



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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# Foreword

As Chief of Police, I am proud to present the 2023 Annual Report for the City of Mentor Police Department. This report details the activities and progress made by the department in 2023.

The format is a compilation of individual section reports brought together into a single document. This allows for a unique overview of department operations as viewed by the personnel who are responsible for program implementation. The Mentor Police Department continues to receive much support from the City Manager, his staff, other city departments, and City Council. It is vitally important to also acknowledge the support offered by the citizens of this community. Our community continues to reach out a hand to law enforcement, and we are proud to join with you to make this city a safe place to live, work, and play with strong police-community relationships.



Our department cannot accomplish anything without its greatest resource, its people. As you will read, there have been numerous accomplishments made in 2023 by the men and women of the Mentor Police Department as they served the citizens of Mentor.

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**Ken Gunsch**  
**Chief of Police**

# Mission Statement

**W**e, the members of the Mentor Police Department, vow to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the State of Ohio, to maintain order, and to protect life and property. We pledge to promptly deliver the highest quality service and wisely use available resources. We shall strive to improve the quality of life for the community and endeavor to be role models.

**W**e will accomplish our mission through innovation, problem-solving and community involvement.

**I**n accepting this challenge, we will genuinely pursue our core values of *Integrity, Caring, Fairness* and *Professionalism*.

## **INTEGRITY**

**We are dedicated to** individually upholding the public trust and being held accountable for performing our duties ethically, morally, and honestly.

## **CARING**

**We are dedicated to** showing concern, courtesy and sensitivity to ourselves, fellow employees, and those we serve. We will be compassionate and treat everyone as we wish to be treated.

## **FAIRNESS**

**We are dedicated to** treating all persons with respect, understanding and dignity. We will consistently use common sense in a non-discriminatory fashion to promote harmony and equality.

## **PROFESSIONALISM**

**We are dedicated to** providing the community with a competent, responsive and supportive department. We will provide quality service through effective communication, cooperation, and personal involvement. Our commitment to excellence in all we do will present a professional image.

The **Mentor Police Department** consists of three major divisions, each responsible for separate duties and functions, but designed to offer support to each other. Currently the Police Department consists of the Administrative Division, Operations Division, and Support Services Division. The Command Staff of the Police Department is made up of the Chief of Police, who oversees the entire Department, and three Captains each of whom command one of the three Divisions. The Command Staff works at coordinating all the efforts of the Police Department to achieve the Department's goals and objectives. The Chief and the Captains are assisted by two full time secretaries. The Victim's Assistance program is directed through the office of the Chief of Police.

## **Distinguished Awards**

To recognize outstanding work and achievement, the Mentor Police Department has adopted the Lake County Association of Chiefs of Police (LCACP) Award Program. The awards consist of a citation bar to be worn on the officer's uniform and a written account of the award to be placed in the officer's personnel file.

Some awards are issued internally through the department. The Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service, Combat Cross, Injured on Duty, and Life Saving Award are normally awarded by the LCACP awards committee. Occasionally an officer is recognized for his or her achievements by outside agencies and businesses.

<b>Jeremy Epling</b>	<b>Officer of the Year (for 2022)</b>
<b>Tracey Woodward</b>	<b>Civilian of the Year (for 2022)</b>
<b>Mike Majernik</b>	<b>VFW Public Servant of the Year</b>
<b>Matthew Jacob</b>	<b>Letter of Commendation (June)</b>
<b>Ryan Butler</b>	<b>Letter of Commendation (June)</b>
<b>Jonathan Smelcer</b>	<b>Letter of Commendation (October)</b>
<b>Steve Ondercin</b>	<b>Letter of Commendation (October)</b>
<b>Ric Smith</b>	<b>Department Excellence Award</b>

## Historian

In late 2010, it was decided that the police department needed to make a special effort to preserve its history. The volunteer position of a Police Historian was created to document, record, and honor past officers and the history of the department. Sgt. Steve Ondercin has volunteered to be the Historian. In the spring of 2011 display cases crafted by the city road department woodshop were installed in the patrol hallway where officers passing them are reminded of the rich history of their department and the citizens that are served.

Donations were received from retired officers and others to preserve the past and honor those officers with some treasured photographs, memorabilia, and old equipment. Both display cases are filled, but their content is frequently getting updated. Since today is tomorrow's history, the department is constantly collecting items, especially photographs of officers and current equipment.



## Mentor Police Victim Assistance Program

The Mentor Police Victim Assistance Program addresses the needs of crime victims in the cities of Mentor and Mentor on the Lake. Our program has served over 6,750 victims since its inception in 1997. The program currently employs one full-time Victim Advocate who works in cooperation with the police department, municipal court, probation department, and prosecutor's office in assisting victims through the criminal justice process. A volunteer also provides clerical assistance to the program.

The goal of the program is to provide prompt, personalized services to citizens victimized by crime. Victims are provided written notifications regarding hearings and made aware of their rights as a victim. Victims are welcome to meet individually with the advocate concerning their individual needs and concerns. Services may begin from the moment a victim makes a police report and continue through sentencing and probation. The advocate is available to provide victims with court accompaniment, crisis intervention, complete explanation of the criminal court process, referrals to counselors and social service agencies, notification of court hearings, assistance in obtaining protection orders, notification and awareness of VINE (Victim Information and Notification Everyday), obtaining restitution, and assistance in completing Victim Impact Statements and Victims of Crime Compensation applications. Victims of Domestic Violence are provided with comprehensive services including safety planning, referrals, and information packets. Victims receiving services in 2023 ranged from age 1 through 83 years old. The Victim Advocate assists residents with safety concerns regardless of whether a police report is made, or crime is prosecuted.

With the 2023 expansion and codification of Victim's Rights Laws in Ohio, the advocate had an integral role in developing procedures and providing extensive training to two police departments and court staff to implement new mandates. The police department has updated their website to include the Victim Rights Request Form, extensive Victim's Rights information, and links to other state and local agencies that can provide assistance.

The Mentor Victim Assistance Program served 267 Victims in 2023. Compared to 190 victims served in 2022, this is a 39% increase over last year. This increase is in part related to a triple homicide involving an active shooter at a trailer park community. Multiple witnesses, neighbors and family members of the deceased victims required immediate services. In coordination with state and local agencies, the advocate coordinated a trauma response team available for the community offering on site crisis intervention and immediate referrals to services such as counseling and Victim of Crime Compensation assistance.

Over 30% of all cases served in 2023 involved Domestic Violence. Given the complexity of domestic violence, these cases typically are provided the most extensive services including crisis intervention, safety planning, referrals, and no contact orders. It is not uncommon for the advocate to work with the same victim over a prolonged period to provide ongoing support and advocacy to enable the victim to leave the abusive relationship.

In addition to domestic violence, other crimes such as assault, menacing, burglary, robbery and theft are major areas of focus for the program. Services were provided to 129 felony crime victims who were provided advocacy and information during arraignment



and preliminary hearings. Additionally, the Victim Advocate contacts victims prior to arraignment for their input and to assess the need for No Contact Orders as bond and/or probation conditions then presents those recommendations to the court. In 2023, 125 No Contact Orders were initiated and processed by the Victim Advocate.

The program works in concert with the Mentor Municipal Court Judge, Mentor Prosecutor, Probation Officers, Lake County Victim Assistance Office and other law enforcement and community agencies such as Forbes House, Crossroads, and the ADAMHS Board in the best interests of all crime victims to provide quality services.

The Mentor Police Victim Assistance Office receives funding through a grant from the Victims of Crime Act. The program is conveniently located within the Mentor Police Department Building and can be reached at 440-205-2438.

## **Administration Division**

The Administrative Division is responsible for the Community Services Unit, Court Services Unit, grant procurement and management, labor contract management, personnel, training, research and project management, and working with Public Works to manage the Department's fleet of vehicles.

Due to several recent retirements the department offered a police officer entrance exam in February, 2023. The hiring process is a very detail oriented and involved endeavor and continued through the end of the year. As a result of the hiring process, five officers were offered and accepted positions as police officers. They were sworn into the position in August 2023. Two attended the Ohio Highway Patrol Academy prior to department training while three started immediately with in-house training.



