



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

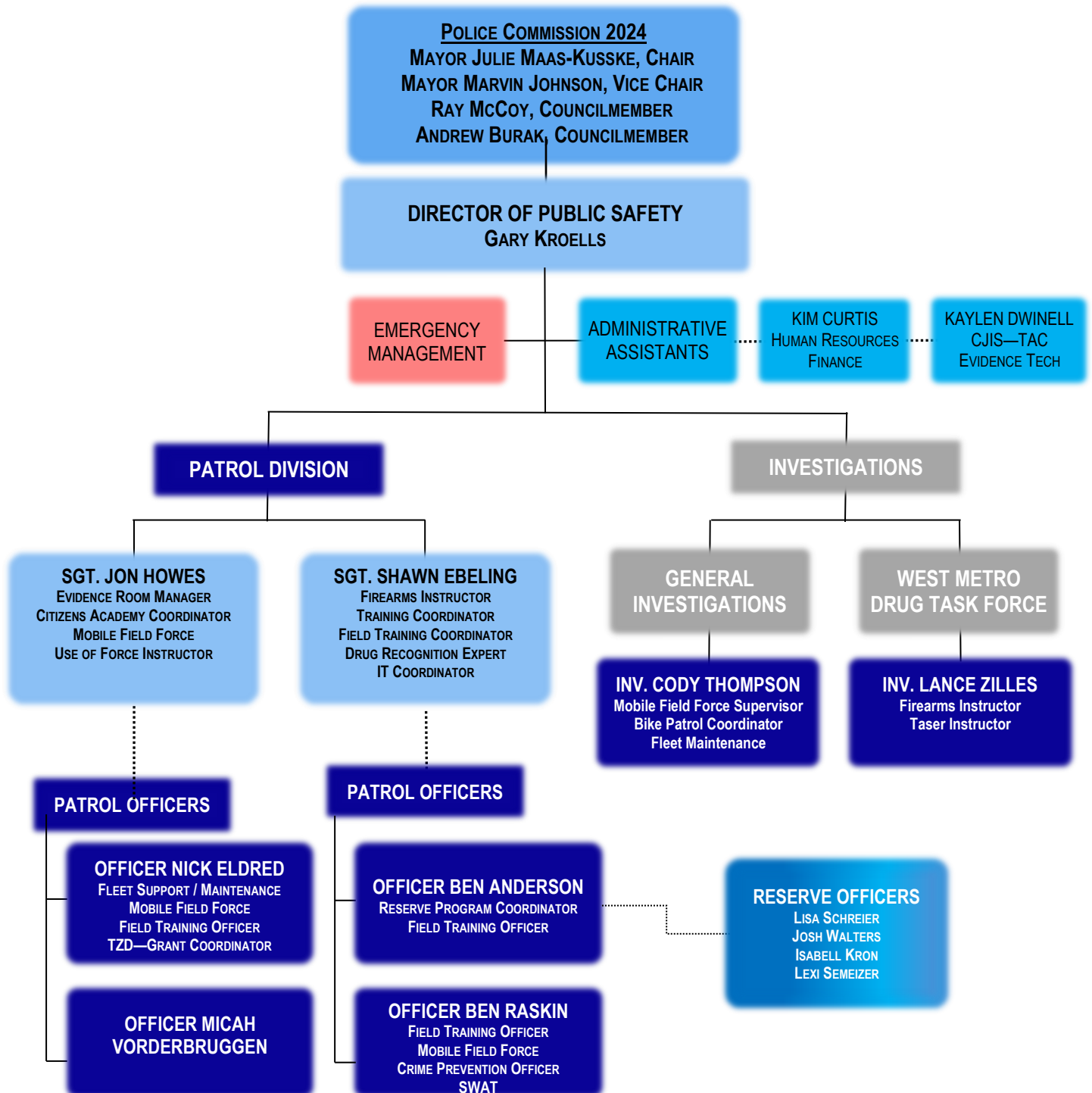


MISSION:

To protect and serve the citizens of Maple Plain and Independence in a professional and compassionate manner.



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



Serving our Community proudly with our core values:

Honor Courage Common Sense Respect & Dignity Loyalty Fairness Trust



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



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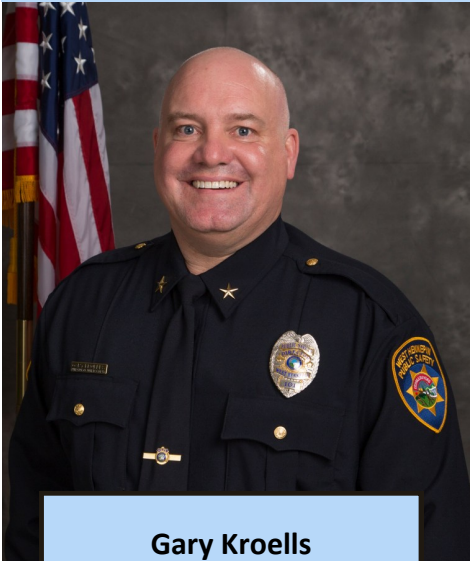
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WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Gary Kroells
Director of Public Safety

I present the 2024 Annual Report for the West Hennepin Public Safety Department with mixed emotions. As I prepare this final report, I reflect on nearly three decades of dedicated service to the citizens of Maple Plain and Independence. Serving as your Director, Sergeant, and patrol officer over the past 29 years has been one of the greatest honors of my life.

This report not only highlights the outstanding accomplishments of our department over the past year but also serves as a farewell message as I prepare to retire in the spring of 2025. I am immensely proud of the exemplary work our men and women in blue perform daily. Their professionalism, commitment, and unwavering determination continue to uphold the highest public safety standards for our communities.

I want to take this opportunity to extend my deepest gratitude to the citizens of Maple Plain and Independence. Your ongoing support, respect, and active participation in our shared mission have been the cornerstone of our success. Every call answered, every life safeguarded, and every community initiative

implemented has been driven by the positive relationships we have cultivated over the years.

I must also recognize Mayor Marvin Johnson, whose 45 years of dedicated service as both the Mayor of Independence and as a West Hennepin Police Commissioner have been instrumental in shaping an exceptional work environment within our department. His unwavering commitment to excellence and his sound policy decisions have improved our internal operations and elevated the overall quality of public safety services in our community.

Moreover, the continued support from the Maple Plain and Independence City Councils has been invaluable. The collaborative efforts between our department, local government, and the citizens we serve have built a strong foundation for safety and trust that will endure long after my retirement.

As I submit this final report, I am grateful for the experiences I have had and the relationships I have built over the years. I am confident that our department will continue to excel in providing the highest quality police services. The legacy of teamwork, professionalism, and community commitment will undoubtedly guide the department in the future.

Thank you for allowing me the honor of serving as your Director of Public Safety. It has indeed been a privilege to contribute to the well-being and safety of Maple Plain and Independence. I look forward to witnessing the continued progress and success of the West Hennepin Public Safety Department as it embarks on its next chapter.



Mayor Emeritus Marvin Johnson and Chief Gary Kroells at the mayor's retirement celebration



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING

West Hennepin Public Safety (WHPS) is dedicated to maintaining the highest standards in law enforcement training and professional development. We utilize PATROL (Peace Officer Accredited Training Online) courses to ensure that each officer meets and significantly exceeds the training requirements set by the Minnesota Police Officers Standards and Training (POST) Board. Our rigorous live-fire training regimen includes four annual sessions for each officer, further demonstrating our commitment to training.



WHPS officers actively engage in PATROL courses, using this online platform to earn up to 60 credits annually across various essential topics. These courses are tailored to align with Minnesota's legal standards and case law, equipping our officers with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the complexities of modern law enforcement effectively. The convenience and flexibility of PATROL's online learning environment have been crucial in maintaining a highly trained and responsive force.



Sergeant Jon Howes
Patrol Sergeant

During each three-year licensure cycle, WHPS officers exceed the POST-required 48 hours of continuing education, including a minimum of 16 POST-approved credits in specific categories such as crisis intervention, mental illness crisis, conflict management and mediation, diversity and cultural differences, autism, and crimes motivated by bias.

A cornerstone of our training program is the emphasis on practical, hands-on experience. In 2024, WHPS officers attended several training sessions focused on firearm proficiency, taser use, 40 MM less-lethal munitions, and other less-lethal options. WHPS collaborated with multiple local agencies to participate in scenario-based dynamic situation training. Additionally, WHPS held an MN POST Board-accredited Use of Force training day that emphasized de-escalation tactics, officer safety procedures, and the effective use of all available tools on the officer's belt. This training consisted of instruction, demonstrations, and real-life scenarios. Our officers also attended various training sessions hosted by outside agencies.

