

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



**West Hennepin
Public Safety**

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FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Mission

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

Core Values

Honor Courage Common Sense Respect & Dignity
Loyalty Fairness Trust



Population served: 5,498
 Area covered: 35.6 sq. mi.
 (Independence: 34.5 sq. mi.
 and Maple Plain: 1.1 sq. mi.)



Director's Message

To the Residents of Independence, Maple Plain, and the Greater West Hennepin Community,

I am honored to present the West Hennepin Public Safety Annual Report. Each year, this report offers an opportunity to highlight our accomplishments, address the challenges we have faced, and reaffirm the community values that guide our service.

Our mission remains straightforward: to protect and serve the citizens of Maple Plain and Independence in a professional and compassionate manner. The successes detailed in this report are not solely the work of our dedicated officers and staff; they result from the strong relationships we have built with the community. Through community engagement, partnerships with local organizations, and daily problem-solving by our officers, your support helps us keep our communities safe.


Over the past year, our team has shown exceptional dedication, responding effectively to emergencies while investing in proactive initiatives to enhance the quality of life. We continually strive to adhere to public safety best practices, enabling us to serve our communities with transparency and accountability.

Public safety is a shared responsibility, and we are grateful for your trust, involvement, and partnership. As we look to the future, we remain committed to strengthening our agency, supporting our staff, and deepening our connection with the community.

On a personal note, I want to thank you for the warm welcome and support you have shown me during my first year at West Hennepin. When I considered applying for this position last year, everything I heard and read indicated that it would be a great opportunity for me to use my skills and experience to enhance an already outstanding organization with a forward-thinking culture. My experiences over the past year have confirmed this belief.

On behalf of the entire West Hennepin Public Safety team, thank you for the privilege of serving you.

