

**SUPPORT OUR
FIRST RESPONDERS**



Let's Back The Blue 2.0 on FB

Let's Back The Blue **2023 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.



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BEHIND EVERY STRONG
OFFICER
IS A STRONG
COMMUNITY
WHO SUPPORTS THEM

On the cover: A grateful thank you to Celina, Ohio's **Reynolds & Reynolds Co.**, for generously presenting *Let's Back the Blue* with license plate frames custom designed by **Cory Knutzen!**

ADVISORY PANEL

WAPAKONETA

Mayor Dan Lee
Chief Cal Schneider
Supt. Of Schools
Aaron Rex

ST. MARYS

Mayor Joseph Hurlburt
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 Craig Oldiges
Chief Eric Morris
Supt. Of Schools
Josh Meyer

SHERIFF

Mike Vorhees

OSHP POST

Lt. John Westerfield

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

David Bambauer
Doug Spencer
John Bergman

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

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

EXEC. DIRECTOR

Anne Niemeyer

Let's Back the Blue

*Encouraging support of law
enforcement and their efforts while
helping to build strong bonds
between law enforcement and the
communities they serve*



Dear Friend of Law Enforcement,

Let's Back the Blue was founded in Auglaize County in the spring of 2020 as a way to encourage support and appreciation for our local law enforcement. Starting out with a one page list of examples of how residents, businesses and organizations could support our men and women in blue, we have grown - both in numbers and in ideas. We have a commitment to the safety and well-being of our youth and our communities, and thus believe in the importance of supporting those who work tirelessly to protect us.

Because of county-wide support over the past four years we have:

- ✓ **Approved over \$175,200 in grants** to our law enforcement agencies throughout the county for equipment and outreach needs;
- ✓ **Provided scholarships to Auglaize County residents** attending area Peace Officers Training Academies at Apollo Career Center, Rhodes State University, or Wright State University - Lake Campus;
- ✓ Supported National Night Out, D.A.R.E., and Shop With the Blue;
- ✓ Promoted our **"Blue Lights For Canned Goods"** campaign to restock local food pantries while encouraging visible signs of support for law enforcement through the display of blue lights;
- ✓ Worked to supply **"Lambi Learns About Addiction"** kits for officers to leave with caregivers of children to help them cope and understand when a parent is removed from the home due to substance abuse;
- ✓ Plans to **supply trauma kits and/or needle resistant gloves** used for conducting searches for each officer in Auglaize County that currently does not have these vital safety necessities;
- ✓ **Instituted a Benevolent Fund** for line-of-duty deaths and critical injuries;
- ✓ And much more!

Thank you for your past and your future support. 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 law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty across the United States and its territories.

Let's Back the Blue TOGETHER!

Anne Niemeyer
Director

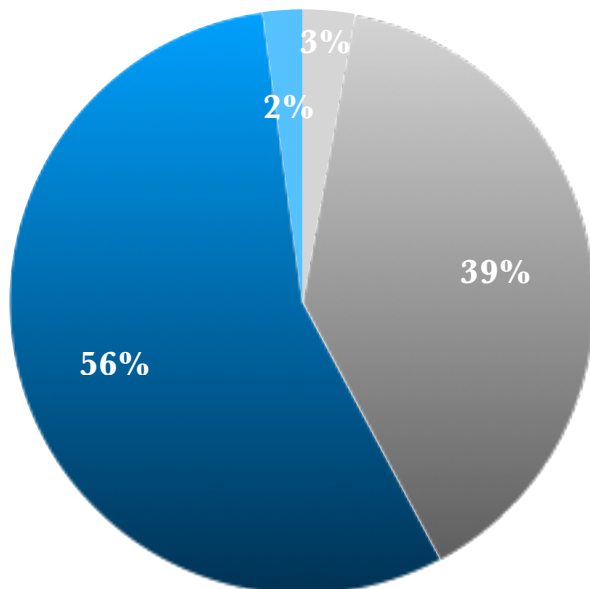
Let's Back the Blue - P.O. Box 1656 - Wapakoneta, OH 45895 - 419-234-6414
Visit us at: <http://letsbacktheblue.org> - letsbacktheblue@bright.net

