicles and automatically read license plates constantly. The license plates are then run through national crime systems and Altoona PD lists to determine if the license plates are reported stolen, belong to a missing person, or are connected to a person on terrorist watch lists, probation/parole, sex offenders, warrants, or any crime entered by an officer in Altoona. Officers can also search the past 30 days for license plates in Altoona and any agency across the country that uses this system for any criminal activity.



The LPRs were hugely successful during this first year. We recovered an estimated monetary amount of \$50,847 through the use of the cameras. Officers used the LPRs as a resource in about 90 cases. This was utilizing only a portion of the 11 cameras. In 2024, all 11 cameras will be operational for the entire year, and we expect even higher success rates. Previously unsolvable cases are being solved, and some solvable cases are being solved faster and with more evidence.

In the last 30 days, there were 139,543 vehicles detected on the 11 active LPR cameras, which resulted in 110 hotlist hits. During this same time, officers utilized the 11 cameras for 56 case searches.

Highlights of some significant cases solved with LPRs in 2023:

- 1) Officers responded to assist Eau Claire Police with a report of a subject at a bar with a gun. The subject left the scene, witnesses were able to provide a partial license plate. The vehicle was located on license plate readers and within a short period of time officers were able to make a traffic stop on the suspect vehicle. The driver was arrested for OWI, operating a firearm while intoxicated, and pointing a firearm at another.
- 2) Officers were alerted to a stolen license plate entering the city. Shortly after, officers responded to multiple vehicles broken into at Hobbs Sports Center. Officers connected the thefts to the vehicle with the stolen plate and quickly broadcast the suspect vehicle to the public and law enforcement. Around the same time, Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls Police responded to multiple vehicles broken into as well. Because of the Flock camera alert Officers were able to quickly share information to both law enforcement and the public which resulted in several calls about the location of the suspect vehicle. The same vehicle attempted to commit thefts in Barron but was confronted by law enforcement because of the shared information. Barron engaged in vehicle pursuit through Chippewa, Eau Claire, and Jackson Counties. The suspects were eventually stopped and arrested. We were able to identify a white minivan connected to the incidents because of Flock as well. This is a common trend of out-of-state

criminals, and we were warned and immediately able to address it, leading to their apprehension.

- 3) A vehicle was stolen from a store parking lot. Flock cameras showed exactly when the vehicle was stolen. It was eventually recovered, and the thief was arrested.
- 4) Officers were notified of a reckless driver southbound on Highway 53. The vehicle was entered into the LPR system. The vehicle passed a camera within a minute of being entered, and officers located it immediately. The driver was arrested for OWI.
- 5) Police were looking for a missing person due to mental health concerns. The vehicle was entered as an Altoona alert and subsequently as an NCIC entry. As soon as the vehicle passed a LPR, officers were alerted and located the vehicle. The person was stopped and was connected with a mental health co-responder.
- 6) Officers were investigating a stalking case involving an adult having an inappropriate relationship with a child. Officers used the Flock cameras to search how often the suspect's vehicle had been driving by the victim's residence. In addition, officers added the vehicle as a hot plate to alert officers when the vehicle was around the victim's school or residence.
- 7) A suspect in a construction site theft was identified using the cameras. He was arrested for theft. It would not have been solved without the Flock evidence.
- 8) Officers were dispatched to a domestic violence case where the suspect was alleged to have a firearm. The suspect left the scene before officers arrived. Officers entered the license plate as an Altoona alert. Officers checked another residence for the suspect, the suspect was believed to be inside but would not come to the door. Later this same day, officers received an alert on the LPR of the suspect vehicle and were subsequently able to make a traffic stop and arrest the suspect without incident.

Wellness Program

The department provides a wellness program to ensure our officers are mentally and physically ready to perform their duties. Law enforcement can be a taxing career and officers not having their mental health needs met, can lead to ineffectiveness in the field. Conversely, Officers provided with a robust wellness program tend to be effective officers who are high-quality leaders and role models in the community.

The department uses multiple resources to ensure we have healthy officers. Officers are encouraged to take the physical readiness test once a year for a small financial bonus. We continue to work on programs and alternative options to ensure our officers are physically healthy. In 2024, we hope to complete our fitness center and will work on activating and law enforcement participation in additional physical fitness.

The department has a Employee Assistance Program (EAP), through ReaLiving in which each officer gets four free visits and one annual wellness training. In addition to EAP, officers are required to attend one wellness counseling meeting each year with Hakes Wellness. Investigators involved in Internet Crimes Against Children attend two sessions per year. These sessions are with a licensed professional counselor specializing in law enforcement personnel. Staff are also given the option to attend special post-incident debrief sessions with mental health professionals following traumatic calls for service.

This year, several officers and a supervisor attended Peer Support Training and formulated a Peer Support Team. The team consists of officers specially trained to provide support to their peers. This ensures that all our staff receive the resources needed and have peers to confide in. At the annual regional peer support conference, our team was awarded the Spirit Award for excelling in the spirit of the peer support teams. We received this award because our officers took it upon themselves to take the extra step of providing support to agencies from our area who were involved in investigating and assisting after the deaths of several law enforcement officers in our region.



Conclusion

2023 proved to be a busy year for law enforcement; we experienced a 24.5% increase in calls for service. With the increase in call volume, we experience an increase in the number of arrests. Although our calls for service have increased, according to the UCR report, our violent crime rates remain relatively stable. Proactive strategies and community-oriented policing approaches have allowed the department to keep the crime rates relatively low despite the ever-increasing population of Altoona.

The department was fully staffed for most of the year, with only one new full-time hire in 2023. Our staffing levels allowed the department to maintain an expected standard of law enforcement services in the city.

As we look forward to 2024 and 2025, I continue to look at succession planning; I'm anticipating several long-time patrol officers will retire and anticipate adding staffing to keep up with the growth. I have maintained one part-time officer awaiting a full-time position and anticipate sponsoring at least two part-time officers through the summer 2024 academy. The objective is to have three part-time staff members available to fill

vacant full-time positions as they occur. Something unheard of in this challenging hiring environment.

In 2023 we continued to advance our available technology by embracing the opportunity to add Flock LPR cameras throughout the city, this advanced surveillance tool has enhanced operational effectiveness and response capabilities to help maintain public safety.

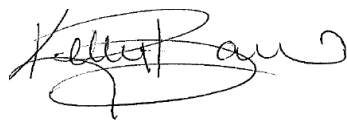
We continue to focus on training, ensuring officers have enhanced skills and knowledge and are prepared to handle diverse situations effectively. We prioritize education and professional development to keep officers updated on the latest practices and techniques, enabling them to provide top service to the community.

In 2023, the department added a Peer Support Team, an additional resource to ensure officers have the appropriate support for mental health and well-being. Ensuring officer well-being has been a priority, recognizing that a healthy department is essential for providing effective public safety.

We continued to build community partnerships and collaborate through strong relationships with community organizations, neighborhood associations, and businesses. These relationships foster trust and enable collaborative problem-solving.

By emphasizing public safety, training, staffing, and community engagement, the department remains dedicated to serving and protecting the City of Altoona. We strive to create a safe, inclusive, thriving community for all residents, businesses, and visitors. Together, we continue strengthening our commitment to public safety and community well-being.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelly Bakken". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Chief Kelly Bakken