



2022

*Let's Back the Blue*

ANNUAL REPORT



*Building Strong Bonds*



## Our Mission

Let's Back the Blue encourages support and appreciation for our law enforcement and their efforts, and endeavors to help strengthen bonds between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

## Our Vision

Let's Back the Blue believes the efforts of law enforcement are most successful when there is support from the local community. Our vision, therefore, is a county in which each law enforcement officer, correctional officer, dispatcher, and wildlife officer feels the full support, respect, and appreciation of residents in Auglaize County through visible signs of support as well as through equipment and program grants, helping to further a more positive and safe environment for all.



## Table of Contents

2. Mission and Vision
3. Director's Message
4. The Financial Picture
5. Fundraising Efforts
6. "Got Their Six!" Raffle
7. Thankful For Our Donors!
8. Law Enforcement Grant Fund
9. Police Academy Scholarships
10. Benevolent Fund
11. Pathways for Involvement
12. Light Ohio Blue
13. Blood Drives and More
14. Looking Ahead to 2023
15. With Great Appreciation
16. Law Enforcement Agencies
19. Board of Directors
20. 2022 U.S. Law Enforcement  
Line of Duty Deaths

I want to personally thank *Let's Back the Blue* of Auglaize County for their efforts to promote support for law enforcement. I also want to thank the citizens of Auglaize County for their generous and overwhelming support. *Let's Back the Blue* has provided resources to local law enforcement agencies which directly correlate to safer communities. The purpose of law enforcement agencies is to provide professional law enforcement services to keep communities safe. *Let's Back the Blue* has played an integral part in assisting law enforcement agencies of Auglaize County with public safety. I am truly blessed to serve the citizens of Auglaize County and work alongside the *Let's Back the Blue* program.

*Lieutenant John Westerfield*

## ADVISORY PANEL

### WAPAKONETA

Mayor Steve Henderson  
Chief Cal Schneider  
Supt. Of Schools  
Aaron Rex

### ST. MARYS

Mayor Patrick McGowan  
Chief Jake Sutton  
Supt. Of Schools  
Bill Ruane

### WAYNESFIELD

Mayor Rodney Luma  
Chief Nathan Motter  
Supt. Of Schools  
Tim Pence

### CRIDERSVILLE

Mayor Rick Walls  
Chief Nathan Fried

### NEW KNOXVILLE

Mayor Keith Leffel  
Chief Chris McKinney  
Supt. Of Schools  
Kim Waterman

### NEW BREMEN

Mayor Robert Parker  
Chief Mike Skinner  
Supt. Of Schools  
Jason Schrader

### MINSTER

Mayor Dennis Kitzmiller  
Chief David Friend  
Supt. Of Schools  
Josh Meyer

### APOLLO CAREER CNTR.

Supt. Keith Horner

### AUGLAIZE CO. SHERIFF

Sheriff Mike Vorhees

### OSHP WAPAK POST

Lt. John Westerfield

### AUGLAIZE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

David Bambauer  
Doug Spencer  
John Bergman

### CHAMBERS OF COM.

Wapakoneta Area  
Jackie Martell  
Southwestern Auglaize  
Sara Topp  
St. Marys  
Angie Tangeman

### EXEC. DIRECTOR

Anne Niemeyer

## Let's Back the Blue

*Bringing law enforcement and the communities they serve together by encouraging respect, support and appreciation of law enforcement and their efforts.*



Dear Friend of Law Enforcement,

It's hard to believe *Let's Back the Blue* celebrated its **third** birthday in March of 2023! Starting out with a one-page list of ideas to encourage community support for law enforcement, we grew from a few interested individuals to a board of eight with a large cadre of volunteers. Your support in these three years has enabled us to achieve much, including:

- ☑ **Approval of over \$123,000 in grants** for area law enforcement needs;
- ☑ Creation of a **Benevolent Fund** for Ohio officers suffering line of duty deaths, sadly used three times in 2022, as well as Auglaize County officers who sustain critical line of duty injuries;
- ☑ Scholarships for **Auglaize County residents** who attend Peace Officer Training Academies at Wright State University - Lake Campus, Rhodes State University, and Apollo Career Center;
- ☑ Support of law enforcement community endeavors including **National Night Out** organized by the Wapakoneta Police Department, the Auglaize County **DARE** program, the county-wide law enforcement **Shop With the Blue** program for children in need, and the **Auglaize County Fair**;
- ☑ Support of community needs through **blood drives and canned food drives**;
- ☑ Promotion of the great **Light Ohio Blue** campaign in **Auglaize County** to show a visible sign of support for our law enforcement.

These successful undertakings and many more have kept us busy, and we will continue to work to ensure each law enforcement officer, correctional officer, dispatcher, and wildlife officer feels the full support, respect, and appreciation of residents in Auglaize County.

As always, we encourage you to change out your exterior lights to blue in your home and/or business as a show of support to those committed to keeping our county a safe place to live and raise our families, and to honor those who have died in the line of duty.

Let's Back the Blue TOGETHER!

Anne Niemeyer  
Executive Director

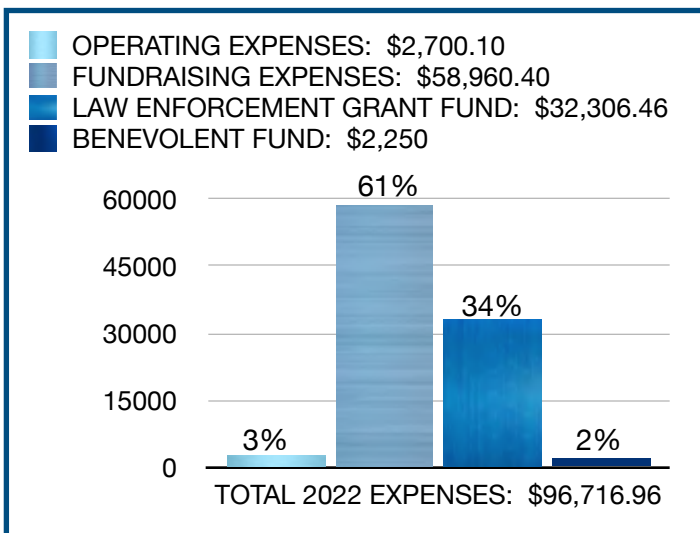
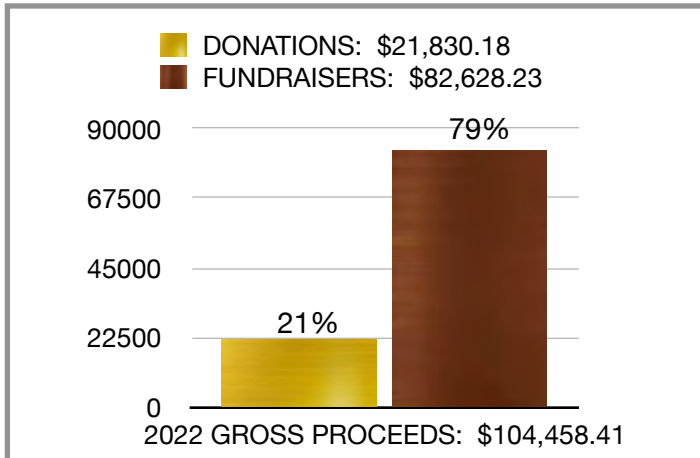
**Let's Back the Blue - P.O. Box 1656 - Wapakoneta, OH 45895 - 419-234-6414**  
**Visit us at: <http://letsbacktheblue.org> - [letsbacktheblue2020@gmail.com](mailto:letsbacktheblue2020@gmail.com)**