Overall, 2024 was an excellent year for training at WHPS, and we look forward to expanding our training initiatives in 2025!



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



HIGHWAY 12 SAFETY COALITION

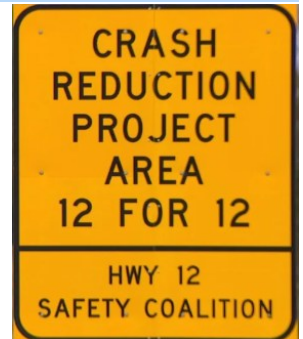


Gary Kroells
Director of Public Safety

Since its formation in 2014, the Highway 12 Safety Coalition has been dedicated to improving roadway safety. Over 11 years, we've made significant progress by focusing on four guiding principles: Enforcement, Engineering, Education, and Emergency Medical Services.

Major Accomplishments:

- ♦ **Enforcement:** Strengthened traffic law enforcement has improved driver behavior and reduced incidents on Highway 12 through increased patrol visibility and targeted initiatives.
- ♦ **Engineering:** Collaborations with local agencies and MnDOT have led to key safety enhancements at County Road 92 and County Road 90, setting the stage for further changes and improvements along Highway 12.



♦ **Education.** We launched public awareness campaigns and driver education programs to inform citizens about safe driving practices, empowering responsible road decisions.

♦ **Emergency Medical Services:** Our coalition has optimized emergency medical services along Highway 12, ensuring prompt response through upgraded protocols and coordinated efforts.

While we've accomplished much, critical safety improvements are still needed between Delano and Maple Plain in the City of Independence. MnDOT is developing a final construction plan for Highway 12, which requires the resolution of environmental concerns and funding.

We urge our community and elected officials to remain engaged in this important effort. Your support is vital for enhancing Highway 12's safety and ensuring a secure roadway for all travelers. Together, we can secure an even safer future on Highway 12. Thank you for your commitment to roadway safety.



Groundbreaking ceremony for improvements on Highway 12



Mayor Holly Schrupp (Delano), Mayor Emeritus Marvin Johnson (Independence), Chief Gary Kroells, Mayor Julie Maas-Kusske (Maple Plain), Mayor Brad Spencer (Independence)



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT

Since its inception in 1979, traffic enforcement has been one of West Hennepin Public Safety's (WHPS) top priorities, a vision established by Maple Plain and Independence residents. In 2024, WHPS officers conducted over 1,500 traffic stops and responded to numerous property damage and personal injury crashes.

Our department has received a traffic safety grant each year since 1995. Initially called "Safe & Sober," the grant program was rebranded "Towards Zero Deaths" (TZD) in 2003. Funded federally and administered by the State of Minnesota, the Safe & Sober/TZD program provides WHPS with additional resources to deploy officers outside their regular shifts to remove impaired drivers from the road. As a result of these efforts, Minnesota recorded a historic low of 364 traffic-related deaths in 2020.



Sergeant Jon Howes
Patrol Sergeant

We firmly believe that education is essential to public safety. WHPS has been instrumental in providing traffic safety presentations to students at Delano and Orono High Schools. Since 1999, our Citizens Academy has included specialized classes on traffic enforcement and DWI enforcement, focusing on impaired driving and traffic safety. We also use social media platforms to share traffic safety reminders and highlight our enforcement activities.

To support our efforts, we maintain state-of-the-art traffic enforcement and safety equipment, including Dual Stalker DSR radar units in each patrol vehicle, a Pro Laser Lidar speed measuring device, and three portable speed signs that we rotate through neighborhoods. These portable signs help us monitor speed and target enforcement during times when residents raise concerns about traffic issues, collecting valuable data related to vehicle speeds.

WHPS has consistently been recognized as a leader in traffic enforcement, not only for our on-street efforts but also for our collaboration with local, regional, and state agencies, such as the Highway 12 Safety Coalition, the TZD program, the Office of Traffic Safety, and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. WHPS officers look forward to continuing our excellence in traffic enforcement and education in 2025.





WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



INVESTIGATOR'S REPORT—CASES OF INTEREST

West Hennepin Public Safety (WHPS) regards the investigator position as a critical element of its officers' professional development. To foster this growth, WHPS implements a rotation system that allows experienced patrol officers to serve in the investigator role for two to three years.

Officer Cody Thompson commenced his assignment in the investigations unit in July 2023. He has been employed with WHPS since February 2017 and has held a peace officer license since 2006. During his initial year and a half as an investigator, Investigator Thompson has effectively managed a wide range of cases, including internet and telephone scams, thefts, adult and child protection reports, domestic assaults, Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC) cases, and burglaries.



Officer Cody Thompson
Investigator

As an investigator, Officer Thompson is responsible for reviewing, following up on, and submitting criminal cases for prosecution to the Hennepin County Attorney's Office and the Maple Plain/Independence City Attorney. Furthermore, he has assisted in processing hundreds of reports and cases initiated by patrol officers, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of WHPS's law enforcement efforts.



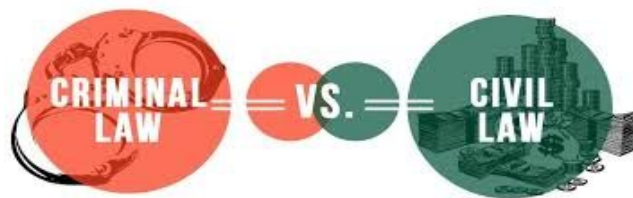


WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



INVESTIGATOR'S REPORT—CASES OF INTEREST

In February 2024, a resident of Maple Plain contacted WHPS to report that an estate sales manager had failed to uphold a contract to manage the sale of their recently deceased mother's property. Typically, cases like these are classified as "civil" matters, which law enforcement cannot enforce since they involve a binding contract. Investigator Thompson took the time to get all the facts of this case before making a decision. During the investigation, he discovered several similar reports of "civil" complaints with the same estate sale manager in neighboring jurisdictions and several unfavorable online reviews that made similar claims. In this case, funds and potential property were missing from the deceased's estate. Investigator Thompson established a pattern linking the other cases and charged the estate sales manager with Felony Theft By Swindle.



In March 2024, a resident of Independence contacted WHPS regarding a purchase made through Facebook Marketplace. The victim had paid for two Spypoint Trail Cameras from a seller in Iowa. After the payment was made via Venmo, the victim and seller communicated back and forth. However, the items never arrived, and the seller blocked the victim after he followed up on the order. Investigator Thompson executed a search warrant on the seller's Venmo account records, which confirmed the transaction. As a result, the seller was charged with Misdemeanor Theft by Swindle.





WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



INVESTIGATOR'S REPORT—CASES OF INTEREST

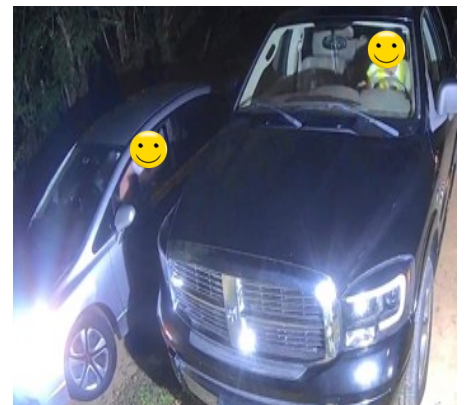
In July 2024, Investigator Thompson began an investigation into a case of financial exploitation involving a vulnerable adult. The individual, a resident of Independence, had enlisted the help of a family member to attend medical appointments and to purchase groceries and other household necessities.

After a thorough five-month investigation, Investigator Thompson discovered that the family member had reimbursed themselves for amounts that exceeded the actual costs of the items purchased. Additionally, the family member divided a bank certificate of deposit (CD) account into two separate CDs and changed the beneficiary designation to their spouse without the victim's consent. The financial impact of this case exceeds \$100,000. Prosecution of this matter is being handled by the Complex Crimes Unit of the Hennepin County Attorney's Office.

In September 2024, officers from West Hennepin Public Safety (WHPS) and the Wayzata Police Department (PD) were dispatched to investigate a motor vehicle that had been reported stolen from a residence in Watertown, located in Carver County. Initially, the officers were unable to locate the stolen vehicle. However, shortly afterward, Wayzata PD discovered the unoccupied vehicle in Wayzata. Attached to this vehicle was an enclosed trailer, which the owner later confirmed had been stolen from a business in Maple Plain.

The victim from Watertown provided video evidence and images showing the suspect arriving with a female passenger in a silver vehicle. The license plate of this vehicle was not visible before the theft of the second motor vehicle. By utilizing data from our License Plate Reader (LPR) system and establishing a timeline, we successfully located video of both the stolen vehicle and the silver passenger vehicle. This process revealed the license plate number, which helped in identifying the suspects.