The Financial Picture

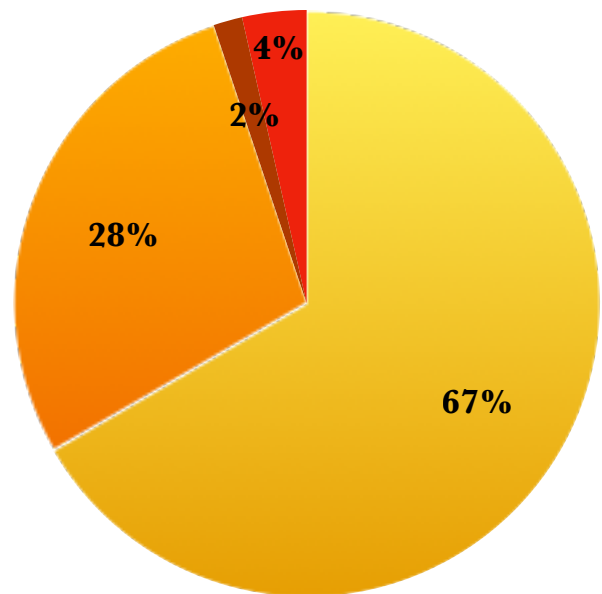
Since our inception, *Let's Back the Blue* has strived to be responsible stewards of all funds. We are proud to be able to **consistently allocate more than 97% of proceeds directly to our mission**. The continued response from our communities has enabled us to continue to grow our funds, increase community outreach and participation, and benefit our law enforcement as needed.

After the success of our first "Got Their Six!" raffle in 2020, our Board made the decision to allocate 100% of raffle proceeds to our Law Enforcement Grant Fund and scholarships. Keeping our operating expenses below 3% enables us to keep this promise to our donors.

- OPERATING - \$2,951
- FUNDRAISING - \$40,878
- LAW ENFORCEMENT GRANT FUND - \$57,840
- BENEVOLENT FUND - \$2,250



- FUNDRAISERS - \$83,641
- DONATIONS - \$35,470
- GRANTS - \$2,000
- MISCELLANEOUS - \$4,442



Our donors are the lifeblood of *Let's Back the Blue*, and our appreciation is absolute. From money dropped in a donation box to the generosity of our county businesses, each donation helps. We also wish to thank our generous local VETERANS who understand perhaps more than most what it takes to live a life of service in a field such as law enforcement.

97.7% of every dollar collected goes to furthering our mission

"Got Their Six!" Raffle

Our largest fundraiser of the year, the "Got Their Six!" raffle is a great show of community support for our law enforcement. With 2,000 tickets up for sale at \$50 each, **100% of the proceeds from this annual raffle go directly into our Law Enforcement Grant Fund and police training academy scholarships.** We are deeply indebted to and thankful for all of the thirty six prize partners from Auglaize County whose full or partial sponsorship allows us to offer so many great prizes, each valued between \$500 and \$5,000. We are also grateful for our growing team of ticket sellers and purchasers who continue to find more and more ways to spread our vision and mission throughout our county.

\$50.00
letsbacktheblue.org

Got Their Six!

WATCH DRAWING LIVE ON FACEBOOK
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2023, 12 NOON

1. \$5,000 CASH
2. \$1,000 Southwest Airlines Gift Card
3. 6.5'x10' Utility Trailer - Midwest Trailer/LBB
4. **Sig Sauer P365/CCW - Midwest Shooting/LBB
5. \$500 CASH - Eley Funeral Home
6. *\$950 Taste of The Auglaize Restaurant GC Pack 1
7. *Freezer with 1/4 side beef, 1/2 hog, processing
8. \$1,000 Gilberg Furniture GC - Gilberg Furniture
9. \$750 Marathon Gas Gift Card - Autobahn Collision Center
10. \$500 CASH - Oen Kitchen and Bath
11. 36" Blackstone Griddle, extras - Wapak Loaves/LBB
12. *Two Browns vs. Bengals tickets (\$600) Superior C.U.
13. \$750 Walmart Gift Card
14. \$1,000 CASH - Raines Management Group
15. \$500 CASH - Stroh, Johnson, & Co., LLC
16. Security Camera System with Install - Fiedler's/LBB
17. 7-Piece Patio Dining Set - Western Ohio True Value HW
18. \$500 Landscape Gift Card - Village Green
19. Vitamix Blender Super Bundle - Telephone Service Co.
20. \$500 CASH - Bunnings Fertilizer & Seed, Inc.
21. Metabo Power Tool Package - Auglaize Audiology
22. \$750 True Value Gift Card
23. \$500 Wagner's IGA GC
24. REME HALO Whole Home Air Purifier - Perry's H&AC
25. \$500 CASH - Burke Insurance Group
26. \$750 Worth of Gutters - KISS ABC Seamless Siding
27. 43" TV with Sound Bar - Western Ohio True Value HW
28. \$500 Kroger Gift Card
29. Gardening Supplies Package - Western Ohio TVH
30. \$500 CASH - Merritt Real Estate Professionals

