

# CELEBRATING **190 YEARS** OF SERVICE

**PADUCAH POLICE DEPARTMENT EST. 1834**



**2024 ANNUAL REPORT**



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## CITY COMMISSION

Mayor George P. Bray  
Mayor Pro Tem Sandra Wilson  
Commissioner Raynarldo Henderson  
Commissioner Buz Smith  
Commissioner Dajuan Thomas





## A MESSAGE FROM **THE CHIEF**

**I want to thank you personally for taking the time to learn more about the Paducah Police Department. Transparency is key to establishing and maintaining strong community relationships. For more than 40 years, we have been sharing information with the public by publishing our annual report. This year's report includes information about our community involvement, training, use-of-force statistics, crime/collision rates, and much more.**

Paducah continues to be a much busier City than most people realize. While Paducah has around 27,000 residents, the daily population often increases to approximately 100,000 people, putting us in the mid-size city category. Even though we have this huge influx of people into the community, our crime rate remains low. Crime in a community is impactful. No matter how minor the offense, it has a negative effect on someone. We are fortunate that for the past six years, since 2019, the crime rate has gone down or remained flat.

Some articles on the internet state Paducah is one of the most dangerous cities in Kentucky, which is just not true. What these reports don't take into consideration is the daily population increase Paducah sees. When you compare our crime numbers to the daily population and not the census numbers, we are doing pretty well. The majority of our crime rate is driven by retail theft due to us being a regional shopping hub. Unfortunately, not everyone who visits Paducah is a law-abiding citizen.

Advancements in technology play a key role in modern-day policing. The Paducah Police Department uses a variety of new technology to be more efficient and effective while working to keep our community safe. Two examples of this are our use of drones and automated license plate readers.

Drones have become an important tool for law enforcement and are used in various ways. Some of the ways we use drones include keeping an eye on large crowds at special events like BBQ on the River, searching for missing persons or fleeing suspects, and reconstructing accident and crime scenes. It is important to mention that all of the officers flying our drones are certified by the FAA and have obtained their Part 107 license.

Over the past couple of years, we began using automated license plate readers. Working with Flock Safety, we have strategically placed these systems throughout our community. You may have seen some utility poles with a solar-powered device attached. Those are Flock Safety license plate readers. Most of these camera systems are located along major highways and thoroughfares with a high traffic volume. These cameras alert officers to vehicles involved in criminal activity when they enter our city. They also alert to stolen vehicles, missing persons, and Amber Alerts. Since their implementation, we have had success with preventing and solving crimes within our community. On average, the camera network reads more than 80,000 license plates daily. We currently have 21 cameras in operation and plan to expand the network over the next year.

The last item of technology I want to mention is our new 911 radio system. Radio communication is the lifeblood of how our public safety agencies communicate. We have been working hard to upgrade an insufficient and outdated radio communications system in our 911 center for many years. In late 2023, Communications International was selected as the vendor to replace our radio system. Work is being done on building out the system, and we are hopeful it will be completed and operational in early 2026.

While technology continues to evolve and play a key role, the most important resources at the Paducah Police Department are the men and women in uniform. Retaining experienced officers and recruiting the next generation of police officers continue to be our top priority. To help in this effort, we have made a few policy changes related to our appearance that you may have noticed. Officers are now allowed to have facial hair and visible tattoos. Previously, officers were required to be clean-shaven, and any tattoos had to be covered by clothing. Coming in 2025, officers will be sporting a more modern and comfortable uniform.

As we move through 2025, one of our primary goals is to work towards a new police facility. Our headquarters building is over 70 years old and was not built to be a police department. We moved here more than 25 years ago when Paducah Power moved out. The building's maintenance needs are estimated at more than two million dollars. I, along with many others, do not believe we should invest that amount of money in a building that still would not meet the current and future needs of a police department. This project is a top priority and something we hope to achieve in the next few years. We need to build a modern police facility our community can be proud of!

The Paducah Police Department has a long tradition of providing excellent service to our community and its visitors. I am very proud of our officers' work this past year and consider it a privilege to continue leading this agency.

There is a lot going on in our community. I want you to know we are committed to keeping our community safe while providing our citizens the highest quality of service. Please follow our social media accounts to keep up with what is going on with your police department.

Thank you for taking the time to look at our annual report. Our officers and staff work hard daily, and we are proud to highlight some of their accomplishments in 2024. Please contact me at [blaird@paducahky.gov](mailto:blaird@paducahky.gov) with any questions, concerns, or compliments.

# POLICE FOUNDATION

The Paducah Police Foundation is a non-profit organization focused on helping the police department enhance community partnerships, improve public safety and assist with employee development. Since its creation in 2015, the Police Foundation has been an important partner for the Paducah Police Department.