Furthermore, a search warrant was executed to obtain phone records, which confirmed the male suspect's presence at both the location of the stolen motor vehicle and the trailer, as well as the recovery sites. The phone records also indicated frequent communication between the male suspect and the female passenger, suggesting her involvement in the criminal activity. The Hennepin County and Carver County Attorneys' Offices have formally charged both suspects in these cases.





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INVESTIGATOR'S REPORT—COMMON SCAMS

West Hennepin Public Safety would like to remind its citizens about recurring scams. Below is a list of the most common ones.

Social Security or Identity Theft Scams: You receive an unexpected phone call or unsolicited email about a “problem” with your Social Security number, account, or benefits that you need to resolve immediately, or you will face arrest or other legal action. The scammer says you have to make a payment to receive assistance for an identity theft issue or in exchange for a Social Security benefit increase; this is a scam!

Family Emergency Scam: You receive an unexpected phone call or unsolicited email from an individual claiming to be a lawyer, law enforcement officer, hospital employee, or possibly even a family member—the individual requests financial help or information to help the individual out. Most of the time, they request financial help by wire transfer or gift cards. Contact the family member named by the suspect directly before providing any information or financial assistance.

Amazon Scam: You may receive an unsolicited call from someone stating they are a member of Amazon Customer Service. They may say your account is frozen and you need to purchase Amazon.com or other branded gift cards and ask you to provide the claim codes over the phone to remove the freeze on your account. Amazon will never call you to ask you to purchase gift cards to unlock your account or provide sensitive personal information like your Social Security number, tax ID, bank account number, or credit card information.

What can you do to protect yourself? Hang up and report it to the Social Security Office of the Inspector General online at <https://oig.ssa.gov>. Only provide personal or financial information to *verified* businesses or persons over the phone. Report suspicious phone calls to your law enforcement agency or file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at <https://www.ftc.gov>. It's also a good idea to monitor your credit reports. Federal law gives you the right to get a free copy of your credit report every 12 months from each of the three nationwide credit bureaus. In addition, the three bureaus have permanently extended a program that lets you check your credit report from each once a week for free at AnnualCreditReport.com.





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RESERVE OFFICER PROGRAM



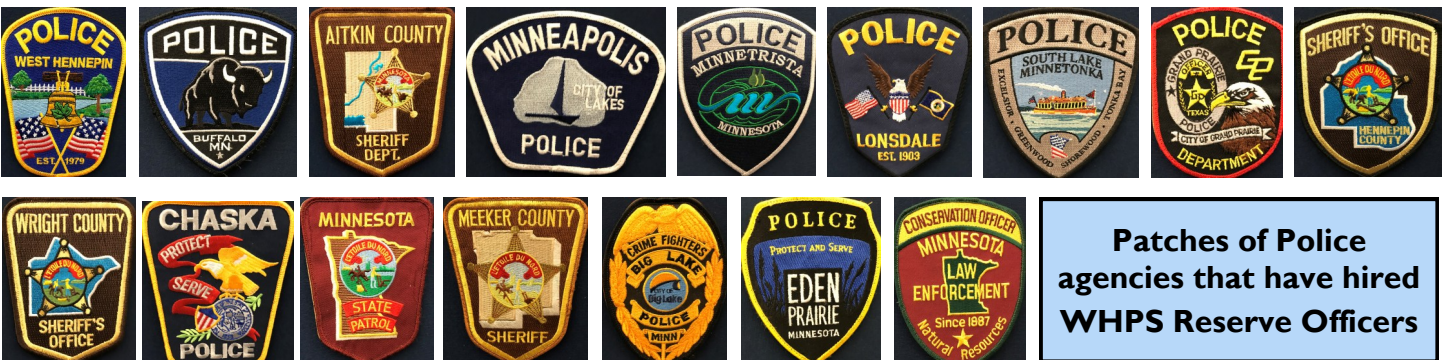
Officer Ben Anderson
Reserve Coordinator

The West Hennepin Public Safety (WHPS) Reserve Officer Program had another successful year in 2024. The reserve officers supported our communities by riding alongside regular officers and assisting at community events, contributing 1,013.5 hours to WHPS and, in turn, to Maple Plain and Independence. This commitment represents a notable contribution to our communities, valued at \$33,942 based on a modest rate of \$33.49 per hour (the national figure for 2024), and was achieved at a minimal cost to the taxpayers.

Our reserve officers come from diverse professional and personal backgrounds. Some work in non-law enforcement careers, others are pursuing education to become law enforcement officers, and some are retired from their previous occupations. What unites all of them is their shared dedication to serving the community. We encourage any citizen interested in volunteering their time to consider becoming a WHPS reserve officer. We provide training and

uniforms, and you will have the opportunity to work with some of the most remarkable people in the world. Serving as a police reserve is more than just a volunteer opportunity; it's a chance to grow, learn, and make a tangible impact in your community. You will acquire valuable skills, knowledge, and experiences that will benefit you personally and professionally.

2024 marked my 11th and final year leading the WHPS Reserve Officers. It has been one of the highlights of my career. I am grateful for the opportunity to lead and mentor many incredible individuals over the years. WHPS is fortunate to have such dedicated volunteers on our team. I cannot thank each of them enough for their commitment and for being a part of our journey.





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RESERVE OFFICERS IN ACTION



**WHPS Reserves honoring the
lives of Burnsville Heroes:**

**Officer Matthew Ruge
Officer Paul Elmstrand
Firefighter/Paramedic
Adam Finseth**

**Officer Thompson conducting
ebike training for the reserves**



**Reserve Officers Semeizer and Schreier
working a detail at the Polo Classic**



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY

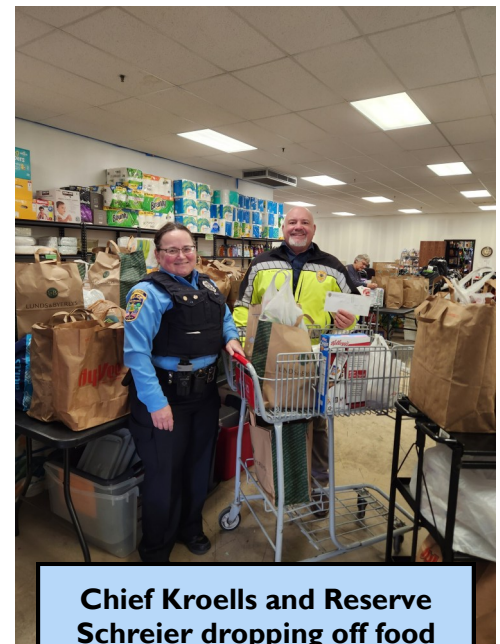


VIEW SANTA 2024



Kneeling: the Grinch (Officer Eldred)
Standing, L to R: Reserve Semeizer,
Reserve Walters, Reserve Schreier,
Officer Vorderbruggen, Sergeant Ebeling, Santa,
Chief Kroells, Officer Anderson,
Officer Thompson, Sergeant Howes

View Santa 2024 took place on a warm Saturday in December, celebrating its 44th year with West Hennepin Public Safety officers and reserves! Santa had a wonderful time visiting children of all ages at the Independence City Hall Atrium, and at the Veterans Memorial Park and Haven Homes in Maple Plain. Our incredible reserves gave the kids small treat bags along the way and they filled a trailer with food donations for local food shelves. A big thank you to all our generous citizens—your kindness truly makes a difference!



Chief Kroells and Reserve
Schreier dropping off food
and money donations at
WeCAN

“Maple Plain and Independence residents give generously to local food shelves each year,” stated Director Gary Kroells. “It was another exceptional year with many people coming out to see and talk with Santa in the relatively warm temperatures.” The police reserves collected 1,333 pounds of food, 22 personal care items, and \$1,102 in cash donations for the WeCAN organization!



