



ERIE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

PAUL A. SIGSWORTH
SHERIFF

2800 Columbus Avenue
Sandusky, Ohio 44870
Ph: 419-625-7951
Fax: 419-627-7547

Email: sheriff@eriecounty.oh.gov

To the citizens of Erie County:

Respectfully submitted for your review is the annual report for your Erie County Sheriff's Office for calendar year 2023.

This report covers in detail the activity generated as we carried out our varied statutory and public service duties and responsibilities throughout the year.

Your Sheriff's Office consists of four divisions: the Patrol Division, comprised of Patrol Deputy Sheriffs, Detectives, and Communications Officers; the Jail Division, comprised of Jail Deputy Sheriffs and Corrections Officers; the Civil Division, consisting of a Deputy Sheriff assisted part-time by an Administrative Professional, and the Administrative Division, consisting of four full-time and one part-time Administrative Professionals.

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- We received 13,684 classified calls for service.
- Overall law enforcement efforts by your Sheriff's Office resulted in sworn personnel serving 874 arrest warrants and making 608 criminal arrests. Our traffic enforcement efforts resulted in 88 impaired driving arrests and the issuance of 1781 traffic citations and 1524 traffic warnings. We also investigated 751 traffic crashes. Our detectives opened 291 investigative case files and closed 218 investigations during the year.
- Dispatchers were very busy, as always. They answered a total of 86,680 telephone calls or text messages, including 43,944 emergency calls or texts through the 911 system.

- The Civil Division received 3024 writs (subpoenas, protection orders, and other forms of civil process directed to the Sheriff for service) and orders from the Common Pleas Court for sale by the Sheriff of 104 properties.
- Administrative Professionals issued or renewed a total of 1014 concealed handgun licenses.
- The Detective Bureau, with Administrative Division assistance, oversees approximately 122 sex offenders in Erie County—a number that can and routinely does change on a daily basis. There were a total of 319 sex offender registrations and 425 random sex offender residence compliance checks completed in 2023.
- Corrections Officers were busy in the Erie County Jail, as a total of 3037 arrestees were booked into the jail. The average daily jail population was 108 inmates.

Other information of interest for 2023 for your Sheriff's Office includes the following:

- We continued to maintain Sheriff's Office substations in Groton, Oxford, Huron, Milan, Berlin, Vermilion, and Florence Townships and in the Village of Castalia, Margaretta Township. The existence of these substations allows for our Patrol Division Deputy Sheriffs to report directly to assigned areas of patrol throughout the county at shift changes – rather than reporting to the Sheriff's Office as a group – greatly reducing response times to calls for service and increasing our agency's visibility and crime prevention efforts throughout the rural areas of the county. These substations would not be possible without the cooperative relationships that we continue to enjoy with the township trustees and/or village officials throughout the county.
- Due to the continued cooperation and support of the Edison Local School District, Deputy Sheriff Brian Kingsborough continued in his assignment as the school resource deputy at Edison High School.
- Due to the continued cooperation and support of the Erie County General Health District, Deputy Sheriff Mike Kennedy continued in his assignment at the Erie County Health Department to provide for the safety and security needs of the staff and patients throughout the agency's health care campus.
- Due to the continued cooperation and support of educators at the EHOVE Career Center, Deputy Sheriff Kyle Winebrenner continued to provide school resource law enforcement services at the school throughout the academic year. New for 2023, we added a second School Resource Officer at EHOVE at the request and approval of EHOVE administrators and the EHOVE Board of Education. Deputy Sheriff Hayden Service initially filled that role, followed by Deputy Sheriff Cameron Lloyd.