In the fall of 2023, the department started the implementation process for our public safety software system. We worked, and continue to work, diligently with our selected vendor, Tyler Technologies, to have a successful implementation of a successful product. We anticipate the upgrade will be complete in the summer of 2023.

Also, in 2023 we completed implementation of a new policy and procedure application offered by Lexipol. This allows us to keep our policies and procedures up to date with

current laws and best practices. While several items were updated, the vast majority of our previous policies and procedures were unchanged.

## **Court Services**

The Court Liaison Officer, a sworn Mentor Police Officer, is responsible for the security and safety of the Mentor Municipal Court. The position is filled with one full-time and two part-time sworn Mentor police officers. This format allows complete coverage throughout the year. There are also two additional part-time officers (unarmed) that manage the front door of the Court and Police Department entrance. They make sure all persons entering have business with these areas and are scanned for weapons, contraband, etc.

The Court Officer performed daily security checks of the courtrooms, all offices, hallways, stairwells, and outer perimeters. Panic alarms were tested monthly, and the results documented. The Court Officer discussed and reviewed safety and security issues with the bailiffs and the front door officers.

The Court Officer ensured timely delivery of any official documents to and from the Courts including criminal complaints, arrest reports, traffic citations, warrants, jail commits, and subpoenas. An additional duty included transporting prisoners between the Mentor Court and Lake County jail. This took place at least once daily.

## **Community Service Unit**

In the routine course of duty and regular engagement with the public, each member of the Mentor Police Department fulfills the role of a community service officer. The Community Service Unit remains steadfast in fostering a favorable perception of the police department, accomplishing this through educational programming and ongoing engagement with the community.



The Mentor Police Community Service Unit is part of a county-wide Safe Communities Coalition, collaborating with officers from various police and fire departments in Lake County. The coalition, which includes representatives from diverse organizations such as the Lake County General Health District, Ohio Traffic Safety Office, ODOT, the Council on Aging, the ADAMHS board, Crossroads, and MADD, meets regularly to plan events and enhance overall safety in Lake County.

During the year, Crime Prevention Officer Scott Bell retired after four years of dedicated service in the Unit. Officer Dan Radigan has been appointed as his successor starting

January 1, 2024. Additionally, Tracey Woodward, the part-time Civilian Crime Prevention Specialist, will transition to a full-time position on the same date.

The Community Service Unit actively engages in various community and business safety events, including long-standing initiatives such as the third-grade seat belt program and poster contest. This program, spanning three decades, educates third graders in all nine Mentor Elementary Schools on the importance of proper seatbelt safety. The Unit also organizes events like the “Buckle Down” campaign, Safety Town, National Night Out, Homecoming and Prom Blitzes, Protect and Serve Tavern and the Department Open House, among others, fostering community connections and safety awareness.



In collaboration with the fire department, the Community Service Unit hosted Safety Village, an event inviting 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes to explore the fire museum and learn about essential safety topics. The unit also conducted safety demonstrations at local high schools, focusing on topics like distracted driving and sober driving. The annual “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” campaign is co-sponsored with the Lake County Crime Prevention Task Force, emphasizing responsible choices. This year the Drive Sober event was held at the Painesville Speedway.

The "Prevent-A-Gram" program remains active, with daily patrol reports highlighting potential criminal targets, such as open garage doors or bicycles left unattended overnight. Subsequently, residents are informed of these concerns through mailings from the police department. In 2023, the unit distributed 191 Prevent-A-Grams to keep residents informed and enhance community safety.

Crime Prevention Specialist Tracey Woodward, the sole certified Child Safety Seat Technician, conducted inspections and installations, educating parents and ensuring correct usage and care of the child seats. She actively participated in ongoing education classes to stay abreast of the ever-changing car seats. In 2023, the unit conducted inspections and installations for 69 car seats. Notably, it was observed that over 90% of the child safety seats inspected upon arrival had not been correctly installed.



The Mentor Police Department provides an affordable bicycle helmet program, offering high-quality helmets at reduced prices for both children and adults. These helmets are available for purchase by the public and are personally fitted by a Crime Prevention Unit member to ensure a secure and proper fit. A total of 43 helmets were successfully sold through this program.

The Community Service Unit remains at the forefront of the police department's Helmet Safety Citation program, incentivizing children for wearing helmets and practicing safe riding. Officers issue safety citations that are redeemable at the Mentor Police Department for fantastic prizes. In 2023, seven officers participated, collectively issuing 140 safety citations to local children. Notably, Officer Hatch secured the title of the department's top bicycle helmet citation writer for the fourth consecutive year.

Mentor Police Department's commitment to safety extends to adult school crossing guards dedicated to protecting children in high-traffic areas. Across four elementary schools, we have three adult guards trained to ensure the secure movement of school children. They remain vigilant for vehicular traffic and promptly report any violations to the police for appropriate enforcement. The Community Service Unit serves as the police liaison for these crossing guards. Once again, during the 2022-2023 school year, the school crossing guards maintained a flawless safety record. Additionally, this year saw the recruitment and training of substitute crossing guard, Michael Miller.



In 2023, the Mentor Police Department's Community Service Unit continued to uphold its commitment to community engagement, safety education, and fostering positive relationships with the residents of Lake County. Beyond the events mentioned earlier, our active participation extended to various activities, including parades, Shop with a Kop, Kops and Kids Christmas Party, and engaging safety talks at local daycares, nursing homes and the Mentor Chamber of Commerce. The unit also joined National Walk to School Day, promoting safety procedures and health benefits associated with walking to school.



## **Personnel and Training Unit**

Training is a crucial function that prepares the committed police officer to safely meet every challenge on the job. As the largest municipal police department in Lake County, the Mentor Police Department strives to provide all officers with the tools they need to set the department above all others in the area. Our commitment to training maintains our police department on the cutting edge of police professionalism.

During 2023, the department invested 10,900 hours in training to maintain and improve the skill levels of sworn officers and civilian employees. Of those, 5,382 hours were free training.

The police administration, supervisory staff, and specialty unit commanders continue to receive leadership training. The Chief attended the International Association of Chiefs of Police Training Conference and the FBI-NAA-Ohio Chapter Training Conference. One Captain attended the FBI-NAA National Annual Training Conference. Two Lieutenants attended the prestigious FBI Executive Commander Supervisor Leadership Institute Trilogy.

Patrol supervisors attended *The National Law Enforcement Roadway Safety Program*, *Introduction to Street and Prescription Drug Identification*. MPD hosted: *Supervising Patrol Critical Incidents*, taught by the National Tactical Officers Association instructors. *Traffic Incident Management (T.I.M.) Responder Training* was taught by ODOT instructors.

The Detectives received training in several areas specifically suited to their specialized areas. The Narcotics Detectives attended *Street Crimes Seminar* and *Physical Surveillance Tactics*. The MPD Detective Bureau hosted *Homicide Investigation* training. During Spring and Fall, the Detectives attended the Medical Examiner's Series. One Detective attended *Fire and Arson Investigation*.

Officers from the Patrol Division completed *Autism and First Responders* training; *Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE)*, *Highway Interdiction*; *Advanced Patrol Tactics*, *Criminal Interdiction*, and Adult, Child, Infant CPR. *Active Shooter Training* was conducted at the Mentor High School while classes were not in session. Three Patrol Officers attended Drone training, while two officers attended *Leading Without Rank*. Two officers attended *Fundamentals of Ohio Animal Cruelty, Neglect, and Abandonment*. Roll Call Training included the annual Review for Emergency Response to the Perry Nuclear Power Plant.

Training is required for basic police functions as well as specialized units. The Crisis Negotiators Team members continue to train monthly to maintain required skill levels. Four SWAT team members attended the Ohio Tactical Officers Association annual training conference while four others completed Tactical-Medical Instructor training. The school resource officer attended *Profiling Dangerous People* training. All Accident Investigation Unit members attended *Precision Laser & Instrument* training. One specialist attended *Vehicle Dynamics* and *Accident Re-construction Level IV*. Our K-9 handlers attended *Canine Case Law for Ohio K-9 Handlers*.