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



ADMINISTRATIVE AND RECORDS DIVISION



**Administrative Assistant
Kim Curtis**

CONTACT US
1918 County Road 90
Maple Plain, MN

Office Hours:
Monday-Thursday
8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Friday
8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

(763) 479-0500

**For an emergency,
dial 911**



**Administrative Assistant
Kaylen Dwinell**

The Administrative and Records Division of West Hennepin Public Safety is comprised of two administrative assistants with individual responsibilities. Kim Curtis is the Administrative Assistant/bookkeeper, human resources (HR) & benefits coordinator, and recording secretary. Kaylen Dwinell is the Administrative Assistant/Terminal Agency Coordinator (TAC), NIBRS (National Incident-Based Reporting System) manager, and is the primary manager for the Records Division, which includes collecting and reporting data on crimes and submitting state-mandated records. Together, they provide a range of administrative and support services, including:

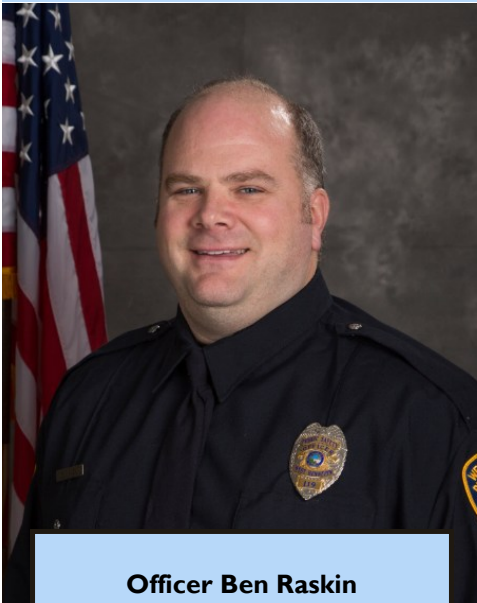
- Assist the public on the phone and at the front window with public data requests, issuing burn permits, permit to purchase applications, etc.
- Department bookkeeping: payroll, HR & benefits coordination, accounts payables/receivables, maintaining financial status reports, bank account maintenance & reconciliation.
- Maintaining employee training records.
- Process background checks for numerous licenses and permits
- Preparation of case files for criminal prosecution and court records management.
- State-certified for transmitting reports to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA).
- Preparing and transmitting monthly crime, property, and arrest reports to the BCA.
- Writing weekly media reports and press releases for local newspapers.
- Maintaining records and reporting to the Office of the State Auditor for assets forfeiture programs.
- Compliance with OSHA reporting requirements.
- Storage, retrieval, and disposal of records; completing local background checks.
- Collect, process, disseminate, and maintain department records following Federal and State Data Practices laws and record retention requirements.
- Criminal History Records Management.
- Ensure compliance and lead annual audits.
- Linking criminal justice “suspense” records to the corresponding criminal history arrest records.



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



CRIME PREVENTION



Officer Ben Raskin
Crime Prevention Coordinator

West Hennepin Public Safety (WHPS) officers work extremely hard to prevent crime, but we can't do it alone.



We regularly receives tips from concerned citizens who may see something out of the ordinary or suspicious. We encourage you to call 911 while it is occurring so we can check it out. Some of the tips we receive lead to arrests, including drunk drivers, drug seizures, and damage to property crimes. Educating citizens with crime prevention information has assisted WHPS with making our area a better place to live, work, and play!

WHPS is committed to keeping Independence and Maple Plain informed and engaged. We use social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), CodeRED, and Neighbors/Ring Public Safety apps to quickly share crime alerts, law enforcement events, classes, and important notifications. Stay connected with us and be part of our efforts to make Maple Plain and Independence a safer place.

WHPS successfully conducted the yearly alcohol and tobacco compliance checks, a crucial measure to ensure adherence to the law. We sent an underage decoy into alcohol and tobacco establishments within our jurisdiction, and we're pleased to report that all nine establishments passed the compliance checks!

In the coming year, we will again offer free alcohol and tobacco compliance training to the owners and employees of local establishments. We host two classes each calendar year at Independence City Hall: one in the spring and one in the winter.

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please contact the WHPS office during business hours.



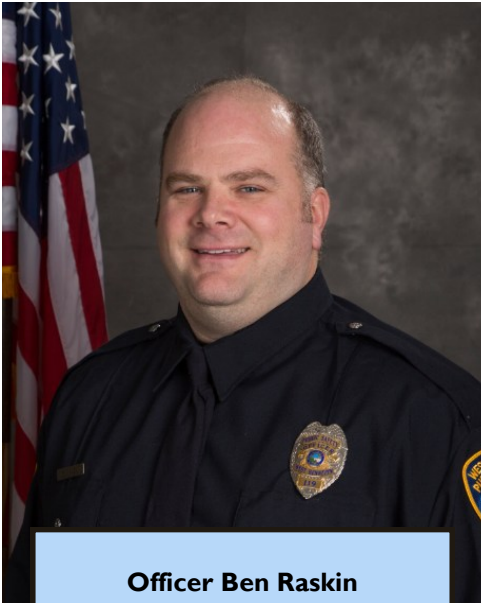
Officer Cody Thompson
Alcohol Compliance



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS—NIGHT TO UNITE



Officer Ben Raskin
Crime Prevention Coordinator

WHPS participated in the Night to Unite event on August 6th, 2024. Once again, we had perfect weather and an amazing turnout with our Maple Plain and Independence residents. Along with our public safety partner, Maple Plain Fire Department, we attended twelve parties! WHPS has been involved in the Night to Unite celebration since 2006.

Each year, we seek volunteers in Independence and Maple Plain to host neighborhood parties at their homes or street blocks. WHPS police officers, reserve officers, and Maple Plain firefighters enjoy participating in the event. If you would like to host a party in 2025, please get in touch with Officer Raskin or WHPS.

We look forward to gathering once again in 2025. Mark your calendars for Tuesday, August 5th.





WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS—CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY

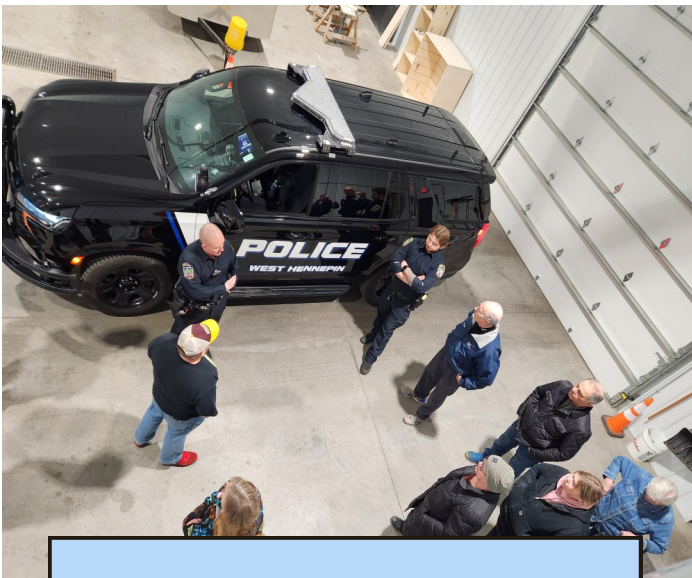
West Hennepin Citizens Police Academy

In the spring of 2024, the West Hennepin Public Safety Department (WHPSD) hosted its 23rd class of the Citizens Police Academy.

Fifteen citizens participated in the eight-week academy—three of whom were attending for the second time. These individuals either live or work in the surrounding communities and

attended sessions one night each week to learn about the WHPSD, its officers and reserves, and their duties.

Officers educated participants on various law enforcement topics, including the use of force, criminal investigations, narcotics enforcement, traffic and DWI enforcement, court proceedings, and the role of K-9 officers. Attendees also had the opportunity for hands-on training, such as simulating a traffic stop and interacting with a driver, and they visited the Hennepin County 911 Dispatch Center in Plymouth to listen to actual 911 calls.



Talking with officers about making traffic stops and the equipment in our patrol vehicles

The academy is a welcoming platform for all community members to meet and engage with many of the WHSPD officers and reserve officers. It provides a unique opportunity to gain an understanding of law enforcement roles through lectures, open discussions with officers, and interactive sessions. Nearly all the officers participate in teaching, ensuring a comprehensive learning experience.

The Citizens Academy is held annually at the WHSPD. If you are interested in attending, please get in touch with the office during business hours.



