



2020

Annual Report

Sheriff Frank Baker

Allegan County

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Message from the Sheriff

Dear Chairman Storey:

On behalf of the Deputies and Staff of the Allegan County Sheriff's Office we respectfully present the 2020 Sheriff's Office Annual Report to the Commissioners and citizens of Allegan County.

2020 was a year like none other. It was a time of unprecedented decision making usually done on the fly. We had to implement numerous unproven policy and procedure changes in reaction to the pandemic and changing guidelines. The dedication of the staff was highlighted by their willingness accept and adapt with these changes. The staff were also asked to work modified schedules so that we could ensure that we had a ready and able workforce in the event of a Covid-19 outbreak on a specific shift. They also had to work while under much additional stress, as little was known regarding the health risks to first responders and essential staff working in close contact with the public and incoming inmates. The need to utilize personal protection equipment, which was in short supply, at the onset of the pandemic created another level of stress and anxiety. Many expressed concern, not so much for themselves, but regarding the potential to bring the virus home to their spouses and children.

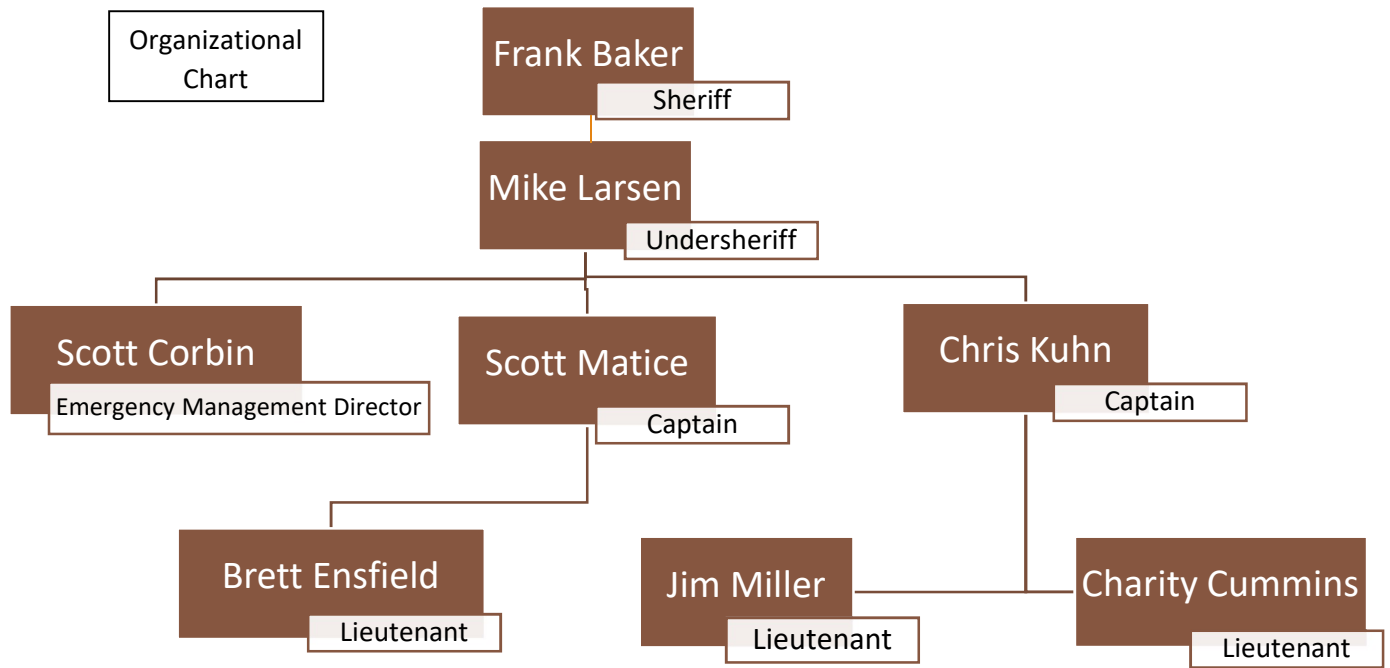
I could not be prouder of the staff and what they accomplished this past year. Obviously, a statistical analysis of the year will not yield great numbers. It could in fact look as though it was an "easy" year. I can assure you; however, it was anything but that. The Command Staff was tasked with safely guiding our Deputies, providing services to our communities, and protecting the inmate population from infection. Through the constant evaluation of our procedures and implementing modifications to our practices we were able to avoid any significant outbreaks. While we did have a few staff and a few inmates who contracted the virus I feel we can say our efforts were successful.

The year ended on a positive note as we were making plans to assist in the roll out of the vaccine. Hope is on the horizon for our businesses and our communities. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the many who have been impacted during this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Frank Baker





Promotions and Retirements in 2020

Deputies Brandon Berens and Mike Martin were promoted to Sergeant in 2020. Deputies David Ashton and Matt VanderPloeg were promoted to Detective in 2020. Sergeant Tony Saucedo, Sergeant Todd Wagner, and Deputy Tim Halstead retired in 2020.