# The Financial Picture

Let's Back the Blue is grateful for every dollar received, striving to be financially responsible stewards of our funds. In the three years we've operated, we are proud to have been able to **consistently direct 97-98% of proceeds to our mission**. The response from our communities has enabled us to continue to grow our funds, increase community participation, and benefit our law enforcement as needed.

**Three years in a row, over 97% of proceeds has gone directly to furthering our mission**



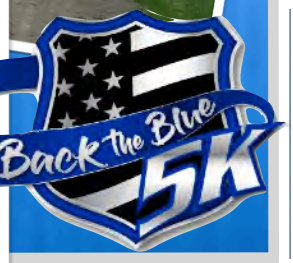
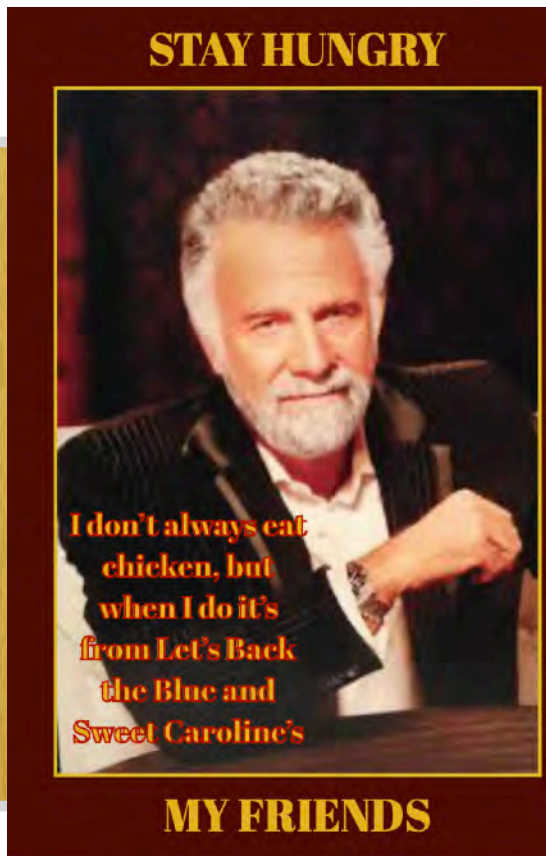
I would like to take a moment and express our gratitude to the “Let’s Back the Blue” committee and its organization. The support that our agency has seen due to their efforts has been phenomenal... While the visible support has been the biggest blessing from the “Let’s Back the Blue” organization, I would be remiss if I did not mention the equipment that the committee has purchased for our department, as well as the other departments in our county. With budgets being tight and what is expected of police officers being increased, there is always a gap that we can never seem to close. With their financial support our agency has been able to purchase equipment that has helped to close that gap and help our officers to better protect our community.

— *With sincere gratitude, Wapakoneta Chief Calvin Schneider, Wapakoneta Police Department*



# Fundraising Efforts

Raising funds is an ongoing activity at *Let's Back the Blue*, and we are always looking for new ways to rise to the challenge. In 2022, business and industry purchased **chicken dinners** multiple times, area community foundations sent **donations**, supporters turned out for our Annual **5k and Little Cop 1-Miler**, many businesses became **raffle partners**, **community service groups and individuals** made contributions, and shoppers dropped money in our **donation boxes** around the county. Spreading the word is a constant and we are so grateful for the community response!



I want to commend *Let's Back the Blue* for providing a positive impact on the Minster Community. The police officers observed more blue lights than ever before which created a boost in their morale knowing that the community is behind them.

*Chief David Friend, Minster Police Department*



# "Got Their Six!" Raffle

Our biggest fundraiser of the year, "Got Their Six!" Is a raffle that packs a punch. With 2,000 tickets available at \$50 each, **100% of the proceeds from this annual event go directly into our Law Enforcement Grant Fund and toward our police training academy scholarships.** We are deeply indebted to and thankful for each and every prize partner whose full or partial sponsorship allows us to offer so many great prizes. We are also grateful for our growing team of ticket sellers and purchasers. Without our prize partners, sellers, and ticket buyers we would not have been able to proceed with "Got Their Six!"

## Get Your "Got Their Six" Raffle Tickets!

**100% OF PROCEEDS benefit Auglaize County Law Enforcement Agencies through our Law Enforcement Grant Fund, police academy scholarships for Auglaize County residents, and equipment purchases.**

### For Tickets:

Check our FB page for businesses selling tickets, email us at [letsbacktheblue@bright.net](mailto:letsbacktheblue@bright.net), purchase directly from our website [www.letsbacktheblue.org](http://www.letsbacktheblue.org) or text 419-234-6414



**Please Support Our Raffle Partners!**

*AmVets Post #333  
Anytime Fitness - Wapak  
Auglaize Embroidery  
Autobahn Collision Center  
Bambauer Fertilizer & Seed  
Binkley Land Surveying  
Binkley Real Estate  
Bud's Chevrolet Buick  
Daniel Schenking, Aflec Ins.  
Fowler's TV*

*G.A. Wintzer & Son  
Gilberg Furniture  
Jimmy Seger State Farm Ins.  
Kah Meats  
Harrod Insurance Agency  
KISS ABC Seamless Siding  
Lowe's Wapakoneta  
Lowe's Lima  
Marathon - Wapakoneta  
Merritt Real Estate*

*Midway Trailer  
Midwest Shooting Center  
Moran Refrigeration  
Perry's Hearing & Air Conditioning  
RJ Burke Insurance Agency  
Schultz Family Farms  
Stroh, Johnson & Company  
Telephone Service Company  
West Ohio True Value Hardware  
Wagner's IGA*

I cannot overstate how much of an impact *Let's Back the Blue* has had for our department and community. They have been instrumental financially in areas where we did not budget enough, but more importantly, feeling appreciated by our community is so beneficial to our officers!

