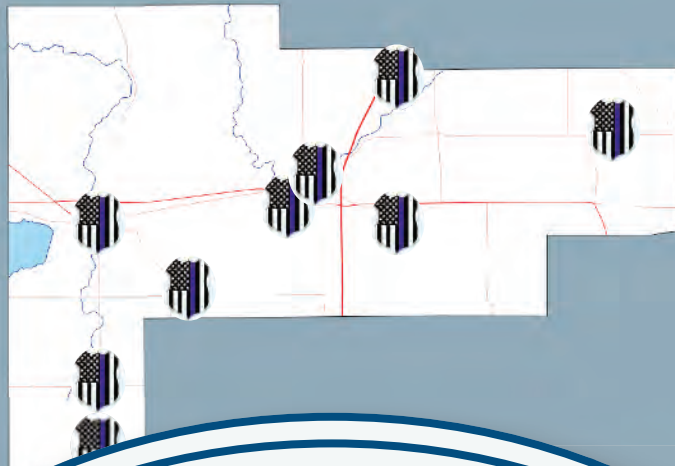


Auglaize County Sheriff's Office
New Knoxville
St. Marys
Cridersville
Auglaize
Wild

Minster
Piketoneta
Hinesfield
Center
Bremen



Let's Back The Blue

2024 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.

BEHIND EVERY STRONG
OFFICER
IS A STRONG
COMMUNITY
WHO SUPPORTS THEM

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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.



The bond between law enforcement and Veterans is built on shared values of service, sacrifice, and unwavering dedication to protecting others. Both have answered the call to serve and carry with them a deep sense of duty, discipline, and honor. This mutual respect creates a powerful connection rooted in courage, camaraderie, and commitment. Our Veterans organizations are some of our strongest supporters, and we salute and thank them!

ADVISORY PANEL

WAPAKONETA

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

ST. MARYS

*Mayor Joseph Hurlburt
Chief Brian Christopher
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:
Lindsey Young
Southwestern Auglaize:
Sara Topp
St. Marys:
Angie Tangeman*

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,

It's hard to believe we are now starting our 6th year encouraging support for and appreciation of our local law enforcement! The experiences over the past five years have just solidified our commitment to the safety and well-being of those who work tirelessly to protect our communities.

Each year we have experienced increased support from our many local businesses and organizations such as our Veterans organizations. With this support, we have to date:

- ★ **Approved nearly \$181,000 in grants** to our law enforcement agencies throughout the county for equipment and outreach needs;
- ★ **Increased scholarships to Auglaize County residents** attending area Peace Officer Training Academies at Apollo Career Center, Rhodes State University, Wright State University - Lake Campus, and beginning in 2024, Edison State Community College;
- ★ Supported **National Night Out, D.A.R.E., and Shop With the Blue;**
- ★ Supported the families of 10 Ohio officers killed in the line of duty through our **Benevolent Fund;**
- ★ Conducted blood drives, Blue Lights for Canned Goods drives, supplied materials for officers to leave with caregivers of children to help kids cope and understand when a parent is removed from the home due to substance abuse and resultant issues;
- ★ And much more!

In truth, your partnership in this endeavor has made all the above possible, and for that we are very grateful. We look forward to continuing to partner with you throughout 2025! 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, as well as 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

Top Priority: Supporting Our

Our vision for our 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 is what guides each decision we make. Whether it's goodie bags during respective appreciation week s or special meals during unusual circumstances such as April's 2024 total eclipse, we have worked to let our law enforcement personnel know they are supported and appreciated.