Sgt. Brandon Berens



Sgt. Mike Martin



Det. Dave Ashton



Det. Matt VanderPloeg



Sgt. Tony Saucedo

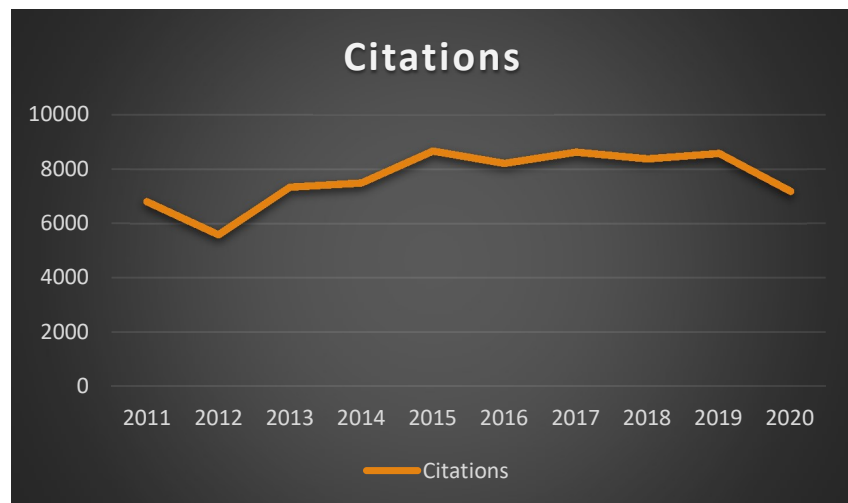


Sgt. Todd Wagner



Dep. Tim Halstead

Law Enforcement Division - Road Patrol

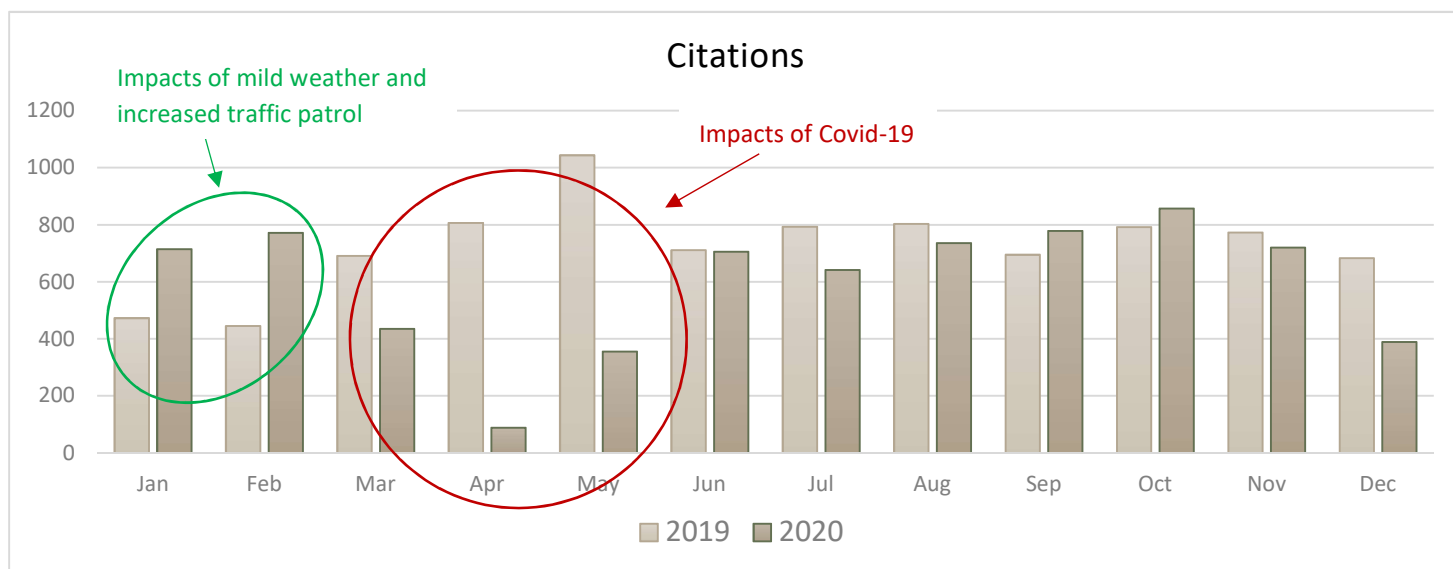


The number of citations issued in 2020 was down from previous years. This was anticipated as we implemented measures to reduce close contact with the public and our Deputies during the early stages of the pandemic. Restrictions were lifted as PPE became more readily available.

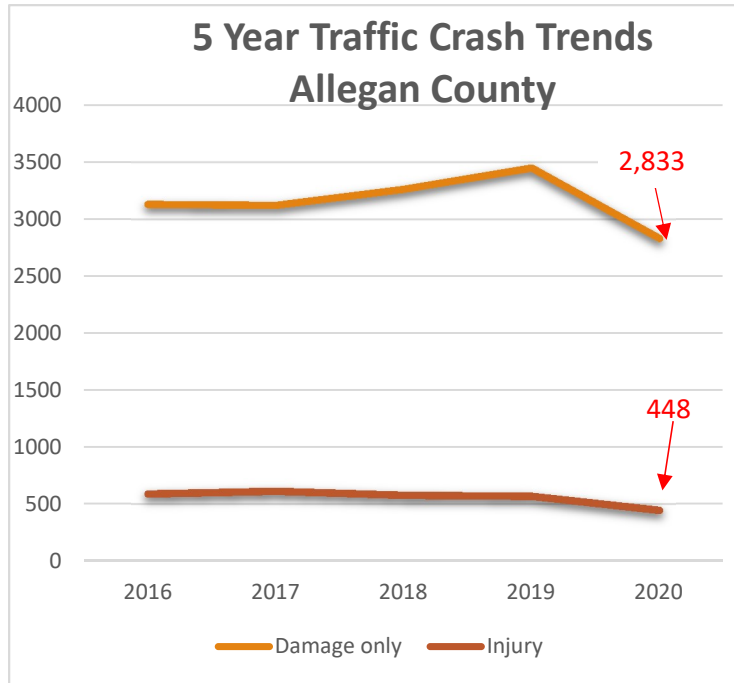
We also noticed a definite reduction in traffic volumes as more people were working from home and retail shops, food service, and entertainment opportunities were limited.

The mild winter and opportunities for traffic enforcement at the start of 2020 had actually resulted in a higher number of citations compared to 2019; however, that was cancelled out as a result of limitations on traffic enforcement and the overall reduced traffic during 2020.

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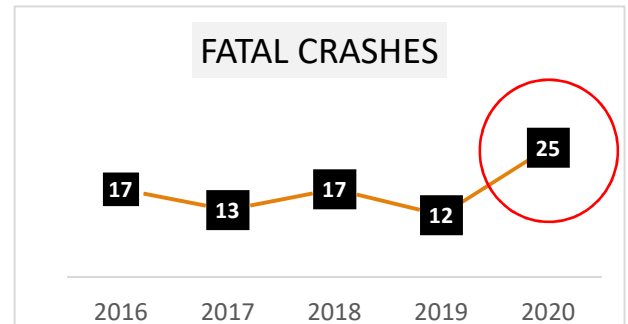
Road Patrol - Traffic Crashes



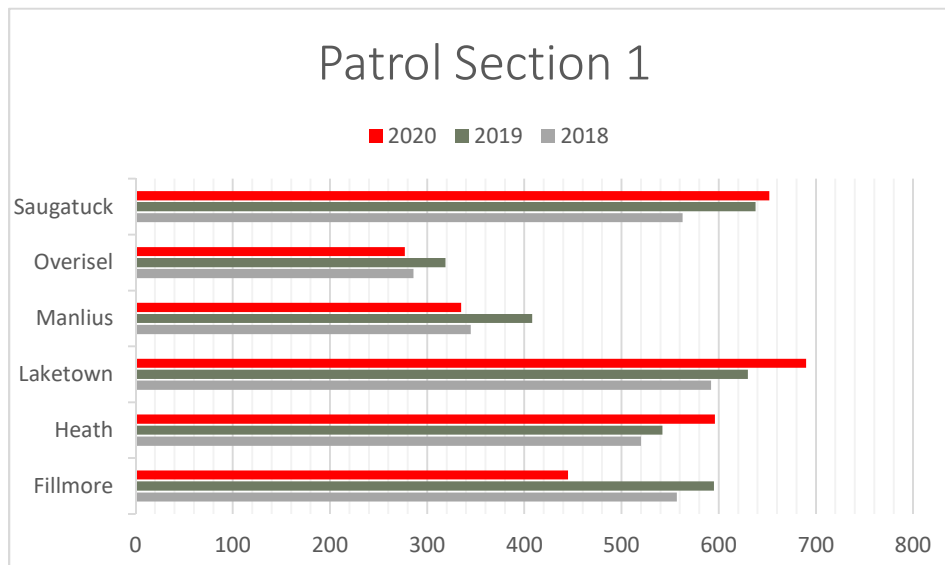
The overall number of traffic crashes was down in 2020. The number of injury crashes and the number of property damage crashes were both lower than any of the last 5 years in Allegan County.

The number of fatal crashes was significantly higher. We experienced 5 fatal crashes during the month of December. A review of those December crashes indicated that they were primarily on sunny and clear days with no weather related concerns. 20 of the 25 total fatal crashes were handled by the Sheriff's Office.

