"PROTECT AND SERVE"

2020 ANNUAL REPORT
Austin Police Department

"...The mission of the Austin Police Department is to enhance the quality of life in the City of Austin by working cooperatively with the public to enforce the law, preserve peace, reduce fear, and provide for a safe environment."

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I present the Austin Police Department’s 2020 Annual Report to the Mayor, City Council, and citizens of Austin. This report is meant to give you a brief overview of the activities and accomplishments of the staff of Austin Police Department who serve our City.

Our current staffing level remained the same in 2020 with authorization for 34 sworn Officers, 2.5 CSOs (Community Service Officers), and one Administrative Assistant. We anticipated replacing a part-time Parking Enforcement Officer (PEO) that we eliminated from the 2020 budget with a .5 time CSO we added, however the pandemic impacted that hire and it was not made. That .5 CSO position was removed from the 2021 budget. Parking enforcement has shifted to the remaining .5 CSO position.

We did not have any staff turnover in 2020 from our licensed officers or CSO’s. The 5 new officers we hired in October 2019, along with 2 CSO’s at about that same time, all passed their probationary periods. We did however lose our longtime Administrative Assistant, Jeanne Steinbrink, to retirement. Her role was filled by Kari Haarstad, whom we hired away from Olmsted County.

2020 was a unique year for our profession. Like everyone we were affected by the pandemic. Our profession was considered essential and our employees needed to physically fulfill their duties. We did have essential PPE on hand when the pandemic started that helped in our response and we also received generous contributions from the community. While we did have some employees test positive or need to quarantine for close contacts, those losses never impacted our operations. We were also often asked via the many Executive Orders to help monitor and enforce certain sections. Our agency found that the citizens and business owners in Austin had very few issues in complying with the intent of those orders despite the sacrifices they were asked to make.

We also were aware of the social justice issues stemming from George Floyd’s death in Minneapolis. As protests spread in the region and nation we did monitor them. Austin did see 2 marches in 2020. Those did not have any negative outcomes associated with them. In addition to being mindful of those free speech issues and the property rights of others, our profession did see some legal and policy changes through state mandates. We have kept abreast of those and adopted the policies and training as required.

Our officers continue to respond to a high volume of calls with 17,981 total calls for service in 2020. This was down slightly from past years. However most of the decline came from proactive work we asked the officers to lessen in 2020 due to the pandemic. This pullback included low level traffic offenses or misdemeanor warrant services. This was to reduce citizen/Officer/jail contacts,
hence lessening the risk of viral transmission, and help preserve our staffing. We anticipate moving back toward more normal operations in 2021.

We did need to also pull back on many of our in-person programs in 2020 due to Covid-19. This included not having a National Night Out event, our Citizens Police Academy was cancelled, we stopped having explorer meetings, and we stopped doing ride-a-longs. All of these are important outreach tools that we could have really used in 2020 to help connect with the community on the policing questions they had following the spring events in Minneapolis that we were not able to host when they were needed most.

As always I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Officers, CSO’s, and Administrative staff for work they performed for this Department and the citizens of Austin in 2020. They do a fantastic job and I am happy to advocate for them and share their accomplishments in this report.

Respectfully submitted,

David McKichan
Chief of Police
AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT 2020 ROSTER

Chief of Police David McKichan
Captain Todd Clennon

Lieutenants
John T. Mueller
Dustin Wollenburg
Jeff McCormack

Detectives
Pat Retterath
Mark Walski
Brant Strouf
Dustin Hicks

Sergeants
Kim Lenz
Michael Hartman
Travis Martin

Officers
Ryan Leif
Chad Norman
Brian Blake
Mike Tischer
James Lunt
Samuel Schuweiler
Derek Ellis
Aaron Juenger
David Dyke
Nate Curtiss
Nathan Hoefs
Jorge Jimenez
John J. Mueller
Michael Nordean
Michael Hullopeter
Ryan McCormack
Josh Bradley
J. Daniel Osborne
Jeffrey Marx
Zachary Gast
Hannah Mueller
Samuel Diggins

Community Service Officers
Ernesto Cantu, Brady McDermott, Nick Zago

Administrative Assistant Kari Haarstad
DAY SHIFT- PATROL
Lt. John Mueller

Wow! What a year 2020 was! The year certainly saw a lot of changes. Some were expected, even anticipated with excitement, but there were many changes that nobody could have seen coming and they have forever changed the world and the profession of law enforcement.

Going into 2020, officers of the Austin Police Department were excited to have five new officers ending their field training and being posted into shifts. This is the first time in many years that the department was at full staff and officers were excited to have all of the positions on all of the shifts filled.

2020 started with a crushing reminder of how dangerous the job of being a police officer can be. On January 7th Waseca police officers responded to a disturbance at a home. This is a call police officers go on daily. This time however, in the small and normally quiet town of Waseca, officers were met with gunfire and one officer was shot in the head. He survived but is changed forever. Officers across the state and beyond united to support him, his family, and his department. I am proud to say members of the Austin Police Department showed their support by donating funds to his family and being present at the Austin vs. Waseca girls’ hockey game along with dozens of other officers from multiple agencies to support him.

Then in March, came the news of a world pandemic. It is one that has had a big impact on our jobs and how we do it. Suddenly everyone is masked, which is very contrary to what a police officer wants when trying to identify someone or having a witness describe a suspect. Officers have had to wear masks too. Not just cloth ones, but N95 masks, glasses or face shield, and even a plastic gown when having contact with someone who is suspected or known to have COVID 19. Officers did a good job protecting themselves and those they have contact with.

On Memorial Day, events in Minneapolis brought days and weeks of protests and riots in the wake of the death of a man who died in Minneapolis police custody. Minneapolis and the metro area saw the largest protests and most of the violence
but even here in Austin there were protests planned and officers had to prepare for the worst. The protest was peaceful as a large group of about 300 people walked the streets to spread their message. Police officers kept the protesters safe as they marched on the roadway and officers intervened to diffuse any confrontations that arose.

The Day Shift

The normal hours of the day shift are 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or 0700 hours to 1700 hours as it is referred to in law enforcement. At full staff, there are seven patrol officers, a sergeant, and a lieutenant assigned to the shift and these officers work on a rotating schedule of days which includes working weekdays, weekends, and holidays.

There are also two School Resource Officers assigned to the day shift. One SRO is assigned to Ellis Middle School and IJ Holten Intermediate School and the other SRO is assigned to Austin High School. Both SROs spend some time at the elementary schools and the high school SRO also responds to incidents at the Oakland Education Center. The SROs work Monday through Friday and hours that are more conducive to school hours. During the school year, on days there is no school the SROs work street patrol. During the summer, the middle school SRO is assigned to join the day shift patrol officers and the high school SRO remains with the school district as there are hundreds of students in the building for summer school and other programs.

The day shift is supported by a full time Community Service Officer (CSO) who also works weekends and holidays, as well as a part time Parking Enforcement Officer (PEO). In addition, the day shift lieutenant is responsible for the hiring and supervision of four adult school crossing guards.

Officers were very excited to be at full staff, a luxury that came with the hiring of five new officers that started in October of 2019. As we went into 2020 all five new officers were completing their field training and posting into shifts. Transitions took place in the second week of January and this brought two officers from other shifts to the day shift.

Beginning January 12, the day shift was made up of Lt. John Mueller, Sgt. Kim Lenz, Officers Ryan Leif, Chad Norman, Sam Schuweiler, Dave Dyke, Jorge Jimenez, JJ Mueller, Mike Nordean, and School Resource Officers Brian Blake and Jim Lunt. The shift is supported Community Service Officer Nick Zago and Part-time CSO and Parking Enforcement Officer Brady McDermott. For the first time in many years, we ended the year with the same officers on the shift!

In addition to those officers, the day shift Lieutenant is responsible for the hiring and coordinating of four adult school crossing guards and a substitute. We are very fortunate to have very good people in those positions and we don’t see a lot of turn over there though we did have one new hire in 2020. Our most tenured
crossing guard has held the position since 2010! Whenever the dayshift does not have a CSO or Crossing Guard available, a patrol officer is assigned to fill those duties.

The day shift is typically very busy, partially due to the number of people that are out and about, the number of vehicles on the road, and the self-initiated activities of the patrol officers. Once the Coronavirus grabbed hold in the USA and more specifically in Austin and Mower County, like most professions, we saw some changes.

The department took steps so officers would have less contact with people. The courts changed their procedures in order to reduce and even eliminate in person hearings including quashing non-violent warrants. This aided the jails in reducing their populations. Everyone learned how to continue to do their part in the system and try to keep their staff and the public as safe as possible.

With many people working from home and many more being laid off or unemployed due to businesses being shut down or restricted, there was much less traffic enforcement needed because there was simply less traffic. With 665 citations, officers issued about 40% fewer than in the previous year.

Officers still responded to the same kinds of calls as in the past. But now Personal Protective Equipment was required on all calls when there would be contact with the public. Typical calls include motor vehicle accidents, theft, assaults, burglaries, suicides and other deaths. The protocol for medical calls was the most changed due to the pandemic. Even with coronavirus and unsettling times in law enforcement, Austin Police Officers adapted and continued doing their jobs and serving the community.

The officers of the day shift are fortunate to have the services and assistance of the Community Service Officers. The Community Service Officers have been known to respond to more than 1,000 calls on a day shift. Things changed for them as well in 2020. We did not see near the number of bicycles placed into the bike shed or animals placed into the shelter that we would normally see, but the CSOs still stayed busy. In addition to the found property and animal control calls, they respond to vehicle lock outs, runaway reports, and they do department errands. Their assistance is valuable and important because it allows the sworn officers to be available to respond to emergencies and criminal matters.

The officers of the Austin Police Department work in unison with several other agencies including the Mower County Sheriff’s Office, the Minnesota State Patrol, Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, as well as federal agencies such as the FBI and United States Secret Service. Officers also respond to calls with and work closely with the Austin Fire Department and Mayo Clinic Ambulance Service.
The Officers of the Day Shift

- **Lt. John Mueller** has been with the Austin Police Department for more than 26 years and has been a supervisor for over 21 years. He is involved in many department activities including crime prevention and public presentations, and serves as the Day Leader for the Leadership Austin program on Public Safety Day. Lt. Mueller oversees the department’s criminal vehicle forfeitures, as well as the department’s vehicle and property auctions. Lt. Mueller serves as president of the Austin Police Officers Association (APOA) and is president of the Lieutenant, Sergeant, and Detective labor group. Lt. Mueller is a graduate of Leadership Austin as well as The Blandin Foundation’s Community Leadership Program. He serves on community boards and volunteers in several community organizations.

- **Sgt. Kim Lenz** is a 13 year veteran of the Austin Police Department and has been a supervisor since 2015. Sgt. Lenz is the shift supervisor when the lieutenant is not on duty. In addition to her supervisory duties, Sgt. Lenz is an operator on the Special Incident Response Team (SIRT) and she serves as a Field Training Officer (FTO) for newly hired officers. She organizes or takes part in positive police and community relations opportunities such as Shop with A Hero and National Night Out. Sgt. Lenz is the police department representative for the city’s rental property ordinance program. Sgt. Lenz is a graduate of the Leadership Austin program and she is continuing toward her BCA Supervisor Management Series Certificate.