31. \$2,500 CASH - Am Vets Post #333, Wapakoneta
32. Toro 42" ZTR Mower - Western Ohio True Value HW
33. Samsung 65" QLED TV/Sound Bar - Fiedler's/LBB
34. Weber Genesis S-325 Gas Grill - Wapak Loaves/LBB
35. \$500 CASH - Glen Accounting
36. Apple MacBook Pro Laptop Computer
37. \$750 Lowe's Gift Card
38. **Ruger 350 Legend/1 yr Mem - Midwest Shooting/LBB
39. Blackstone Tailgate Package - WOTVH/LBB
40. \$500 CASH - G.A. Wintzer & Son
41. DeWalt Yard Care Package - WOTVH/LBB
42. \$750 Kroger Gift Card
43. \$750 Shell Gift Card - Autobahn Collision Center
44. *\$950 Taste of the Auglaize Restaurant GC Pack 2
45. \$500 CASH - Chill Tex LLC
46. \$500 Walmart Gift Card
47. Built-In/Free Stand Bev. Cooler + GC - Loaves/LBB
48. Yeti Roadie and GC - Top Mark Federal Credit Union
49. DeWalt Tool and Charger Combo - WOTVH/LBB
50. \$500 CASH - Sons of the American Legion Post #330
51. \$500 Community Markets GC - Ewald Financial Services
52. \$500 Shell Gas Card - Binkley Real Estate
53. Prairie View Golf Mem. + GC - Prairie View/LBB
54. Anytime Fitness Center Mem. - Anytime Fitness
55. \$500 CASH - ALEA (Auglaize Law Enforcement Advocate)
56. Nintendo Switch with Expansion Package, GC
57. Solo Baffle, Yeti Cooler, GCI Chairs - WOTVH-LBB
58. \$500 Marathon Gift Card - Wapak Marathon/LBB
59. \$500 CASH
60. \$5,000 CASH

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR RAFFLE PARTNERS! THEIR GENEROSITY MAKES OUR GRANTS POSSIBLE

**** \$950 Taste of the Auglaize Gift Card Package #1 courtesy of the following merchants (Prize # 6):**

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**** \$950 Taste of the Auglaize Gift Card Package #2 courtesy of the following merchants (Prize #44):**

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New this year were TWO "Taste of the Auglaize" gift card packages. **Twenty six** different restaurants across the county provided gift cards ranging in price from \$50-\$100 each, with each package worth \$950.

Now more than ever, support for our local Law Enforcement Agencies is crucial. The "Let's Back the Blue" leadership has worked tirelessly to promote, support, and provide much needed resources to area agencies. Their efforts continue to make our communities a safer place to live, work and visit.

Greg Foxhoven - Director of Public Service and Safety, St. Marys

Thankful For Our Donors!

Donors play a pivotal role in the success and sustainability of charitable nonprofits. Our donors provided crucial financial support that has enabled *Let's Back the Blue* the ability to pursue our mission and serve our law enforcement - and their communities - effectively. Every donation not only helped us reach our annual goals, but also provided great encouragement to keep moving forward. In essence, **donors are our lifeblood** in more ways than one and are **GREATLY APPRECIATED!**

In addition to monetary donations, we were **helped substantially** through the donation of **in-kind goods and services**, especially for our raffle. These donations saved us well **over \$3,500 in some individual cases**, and together added up to great savings for *Let's Back the Blue*. Each was extremely important to our ability to continue 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+

AmVets Wapakoneta Post #333
American Legion Wapak Post #330*

Platinum Donor \$2,500-\$4,999

Western Ohio True Value Hardware

Gold Donor \$1,000 - \$2,499

Minster Service Club
Autobahn Collision Center
Wapakoneta Area Community Foundation