A review of crashes over the last decade indicates an average of 13.8 fatal crashes per year from 2010-2019. We experienced an 81% increase in fatal crashes in 2020 compared to an average of the previous 10 years and a 108% increase from 2019.



Road Patrol – Calls for Service



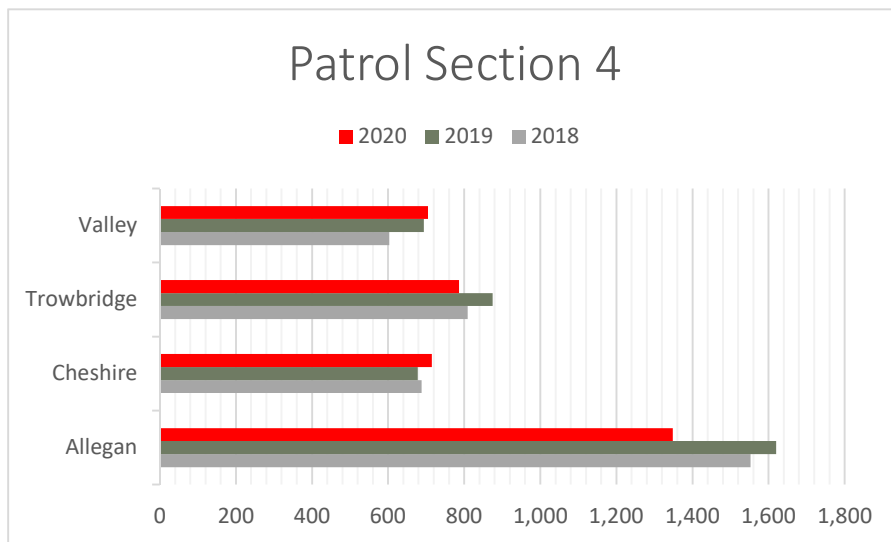
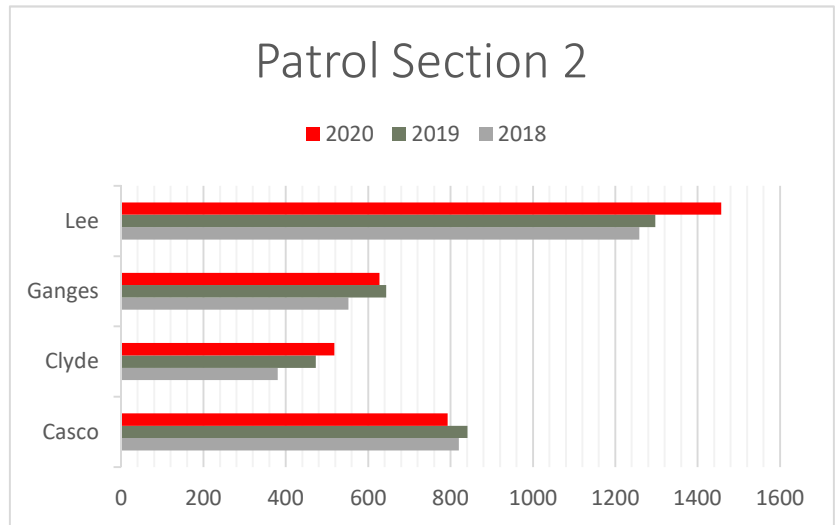
Section 1

The total call volume in Section 1 for 2020 was 2,975. Saugatuck City, which was not included in the above total, had a call volume of 976. This represents a 5% reduction in call volume for Section 1.

Road Patrol – Calls for Service (continued)

Section 2

The total call volume in Section 2 for 2020 was 3,395. This was an increase of 5% in call volume compared to the volume of calls in 2019 for Section 2. Lee Twp. had the largest increase.

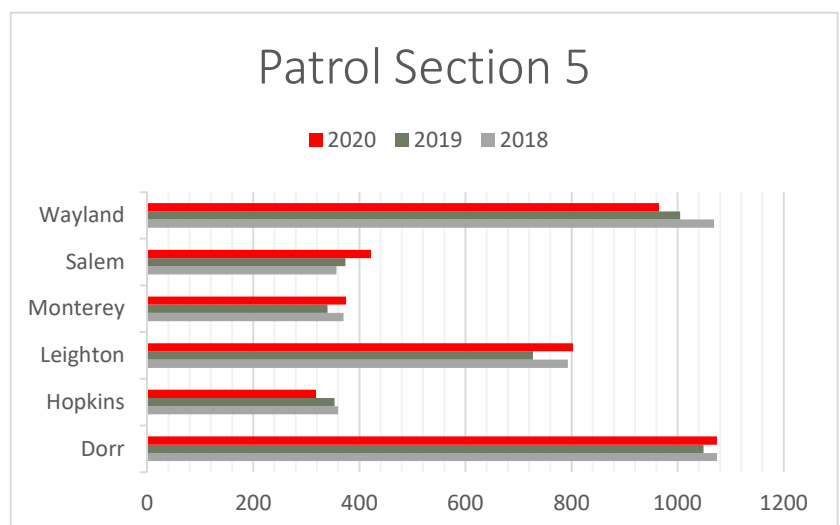


Section 4

The total call volume in Section 4 for 2020 was 3,554. This was a reduction of 8% in call volume compared to the previous year. Valley and Cheshire Townships experienced slight increases in volume; however, Allegan and Trowbridge had reductions in calls for service.

Section 5

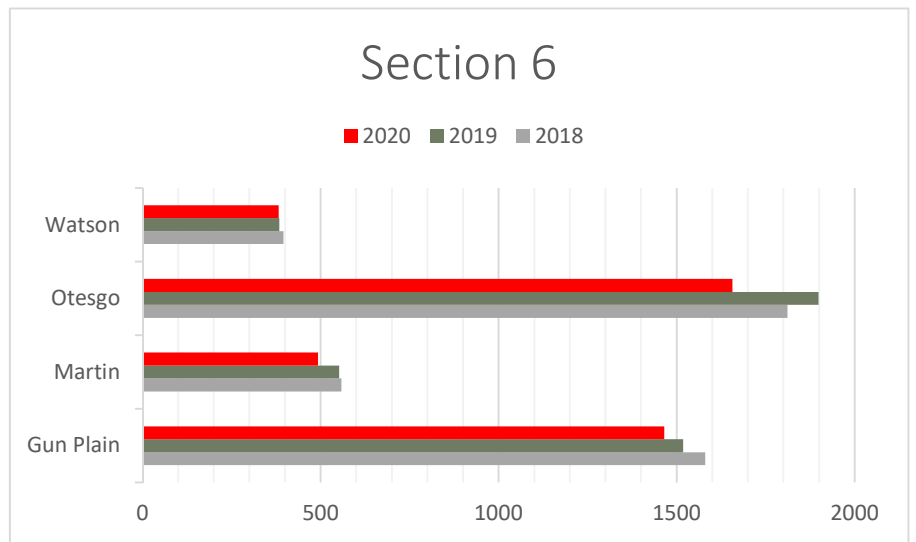
The total call volume for Section 5 was 3,957 in 2020. There was a 3% increase in call volume for Section 5 compared to 2019. The reductions in call volume in Wayland Twp. were probably the result of the pandemic's impact on the Casino.