*Chief Jacob Sutton - St. Marys Police Department*



# Thankful For Our Donors!

A charitable non-profit can work very hard holding fundraisers - which we do! - but our donors are exceptionally treasured! Each time an envelope arrives in the mail with a check from a donor it not only helps us to reach our annual goals but also provides great encouragement to keep moving forward. Donors, you are our lifeblood in more ways than one and are **GREATLY APPRECIATED!**

In addition to monetary donations, we were helped substantially by the donation of goods and services, saving us in some cases over \$2,000 per donor. Such **in-kind donations** added up to great savings for *Let's Back the Blue*, and are extremely important to our ability to continue of grants, scholarships, and monetary support of law enforcement community initiatives. These donations are also **GREATLY APPRECIATED**, and are included below with our monetary donors.

## **DIAMOND DONOR - \$5,000+**

**WAPAKONETA AMVETS  
POST #333**

## **PLATINUM DONOR - \$2,500-\$4,999**

**LOWE'S - WAPAKONETA  
ST. MARYS COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**

## **GOLD DONOR - \$1,000-\$2,499**

**GILBERG FURNITURE, NEW BREMEN  
AUTOBAHN COLLISION CENTER, WAPAKONETA - WESTERN OHIO TRUE VALUE  
HARDWARE, MINSTER - AIP LOGISTICS - WAPAKONETA  
RAINES MANAGEMENT GROUP  
MINSTER BANK**

## **SILVER DONOR - \$500-\$999**

**PERRY'S HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING  
RJ BURKE INSURANCE AGENCY  
STROH, JOHNSON & COMPANY, LLP  
BINKLEY REAL ESTATE  
AUGLAIZE EMBROIDERY  
G.A. WINTZER & SON  
KISS SEAMLESS SIDING  
MIDWEST SHOOTING CENTER  
BAMBAUER FERTILIZER & SEED**

**WAPAKONETA ANYTIME FITNESS  
TELEPHONE SERVICE COMPANY  
HARROD INSURANCE AGENCY  
MERRITT REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS  
BUD'S CHEVROLET BUICK  
BINKLEY LAND SURVEYING  
DANIEL SCHENKING, AFLAC INSURANCE  
MORAN REFRIGERATION, INC.**

## **BRONZE DONOR - \$250-\$499**

**ST. MARYS ROTARY  
LIMA LOWES - FOWLER'S TV  
MIDWAY TRAILERS  
SCHULTZ FAMILY FARMS  
CHARLES PACKARD  
CAROLYN SCHNEIDER**

## **BLUE DONOR - \$100-\$249**

**WAPAK MARATHON  
KAH MEATS  
WAGNER'S IGA  
HOME SAVINGS BANK  
ADK SORORITY**

**LAURA YELTON/  
STATE FARM  
MAX DREXLER  
ALAN DAVIS INSURANCE**

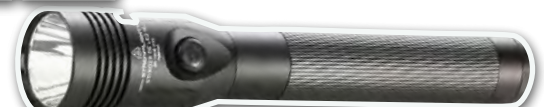
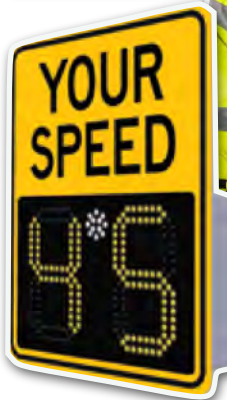
# Law Enforcement Grant Fund

As with most public service agencies, our law enforcement offices frequently rely on grants to purchase items which will make their jobs - and our communities - safer. *Let's Back the Blue's* Law Enforcement Grant Fund was initially begun to help our local agencies during budget reductions due to COVID. Despite budgets being in much better shape today, many of our agencies still rely on grants such as our Law Enforcement Grant for needed equipment. During **2022, \$32,806 was awarded for law enforcement needs through the grant, and in just the first four months of 2023, \$36,313 has been awarded.** In all, since its inception in December of 2020, we have been able to award over **\$123,000 for local law enforcement needs.**

Funds have been awarded for equipment such as high visibility parkas, tasers, stop sticks, night vision cameras, radar signs, body cameras, stinger flashlights, and a K-9 ballistic vest. There are other grant sources available to our agencies which may or may not approve requests, but we are proud this grant is funded by **Auglaize County residents to help Auglaize County law enforcement.** Each item purchased through our grant fulfilled a distinct need, **resulting in safer conditions for our officers and their communities.**

## Examples Of Items Purchased Through Our Law Enforcement Grant Fund

- ★ Body Cameras
- ★ Tasers
- ★ Stinger Rechargeable Flashlights
- ★ Stop Stick sets
- ★ Night Vision Camera
- ★ Solar Powered Radar Signs
- ★ High Visibility Parkas
- ★ Radar Detectors
- ★ Mobile Radios
- ★ K-9 Equipment



With an operating budget of approximately \$22,000 a year, the *Let's Back the Blue* organization has helped fill a huge gap when it comes to equipment needs. The Waynesfield Police Department has minimal funds in the event an unfunded mandate is ordered or a piece of equipment fails. We do our best to keep our equipment in pristine condition and be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. Evidence of that is our use of radios, that have a typical life span of 4-6 years, and are now 14+ years old. Sometimes that just isn't enough, however.

When an unexpected cost occurs and the appropriated funds are stretched thin, the *Let's Back the Blue* organization has stepped up significantly to help us. *Let's Back the Blue* has provided resources to help keep the public and police officers safe in ways that, without them, the Waynesfield Police Department simply could not do.

*Chief Nathan Motter, Waynesfield Police Department*



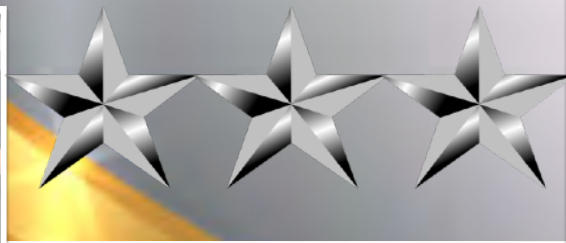
# Police Academy Scholarships



In last year's report we reported a law enforcement recruiting crisis that not only existed in Auglaize County, but which existed across the nation. Unfortunately, this crisis still exists, affecting not only our law enforcement agencies but our communities as well. Because fewer qualified individuals take the civil service exam as a first step toward a law enforcement career, agencies across the country are forced to lower standards to attract candidates. When it comes to law enforcement, higher standards are essential.