Respectfully,



Chief of Police
West Hennepin Public Safety

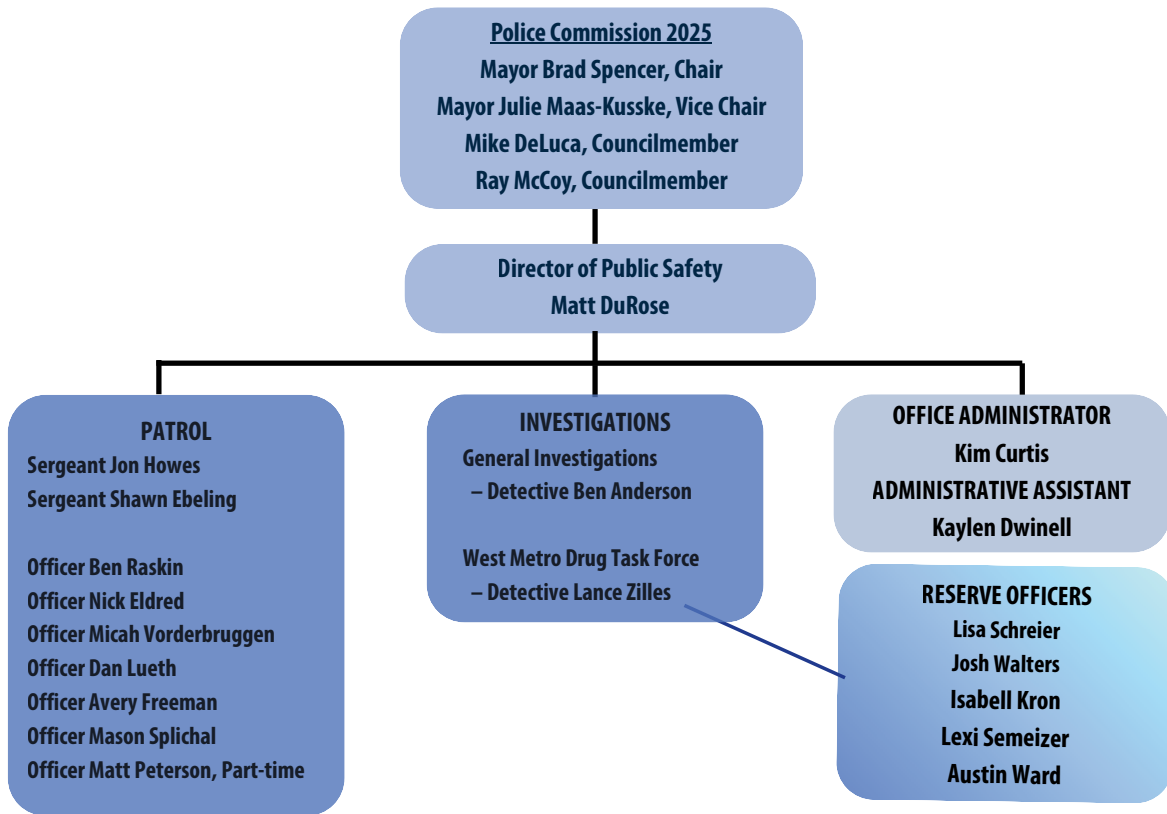


I want to express my gratitude to the community and our local partners for making my transition from the outside much easier. This past year would not have been as positive without the incredible staff at West Hennepin Public Safety. A special thanks to the team for welcoming me and helping me navigate my new surroundings. I look forward to more successes in the coming years!

Matt DuRose
Director of Public Safety



West Hennepin Public Safety



Meet Our Staff



Matt DuRose
Director
March 31, 2025



Jon Howes
Sergeant
May 23, 2005



Shawn Ebeling
Sergeant
March 1, 2016



Ben Anderson
Detective
June 16, 1997



Ben Raskin
Patrol Officer
March 7, 2005



Lance Zilles
Detective
November 10, 2014



Nick Eldred
Patrol Officer
February 22, 2023



Micah Vorderbruggen
Patrol Officer
August 1, 2024



Dan Lueth
Patrol Officer
March 1, 2025



Avery Freeman
Patrol Officer
March 20, 2025



Mason Splichal
Patrol Officer
October 16, 2025



Matt Peterson
Part-Time
Patrol Officer
April 4, 2025



Kim Curtis
Office Administrator
September 13, 1999



Kaylen Dwinell
Administrative
Assistant
August 8, 2022



Lisa Schreier
Reserve Officer
November 28, 1986



Josh Walters
Reserve Officer
February 3, 2020



Isabell Kron
Reserve Officer
October 19, 2023



Lexi Semeizer
Reserve Officer
June 17, 2024



Austin Ward
Reserve Officer
October 7, 2025



New Faces, Promotions, and Departures



Dan Lueth
Promoted to Full-time
Patrol Officer
March 1, 2025



Avery Freeman
Patrol Officer
March 20, 2025



Matt DuRose
Director
March 31, 2025



Matt Peterson
Part-time
Patrol Officer
April 4, 2025



Austin Ward
Reserve Officer
October 7, 2025



Mason Spichal
Patrol Officer
October 16, 2025



Gary Kroells
Director
Retired



Cody Thompson
Detective
Retired

Sworn Staff		Civilian Staff	
1	Director of Public Safety	2	Administrative Assistants
2	Sergeants	5	Reserve Officers (Volunteers)
1	Detective		
1	Drug Task Force Agent		
6	Patrol Officers		
1	Part-time Patrol Officer		



Patrol Division

The Patrol Division is the most visible function of West Hennepin Public Safety (WHPS). This division is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with two patrol sergeants and six patrol officers. They are supported by one part-time police officer and five reserve officers. The main objectives of the Patrol Division are to respond to calls for service, proactively patrol Maple Plain and Independence, and uphold the core principles of community policing, including problem-solving, community engagement, and building partnerships.

A significant focus of the patrol division, when not actively responding to calls, is proactive traffic enforcement and education. Through effective enforcement and education efforts, officers aim to make the roads safer for everyone. In 2025, WHPS conducted nearly 2,000 traffic stops, with most resulting in warnings. Among these stops, there were 34 arrests for impaired driving, a 50% increase from 2024.

In addition to traffic enforcement performed during shifts, WHPS receives funding from the Minnesota Office of Traffic Safety's Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) grant. TZD is a national highway safety strategy aimed at eliminating serious injuries and fatalities on our roadways. It brings together all stakeholders to emphasize that one death on our roads is too many, and we must collaborate to reduce annual roadway deaths to zero. TZD provides funding to agencies for extra enforcement and education addressing issues such as speeding, seat belt usage, distracted driving, and impaired driving.



Traffic Safety

Traffic safety is a top priority for West Hennepin Public Safety (WHPS), reflected in our commitment to maintaining secure roads and reducing crashes across our response area. Our dedicated staff actively engages in thorough traffic enforcement, meticulously monitoring areas known for high rates of collisions as well as locations flagged by community members as potential hazards.

In addition to our enforcement efforts, we prioritize public education, striving to inform and empower residents about the vital role each person plays in promoting traffic safety. We believe that a well-informed community is essential for fostering safer driving habits and practices.