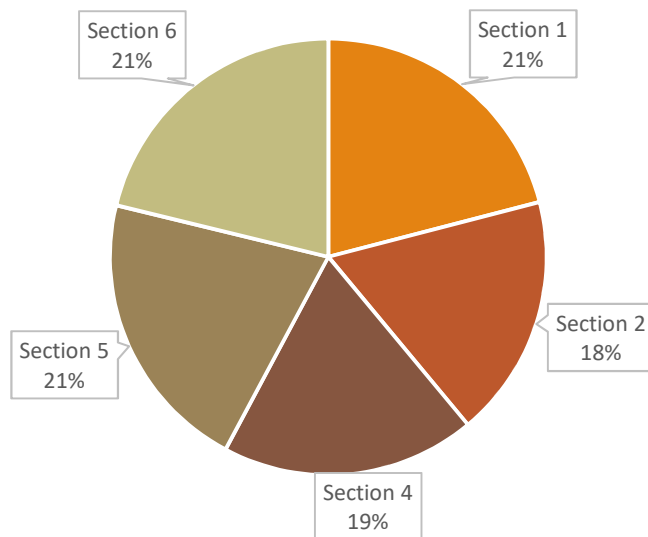
Road Patrol – Calls for Service (continued)

Section 6

The total call volume for Section 6 in 2020 was 3,997. This was an 8% reduction in calls for service compared to 2019. The largest reduction occurred in Otsego Twp. This is believed to be the result of the pandemic and impacts on the businesses in the area we refer to as the “M-89 Strip” that runs through Otsego Twp.



2020
Calls for Service by Patrol Section



Additional Call Volume Included

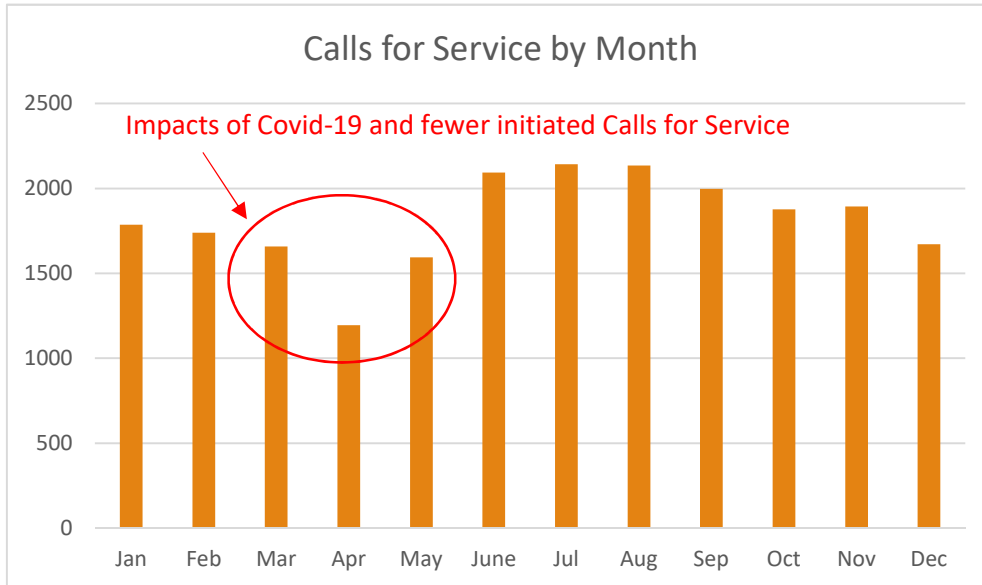
The Sheriff’s Office provides contracted police services to the City of Saugatuck which is within Section 1. The 976 calls for service handled by the Sheriff’s Office are included in the adjacent chart.

Highest Call Volume Townships

Township	Call Volume 2020	Within Section
Otsego Twp.	1,657	6
Gun Plain Twp.	1,465	6
Lee Twp.	1,457	2
Allegan Twp.	1,348	4
Dorr Twp.	1,074	5
Wayland Twp.	965	5

Saugatuck City had a call volume of 976

Road Patrol – Calls for Service (continued)



This chart reflects the impact of the initial Covid-19 stay at home order last year. The stay at home order along with the directives we had issued resulted in a reduction in call volume.

Law Enforcement Division - Investigations

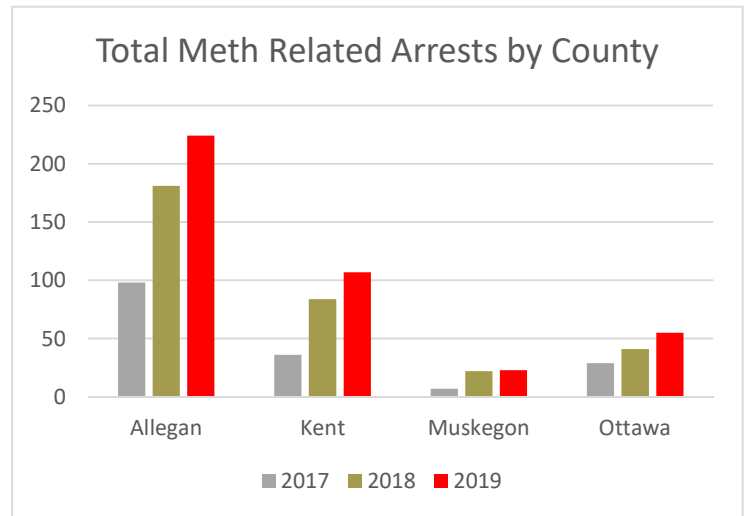
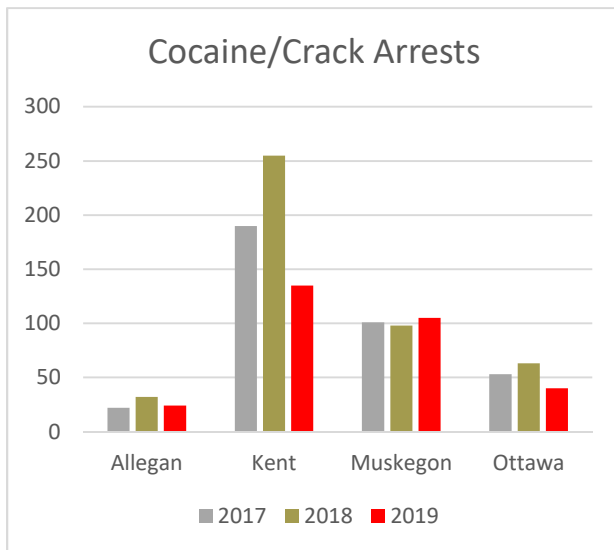
The Sheriff's Office Detectives investigated 2 homicides in 2020. The first homicide was in August and the second in November. Our Detectives, working along with Detectives from Norfolk, Virginia and the Michigan State Police, were also able to make an arrest and locate the victim's body from a cold case homicide that occurred in 1989. This cold case is proceeding through the Courts. Arrests were also made in the other 2 homicides and those cases are also proceeding through the Courts.

The Sheriff's Office has greatly expanded our ability to investigate crimes by utilizing the training, software, and equipment acquired in 2020 to conduct forensic analysis of computers, cell phones, tablets, and other digital data storing devices. A new detective position was added in 2020 to the Detective Bureau. Detective Ashton, who was listed as a promotion in 2020, has been trained and is providing this beneficial investigative skill for the Sheriff's Office and other Allegan County law enforcement agencies.