- **Officer Ryan Leif** has been with the department for more than 20 years. Officer Leif is occasionally the acting shift supervisor. Officer Leif has been a “decoy” or runner for the K-9 program for many years and has worked with another officer to teach him the techniques a good decoy should possess. Officer Leif has been an important part of the success Austin Police K9 and handlers have had over the years at competitions and on the street.

- **Officer Chad Norman** joined the department 17 years ago. Officer Norman is responsible for managing and maintaining the department’s fleet of squad cars. He has a great passion for this task and keeps the department current on equipment and updates. Officer Norman is active in coordinating National Night Out. He is a negotiator on the Special Incident Response Team (SIRT). Officer Norman is one of the department’s Field Training Officers and he serves on the Uniform Committee.

- **Officer Brian Blake** has been an Austin Police Officer for 14 years. He has served the department as an FTO and always willing to take on new tasks and learn new skills. Officer Blake has been a School Resource Officer since January of 2017. He is responsible for Ellis and IJ Holten Middle Schools as well as visiting several elementary schools. In addition, he conducts tobacco and alcohol compliance checks in Austin. Officer Blake is an Emergency Vehicle Operation Course (EVOC) instructor, patrol union representative, and a graduate of the Leadership Austin program.
• **Officer Jim Lunt** has been an Austin Police Officer for 13 years and has been the School Resource Officer at Austin High School since 2012. Officer Lunt is responsible for Austin High School, Oakland Education Center, and he conducts tobacco and alcohol compliance checks in Austin. Officer Lunt is a Mayo Clinic Ambulance Service paramedic. Officer Lunt provides annual medical training to officers of the department.

• **Officer Sam Schuweiler** joined the Austin Police Department 13 years ago. Officer Schuweiler is an Emergency Vehicle Operation Course (EVOC) instructor for the department. Officer Schuweiler is a negotiator on the Special Incident Response Team and those skills have made a difference in some volatile situations during his patrol duties. He is also a patrol union steward and serves on the department’s uniform committee.

• **Officer Dave Dyke** has been an Austin Police Officer for 5 years and brought with him 17 years of experience in law enforcement. Having been on a drug and gang task force, Officer Dyke’s experience is beneficial to the other officers and to detectives as well. Officer Dyke enjoys building community relations, especially with youth. At the end of 2020, Officer Dyke began taking steps to join the Special Incident Response Team as a negotiator.

• **Officer Jorge Jimenez** became an Austin Police officer 4 years ago and he joined the day shift in 2018. Officer Jimenez is a co-advisor for the Austin Police Explorers post and in 2020 he became an operator on the Special Incident Response Team. Officer Jimenez is bilingual which has been helpful to him, his partners, and the public he serves.

• **Officer JJ Mueller** joined the Austin Police Department 4 years ago after gaining 3 years of law enforcement experience in Wisconsin. After working some overnights and some evening shifts, Officer Mueller joined the day shift in January of 2020. He has taken on several extra duties such as coordinating the Toward Zero Deaths (TGD) project, being an operator on the Special Incident Response Team, being a Field Training Officer, and being a certified Project Lifesaver Operator.

• **Officer Mike Nordean** has been an Austin Police Officer for 3 years. He worked the night shift until joining the day shift in January 2020. Officer Nordean is looking for extra duty opportunities. In 2020 he became a certified Project Lifesaver Operator and Officer Nordean will be presenting Responsible Beverage Server Training in a cooperative effort with Austin Positive Action Coalition (APAC Austin).

A Community That Cares

Normally I wrap this up this annual report with words about how our officers care for and interact with the community we serve. In 2020, how we display our care and how we interact with the community was different because of Covid. Visiting with kids in pre-schools and parks and giving high fives went away. But
all summer, officers took part in birthday parades with horn honking, siren wails, and flashing lights to try to make someone’s birthday a little more special. Instead of officers giving kids coupons for ice cream cones, hamburgers, and pizzas, some officers helped deliver meals to vulnerable people that were unable to leave their homes due to Covid.

Austin police officers believe their relationships within the community they serve are important. In addition to the challenges Covid brought to officers having positive interactions with residents, there have been state, national, and even international calls for more intense scrutiny of police policies and actions and even calls to defund law enforcement.

Thankfully, here in Austin, officers continue to have strong support from residents and city leaders. This was very apparent from the many acts of kindness shown to officers and by nearly 400 homes and businesses displaying their support with signs! This support has been earned by officers over many years and it is not taken for granted. Austin officers strive to continue to earn respect and trust.

My Final Report

This is my 20th and final Annual Shift Report. I want to thank former Police Chief Paul Phillip for the opportunity to serve my hometown and I also want to thank the mayors and council members that I have served under. Your support for your police department is important for the officers and the citizens. And last but not least, I want to thank the citizens of Austin. It has been my honor to serve my community for more than 26 years!

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EVENING SHIFT – PATROL
Lt. Jeff McCormack

The evening shift is responsible for providing police services between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. The evening shift is one of the largest and busiest shifts on the department. At full staff, which we currently are, there are a total of nine officers and two CSO’s assigned, including two mid-shift patrol officers that work from 12:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. The mid-shift also provides supplemental manpower to the day shift, but those officers are primarily responsible to the evening shift schedule. The evening shift has a minimum of four officers working at any given time, with possibly up to five or six if no officer takes their shift off. The evening shift overlaps with the night shift from
10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m., which provides extra manpower during what is often the busiest time of the shift.

**The evening shift patrol division consisted of the following officers in 2020:**

**Lt. Jeff McCormack – Badge# 3D75** is a 25½ year veteran officer. McCormack is the Evening Shift Patrol Lieutenant/Supervisor, Evidence/Property Room Manager, DMT Breath Test Operator and a speaker at the fall APD Citizen’s Academy (which we did not have this year).

**Sgt. Travis Martin – Badge# 8D109** is a 6+ year veteran officer. Martin is the Department Firearms Instructor, Firearms Pistol and Rifle Armorer, Field Training Officer, Special Incident Response Team Operator, SIRT team Sniper, Department Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) Coordinator, Internship/Mentorship Program Coordinator, and DMT Breath Test Operator.

**Patrol Officer Aaron Juenger – Badge# 9D111** is a 5½ year officer of the department. Juenger is Firearms Glock Armorer, Use-of-Force Instructor for the department and a Union Steward.

**Patrol Officer Nathan Curtiss – Badge# 9D115** is a 5 year officer with the APD and started with our department in January 2016. Curtiss is a DMT Breath Test Operator.

**Patrol Officer Daniel Osborne – Badge# 9D128** has been with the APD for a little over a year, starting with the department in October of 2019. Officer Osborne came here with 4 years of prior Police Officer experience, coming from Kentucky. Officer Osborne is on the APD uniform committee.

**Patrol Officer Jeff Marx – Badge# 9D129** has been with the APD for a little over a year, starting with the department in October 2019. Officer Marx came here with 10 years of prior Police Officer experience, coming from the Minnesota Lake area. Officer Marx is a newly appointed member of the SIRT team and is in the process of becoming a department Drone Operator/Pilot.

**Patrol Officer Zachary Gast – Badge# 9D130**, has been with the APD for a little over a year, starting with the department in October 2019.

**Patrol Officer Hannah Mueller – Badge# 9D131**, has been with the APD a little over a year, starting in October 2019. Officer H. Mueller is the third Mueller family member currently working for the APD, joining her father, Lt. John Mueller and brother, John Mueller Jr. Officer H. Mueller is posted into one of the department’s 12:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. mid-shift positions, which she worked the entire year. Officer Mueller is a newly certified member of Project Lifesaver International, a program to help locate lost/endangered Autistic subjects.

**Patrol Officer Sam Diggins – Badge# 9D132**, has been with the department a little over a year, starting in October 2019. Officer Diggins had a small
amount of prior experience, working for Grand Meadow P.D. before being hired with Austin. Officer Diggins is posted into the other/opposite of the department’s 12:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. mid-shift position, which he worked the entire year.

The evening shift patrol division is also supplemented by Community Service Officers Ernesto Cantu and Brady McDermott. CSO Cantu works full-time, typically from 4 p.m. – 12:00 a.m. while CSO McDermott works part-time on a varying schedule. CSO McDermott is also a part-time PEO (Parking Enforcement Officer) and handles parking enforcement when he works hours more on the dayshift side of the schedule. The CSO’s handle the animal control duties throughout the city, handle many minor violations of state statutes and city ordinances, including but not limited to juvenile and parking complaints. The CSOs frequently assist the patrol officers during the course of their duties and are a real asset to the department. The CSO Program is supervised by evening shift Sgt. Travis Martin.

In 2020, the evening shift officers responded to a wide variety of calls relating to things like Domestic Disturbances, Assaults, Illegal Drugs, Robberies, Burglaries, Thefts, Missing Persons, Medical Emergencies, and unfortunately, a much higher than normal amount of firearms complaints, specifically drive-by shootings this year.

Officers also handled many traffic related incidents including, but not limited to, DWI enforcement (Alcohol and Drug Impairment), Unlicensed Drivers, Reckless/Careless Driving, Speeding, Insurance Violations, Traffic Accidents in addition to other General Traffic Enforcement.

As we all know, 2020 was anything but a “normal” year with the COVID pandemic that the world faced. Due to the pandemic, calls for service for the year were down slightly for the APD as a whole, mainly due to officers being asked to dial back on the self-initiated activity, such as traffic stops and warrant arrests for multiple reasons. The evening shift officers handled 8,457 contacts and/or calls for service out of the approximately 19,000 total contacts and calls for service for the entire department in 2020, proving again to be a very busy and active shift. The busiest time of the afternoon shift is from the hours of 5 p.m. thru 7 p.m. in which there were 2216 calls for service throughout the year. Calls for service and contacts include both dispatched calls for service and self-initiated activities. One very nice thing is that the APD was finally up to full staff for the entire year after many years of being short staffed to some degree for one reason or another.

Evening shift officers issued just over 600 citations and documented warnings throughout the year for various criminal, traffic and parking related offenses. This total was approximately 100 fewer citations than the previous year, mostly due to the pandemic we had to deal with. The most common criminal offense that the evening shift officers cited was for theft-related and assault-related crimes. The most common traffic offense citations were issued for driver’s license violations (No Driver’s License, Driving after Revocation, Suspension or Cancellation), insurance and speeding.
Highlights of evening shift activity and community involvement:

**January:** Officers Osborne, Marx and Lt. McCormack responded to the 600 block of 3rd Ave NW on a report of an armed robbery. It was reported that a taxi cab driver arrived in the area to pick up a fare. Upon arrival, the cab driver was approached on both the drivers and passengers side of the vehicle and robbed at gunpoint. Officers were able to follow footprints both around the block and through a back yard to a common house not too far away. Officers surrounded the house and stopped a subject who was trying to leave the house with the gun in his waistband. Two juveniles were ultimately arrested and charged for the armed robbery of the cab driver.

**May:** Officers Curtiss and Officer Osborne were dispatched to Western Manor to a report of a 55 year-old male who was not breathing and had no pulse. Upon arrival, officers performed CPR and administered shocks from an AED and ultimately assisted in saving the man’s life.

**June:** June was an unusually busy and difficult month for the afternoon shift. Officers responded to (7) actual shootings or drive-by shootings in the month of June alone with (3) of them being on Father’s Day Sunday alone.