It is our hope scholarships could help attract women and men who are qualified candidates excited by and committed to protecting their communities. Because cadets living in Auglaize County and attending the three area training academies are frequently hired by our Auglaize County law enforcement agencies, it benefits not only the cadet but the local communities in which they will serve.

In 2022, *Let's Back the Blue* increased their scholarships at each academy. Due to college credit costs, we initiated **two \$1,000 scholarships at both Rhodes State College and Wright State University - Lake Campus**, while offering **two \$500 scholarships for Apollo Career Center**. We hope to continue this scholarship program for our Auglaize County residents in the coming years.



Henry Spencer — — — Dylan Herzog — — — Jeff Trego

I wanted to write an appreciation letter to the Auglaize Peace Officer Scholarship for the gift to complete the Rhodes State College Police Academy. This scholarship will help me and my family lessen the financial burden while completing the academy program. Thank you for all you do and provide." ~ ~ LaMar Dixon, Auglaize Peace Officer Scholarship Recipient, Rhodes State Univ.



# Benevolent Fund




In 2022, after careful study and deliberation, *Let's Back the Blue* endowed a **Benevolent Fund** with specific guidelines, allowing us to send memorial donations to funds set up for **Ohio officers killed in the line of duty**. Additionally, donations will be made for any **Auglaize County officers suffering critical injuries in the line of duty**. Within one month of setting up the fund, the first donation was sent in memory of Bluffton Officer Dominic Francis. Sadly, it would be used three times during 2022.



“Responding to a call of a break-in and shots fired at a trailer park in Harmony Township, OH, deputies entered a mobile home when they were met with a barrage of gunfire. **Deputy Matthew Yates** was gravely wounded and went down inside the trailer. The gunman, having fatally shot a relative prior to their arrival, actively fired on any officer who tried to rescue the trapped deputy. It was over two hours before special operations units were able to storm the trailer to remove Deputy Yates. He was airlifted to the hospital, but did not survive his wounds. The killer died at the scene.

Deputy Yates was a 15-year veteran of the Clark County Sheriff's Office and leaves behind a wife and three children. Matt chose a life in law enforcement by following in his father's footsteps, who retired from the same agency. He was humble, compassionate and giving, lifelong traits that he brought with him into his career as a Sheriff's Deputy. If you had the pleasure of meeting Matt, he would always greet you with smile and a handshake, and you would leave feeling better having shared even a minute with him. He was 41 years old.”  
(Source: Johnny Castro Art)




**Police Officer Dominic M. Francis**  
Bluffton Police Department, OH  
EOW: Thursday, March 31, 2022  
Cause of Death: Vehicle pursuit

In the early morning hours of March 31st, Troopers from the Ohio State Highway Patrol were pursuing a vehicle that fled from a traffic stop. The sedan made its way onto Interstate 75 and reached speeds exceeding 130 mph. Bluffton Police **Officer Dominic Francis** was monitoring the chase and heard them heading towards his location. As the suspects' vehicle approached exit 142 of the interstate, Dominic deployed spike strips to try and safely end the pursuit, but their car struck him at a high rate of speed. Dominic was killed instantly. The vehicle continued on and the three occupants eventually fled the scene on foot, taken into custody later that day.


Dominic Francis was a 19-year veteran of law enforcement, and spent the last 11 years proudly serving the Bluffton Police Department. He earned numerous commendations for his outstanding police work during his time with the BPD. In addition to being a police officer, Dominic served as a Fire Captain for the Southwestern Hancock Joint Fire District in Hancock County, and was also a beloved teacher, bus driver, and football coach at Cory-Rawson High School. Dom leaves behind a wife and two children. He was 42. (Source: Johnny Castro Art)

**Deputy Sheriff Daniel Kin** was killed in a vehicle crash at the intersection of State Route 56 and State Route 104 in Pickaway County at about 11:00 am, December 15. He was transporting a prisoner when a pickup truck struck the transport van on the driver's door. Deputy Kin was flown to Grant Medical Center in Columbus, where he succumbed to his injuries. The prisoner suffered non-life threatening injuries.

Deputy Kin had served with the Wyandot County Sheriff's Office for one year and had previously served with the Seneca County Sheriff's Office for three years. Dan was such a positive person with an awesome smile. He is survived by his wife, two young children, his father, and six sisters. He was 34 years old.



**Deputy Sheriff Matthew Eugene Yates**  
Clark County Sheriff's Office, OH  
EOW: Sunday, July 24, 2022  
Cause of Death: Gunfire



**Deputy Sheriff Daniel J. Kin**  
Wyandot County Sheriff's Office, OH  
EOW: Thursday, December 15, 2022  
Cause of Death: Automobile crash



# Pathways For Involvement

People often ask, "What can I do?" There are many ways to show your appreciation or to become involved. **Lighting a blue light** at your home or business has **one of the biggest impacts**. The list below highlights examples of how you can use your time, talent and treasure to help make your community a safe place for those who protect it.

## Use Your Time

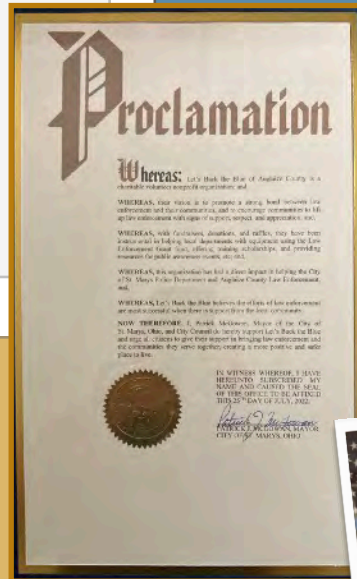
- ★ Write a **simple note of thanks** and send it to the law enforcement agency that serves you;
- ★ Like, comment on, and **share posts** from our *Let's Back the Blue 2.0* FB page;
- ★ Take part in the **Sheriff's Citizen Police Academy** held every winter;
- ★ **Teach your kids to respect L.E.**, and to know police are there to be of help;
- ★ Help out with **Let's Back the Blue** fundraisers, especially our Raffle;
- ★ Write a supportive **Letter to The Editor**;
- ★ **Mayors and Council** can make a **Proclamation** of support for LE;
- ★ **LIGHT A BLUE LIGHT!**

## Use Your Treasure

- ★ Send **pizza** or take snacks to your favorite law enforcement agency;
- ★ **Sponsor a "Got Their Six" raffle prize**;
- ★ Make a donation to our **Law Enforcement Grant Fund, Scholarship Fund, or Benevolent Fund**, or to **Let's Back the Blue** in general so we can continue our mission;
- ★ **Support** law enforcement community outreach endeavors such as **National Night Out** or **Shop With the Blue**;
- ★ Support the Auglaize County **DARE** program with a donation or by participating in one of their fundraising projects.