Furthermore, we collaborate extensively with both local and state partners on initiatives designed to enhance road safety, including the Toward Zero Death (TZD) program, the Highway 12 Safety Coalition, and the Hennepin County Traffic Advisory Committee. Additionally, we participate in Traffic Incident Management Training, which equips our personnel with the necessary skills to respond effectively to traffic-related incidents, thereby ensuring the safety of all road users. Through these collective endeavors, we aim to create a safer driving environment for everyone in our community.



A driving course for people wearing "Fatal Vision" goggles - goggles that simulate alcohol impairment.



"Seatbelt Convincer", operated by MN Office of Traffic Safety at the Party in the Park, Veterans Memorial Park

Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) is the state's cornerstone traffic safety program, employing an interdisciplinary approach to reducing traffic crashes, injuries, and deaths on Minnesota roads.

The TZD program focuses on four major areas for communities working to reduce traffic injuries and fatalities:

- **Education:** Giving drivers the knowledge they need to avoid hazardous driving practices and choose responsible behavior.
- **Emergency Medical & Trauma Services:** providing fast, efficient emergency medical and trauma services to reduce fatalities and serious injuries whenever a crash does occur.
- **Enforcement:** Ensuring compliance with traffic laws to change driver behavior and reduce unsafe driving practices
- **Engineering:** Changing the roadway--with cable median barriers, signage, the roadside, and more--to make travel safer.



Calls For Service and Crime Statistics

Group A Offenses, 2020 - 2025

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Incidents	5224	4824	4541	5007	4712	5496
Group A Offenses*						
Assault	10	6	17	10	12	13
Agg Assault	0	0	0	1	3	4
Simple Assault	6	5	9	4	7	5
Intimidation	4	1	8	5	2	4
Burglary	9	7	5	1	1	3
Counterfeit/Forgery	0	1	2	0	1	5
Damage to Property	3	6	15	5	12	9
Drug Violations	9	4	10	7	8	3
Drug Equip Violations	5	1	6	0	0	0
Embezzlement	0	1	2	0	0	1
Extortion	0	0	0	2	0	1
Fraud	4	5	15	5	5	15
Swindle	1	2	6	3	4	10
Credit Card	1	1	5	1	0	1
Impersonation	0	1	0	1	0	0
Identity Theft	2	1	4	0	1	3
Hacking	0	0	0	0	0	1
Homicide	0	0	0	0	0	1
Murder	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manslaughter	0	0	0	0	0	1
Human Trafficking	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kidnapping	0	0	0	0	0	0
Theft	22	28	23	10	17	22
Shoplifting	0	0	1	1	1	2
From Building	4	9	6	0	2	4
From Motor Vehicle	8	11	6	4	5	3
Of MV parts	3	5	1	5	2	2
All other	7	3	9	0	7	11
Motor Vehicle Theft	2	2	8	1	0	2
Pornography	0	0	0	0	0	1
Robbery	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sex offenses	0	3	2	0	3	0
Forcible Rape	0	0	2	0	2	0
Sodomy	0	1	0	0	0	0
Forcible fondling	0	2	0	0	1	0
Stolen Property	0	0	2	7	0	1
Weapon law violations	1	1	4	4	1	3
Total Group A Offenses	65	65	111	52	60	81

*Group A offense types with 0 reported since 2020: Animal Cruelty, Arson, Bribery, Welfare Fraud, Wire Fraud, Gambling, Homicide, Human Trafficking, Kidnapping, Pocket Picking, Purse Snatching, Theft from Coin Machine, Prostitution, Sex Offense w/ an object. (These have been removed from the chart for formatting purposes.)