The Sheriff's Office has one detective assigned to the South West Enforcement Team (SWET). This detective is assigned to the North Team which is comprised of detectives from the Sheriff's Office, Michigan State Police, and the Hastings Police Dept. This team works in Allegan and Barry Counties along with assisting the other local, State, and Federal narcotic investigation teams such as the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF), Department of Homeland Security, Southwest Michigan Enforcement Team (WEMET), the Kalamazoo Valley Enforcement Team (KVET), and others.

Issues and concerns regarding Substance Abuse Investigations

The Allegan County Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force (ASAP) and the Lakeshore Regional Entity (LRE) commissioned a report in 2020 regarding stimulants and this emerging problem. We have included some data from this report for comparing this issue with some of our LRE neighboring counties.



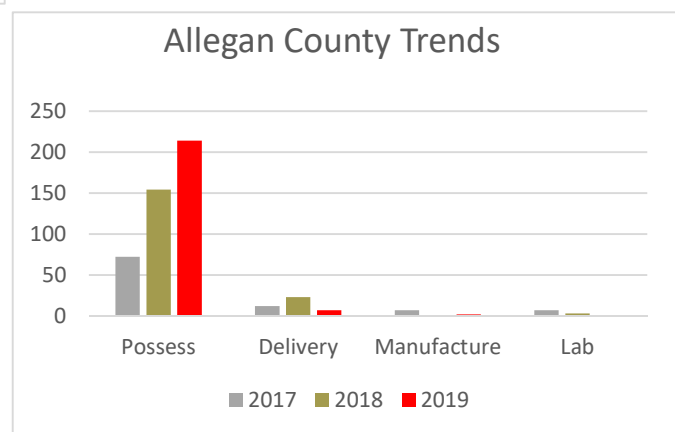
The following was taken directly from the LRE Report:

“Methamphetamine (MA) Related Arrests

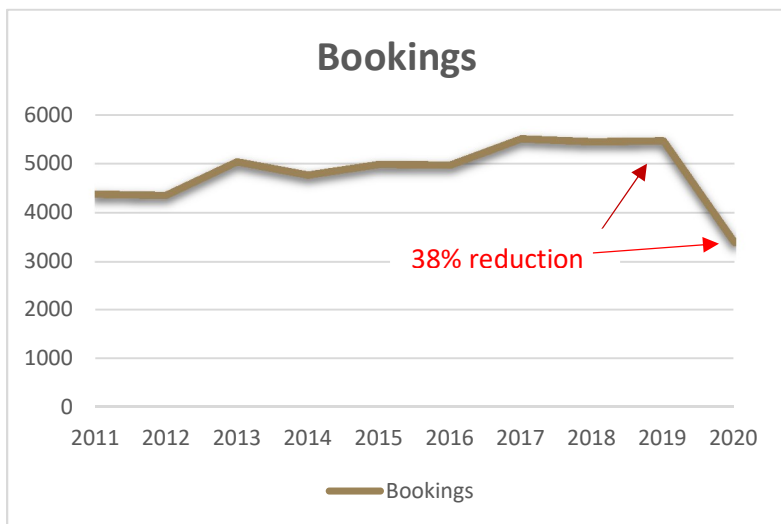
Allegan County had the highest number of MA arrests in the region. Between FY17 and FY19 arrests have been increasing throughout the region but remain much lower than in Allegan County. Allegan County accounts for less than 9% of the region’s population yet almost half (49%) of MA related arrests occurred in the county.

Local stakeholders note that the high number of arrests in Allegan County is likely caused, at least in part, to ongoing efforts and attention by local law enforcement.”

On a positive note, you can see that the number of reported Meth Labs is down considerably from years past. This is believed to be due to the availability of inexpensive meth imported into Allegan County from other areas. This was one of the driving factors in our decision to move from the WEMET Team to the SWET Team. Our investigations have shown that as meth manufacturing and labs decreased we saw a trend that the meth in Allegan County was often being trafficked from the Kalamazoo area. This allowed us to align our investigative efforts with the Teams having the greatest opportunity to address this trend. This new partnership has resulted in several large seizures.

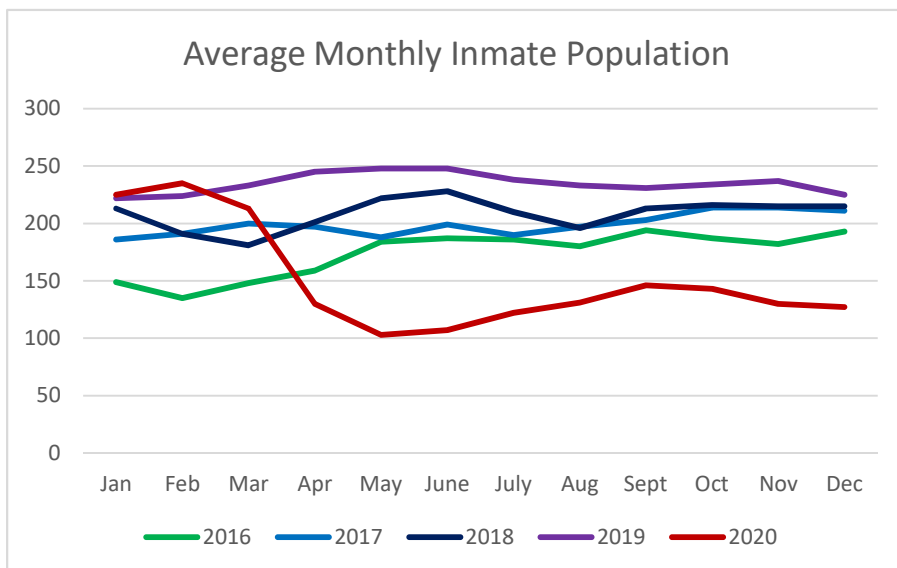
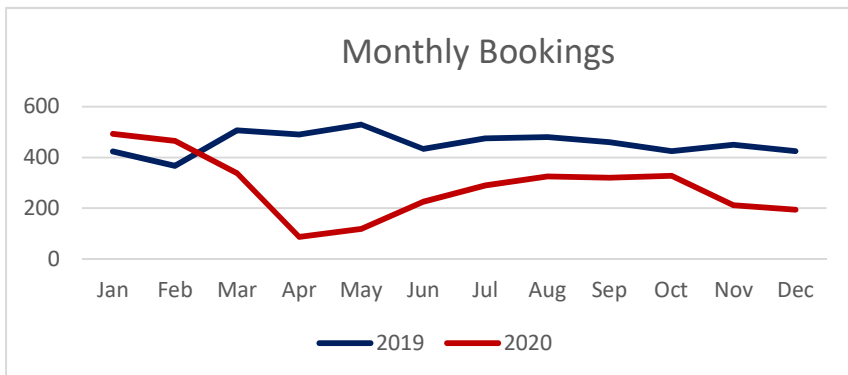


Corrections Division



Bookings into the Corrections Center during 2020 were down approximately 38% from the previous year. The Sheriff's Office, in collaboration with our criminal justice partners, implemented actions and procedures to address pandemic related concerns. Those actions significantly impacted the number of bookings in 2020. We began the year ahead of 2019, but similar to citations, that was cancelled out by the pandemic's impacts.