- Due to the continued cooperation and support of educators at Firelands College of Bowling Green State University, Deputy Sheriffs Paul DeFazio and Justin Majoy continued to provide year-round primary law enforcement services throughout the campus. This collaborative program has been in place for many years. In addition, Deputy Majoy was selected as a K-9 handler and has been partnered with Rex, a German Shorthaired Pointer. Once he reaches the appropriate age, Rex will be trained as an explosives detection dog and will remain partnered with Deputy Majoy. Rex loves his new home at BGSU!
- Due to the continued cooperation and support of educators at North Point Educational Services Center (NPESC), Deputy Sheriff Matthew Green, followed by Deputy Sheriff Adam Martin, continued to provide school resource law enforcement services at NPESC's facility on Galloway Road in Perkins Township. Deputy Sheriff Green is now our agency's DARE deputy, continuing the DARE program at NPESC as well as the Margaretta and Edison Local School Districts.
- Due to the continued cooperation and support of Erie County Engineer Jack Farschman, Deputy Sheriff Nick Mazur continued to perform commercial motor vehicle weight enforcement duties throughout Erie County.
- Due to the continued cooperation and support of the Erie County Commissioners and the Erie County Department of Job and Family Services (JFS), Deputy Sheriffs Greg Hall and Keith Bodi continued to be assigned to JFS to concentrate on the service of arrest warrants issued in cases relating to child support issues, and to also conduct criminal investigations concerning the alleged fraudulent receipt of public assistance funds.
- Due to the continued cooperation and support of the Huron Township Trustees, we were contracted to provide three Deputy Sheriffs and one Communications Officer to provide law enforcement services and supplemental dispatching services within Huron Township. With the additional cooperation of BGSU, Deputy Majoy's salary is funded by both Huron Township and BGSU a multi-agency public safety collaborative.
- Due to the continued cooperation and support of Townsend Community School (TCS), Deputy Justin Sanchez was assigned as the school resource deputy at TCS in 2023.
- Due to the continued cooperation of the Margaretta Local School District, Deputies Matt McPeek and Dan Eubank provided school resource law enforcement services at the Margaretta Local Schools in 2023. Deputy McPeek is assigned to the Margaretta High School and Junior High School facilities with Deputy Eubank being assigned to Margaretta Elementary School.

- Due to the cooperation of the Erie County Common Pleas Court, the Erie County Adult Probation Department, the Erie County Commissioners, and the Erie County Solid Waste District, the Sheriff's Office Community Service Program continued its operation in 2023. Deputy Sheriff Ron Schnittker, until his retirement, followed by Corrections Officer Jeff Kashian, coordinated the program that allows for those sentenced by a court to perform community service, probationers, and nonviolent Erie County Jail inmates to complete routine general maintenance tasks for political subdivisions and non/not-for-profit entities throughout the county. In exchange, the community service workers receive credit toward their fines, court costs, and/or jail time.
- Also due to the cooperation of the Erie County Common Pleas Court, the Erie County Adult Probation Department, and the Erie County Commissioners, Deputy Jacob Cooper continued in his assignment for the supervision of those individuals released on bond pending further Erie County Common Pleas Court action. Deputy Cooper is also responsible for monitoring those released on ankle monitors with the approval of the Common Pleas Court judges, thereby reducing the potential number of inmates incarcerated in the Erie County Jail.
- We continued to provide emergency public safety dispatching services to political subdivisions throughout Erie County. Along with dispatching Sheriff's Office personnel and acting as a message relay point for other county offices, we also dispatched the following agencies: Sandusky Police and Fire Departments; Perkins Township Police and Fire Departments; Huron Police and Fire Departments; Bay View Police and Fire Departments; Kelleys Island Police, Fire, and EMS Departments; Berlin Heights Police Department; Milan Police Department and the Margareta Township, Groton Township, and Vermilion Township Fire Departments. The Sheriff's Dispatch Advisory Board, chaired by Huron Police Department Chief Bob Lippert until his retirement and then by Sandusky Police Department Chief Jared Oliver, and comprised of the chiefs of the public safety agencies that we dispatch for, continued to provide collaborative input concerning administrative and operational issues pertinent to their dispatch operation.
- We provided mutual aid assistance to law enforcement agencies throughout the county on over 324 occasions. We also continued to host monthly meetings of police chiefs throughout the county, with attendees representing law enforcement agencies from various local, state, and/or federal agencies. These meetings allow for direct communication and information sharing between these law enforcement professionals.
- As part of our agency's ongoing effort to utilize technology to combat criminal activity, Sergeant Dennis Papineau has received extensive training in the use of devices to download evidence—many times crucial to the solution of a criminal offense—from personal computers and cell phones. While these services were previously available, there was—in many instances—a delay of

several weeks before that information could be received. If crucially needed, Sergeant Papineau is now able to download this information in most cases within several hours. We have made Sergeant Papineau's services available to any local law enforcement agency in the region and he has processed—and will continue to process—cell phones and/or computers for those agencies.