Our specialized in-house instructors are the backbone of our training program. Utilizing in-house instructors saved 1,234 hours of paid instruction during 2023. New instructors

were added, and the training specialists enhanced their training by attending: National Law Enforcement Roadway Safety Program Instructor, Individual Chemical Aerosol Instructor, Impact Weapons Instructor, Tactical-Medical Instructor, and Taser Instructor training.

Each year, the Ohio Peace Officers Training Council (OPOTC) requires statewide Continuing Professional Training (CPT). For 2023, OPOTC required 24 hours of specific topics of training including Legal Updates; School Threat and Safety Training; Arrest, Search and Seizure; Criminal Interdiction; and Officer Wellness. The MPD was the host for each class and outside instructors shared their fields of expertise. All MPD sworn officers completed the mandates, for a total of 1,944 training hours.

Regarding civilian employee training, two new dispatchers completed the 40-hour *Public Safety Telecommunicator* course. Four dispatchers attended *Crisis Communication/Negotiation for Emergency Dispatchers*; Two dispatchers attended *Emergency Medical Dispatch*; and our new dispatch supervisor attended “911 Supervisor Training”. Two Records Unit clerks completed Basic and Advanced Public Records with legal updates. This year, corrections officers attended *Real World De-escalation*. Our victim advocate attended the annual Ohio Victims Advocate Conference.

As we pursue our core values of Integrity, Caring, Fairness, and Professionalism, the Mentor Police Department will continue to train officers, to do their job to the best of their abilities, to help keep our community safe.

## **Range and Defensive Tactics**

The Police Department continued its very active range program in 2023. This program is traditionally run twice each month in conjunction with the Defensive Tactics program. There were several range courses designed to not only simulate real world scenarios, but to also keep officers proficient with their duty weapons.

There are currently eight range officers in the department. We did have one range officer retire during 2023 but added two more to complete their training in 2024. Having this number of qualified range officers allows for more flexibility in scheduling and training options. Each brings a unique element to the Range Program, though all are committed to improving the firearm capabilities of our officers.

## **Field Training Officer (FTO) Program**



The Mentor Police Department Field Training Officer program consists of three weeks of “in house” training, and fourteen weeks of “on the road” training. During that time, the new officer will have three different training officers and work both day shift and night shifts. Once a new officer completes the program they are cleared to begin working as a one-man unit.

We had a total of five new officers go through the FTO program in 2023. Officers Tunquist, Nietert, Nicholson, Matejka, and Hagan all successfully completed the program.

We currently have nineteen training officers in the Patrol Division. Officers Luzius, Wilson, Magnuson, and Friel were added as training officers. Sgt. Kloski does a great job running the program assisted by Sgt. Ondercin.

The training officers are expected to train the new officers in everything from department forms, laws of arrest, building searches and everything in between. They document everything they do and test the new hires regularly. They really are the backbone of the department.

Once a month, the training officer and trainee meet with Sgt. Kloski and Lt Molnar to make sure training is progressing and everything is “on track”.

The Mentor Police Department just announced another hiring test in early 2024. As a result, the FTO program looks forward to another busy year.

## **Operations Division**

The Operations Division is comprised of both the Patrol Bureau and the Detective Bureau. The patrol officers are responsible for handling all calls for service, taking initial reports of crime, completing investigations, enforcing traffic violations, and providing a safe environment for our residents and businesses. The Detective Bureau is responsible for investigating more serious crimes, crimes that are more complex and crimes requiring investigation outside of the city. The Detective Bureau also provides valuable support to the patrol division with various investigative tools. The main goal of the Operations Division is to provide a safe environment for the residents and visitors to the city through effective and efficient delivery of police services.

Our patrol officers engage with the community while providing security at city events such as the Mentor Rocks Concert Series, Tunes at the Lagoons, City Fest, BeachFest, and other smaller city sponsored events. Our goal was to ensure there were no problems at these family centered events, and we are happy to report we were successful in accomplishing that. Our officers enjoy meeting the community at these events and we appreciate their strong support of the police department.

The Mentor Police Department completed a grant from the Office of Criminal Justice Services for the Mentor Police Wellness Program. The goal of our Wellness Program is to ensure that our officers are both mentally and physically healthy. With the help of the grant, we were able to establish a team of peer supporters and an officer trained as a tactical fitness instructor. We are happy to report that these programs are continuing without grant funding and more officers are participating.

## **Patrol Bureau**

Officers assigned to the patrol bureau work 12-hour shifts and are assigned daily to various parts of the city. The Mentor Police Department had four officers retire and one officer resign during 2023. The department hired seven officers in 2023. Five of them successfully completed their training program and our patrolling on their own. The other two attended the Ohio State Highway Patrol Basic Police Academy and graduate in January of 2024. Recruitment and retention remain the biggest obstacle for our department as well as many other departments nationwide.

Our patrol division continues to use technology to help with their job. Our FLOCK license plate reader cameras, stationed throughout the city, help locate suspects and wanted persons on a regular basis. In 2023, 106 arrests were made with the help of the FLOCK cameras. We continue to use Facebook to help us identify individuals committing crimes that have been caught on store cameras as well as the residential cameras shared with us by citizens. Our officers now complete their traffic citations electronically, reducing the amount of time they are on traffic stops.



In addition to normal patrol duties, patrol officers will at times conduct special details including warrant service, targeted traffic enforcement, and aggressive criminal enforcement in higher crime areas. To help make our roads safe for our citizens, students



and motoring public, our officers are detailed to school zones and speed enforcement on SR 2. We also conducted a Porch Pirate program around the holiday to help deter the theft of packages. The Mentor Police Department has a strong working relationship with our Fire Department as well as Mentor schools. This summer all three groups partnered for a large-scale mass casualty incident training. In addition, the entire police department trained in active shooter response. This training proved to be invaluable when we responded to an active shooter situation at one of our trailer parks in November 2023. Our officers' quick response to the incident prevented further deaths by the shooter.



Reported crimes in the city remained relatively consistent with 2022 numbers. For the second year in a row, we saw a slight decrease in drug offenses. Our motor vehicle thefts were down 48% compared to 2022. Violent crime remains very low in the city. We did have three individuals murdered during a mass shooting at one of our trailer parks. Our patrol division investigated a wide assortment of calls including sex offenses, aggravated robbery, felonious assault, burglary, as well as numerous other crimes and calls for service.

The call activity in the department was down 2% compared to 2022. The total number of arrests were up from 2022 by 5%. Traffic citations and written warnings remained relatively the same as in 2022. Thefts and drug offenses were again the leading arrest categories.

A major goal and objective of the Patrol Bureau is traffic enforcement directed at reducing the number of motor vehicle accidents occurring on the city's roadways. The Mentor Police Department actively participated in three State of Ohio Department of Public Safety sponsored traffic enforcement programs: "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over", "What's Holding You Back," and "Click it or Ticket." Accidents were down by 8% in 2023 which is a great thing. OVI arrests have been on the decline, as it seems more people are utilizing ride share services after drinking.

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
<b>Calls for Service</b>	21,240	20,745	-495	-2 %
<b>Criminal Offenses</b>	1,876	1,791	-85	-4.5 %
<b>Adult Arrests</b>	1,047	1,103	56	5 %
<b>OVI</b>	183	156	-27	-15 %
<b>Total On-Street Accidents</b>	1,247	1,146	-101	-8 %
<b>Total Injury Accidents</b>	271	271	0	0 %
<b>Traffic Citations</b>	4,954	4,952	-2	0 %
<b>Written Warnings</b>	1,452	1,490	38	3 %

## Traffic Services

One of the many responsibilities of the Mentor Police Department is enforcing traffic laws. Throughout the year, patrol officers are expected to address traffic violations in order to promote good driving habits and lower the number of accidents that occur in the city. Ultimately, the goal is public safety. There are times when specific traffic complaints are reported and forwarded to the dayshift Lieutenant for action.