## Use Your Talent

- ★ Are you a **lawyer or CPA** who would be willing to be an advisor? Your help would not be needed very often, but would be appreciated when questions arise;
- ★ If you are talented with **sales**, we could use your help with generating business/corporate backing;
- ★ If you love **photography**, including arial photography, we can use you;
- ★ Are you a **graphic designer**? We produce many posters, pamphlets, etc., and would love to have your help;
- ★ If you are an **artist, crafter, or woodworker**, donate one of your creations for an auction or gift to your favorite LE agency.



*There are MANY ways to show your support!*

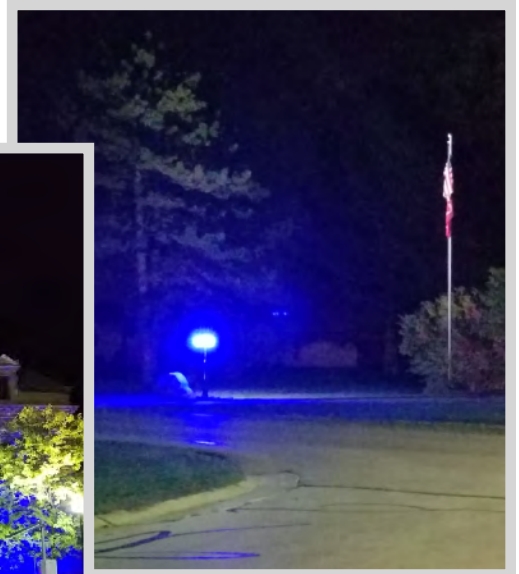
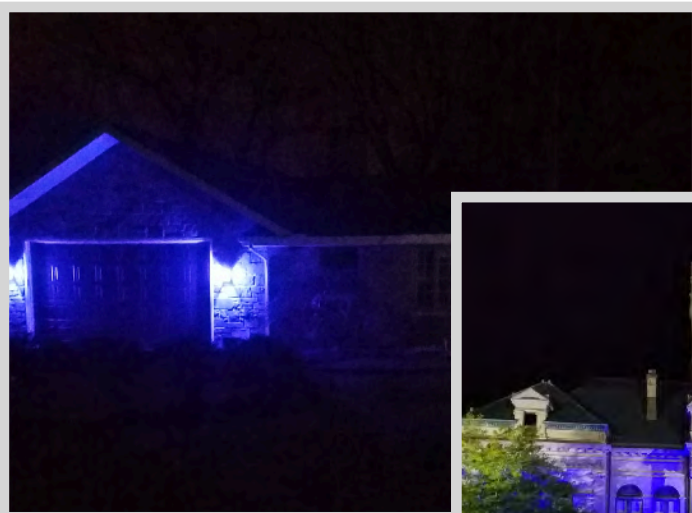
Let's Back the Blue has been a strong supporter of Auglaize County law enforcement agencies for many years. They have established a grant program that allows us to purchase equipment, helping to ensure that our officers have the tools they need to serve their communities.

*New Bremen Police Chief Mike Skinner*

# Light Ohio Blue (And Auglaize County, too!)

Each year in May, the staff of Central Ohio's **Light Ohio Blue** works with Ohioans across the state to light up skylines all around Ohio Blue for law enforcement. They **encourage every citizen to change their home exterior lights to blue to show their support for Law Enforcement personnel**. Over the past few years, the *Light Ohio Blue* campaign has grown exponentially, reaching every corner of Ohio. Partnering with *Light Ohio Blue*, **Let's Back the Blue** has encouraged **Auglaize County to illuminate blue lights at their homes and businesses** for each of the last three years. Our communities responded, and even more encouraging is the number of blue lights that still continue to shine, night and day throughout the year, in full support of our local law enforcement!

Go to [lightohioblue.org](http://lightohioblue.org) to learn more about *Light Ohio Blue*, their Cruiser Caravan, and Operation Santa Sleigh - and **please consider lighting a blue light at your home or work!**



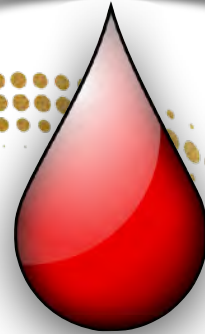
*Do you have your blue light?*

We are very fortunate in Auglaize County to have a citizen group that supports Law Enforcement, the blue porch lights, and the showing up at the fair and festivals. It lets law enforcement in this county know they are appreciated everyday with the tough job that is given to them. The fundraiser event and grant program is a bonus in my eyes that citizens are willing to raise money and provide much needed equipment to help law enforcement do their job. We thank "Lets Back the Blue" from the bottom of our hearts. They are the true support system to Auglaize County Law Enforcement.

*Auglaize County Sheriff Michael Vorhees*



# National Night Out, DARE, Blood Drives and More



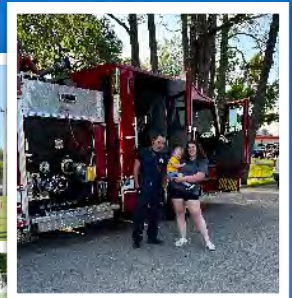
In the US, **38,000 pints** of blood are **needed each day**. In an effort to give back to the community, *Let's Back the Blue* sponsored several community blood drives in honor of our first responders, with plans to continue blood drives in the future. Please consider donating blood during future drives. **Do it for your favorite first responder - or do it for someone you love.**



We Are Also Happy to Support These Great Law Enforcement Community Initiatives



Shop With the Blue



National Night Out



# Looking Ahead to 2023

March of 2023 will mark *Let's Back the Blue's* 3rd birthday. During those three years we've been honored to encourage support for our Auglaize County Law Enforcement, indeed for law enforcement in general. Our focus in 2023 will be to **continue to encourage citizen support of law enforcement** and all that entails. We hope to **personally thank each dispatcher, corrections officer, police officer, deputy, trooper and Chief** for the work they do to keep our communities safe.



**THANK  
YOU**  
FOR ALL YOU DO!



Since losing our original Facebook account due to FB no longer recognizing our password and not allowing for a password reset, we have had to start a new page. Facebook was our key method of communicating with the public, so starting fresh offers a new challenge. In 2023, our goal is to double our Facebook presence while finding new and equally effective ways to be heard. Please help by liking and following **LET'S BACK THE BLUE 2.0!**

Besides encouraging support of law enforcement, our 2023 goals include:

- ☆ A **county-wide Blue Lights for Canned Goods** campaign;
- ☆ Supporting as many law enforcement community endeavors as possible by supplying needs such as fans, coats, **addiction education kits for cruisers**, etc.;
- ☆ Host an **"In Honor of All Heroes" Blood drive, donating blood in honor of** police, fire, EMS, dispatch, corrections, nurses, or **anyone who is a hero in our lives**;
- ☆ **Special recognition** to those connected to law enforcement during National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, National Corrections Officer Week, and National Police Week.