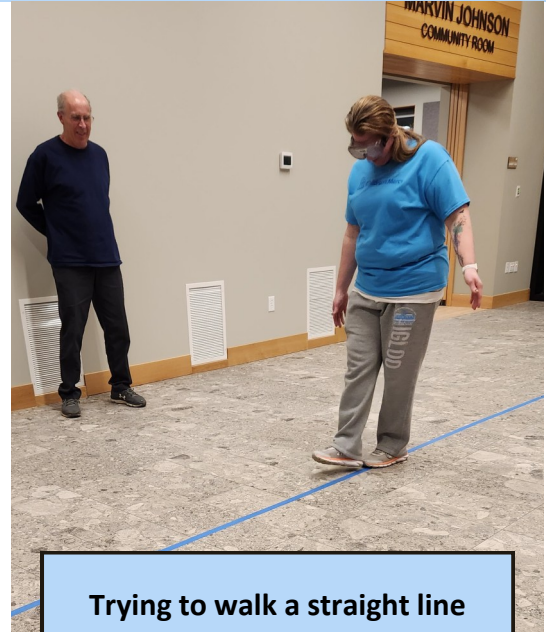
WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS—CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY



Experiencing the Firearms Training Simulator (FATS)



Trying to walk a straight line wearing Fatal Vision goggles



CLASS OF 2024



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



EVENTS OF THE YEAR 2024

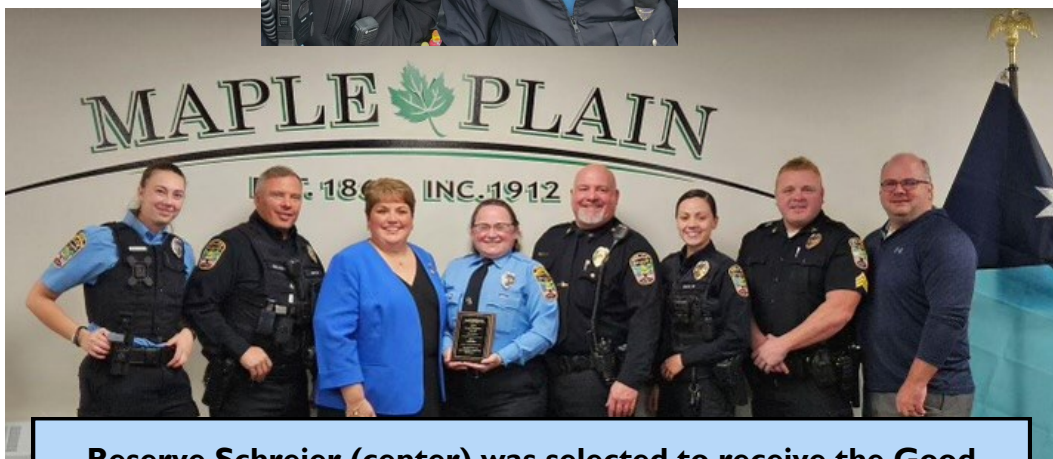
**Chief Kroells and Reserve Schreier at the
Maple Plain Fire Department Open House**



**Sergeant Howes, Reserve Schreier and
Chief Kroells with Toys for Tots
donations**



**Reserve officers at a
Trunk or Treat event**



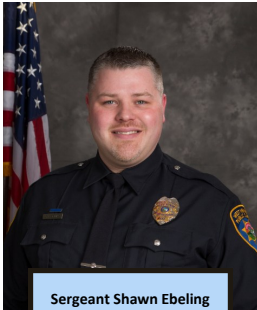
**Reserve Schreier (center) was selected to receive the Good
Neighbor Award given by the City of Maple Plain**



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



PROMOTIONS AND NEW EMPLOYEES

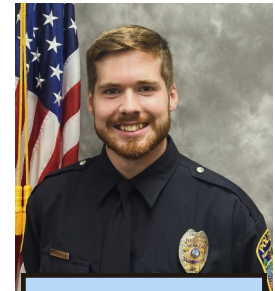


Sergeant Shawn Ebeling
Patrol Sergeant

Congratulations to Officer Shawn Ebeling, who was promoted to Patrol Sergeant at West Hennepin Public Safety on November 1, 2024. Sgt. Ebeling has been with West Hennepin Public Safety since March 2016 and has served as a patrol officer, Firearms and Use of Force instructor, Field Training Officer, and Drug Recognition Expert (DRE).

On August 8, 2024, Officer Micah Vorderbruggen was hired as a patrol officer with West Hennepin Public Safety. Prior to this appointment, Officer Vorderbruggen served as a reserve officer for over four years and held a position as a Community Service Officer for several months while completing his Law Enforcement degree at Hennepin Technical College. He looks forward to a rewarding career in Maple Plain and Independence.

Welcome, Officer Micah Vorderbruggen!



Officer Micah Vorderbruggen
Patrol Officer



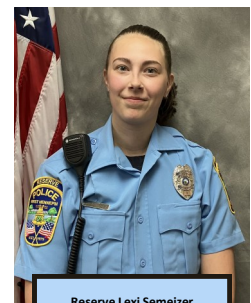
Officer Avery Freeman
Patrol Officer

In July 2024, the West Hennepin Public Safety Department received the Intensive Comprehensive Peace Officer Education and Training (ICPOET) Grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. This grant is designed to support the recruitment and training efforts of law enforcement agencies in Minnesota. Avery Freeman was chosen as the department's ICPOET candidate, and he began his studies at Hennepin Technical College in October 2024 to pursue a law enforcement degree. After successfully completing the program in March 2025, Officer Freeman was promoted to police officer, further strengthening our team's ability to serve the community.

Welcome, Officer Avery Freeman!

Reserve Officer Lexi Semeizer joined the West Hennepin Public Safety Department on June 17, 2024. Reserve Semeizer grew up in Independence and is attending the University of Minnesota with the goal of becoming a licensed Officer with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Welcome, Reserve Officer Semeizer!



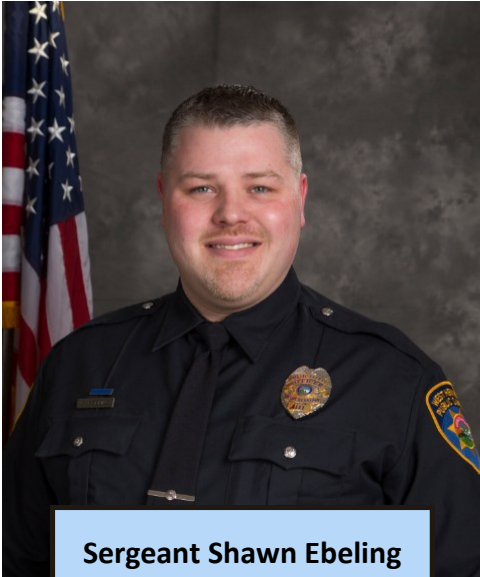
Reserve Lexi Semeizer
Reserve Officer



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



USE OF FORCE—FIREARMS TRAINING



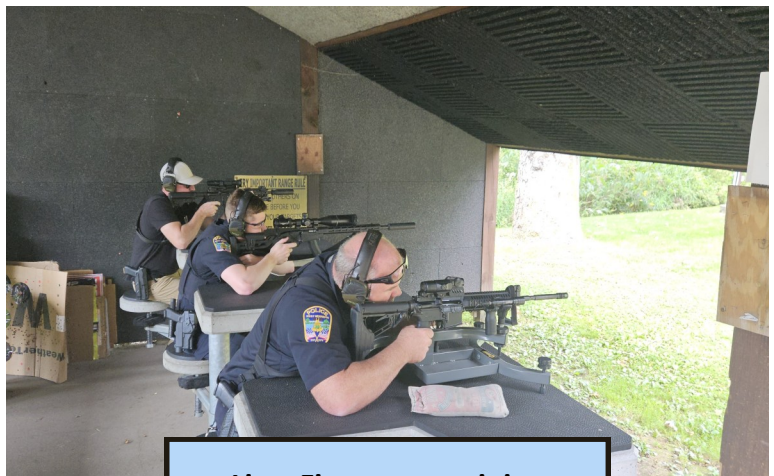
Sergeant Shawn Ebeling
Firearms Instructor

West Hennepin Public Safety (WHPS) is dedicated to ensuring that our officers receive the highest level of firearms and use-of-force training. This commitment is vital not only for the safety of our officers but also for the well-being of the communities we serve. Through comprehensive training programs, real-world scenario exercises, and ongoing evaluations, WHPS prepares its officers to respond effectively, responsibly, and professionally to the complex challenges of modern policing.

WHPS conducts firearms and use-of-force training sessions throughout the year, with at least four live-fire training sessions. These sessions focus on scenario-based training, enhancing officers' proficiency with their weapons and their ability to apply force appropriately in dynamic, real-life situations. In addition to live-fire exercises, officers undergo extensive annual training on use-of-force principles and the application of deadly force. This training is complemented by the "Peace officer Accredited TRaining OnLine" (PATROL) program in partnership with the

League of Minnesota Cities, which provides in-depth instruction on case law, legal considerations, and the practical application of use-of-force and de-escalation techniques. This ensures that our officers remain well-informed and legally sound in their decision-making.

In July and August 2024, WHPS officers participated in joint scenario training with the Corcoran and Medina Police Departments. This immersive experience challenged the officers with high-stakes scenarios that tested their critical thinking, tactical decision-making, and de-escalation skills. The training took place in an abandoned residence, with role players acting as suspects, victims, and bystanders. Officers engaged in realistic situations, including domestic disturbances that required verbal de-escalation and conflict resolution strategies. They faced subjects armed with weapons, compelling them to make rapid decisions under stress and to apply appropriate force while working as a team to resolve incidents safely. Additionally, scenarios involving individuals in mental health crises required officers to utilize communication skills, conduct threat assessments, and employ specialized resources to de-escalate situations and ensure the safety of all involved. By collaborating with neighboring agencies, officers gained valuable experience in multi-agency environments, enhancing their communication, coordination, and adaptability when responding to joint emergency situations.