There were 56 specific complaints received through various channels in 2023. Most came directly from citizens or through City Council members. The most common complaint was speeding vehicles. Eighteen of those complaints were assigned selective enforcement. Selective enforcement is a program where officers are assigned specific areas of the city during their shift. The others were handled by deployment of the speed trailers or passed on to patrol officers during roll call. The traffic calming program ran from April 3<sup>rd</sup> through December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Select locations were designated in residential areas based on



complaints. The City Public Works Department assisted in the traffic calming program by posting signs at targeted locations. The program was divided into six-week segments with each ward having a designated street. Patrol officers conducted traffic enforcement activities at each location throughout the year.

The department was awarded \$61,452.20 in federal traffic safety funding in October 2022. This was part of a grant through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. It was used to pay officers to aggressively enforce traffic laws with an emphasis on OVI, speed, distracted driving, and seatbelt violations. The goal of the grant is to promote safe streets and to reduce fatalities. The grant continued throughout 2023 and was renewed in October 2023.

Traffic law enforcement will continue to be a priority with the Mentor Police Department patrol division in an effort to promote safe driving habits and reduce accidents.

## Special Events

The City of Mentor Police Department provided security for several special events in 2023. These events included the popular 4th of July, CityFest, Tunes at the Lagoons, BeachFest, and the Mentor Rocks concert series. MPD worked closely with the Parks and Recreation Department and Public Works to provide a safe and secure atmosphere for all who attended the events. Officers were assigned foot patrol and bike patrol.



We utilized our ATV Unit and side-by-side as well to patrol, provide escorts, and pass out candy and stickers to children. There were no significant incidents at any of the festivities this year thanks to the dedicated officers at MPD.

## Criminal Investigations Bureau

The Mentor Police Department Detective Bureau consists of a Detective Lieutenant, a Detective Sergeant, six general duty detectives, two narcotics investigators, one juvenile detective, one school resource officer, and a secretary. The Detective Lieutenant and Detective Sergeant are responsible for the administration of the Detective Bureau, management of the Narcotics Unit, Internal Affairs investigations, the Evidence Technician program, the Video Forensic program, the Computer Forensic program, the detective assigned to the U.S. Marshals Task Force, the detective assigned to the FBI Midwestern Cryptocurrency Task Force, the Ohio Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, the School Resource Officer program, and the overall management of all investigations assigned to the Detective Bureau.

Training for detectives and evidence technicians is a priority for the Mentor Police Department. The narcotics detectives attended classes in surveillance techniques and street crimes. The narcotics detectives conduct proactive surveillance when they are not assigned cases, so this type of training helps them enhance their skills.

The general duty detectives completed a course in homicide investigations. MPD hosted a 20-hour course in homicide investigations and managing crime scenes in major investigations. In addition to this course, all detectives attended the Medical Examiner's Series training in Cuyahoga County. The series presents multiple case studies in death investigations. The School Resource Officer completed training in threat assessments. The arson investigator completed a 16-hour course in fire investigations. One detective completed training to become a tactical medic instructor. This detective will assist with training other officers in basic medic protocols.

Detectives were responsible for follow-up on all assigned cases until the case could be cleared or satisfactorily closed. Detectives are also encouraged to self-initiate investigations from information developed by other means such as civilian contacts, confidential informants, and referrals from other agencies. Detectives are responsible for assisting and supporting the patrol division with investigations when the need arises. One key responsibility of the Detective Bureau is conducting background investigations for new police candidates, corrections officers, and dispatchers.

The Detective Bureau utilizes social media to keep citizens informed of important information and as an aid in their investigations. Several cases have been solved by citizen tips received after a video or photograph has been posted to Facebook asking for assistance in identifying a person. The Detective Bureau continues to work with multiple criminal justice agencies on the local, state, and federal levels, to be proactive in its crime fighting efforts.

## **Computer / Cell Phone Forensics Unit**

This unit forensically processes phones, computers, and other electronic devices to obtain evidence of crimes. The crimes can include child pornography, soliciting minors for sex, drug trafficking, and other situations where electronic images, communication, or data provide evidence of a crime. The department has a detective assigned to work with the United States Secret Service Electronic Crimes Task Force for training and assistance with examinations. In 2023, these officers conducted 51 electronic device examinations related to crimes in Mentor and in other jurisdictions within Lake County.

## **Ohio Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force**



The Detective Bureau has one investigator assigned to receive complaints generated by the Ohio Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force. This task force supports the prosecution of offenders disseminating or receiving prohibited child sexual abuse materials.

This detective investigated seven complaints from ICAC in 2023. These cyber tips all contained information about IP addresses located in Mentor where child pornography was being saved or shared over the internet. The investigations led to the execution of five search warrants on homes in Mentor and four arrests, which included two registered sex offenders. ICAC provides the funding for our department to use Griffeye Analyze DI Pro software to assist with searching electronics for evidence of child sexual abuse material.

## School Resource Officer (SRO)

The SRO is assigned to the Detective Bureau and works at the Mentor High School interacting with the students, faculty, and school administration. He provides a law enforcement figure that students can approach for information, guidance, or help. The SRO is responsible for investigating crimes and complaints that are committed on school property and makes arrests when appropriate. He also assists in enforcing school rules and guidelines. The SRO also teaches classes that are law enforcement related and aids in seeing that school rules and guidelines are followed. The SRO handled nine investigations that resulted in three arrests. He also assists with Safety Town during the summer months. Safety Town teaches young children basic safety skills such as stranger awareness, fire prevention, and traffic rules.



## Narcotics Unit

The narcotics unit primarily investigated drug trafficking offenses in and around the city of Mentor. Narcotics Detectives often worked with the Lake County Narcotics Agency and other agencies such as the DEA. They used confidential informants in many of their investigations. The unit also investigates complaints of drug thefts. Detectives use Ohio Automated Prescription Reporting System to check if reports of drug theft are attempts to obtain unauthorized prescriptions. The narcotics detectives also train the newly hired officers in the basics of narcotics related criminal investigations and the current case law pertaining to search and seizure.

In 2023, \$5,250 was seized as the result of drug investigations. The narcotics unit also handles vehicle forfeitures in both drug and OVI cases. There were seven vehicles seized in 2023. The narcotics unit executed two search warrants on homes in Mentor in 2023. Narcotics detectives also investigate overdose deaths. The investigations include follow up for suspects who have overdosed on illicit drugs and are afforded the grace period under Ohio law to seek drug treatment in lieu of criminal charges. One of the overdose death investigations led to the arrest of a drug trafficker who sold drugs to a person who fatally overdosed.

## **Video Forensic Unit**

This Unit consists of two detectives who process and enhance video and images from various sources. The unit uses a Video Forensic Computer system utilizing Avid and Input Ace software. Video projects are used in identifying suspects and aid in their successful prosecution. This system allows for enhanced still photos captured from videos to be distributed to media outlets and other law enforcement agencies. Many of the suspects identified through social media tips in 2023 were through still images captured with this software. In 2023, the unit processed 81 forensic video requests and placed the images on social media to seek help from the public in identifying a suspect.

## **U.S. Marshals Northern Ohio Violent Fugitive Task Force**

The Detective Bureau continued to have one detective assigned to the U.S. Marshals Northern Ohio Violent Fugitive Task Force in 2023. The Mentor detective assigned to the Task Force assists with tracking down violent felons who are wanted from Mentor and the surrounding counties. Our detective assigned to this task force was nominated as the 2023 Task Force Officer of the Year. This detective also receives additional training in field trauma and search tactics as a member of this Task Force. During the detective's service with the task force this year, 87 people were taken into custody for warrants. This number included 23 of our own Mentor warrants.

## **Volunteer Police Chaplain Program**

The program was formally instituted in February of 2009. The current members are Rev. Stoney Drain, Fr. Timothy Plavac, and Rev. Scott Kennedy.