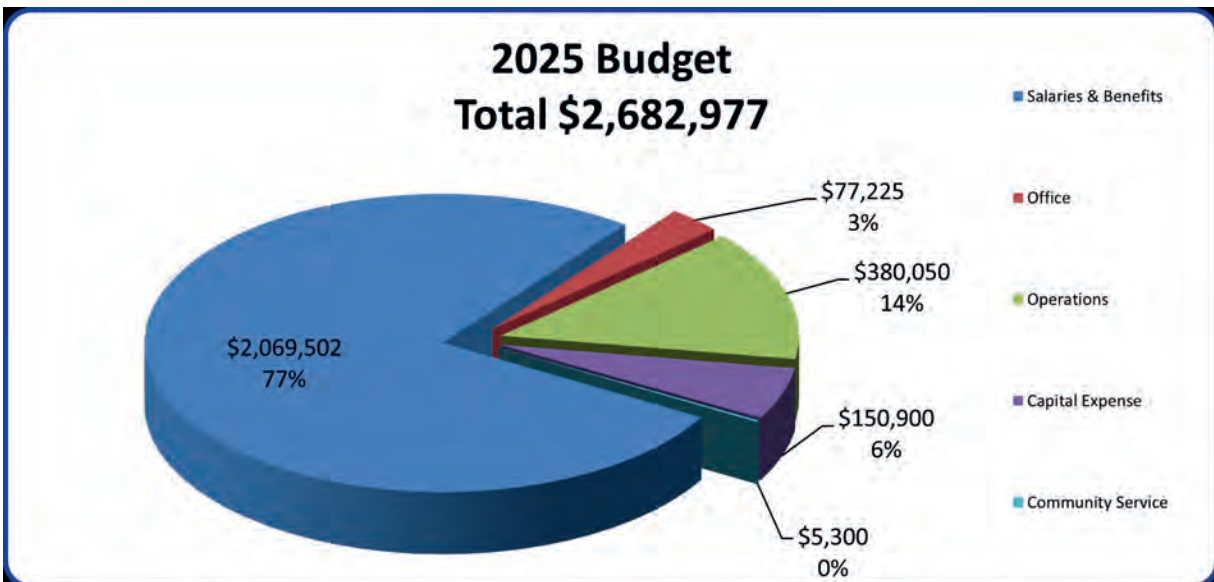
Calls For Service and Crime Statistics

GROUP B OFFENSES, 2020 - 2025

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Curfew	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disorderly Conduct	3	0	1	1	1	0
DWI	20	21	20	20	22	34
Family offenses, nonviolent	0	0	0	0	1	0
Liquor law violations	5	6	2	1	4	8
Runaway	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trespassing	1	0	1	0	1	3
All Other	1	2	3	2	5	8
Total Group B Offenses	30	29	27	24	34	53

CRIME RATE PER 100,000, 2020 - 2025

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Crime Rate (per 100k)	1,084	1,092	2,090	991	1,148	1,521
Cleared by Arrest	30	14	27	20	26	26
Exceptional Clear	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clearance Rate	46%	22%	24%	38%	43%	32%
Involve under 18	0	1	0	0	0	0
Population	5,995	5,955	5,311	5,245	5,225	5,225



The West Hennepin Public Safety budget is broken down into five spending categories, as noted above, with personnel costs accounting for approximately 77% of total budget spending. Revenue is generated from a variety of sources, with 90% coming from Maple Plain and Independence. Other sources of revenue include grants, permit/license fees, statutory reimbursements, and state aid.



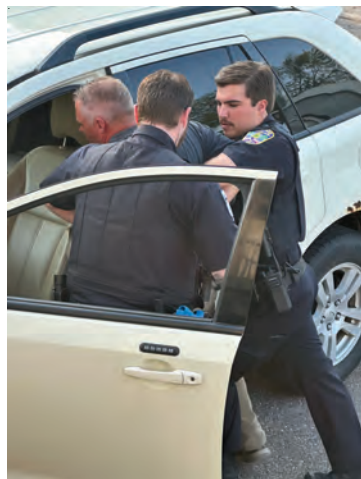
Training

West Hennepin Public Safety (WHPS) places a strong emphasis on professional training to ensure officers remain prepared to serve the communities of Maple Plain and Independence with professionalism, safety, and accountability. Law enforcement is a constantly evolving profession, requiring officers to remain current on legal updates, emerging threats, technology, and best practices in public safety.

Throughout 2025, WHPS officers participated in a wide range of training programs designed to strengthen their skills in critical areas such as decision-making, de-escalation, emergency response and investigative techniques. These trainings help ensure officers are equipped to handle complex and rapidly changing situations while maintaining a strong commitment to community-focused policing.

Much of the department's training is conducted in-house by certified instructors within the agency, allowing officers to train together in realistic scenarios tailored to the needs of our community. Department instructors provide instruction in areas such as:

- Defensive tactics and use of force decision-making
- Firearms and weapons proficiency
- De-escalation and communication techniques
- Emergency medical response and life-saving equipment
- DWI detection and impaired driving investigations



In addition to internal training, WHPS officers regularly attend specialized courses offered by regional, state, and national training organizations. These courses cover topics such as:

- Emergency vehicle operations and pursuit management
- Search and seizure law and constitutional updates
- Mental health response and crisis intervention
- Investigative techniques and evidence management
- Leadership development and supervisory training

All training completed by WHPS officers meets or exceeds the requirements established by the Minnesota Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board, which regulates law enforcement certification and continuing education statewide.