Gilberg Furniture
Raines Management Group
American Legion Wapakoneta Post #330

Silver Donor \$500 - \$999

ChillTex, LLC
Eley Funeral Home
Oen Kitchen & Bath
G.A. Wintzer & Son
Bambauer Fertilizer & Seed
Binkley Real Estate
Stroh, Johnson, LLC
RJB on Wayne, LLC
Sons of the American Legion
Lowe's Wapakoneta

Merritt Real Estate
Midway Trailers
Gren Accounting
Midwest Electric's
Community Connection
Midwest Shooting Center
Pine Bark Cattle Company
Superior Credit Union
Village Green Landscape & Floral Center

Telephone Service Company
Auglaize Audiology
Perry's Heating and Air Conditioning
ABC KISS Seamless Siding
Auglaize Embroidery
Moran Refrigeration
Ewald Financial
Carolyn Schneider
Top Mark FCU*

Bronze Donor \$250-\$499

Fowler's TV
Reynolds & Reynolds
Wapakoneta Marathon
Prairie View Golf Course
Wapakoneta Anytime Fitness
New Knoxville American Legion

Blue Donor \$100-\$249

First National Bank
Koenig Insurance Agency
Hometown Pizza Burgers & More
Guarneiri's Pub & Pizzeria
Tom Ahl Chrysler
Dodge Jeep

17 West
Kah Meats
Casa Lupita
The Side Rail
JT's Brew & Grill
The Whaling Knife

**Pledged in 2023 received in January, 2024*

Law Enforcement Grant Fund

As with most public service agencies, our law enforcement agencies frequently rely on grants to purchase items which make their jobs - and our communities - safer. Originally begun to help our local agencies during budget reductions due to COVID, our Law Enforcement Grant Fund continues to provide needed equipment, especially to those local agencies whose budgets remain extremely tight. During **2023, \$48,721 was approved for law enforcement needs through the grant.** Since its inception in December of 2020, we have been able to award **\$1725,200 for local law enforcement needs.**

Although there are additional grant resources from various sources utilized by our agencies, we are proud **the Law Enforcement Grant Fund is funded by Auglaize County residents to help Auglaize County Law Enforcement.** Each item purchased through our grant fulfilled a specific need and **resulted in safer conditions for our officers and their communities.**

What Types of Items Have Been Purchased Through the Law Enforcement Grant Fund?

- Automated External Defibrillator (AED)
- Solar Powered Radar Signs
- Radar Detectors
- MARCS compatible radios
- K-9 equipment
- Stop Sticks
- Cameras for crime scene and accident investigations
- Community Outreach
- Body Cameras
- Active Shooter Body Armor
- Mobile radios
- Laser Lidar for training



The Minster Police Department is grateful to have the law enforcement dedicated funding organization, Let's Back the Blue. Along with other law enforcement agencies in Auglaize County, MPD has utilized Let's Back the Blue for equipment and resources otherwise difficult to obtain through traditional means. These additional tools are integral to the operations of the department and to providing superior services to the community. We thank Let's Back the Blue for being there for us, so we can be there for the community.

Chief Eric Morris - Minster Police Department

Police Academy Scholarships



It has always been our hope scholarships could help attract men and women who are qualified candidates excited by and committed to protecting their communities. With three Peace Officer Training Academies immediately adjacent to Auglaize County, *Let's Back the Blue* instituted scholarships for Auglaize County residents who enroll in a training academy at Apollo Career Center, Rhodes State College, or Wright State University Lake Campus. Because cadets living in Auglaize County and attending one of those three 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 2023, we were able to offer **two \$1,000 scholarships at both Rhodes State College and Wright State University - Lake Campus**, while offering **two \$500 scholarships for Apollo Career Center**. In the future we hope to also offer a **\$1,000 scholarship at Edison State Community College**.



Gavin Cotterman



Britton Martin

WSU Scholarship recipients from left to right: Tobias Luebke St. Marys, Bradyn Adams St. Marys, Jessica Fledderjohann New Bremen, Taylor Ott St. Marys, Bud Vanover St. Marys.

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 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 "Let's Back the Blue" from the bottom of our hearts. They are the true support system to Auglaize County Law Enforcement.