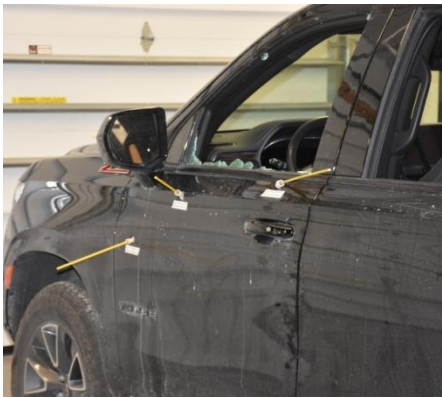


This program has continued to stabilize after being setback, due to COVID. The Chaplains continued to make their services available by way of counseling, counseling children of officers, assisting with death notifications, callouts to community members as requested by the police department, funeral service for a retired officer, officiated the marriage of an officer, Kops-N-Kids events, Fil-A-Cruiser, and department gatherings. The Rev. Brian Landrum retired from both his church and as a Chaplain in 2023. The Rev. Scott Kennedy, a Mentor resident, began volunteering as a Chaplain in the fall of 2023. The Chaplains, combined, volunteered over 150 hours in 2023. The Chaplains program continues to thrive as much of their volunteer time goes to individual time with officers. In addition, the Chaplains donated approximately \$164.00 dollars to the men and women of the police department for food and treats.

## Arson Investigation

The Mentor Police Department Detective Bureau has one detective assigned and trained to assist the Mentor Fire Department with arson investigations. This detective works with investigators from the fire department to collect evidence at the fire scene. There were two arson investigations in 2023. One case was solved with an arrest after the suspect set fire to the exterior door of a hotel room. The second incident involved construction materials set on fire near a school.

## Evidence Technicians



The Mentor Police Department Evidence Technician Program consists of 25 patrol officers, one School Resource Officer, and all nine of the detectives in the Detective Bureau. Their duties include photographing and collecting evidence. The photographs they take are of both crime scenes and victims of crimes. The evidence they collect includes fingerprints, tool marks and impressions, shoe and tire prints, DNA, and trace evidence, such as hairs and fibers, left at the crime scene. Their work also includes collecting evidence at the scene of traffic crashes. Evidence technicians processed 761 cases in 2023.

The Mentor Police Department hosted a 40-hour training for new evidence technicians in 2023. The course was attended by eight Mentor officers and thirty officers from outside agencies. The class was taught by the Lake County Crime Laboratory technicians, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation crime scene technicians, the Lake County Coroner's Office investigators, and members of the Lake County Prosecutor's Office.

They assist the crash investigators by photographing the marks left on the roadway and the damage to the vehicles. Detectives draft affidavits for records requests and search warrants. In addition to writing search warrants, detectives also process search warrants/consent searches of homes and businesses to collect evidence relating to their investigations. Evidence technicians took 13,486 digital photographs of evidence in 2023.



The Detective Bureau and evidence technicians handled several major crime investigations this year. Crimes involving the use of firearms increased in 2023. One notable case was a triple homicide in November of 2023. One suspect shot four people, killing three of them and wounding another. The crime scene was processed with the assistance of the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation. Detectives also investigated an attempted homicide at a hotel where one victim was shot by two suspects with handguns. There were three separate incidents where a suspect discharged a firearm into homes in Mentor. One of those cases resulted in an arrest for felonious assault and discharging a firearm into a habitation. One aggravated robbery arrest was made after a complaint from a victim who listed an item for sale online. An investigation led to the arrest and prosecution of the suspect. Detectives investigated two arson cases; one resulted in an arrest for aggravated arson.



Detectives spend a considerable amount of time writing and executing search warrants. The warrants can be for locations, the DNA of a suspect, devices, such as cell phones and computers, and on accounts for websites and computer applications. The number of search warrants completed and executed totaled 80 in 2023. Eight of those search warrants were at physical locations for either narcotics or child pornography investigations. The rest of the search warrants were for digital accounts, cell phones, or DNA.

## **Cryptocurrency Task Force**

The Detective Bureau assigned one detective on a part time basis to the Midwestern Cryptocurrency Task Force. The task force is run by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and targets financial fraud which utilize cryptocurrencies, such as Bitcoin. This detective investigated 24 cases from outside the city and three cases in Mentor that involved financial scams where the victim sent funds to a criminal by using cryptocurrency. The cases in Mentor involved cryptocurrency scams where three victims were tricked into sending \$1 million in US funds through various cryptocurrency retailers. These funds are difficult to track as they get moved to other digital wallets and accounts, mixed with other funds, and moved multiple more times to mask the destination of the funds. The three separate cases involved transactions of \$900,000, \$80,000, and \$20,000. These cases highlight the need to continue to educate the public to the prevalence of these scams and remain part of the cryptocurrency task force.



## Case Load

In 2023, the Detective Bureau investigated 355 cases. Detectives cleared 135 cases by arrest or other means. They closed an additional 186 cases as pending. The investigations involved a variety of cases including aggravated murder, aggravated burglary, aggravated robbery, felonious assault, financial crimes, theft offenses, sexual assault, narcotics trafficking, overdose deaths, weapons offenses, arson and suspicious fire investigations, child pornography, and missing persons. Detectives use a variety of tools to solve their cases. The police department continues to use the FLOCK camera system. These cameras are placed in a variety of locations throughout the city to run license plates on passing vehicles. Detectives can use the data to show when and where a suspect vehicle was in the city.

## Specialty Units

### Accident Investigation Unit



The Mentor Police Department's Accident Investigation Unit (AIU) is headed by Sgt. Michael Danzey. The members of the Mentor Police AIU also serve on the Lake Regional Crash Reconstruction Unit (CRU). Ptl. Paul Balongie, the AIU's senior reconstructionist, retired in 2023. Ptl. Kevin Hatch, a member since 2017, completed training to become MPD's newest reconstructionist.

In April 2023, MPD deployed a new Trimble S5 Robotic Total Station and R4sLE GNSS receiver. This modern equipment allows crash scenes to be measured with survey-grade accuracy in far less time than with MPD's previous equipment. Members of the Lake CRU were invited to attend the initial equipment training, and the team continues to become proficient during monthly training days.

In 2023, Mentor's AIU assisted in the investigation of 26 cases, including mutual aid to the Lake CRU. Among these cases were eight fatalities, two motorcycle crashes, one train crash, two fleeing/eluding investigations, two felonious assaults, five Aggravated Vehicular Assaults, and one Aggravated Vehicular Homicide. Nine cases were alcohol or drug related.

### Bike/ATV Unit

The MPD Bike Unit is comprised of one supervisor and nine officers. The ATV Unit is comprised of one supervisor and six officers. Both units were assigned to many events in 2023. These events included Mentor BeachFest, the 4th of July celebration, National Walk to School Day, Mentor Rocks Concert Series, Tunes at the Lagoons, and Mentor

City Fest. The side-by-side was also used for these special events and continues to be a great high visibility public relations tool. The side-by-side and ATV Unit were utilized by the City of Mentor's Wildlife Management Team as well. Both the Bike Unit and the ATV Unit continue to make a positive impact on the community.

## **Aggressive Criminal Enforcement (ACE)**

In 2023, the Aggressive Criminal Enforcement Unit (ACE) remained proactive. The ACE unit focuses on proactive police techniques which include, but are not limited to, criminal patrol, drug interdiction within the city or interstates, short term traffic/hotel interdiction, and a focus on high crime activity areas.



The members of the ACE Unit for 2023 were Officers Heramb, Swindell and Kupchik. The ACE Unit works in conjunction with the K9 Unit along with the Narcotics Unit. The ACE Unit collectively were responsible for making 55 drug related arrests and arrested 34 wanted persons during their shifts. The following was seized by the ACE Unit: 8.07 pounds of marijuana, 20.58 grams of heroin/fentanyl, 83 fentanyl pills, 38.3 grams of methamphetamine, 113.4 grams of cocaine, 96 ECSTASY/MDMA pills. Five of the arrestees were also charged with drug trafficking. The unit also issued 246 traffic citations for various traffic offenses.

Additionally, the ACE Unit made multiple arrests for illegally possessed firearms which include illegally possessed and/or stolen firearms. Eight firearms were seized this year. Each of the weapons recovered was confiscated and removed from our community. The ACE unit also made 18 OVI arrests in 2023.