Officers routinely complete training hours well beyond the minimum required to maintain their professional licensure.

Investing in training strengthens the department's ability to provide high-quality service, enhances officer safety, and reinforces the department's commitment to professionalism and accountability. By continually developing skills and knowledge, WHPS officers remain prepared to respond effectively to the diverse needs of the communities we serve.



Investigator's Report

For much of 2025, Detective Cody Thompson conducted follow-up, reviewed and prepared cases for charging, and completed other investigative-related duties. With Detective Thompson retiring in the fall, Officer Ben Anderson replaced him and assumed the detective responsibilities in late 2025. Some examples of the types of cases investigated this year include domestic abuse, assault, theft, child/adult protection, and burglaries. Detectives also review completed patrol officer reports and prepare them for charging by the City or County Attorney.



The most common and in-depth investigation was scams and swindles. Throughout the year, several citizens reported that scammers had contacted them by phone or online, requesting payment for various reasons. The requested payment could be for the sale of an item, an investment, or an alleged debt. These cases are often very difficult to investigate because they involve suspects in other states or countries. Protect yourself from these scammers and call the police if you believe someone is trying to take your hard-earned money from you!



This year, WHPS experienced three significant incidents that required extensive follow-up that came after professional and compassionate responses at the time of the call.

- On February 26, WHPS responded to a fatal crash on County Road 6 in Independence that tragically claimed the life of an 11-year-old girl while leaving others severely injured. After a thorough investigation, charges were submitted to the Hennepin County Attorney's Office. In August, a 19-year-old man from St. Paul was charged with Criminal Vehicular Homicide for his role in the crash. In April of 2026, he plead guilty to the charge and was sentenced to 44 months in prison.
- On November 3, WHPS responded to an armed robbery on Meadow Lane in Maple Plain. A 17-year-old female was taken into custody for the robbery after several pieces of evidence, including a firearm, were collected at the scene. The female was subsequently charged by the Hennepin County Attorney with Simple Robbery.
- On December 27, WHPS responded to reported shots fired on Meadow Lane in Maple Plain. Several pieces of evidence were collected during this investigation, that remains open and active. No one was injured during the shooting.



West Metro Drug Task Force

The West Metro Drug Task Force (WMDTF) is a multi-jurisdictional task force, established in 2003 by the founding agencies of West Hennepin Public Safety, Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, Medina Police, Minnetrista Public Safety, and the Orono Police Department. Task force membership has since grown to include Edina Police, Eden Prairie Police, Hopkins Police, Minnetonka Police, St Louis Park Police, South Lake Minnetonka Police, and Richfield Police. West Hennepin Public Safety (WHPS) has one detective assigned to the WMDTF.

Joining the WMDTF strengthens West Hennepin Public Safety's resources, deepens our expertise, and improves coordination in fighting drug-related crime. By partnering with neighboring agencies, WHPS gains access to specialized investigators, intelligence-sharing networks, and advanced tools that would be difficult to maintain independently. This collaboration improves the department's ability to identify drug trends, disrupt trafficking operations, and respond quickly to emerging threats. Ultimately, participation in the task force increases community safety, strengthens regional partnerships, and ensures a more efficient and effective approach to addressing narcotics-related issues in the West Hennepin area.

2025 West Metro Drug Task Force seizures by the numbers:

- 10,000 grams of cocaine
- 90,000 grams of methamphetamine
- 8,000 grams of fentanyl
- 1,600 fentanyl pills
- 5,000 grams of psilocybin mushrooms
- 4,500 MDMA pills (ecstasy)
- 50 firearms

In addition, WMDTF detectives executed over 100 search warrants and 106 administrative warrants while making 179 arrests.

In June of 2025, Detective Zilles was a co-case agent in charge of a narcotics investigation in the City of Richfield. Detective Zilles identified a narcotics dealer who was selling large quantities of fentanyl. During this investigation, the West Metro Drug Task Force executed a search warrant in the City of Richfield and located over 2000 grams of fentanyl and a large quantity of U.S. currency suspected to have been obtained from drug proceeds. The suspect in this case was identified as a known gang member of the "Family Mob" street gang. The suspect has been federally indicted by the FBI in connection with this case.

In October of 2025, Detective Zilles was a co-case agent in charge of a narcotics investigation in the City of St. Louis Park. Detective Zilles received information on a narcotics dealer who was selling pounds of methamphetamine. During this investigation, Detective Zilles was able to identify the suspect and the location where he was likely storing the narcotics. The WMDTF executed a search warrant at an apartment in the City of St. Louis Park and located approximately 144 pounds of methamphetamine. Formal charges have been filed against the suspect in this case, and the case is currently pending in the court system.