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 designating May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week in which that date falls as National 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 five years. Most 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!**



Thanks to the incredible generosity of *Let's Back the Blue 2.0*, Auglaize County law enforcement agencies now have six new virtual reality (VR) headsets for advanced training. The State of Ohio supports VR as an effective tool for training both new and experienced officers, making this donation particularly valuable. *Let's Back the Blue* in Auglaize County regularly provides grants for various equipment needs, made possible by the community's support through annual raffle ticket purchases. Thank you for your continued support, **Let's Back the Blue 2.0!**

~Chief Eric Morris, Minster Police Department

Law Enforcement Men and Women



When the idea for *Let's Back the Blue* was in its formative stages, the initial intention was to canvas the area encouraging friends, neighbors, organizations and businesses to show visible signs of support for our local police officers who were being painted unfairly with a broad brush of demoralizing condemnation. Mistrust of law enforcement along with the decline in respect for officers made their jobs increasingly dangerous. *Let's Back the Blue* sought to reverse this trend by encouraging the silent majority to step up and show support. Wristbands were distributed, flags were flown, yard signs were placed, and unfortunately, when COVID struck, budgets were cut. Our mission then included fundraising to help our local struggling law enforcement agencies whatever way we could.

This past year we started to return to our original vision by showing each officer, dispatcher, correctional officer, admin, and wildlife officer that Auglaize County does indeed appreciate and support their efforts to make our communities safe places in which to live, work, and raise families. Ninety two businesses and organizations were represented on our fundraising raffle ticket, a genuine show of support for our local Auglaize County law enforcement personnel. **We see you - and we appreciate you!**

I would like to thank *Let's Back the Blue 2.0* for a few reasons. This program was started a few years back to make sure that Auglaize County Law Enforcement had what they needed. This group has done an amazing job in helping out. They raise most of their money through an annual raffle called "We Got Their Six!" and use the proceeds from that to create a grant fund for Auglaize LE. Since 2022 *Let's Back the Blue 2.0* has saved New Knoxville taxpayers almost \$19,000.00 in purchasing new radios, tasers, firearms and the decals on our new cruiser, which will be on the road soon. So a HUGE thank you to *Let's Back the Blue* for a job well done.

~Chief Chris McKinney, New Knoxville Police Department

Law Enforcement Grant Fund

Not everyone has an unlimited budget, and law enforcement agencies are no different. Working within the constraints of tight budgets, our local agencies frequently turn to grants, one of which is *Let's Back the Blue's* Law Enforcement Grant Fund. **Our Law Enforcement Grant Fund is funded largely through fundraisers and donations to help Auglaize County Law Enforcement**, a fact of which our local residents, businesses, and organizations can be proud. Each item purchased through this grant fund fulfills a specific need and results in safer conditions for our officers and their communities.

2024 saw **\$50,629 approved for Auglaize County Law Enforcement** needs through our local grant fund, with \$22,133 of that going to fund equipment for a necessary upgrade to the Multi-Agency Radio Communications System (MARCS). **Since its inception in December 2020, we have awarded nearly \$181,000 for local law enforcement needs and expect to surpass \$225,000 before year's end.**

Examples of Items Purchased Through Our Law Enforcement Grant Fund:

- MARCS Compatible Radios
- Internet Devices for Cruisers
- Radar Detectors
- K-9 Equipment
- Computers
- Automated External Defibrillators
- Cameras for Crime Scene and Accident Investigations
- Stop Sticks
- Laser Lidar Training Equipment
- Solar Powered Speed Alert Signs
- Community Outreach Efforts
- Animal Control Poles
- Holsters and Firearms
- Door Access Control System
- Active Shooter Body Armor Kits
- Night Vision Goggles and Camera
- Virtual Reality Training Programs



Another great resource for our department was provided by *Let's Back the Blue 2.0*. Last year, Lt Patrick Green attended a week long training to become a Virtual Reality Instructor. Our department was able to have in-service training for our Officers and Dispatchers. The training ranged from mental health issues to high stress violent crimes. This donation is very valuable, we are thankful to have the support from ***Let's Back the Blue*** and our community.

~Chief Calvin Schneider, Wapakoneta Police Department

Police Academy Scholarships

2024 was an exciting year for *Let's Back the Blue* in that we were able to increase our scholarship offerings to Auglaize County residents attending area police training academies. We now offer **THREE \$1,000 scholarships at FOUR area academies: Rhodes State College, Wright State University - Lake Campus, Edison State Community College, and Apollo Career Center, for a total of \$12,000 in scholarships available annually.** Edison State, believing in the genuine need for qualified candidates, has generously **MATCHED** our scholarship, something we hope we will see at other institutions in the future.