Sergeant Papineau completed 40 forensic cell phone examinations and 1 forensic computer examinations in 2022. The following agencies requested his assistance during the course of the year: United States Secret Service; Sandusky Police Department; Huron Police Department; Clyde Police Department; and the Milan Police Department.

Sergeant Papineau also continued in his assignment as our agency's Training, Recruitment, and Standards coordinator. As Training and Standards requirements continue to become more stringent and as employee recruitment continues to become more difficult, it is necessary to assign these duties to a full-time employee. Sgt. Papineau has streamlined these functions for the agency as a whole.

- We continued to provide primary law enforcement response to calls for service at Erie Metroparks properties throughout the county in 2022.
- Deputy Sheriffs Josh Miller and Corrections Officer Kyle Bellamy continued in their roles as K-9 handlers working daily with their K-9 partners, Xena and Ranger, respectively. As previously mentioned, Deputy Sheriff Justin Majoy began handling his partner, Rex, this year. Our three K-9 handlers successfully coordinated K-9 Unit fundraisers throughout the year.
- With the outstanding ongoing support and cooperation of Lions Clubs throughout Erie County, we continued to participate and staff Project Lifesaver efforts. Project Lifesaver provides equipment that can assist in locating those individuals with cognitive disorders who may wander from their caregivers. Deputy Sheriff Ron Schnittker was the coordinator for this program for our agency until his retirement; Deputy Sheriff Benny Crucey replaced him.
- We continued to work cooperatively and collaboratively with the members of the Erie County Commission, the Erie County Administrator, and all other state, county, and local officials in an effort to provide the most effective and cost-efficient law enforcement services possible to our constituents throughout the county.

- We lost several very valued members of the agency in 2023 due to retirements. Deputy Sheriff Ron Schnittker, Corrections Officer Eric Rieber, and Dispatcher Victoria Marksbury each retired after having served their entire 30+ year public safety careers with the Sheriff's Office.

In addition, Administrative Professional Amy Kazmaier retired after dedicating 31+ years to the citizens of Erie County through her employment at the Erie County Court, the Erie County Prosecutor's Office, and having served the last 11+ years of her career with the Sheriff's Office. Deputy Sheriff Curt Muehling also retired after serving many years as a security screener at the Erie County Courthouse; prior to his service at the Sheriff's Office he had initially retired as a Detective Captain from the Sandusky Police Department, had served as the Commander of the former Erie County Drug Task Force and had also served as an investigator with the Auditor of State.

Together, these five retirees served a combined total of more than 170 years of dedicated public service. We thank them for that service and wish them the very best for health and happiness in their well-earned retirements. They are sincerely missed.

Last, but certainly not least, we continued our community outreach efforts in 2023 by participating in numerous festivals and functions throughout Erie County—to include the Erie County Fair, the Woollybear Festival in Vermilion, the Berlin Heights Basket Festival, the Milan Melon Festival, the Castalia Cold Creek Festival, Kelleys Island's Islandfest, the Huron Riverfest, Touch a Truck in Sandusky sponsored by the Sandusky Police Department, and Trunk or Treat sponsored by the Perkins Township Police Department.

In summary, while unique in many ways, 2023 was a typically busy year for the employees of your Erie County Sheriff's Office. While statistics alone can be useful, they do not—and cannot—reflect the true devotion to public safety that all of our staff members demonstrate while performing their day-to-day duties under what can only be described as, at best, difficult conditions. Whether the employee is a 911 Dispatcher, a Corrections Officer, a Deputy Sheriff, or an Administrative Professional, they strive to conduct themselves ethically, professionally, and in a dignified fashion at all times, regardless of the situation that may occur. They are by far the most valuable asset that our agency possesses.

Finally, we wish to thank you, the citizens of Erie County. We thank you for your ongoing support of our agency, both through your tax dollars and your conduct. We thank you for your patience with us when we make a simple human error. We know that the vast majority of you are law-abiding and peaceful individuals who support our efforts to serve and protect you and who realize the trying situations that we face. We are deeply grateful for that support, and we will continue to work diligently every day to continue to earn and maintain your support and respect.

On behalf of the entire staff of your Erie County Sheriff's Office, I remain,

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul A. Sigsworth". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending from the end.

Paul Sigsworth
Sheriff