The Sheriff's Office was quick to implement actions to reduce the possibility of Covid-19 finding a way into the facility. These early actions were instrumental in our success in protecting our staff and inmate population.



Prior to the pandemic we were experiencing average monthly inmate population numbers at or near our rated capacity. This required us to routinely monitor and take periodic corrective actions to lower the population. We anticipate the need to revisit our rated capacity in the future as we resume normal court operations.

Our facility has the ability to house approximately 100 more inmates beyond our current rated capacity;

however, we will need to work with the Michigan Department of Corrections to request raising the current capacity. The purpose of intentionally rating the facility lower than full capacity was done to control costs, as some of our vendor contracts are based on capacity.

Corrections Division (continued)



Close monitoring of the inmate population will be critical as we come out of the pandemic. We anticipate we will see an increase in inmates as the Courts resume full operations. We will need to work with our criminal justice partners to fully understand the impact Covid-19 had on our inmate population and if those impacts are temporary or long term. That information will be needed to make future inmate population projections.



The Sheriff's Office took action prior to the mandates that came out of the Governor's Office. We began working with our Judges, the Courts, and the Prosecutor's Office to implement actions that reduced our inmate population. We collaborated with our criminal justice partners to address pretrial incarceration, bond, delaying the issuance of certain non-violent warrants, and modifications to court hearings. Additionally, corrections staff were moved to schedules that allowed for us to have a ready workforce available in the event of an outbreak or exposure within the facility. We were fortunate enough to avoid several potentially challenging situations by taking action early and constantly evaluating our processes and making changes as needed to address concerns.

Inmate Programming

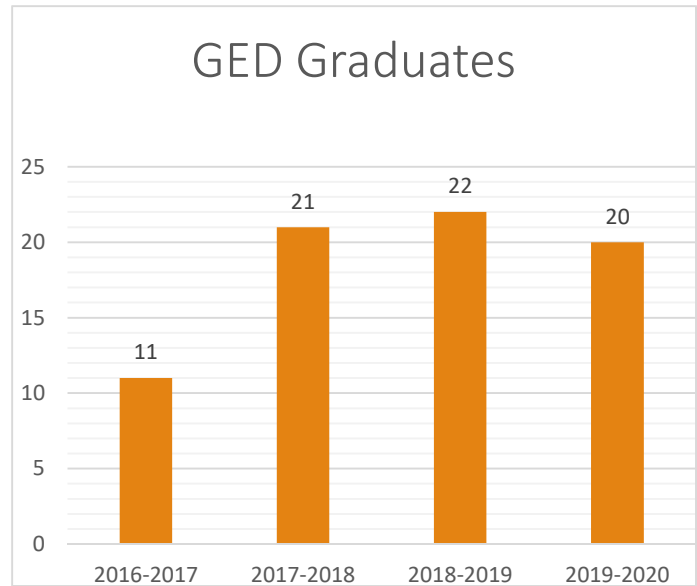
Inmate programs were greatly impacted last year as a result of the pandemic. The numerous volunteers that come into the facility were not able to enter due to our Covid-19 protocols that locked down the facility. Some were entirely cancelled; however, when possible some were modified or adapted to work within the parameters set up in our processes and procedures to mitigate the spread into the Corrections Center.

D.E.B.T.S. Crew (Detail Enabling Better Transition to Society)

Inmate workers assigned to the DEBTS Crews were transitioned to other duties within the facility. These duties were primarily additional cleaning and sanitizing responsibilities since we could not have them working outside the facility and returning to their housing units. We were still able to save 726 bed days which was only 8 days less than 2019.

General Educational Development (GED) / Career Readiness

The GED program too was impacted in 2020 as a result of schools being paused or shifted to remote learning. Due to precautions taken within the facility many students or potential students were not able to participate. Our reduced inmate population was our biggest challenge as the teachers were able to implement remote learning utilizing technology made available in the facility. Since the majority of the 2019-2020 school year was prior to the pandemic, we were able to still graduate 20 inmates with a GED. Unfortunately, we were on track to exceed the previous year's numbers for graduates until the pandemic.



The 2019-2020 school year had 85 participants in the GED program and 64 in the Career Readiness program. This resulted in 162 bed days saved in the GED program and 67 bed days saved in the Career Readiness program.

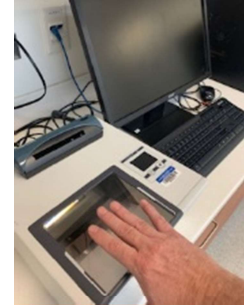
We anticipate that the 2020-2021 school year will be considerably impacted and that there will be a considerable reduction in the number of graduates and bed days saved in both programs.

Other Inmate Programs (Work Release, Meth Diversion, MRT, Relapse Prevention, Re-Entry Units)

- The Work Release program was significantly impacted since we could not have inmates in and out of the facility potentially contracting the virus and spreading it inside the facility. As a result, we only had 16 participants in 2020. This resulted in 37 bed days saved compared to the 134 we saved with the 31 participants in 2019. This was a 72% reduction in the number of bed days saved.
- Meth Diversion had 13 participants in 2020 and had 5 individuals successfully complete the program.
- Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) had 69 participants and had 21 individuals successfully complete the program with success rate of 30%. The success rate of 2019 was 31% with 109 participants and 34 completions.
- Relapse Prevention had 42 participants last year with 10 successful completions for a success rate of 24%. The success rate in 2019 was higher and we will be evaluating causes.
- The Re-Entry Units were impacted severely by the pandemic as we could not allow volunteers into the facility for most of last year. We are excited to get out of this pandemic and restore those services and programs to the inmates. Chaplain Sarah has done a great job remotely but the program needs the face to face time and volunteers back.

Administrative Services

Fingerprinting	2017	2018	2019	2020
Concealed Pistol License	878	722	607	876
School Employment	68	86	95	34
Criminal Justice	60	69	115	93
Total	1,006	877	817	1,003



2020 was an interesting year for our Administrative Staff. We transitioned to a limited number of administrative staff working on site. We also modified our scheduled lobby hours. Additionally, some services were limited or suspended during pandemic surges. We still managed to fingerprint just over 1,000 individuals. Utilizing technology to schedule appointments for fingerprinting allowed us to minimize the number of applicants congregating in the lobby.

Activity	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sex Offender Registrations	1,034	1,041	1,019	1,035	596
Background Requests (CPS, Adoptions, Probation/Parole, FBI NICS)	428	1,102	1,206	1,353	1,080
Case Reports Transcribed	10,544	10,989	11,888	11,921	11,333
Freedom of Information Act (Attorneys and Public)	796	906	991	988	1,035

Sex offender registrations and verifications were greatly impacted by the pandemic. Direction from the state was to suspend those activities during the lockdown and during the pandemic. We anticipate that number will go back up in subsequent years. FOIA requests for background checks and requests for law enforcement and corrections records were down slightly from the previous year; however, the trend and projections are that it will continue to rise.

Administrative Staffing

The staff has done a great job adapting to the changes as a result of our Covid-19 protocols and procedures. The staff responsible for typing and transcribing police reports has been working remotely. They receive their work load electronically and prepare the reports and documents. Their supervisor is typically in the office assembling the arrest packets, information, and reports to be taken each day to the Prosecutor's Office. The supervisor can monitor their work load and performance based on their output. This has helped to ensure these critical services were not impacted due to illness and has worked well for us this past year.