Attracting qualified men and women to careers in law enforcement has been difficult over the past six-plus years, resulting in reduced academy enrollment and a reduced pool of qualified candidates. Providing scholarships creates a proactive way to address recruitment challenges, hopefully encouraging capable, motivated individuals to pursue law enforcement careers. Additionally, local residents are more likely to have deep roots in the community and a better understanding of its needs, cultures, and concerns. When officers reflect the community they serve, it fosters trust and mutual respect - an important part of our vision!



Before receiving support from *Let's Back the Blue*, I was working hard at Taco Bell, trying to save enough money to afford the police academy. It was a struggle—I was determined to pursue my dream of serving my community, but financial barriers made the path uncertain. Thanks to their generosity, I was able to overcome those obstacles and focus fully on my training. Their support didn't just fund my education—it reinforced my commitment to law enforcement and reminded me that there are people who truly believe in the next generation of officers. I am grateful for their help and eager to give back by protecting and serving.

~Officer Bradyn Adams, Minster Police Department



Benevolent Fund



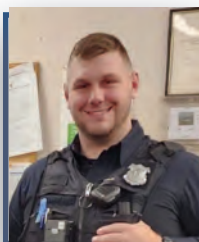
Although our funds stay in Auglaize County to benefit our officers, all members of law enforcement are like family to each other. What happens to one is felt by all. With that in mind, we created a **Benevolent Fund** with specific guidelines for any **Auglaize County officer suffering critical injury in the line of duty**, as well as for the family of any **Ohio Officer killed in the line of duty**. Since its inception in 2022, sadly there have been **eleven Line of Duty deaths of Ohio officers**. The 2024 Line of Duty deaths in Ohio include:



Lieutenant Rodney Osborne

Ohio Department of
Rehabilitation and Correction
EOW: Tuesday, April 9, 2024
Cause: Gunfire (Inadvertent)

Lieutenant Rodney Osborne was shot and killed during a training exercise at the Corrections Training Academy at 1781 State Route 762 in Orient, Ohio. Lieutenant Osborne had served with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction for 13 years and was assigned to the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility, serving on the honor guard, special response team, and the statewide special tactics and response team. In the week prior to his death, he had received Employee of the Year recognition. He is survived by his wife and three children.



Police Officer Jacob Derbin

Euclid Police Department
EOW: Saturday, May 11, 2024
Cause: Gunfire

Police Officer Jacob Derbin was shot and killed while responding to a disturbance call in the 300 block of East 211th Street in Euclid at about 9:55 pm. Arriving at the scene, he was ambushed by a convicted felon who was wanted for violating conditions of his community supervision. The suspect fled the scene and later committed suicide. Officer Derbin was transported to University Hospital, where he succumbed to his wounds.

Officer Derbin was a United States Army National Guard veteran and had served with the Euclid Police Department for 10 months. He is survived by his mother, father, three brothers, a sister, and fiancée.



Police Officer Jamieson Ritter

Cleveland Division of Police
EOW: Thursday, July 4, 2024
Cause: Gunfire

Police Officer Jamieson Ritter was shot and killed at about 1:00 am at a home while attempting to arrest a subject wanted for felonious assault. The man exited the home and attempted to flee on a bike before opening fire on officers. Officer Ritter was shot and killed by the subject. The suspect was declared incompetent to stand trial and has been hospitalized indefinitely. If he improves, he will face aggravated murder charges.

Officer Ritter was a member of the Ohio Army National Guard. He had served with the Cleveland Division of Police for four years, and was recently recognized as Officer of the Month. He is survived by his parents, two sisters, a brother, a niece, and a nephew.



Correction Officer Andrew Lansing

Ohio Department of
Rehabilitation and Correction
EOW: Wednesday, Dec. 25, 2024
Cause: Assault

Correction Officer Andy Lansing died after being assaulted by an inmate on Christmas morning around 7:30 a.m. at the Ross Correctional Institution, 16197 State Route 104 in Chillicothe. The inmate went into the prison yard and attacked Officer Lansing, who was working in the middle of the yard by himself. Officer Lansing was transported to Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center where he died from severe head trauma. The inmate has been charged with aggravated murder.