**July:** Officers Gast and Officer Osborne responded to a house where a 60 year old female was choking on food and not breathing. Upon arrival, officers were able to perform the Heimlich maneuver and were credited with saving the victims life.

Additionally, Officer Curtiss received a statewide award for his aggressiveness in removing impaired drivers from the streets of Austin. Officer Curtiss was named to the statewide “DWI All-Star Team” and would have been awarded a baseball bat before a Minnesota Twins game if it was not eliminated due to the pandemic.

**August:** August was another busy month for firearms complaints where afternoon officers responded to (3) more drive by shooting complaints.

**September:** Officers were dispatched to the Northeast part of town on a “shots fired” report. Throughout the investigation, it was found that 2 people got into an argument with each other and both had been shot and 1 was taken to the hospital in Austin 1 ended up at the hospital in Rochester.

**November:** On November 29th officers on the SIRT team responded to Albert Lea for the majority of the night and assisted numerous other agencies with their active shooter who shot multiple people, including an Albert Lea Police Officer. With the help of all agencies involved, the shooter was taken into custody with no additional subjects being shot. The Austin/Mower SIRT team was given praise for the professionalism and assistance they provided at a time of need.

**December:** During the beginning of December, Austin and the surrounding areas had a rash of 4 business armed robberies where 3-4 assailants, who were armed with knives and swords, were terrorizing employees and robbing them while physically holding them at knifepoint during the robbery. On December 11th, Officer Curtiss and Officer Diggins stopped a car coming back into Austin within minutes of one of the robberies being committed and arrested the armed robbers. Since that time, 2 have pleaded guilty and 2 are still awaiting trial.

On 12/17/20, officers were sent to the area of East Side Lake for a report of a lady screaming for help. Upon arrival, officers observed a female out in the middle of the lake in the small patch open water, screaming. Officers were not
able to reach her due to the unsafe ice and open water and kept an eye on her. Shortly after the officer’s arrival, the victim went unconscious and went face down into the water. Multiple officers were able to assist in keeping an eye on the victim until the Austin Fire Dept. arrived on scene and entered the water after donning cold water rescue suits. Officers were able to assist in guiding FD personnel out to the victim, who was rescued and brought to shore where CPR was performed and she was transported to the hospital. The victim survived and later credited the officers for saving her life.

The evening shift is a very pro-active team of professional officers that work together to achieve the ultimate goal of enhancing the quality of life for the citizens of Austin. We are committed to providing the best service possible to our community and we look forward to continuing that service in 2021.

NIGHT SHIFT - PATROL
Lt. Dustin Wollenburg

The night shift is responsible for providing police services between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. When at full staff, there are a total of seven officers assigned to the night shift, which includes a shift lieutenant and sergeant. The night shift has a four officer minimum staffing level from 10:00pm to 2:00am, and then a three officer minimum from 2:00am to 8:00am. The night shift overlaps with the afternoon shift from 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m., which provides extra manpower during what is often the busiest time of the night.

The night shift patrol division consisted of the following officers in 2020:

- **Lieutenant Dustin Wollenburg – Badge# 3D89**, an 18-year veteran officer, Lieutenant and Night Shift Patrol Supervisor, Special Incident Response Team (SIRT) Assistant Commander, Field Training Officer, Field Training Program Coordinator and DMT Breath Test Operator.

- **Sergeant Michael Hartman – Badge# 8D103**, an 11-year veteran officer, Sergeant, Special Incident Response Team (SIRT) Operator and Chemical/Less Lethal Munitions Instructor, Field Training Officer, Department Use of Force Instructor and DMT Breath Test Operator.

- **Patrol Officer Michael Tischer – Badge# 9D97**, a 14-year veteran officer, Evidence Room Supervisor, Field Training Officer, and DMT Breath Test Operator.
Patrol Officer Nathan Hoefs – Badge# 9D116, a five-year veteran officer, Field Training Officer, and DMT Breath Test Operator.

Patrol Officer Michael Hullopeter – Badge# 9D125, a three-year officer.

Patrol Officer Ryan McCormack – Badge# 9D126, a two-year officer, Special Incident Response Team Negotiator.

Patrol Officer Joshua Bradley – Badge# 9D127, a two-year officer.

Staffing Changes

In late 2019, five new officers joined the department. The training program for new recruits is a total of 11 weeks long. The new recruits all successfully completed their training and were assigned to their new shifts in early 2020. This meant that our department was at full staff for the first time in a while. The department held a large posting meeting in January which assigned the new officers to their permanent shifts. It also gave an opportunity for the senior officers to move shifts or positions as openings permitted.

Here are some of the staffing changes to the night shift in January:

- Officer Derek Ellis was selected for assignment to detective following a competitive testing process. Ellis had been posted onto the night shift with his canine partner Rudy. With their new assignments, Ellis and Rudy left the night shift and joined the Division of Investigations. Rudy is officially the department’s first canine detective.
- Officer Michael Hullopeter joined the shift. Hullopeter had previously been working the mid-shift from 12:00-10:00pm.
- Officer Joshua Bradley joined the shift. Bradley had just recently completed his field training and was temporarily assigned to the day shift while awaiting posting.
- Officers Michael Tischer and Ryan McCormack had both already been working the night shift, but they posted into a different work day rotations.

In 2020, the night shift officers responded to a wide variety of calls relating to things like Domestic Disturbances, Assaults, Illegal Drugs, Robberies, Burglaries, Thefts, Missing Persons and Medical Emergencies to name a few. Officers also handled many traffic related incidents including DWI-Alcohol and Drug Impaired Drivers,
The night shift officers handled 5878 calls and contacts in the community this year. This was up approximately 200 more than the previous year. Calls and contacts include both dispatched calls for service and self-initiated activities like traffic stops and warrant service. Night shift officers also issued 467 citations throughout the year for various criminal, traffic and parking related offenses.

**Highlights of Activities and Community Involvement**

2020 proved to be a very difficult year for everyone, including our department and the officers on the night shift. The Covid-19 Pandemic presented a lot of unique challenges that we’ve never faced before. Like many organizations, our operating procedures were constantly changing and evolving to help mitigate the dangers of the virus. Despite these additional challenges and uncertainty, the officers on the nightshift remained steadfast in their commitment to serve the community.

Unfortunately, the majority of local events and opportunities for officers to become further involved with the community were also canceled. Throughout the year, the officers did continue to be involved in the Austin Police Officers Association (APOA). The APOA is a non-profit group that officers contribute to financially. The money is then donated to local organizations and groups to promote community improvement.

- Lt. Wollenburg, along with Officers Tischer and Hoefs, began training five newly hired police officers. The field training program is 11 weeks long and culminates with the new officers being certified for solo patrol.

- In January, Officers McCormack and Bradley, along with other members of the Austin PD and Mower County Sheriff’s Office, participated in a show of support event for injured Waseca PD Officer Arik Matson. Ofc. Matson was shot while responding to a suspicious person call in his
community. The event was held during the Austin/Waseca High School hockey game in Waseca, MN.

- In February, Lt. Wollenburg, Officer Tischer and Hoefs, received commendations for their actions while responding to an armed home invasion and assault in the Northeast part of town. The suspect fled the scene after having assaulted a victim and discharged a firearm. The suspect was identified and arrested within 24 hours of the incident.

- In July, Officers Tischer, Hoefs and McCormack, along with some afternoon shift officers, responded to a significant stabbing incident in the Southeast. The victim was stabbed multiple times and suffered very serious injuries. Due to exceptional team work of everyone involved, a suspect was identified and arrested within 12 hours of the incident.

- In August, Sgt. Hartman, Officer Hullopeter and Bradley received commendations for their actions during a report of a subject in cardiac arrest at a local business. Officers and EMS administered CPR and life saving efforts. The victim ultimately regained a pulse and became responsive.

- In August, Lt. Wollenburg and Sgt. Hartman, along with other members of the SIRT team, responded to an incident involving a barricaded suspect wanted for multiple felony offenses. The suspect was armed with a knife and had barricaded himself in an apartment building. Following negotiations and some advanced tactics, the subject was ultimately subdued with a taser and taken into custody without further incident. All officers involved received commendations for their actions.

- The night shift officers were active in the Toward Zero Death (TZD) campaign enforcement waves throughout 2020. Each enforcement wave focuses on seat belt enforcement, distracted driving and drug/alcohol impaired drivers.

- In November, Lt. Wollenburg and Sgt. Hartman, along with other members of the SIRT team, responded to the active shooter incident in Albert Lea to provide mutual aid. Officers were involved in the securing and evacuation of a large apartment building while the suspect was actively shooting at Police and bystanders. Officers received department commendations for their actions.

- In December, Officers McCormack and Hoefs received department commendations for their actions during a shooting incident in Northwest Austin. Their actions led to the apprehension of a suspect fleeing the scene of the crime.
In December, Officers McCormack, Hullopeter and Bradley, along with several afternoon shift officers, helped rescue a subject from Eastside Lake that had fallen through the ice. The victim was unresponsive and resuscitated following lifesaving efforts by the officers and EMS staff. The officers received department commendations for their actions and lifesaving efforts.

The night shift is a very pro-active team of professional officers that work together to achieve the ultimate goal of enhancing the quality of life for the citizens of Austin. We are committed to providing the best service possible to our community and we look forward to continuing that service in the New Year.

COMMUNITY SERVICES OFFICERS
Sgt. Travis Martin

The Austin Police Department Community Service Officer (CSO) program provides many valuable services to the citizens of Austin and is a great asset to the department. The CSOs handle the animal control duties throughout the city, care for and maintain the city’s animal shelter, oversee the operations of the city’s bike shed, and handle many minor violations of state statutes and city ordinances. Additionally, the CSOs frequently assist the patrol officers during the course of their duties and they are a real asset to the department.

Community Service Officers

The CSO Program has two Fulltime positions and one Part time position:
- Ernesto Cantu, CSO11, is the most senior CSO and has been with the department since the start of the program in 1999. CSO Cantu works the evening shift Fulltime.
- Nick Zago, CSO19, has been with the department since October 2019 and works day shift Fulltime.
- Brady McDermott, CSO18 has been with the department since October 2019. CSO18, works the day shift Part time on a rotating schedule. He
is the primary caretaker of the city’s Animal Shelter, Bike Shed and Parking Enforcement.

The Animal Shelter is located next to the Humane Society. The new Animal Shelter can hold sixteen dogs and sixteen cats inside, compared to holding only ten dogs and twelve cats at the old facility. The dog area has a feature that makes feeding and cleaning easier without taking the dogs out.

The CSOs responded to 1,887 calls for service in 2020. The majority of these calls were for animal related complaints, found property, juvenile runaway reports and key retrieval from locked vehicles. There were a total of 599 citations issued in 2020. The vast majority of citations issued were for various parking violations.

A total of 189 animals were placed at the Animal Shelter in 2020; including 157 dogs, 30 cats, one chicken and one Guinea pig. Of these, 111 dogs, one cat were released to their owners. Thirty-one dogs and 14 cats were released to the Mower County Humane Society.