Administration and Records Division

The Administration and Records Division of West Hennepin Public Safety is comprised of an office administrator and an administrative assistant with individual responsibilities. Kim Curtis is the Office Administrator/ Bookkeeper, Human Resources (HR) & Benefits Coordinator, and recording secretary. Kaylen Dwinell is the Administrative Assistant/Terminal Agency Coordinator (TAC) and is the primary manager for the Records Division, which includes collecting and reporting crime data and submitting state-mandated records, and she also maintains the property and evidence room. Together, they provide a range of administrative and support services, including:

- Public data requests, issuing burn permits, permit to purchase applications, etc.
- Department bookkeeping: payroll, HR & benefits coordination, accounts payable/receivable, 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.
- Writing weekly media reports and press releases for local newspapers.
- Storage, retrieval, and disposal of records; completing local background checks.
- Criminal History Records Management.
- Ensure compliance and facilitate annual audits.

As part of their duties, in 2025, the administrative assistants and officers issued/handled:

Permits and Checks for 2025	
Record checks	66
Burn Permits	223
Firearm Permit to Carry Data Request	81
Firearm Permit to Purchase Requests	42
Non-Criminal Fingerprint Requests	19
Liquor License Checks	8



Reserve Officer Program

Reserve officers are dedicated civilian volunteers who work alongside sworn police officers and offer invaluable support services to the residents of Maple Plain and Independence. West Hennepin Public Safety (WHPS) reserve officers play a vital role in enhancing police services by accompanying police officers on patrol and assisting on calls for service, managing traffic at events and crashes, ensuring public safety during community events, transporting offenders, conducting residence and business checks, and responding to emergencies and crises. Reserve officers contribute to WHPS crime-prevention initiatives and participate in our popular community events.

Detective Lance Zilles assumed leadership of the Reserve Unit in January of 2025, succeeding Officer Ben Anderson, who stepped down after 11 years. Officer Anderson's leadership was extremely valued and appreciated by the reserve officers and the department, and his contribution will be missed.

In 2025, WHPS reserve officers contributed 1,153 hours of volunteer service to the Cities of Maple Plain and Independence. The national value of volunteer hours in 2025 is \$34.79 per hour, which translates to \$40,113 donated to WHPS.

Some highlights of the Reserves for the 2025 calendar year include the following:

- Austin Ward joined the WHPS Reserve program and is currently in field training.
- Reserve Officer Isabell Kron attended the Hennepin County Reserve Academy, an 8-week-long program that teaches the fundamentals of reserve officer functions and tactics.
- Reserves assisted with many public safety and community events throughout the year and hosted View Santa in December of 2025. The View Santa event raised \$805 and 1,398 pounds of food, which were donated to the Westonka Community Food Shelf.
- Reserve officers responded to multiple call-outs throughout the calendar year on short notice and assisted with critical incidents and subjects who had been arrested.

The West Hennepin Reserve Program and reserve officers are an invaluable resource to the department, and their dedication to West Hennepin Public Safety in 2025 was a key component to the success and completion to investigations, patrol operations and resolution to critical incidents.

WHPS is always looking to welcome new volunteer reserve officers. For more information on becoming a reserve officer, go to our website at westhennepin.com/reserves or call our office at 763-479-0500. Interested persons can obtain an application in person at the West Hennepin Public Safety office at 1918 County Road 90, or by sending an email request to westhennepin@westhennepin.com.



View Santa 2025

The West Hennepin Public Safety Department sponsored the 45th Annual View Santa on Saturday, December 6th, 2025. Officers and reserves escorted Santa in his sleigh around parts of Maple Plain and Independence, handing out small bags with candy and small toys to children of all ages that came to see and visit Santa. Along the way, the department also collected \$805 in cash donations and 1,398 pounds of non-perishable food and other donations for the Westonka Community Food Shelf.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

THE WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY RESERVES ARE SPONSORING THE 45th ANNUAL "VIEW SANTA" PROGRAM. IT WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6th, 2025. THE RESERVES WILL ALSO COLLECT NONPERISHABLE FOOD DONATIONS FOR LOCAL FOOD SHELVES.

CHECK THE TIMES CAREFULLY AS THEY HAVE CHANGED, ESPECIALLY AT THE END OF THE ROUTE.