Officer Lansing was a United States Army veteran and had served with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction for over 24 years. He is survived by his wife, two children, three sisters, and three brothers.

"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.** Because of the success of the 2024 raffle, *Let's Back the Blue* will increase their scholarships to three \$1,000 scholarships at four area academies for 2025, for a total of \$12,000 available. We are deeply indebted to and thankful for the 90+ 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 spread our vision and mission throughout our county.

Over 92 Businesses and Organizations Participating! AWESOME!!

2024 GOT THEIR SIX! RAFFLE

Thank You! Got Their Six! WATCH DRAWING LIVE ON FACEBOOK SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2024, 12 NOON

WE SUPPORT OUR GENEROUS RAFFLE PARTNERS AND OUR VETERANS!

\$50.00 letsbacktheblue@bright.net

Prize #1: \$1,125 Taste of the Auglaize Gift Card Package #1 courtesy of the following merchants (Prize #8):

- ASTRO Lanes
- New Bremen: New Bremen Coffee Co, Casa Lapita, 17 West, The Pie Shell, Speedway Lanes, The Deli Bar
- Wapakoneta: The Side Rail, Know Creamery, La Grande Plaza, J. Marie's Wood, Pizzeria & Grill, The Alpha Cafe
- Amos Lanes, Caffe Amos
- St. Marys: JT's Brew & Grill, Hometown Plaza, Two Scoops, Variety Lanes
- Minister: Caddy's Bar & Golf Lounge, Community Lanes, Uniopolis, Mama's Pizzeria

Prize #2: \$1,125 Taste of the Auglaize Gift Card Package #2 courtesy of the following merchants (Prize #42):

- Wapakoneta: Rhythm & Brews, The Side Rail, AJ's Woody's, Amos Lanes, El Antico, The Whaling Knife
- St. Marys: Hometown Plaza, Friendly Tavern, Variety Lanes, Two Scoops
- New Bremen: Gongoozlers, New Bremen Coffee Co, Casa Lapita, 17 West, Speedway Lanes
- Minister: But's Pizza, Lane 19 Patio, Willy's Tavern, Holy Smoke & BBQ, The Wooden Shoe

Prize #36: S.M.A.R.T. Gift Package

- *Laura Yehon - State Farm Insurance
- *Pete's Boutique
- *CR8 Viera Winery
- *Hometown Plaza
- *The Hair Place
- *Gina's Candy Store
- *WVJK Party Supplies
- *Miami & Eric
- *Trading Company
- *Shoreline Ink
- *St. Marys Area Chamber of Commerce
- *City of St. Marys
- *Guarini's Pizzeria
- *St. Marys Theater and Grand Opera
- *Underground - Nails
- *Studio Salon & Spa
- *Fun One Professionals
- *Minister Bank - St. Marys Branch
- *Malheur & Associates
- *Egan & Company
- *JT's Brew & Grill
- *S.M.A.R.T.

Prize #37: \$5,000 CASH - Wapakoneta American Legion Post #2350

Prize #38: \$5,000 CASH - Wapakoneta American Legion Post #2350

Prize #39: \$5,000 CASH - Wapakoneta American Legion Post #2350

Prize #40: \$5,000 CASH - Wapakoneta American Legion Post #2350

Prize #41: \$5,000 CASH - Wapakoneta American Legion Post #2350

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Prize #99: \$5,000 CASH - Wapakoneta American Legion Post #2350