AUSTIN HIGH SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER
Officer James Lunt

Officer James Lunt is currently the School Resource Officer serving Austin Public Schools. SRO Lunt has been located at the Austin High School since October 2013. Officer Lunt is primarily responsible for Austin Public High School, along with Banfield and Sumner elementary and the Oakland Education Center. Officer Lunt will continue to build the SRO program and work closely with school administration, teachers, staff, and students to provide high quality, school-based law enforcement.
The 2019-2020 school year has certainly seen a lot of changes due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Students within the district could elect to be distance learners or attend in person classes as a hybrid student. The students who elected to attend in person classes are divided in half. The hybrid students attend classes in person two days a week with distance learning the remaining three days.

Officer Lunt has adapted his duties to include student home visits and welfare checks. Officer Lunt has been working closely with Mower County Probation and school administration to identify truancy issues within the school. Officer Lunt will contact students and families to make sure they have all the access they need to be successful with their chosen learning style. Officer Lunt continues to serve as a guest speaker in classrooms and through Microsoft Teams.

Officer Lunt attends weekly building and leadership meetings and monthly safety meetings that focus on safety issues within the district.

**Officer Lunt is involved in a variety of functions:**

- Responsible for the safety and security of assigned schools
- Liaison between the Austin Police Department and Austin Public Schools
- Serves on the school safety committee to implement security and emergency procedures
- Coordinates alcohol compliance checks within the City of Austin
- Conducts investigations in cases assigned within the school district
- Serves as a guest speaker for classrooms on topics such as alcohol, drugs, and criminal matters
- Assigned to patrol division when not performing School Resource Officer duties

During the summer, Officer Lunt continues to be a part of the Austin Public School system for summer programing and assists with patrol as needed. He is the Austin Police Department medical trainer and instructs officers in first responder duties; that include basic first aid, the use of oxygen, CPR, and use of an AED.

Officer Lunt provides a program of educational leadership to the school staff, students, and parents. The program addresses tobacco, alcohol, drug issues, gang activity, violence prevention, crime prevention, and safety issues in the school community.

Officer Lunt continues to combat the rise in use of electronic nicotine delivery devices known as “Vapes.” Vaping is becoming increasingly common in our high school; not only do vapes deliver a high concentration of nicotine, vapes can be used as a delivery device for a controlled substance. Through an array of anti-vaping polices and school discipline initiatives, we will continue to fight this issue and educate students about the health hazards of vaping.
Officer Lunt has been involved with a variety of incidents while working within the schools. Most of the criminal complaints he responds to include theft, drug use, child abuse, child welfare, assaults, disorderly conduct, and socially-based media harassment.

SROs also work closely with patrol and other entities within the department, both in and out of the school. School Resource Officers Lunt and Blake work closely with the SROs in surrounding cities when issues arise.

Officer Lunt continues to be an integral part of the daily operation at the Oakland Education Center. Oakland Education Center is a cooperative school with Albert Lea and Austin that provides education to Level 4 students with behavioral and emotional disturbances. Dealing with student behaviors can be very challenging and time consuming, but also rewarding to see the positive changes that students can make.

ELLIS MIDDLE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER
Officer Brian Blake

I am Officer Brian Blake; I am one of two School Resource Officers for the Austin school district. This is my third full year as the SRO. I am responsible for the following schools in the district; Ellis Middle School, IJ Holton Intermediate, Neveln Elementary, Southgate Elementary and Woodson Kindergarten Center. My primary office is located at Ellis Middle school and I have an office at IJ Holton Intermediate when working there. I enjoy my role at Ellis Middle School with continued excitement with my work here at the schools. I will be starting my fifteenth year with the Austin Police Department this July.
During the beginning of the school year, Officer James Lunt and I continue to be a part of the annual Parent Teacher Committee Walk-a-Thon at Southgate. The walk-a-thon allows the children to raise money for the upcoming years activities and field trips. I continue to spend time at IJ Holton on a regular basis, remaining a friendly and familiar face for the children.

Starting December 31 of 2019 Coronavirus started. In March 2020, the Coronavirus became a pandemic and all the school in the district went to distance learning. With that I went back to the working patrol on the day shift for the City of Austin.

While answering patrol calls for service for the City of Austin, I would also have contact with some of the children that were having difficulty logging on to their computers and completing assignments. I would do this with either a school administrator or a probation agent that works with the juveniles.

The year was a strange one and a difficult one for a lot of people. Officers having to take even more precaution when dealing with the public, wearing masks, eye protection and a lot of hand sanitizer. Parents and teachers are working from home and teaching children. For the parent that had to juggle work and teaching their own children. My hat is off to you for doing an extremely difficult task. For the teachers teaching their students and their own children my hats off to you as well.

I am enjoying my work and interactions with the students. The SRO program is very important to me, it allows me to have that interaction and make a positive connection with the students. Making them feel like they can come and talk to the police about problems they might have or just want to talk about the weather.
K9 RUDY
Detective Derek Ellis

K9 Rudy is a six-year old male Belgian Malinois and is partnered with Detective Derek Ellis. During 2020 K9 Rudy was on the Day shift from 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. K9 Rudy is a dual purpose K9, trained for patrol work and narcotics detection.

K9 Rudy certified at the United States Police Canine Association (USPCA) Region 12 Narcotics Trial in West Fargo, North Dakota in February where K9 Rudy placed 2nd overall. In June K9 Rudy certified at the USPCA Patrol Dog Trial held in Houston, Minnesota.

K9 Rudy was deployed over 35 times in 2020. K9 Rudy assisted in many narcotic cases including traffic stops, and high risk search warrants. K9 Rudy also assisted in many building searches involving possible burglaries and deployed on several tracks.

K9 Rudy is utilized for search warrants and high risk call outs with the Special Incident Response Team (SIRT). In 2020 K9 Rudy was able to provide community outreach by utilizing the Austin PD K9 Unit and Austin Police Facebook pages which is managed by Officer J.J Mueller and Sgt. Lenz. K9 Rudy received a donation from a local business owner to purchase a new bullet proof vest.

Some K9 highlights of 2020:

May: K9 Rudy assisted taking into custody a wanted felon. Officers located a domestic assault suspect in an apartment. The suspect had MN DOC felony warrants for Domestic Assault. Officers made verbal contact with the suspect. The suspect refused to comply with officers to come out of a bedroom. The suspect barricaded himself in a room. Officers continued trying to deescalate the situation with no success. The suspect was advised to comply or K9 Rudy would be sent to apprehend him. The suspect started to become even more agitated and verbally aggressive towards officers. Detective Ellis and K9 Rudy went outside the apartment and found an open window to the bedroom. K9 Rudy was deployed through the window. K9 Rudy tried to engage the suspect however K9 Rudy was unable to apprehend the suspect as he retreated to a bathroom shutting K9 Rudy out. This gave other officers time to enter the bedroom. After K9 Rudy had been deployed the suspect became complaint and was taken into custody without the suspect or officers being injured.

July: K9 Rudy assisted in apprehending a suspect wanted for attempted murder after the suspect stabbed a victim several times and fled from officers after a
traffic stop. The suspect was found to be hiding in a basement at a residence in Austin. K9 Rudy was used to locate the suspect in the basement. K9 Rudy alerted to a closed door. It was discovered the suspect had barricaded himself in a basement room. After several attempts to make verbal contact with the suspect and have him surrender, he refused to comply. The suspect was given several warnings that K9 Rudy would be used to locate and apprehend him if he did not comply with officers’ commands. Officers knew the suspect had a history of fighting with police, fleeing police, and had just stabbed a suspect several times. K9 Rudy was used in the bedroom to locate the suspect who was in a closet under clothing and still refusing to comply with officers’ commands. The suspect was apprehended by K9 Rudy and safely taken into custody by Officers.

SPECIAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM (SIRT)
Detective Brant Strouf, Commander
Lt. Dustin Wollenburg, Assistant Commander

The Special Incident Response Team (SIRT) is a joint law enforcement agency team that includes members from both the Austin PD and the Mower County Sheriff's Office. SIRT responds to incidents requiring specialized training and equipment throughout the City of Austin, Mower County, and neighboring jurisdictions.

SIRT once again had unique challenges in 2020. The pandemic was just one of the many obstacles the team had to overcome. It took away training hours and meant painstaking procedures were in place such as wearing masks in addition to the heavy gear that SIRT members must operate in. New challenges of providing reactionary team assistance to potential riot situations had to be overcome and was something the team hadn’t been called upon to task in at least the last decade or two. Cancelled training in an already dicey training calendar year also had to be addressed because of the pandemic. Regardless, the SIRT team once again rose to the occasion and maintained its high state of readiness.

The SIRT team also received two extremely important assets in 2020. Mayo Clinic Doctors Matt Sztajnkrycer and Sarayna McGuire reached out to the SIRT team in the spring of 2020 and inquired about joining the team as medics. Both have a background in tactical medicine and were welcomed with open arms. The city council quickly moved to adopt a formal agreement with Mayo Clinic which agreed to provide the assistance of Dr. Sztajnkrycer and medical professionals under his oversight and on a volunteer basis. This is
truly a remarkable addition to the team and provides world class medical expertise and training to SIRT. We cannot thank Doctors Sztajnkrycer, McGuire, and Blakeney enough for their interest in joining the team and the invaluable services they provide.

The following is a biography of them.

**Matthew Sztajnkrycer, MD, PhD, NRP, FACEP, FACMT, FAACT**

Matthew Sztajnkrycer, MD, PhD, is a Consultant and Professor of Emergency Medicine at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, an associate program director for the Emergency Medicine Residency, and program director and prehospital care physician for the EMS fellowship. Dr Sztajnkrycer is board-certified in emergency medicine, medical toxicology, and emergency medical services, as well as being a nationally registered paramedic.

Dr Sztajnkrycer has over 20 years experience in operational and prehospital medicine. He is a member in good standing of the National Tactical Officers Association (NTOA), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP), and the Tactical EM section of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP). He is a graduate of the federal Counter Narcotics and Terrorism Operational Medical Support (CONTOMS) program and the US Army Medical Management of Chemical and Biological Casualties (MCBC) course.

At the federal level, he has provided operational medical support to federal and state assets including during the 2002 Winter Olympic Games, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and most recently at the 2008 Republican National Convention. A former sworn part-time deputy sheriff, Dr Sztajnkrycer serves as Medical Director for the Rochester (MN) Police Department, the Olmsted County Sheriff's Office, and as both Medical Director and Tactical Physician for the Emergency Response Unit (SWAT). He also serves as the Medical Director for the Rochester Fire Department, the Rochester Structural Collapse Team (part of the state MN-Task Force 1 USAR), and the Rochester Hazardous Materials Team (part of the state regional Chemical Assessment Team).

Dr Sztajnkrycer has lectured nationally and internationally on CBRNe, high threat medicine, law enforcement medical training, and officer survival. He is actively engaged in law enforcement medical research, focusing upon immediate life saving interventions for the downed officer.

**Sarayna McGuire, MD**

Dr. Sarayna McGuire is an emergency medicine resident physician at Mayo Clinic and prior Air Force Security Forces non-commissioned officer where she served as military police and an emergency dispatcher in Japan and South
Korea. Additionally, she provided command and control and security to aircraft and personnel during deployments to Iraq, Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia, Diego Garcia, and the Philippines. She serves as Chair-Elect of the Emergency Medicine Residents Association (EMRA) Prehospital & Disaster Medicine Committee and is a representative on the American College of Emergency Physicians EMS Committee. She recently became certified in Counter Narcotics & Terrorism Operational Medical Support Medical Director’s Course.