VISIT WITH SANTA, TAKE PHOTOS, AND ENJOY REFRESHMENTS AT THE INDEPENDENCE CITY HALL ATRIUM (1920 COUNTY ROAD 90) FROM 3:30 TO 4:15 P.M. OR AT VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK (1664 BUDD AVENUE, MAPLE PLAIN) FROM 4:45 TO 5:30 P.M., OR SEE SANTA ON HIS ROUTE THROUGH TOWN.

SANTA'S ROUTE AND SCHEDULE ARE:

3:30-4:15 p.m. INDEPENDENCE CITY HALL	5:35 p.m. INDEPENDENCE ST HOWARD AVE. DRAKE STREET PERKINS LANE.	6:05 p.m. GATEWAY BLVD. HOWARD AVE. (via strip mall parking lot)	6:20 p.m. MAIN ST. EAST BUDD AVE BRYANTWOOD AVE JOYCE ST. BRYANT ST.	6:50 p.m. MAIN ST. WEST HALGREN RD HAMILTON HILLS DEV.
4:25 p.m. PAGENKOPF RD 4:30 at BECKER RD 4:35 at INDEPENDENCE RD 4:40 at NORTH BUDD AVE	5:40 p.m. INDEPENDENCE ST. BAKER PARK RD.	HWY 12 FRONTAGE RD. BOUNDARY AVE	6:40 p.m. PRAIRIELAND AVE JOYCE ST. WYMAN AVE PIONEER AVE	7:20 p.m. HALGREN RD. PARKVIEW RD. RAINBOW AVE MAIN ST. WEST PARKVIEW RD THREE OAKS AVE
4:45-5:30 p.m. VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK	5:50 p.m. GATEWAY BLVD (HAVEN HOMES)	6:15 P.M. OAK ST. HOWARD AVE		

THESE TIMES ARE APPROXIMATE.



VIEW SANTA



Regional Partnerships

West Hennepin participates in a number of regional partnerships to deliver services to our communities and to support our partners in theirs. Working with our key partners improves our ability to respond to incidents in our area and to assist other agencies in theirs. These regional partnerships include:

- **Lake Minnetonka Special Weapons and Tactics**

This group is a multi-agency SWAT team formed in 2008 to coordinate local efforts to develop and provide a joint response to critical incidents or high-risk situations in our jurisdictions where there is a risk of criminal violence. Member agencies include West Hennepin, Minnetrista Police Department, Orono Police Department, South Lake Minnetonka Police Department, and Wayzata Police Department. Members of the team receive training each year on new techniques and tactics to bring potentially dangerous situations to a safe resolution for all involved.

- **Lakes Area Planning Group**

This group exists in the Lake Minnetonka area to bring emergency managers and other local partners together to plan for disasters that may happen in our communities. The group meets regularly and works directly with Hennepin County on emergency management planning.

- **Public Order Group (Formerly Mobile Field Force)**

West Hennepin is a member agency of West Command with two officers assigned to the team. They receive training specific to public order operations to work with incident commands to safely and effectively restore order.

West Hennepin staff are also regular attendees and members of the West Hennepin Chamber of Commerce, Delano Safe Schools, the Highway 12 Safety Coalition, and the Orono Healthy Youth Coalition.



Engagement and Events



Back the Blue Event, August 4th, in Delano



Back the Blue Event, August 4th, in Delano



McGarry's Golf Scramble, September 15th



Battle of the Badges, August 28th



Night to Unite, August 5th



Christmas carolers visiting WHPS, December 19th



Reserve Schreier and Officers Avery Freeman and Nick Eldred delivered toys to KARE11 for the Toys for Tots initiative.



Achievements

We are proud to recognize the achievements and outstanding performance of the following members of West Hennepin Public Safety

DRUG RECOGNITION EXPERT CERTIFICATION

Officer Nick Eldred was certified as a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE). A DRE is a specially trained officer who can identify drivers impaired by drugs other than alcohol. Officer Eldred spent several weeks training to earn this important certification, which helps make our roads safer by removing dangerous, impaired drivers who might otherwise go undetected.

CHILD PASSENGER SEAT SAFETY TECHNICIAN

Officer Dan Lueth was certified as a Child Passenger Seat Safety Technician. Officer Lueth has been trained in how to ensure that children are riding safely in vehicles. He can provide subject matter expertise to the community through education on how to properly install car seats and when to transition children to the next level of seating.

Recognition and Commendations



Officer Nick Eldred was recognized by the Law Enforcement Memorial Association for his 15 years of standing guard at the state memorial in St. Paul. The memorial stands as a symbol of recognition of fallen police officers in the State of Minnesota.