Prize #100: \$5,000 CASH - Wapakoneta American Legion Post #2350

MUST PRESENT THIS TICKET TO CLAIM PRIZE

**** See back for more information**

Winner must complete ATF Form #473 and pass NICS background check

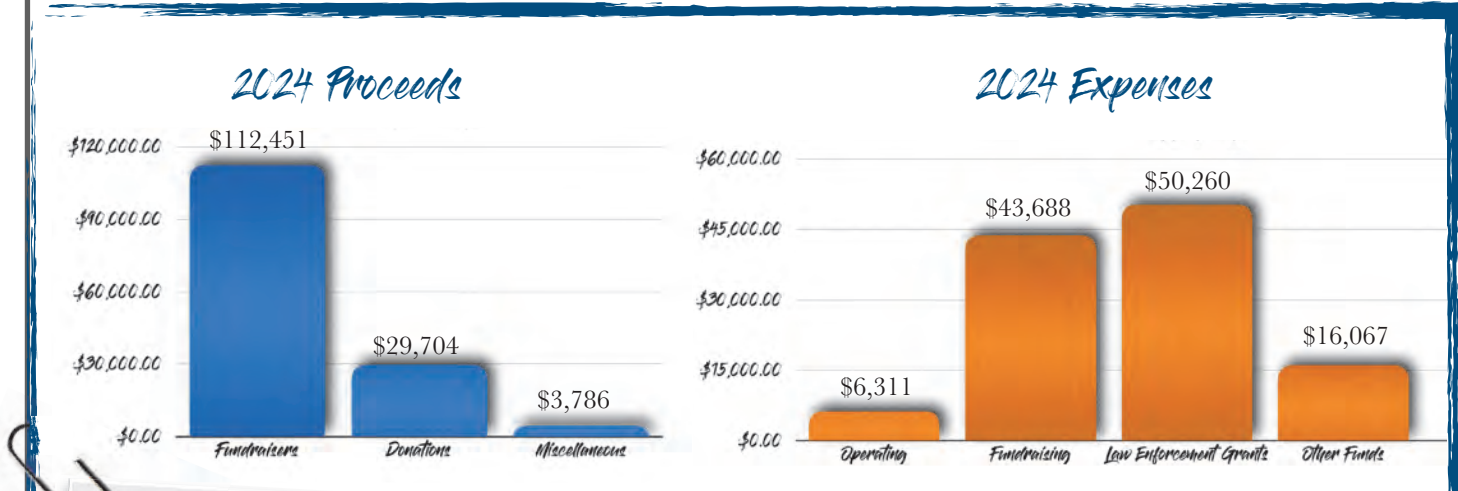
The Cridersville Police Department would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to *Let's Back the Blue 2.0* for their incredible generosity and support! From September 2024 to January 2025, they generously purchased much-needed items for our department, saving us a total of approximately \$4,529.95 in funding. These items included a vest for Ptl. Chiles, new internet connection devices for the police cruisers, animal control poles, and an access control system for the police station! Your kindness and unwavering support make a huge difference in helping us serve and protect our community. We truly appreciate everything you do for law enforcement, and we are proud to have such dedicated supporters standing behind us. Thank you again, *Let's Back The Blue*, for having our backs!

~Chief Nathan Fried, Cridersville Police Department

The Financial Picture

Let's Back the Blue takes great pride in being a responsible steward of every dollar entrusted to us. We operate with transparency, integrity, and a deep commitment to ensuring that all funds are used efficiently and effectively to directly support law enforcement agencies and officers in our communities. From equipment grants to training assistance and morale-boosting initiatives, every investment is carefully considered to maximize impact. Although our operating funds were slightly more than in past years, we are still pleased to report almost 95% of all proceeds generated went directly to furthering our mission of support and appreciation of our local law enforcement.

We are deeply grateful for the incredible community response to our mission, especially that of our Veterans organizations. Your generosity and belief in our cause make it possible for us to stand strong behind those who protect and serve. Together, we are making a meaningful difference!



94.6% of every dollar goes
to furthering our mission!

A huge thanks goes out to *Let's Back the Blue 2.0*, as the Waynesfield Police Department recently received brand new Rugged Dell laptops courtesy of their amazing grant program. With the upcoming end of support for Windows 10, the police department's cruiser laptops were unable to be updated to Windows 11 and needed to be replaced. This was going to be an extreme strain on the department's very tight budget, but the original hope was to upgrade the computers with used devices that supported Windows 11. Unfortunately, that wasn't possible. So, we completed the *Let's Back The Blue 2.0* grant paperwork and the organization graciously approved the purchase of two brand new devices at a cost of around \$2,300 each!