**Craig Blakeney, MD**

Dr. Craig Blakeney an emergency medicine trained physician who primarily works in a large trauma center. He is a volunteer medical instructor teaching battlefield medicine for Tier One Group. He also has a background with medicine in austere environments, multiple state technical rescue task forces, USAR, and is currently an EMS prehospital physician.

SIRT’s 2020 year started off with a couple of high risk search warrants at the request of the Southeast MN Violent Crimes Task Force (SEMNVCF). The training calendar was moving along as planned. Then the pandemic broke out and SIRT was forced to adjust. Monthly trainings were adjusted or outright cancelled and procedures had to be put in place to address the challenges of keeping everyone safe in the event of a callout; the general public and individual SIRT members alike.

Nearby civil disturbances also forced SIRT to prepare for that new challenge. The SIRT team was activated for potential disturbances in Austin and the nearby cities of Albert Lea and Owatonna. Thankfully the team didn’t have to react to any of the violence seen in Minneapolis or other cities across the country and area protests remained peaceful.

Despite the pandemic and civil unrest SIRT was called upon to address other incidents in 2020. These incidents included a barricaded subject wanted for attempted homicide, two barricaded subjects wanted for serious violent crimes; each one requiring the excellent skills of SIRT’s negotiator team resulting in arrests without serious injury or physical harm, and a high risk search warrant for evidence related to a shooting following a large gathering of unruly and uncooperative party-goers.

Likely the most intense and prolific event SIRT members have ever faced, and may ever face in their careers, occurred during the early morning hours of Sunday, November 29, 2020. An active shooter situation was occurring in nearby Albert Lea resulting in an officer and two civilians shot. Albert Lea requested mutual aid and on duty SIRT members responded immediately. Several more SIRT members left the safety and comfort of their own homes not knowing what they were facing. SIRT members arrived in Albert Lea to
find the shooter was still actively firing. SIRT members later recalled a chaotic and dynamic situation as the shooter’s exact location was unknown. SIRT members quickly formed teams with other responding agencies and were able to determine the suspect was firing from a third floor apartment building window. Several SIRT members recalled hearing the sound of gunfire and the impact of bullets as they struck nearby. Ultimately it was each of the SIRT Operator’s abilities to rely on their training and experience that helped them maintain their composure, work quickly and efficiently with other SWAT members, and gain the upper hand on the suspect through superior tactics that resulted in the apprehension of him with no lives lost. It’s truly remarkable what our SIRT members (and other responding officers) faced and then accomplished during that event and our communities owe them a debt of gratitude. It’s likely everyone who experienced that incident will remember it for the rest of their lives.

SIRT operators and negotiators continue to exceed because of the training they partake in and the equipment they operate and maintain. The active shooter incident in Albert Lea was another example in which the importance of having the best tactical gear available can make the difference in saving lives. New operator tactical vests are on order and SIRT continues to explore new and advanced equipment of which they become proficient with.

SIRT operators and negotiators are experts in the areas of tactics, communications, marksmanship, and other specialty areas. SIRT operators and negotiators are its most important asset and are comprised of high quality individuals which form a top notch team. Its members are highly motivated and take pride in the important work they do. Lessons learned in 2020 will be on the forefront of the 2021 SIRT training plan and SIRT will continue to evolve and meet its challenges through new additions of added personnel, equipment, and training. SIRT will continue to protect and serve and meet any challenges with its team oriented approach.
SIRT Operators entry/breach training

SIRT Operators gas exposure/less than lethal training
SIRT truck.

SIRT Operators gas exposure training
The City of Austin and Mower County continues to partner with the Southeast MN Violent Crimes Enforcement Team (SEMVCET), which is represented by eight counties and five cities. There are currently two task force detectives assigned to Austin/Mower County.

Task force officers work narcotics and violent crimes in the Austin/Mower area, but also assist in other counties and other task forces, including Iowa task force agents. It is also common that incidents and controlled buys occur at unusual times and in unusual situations. The local detectives from the Austin Police Department and Mower County Sheriff’s Department assist with controlled buys and search warrants when the time frame is not practical to have other agents travel from afar. The SEMVCET in the Austin/Mower area would be unable to do many of these cases if it weren’t for the local detectives.

Many of cases start from citizen tips, including people who want to remain anonymous, and patrol officers. When a patrol stop occurs, officers often don’t just look at the stop as an arrest, but they see the bigger picture and pass information on to the SEMVCET, which follows up with search warrants for residences and electronics. The SEMVCET has a Criminal Investigation Support Analyst who assists the task force and other detectives in the region with investigations in a manner that the SEMVCET has not been able to do in the past. It has been found to be a great asset to the SEMVCET.

There were a total of 105 active drug and violent crime investigations; many of those investigations were into the same targets who repeatedly offend. Some of the investigations are still pending into 2021. The quantity of drugs seized is less this year from 2019, but due to COVID, we have done fewer search warrants. COVID has caused us to change the way cases were completed. The amount purchased was reasonably close to previous years. The task force spent just under $50,000.00 during investigations in 2020.

Drugs seized by the Southeast MN Violent Crimes Enforcement Team:
- Methamphetamine- 15,746 grams
- Heroin- 352 grams
- Cocaine- 572 grams
- Marijuana- 45,055 grams

**Notable Austin/Mower County Cases**

A subject who was arrested in 2017 for trafficking narcotics from the cities to Austin was released from prison and continued trafficking narcotics after he was released. A case was started and it was eventually found that he was selling large quantities of meth in southern MN. Using a Confidential Reliable Informant, the task force purchased an ounce of meth from him and was able
to obtain a gun during his dealings. The subject was later arrested and was sentenced back to prison for his criminal behavior.

In early 2020, the task force was able to buy from a subject and obtain a 1st degree sale on him. During the investigation, state patrol stopped the same subject and the vehicle was impounded in Rochester. We found through our investigation that the subject had a gun hidden in the vehicle, and in a place that would be difficult to find the gun. A warrant was executed in Rochester and detectives found the suspect broke into the impound lot and stole the gun. Detectives were able to locate the gun at a residence in Mower County and another warrant was executed. The subject is currently in jail for being a felon in possession of a firearm and 1st degree sales.

A subject who was selling large quantities of meth in the Rochester area had moved to Austin in an attempt to hide from the task force. We were able to locate the subject, make multiple arrests upon him, and eventually arrested him with a firearm. The subject eventually plead guilty and due to his criminal history; he has plead to 98 months in prison. Officers Nordean and Mueller assisted the task force multiple times and were able to make traffic stops on the subject, which assisted with the case.

2020 EVIDENCE ROOM
Officer Mike Tischer

The evidence room is shared by the Austin Police Department and the Mower County Sheriff’s Office with approximately 58 officers and deputies collecting evidence, along with additional pieces placed there by surrounding local Mower County small town agencies such as Brownsdale, Grand Meadow and alike. When officers and deputies collect evidence, they take the pieces to the evidence room where they are packaged, labeled, logged and placed into temporary storage lockers. Evidence room officers then transfer the evidence from the storage lockers to a secure room for long term storage. In 2020, over 2000 pieces of evidence were checked into the evidence room.

The evidence room duties are handled by afternoon shift Lt. Jeff McCormack and night shift Officer Mike Tischer. The evidence room is normally open to the public for property pick up/release every Monday from 8am-12pm.

The evidence room officers assist detectives, officers, deputies, prosecuting and defense attorneys with viewing and prepping evidence for upcoming court cases and processing new evidence. These items are stored until the cases are closed. Evidence pieces are then returned to the owners, sold at public auction or disposed of properly following the appeal period.
Evidence room officers also transport evidence to the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (MN BCA) in St. Paul for additional analysis and processing. This occurs on an average of one trip every 45 days. A usual trip consists of 40-50 pieces of evidence, but had exceeded 80 pieces on occasion. A majority of these pieces are tied to felony drug cases, but may include evidence from assaults, homicides, robberies, burglaries, sexual assaults and other serious cases. There are also articles that aren’t part of criminal cases, but listed as found property. These items may be returned, destroyed or auctioned off: but none the less need attention at some point.

Evidence set aside for destruction is normally transported by Lt. McCormack and Officer Tischer to two separate facilities. Any metal evidence, including but not limited to guns, bats, and paraphernalia is melted down and recycled into rebar at the Gerdau Foundry in St. Paul, MN. All other evidence that is able to be burned is taken to the Wilmarth Generating Plant, a subsidiary of Excel Energy, near Mankato MN. Here the evidence is placed into an incinerator which produces energy. The outcome for all the evidence taken to these two facilities has a positive impact on our environment. Both Wilmarth and Gerdau have provided these services to law enforcement departments as a public service, so there is no cost associated with the disposal of such evidence.

Looking back at the year 2020 in general, everyone nationwide was faced with large or small challenges from the global pandemic Corona 19 virus. This was no different for the evidence room. The Law Enforcement Center lobby was closed for most of 2020 presenting the challenge of figuring out safe ways to return property to the owner. Also, with the lobby being closed, the RX drop area was closed to the public for most of the year as well. Incinerator Plants were closed to outside visitors, so evidence that was set for destruction had to take up space that under normal circumstances wouldn’t have. The plant where metal objects collected for evidence is destroyed permanently closed, leaving our next closest option nearly twice as far away as St. Paul. Luckily enough, it is also owned and operated by the Gerdau Corporation, so transition should be fairly smooth.

McCormack and Tischer did manage to take 68 boxes of evidence to the Wilmarth Generating Plant in Mankato on 09/02/2020. A total of 971 pounds of evidence was burned, which consisted of 41 boxes of general evidence items, 1 box of prescription / illicit drugs collected as evidence, and 26 boxes of drugs from the RX drop box at the LEC (324 pounds). The RX drop box is in place to promote a secure, safe place for the public to properly destroy unused and unwanted pharmaceuticals.
The 2020 Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) grant was handled by Officer John (JJ) Mueller from the Austin Police Department, with the assistance of Deputy Jamie Meyer from the Mower County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO). The Austin Police Department and the MCSO received up to a $19,075 grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety for TZD traffic enforcement in the 2020 cycle, which is a few thousand more than the previous year. The grant cycle ran from October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020 and was used to cover overtime that was incurred by the officers and deputies during specific enforcement hours, and also for dispatch services.

Although the public considers traffic enforcement to be a core duty of law enforcement, it is secondary for most local agencies behind answering calls for service. This can mean that on a busy night when the call load is high from the citizenry, traffic stops could be quite low as officer resources will first go to answering calls to dispatch on the regular and 911 lines. The TZD grant program allows police and sheriff’s departments to call in additional resources whose sole duty is to work traffic violations.

The goal of the enforcement is to lower the rate at which accidents occur and the rate at which injuries/fatalities occur within those accidents. People will follow the traffic regulations in order to stay safe and to avoid getting a traffic citation. Enforcement is the “avoid getting a ticket” part of the equation that helps make our roads safer and strives to get closer to the goal of the program, zero fatalities statewide.