Emergency Management



EM Director Scott Corbin

2020 was a very active year for our Emergency Management Division. The work of our Director Scott Corbin, his small staff, and the numerous volunteers was monumental. Obviously, the pandemic presented the biggest challenge during 2020; however, erosion and flooding were also significant events involving Emergency Management.



Besides our law enforcement agencies and Fire Departments, Director Corbin coordinates and works with our Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Allegan County Search and Rescue (ACSR), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Radio Service (RACES), and other volunteer organizations. Emergency Management also manages the Special Needs Registry and provides training to various agencies.



Brett Apelgren, LEPC Site Area Specialist

Emergency Management played an instrumental role in assisting law enforcement, the Fire Service, and Public Health during this pandemic. They worked diligently to acquire personal protection equipment and supplies as well as tracking the numerous donations of PPE and supplies. They also distributed the supplies and equipment to numerous agencies throughout the county.

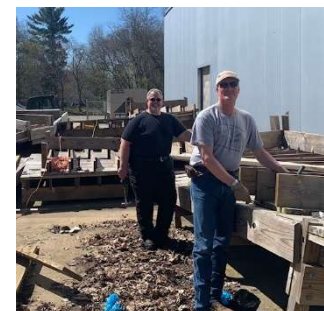


Jim Steuer, EM Deputy

CERT Training Class



CERT Staff building docks for Marine Patrol



Marine Patrol

High water levels on many lakes brought about challenges in 2020. Our Patrol Boat PB1, which is always stationed in Saugatuck, could not be docked initially due to high water. Volunteers from CERT built us a platform on top of the dock so that PB1 could be docked and accessed.

Boaters Safety Classes	2017	2018	2019	2020*
Number of Classes	9	10	9	0
Students Trained	177	281	309	0
Students Certified	169	280	306	0

*All Classes canceled due to Covid-19 Pandemic



Required Safety Equipment	2019 Citations / Warnings	2020 Citations / Warnings
Wearable Personal Flotation Devices (PFD)	13 / 33	10 / 59
Type IV PFD	1 / 15	0 / 10
Fire Extinguisher	1 / 16	0 / 13
Sound Producing Device	0 / 4	0 / 14

Marine Patrol Deputies participated in Operation Dry Water over the 4th of July. During the operational period of July 3rd -5th they contacted 181 vessels, issued 5 boating safety citations, 38 safety warnings, and arrested 1 individual for boating under the influence of alcohol. That individual had a blood alcohol content of .19 which is over double the limit to operate a motor vehicle on a roadway.

Marine Patrol (comprised of 1 full time sergeant and 19 part-time deputies) logged 1,699 hours of patrol on our lakes and waterways during 2020. They investigated 9 boating accidents and conducted 12 search and rescue operations involving 7 boats and 10 individuals.

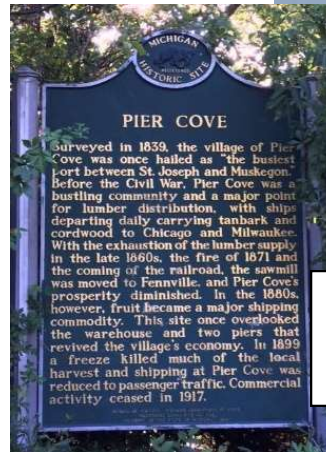


Reserve Division

Sgt. Morgan Sullivan heads up our Reserve Division. 2020 was a difficult year for the Reserve Division, who were tasked with new responsibilities in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of the normal activities were cancelled; however, new responsibilities emerged to assist the Sheriff's Office, Emergency Management, and the Health Department. This was done with fewer staff members as we had to cancel our Reserve Division Academy. We typically conduct an Academy every couple of years to hire and train new members to replace Reserve Deputies who retire or leave.

The Reserve Deputies provided over 3,200 hours of service to the Sheriff's Office and our communities last year. Those hours included 1,055 volunteer hours. Additional duties included about 700 hours of foot patrol, almost 600 hours of Courthouse Security, 100 hours of property inspections, and 320 hours of trainings and meetings.

Their total hours were down from prior years, primarily due to the pandemic and cancelled events; however, the lack of staffing also contributed to the reduced hours. Everyone at the Sheriff's Office is very grateful to the dedicated individuals who volunteered over this last year.



Reserve Deputies assist Ganges Twp. and Saugatuck City with foot patrols at their beaches every summer

Victim Services Unit

The Allegan County VSU (Victim Services Unit) is comprised of 9 current members. This volunteer unit responds to a multitude of tragic events here in Allegan County. These events include, but are not limited to, child deaths, fatal crashes, fatal accidents, suicides, and homicides. They provide an initial response to these events when they occur and provide assistance and resources to the families impacted. These volunteers agree to attend and complete an initial training program along with ongoing educational and training updates.

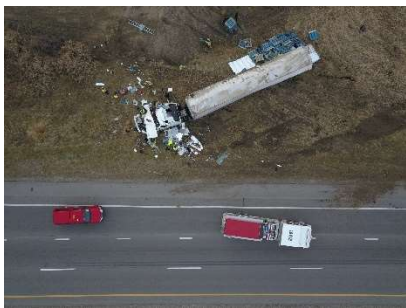
They sign up to be on-call and respond all hours of the day. They are truly an extraordinary group of volunteers who help families who have been notified of the loss of a family member or friend. These highly emotional events require special volunteers capable of providing support and assistance. The team typically responds to about 30-50 call outs per year.

This past year presented challenges and made their response more difficult; however, they made every effort to provide services safely during the pandemic. Many of their training sessions and meetings were cancelled or postponed. They took it upon themselves to continue learning and training on their own. Allegan County citizens benefit greatly by the services they provide.

Looking to the Future

We are constantly evaluating and looking to improve our services to the community. Some of the things we will be looking to implement or improve include:

- Body worn cameras – the body cam project is moving forward and hopefully we will begin utilizing body cameras during 2021.
- Hiring a trained person to work with the data from the body cameras.
 - Redaction and compiling the video captured by our deputies.
- We are looking to expand the use of drones in our investigations, especially for conducting overhead video and photography of fatal traffic crash scenes. We have begun using them and believe that this will provide better evidence and be safer for our investigators tasked with measuring, photographing, videoing, and documenting crash scenes.



- Establishing a dedicated domestic violence investigator assigned to follow up on domestic violence cases. This investigator will work closely with victims who might be in need of further assistance and services from the criminal justice system.
- We are moving forward with a project to provide an on-line resource for people looking up information on individuals in our Corrections Center. Currently Sheriff's Office or Court Staff are called upon to look up information such as bond amounts or out dates.
- Utilizing technology to expand inmate programs.
 - Video conferencing "Second Chance Job Fairs" in our Inmate Career Readiness program.
 - Utilizing tablets to increase access to the GED program.

In Memory of Deputy Gary Smith



We would like to remember and honor Deputy Gary Smith who passed away on December 22, 2020. Deputy Smith retired from the Sheriff's Office back in 2010; however, returned to work part-time as a Court Security Deputy. Deputy Smith worked right up until his health would no longer allow him to serve. He will be fondly remembered and dearly missed.

In Conclusion

The Sheriff's Office would like to thank the Board of Commissioners for your support the past year. Please reach out to us should you have any questions regarding this report, if you would like more detailed information on anything contained within the report, or that we did not include in this report.