The nonprofit organization has supported law enforcement agencies in Auglaize County for several years and, specifically the Waynesfield community through the purchase of a speed sign, hand-held laser, and other equipment for the police department. Many thanks to the people who support *Let's Back the Blue* in their annual raffle fundraiser because without your support, these grants would not be possible.

~Chief Nathan Motter, Cridersville Police Department

Our Donors-Our Heartbeat

Donors are absolutely essential to the success of *Let's Back the Blue* because they provide crucial financial support that allows us to fulfill our mission. This initiative is all about showing real, tangible support to the brave men and women in law enforcement who risk their lives every day to protect our communities. Whether it's funding needed equipment, scholarships, or ensuring events like the *Got Their Six!* raffle reach their full potential, **none of it would be possible without the generosity of our cash and in-kind donors.**

Every dollar and in-kind gift given is more than just a donation—it's a statement of gratitude and solidarity. Donors help us create a powerful ripple effect of encouragement, showing officers that their sacrifices are seen, appreciated, and backed by the very people they serve. Our donor support empowers us to turn heartfelt appreciation into action, and that's what truly makes a difference.

Simply put, *Let's Back the Blue* runs on community support, and our donors are the **HEARTBEAT** of that community.

DIAMOND DONOR \$5,000+

AmVets, Wapakoneta Post 333
American Legion, Wapakoneta Post 330



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

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8445,
Wapakoneta

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

Gilberg Furniture - Wapakoneta Lowe's - Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9289, St. Marys
St. Marys Community Foundation - Telephone Service Company

SILVER DONOR \$500 - \$999

Minster Bank - Minster
B&G Auto and Recycling
ChillTex, LLC
Eley Funeral Home
R.E. Becker Builders
Midway Trailer Sales
TopMark FCU
Merritt Real Estate

Black Iron Armory
Anytime Fitness - Wapak
Waynesfield Lions Club
Mottieriffic Music &
Photo Booth
Moran Refrigeration
Pine Bark Cattle Co.
Schultz Family Farms

Midwest Shooting Center
Western Ohio True Value
Hardware - Minster
Auglaize Audiology
Perry's Heating &
Air Conditioning/ATR
Sam Patel
Binkley Real Estate

Frost Roofing
Bambauer Fertilizer & Seed
Stroh, Johnson & Co, LLP
G.A. Wintzer & Son
Evans Roofing and
Supply
St. Marys Foundry
RJB on Wayne, LLC

BRONZE DONOR \$250-\$499

Schlosser Funeral Home - Minster Service Club - Fowler's TV
Prairie View Golf Club - Wapak Marathon - Raines Management Group

BLUE DONOR - To \$249

Speedway Lanes
Willy's Tavern
Koenig Insurance
Village Green
Polished Supply Co.
Cheryl's Cookies
Kah Meats
Wapak Marathon
Krave Creamery
LaGrande Pizza
The Alpha Cafe
Two Scoops
The Side Rail
Casa Lupita
Coffé Amor

Rhythm & Brews
Al's Woody's
Mama J's
Astro Lanes
The Whaling Knife
Varsity Lanes
17 West
New Bremen Coffee
Hometown Pizza
Gongoozlers
The Deli Bar(n)
Bayliff & Son
Funeral Home

S.M.A.R.T
Community Lanes
Lane 19 Patio
Caddy's
The Pie Shell
Bud's Pizza
The Wooden Shoe
Friendly Tavern
El Azteca
Holy Smokes & BBQ
J. Marie's
Laura Yelton - State
Farm Insurance

St Marys - Minster
Bank
Plus One Professional
Real Estate
GR8 Vines Winery
Malhotra Assoc. Ins.
Eight & Company
Photographic Design
Underground Nails,
Studio, Salon & Spa
St. Marys Theater &
Grand Opera
City of St. Marys