I want to first thank the members of the board for their continued support of our local law enforcement agencies in all that you do. It is very much appreciated. Smaller agencies like ours can not always afford to keep up with technology and the always changing times, and with your help we are able to make valuable changes that help insure the safety and security of our officers and the communities we protect.

Last year you were able to help us update our Tasers to the newest ones on the market. This year with your help we are able to start the process of updating the most valuable piece of equipment we could have, our radios. The county as a whole is finally looking into the way overdue replacement of the county radio system. It is not going to be a cheap venture for any one of the agencies in the county, but with your help the New Knoxville Police Department will be able to start the process.

I again want to thank each and every one for your work and continued support of Law Enforcement in Auglaize County.

*New Knoxville Police Chief Chris McKinney*



# With Great Appreciation

With our third year anniversary marked, we have experienced a notable change in the toxic atmosphere toward law enforcement so prevalent in 2020 and 2021. 2022 was a year of understanding the need to strengthen bonds between law enforcement and the communities they serve if safer communities for all are desired.

To that end, *Let's Back the Blue* has many in Auglaize County to thank for their part in working toward safer communities through strong support of our law enforcement. As in the past, we are extremely fortunate to have great superintendents who welcome School Resource Officers into their buildings, providing opportunities for students to see law enforcement in a positive light. **Keith Horner, Aaron Rex, Bill Ruane, Kim Waterman, Jason Schrader, Tim Pence, and Josh Meyer** are testaments to the success of dialogue under friendly conditions to build friendship and trust.

Thank you to **Charles Packard**, founder and CEO of the Packard Group, who has continued to offer his expertise when needed. Our **Chambers of Commerce Directors Sara Topp, Angie Tangeman, Jackie Martell, and expert Admin Jillian Wallace** are steadfast sources of support and knowledge for our efforts. We can't thank **Mary Beech/Image Masters, and the great crew at Bornhorst Printing** enough for fast, expert printing services, making our publications stand out.

Because our initial goal in 2020 was encouraging businesses and individuals in the community to send a little love in our officers' direction, we are always thrilled to hear examples of the many ways people show appreciation. A great example is **Bill Swank**, who has dedicated himself to showing officers throughout Ohio appreciation through a simple blue light. Follow him on his *Light Ohio Blue* website. **Treg Raines of Raines Management** once again set up a raffle and donated \$950, in addition to being a raffle seller. As seen on our donors page, the **thirty-plus businesses and individuals who made donations to our raffle were vital** to the success of our raffle. Without their generosity, things would have been very different. Along the same vein, our raffle sellers were **just as vital and just as appreciated!**

Another huge note of thanks to **Amy Kenter** for her work with our 3rd 5K and Little Cop 1-miler, held this year in St. Marys, OH, for the energetic **St. Marys Area Resource Team** for feeding our runners a very delicious homemade breakfast, for our participants, as well as our law enforcement who ensured a fun and safe run.

***Finally, our deepest appreciation and thanks goes to our law enforcement officers, corrections officers, dispatchers, law enforcement support personnel, and our Auglaize County Wildlife Officer whose jobs are critical to the lives we are accustomed to living. You give so much. We support and appreciate you all!***

## We've Got Your Six!

The *Let's Back the Blue* organization has assisted the Wright State Police Academy with scholarships and equipment purchases. The scholarships have assisted our police cadets in achieving their goals of becoming law enforcement officers... *Let's Back the Blue* has also purchased for the Academy the DART Electronic Shooting Range. This purchase has been used in a wide variety of ways. Since I am currently the Commander of the Police Academies at both Rhodes State and Wright State I have shared the use of this system with both academies. The system is used of course for firearms training but is also used for instruction on use of force, exposing students to a shoot/don't shoot scenario. At Wright State I also use the system in my college classes to expose students to the use of firearms and again to discuss use of force issued. Thank you!

*Mark Ernst, Commander, Wright State University Lake Campus and Rhodes State University Police Academies*

# Our Auglaize County Law Enforcement Agencies

## AUGLAIZE COUNTY SHERIFF



Since the establishment of Auglaize County in 1848, Sheriff Michael Vorhees is our county's 30th Sheriff. Possessing jurisdiction throughout the county, including all municipalities, the department manages the county jail, runs the DARE program, issues CCW licenses, conducts National WebChecks, and processes court paperwork. The 79 employees who are a vital part of the Sheriff's Office include administrative employees, 25 full and part-time Corrections Officers, food service employees, jail nurses, and a mental health and substance abuse counselor. 12 Dispatchers are on the line with you in an emergency, while 27 Deputies and 11 Auxiliary Deputies attend court proceedings, serve subpoenas, manage eSORN, and preserve the peace we all enjoy. The Sheriff's Office is active in schools and community, watches over our homes when we are away, and is a true partner in assuring our safety.



## CRIDERSVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT



The Cridersville Police Department provides 24 hour a day, 7 days a week police protection and services to the Village Of Cridersville. Staffing includes Chief Nathan Fried, four additional full-time officers, three part-time officers, and one part-time clerk. The CPD pledge to enhance the quality of life throughout the village is that of excellence, initiative, and integrity. It is our goal to continue being a responsive, proactive and caring department making Cridersville a safe place to live, work, and visit.



## WAPAKONETA POST - OHIO STATE HIGHWAY PATROL

The mission of the Wapakoneta Post of the Ohio State Highway Patrol is to protect life and property, promote traffic safety, and provide professional public services with respect, compassion, and professionalism. The Wapakoneta Post helps with driver's education classes, conducts vehicle inspections, and takes part in the Auglaize County *Shop With the Blue* program. Under the leadership of Lt. John Westerfield, the post includes four sergeants, 13 troopers, and one administrative assistant.

*"Service With A Purpose"*



NEW BREMEN POLICE DEPARTMENT

The New Bremen Police Department provides law enforcement in the village with seven full-time officers and up to five part-time officers, overseen by Chief Michael Skinner. All officers have completed mandatory training at the Ohio Peace Officers Training Academy. The department has three fully equipped cruisers and a sports utility vehicle utilized by the K-9 unit. Going out of town? If you notify the department that you will be on vacation and your home will be unoccupied, the department will keep an eye on your house for you. The department also offers safety talks to schools and organizations about traffic and pedestrian safety and related topics.