Sheriff Michael Vorhees - Auglaize County Sheriff's Office

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, since its inception, there have been **seven Line of Duty deaths in Ohio**.



Police Officer Timothy James Unwin

Springfield Township Police Dept.
EOW: Friday, March 31, 2023
Cause of Death: Automobile crash

Police Officer Tim Unwin was killed in a vehicle crash at the intersection of Hamilton Avenue and Center Ridge Avenue in North College Hill.

He was responding to an "officer needs assistance" call when his patrol car collided with another vehicle shortly after midnight. Officers from multiple jurisdictions were responding to the call when the crash occurred. The driver of the other vehicle was also killed in the crash.

Officer Unwin had served with the Springfield Township Police Department for two years. He had previously served with the Hamilton Police Department for two years and the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office for five years. He is survived by his parents and grandparents.



Deputy Sheriff Marcus Zeigler

Hamilton County Sheriff's Office
EOW: Friday, May 26, 2023
Cause of Death: Duty related illness

Deputy Sheriff Marcus Zeigler passed away after suffering a medical emergency during participation in mandatory running activities at the Great Oaks Police Academy in Sharonville.

He was transported to a local hospital where he

passed away two days later.

Deputy Zeigler had served with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office for nine months as a corrections deputy and was assigned to the Patrol Academy. He is survived by his wife and five children.



Deputy Sheriff Joshua Hamilton

Preble County Sheriff's Office
EOW: Monday, December 18, 2023
Cause of Death: Automobile crash

Deputy Sheriff Joshua Hamilton died in a vehicle crash on Ohio State Route 503 at 4:00 a.m.

Deputy Hamilton, traveling southbound, and a vehicle traveling northbound collided head-on. He was transported to the Kettering Preble ER Campus, where he was pronounced dead. The driver of the other car was also killed.

Deputy Joshua Hamilton had been with the Preble County Sheriff's Office since May of 2022. He began his law enforcement career working in the jail before he being promoted to road patrol in June. Deputy Hamilton leaves behind a 10-year-old daughter, both parents and a sister. Josh also proudly served his country in the U.S. Navy from 2009 until the beginning of 2023, then enlisted in the U.S. Army National Guard. Deputy Hamilton is the first deputy with the Preble County Sheriff's Office to be killed in the line of duty.



Light Ohio Blue And Auglaize County, Too!



HONOR, RESPECT, REMEMBER

National Police Week is a time to not only pay tribute our men and women who are tasked with the job of keeping their communities safe, but also a time to honor those in law enforcement who suffered line of duty deaths. In 1962, President John F. Kennedy signed a proclamation which designated May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week in which that date falls as Police Week. **Light Ohio Blue** works with Ohioans across the state to light up skylines and homes BLUE to honor, respect, and especially remember those fallen. Working with *Light Ohio Blue*, **Let's Back the Blue** has encouraged Auglaize Countians to illuminate blue lights at their homes and businesses for each of the last four years. 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 to learn more about *Light Ohio Blue*, their National Police Week Cruiser Caravan, and their Operation Santa Sleigh - and **please consider lighting a blue light at your home and business!**

The first day I took office as Chief of the Cridersville Police Department, the first meeting I had was with the director of Let's Back the Blue. It was so encouraging to hear about the organization and the support they provide for the community and surrounding agencies. We are a small agency and small community; therefore, our funds are limited. Knowing they can be counted on as a reliable resource for additional funds to purchase equipment and community related supplies allows relief for our budget when times are tough.

Over the past year we have been able to obtain new vests for our officers, a large pop-up tent with our patch logo, items to hand out during events, and new AEDs for our cruisers! I cannot express enough how much we appreciate everything they have done and the impact they continue to make on us and our fellow agencies!

Chief Nathan Fried - Cridersville Police Department

Other Ways We Support

More than just a grant awarding organization, *Let's Back the Blue* has worked to support our law enforcement in as many ways as possible. Encouraging community members to **light a blue light** has had one of the biggest impacts. We helped sponsor **National Night Out**, organized by the Wapakoneta Police Department, the Auglaize County Sheriff's Office **D.A.R.E.** program, the annual county wide "**Shop With the Blue**" event, organized **blood drives**, and supplied "**Lambi Learns About Addiction**" kits to any officer in the county who wanted one to leave with the caregiver of a child whose parents were suffering from substance abuse. We also operate a **Facebook** page to help the community become aware of all that law enforcement experiences in keeping our communities safe.