JT's Brew & Grill
Joe Bailey
The Hair Place
Girty's Candy Store
Miami & Erie
Trading Company
Sketcherz Ink
Guarnieri's Pizza
WWJK Party Supplies
Island Dress Shoppe
Effie's Boutique
St. Marys Area
Chamber of Com.
Becky Bayliff
Dianne Knipp

Our Dedicated 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. It also manages the only Special Response Team (SRT) in the county, along with a very active drug task force. The 73 employees who are a vital part of the ACSO include administrative employees, 25 full and part-time Corrections Officers, food service employees, 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, watch over your homes when you are away, and preserve the peace. Their active Auxiliary assists in serving county residents for security at special events throughout Auglaize County, supporting full time Deputies in their day to day operations. The ACSO is active in schools and community, and is a true partner in assuring our safety.



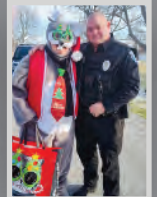
MINSTER POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Minster Police Department is dedicated to providing exceptional service and protection to our community. We are proud to have **eight full-time officers** and a **full-time administrative assistant** who focus on preventing crime before it happens. Under the leadership of Chief Eric Morris, we work closely with local schools and officials to foster community engagement, promote safety initiatives, and implement proactive measures.

Operating **24/7** from our **new state-of-the-art facility**, we ensure that we are always available to serve and protect our community efficiently and effectively.



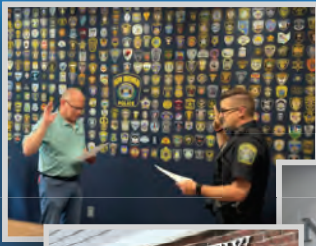
CRIDERSVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT



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. Our K-9 "Doc" retired in 2024, and we will welcome our new K-9 Mischka, who will train with Officer Logan Newbauer in the spring of 2025.

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 just over 1,000 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, vehicle inspections, and participation in "Drive to Live" educational programs conducted monthly. These programs are designed to speak with high school students of driving age about the importance of driver safety. DRIVE is an acronym for Decisions, Responsibility, Invest, Value, and Educate. Troopers at the Wapakoneta Post complete these details to educate youthful drivers and speak about the importance of safe driving practices. Troopers have also taken part in *Let's Back the Blue* 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. Implementing the core values of honesty, integrity, professionalism, fairness, and accountability, the SMPD, under the leadership of Chief Brian J. Christopher, provides 24-hour protection with 16 officers, one full-time detective, 4 dispatchers, one K-9 officer, and a Code Enforcement Officer. The SMPD promises to perform their duties ethically and responsibly, knowing that their bond with the community is fostered through trust and transparency, ultimately enhancing safety and cooperation.



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, 1 part-time LEO, 6 dispatchers, 2 auxiliary officers and a chaplain. 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 2024 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 the father of Auglaize County Sheriff's Sergeant Ryan Burke and cousin to ACSO Lieutenant Doug Burke. 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.

Greg Lowry

Retiring from the Wapakoneta PD, Greg's experience at multiple LE agencies, also including Cridersville PD, the ACSO, and St. Marys Township, provides valuable insight into law enforcement needs.

THIS REPORT IS DEDICATED TO THE 163 LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL ACROSS THE USA WHO MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE IN THE LINE OF DUTY IN 2024:

Justin Smith	Steven Allen Singer	Philip John Michael	Kevin Ramirez-Vasquez
Eric Anthony Minix	Alfred George Williams	Floyd H. Miles, Jr.	Cailee Campbell
Jeremy Malone	Rodney Osborne*	Ryan So	Dale Coski
William A. Burkel	Derek Sean Baer	Bradley J. Reckling	Michelle Lynn Quintero
Herbert Fonseca	Ross Bartlett	Luis Algarin De Jesús	Charles James Lau
David J. McShane	Joseph Russell McKinney	Corey Proulx	Ruben Garcia
Joel Popp	William Marty Jackson, II	William Butler, Jr.	Clarence E. Word, III
Michael "Zini" Kurinzi	Michael E. Jensen	Kevin Canavan	Lex Allen Love
Jimmy Cenescar	Michael Hoosock	Jamieson Ritter*	Kevin M. Grossheim
Zachary Fink	Fred Fislar	Edgar Ordóñez	Timothy W. S. Johns
Ken Prorok	John Kilpatrick	Matthew Bowen	Maurice "Mo" Joseph
Timothy Tavarus	Brian Herbert	Fernando Esqueda	Bradford D. McNew
Christopher Johnson	Alfredo "Freddy" Flores	Robert William Sumner	Corey S. Thompsen
Steven A. Tyrrell	Jordan Wingate	Mohamed Said	Joseph Love
Greg McCowan	Tobin Bolter	Hunter Scott Miller	John L. Carey
Rondald Bates	Luis M. Huesca	Segus R. Jolivet	Enrique Martinez
Jonah Hernandez	John H. Coddou, III	Kenneth B. Campbell	Evan Dunn
Nevada Krinkee	Kyle Hicks	Rafael Wordlaw	Burl Wesley Everman
Robert John Leonard	Ian Taylor	Demetrice Lavelle Johnson	Ralph "Butch" Waller, Jr.
Paul Elmstrand	John M. Collins	Bradley Michael Link	Luis Paez
Matthew Henke Ruge	Russell Croxton	Troy Floyd	Katherine Hutson
Chase Winston Redner	Lyndon J. Cosgriff-Flax	Hunter Reedy	Louis Pepe
Charles Rivette	Joshua Eyer	Billy Randolph	Ignacio "Dan" Diaz
Wisbens Antoine	Samuel Poloche	Brandon T. Cunningham	Cooper Dawson
John Randall McCrary	William "Alden" Elliott	James Crowley	Jesse Branch
Cody Allen	Thomas M. Weeks	Steven P. Bilodeau	Philip J. Schifini
Christopher M. Gadd	Kevin Linn Palmer	Taylor Jaimeson Bristow	Allan Reddins
Bryan "Brad" Sweetman	Marcellus E. Bethea	Austin Machitar	Jacob Candanoza
Paul R. Hargrove	William E. McLean, III	Wayne Ellis David	Colton Dale Pulsipher
Christopher Luna	Bill Hooser	Darron Lee Burks	Rick Finley
William A. Anderson, Sr.	Benedicto Albizu, Jr.	Phylicia Carson	Elio Diaz
Thomas A. Sanfratello	Gerald Nelson	Shane R. Eyre	Jeffrey Kanas
Justin Hare	Jacob Derbin*	Raymond Kuuchi	Isaiah Bias
Joseph M. Stillitano	Anthony Mezzacappa, Jr.	Mark Reynolds	Dennis Francis Kelly
Frank Cimmino	John Dale Leatham	Zane Tristan Coolidge	Clay M. Carns
Jonathan Diller	Pricilla Soell Pierson	Jeremy Boykins	Michael Horan
Christina Musil	Aaron Pelletier	Jaime Junior Roman	Andrew Lansing*
Eliezer Ramos-Velez	Jamal Mitchell	Brandon Schreiber	Jeffrey A. Burke
Adam Buckner	Davis Geovanni Martinez	Enrique Delgado-Garcia	
Jermyus O'Marian-	Joshua Briese	Daniel Kerstetter	
D'Nazhray Young	Vicente Ortiz, Jr.	Joshua C. Phipps	
Andrew John Faught	Brenda J. Lowery	David Lee	

*** Denotes four Ohio Line of Duty Deaths**

In 2024, there were **163 Line of Duty Deaths** across the US and its territories (not including one COVID death), reversing a LODD decrease seen over the previous five years. Thankfully, 2024 saw a 9% decrease in officers **shot** from the 2023 all-time high of 378, yet of those 342 officers shot in 2024, 52 were were killed, **an increase of 8%**. Unfortunately, Ohio's LODDs increased from three to four, three of whom died of gunfire and one by assault. Since our inception in 2020, Ohio has lost 19 officers to non-COVID Line of Duty Deaths.

There were 21 K-9 Line of Duty Deaths, a welcome decrease from the 25 who died in 2023.

WE HONOR ALL THOSE KILLED AND INJURED IN THE LINE OF DUTY