The ACE Unit continues to work hard with their proactive enforcement for our community. In 2023 several newer officers attended training put on by the Ohio State Highway Patrol covering the topic of Criminal Patrol/Drug Interdiction. This two-day course is designed to introduce patrol officers to techniques in detecting and apprehending criminals who utilize our streets and highways to conduct criminal activity. The course includes instruction on driving behaviors, roadside interviews, commercial/large vehicle interdiction, report writing/court testimony, officer safety and a legal review. Instruction for the course is provided by the OSHP Criminal Patrol Unit and veteran troopers who are actively engaged in criminal interdiction on a daily basis.

In 2024 the unit plans to attend additional training covering current trends in narcotics trafficking and updates in search and seizure laws. The unit would also like to add officers

to the Aggressive Criminal Enforcement Unit. Ideally each of the four platoons would have a two-officer unit.

## Bomb Squad

The Lake County Bomb Squad continued its tradition of providing excellent response to and coverage of incidents involving hazardous materials and devices in Lake, Geauga, and Ashtabula counties. The squad was formed in 1992. Since that time, we have trained and gotten equipment to be able to respond to a wide array of hazardous incidents. The squad is recognized as an Accredited Public Safety Bomb Squad by the FBI and the National Bomb Squad Commanders Advisory Board.

The team consists of four bomb technicians, one explosive detecting K9 team, and one paramedic. We also had one officer join the team to become a certified bomb technician. He is scheduled for his certification course in early 2025. The team members were from five area agencies: Mentor Police Department, Concord Township Fire Department, Eastlake Police Department, Painesville Police Department, and the Geauga County Sheriff's Department. We continued our partnership with University Hospitals. UH will send a squad and paramedics on all bomb squad responses. This will allow for on-scene rescue squad and medical personnel who are familiar with our gear and processes should the need arise.



The team trains twice each month to ensure continued familiarity with equipment and methods introduced by the FBI and ATF. The FBI coordinated several advanced courses in the Cleveland area for local bomb squads. This afforded our bomb squad members the opportunity to learn new techniques and discuss trends with other squads from the area. Two team members are on a task force with the FBI to respond to radiological or nuclear hazardous incidents across northern Ohio.



The bomb squad is required to submit incident reports to the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. This system tracks all bomb squad activities and incidents to allow for trends to be identified and communication between squads to be simplified. During the year our bomb squad was utilized 58 times. Examples of incidents to which the squad responded include: two explosions, improvised explosive devices, recovery of bomb making materials, suspicious packages, recovery of munitions, military ordnance, and recovery of improvised explosives, among others. Each incident presented a unique challenge for

the squad. Fortunately, there were no injuries to team members or accidents related to the calls.

In conclusion, the Lake County Bomb Squad has provided a necessary, important service to the residents of Lake, Geauga, and Ashtabula Counties for over 30 years. In light of the ever-present risk of attacks by foreign and domestic terrorists, the Squad has proven to be a valuable asset to our community and to the various cities within the three-county region. Continued operation and support are essential to the safety and well-being of the citizens of the City of Mentor and the region.

## Drone Unit

Mentor Police Department added a new unit to their roster of specialty teams. The Mentor Police Drone Team was officially established in February of 2023 with the selection of three new drone pilots Sgt. Steve Ondercin, Patrolman Shawn Wilson and Patrolman Logan Hanreck. The team consists of these new pilots, along with our two experienced pilots, Capt. Robert Valley (Team Commander), and Det. Brian Yenkevich, both FAA licensed pilots serving with the Lake County Public Safety UAS Team since 2018. All team pilots will be FAA Small UAS Certified by early 2024.



Advancements in UAS (unmanned ariel systems) technology have given public safety agencies a cost-effective means to increase awareness and safety for first responders during critical incidents. Drones have proven to be extremely effective in search and rescue, hazardous material and dangerous ordnance identification, fugitive search and support, crime scene imagery, accident reconstruction, fire investigations and night-time operations. With high-definition cameras, thermal imaging, and spotlights, the Drone Team can provide visual support over large areas, at night, or when it is too dangerous to send in first responders. The Mentor Drone Team provides support to tactical or specialty units. Our drones have the capability to stream video footage to ground or command units to assist with tactical planning and decision making during critical incidents.



In 2023, the Mentor Drone Team assisted with missing persons, crime and accident scene mapping, assisted tactical units at the Mentor Mobile Green shooting, and assisted the Mentor Fire Department to locate hot spots in the field fires south of Menards. The Mentor Drone Team can work independently, or in concert with members of the Lake County Public Safety UAS Team. Some of the drone equipment used by the Mentor Drone Team was obtained with grant funding obtained through the Lake County Public Safety UAS Team, who also provides training, additional UAS equipment, and pilots as needed.



Our drone pilots go through a variety of training including FAA laws and regulations, flight operations using various drones, indoor searches, search and rescue and geo-spatial imagery. The Mentor Drone Team respects the rights of all citizens and follows all laws and regulations regarding privacy.

## **K-9 Unit**

The K-9 Unit continued to be an essential asset to the Mentor Police Department in 2023. Our two teams consist of Ptl. Mackey with K-9 Bak and Ptl. Wurgler with K-9 Achilles.

The K-9 teams perform a wide array of duties throughout the year not only in Mentor, but also assisting surrounding law enforcement agencies. These duties include patrol, apprehension, drug detection and interdiction, tracking, searches, crime deterrence at special events, and community policing. The teams also visit schools and businesses allowing social interaction with the K-9s.



The primary responsibility of the K-9 teams is criminal enforcement. In 2023, the teams performed 91 K-9 uses for the Mentor Police Department and 30 assists to other law enforcement agencies. These included 15 suspect controls and apprehensions, 59 assists to officers, 3 article or area searches, 7 subject tracks, 48 narcotics searches, and 3 building searches. The teams were directly responsible for or assisted with 16 misdemeanor arrests and 14 felony arrests.

The teams were also involved in 39 community policing activities, 7 public K-9 demonstrations, and 22 visits to businesses and schools. Some of the 2023 events they participated in include Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over, City Fest, Mentor Rocks, Trunk or Treat, and the Kops and Kids Christmas party.



The K-9 handlers trained for a total of 550 hours in 2023. Both teams recertified with the State of Ohio in April. The handlers attended a legal update class in August. In September, both handlers attended a week-long workshop in Alpena, Michigan, held by the National Association of Professional Canine Handlers.

The support for the K-9 Unit from the Mentor community continued in 2023 with several businesses and residents offering support in the form of services, supplies, food, and monetary donations. PetSmart continued to donate food for the teams, and the Lakeshore Animal Hospital continued to donate health care services.

We look forward to continued success with our K-9 teams in 2024.

## **Hostage Negotiation Team (HNT)**

The Hostage Negotiation Team (HNT) is a unit within the Mentor Police Department that has been trained to handle communications in crisis and hostage situations. The primary

goal of the HNT in any crisis situation is the preservation of life and the peaceful resolution of the crisis through open communication and negotiation, thereby minimizing the need for the use of force. All six (6) of the team members are trained as Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) officers.

During crisis situations, the HNT is under the control of the scene commander and works alongside patrol officers, SWAT team members, Bomb Squad officers, and/or other specialized units. The HNT is called upon to communicate primarily with suicidal, armed, and/or barricaded subjects.

The HNT met three times for team training throughout the year which included a joint training exercise with Mentor SWAT. We were able to utilize and train with the newly acquired equipment during the joint training session.

In November 2023 the team was called out for a barricaded subject who had murdered three people. Team members responded and were utilized to collect intelligence on the subject to aid in the potential negotiations. Due to a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the subject there were no negotiations. However, the intelligence collected aided in the investigation.

A goal for 2024 is to replace a recently retired team member.

## **Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT)**

In 2023, the Mentor SWAT team conducted frequent training to enhance their capabilities and provided tactical support to Lake and Geauga counties.