Live-Fire range training

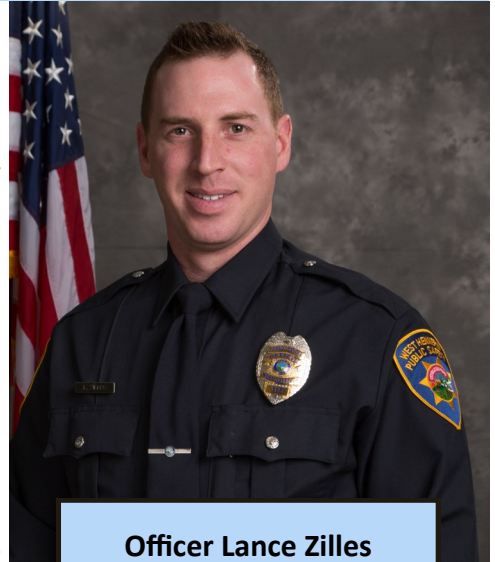


WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY

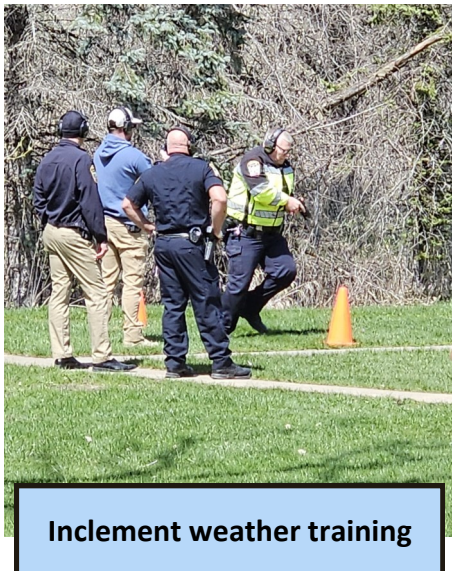


USE OF FORCE—FIREARMS TRAINING

WHPS equips its officers with a variety of use-of-force options to ensure safe, appropriate, and effective responses to different levels of resistance from subjects they encounter. Officers are issued handguns and rifles as primary lethal force options, along with chemical spray, an expandable baton, and a TASER™ for intermediate force applications. Patrol vehicles are equipped with a 40mm less-than-lethal launcher, allowing officers to deploy kinetic impact projectiles, pepper spray, or distraction devices. This tool enables officers to create distance and time when responding to volatile situations, minimizing the need for lethal force and facilitating safer resolutions.



Officer Lance Zilles
Firearms Instructor



Inclement weather training

WHPS also conducts an annual full-range training day focused on low-light and no-light scenarios, as well as inclement weather training, to ensure our officers are prepared for all operational conditions. Officers practice weapon handling, tactical movement, and engagement techniques under reduced visibility, improving their readiness for nighttime operations and adverse weather responses. Additionally, they train with protective equipment such as gas masks, ballistic shields, and body armor, ensuring they are ready for various challenging environments. These training exercises require officers to adapt their tools, tactics, and teamwork to ensure the safety of themselves and the public while minimizing injury risk.

WHPS continuously evaluates and enhances its training methods to improve officer readiness and public safety. In 2024, there was a heightened focus on stress-induced decision-making, crisis intervention techniques, de-escalation strategies, particularly in mental health-related incidents. Officers received training to identify behavioral health crises and to respond using effective communication and non-lethal interventions.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the Delano Sportsmen's Club for its continued support in providing access to its shooting range and facilities. Their partnership is invaluable in ensuring our officers receive consistent and high-quality training.

DELANOSPORTSMENSClub.COM



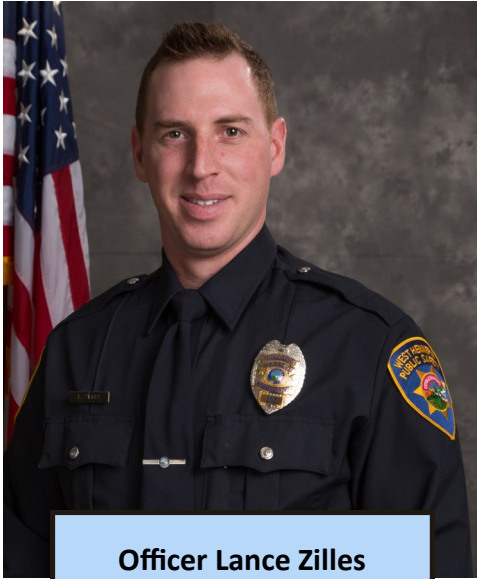
WHPS remains committed to maintaining and enhancing its firearms and use-of-force training programs. Our goal is to equip every officer with the knowledge, skills, and decision-making abilities necessary to serve our community with integrity, professionalism, and accountability. Through a culture of transparency, collaboration, and continuous learning, we reaffirm our commitment to excellence in public safety and responsible policing.



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



WEST METRO DRUG TASK FORCE (WMDTF)



Officer Lance Zilles
WMDTF Agent

The West Metro Drug Task Force (WMDTF) is a coalition created to combat narcotics in western Hennepin County and the Twin Cities metro area. Established in 2003, the founding agencies of the WMDTF include West Hennepin Public Safety, Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, Medina Police Department, Minnetrista Public Safety, and Orono Police Department.

In 2024, the WMDTF took a significant step forward by merging with the South West Hennepin Drug Task Force (SWHDTF) through a joint powers agreement. This strategic merger expanded the task force to include additional agencies: Eden Prairie Police Department, Edina Police Department, Hopkins Police Department, Minnetonka Police Department, and St. Louis Park Police Department.

The WMDTF is currently staffed by 14 detectives who are dedicated to addressing narcotics-related criminal activity. Each member agency contributes at least one officer, with four detectives assigned from the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office. The task force is led by two sergeants and one lieutenant from Hennepin County, who provide effective oversight of the detectives on a daily basis. Together, they are committed to making a tangible impact in the fight against drug trafficking and abuse in the region.



**Mayor Brad Spencer, Agent Zilles, Sheriff Dawanna Witt,
Chief Gary Kroells, Mayor Julie Maas-Kusske at the Drug
Task Force Luncheon**



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



WEST METRO DRUG TASK FORCE (WMDTF)

2024 was a year of significant impact for the West Metro Drug Task Force (WMDTF). The WMDTF executed 147 search warrants and 159 administrative warrants, resulting in 203 arrests, 137 state criminal charges, six federal indictments, over \$1,000,000 in cash confiscated, and 72 firearms seized. The search warrants executed resulted in the seizure of 81,041 grams of marijuana, 11,383 grams of cocaine, 7.27 grams of heroin, 67,428 grams of methamphetamine, 28,117 fentanyl pills, and 2,039 grams of fentanyl powder, making the Twin Cities metro area safer.

Highlighted cases where Detective Zilles was the case agent in charge include:

Summer 2024: A suspect was taken into custody leaving his apartment with a large 9mm handgun and narcotics in his possession. Task force agents executed a search warrant at his residence. As a result of the search warrant, detectives located 66.9 grams of cocaine, 2,500 grams of fentanyl (pill form), 928 grams of methamphetamine, another firearm, and a large quantity of U.S. currency.

Fall 2024: Task force agents executed a search warrant, and the suspect was in possession of approximately 55 pounds of methamphetamine, three kilograms of cocaine, and a large quantity of U.S. currency.





WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



WEST COMMAND MOBILE FIELD FORCE



Officer Ben Raskin
Mobile Field Force



Officer Cody Thompson
Mobile Field Force



Officer Nick Eldred
Mobile Field Force

The West Command Mobile Field Force (WCMFF) is a specially trained unit equipped to respond to incidents within its member agencies when large crowds require oversight for public safety and the preservation of First Amendment rights, including peaceful demonstrations and protests. It consists of officers from 27 law enforcement agencies in suburban Hennepin County. This collaborative group is designed to quickly deploy highly trained personnel who work to preserve life, uphold public safety, protect property, and enhance the quality of life throughout Greater Hennepin County. Each member and the agencies they represent are dedicated to defending lawful protests and demonstrations, ensuring that these events remain peaceful and safe for everyone involved. Through this steadfast commitment, the WCMFF aims to respect individual rights while maintaining peace and security for all residents.



West Hennepin Public Safety has committed three officers to WCMFF Platoon 6: Officer Raskin, Officer Thompson, and Officer Eldred, who diligently serve on this specialized team.