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety works hand in hand with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to launch informational campaigns to make the public aware of upcoming enforcement waves and enhanced traffic enforcement. This is accomplished through Public Service Announcements with local, state, and national media. The Austin Police Department also utilizes its own Facebook Page to broadcast upcoming enforcement details.
The TZD Program partners with and gets support from the Safe Communities Coalition. Representatives on the Coalition include the media, Parenting Resource Center, schools, law enforcement, driver’s education, medical professionals, and concerned citizens. They are a very vital part of the TZD Program. The Coalition helps line up the Public Service Announcements by working with the television stations and newspapers on ad campaigns and they provide all of the electronic media around town. They help law enforcement with the “making safe choices/educational” part of the equation, which is the other goal of the Toward Zero Deaths endeavor.

In addition to the enforcement and media messaging, the State of Minnesota also works with its Department of Transportation (DOT) branch to enhance the safety of roadways. The ultimate goal of the TZD campaigns is to get to zero deaths on our state’s roads.

Over the course of the 2020 Grant cycle, officers/deputies worked approximately 143 hours of enforcement. Of those hours’ three different areas of enforcement were focused on: impaired driving, distracted, and seat belt. During grant funded shifts there was 223 traffic stops made. Of the 223 traffic stops there was 2 people arrested for impaired driving, 14 contacts for cellphone use, 62 contacts for speed, 19 contacts for seatbelts, and 13 people were cited for driving without a valid license.

The trends have been very positive since the TZD campaign waves started; going from an average of over 600 persons killed per year in the late 1990s and early 2000s, to averaging fewer than 400 traffic related deaths per year for the past several years. In 2020 the preliminary numbers show approximately 372 people died in traffic crashes throughout the state of Minnesota which is up from 2019 where 333 people were killed.

TZD overtime work continues to help save lives by reducing fatality and injury statistics.
Officer Chad Norman has been managing the Austin Police Department’s fleet of vehicles for twelve years. The department’s fleet has six marked patrol vehicles. In addition, the patrol division utilizes one unmarked squad car, a Community Service Officer (CSO) truck, and two marked cars that are used by the two School Resource Officers.

Other vehicles in the fleet include unmarked cars that are operated by the police administration and detectives, and a Special Incident Response Team (SIRT) truck that is used for SIRT deployment and can also act as a mobile command post. Another vehicle was added to the fleet after being forfeited in 2016 from a drunk driver, and one of our vehicles is provided by the Southeast Minnesota Violent Crime Enforcement Team (SEMVCET).

The current patrol vehicle for our department is the Ford Police Interceptor Utility. The Interceptor is four-wheel drive and has proven to be popular with our officers during winter weather conditions. The four-wheel drive systems allow officers to stay safe while patrolling in the winter. The Ford Police Interceptor Utility Squads have much more room and have proven to be very reliable and efficient, achieving better fuel mileage than the Ford Crown Victoria and Taurus patrol cars previously used, saving the city fuel and repair costs. The Ford Police Interceptor’s are the only brand of police squads that come
standard with a 75 mph rear crash protection rating and a 100,000 mile powertrain warranty.

Austin’s patrol squads are kept an average of three years, during which they are driven about 100,000 miles, but can accumulate up to 400,000 wear miles on the engines due to idling time. The unmarked cars and other vehicles are kept much longer because they do not accumulate miles as quickly as the patrol squads.

The new Ford Police Interceptor Utilities have also proven to have a high resale value that results in a much lower cost to the city to own these vehicles over the three year in service life cycle.

We are currently using one 2020 Ford Police Interceptor Utility hybrid squad and plan to deploy three more of these hybrid squads in 2021. The hybrid Interceptor has the potential to save our department up to $4,000 per year, per squad on fuel cost and reduce our carbon footprint by potentially reducing our carbon output per squad by 22,560 lbs. per year. The Ford Police Interceptor Utility hybrid will fill every patrol squad position in years to come.
THE DIVISION OF INVESTIGATION
Captain Todd Clennon

The Division of Investigation has an authorized staff of five detectives. 2020 saw a full complement of detectives for the entire year. Case load continues to run high in this unit with approximately 665 assigned cases which averages out at 133 cases per detective. Patrick Retterath, Mark Walski, Brant Strouf, Dustin Hicks and Derek Ellis are the current detectives and worked in this capacity for all of 2020. Four of the authorized five detective positions work general, non-drug related cases. Detective Retterath specializes in child crimes and criminal sex cases. Detectives Strouf and Hicks work predatory offender registration and failure to register (POR), computer crime cases, many of the serious assault and fraud/forgery/theft cases. Detective Ellis works most of the ICAC (Internet Crimes against Children) cases in addition to general case load. Detective Walski was assigned to the Southeast Minnesota Violent Crime Enforcement Team (SEMVCET) and worked most of the city’s narcotics cases.

The Division of Investigation works with the SEMVCET in executing narcotics search warrants. The division works closely together with the three Mower County Sheriff’s Office detectives in executing numerous search warrants in Austin and Mower County. The detectives on the unit also work with each other and assist one another on cases whenever possible. This good working relationship with the city and county detectives serves citizens in both jurisdictions well, as there is so much cross over crime.

The general detectives work a day shift Monday through Friday. The Task Force member works non-traditional hours to complete his cases. One of the five detectives per week is assigned an “on call status,” meaning they must maintain an hour response time during that week and are responsible for the investigation of any serious cases that come in after hours. Even matters that may end up not being criminal, such as suicides, require us to treat them as such until we can make a determination otherwise and may need investigative response after hours.

Detectives are often “assigned” cases that require follow up that the patrol division can’t do based on their time schedule and need to respond to calls. In addition to these assigned cases, the detectives are also often called on to do short next day follow-ups on arrest and in custody cases in which additional detail or interviews must be provided for charging. They also often do the same thing when cases reach the trial phase.

**Patrick Retterath** has over 24 years of experience in law enforcement. He has served ten years in investigations. Detective Retterath is the main liaison with Mower County Human Services and works the majority of the child abuse, child neglect, sex abuse, and sex assault investigations that occur in the city. He handled 49 such criminal sex and abuse cases in 2020 and 96 cases overall. Detective Retterath is responsible, along with Detective Hicks, for screening all
Human Services intakes for possible cases in which law enforcement would take action.

Examples of the type and seriousness of the cases Detective Retterath worked in 2020 include:

- March 2020, kidnapping of a young adult woman from the YMCA Rec Center in Austin. The suspect forced his ex-girlfriend into his car and threatened to kill her if she did not comply. APD officers located the suspect and victim in the car shortly after the incident was reported. The suspect was arrested on charges of kidnapping, stalking, domestic assault and threats of violence. Detective Retterath completed follow up and search warrants in this case and it is currently still pending court hearings.

Mark Walski has approximately 20 years of law enforcement experience with the City of Austin’s Police Department. Detective Walski is assigned to the SEMVCET. He joined the Investigations Division in 2015. Detective Walski worked 143 of his own cases in 2020, a slight increase from 2019. Detective Walski worked his own cases while also helping on numerous other APD and SEMVCET cases in southeast Minnesota. Mark will provide examples of his work in the Task Force section of the annual report.

Brant Strouf has worked for the Austin Police Department for 18 years and became a detective in 2016. He handled 139 cases in 2020 compared to 113 in 2019. Detective Strouf handles general cases, predatory offender registration (POR) and does background investigations. Detective Strouf was selected as the SIRT Commander in 2019 and continues to be the department’s lead range instructor. Examples of Detective Strouf’s case work include:

- March 2020, a family of four that included two toddler aged children were victims of a fatal motor vehicle crash and fire. The crash required the immediate response of the entire Division of Investigations and subsequent investigations took months. The incident shook many in the community and an intensive investigation resulted in the determination that the crash was a homicide/suicide.

- June 2020, a suspect shot at and then stabbed his brother following a late night drunken brawl after a family get together. Detectives were called in to process the scene, gather evidence, and conduct interviews. The suspect was taken into custody and charged with attempted murder. Detectives were clearing the scene and just about to leave for the night when three drive by shootings rang out across the city nearly simultaneously. Those same detectives that had been called in worked with patrol officers throughout the night and into the next day to process evidence, gather information, and make arrests. The drive by shootings were a few examples of many shootings that plagued our area in recent years. These incidents require an intensive amount of work and investigation. Several of them resulted in arrests but many have not mainly due to uncooperative/unwilling witnesses and victims. Other examples of these types of incidents was in July of 2020 when shots fired...
were reported by several neighbors in the SE section of the city. Investigators and patrol officers recovered evidence of a shooting and concluded a fight had broken out at a nearby residence resulting in at least two people shooting at each other. The party-goers however were mostly unruly and uncooperative with the police and refused to give statements about what occurred. And again in December of 2020 a similar incident occurred after a fight broke out involving a large gathering of unruly party-goers. Two suspects were arrested in that incident despite the efforts of the uncooperative party-goers.

- December 2020, two Austin gas stations were robbed and two area small town gas stations were robbed within days of each other. Investigators and patrol officers from both the Austin PD and the Mower County Sheriff’s Department worked together to make arrests in all four robberies after a Friday night traffic stop revealed evidence of one of the robberies. Subsequent search warrants and investigations lasted into the weekend and into the next week. Additionally, several weeks later, court hearings and plea bargains required more investigations and these cases are ongoing.

**Dustin Hicks** has worked for the Austin Police Department since 2016. He joined the Division of Investigation in April of 2019. Detective Hicks was assigned 146 cases in 2020. He assists Detective Retterath with Human Services intakes, handles general cases and works with predatory offender violations and requirements. Hicks also does police candidate background investigations and fraud/forgery cases. Detective Hicks is an Explorer advisor and member of the Special Incident Response Team. Examples of Hicks’ case work include:

- March 2020, Detective Hicks was assigned a case involving a prolific female runaway and victim of human trafficking. Through multiple search warrants, location updates via IP addresses and multi-agency cooperation, Detective Hicks was able to locate and recover the victim from a trailer in Faribault, MN. She is now in a residential treatment facility for victims of exploitation.

- September 2020, Detective Hicks, along with other detectives and information received from the MN Fusion center, FBI and Task Force intercepted a group that were targeting pharmacies throughout the region with fraudulent documents to obtain codeine. The investigation led to multiple arrests and a solid felony case.

- October 2020, Detective Hicks was assigned to a missing person’s case. An elderly woman was reported missing from Austin by her family. Detective Hicks executed multiple documents in regard to phone records and bank statements in an attempt to track the woman. He was able to locate her abandoned vehicle in Iowa and collaborated with local Iowa Law Enforcement to conduct a search of her last known location. Thanks to Detective Hicks rapid response and good work the deceased
woman’s body was recovered in a short amount of time near her abandoned vehicle.

**Derek Ellis** has been with the Austin PD since 2014. He successfully completed his first full year as a detective in 2020. He was assigned 142 cases in 2020. Detective Ellis is a general detective specializing in ICAC (internet crimes against children) and has recently renewed the APD partnership with the BCA ICAC Task Force. Detective Ellis is also engaged in the forensic review of cell phones and other current technology devices. In addition to investigations, Detective Ellis is a department drone pilot and handler for K-9 Rudy. Examples of Ellis’s case work include:

- **March 2020**, a subject sent a video that was suspected of being Child Pornography to a person on a dating site. That person reported it to Rochester PD and ultimately forwarded it to Austin as the suspect said he lived in Austin. A search warrant was done at the suspect’s house. Right away Child Pornography was found on an electronic device. The suspect was arrested and charged with 10 counts of possession of child pornography. The MN BCA reviewed the electronics and found over 200,000 images/videos of child pornography. Trial is set for 2021.