The safest cities in Minnesota in 2025

- #1 Minnetonka
- #2 West Hennepin
- #3 Clarendon
- #4 South Lake Minnetonka
- #5 La Crescent
- #6 Lonsdale
- #7 Hopkins
- #8 Big Lake
- #9 New Ulm
- #10 Minnetrista
- #11 New Prague
- #12 Rosemount
- #13 Lind Lake
- #14 Dayton
- #15 East Grand Forks
- #16 North Branch
- #17 Buffalo
- #18 Lake City
- #19 Chaska
- #20 St. James

West Hennepin Public Safety was recognized as the #2 safest city in the State of Minnesota.

AWARDS & COMMENDATIONS:



Officer Ben Anderson received the **Award of Excellence** recognizing his 11 years and many contributions to the Reserve Program as Coordinator.



Sergeant Ebeling, Officers Raskin and Freeman, and Detective Zilles received **Commendations** for their outstanding performance and teamwork during an armed robbery investigation in Maple Plain.

YEARS OF SERVICE:



5 years
**Reserve Officer
Josh Walters**



20 years
**Patrol Officer
Ben Raskin**



20 years
**Patrol Sergeant
Jon Howes**



LUCAS Device Grant



West Hennepin Public Safety received a LUCAS mechanical CPR device through a statewide public safety grant in 2025.

On August 27th, Sergeant Ebeling and Officer Vorderbruggen attended a training session in the City of Independence. During this session, they learned how to use the LUCAS device and accepted its delivery. The device is valued at about \$24,000, and our agency received it at no cost.

This lifesaving equipment is part of a pilot project funded by the Helmsley Charitable Trust and the University of Minnesota's Center for Resuscitation Medicine. The goal of the project is to improve survival rates for cardiac arrest in rural and underserved areas by giving law enforcement advanced tools for emergency care.

For groups like West Hennepin Public Safety, where one officer often arrives first at the scene and emergency medical services may take time to respond, the LUCAS device is crucial. It provides consistent, high-quality chest compressions automatically. This allows our officers to do CPR without interruption while managing other important parts of the emergency.

We appreciate this chance to improve our emergency response and outcomes for the City of Maple Plain and the City of Independence.

Thank you to the Helmsley Charitable Trust and the University of Minnesota Center for Resuscitation Medicine for supporting rural public safety.



"Bit of Grace" Sensory Kits



A heartfelt thank you to **Bit of Grace** for stopping by West Hennepin to present their incredible Sensory Emergency Kit!

These thoughtfully curated bags are designed to support individuals with sensory sensitivities during moments of crisis or high stress. Filled with calming tools and comfort items, they are a powerful resource for our officers as they continue to serve with compassion and care.



We're proud to partner with organizations like **Bit of Grace** who help us better connect with and support every member of our community. Together, we're making sure everyone feels seen, safe, and supported.

To donate, sponsor, or get more information, please visit their website at <https://www.bitofgrace.org/our-vision>



2025 Photo Album



2025 Photo Album



Honoring West Hennepin Public Safety
Director Gary Kroells



After 31 years of dedicated service in law enforcement, West Hennepin Public Safety Director Gary Kroells will be retiring. We can't thank him enough for his service to the communities of Maple Plain and Independence. We will be hosting an open house to celebrate his many accomplishments.

Tuesday, April 22nd, 2025
4:00 - 6:00 P.M.

Award Presentation
5:30 P.M.

Independence City Hall
1570 County Road 90
Independence, MN 55128



2025 Photo Album



Retirement of Director Gary Kroells



After 31 years of dedicated service in law enforcement, Director Gary Kroells retired in April 2025. Director Kroells joined the West Hennepin organization in 1996 and held various roles throughout his career. He was promoted to Sergeant in 2004 and became Director in 2014. Throughout his tenure, Director Kroells was active in promoting traffic safety and played a key role in establishing the Highway 12 Safety Coalition. Under his leadership, several safety improvements were implemented along the corridor, resulting in saved lives. We would like to express our gratitude to Director Kroells for his leadership and wish him all the best in his retirement!



Looking Ahead to 2026

As we look toward 2026, we remain committed to the principles of community policing, and we are eager to connect more deeply with the communities we serve. Some of our additional priorities and initiatives include:

- Retaining current staff and filling any upcoming vacancies
- Hosting our first “Cops and Bobbers” fishing event
- Expanding our Polar Plunge team
- Practicing responsible and reasonable budgeting
- Achieving department accreditation
- Continuing collaboration with local partners to secure funding for essential safety improvements on Highway 12 through Independence.