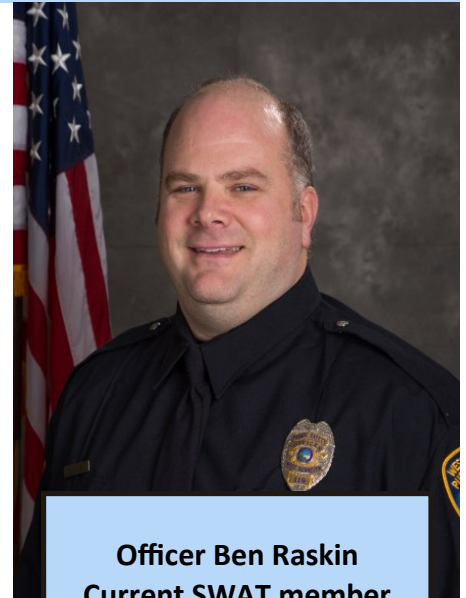
WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



LAKE MINNETONKA SWAT TEAM

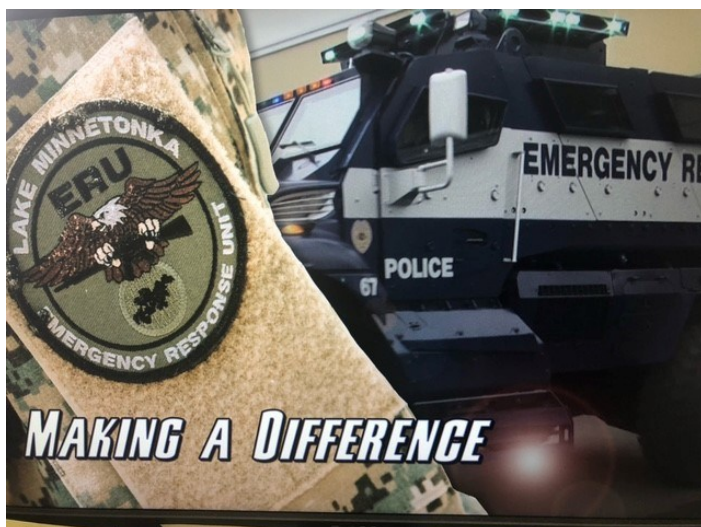
West Hennepin Public Safety (WHPS) is a member of the Lake Minnetonka Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team, which is a multi-agency SWAT team formed in 2008. The founding agencies include the West Hennepin Public Safety Department, the South Lake Minnetonka Police Department, the Orono Police Department, the Minnetrista Police Department, and the Wayzata Police Department. The team has a total of eighteen members, with WHPS holding two positions, one of which is vacant.

The SWAT Team trains regularly to learn new techniques, devices, tools, and tactics for handling high-risk situations. They also provide assistance to other SWAT teams under mutual aid agreements. WHPS is grateful to participate in a unit that could not be funded by a single department alone.



Officer Ben Raskin
Current SWAT member

The Lake Minnetonka SWAT Team participates in annual training at Camp Ripley, where numerous teams from across the state come together to practice techniques and tactics. The scenarios created during these sessions often involve multiple buildings and include ten or more actors, allowing teams to practice in environments where team security and scene safety are paramount. This training event has proven to be very successful.



The training can encompass a wide range of scenarios, including large-scale active shooter situations, crowd control during critical incidents, hostage rescues, and armored vehicle operations, among others. Such training is essential for preparing teams for large-scale incidents that many are unable to practice for during their monthly training sessions.

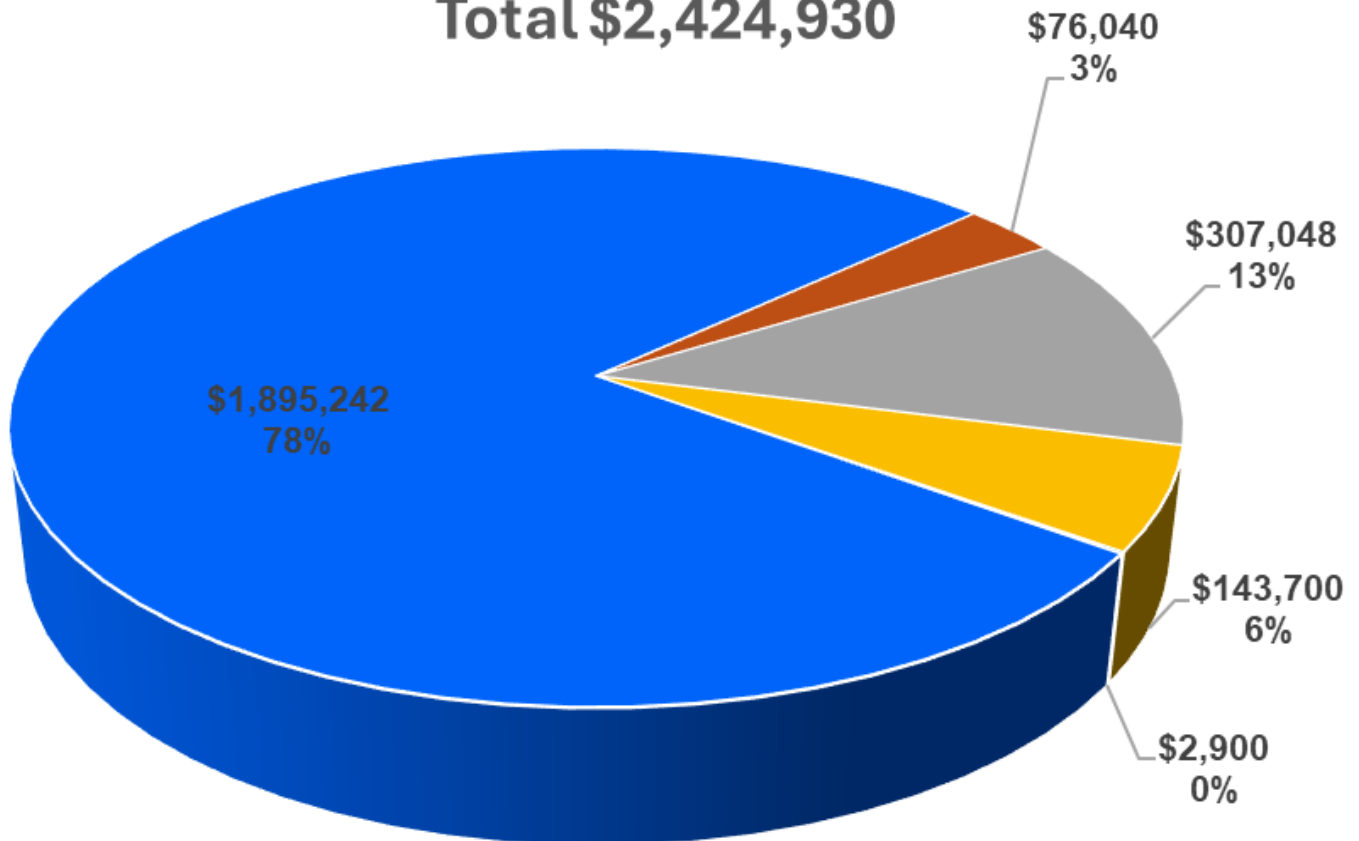


WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



FINANCIAL SUMMARY: 2024 BUDGET

2024 Budget Total \$2,424,930



■ Salaries & Benefits ■ Office ■ Operations ■ Capital Expense ■ Community Service

The personnel section accounts for 78% of the overall budget. It includes health and dental benefits, overtime, PERA contributions and medical disability insurance that West Hennepin is mandated to pay. The remaining funds are allocated to office supplies, police department operating costs, capital expenses and community service programs.