- **June 2020**, a Sheriff’s Department in Iowa reported a male living in Austin that was reportedly soliciting juveniles online. An undercover account posing as a 12 year-old girl living in Austin was set up by Austin PD. The suspect began speaking with the 12 year-old girl (Austin Detective). The male discussed wanting to do sexual acts with the 12 year-old girl and planned to meet her in a park in Austin. Detectives met and arrested the suspect at the park. The suspect admitted to soliciting a minor online and admitted to possessing child pornography on his phone. Suspect pled guilty.

- **July 2020**, an adult male suspect was arrested after stabbing a victim several times. The victim was flown to St Mary’s Hospital with severe injuries. The suspect was located at an Austin home and barricaded himself in the basement. The SIRT Team was activated. With the assistance of the SIRT team and K9 Rudy the suspect was taken into custody. He was charged with 2nd Degree attempted Murder and is scheduled for trial 2021.

- **August 2020**, a Juvenile victim reported that the suspect said sexually explicit things to him. An interview with the suspect uncovered the suspect had sexually assaulted 4 other juveniles, taken nude photos of one victim, and paid a juvenile victim to engage in sexual acts. Subsequent interviews with the named victims confirmed the suspect’s statements. A search warrant of the suspect’s phone uncovered the sexually explicit photos of one juvenile victim. Suspect was charged with several counts of Criminal Sexual Conduct, possession of child pornography and manufacturing of child pornography.
Cases which the detectives handle tend to require additional follow up which the patrol division can’t complete due to call load. The cases often also require additional training and expertise. Even cases that seem simple in nature, such as a check forgery, often require hours of follow up to reach a point where a suspect can be identified and charged. The service of a search warrant at best also takes hours to write, prepare, and serve. Often these cases require more than one person, and the case of a single search warrant may require four to six hours or more.

From the perspective of cases assigned to the unit, 2020 trended higher than past numbers but the unit was fully staffed with five detectives vs. four for most of 2019. Total cases assigned in 2020 were 665. This is consistent to numbers we have seen from 2010 onward with approximately 400-500 cases spread between the four investigators. The addition of the fifth investigator in 2016 was critical in better spreading out the cases to allow for follow up on more minor cases that may have been tabled in the past due to lack of time resources to pursue them. Some minor cases such as gas drive-offs, minor thefts, ongoing animal issues, or initial runaway reports continue to be shifted to the uniformed patrol division, CSOs, or school liaisons in order to free up investigators’ time for larger cases, as well as provide experience to the patrol officers in investigating cases.

In addition to investigating new cases, the detectives are responsible for aiding the county attorney’s office in cases that go to trial. These duties in serious matters may tie up an investigator for the better part of a week’s time between trial preparations and testifying; all while new cases continue to flow in.

Other time may be spent working with the BCA and state crime lab to process evidence from victims or scenes. The Austin Police Department has had some success in identifying suspects from fingerprint recoveries and DNA evidence. It is also something that the public has come to expect from local law enforcement as technology has improved.

**TRAINING**

Captain Todd Clennon

All officers must have at least a two-year degree in law enforcement (some have four year degrees) and be licensed by the State of Minnesota. Officers then must receive continuing education in order to maintain a Peace Officer license. Training is monitored by the Minnesota Board of Police Officers Standards and Training, or MN POST Board as it is more commonly known.

Licenses are issued for 3-year periods of time. They start 7-1-XX of the year of issue and expire three years later on 6-30-XX. Officers are required to have 48 hours of educational credits every three years. All officers receive mandatory
in-house training in the use of force, firearms, first aid/CPR, and emergency vehicle operations. These are all tracked for POST audit purposes. In-house training alone can be enough for officers to receive their 48 hours of mandatory training every three years.

Beginning in 2018 officers needed to receive an additional 16 hours of POST mandated training every three years spread across the areas of crisis response, conflict management, and cultural diversity. The three-year window is dependent on when their POST license was issued. The Austin Police Department needs to track these hours for all 34 of its officers. The Austin Police Department partners with several outside agencies to bring this training local. To date the partnerships have proven valuable and officers are gaining credits through these courses. Additional, cost effective training was identified through the League of Minnesota Cities “PATROL” online training courses. This program includes courses in the new 16-hour mandate and allows officers to complete the courses when it is convenient to them.

The Austin Police Department is able to provide much of the training in-house because many of our officers have expertise and teaching skills in most of these areas. Training in-house can significantly cut the cost associated with training and often eliminates course fees, meals, and lodging costs; which can be significant. Having instructors and experts in-house also enables the department to host annual Citizen Police Academies. Unfortunately, 2020 proved to be a challenging year with COVID-19 causing the Citizen Academy to be cancelled.

Officer Travis Martin and Detective Brant Strouf instruct officers in the use of firearms during quarterly qualifications. Officers qualify using handguns and rifles to increase their proficiency with both. Officers train in real life conditions that are likely to be encountered during the performance of their normal duties. Conditions include normal daylight, a two officer combat course, night time, and inclement weather training. The department continued its focus on training in 2020 with the weapons used, as opposed to simply qualifying with them.

Officers also receive non-mandatory training that may include instructor certifications, DWI detection, legal updates, and special investigation techniques for drugs, financial, computer, identity theft, and child abuse investigations.

The department began and finished the year with a full complement of officers. This allowed for consistent and prescribed training throughout 2020. Officer attendance to outside agency training was very low compared to prior years. This was no doubt due to the impact of COVID-19 closures and concerns. Due to the lack of outside training opportunities the training budget did have remaining funds at the end of 2020. Even with the challenge of 2020 all APD Officers completed the necessary mandated POST requirements in a timely manner.

Officers Sam Schuweiler and Brian Blake focus on enhancing the driving skills of officers. Officers are provided classroom instruction and then must perform
their skills on the driving course. This year’s training was held at the airport. Officers must acclimate to various conditions, such as darkness and slippery pavement. Receiving ongoing driving training is a POST licensing requirement. The Austin Police Department exceeds the state guidelines for driving training hours offered. The reason for this is the amount of time our officers spend behind the wheel and the many dangers posed by Austin’s traffic and diverse weather, especially when responding to emergency calls.

Sgt. Mike Hartman and Officer Aaron Juenger instruct officers in the Use of Force. Instruction includes discussion on Use of Force statutes and continuum; as well as hands-on instruction on techniques for defensive tactics, weapon retention, mace, Tasers, batons, and pepper ball guns.

Like driving training, this ongoing training is POST required, although there is no set guideline by POST as to hours needed. The Austin Police Department trains regularly to avoid injury to our officers, citizens, and suspects.

The success and safety of the officers is dependent upon practical and diverse training. We are fortunate to have officers that are qualified to share their knowledge and skills with others. The training that officers receive benefits the department and the City of Austin because it increases officer safety, reduces officer injuries, and reduces the chance of litigation.

In addition to the traditional hands-on type classes and classroom type activities, the Austin Police Department also encourages its officers to train physically for the rigors of the job. The department makes a workout room available towards that goal for the department, as well as a training room. Many of the items in these rooms are equipped and maintained by the officers. As our officers are often outside and exposed to environmental dangers, in addition to the potential physical encounters with suspects that occasionally occur, the need to be physically fit can help protect them from harm and the city from work comp and lost work related issues.

**Types of non-mandatory specialized training attended in 2020 by officers include:**

- USPCA region 12 K9 qualification and certification
- BCA leadership classes for supervisors
- DMT-G training (breath test instrument operator for DWI testing)
- MN Toward Zero Deaths (no statewide and regional conferences in 2020)
- Narcotics investigations
- Sex offender registration (POR) training
- Interview and interrogation
- Sniper training for SIRT
- Leadership Austin (the APD sends one officer per year and hosts one session)
- Cellbright operator and analyst course
- NTOA Team Leader Development
VEHICLE FORFEITURES  
Lt. John Mueller

Motor vehicles can be seized and forfeited for several offenses. Those offenses include certain levels of alcohol DWI, certain repeat alcohol or controlled substance DWI, possession of controlled substances, fleeing an officer in a motor vehicle, use of a vehicle in the commission of a felony, drive by shootings, and prostitution.

The Austin Police Department seized 24 vehicles as a result of subject being arrested for Driving While Impaired in 2020. In two of these cases the forfeiture was triggered by the driver being arrested for DWI while their driving privilege were ‘Canceled – Inimical to Public Safety’. DAC-IPS is a result of having several DWIs, usually within a ten-year period, and the Minnesota Commissioner of Public Safety deems the person to be a danger to the public when they operate a motor vehicle. Another unique forfeiture was triggered when a driver was arrested for DWI while having a No Use (of alcohol or drugs) condition on their driving status. In those two cases, the subject had prior DWI convictions that led to their status of DAC-IPS or No Use but their previous DWI arrests were not within a certain time frame or were not double the illegal limit of .08 Blood Alcohol Content.

In those two unique situations, the drivers were charged with misdemeanor DWI despite the status of their driver’s license however the DAC-IPS charge itself is a Gross Misdemeanor. Of the 24 other forfeitures, 20 drivers were charged with gross misdemeanor DWI and/or DWI Refuse to Test, and four drivers were charged with felony level DWI.

In addition to the DWI forfeitures, one vehicle was seized as a result of the driver fleeing a police officer in a motor vehicle and eight other vehicles were seized for possession of controlled substances; however, those vehicles are processed by Southeast Minnesota Violent Crimes Task Force, SEMVCET, of which the Austin Police Department is a member.

When a vehicle is seized for forfeiture, the driver is served a Notice of Seizure and Intent to Forfeit. The driver of the seized vehicles has 60 days to challenge the forfeiture. The owner, if not the driver, is also served a notice and they, too, have 60 days to contest the forfeiture by filing suit against the car. The appropriate prosecutor must be served notice of the lawsuit.

Most forfeitures are not challenged by the driver or by an owner that was present at the time of the arrest, however they are often contested by an owner who was not present. In most of those cases, the owner claims an ‘innocent owner’ defense. They must then prove that they had no knowledge or reason to believe the vehicle would be operated contrary to law. In other words, they didn’t turn
their vehicle over to someone that they knew was under the influence or has a history of DWI arrests.

The innocent owner defense is often claimed by a spouse who is a registered owner of the vehicle and wasn’t in the vehicle during the arrest and didn’t have knowledge that their spouse was operating the vehicle contrary to law. There have been a few occasions where one spouse has reported the other for driving impaired. In those cases, if the reporting spouse is a registered owner of the vehicle, they are allowed to have the vehicle back.

If there is a known lien on the vehicle, the lien holder is given notice of the seizure and intent to forfeit the vehicle. If they already had a repossession order on the vehicle, it is turned over to them. The lien holder has the right to claim and take possession of the vehicle but if the driver or owner contests the forfeiture and wins, the lien holder would need to turn the vehicle back over to the prevailing party. So ultimately it comes down to a matter of who is going to store the vehicle until the forfeiture is resolved and that can be months. Most lien holders choose to leave the vehicle at the city impound.

After the 60 days has passed and if it has not been contested, or if the forfeiture was contested and upheld, the vehicle may be sold in a public manner, usually at auction. If there is not a lien, the department will sell the vehicle and then take from the proceeds, the cost of the title, preparing the vehicle, auction fees, and any towing or other fees the department paid. Any remaining funds are directed to the City’s DWI fund.