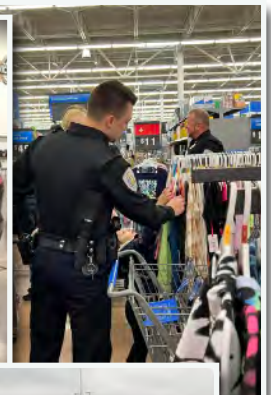
MINSTER POLICE DEPARTMENT

With seven well trained professionals providing full-time protection, the Minster Police Department, under the leadership of Chief David Friend, focuses on preventing crime before it happens. Partnering with the Minster Local Schools, MPD officers can be found in school classrooms educating students on topics ranging from bicycle safety, drug awareness, and more. In keeping with their focus on crime prevention, the MPD utilizes a new communications service that allows important, valuable community information sent directly to residents, helping to keep crime low and relationships strong.

NEW KNOXVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Chief Chris McKinney of the New Knoxville Police Department has made his primary focus maintaining bonds with residents the department serves while ensuring the locally low crime rate continues to drop. A priority of Chief McKinney's is providing beneficial in-service to his three man team as well as others, utilizing appropriate tactics when encountering special needs individuals. Serving a community of 870 residents who strongly value education, the New Knoxville Police Department is also active in the local school. Serving a community which has a deep appreciation of fiscal responsibility, the NKPD aims to be fiscally responsible while obtaining the necessary equipment to keep the department and the community safe.







# WAPAKONETA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Under the leadership of Chief Calvin Schneider, the Wapakoneta Police Department strives to ensure their community is provided with the best law enforcement and public safety possible. Serving a community of just under 10,000 people, the department has 18 full-time officers including one K-9 officer, 5 dispatchers, and 3 auxiliary officers. The men and women of the Wapakoneta Police Department are dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in the City of Wapakoneta by working in partnership with the community to provide quality law enforcement service while being responsive and caring to the needs of residents, using practices and tactics that compliment the needs of the City of Wapakoneta. They strive to complete their mission with honesty and integrity while having the courage to do what is right. They truly understand the importance of strong bonds between law enforcement and community.



# WAYNESFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT

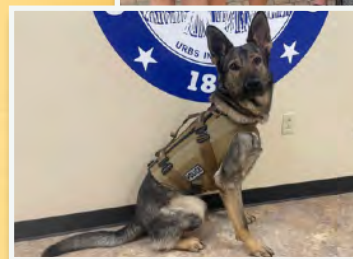


Founded in 1848, the Waynesfield Police Department has a long history of keeping residents safe. Under the leadership of Chief Nathan Motter since 2009, the WPD has updated equipment, obtained grant monies, entered into the social media realm, and added a K9 unit. This progression has made the department more efficient, safer, and better stewards of taxpayer money. Committed to excellence and community, the department has worked tirelessly to eradicate illegal drugs while regularly being a visible, positive part of the Waynesfield community.



# ST. MARYS POLICE DEPARTMENT

The mission of the St. Marys Police Department is to protect life, preserve property, and provide a safe environment for residents and visitors to live, work, and visit. Adhering to the core values of honesty, integrity, professionalism, fairness and accountability, the SMPD, under the leadership of Chief Jacob Sutton, provides 24-hour protection with 17 officers, one full time detective, 4 dispatchers, one K-9 officer, and a Code Enforcement Officer. Believing their word is their bond, the SMPD strives to do the right thing, even when no one is watching.







# OHIO WILDLIFE OFFICER AUGLAIZE COUNTY

The Division of Wildlife is the oldest state agency with law enforcement officers. Its mission is “to conserve and improve fish and wildlife resources and their habitats for sustainable use and appreciation by all.” One wildlife officer is assigned to each county, with Officer Mark Schemmel assigned to Auglaize County. Wildlife law enforcement is unique in that it blends criminal justice and law enforcement duties with wildlife conservation, education, and public service. Therefore, each wildlife officer completes basic peace officer training for state law enforcement certification then completes approximately 8 more weeks of advanced training in wildlife officer specific instruction .



## Board of Directors

### Anne Niemeyer

*One of the founders and current Director of Let’s Back the Blue, Anne is mother to Ohio State Highway Patrol Lieutenant Christian Niemeyer.*

### Greg Bukowski

*Also one of the founders of Let’s Back the Blue and our current Treasurer, Greg was the former Treasurer/ CFO of Apollo Career Center as well as a Jefferson Award Winner for the region.*

### Julie Smith

*Current Secretary and Benevolent Fund Chairperson, Julie is mother to OSHP Trooper Jared Smith, daughter to retired Auglaize County Deputy Paul Eisert, and sister to retired Wapakoneta PD Officer Jeff Eisert.*

### Carolyn Schneider

*One of our founders and our initial Secretary who is aunt to Wapakoneta Police Chief Calvin Schneider, Carolyn has been active in many nonprofit organizations in the community.*

### Dan Burke

*Dan is our St. Marys representative and is father to Auglaize County Sheriff’s Sergeant Ryan Burke and cousin to ACSO Lieutenant Doug Burke. Co-owner of Burke Insurance, Dan is very active in his community.*

### Jeff Eisert

*Jeff is our Let’s Back the Blue Law Enforcement Consultant. Recently retired from the Wapakoneta Police Department, Jeff brings critical expertise to the Board.*

### Kate Gearing

*Kate is mother to Piqua Police Department’s Lieutenant Miles Gearing. Kate is a firm believer in supporting law enforcement personnel to enable them to do their job safely and confidently.*

### Jack Preston

*Jack is a retired Lieutenant Colonel of the U.S. Army. He has been an active lifelong volunteer in multiple service organizations throughout the area.*

In 2020 our office partnered with Let’s Back the Blue. Our partnership was in the form of a canned food drive. In exchange for a canned good, you received a blue bulb to display in support of law enforcement. The community response was overwhelming. The partnership fostered community support for law enforcement, awareness of the sensitive and dangerous situations that our local law enforcement personnel face and support for local food pantries. We saw entire neighborhoods lighting up blue and continue to see the blue lights being displayed over a year later. — Erica Preston, Auglaize County Commissioners’ Office



# THIS REPORT IS DEDICATED TO LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL WHO MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE IN THE LINE OF DUTY DURING 2022:

<i>John S. Horton</i>	<i>William D. Lebo</i>	<i>John K. Williams</i>	<i>Janelle Sanders</i>
<i>Fernando Arroyos</i>	<i>Darren Almendarez</i>	<i>Loren M. Courts</i>	<i>Lloyd "Mike" Todd</i>
<i>Diane Gonzalez</i>	<i>Trey M. Sutton</i>	<i>Ron Spangler, Jr.</i>	<i>Seara Burton</i>
<i>Corille Cortez Jones</i>	<i>Christopher Vaughn</i>	<i>Brian D. Olliff</i>	<i>Michael Hartwick</i>
<i>Tyler Lenehan</i>	<i>Jennifer L. Chavis</i>	<i>Lawrence Koren</i>	<i>Anthony Martin</i>
<i>Johnny Patterson</i>	<i>James Critchelow</i>	<i>Douglas Beers, III</i>	<i>Tyrell Owens-Riley</i>
<i>Jason Rivera</i>	<i>Roy A. Barr</i>	<i>Michael Levison</i>	<i>Gregory Horne, Sr.</i>
<i>Anthony Salas</i>	<i>David P. Jones</i>	<i>Vincent A. Parks</i>	<i>Meagan Burke</i>
<i>Charles Galloway</i>	<i>Nicholas D. Weist</i>	<i>Frederick G. Maley</i>	<i>Terry Arnold</i>
<i>Ramon Gutierrez</i>	<i>Nicholas W. Tullier</i>	<i>Daniel F. Vasquez</i>	<i>Blane Lane</i>
<i>Wilbert D. Mora</i>	<i>Walter Jenkins, Jr.</i>	<i>Christopher Nelson</i>	<i>Sidnee Carter</i>
<i>Noah Rainey</i>	<i>Robert A. Howard</i>	<i>Anthony P. Mazurkiewicz</i>	<i>Myiesha Stewart</i>
<i>Lorin Readmond</i>	<i>Daniel H. Salazar</i>	<i>Matthew E. Yates</i>	<i>Dustin Demonte</i>
<i>Donald Sahota</i>	<i>Jody W. Cash</i>	<i>Jèan-Harold Astree</i>	<i>Alex Hamzy</i>
<i>John Painter</i>	<i>Stephen Plum, Jr.</i>	<i>Nichole Shuff</i>	<i>Truong Thai</i>
<i>Helen M. Smith</i>	<i>Yiu T. "Louis" Tao</i>	<i>Lorenzo Bustos</i>	<i>Steven Nothem, II</i>
<i>Chris Jenkins</i>	<i>Daniel Sincavage</i>	<i>Jamie L. Reynolds</i>	<i>Jorge Arias</i>
<i>Collin Birnie</i>	<i>Cody Alan Olafson</i>	<i>Noah Shahnava</i>	<i>Logan K. Medlock</i>
<i>Aubrey Phillips</i>	<i>John J. McCauley</i>	<i>Dallas R. Edeburn</i>	<i>Steven A. Carnes</i>
<i>James McWhorter</i>	<i>Ryan Tipping</i>	<i>Matthew Fishman</i>	<i>Brandon Tsai</i>
<i>Nicholas Vella</i>	<i>Adrian Lopez, Sr.</i>	<i>Maurica Manyan</i>	<i>Michel O. Maceda</i>
<i>Neil Adams</i>	<i>Thomas Baker, III</i>	<i>Lawrence Cabana</i>	<i>Jordan Jackson</i>
<i>Jorge Alvarado, Jr.</i>	<i>Christopher Fariello</i>	<i>Andrew Peery</i>	<i>Christopher Taylor</i>
<i>David Glen Evans</i>	<i>Kyle L. Patterson</i>	<i>Chad M. Beattie</i>	<i>Frank Gualdino</i>
<i>Joshua Caudell</i>	<i>Kennis W. Croom</i>	<i>Ned P. Byrd</i>	<i>José Angel DeLeon</i>
<i>Robert E. Duran</i>	<i>Justin M. Terry</i>	<i>Cesar Echaverry</i>	<i>Raul Humberto</i>
<i>Tamar Bucci</i>	<i>Glenn R. Hilliard</i>	<i>William Hargraves</i>	<i>Brad Miller</i>
<i>Benjamin Cooper</i>	<i>Michael D. Paredes</i>	<i>Jose A. Perez</i>	<i>Curtis M. Worland</i>
<i>Jake A. Reed</i>	<i>Joseph A. Santana</i>	<i>Ivan M. Lopez</i>	<i>Scott O. Riner</i>
<i>Freddie Wilson</i>	<i>Sean Free</i>	<i>Robert B. Swartz</i>	<i>Branden Estorffe</i>
<i>Caleb D. Ogilvie</i>	<i>Austin Richardson</i>	<i>F. Brent Chomyszak</i>	<i>Steven Robin</i>
<i>Dominique Calata</i>	<i>J'Mar C. Abel</i>	<i>Harold Russell, II</i>	<i>Donald Scoby</i>
<i>Lane A. Burns</i>	<i>Austin D. Aldridge</i>	<i>Matthew Blansett</i>	<i>Daniel J. Kin</i>
<i>Barbara Fenley</i>	<i>Jeremiah Story</i>	<i>Deborah Martinez-Garibay</i>	<i>Oscar Bolanos-Anavisca, Jr.</i>
<i>Martin F. Mack, III</i>	<i>Jeff Hermanson</i>	<i>Kaitlyn B. Ritnour</i>	<i>Joe Carey</i>
<i>Branden T. Sisca</i>	<i>Richard Lopez</i>	<i>Jonathon R. Koleski</i>	<i>Paul D. Newell</i>
<i>Dan Rocha</i>	<i>Jeffrey Richardson</i>	<i>Marshall Ervin, Jr.</i>	<i>Corey D. McElroy</i>
<i>Jeffrey H. Carson</i>	<i>Bradley Johnson</i>	<i>Patrick D. Dupree</i>	<i>Ray C. Hamilton</i>
<i>Donald R. Crooms</i>	<i>Ralph H. Frasure</i>	<i>Dillon M. Vakoff</i>	<i>Isaiah Cordero</i>
<i>Rodrick Covington</i>	<i>William E. Petry</i>		
<i>Dominic M Francis</i>	<i>Jacob R. Chaffins</i>		

In 2022, there were **160** line of duty deaths, **10 less than in 2021**, but **40 more than in 2020**. The list above does not include the thousands injured in the line of duty, many critically, nor the 70 law enforcement personnel who lost their battle with COVID. The 160 LODDs were due to:

9/11 related	7	Duty Related Illness	7	Motorcycle Crash	3
Accidental	1	Fire	1	Struck by vehicle	4
Aircraft Accident	6	Gunfire	64	Training Accident	1
Animal Related	2	Heart Attack	12	Vehicle Pursuit	4
Automobile Crash	32	Heatstroke	2	Vehicular Assault	14

There were also **25 K-9 Line of Duty Deaths in 2022**

**WE HONOR AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE AND SACRIFICE.**

**MAY YOU EACH REST IN PEACE**