We have **encouraged community members to show support** of their local law enforcement, have been **visible in events** to help spread support and teach children respect for law enforcement, and made it a point to **individually thank each officer, correctional officer, and dispatcher with a goodie bag** during their respective recognition weeks.

Our hope is that each person involved in law enforcement in Auglaize County will feel the support, respect, and appreciation of those who live and work here, **helping to further a more positive and safe environment for all!**



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.

Chief Mike Skinner - New Bremen Police Department

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 73 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 29 Deputies and 23 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.



MINSTER POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Minster Police Department consists of seven full-time officers that deliver exceptional service and protection with a focus on preventing crime before it happens. To accomplish this, the department, led by Chief Eric Morris, collaborates closely with local schools and officials to foster community engagement, promote safety initiatives, and implement proactive measures.



CRIDERSVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT



It is the mission of the Cridersville Police Department to safeguard the lives and property of our community. We are committed to reducing crime as well as the fear of crime. We accomplish this by investing in our people and building strong community partnerships. Our mandate is to serve with honor and integrity, while always conducting ourselves with the highest ethical standards to maintain public confidence.

The CPD provides 24 hour per day, 7 days per week, police protection and services to the Village of Cridersville. Staffing includes Chief Nathan Fried, four additional full-time officers, one part time officer, and one full-time clerk.

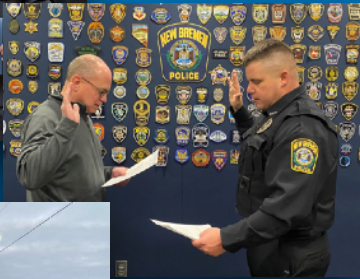


NEW BREMEN POLICE DEPARTMENT



The New Bremen Police Department provides law enforcement in the village with eight full-time officers and four 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.

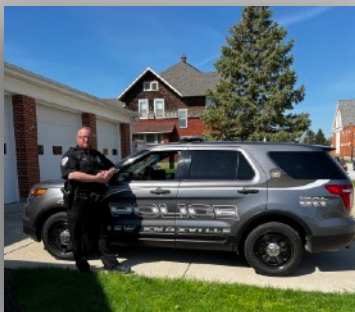
Going out of town? If you notify the department that you will be on vacation and your home will be unoccupied, the department will keep an eye on your house for you. The department also offers safety talks to schools and organizations about traffic and pedestrian safety and related topics.



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 officers as well as others with a focus on 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. Being part of a community with a strong 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 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. 2023 marked 90 years of providing their service with a purpose: to positively impact the quality of life and safety throughout the State of Ohio. One of 59 posts throughout the state, the Wapakoneta Post, under the leadership of Lieutenant John Westerfield, performs a variety of responsibilities, including driver's education classes and vehicle inspections. Post Troopers have taken part in our blood drives, *National Night Out* and the Auglaize County *Shop With the Blue* program.

"Service With A Purpose"





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 .



ST. MARYS POLICE DEPARTMENT

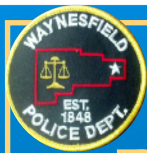
The mission of the St. Marys Police Department is to protect life, preserve property, and provide a safe environment for residents and visitors to live, work, and visit. Adhering to the core values of honesty, integrity, professionalism, fairness and accountability, the SMPD, under the leadership of Chief Jacob Sutton, provides 24-hour protection with 16 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.



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.



Our Board of Directors

Anne Niemeyer

One of the founders and current Director of Let's Back the Blue, Anne is the very proud mother of 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 of retired Auglaize County Deputy Paul Eisert, and sister of 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 of 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. Retired from the Wapakoneta Police Department, Jeff brings critical expertise to the Board.

Kate Gearing

Kate is the mother of 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.