The Sheriff's Office would like the communities and citizens we serve to know it has been an honor to serve you this past year. We would also like to recognize and thank the numerous businesses and citizens who have reached out offering support and kind comments. The entire staff has done its best to serve you during this challenging past year and we look forward to a better, happier and healthier 2021.



A few of the many visitors who stopped by last year with kind words, "treats", and personal protection equipment like face masks and sanitizer.

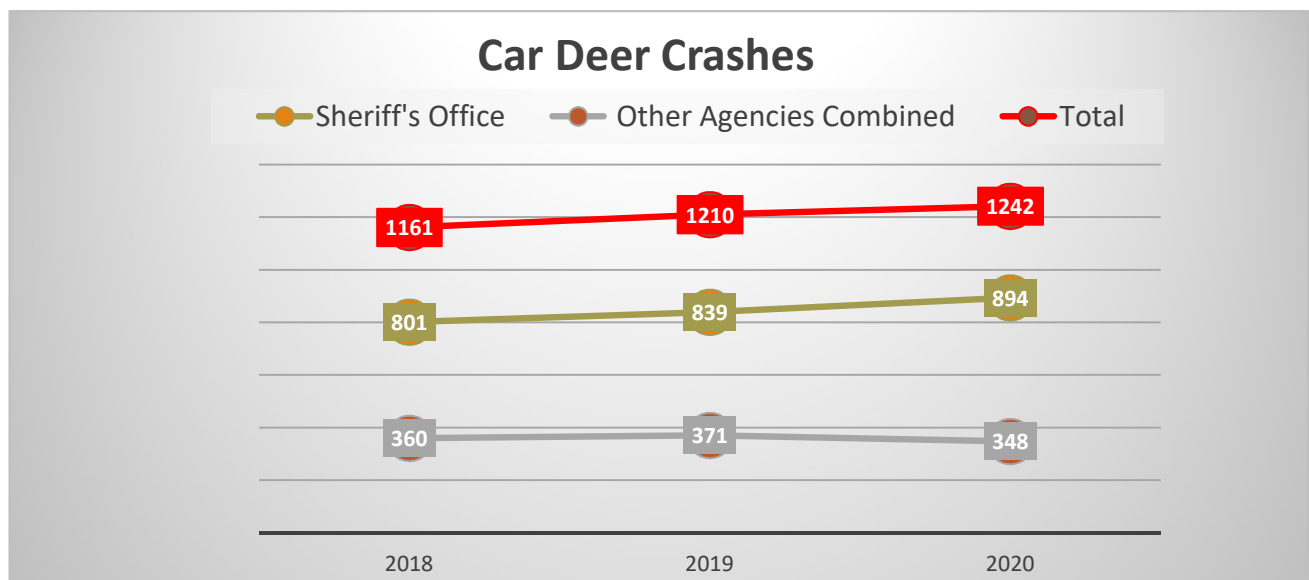
Additional Data

Selected Incident Analysis (types we are often asked about)

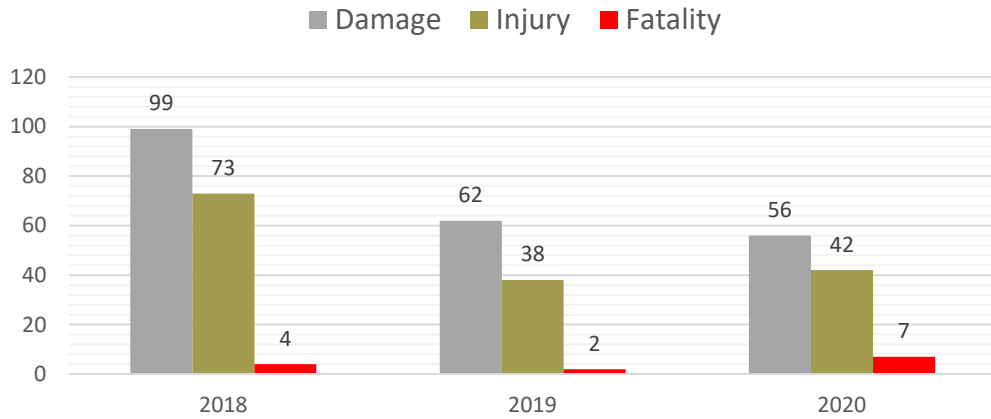
Incident Type	2020	Incident Type	2020
Suicides and attempts	236	Stolen Auto (UDAA)	74
Malicious Destruction of Property	220	Recovered Stolen Autos	28
Domestic Violence	590	Homicides	2
Death Investigations	94	Frauds	305
Suspicious Situations	1,636	Criminal Sexual Conduct	116
Weapons Offenses	220	Trespassing	299
Breaking and Entering (burglary)	230	Controlled Substances	176
Threats and Harassment	399	Larceny	427
Armed Robbery	8	Shoplifting	82
Driving with Suspended License	516	Personal Protection Violations	91
Death Investigations	94	Child Abuse	92
Disorderly Conduct	180	Overdose/Poisoning	46
Juvenile Delinquent/Incorrigible	187	Mental Illness/Psychiatric	137
Loud Noise	270	Alarms	854
Civil Matters	1,260	Child Custody Disputes	103

Selected Arrest Analysis

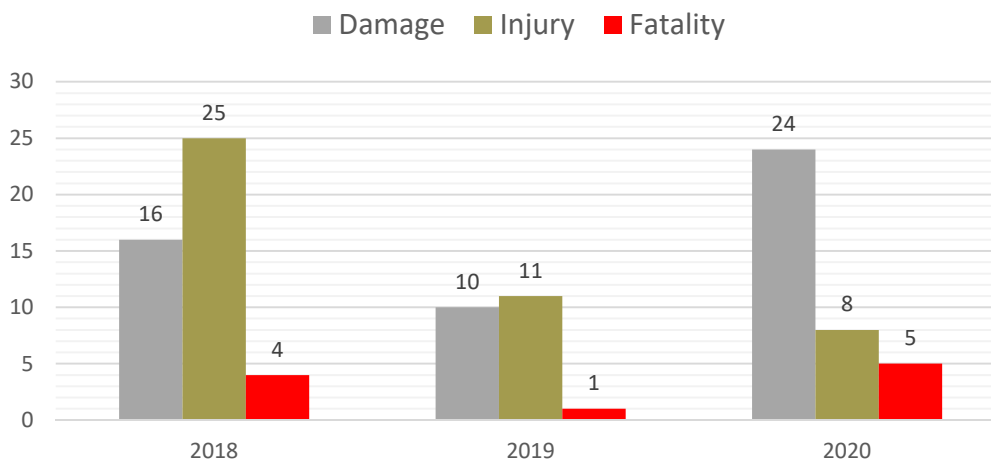
Crime Arrested	2020	Crime Arrested	2020
Assault and Battery	293	Assault w/ Gun	6
Assault w/ other weapon	6	Aggravated Assault	16
Resist and Obstruct Police	119	Flee and Elude (felony)	29
Operate w/ Enhanced BAC (super drunk)	25	Operating While Intoxicated	245
Operating Influence of Drugs	32	Meth Possession	60



Crashes W/ Alcohol Involved



Crashes W/ Drugs Involved



Crashes W/ Alcohol and Drugs Involved