If there is a lien, after the vehicle is sold at auction the department’s costs are taken from the sale proceeds and any remaining funds (up to the amount of the lien) are sent to the lien holder. If there are still proceeds remaining, they are directed to the City’s DWI fund.

If the forfeiture is successful, typically the lien holder wants the vehicle so they can control the sale of it. They sign an agreement that explains the law which states that they are prohibited from returning the vehicle to owner or their household. The lien holder must sell the vehicle in a commercial manner. They can pay their costs of the recovery and sale and apply any proceeds to the lien and then any remaining proceeds are to be returned to the department. In some cases, the lien holder chooses to not take possession of the vehicle, instead letting the police department sell it, take out any costs, and then forward the balance up to the amount of the lien to the lien holder. If there are funds left over, that is directed to the police department’s DWI fund.

The DWI fund is separate from the department and city general funds. The DWI fund is used for DWI training, education, and enforcement equipment. Education can include traffic enforcement law updates, seatbelt and child seat training, and training officers to be certified Data Master Breath Testing Operators. Equipment can range from traffic enforcement tools such as radar units and PBT (Preliminary Breath Test) units, to audio/video recording devices used for preserving evidence such as field sobriety tests.
Vehicles that are not returned to innocent owners, lien holders, or ordered by the courts to be returned, and are successfully forfeited, may be retained by the department for official use or may be sold in a commercially acceptable manner, which means taking bids or selling at public auction. The Austin Police Department typically holds two auctions each year, usually in May and September. After a vehicle is sold, the costs of the vehicle preparation, towing, title, and auction are taken out of the gross income. It is important to know that not all of the vehicles sold at these two auctions were seized in the same year they are sold. The process for a vehicle to be successfully forfeited can be long.

The first auction of 2020 was held in June. Seven forfeited vehicles were sold bringing a total of $11,125. In addition, bicycles and other abandoned property brought another $2,216.30 in sales. Because the County Attorney’s office prosecuted two of the DWI cases that resulted in forfeitures, State law mandates that 30% of the proceeds, or in this case $205.50, from those vehicles be forwarded to the County Attorney’s office. After costs were paid, $9,573.48 was put into the DWI fund while $2,542.30 was put into the general fund. Though the police department organizes the auctions, other city departments are invited to participate and this sale included $2,674.50 in sale of property from other city departments. $1,883.86 was forwarded to them.

The second sale of the year was held in November. This was a small sale compared to most sales in the past. There were six seized vehicles sold and fewer bicycles and less small property than usual. It isn’t known if the reduced number of vehicles and property was due to Covid or not. The vehicles sold for a total of $3,700.00. The County Attorney’s Office received $292.50 as a result of their role in prosecuting felony DWI forfeitures. After expenses were removed $2,887.50 was directed to the DWI fund and $764.93 went to the general fund. No other city departments participated in the sale.

The emphasis in the DWI vehicle forfeiture laws is to get vehicles out of the hands of impaired drivers. A new law is aimed at encouraging convicted drivers to drive sober. Offenders that qualify for the Ignition Interlock Program can now get their vehicle back by posting bond or cash in the value of their vehicle. If in three years, they have not had another alcohol violation, they can petition to get their money back. If however, they do have another offense in that three year window, the prosecutor will file for forfeiture of the bond or cash. There is no further forfeiture action against the vehicle because in three years it could have been wrecked or sold. We have had one person take advantage of this program at the end of 2020. It is also worth knowing, the disposition of each forfeited vehicle is recorded with the State of Minnesota Auditor's Office.

Keeping track of the status of these seized and abandoned vehicles is time consuming and preparing and getting them to the auction is as well. I must thank
the Austin/Mower County Law Enforcement Reserves for their help in accomplishing the task of preparing and moving the property to be sold.

Austin Police Officers continue to be diligent in their efforts to remove impaired drivers from the streets of our community, as well as curb other illegal activity. We will continue to seize and forfeit vehicles and other property from offenders when appropriate and within the limits of the law.

*****
The new hybrid Ford Explorer will cut down costs for the Austin Police Department. Eric Johnson/photodesk@austindailyherald.com

The Austin Police Department has taken a step toward becoming more green as it begins changing over its fleet of squad cars to a hybrid model, using both electric and gasoline.

The vehicle, a 2020 Ford Police Interceptor Hybrid, has the capability to utilize both electric, gas or both at the same time, ensuring that power isn’t sacrificed while at the same time maintaining fuel efficiency and being environmentally friendly. Austin police patrolman Chad Norman, who is department fleet manager, said the move to hybrids is a chance to cut the department’s footprint as well as be fiscally responsible. “We’re always trying to spend taxpayer’s money the wisest way we can,” Norman said. “The hybrid gives us the opportunity to save, even with increased cost, $8,000 to $9,000 over the life of the vehicle.”

Currently, there is only one hybrid in the fleet, a 2020 model with a price tag of $39,470, $3,500 more than previous vehicles purchased. But the hybrid engine setup will equate into savings after the four-year life of the squad car is up. “We’ll make it up in fuel savings and the trade-in value will be higher,” Norman said. “It’s estimated that the vehicles will save between $3,000 to $4,000 in fuel per year for each squad. The 3.3 liter V6 doesn’t require plug-ins as the electric side will regenerate power when the vehicle slows down or comes to a stop. Even when the vehicle is idling, which is a large amount of the time, the hybrid will continue saving money. Sixty minutes of idling only requires the gas engine to run for 20 minutes more than a non-hybrid. At that point, the electric takes over, allowing functions like air conditioning and heating to continue running.”

“It will significantly reduce idle hours,” Norman said. “Thirty-three miles of wear are put on the vehicle for each idle hour. With 100,000 miles on the odometer, 9,600 of that are idle hours. The gas and electric capacities are running together; acceleration will be improved when required. When the move to the new cars is completed, all patrol cars in the 19-vehicle fleet will be replaced.”
**CALL FOR SERVICE STATISTICS**

Austin Police Department Calls for Service 2016-2020

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Disclaimer: These calls are system wide for Mower County and include APD, AFD, MCSO and smaller County Agencies.
## INCIDENT ANALYSIS

### Dates

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<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thur</th>
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<p>| 00911 | 911 Hang Up | 78 | 65 | 67 | 78 | 80 | 79 | 90 | 537 |
| ABANV | Abandoned Vehicle | 3 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 11 |
| ACCAN | Accident vs Animal | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ACCHR | Accident Hit Run | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 11 |
| ACCI | Motor Vehicle Injury | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| ACCP | Motor Vehicle Property | 4 | 5 | 3 | 14 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 42 |
| ACCVD | Vehicle in Ditch | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| AGAS | Agency Assist | 16 | 18 | 33 | 34 | 24 | 28 | 23 | 176 |
| ALARC | Alarm Commercial/Business | 6 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 27 |
| ALARM | Alarm Medical | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 8 |
| ALARR | Alarm Residential | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 5 |
| ANIBI | Animal Bite | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| ANIMB | Barking Dog | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 9 |
| ANIML | Animal Loose/Found | 5 | 9 | 11 | 10 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 55 |
| ANIMW | Animal Welfare | 136 | 132 | 129 | 134 | 121 | 133 | 148 | 933 |
| ASSAU | Assault | 26 | 22 | 17 | 15 | 22 | 10 | 16 | 128 |
| BURG | Burglary | 14 | 15 | 19 | 14 | 9 | 16 | 16 | 97 |
| BURNP | Burn Permit | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| CHILA | Child Abuse | 1 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 24 |
| CHILC | Child Custody | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| CHILN | Child Neglect | 2 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 16 | 56 |
| CNIM | Civil Matter | 27 | 44 | 36 | 40 | 38 | 43 | 43 | 271 |
| CNIP | Civil Process | 0 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 13 |
| CONT | Contact | 7 | 17 | 12 | 12 | 24 | 16 | 14 | 19 |
| COURT | Court Duty | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| CSC | Criminal Sexual Conduct | 9 | 7 | 11 | 13 | 11 | 13 | 4 | 68 |
| CSCR | Sexual Conduct Rape | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| DADOG | Dangerous Dog | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| DANCO | Danco Violation | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| DEATH | Death Body Found | 11 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 10 | 46 |
| DETOX | Detox | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| DISCO | Disorderly Conduct | 5 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 30 |
| DISPA | Dispatch | 42 | 60 | 66 | 50 | 63 | 67 | 36 | 384 |
| DISTU | Disturbance | 34 | 30 | 17 | 28 | 21 | 30 | 29 | 189 |
| DOME! | Domestic In Progress | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| DOMEP | Domestic Physical | 83 | 51 | 64 | 57 | 64 | 56 | 65 | 440 |
| DOMEV | Domestic Verbal | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 18 |
| DRNE | Driving Complaint | 43 | 41 | 42 | 47 | 50 | 45 | 48 | 316 |
| DRUGS | Drugs | 13 | 20 | 13 | 12 | 20 | 18 | 11 | 107 |
| EXTRA | Extra Patrol | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| FIGHT | Fight | 15 | 12 | 15 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 70 |
| FIRAC | Firearms Complaint | 17 | 10 | 6 | 14 | 8 | 18 | 13 | 86 |
| FIRE | Fire - General | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 |
| FIREA | Fire Alarm | 2 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 32 |
| FIREL | Gas Leak | 2 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| FIRER | Residential Fire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| FIRES | Structure Fire | 42 | 46 | 47 | 51 | 61 | 48 | 54 | 349 |
| FIREV | Vehicle Fire | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| FOLLO | Follow Up | 5 | 24 | 23 | 18 | 22 | 24 | 6 | 122 |
| FOUPE | Found Person | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 29 |</p>
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**Total**

2,247 2,693 2,551 2,663 2,643 2,644 2,540 17,981

Disclaimer: This year’s high count is due to the lobby being closed due to COVID and anyone requesting service in our entry way needed to pick up the phone and call dispatch.
Letters and Cards of Appreciation

Good morning,

My name is Mark Winkels. I teach Career and Technical courses at Austin High School. A year ago I received a bike donation from a community service officer.

My power systems course has been working on turning it into a drift trike. We were able to conduct some test drives with it so I thought you would be interested in seeing what your donation has made possible. We still have some small adjustments to make and get it painted.

The plan for the trike is to use in parades and such to help promote the program.

Please contact me if interested in taking it for a ride.
Below are some pictures.
Dear Chief David McKichan,

Matchbox Children’s Theatre is writing to you to let you know that two of your patrol officers went above and beyond what was required of them when they responded to a vandalism call at our building on Sunday, June 8th. Someone threw a rock into our door and broke the window. Officer Gast and Officer Diggins stayed after they cleared the building and took the report from one of our board members and neighbors. They helped us clean up the broken glass and then helped my husband, another board member and I figure out the best way to board up our door and then helped us get the door boarded up. This was not something they needed to stay and do but it was very much appreciated. Officer Gast even reassured my daughter when she was scared because someone would do this to her theatre and was scared that someone else could come back. You have some new officers on your force that looks out for the community and cares about the community. Matchbox truly appreciates that.

Thank you,

Matchbox Children’s Theatre Board of Directors

[Signatures]

and

Angela Donovan
Officer/Education Facilitator

[Signatures]