I want to personally thank "Let's Back the Blue" of Auglaize County for their efforts to promote support for law enforcement. I also wish to that the citizens of Auglaize County for their generous and overwhelming support...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 - The Ohio State Highway Patrol, Wapakoneta Post

THIS REPORT IS DEDICATED TO LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL ACROSS THE USA WHO MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE IN THE LINE OF DUTY DURING 2023:

Justin Clark McIntire	Hunter Timothy Scheel	John Durm	Christine Guerin-Sandoval
Carl Douglas Kimball	Trevor Abney	Jake Wallin	Eric Salrin
Darnell Calhoun	Jason Stuart Jones	Anthony Ferguson	Robert Danforth Clark
Jacqueline Montanaro	Michael Robert Keel	Edwin Maldonado-García	Tucker Blakely
Gerald T. Barbato	Patrick J. Hogan	David Bosecker	Chad Swanson
Francis A. Gaynor	Josh Owen	Robert C. Castioni, Jr.	Richard Carrero Mendez
Lawrence C. Prather	Joseph Johnson	Michael Wood	Milton Resendez
Clarence L. "CJ" Williams	Nicholas Georgeadis	Alejandro Martinez	Kelly B. Rolando
Gonzalo Carrasco, Jr.	Richard Weber	William Cherry	Jon Arden Jenson
Michael G. Prettitore	William J. Gawron, Sr.	Barry Giglio	Phoukham Tran
Sean L. Sluganski	Aréanah M. Preston	Pedro Torres-Santos	James Michael Lett
Adeed Fayaz	Kaitie Leising	Timothy J. Guyer	Jorge Pastore
Peter E.C. Jerving	Robert Shisler	Matthew Hare	Jovian Motley
Charles Herring	Jacob Arthur Beu	John "Jack" Hess	Freddy Ortiz
Julian Becerra	Kimberly Sickafoose	Jonah Oswald	Richard Louis Ruiz, Sr.
Jay Miller	Joshua Lee Clouse	Bill Sapolu	Michael Moran
James Muhlbauer	Brett Harris	James M. Sides	Michael Abbate
Christopher D. Fitzgerald	Michael Kunovich	Patrick Bauer	Alberto Felix
Geoffrey Redd	Caleb Conley	Bryan Holley	James Michael Russ
Kenneth Fowler	Marcus Zeigler *	Anthony Francone	Christopher Philip Rock
John Francis McArdle	Horren Randy Tyler	Daniel Rodgers	Paul Tracey
Andres M. Vasquez Lasso	Shawn Kevin Kelly	Matthew Pierson	Russell Earl Lavarl Jones
Asson Hacker	Cory Maynard	Frank Hayes, Jr.	Paul Martin
James R. Bailey	Anthony Rickerson	Michael Elaine Griffin	Robert M. Burney
Mason Griffith	Christopher J. Garrow	Robert Garten	Christopher B. Cummings
Frederick Charles Bowens, Jr.	Mark C. Wagner, II	Auston Smith Reudelhuber	Stephen Gibson
Jeremy McCain	Jacques F. Rougeau, Jr.	Kevin M. Cram	Daniel P. DiDato
Joseph Barlow	Scott Charles Norcutt	Ryan Clinkunbroomer	Joshua Hamilton *
David Poirrier	Aaron N. Smith	Trinity Leeann Reinhart	Michael C. Maxheimer
Scotty Canezaro	Carlos Taylor	Shannon "Shane" Lang, Sr.	Robert J. Silver
Garrett Crumby	Heather Glenn	Marylin A. Mayo	Tuan Le
Timothy James Unwin *	Delberth Phipps, Jr.	Darrin McMichael	Marc Andrew McIntyre
Nicholas Pepper	Tyee M. Browne	Robert John Kirwan	Philip Dale Nix
Emily Ann Breidenbach	Jessica Ebbighausen	John R. Randolph, III	* Ohio Line of Duty Deaths

*In 2023, there were **129 line of duty deaths** across the US and its territories (not including COVID deaths), as well as **25 K-9 LODDs**, a number that reflects a welcome decrease over each of the previous four years. According to an FOP year-end report, however, **378 officers** were shot in the line of duty in 2023, **the highest number ever recorded**. Thankfully, most likely due to improvements in medical trauma science and anti-ballistic technology, there were fewer deaths.*

Gunfire remains the largest cause of LODDs. In fact, there were 115 ambush-style attacks in 2023, resulting in 138 LEO injuries, and 20 LEO deaths. Please join us in saying, "Enough is enough!"

WE HONOR AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE AND SACRIFICE.

MAY YOU EACH REST IN PEACE