The team had the opportunity to train with the Cleveland Clinic Police Department at the new Mentor Hospital before it opened. The training consisted of several mass-casualty scenarios, which allowed for realistic training in handling a potential critical incident. Joint training was also held with the Mentor

Police Hostage Negotiation Team. This allowed both teams to learn each other's capabilities so they can effectively operate together when called upon. In early summer, four team members attended the annual Ohio Tactical Officers Association Conference in Sandusky, Ohio. They received in-depth training on current best practices which was then incorporated into the team's standard operating procedures.

On several occasions, the team was called upon to provide tactical support in critical situations. The sniper team was activated in August to assist the West End team and Wickliffe PD with the apprehension of an armed male who had barricaded himself inside his home. In October, team members assisted the Lake County Sheriff's Office SWAT team in the arrest of an armed, barricaded male in Geauga County. In November, the team was utilized at the scene of an active shooter at a trailer park in Mentor.

The team remains ready to serve the community whenever needed.

## **Support Services Division**

The Support Services Division of the Mentor Police Department is comprised of the Safety Forces Communications Unit (Dispatch), Corrections Unit (Jail), Records Unit, and Property & Evidence Unit. Under the command of Captain Robert Valley, the dedicated men and women of these units provide a strong supporting cast to the Operations Division and their level of service reflects the mission of the Mentor Police Department. Each of these units is vital to the successful operations of the police department. With the ever-changing legal mandates related to these disciplines, continuing professional training allows them to meet or exceed strict state and federal guidelines, or 'Best Practices' related to their responsibilities.

The Support Services Division is responsible for the overall cleanliness and condition of our police facility. In 2023, we continued to make necessary facility upgrades. Officers at the Mentor Police Department utilize the defensive tactics training room monthly for subject control and less lethal-related training topics. In 2023, with the assistance of the Public Works Department, new wrestling mats were installed in this training room, as well as



padding for the walls. This allows officers to train in a safe environment. We continue to consider cost-effective upgrades to our aging police facility.



The Support Services Division manages the department's Naloxone (Narcan) Program. We ensure that each officer has a supply of naloxone on hand to respond to opioid overdoses. Since the program's inception in 2015, a documented 189 lives have been saved by Mentor Officers using naloxone to reverse the effects of opioid overdoses. Mentor Police Officers responded to 13 opioid overdoses in 2023, saving 12 lives. The number of opioid overdoses continued to fall in Mentor over the last 4 years, with



2023 being the lowest since 2015. The Lake County General Health District continued to supply our agency with naloxone free of charge.

Mentor Police Department - Naloxone Program					
Program Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of Known Opioid Overdoses	44	36	16	16	13
Total Doses of Naloxone Administered	74	59	43	30	20
Average Number of Naloxone Doses Per Overdose	1.7	1.6	2.7	1.9	1.5

Support Services regularly monitors new state legislation, which requires the police department to change its procedures. In 2023, Ohio HB 343 added additional rights for victims of crimes, specifically sexual assaults, violent crimes, and protection order violations. Following this new mandate, the Mentor Police Department published its own Victim’s Rights form that advises victims on all their rights and protections and allows victims to select the rights they want applied. Once officers assist victims to complete this form, it is filed in Records, and shared with prosecutors, courts and corrections agencies to ensure victims’ rights are met.

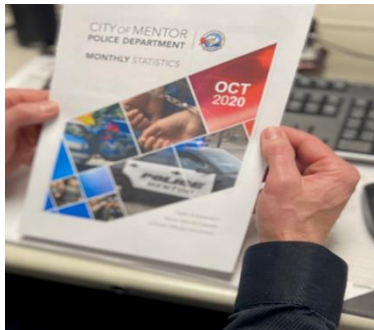


## Records Department



The Records Unit is the central repository for all records produced and/or received by the Police Department, with the responsibility to merge, securely store, and produce records as required by our judicial partners or through public record requests. To manage the vast number of records produced by the police department, we utilize both a paper filing system and New World Systems Law Enforcement Records Management software. This software provides us the ability to serve our citizens and law enforcement partners by quickly locating and accessing various records. Records software aids in limiting the amount of paper filing to only those paper documents required by our records retention schedule.

Visitors to the Mentor Police Department are welcomed by our Records Unit staff. Our staff assists the public with filing police reports, public records requests, solicitor permit applications, vehicle releases as well as answering many police-related questions. Daily, Records duties include merging all case reports into the records management system, preparing criminal cases for both Mentor and the Lake County Common Pleas courts, updating all criminal case and ticket dispositions, filing ATF Gun Trace requests, reporting crime statistics to the state, and managing subpoenas. Our Records staff truly enjoys when they can give out prizes to local kids earning an officer-issued "Safety Citation" for wearing their bicycle helmets.



In 2023, we welcomed new Records Clerk, Eileen Hayes to this unit. Eileen is quickly learning the vast duties of our Records clerks. Besides the daily responsibilities managed by Eileen, she is tasked with compiling and reporting monthly police statistics, used by police department staff and city officials. Her addition allows the Records Unit to remain fully functional and keep up with the vast amount of work required of the unit.

Each month Records staff provided numerous reports to various requestors, both internally and externally. Internally, ad hoc data queries were run to provide patrol supervisors, up to the Chief of Police, with information to aid them in effectively planning directed patrol activities or special details. Externally, reports were provided to the media, local businesses, homeowners' associations, and citizens, based on their specific requests. To satisfy all requests efficiently, Records staff continued to receive up-to-date advanced public records training in 2023, to remain compliant with current rules and laws. Many reports require redaction, per Ohio Sunshine Laws, before release.

## **Communications Division**

The Mentor Safety Forces Communications Unit is committed to providing efficient, attentive, quality service to the residents and safety forces we serve. We promote TEAMWORK in our center; RESPECT those who have given us their trust; are ACCOUNTABLE to those we serve; maintain INTEGRITY in the performance of our duties; and DEDICATE ourselves to the profession we have chosen.

The Mentor Emergency Dispatch center answered a total of 101,395 incoming phone calls for 2023. 9-1-1 calls accounted for 14,834 of those received, a slight increase of 1,227 from 2022.

The Mentor Communications Unit once again surpassed national standards for the speed in which 9-1-1 calls were answered. The accepted national standard is that 90% of all 9-1-1 calls be answered within 15 seconds. In Mentor, 100% of all 9-1-1 calls were answered in under 7 seconds.



With the retirement of Communications Supervisor Nina Lombardo-Mylott in August of 2023, Dispatcher Michele MacDonald was promoted as the new Dispatch Supervisor. Michele worked as both a part-time and full-time dispatcher since 1999. Michele worked under the supervision of Nina for many years and had the privilege of working alongside her on multiple projects, including the CAD (computer aided dispatch) software upgrade in 2012. Michele brings strong administrative and technical skills, along with her dispatching knowledge, to this position. We are confident that Michele will continue the legacy of service and excellence left by Nina.

We would like to thank Nina, who served the residents and safety forces of Mentor for nearly 18 years. She worked tirelessly to ensure that the communication center was always moving forward, staffed with the most qualified dispatchers, and reliable in its service. The advancements she implemented will have a lasting effect on the center's ability to provide high-level service for years to come.



Proper training of new dispatchers continues to be the key to the unit's success. New dispatchers receive training in three phases: call-taker, police radio, and fire/EMS radio. For 2023, the Communications Unit saw the addition of two new full-time dispatchers, Olivia Jarm and Christine Zavada. Both are on their way to completing all three phases



of training. Probationary Dispatcher Zane Lewis completed all phases of training as of December 2023.