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



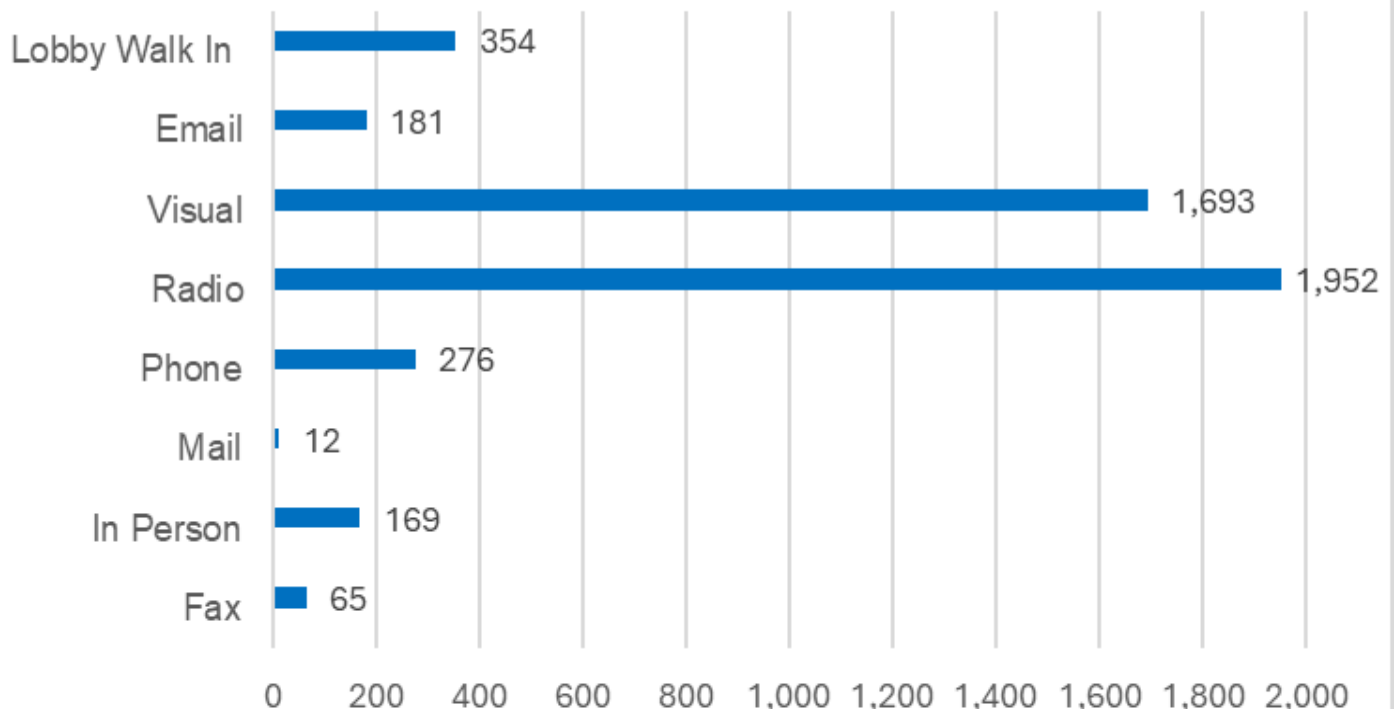
2024 ACTIVITY REPORT

In 2024, the West Hennepin Public Safety Department handled 4,707 incident complaint reports for the cities of Independence and Maple Plain, with 2,784 incidents occurring in Independence and 1,324 occurring in Maple Plain.

Incident complaint reports include:

- 1,491 Traffic Stops and Traffic related offenses
- 78 Criminal Investigations
- 27 DWI Arrests
- 125 Property Damage Crashes
- 7 Personal Injury Crashes
- 1 Fatality Crash

How Calls Are Received



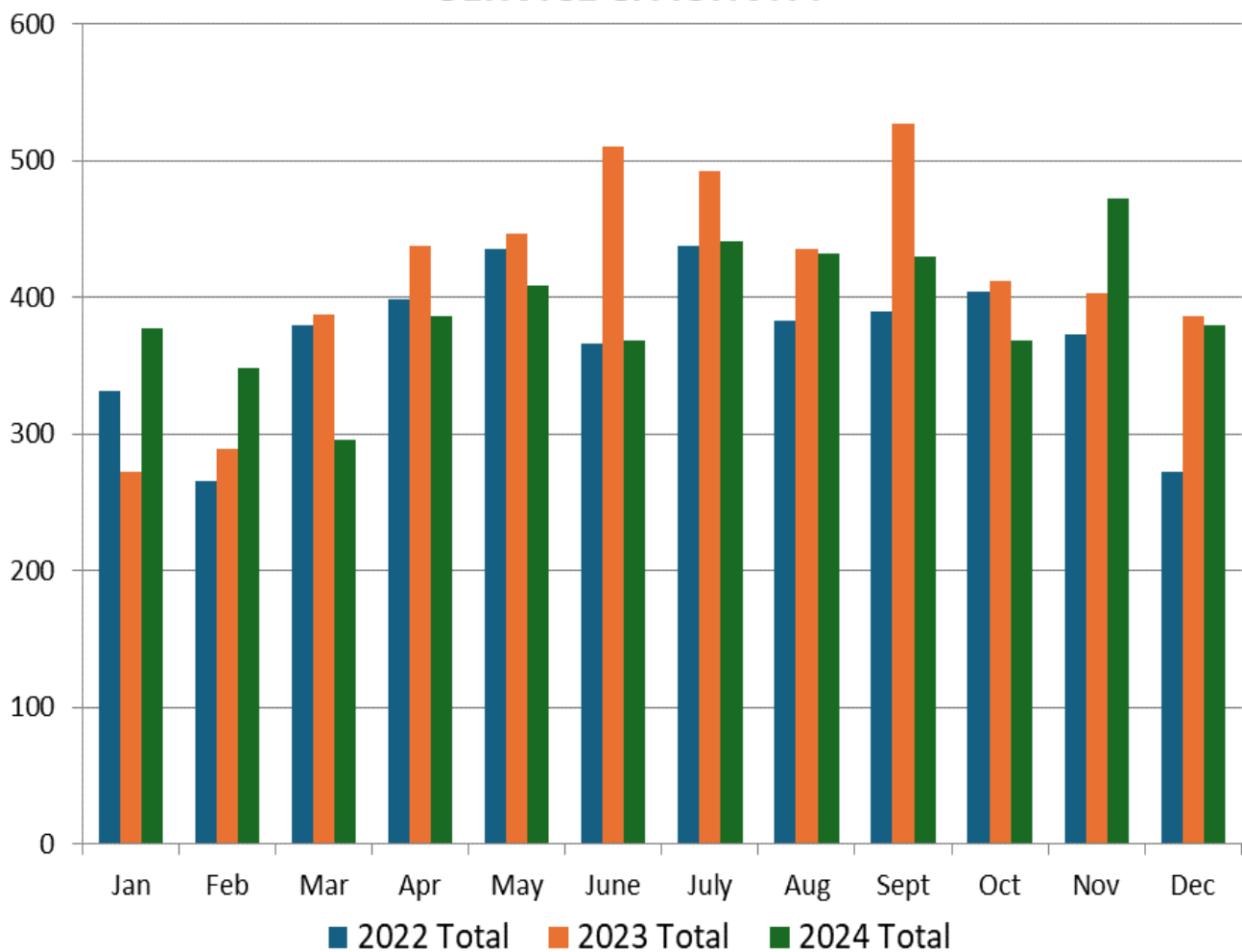


WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



2022-2024 Call Activity Report

THREE YEAR COMPARISON OF POLICE CALLS FOR SERVICE & ACTIVITY



**West Hennepin Public Safety Department call activity per month for the
past three years, 2022-2024**



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



ACTIVITY REPORT: Comparing 2023 versus 2024

Offense	2023	2024
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City Of Independence

Criminal	50	48
Traffic	1077	912
Part III	55	96
Part IV	391	375
Part V	1,365	1,353

Total City of Independence	2,938	2,784
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City Of Maple Plain

Criminal	37	31
Traffic	440	297
Part III	30	47
Part IV	313	325
Part V	557	624

Total City Of Maple Plain	1,377	1,324
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Grand Total Both Cities	4,315	4,108
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TZD	387	279
Other ICRs	295	320

Total ICR Reports	4,997	4,707
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How Received

Fax	113	65
In Person	162	169
Mail	4	12
Other	11	5
Phone	312	276
Radio	1,861	1,952
Visual	2,026	1,693
Email	191	181
Lobby Walk In	317	354
Total	4,997	4,707



WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



RETIREMENT – SERGEANT RICK DENNESON



Sergeant Richard Denneson has retired from West Hennepin Public Safety after an impressive career spanning 35 years and seven months with the department. He began his distinguished law enforcement journey in 1986 as a Community Service Officer (CSO) for the Orono Police Department. Two years later, he was hired as a police officer at West Hennepin Public Safety, where he was promoted to sergeant in 2014.

Throughout his career, Sgt. Denneson has held various roles, including patrol officer, Field Training Officer (FTO), Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) Coordinator, Use of Force Instructor, and President of the Hennepin County Traffic Safety Advisory Board. He also served as Police Reserve Coordinator, Citizens Academy Coordinator, and Mobile Field Force squad leader, among other positions.

Although Sgt. Denneson's law enforcement career has concluded at West Hennepin Public Safety, he will continue to serve the community in his new position as the Fire Chief of Maple Plain. Congratulations, Sgt. Denneson, on your well-deserved retirement from law enforcement!