The Mentor Communications Unit improved its ability to efficiently dispatch fire and EMS calls through the implementation of Zetron Max Fire Station Alerting. This new software allows dispatch to send simultaneous tones, indicating calls for service, to each of the Mentor fire stations. Simultaneous tones speed up response times by eliminating drawn out consecutive tones sent to one station at a time. Another benefit of this system relates to the health of

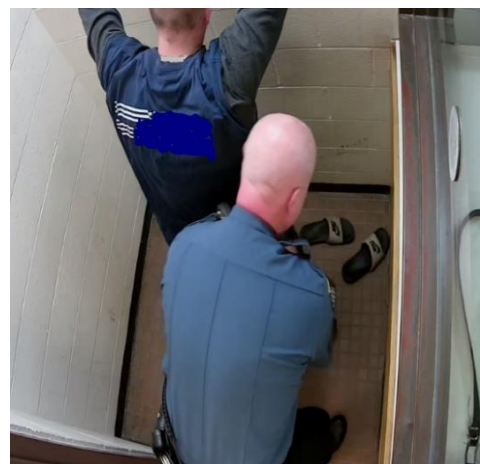


in-house fire crews, as the system uses programmable heart healthy tones, which ramp in volume compared to historically loud startling tones for each call. The implementation required vast coordination with all Lake, Geauga, and Ashtabula fire agencies, as Mentor handles mutual aid calls, known as MABAS, in this region.

## Corrections Division

The Mentor City Jail is classified as a twelve (12) day facility with ten individual cells, two court holding cells, specialty cells, visitation rooms and administrative offices. The jail facility is staffed twenty-four hours a day using a staff of seven (7) full-time Corrections Officers and one (1) part-time Corrections Officer. All subjects arrested by Mentor Police Officers are brought to the Mentor Jail for processing, and then either released on bond or held without bond until their arraignment. The Mentor Jail also houses persons convicted of municipal ordinances who have been committed by the judge to a jail sentence up to twelve days.

While jail staff have several responsibilities, their primary function is the processing, securing, and caring for inmates in their custody. Processing an arrestee includes booking, fingerprinting, mugshots, property maintenance and bond management. Corrections Officers also prepare inmates for court, maintain and operate the jail's 'Intoxilyzer 8000' for breath alcohol testing, conduct in-house jail inspections, and are responsible for the overall safety and cleanliness of the facility.



In 2023, a total of 1311 adults were processed through the Mentor City Jail, compared to 1415 in 2022. In 2023 there were 352 adults temporarily held for court appearances in the Mentor Municipal Court, compared to 406 in 2022. Eight (8) adults were sentenced by the Mentor Municipal Court to serve time in the Mentor City Jail, compared to six (6) in 2022. Corrections Officers were responsible for collecting bonds and fines for the Mentor Municipal Court when the court was closed. In 2023 a total of \$164,410.00 in bonds and fines were collected by corrections personnel.

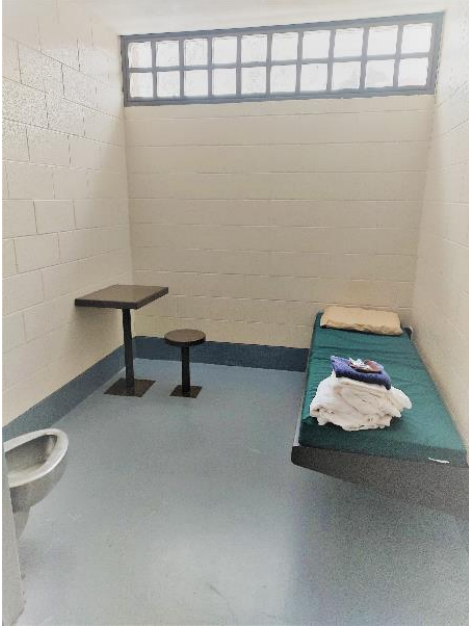
	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Prisoners Processed</b>	1016	1257	1415	1311
<b>Persons Sentenced</b>	8	4	6	8
<b>Persons Temporarily Held</b>	363	367	406	352
<b>Juveniles Processed</b>	29	22	36	24

In 2023, twenty-four juvenile offenders were processed in the jail, compared to thirty-six in 2022. In compliance with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, quarterly reports were completed and forwarded to the Ohio Department of Youth Services. Per Ohio laws, juveniles are limited to certain areas of the jail as needed and may never be mixed with the adult inmate population.

The Mentor City Jail continued to maintain effective per day housing costs by maintaining proper foodservice management. A total of 1938 meals were served in 2023. Meals served in the Mentor City Jail are approved by the State Dietician and inspected by the Health Department on an annual basis. During 2023, a new convection oven was purchased, replacing the original oven installed over 40 years ago.

	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Meals Served</b>	1535	1908	1975	1938
<b>Annual Meal Costs</b>	\$4,406	\$5,818	\$7,939	\$8,808

The Mentor City Jail continues to comply with current jail standards that are mandated by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, Bureau of Adult Detention. In 2023, the Mentor City Jail was in 100% compliance with the Bureau of Adult Detention Jail Inspection.



On April 10, 2023, Officer David Keller was hired as a part-time Corrections Officer. Officer Keller is a veteran Corrections Officer with the Lake County Sheriff's Office and successfully completed his training on November 22, 2023.

All Corrections Officers received 31 hours of training in 2023. This training included: All Policies and Procedures, Suicide Prevention, Fire Extinguisher training, Stress, the Corrections Officer's Silent Killer, Survival Tips If You Are Taken Hostage, Fentanyl Exposure: 5 Safety Tips for Corrections Officers and Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), among other topics.

## Property & Evidence

The Property & Evidence Unit falls under the Support Services Division of the Police Department. This unit is closely supervised and monitored by Capt. Robert Valley. The primary function of the Property & Evidence Unit is to provide a safe and secure location for all evidence and other items turned in to the department, following a strict chain of custody for each item. This unit is tasked with ensuring that evidence is ready for court, or in cases of found property, it is held until the rightful owner can be found to claim it. We strive to provide quick and efficient service to the Police Department, courts, and the public at large.

In 2023, the Property & Evidence Unit handled 4,030 pieces of property and evidence. All property and evidence items were tracked to include the submitting officer, date and time of submission, and the storage location of said item. Any transfer of any item from one person to another, the "Chain of Custody", is documented with computer entries. This includes any evidence transferred from our facility to the crime lab for analysis, prosecutors, or other officers of the court, when items are returned to this facility, or items being returned to the rightful owners or destroyed when it involves contraband from adjudicated cases.



Property & Evidence Items Processed by Year				
2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
4,891	4,129	4,620	3,890	4,030

Property & Evidence is also responsible for supplying and distributing copies of digital evidence, most typically photos and/or videos, as needed for criminal prosecution or public records requests. The unit is tasked with making copies of officers' bodycam and dashcam videos, booking videos and/or case photographs, by burning DVDs or transferring files via secured cloud services. In 2023, over 800 hours were spent processing over 3,080 videos. This is compared to 2022 when 685 hours was logged processing 2,820 videos. As digital media in public safety continues to increase, the task of managing it has become one of Property and Evidence's most time-consuming tasks.



Property & Evidence maintains much of the equipment used by the Patrol Division. This includes radar equipment, AEDs, and radiological measurement instruments used in the event of a radiation leak at the Perry Nuclear Power Plant. Ten new radar units and two new speed measuring laser units were added to the patrol inventory in 2023. We also ensured that all officers had access to equipment for safe handling of any property and/or evidence, especially access to latex gloves. We maintain a supply of property and evidence packaging products, such as paper and plastic Ziploc bags in various sizes, an assortment of different sized envelopes and boxes with sealing tapes.



The Property and Evidence Unit continues to manage the Lake County Prescription Drug Drop Box located in the Police Department lobby. Residents safely discarding old or unused prescription drugs fill this bin weekly. In 2023, over 1,600 pounds of discarded prescription and OTC drugs were collected, compared to 2000 pounds in 2022. All discarded prescriptions were transported to the Lake County Narcotics Agency for proper disposal.

An audit is performed each year certifying all property and evidence is accounted for. The audit is critical to ensuring the integrity of the unit due to the vast amounts of guns, illicit drugs, cash, jewelry, etc., which is collected. The audit is completed with oversight from officers not assigned to the unit. The 2023 audit verified all property and evidence was accounted for.



On a final note, Property and Evidence staff held a police auction in September of 2023. These auctions are necessary to clear out property and/or evidence which is no longer needed and has gone unclaimed. The auction was well-attended, and all proceeds were turned over to the City of Mentor's general fund.





# Mentor Police Department Organizational Chart