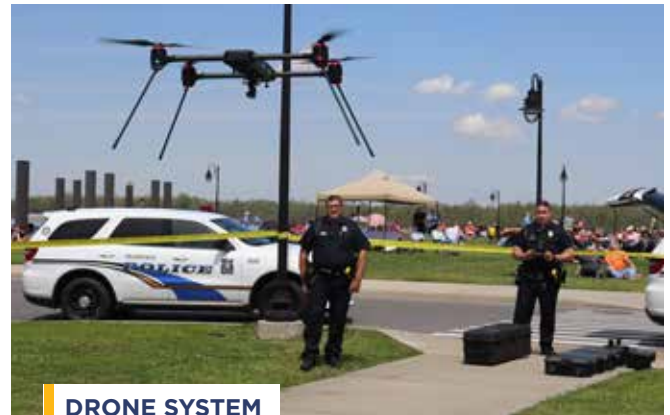
The past year was another exciting and productive year for the police foundation. After meeting their 2023 fundraising goal, the foundation purchased a Draganfly Commander 3XL Drone System for the department to use. This drone system will assist the Police Department with collision reconstruction, search and rescue, and special event security. After 10 officers were received FAA certification, the drone became operational in April 2024.

The foundation also provided funding for a new K-9, who began serving with the Department in November 2024. K-9 Karo and Officer Noah Willet were certified in obedience, tracking, article searches, narcotic searches, handler protection, and criminal apprehension. The new K-9 team is currently assigned to third shift.

In addition to K-9 Karo, the Foundation also launched a fundraising campaign to purchase a second K-9, which will allow us to be fully staffed again with three K-9 Units.

For the ninth consecutive year, our officers participated in the Cultural Leadership Academy as part of our continued focus on employee development. The Foundation continues to play a key role in this endeavor by providing the financial support necessary to maintain the program. In 2024, seven officers graduated from the program.

The CLA is partnership with Murray State University designed to enhance cultural competence for law enforcement. The program is taught in four modules: Intercultural Leadership, Social Intelligence and Nonverbal Communication, Ethical Practices in the community, and Community Interaction and Group Dynamics. Participating officers are eligible to earn college credit for their work. To date, more than 50 of our officers have completed the Cultural Leadership Academy.



**DRONE SYSTEM**



**K-9 KARO AND OFFICER NOAH WILLET**

## Board of Directors

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Penrod Cappock  
Patrice Hoffman  
Phillip Hudson  
Warner Wheat  
Michael Meredith  
Sarah Judd

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**CULTURAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**



**Chief of Police**  
Brian Laird

# COMMAND STAFF



**Assistant Chief**  
Anthony Copeland



**Assistant Chief**  
Joseph Hayes



**Captain**  
Nathan Antonites



**Captain**  
Justin Hodges



**Captain**  
Travis Watson



**Captain**  
Steve Thompson



**Captain**  
Jordan Murphy



**Sergeant**  
Matthew Hopp



**Sergeant**  
Matthew Scheer



**Sergeant**  
Jason Hicks



**Sergeant**  
Nickolas Francescon



**Sergeant**  
Eric Taylor



**Sergeant**  
Cody Santel



**Sergeant**  
Nathan Jaimet



**Sergeant**  
Beau Green



# POLICE OFFICERS



Travis  
Counts



Dana  
Davie



James  
Robbins



Corey  
Willenborg



Josh  
Bryant



Christopher  
D. Fearon



Keith  
Thuline



Derik  
Perry



Blake  
Quinn



Chelsee  
Breakfield



Lucas  
Stone



Daniel  
Kimball



Ryan  
Hudson



Danny  
Slack



Eric  
Abbott



Cassandra  
Ravens



William  
Hendrickson



Alex  
Liebenrood



Matthew  
Strohmeier



Benjamin  
Anthony



Tyson  
Riley



Logan  
Barrow



Matthew  
York



Carlos  
Kerley Jr.



Casey  
Steenberg



Noah  
Willett



Michael  
Vowell



Alex  
Whitworth

# POLICE OFFICERS



Daniel  
Hunerkoch



Dylan  
Cook



Jennifer  
Simmonds



Bryan  
Potts



Taylor  
Cissell



Thomas  
Shiels



Julia  
Cross



Fred  
Harvey



Samantha  
Taylor



Jackson  
McCormick



Rachel  
Bertrand



Michael  
Foster



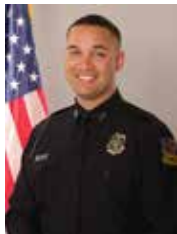
Austin  
Gruner



Steven  
Lang



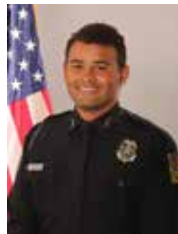
Seth  
Farthing



Bryce  
Mansfield



Steven  
Leady Jr.



Tyree  
Owens



A. Brooke  
Adams



Coy  
Dotson



Thomas  
Miller



Matthew  
Crisman



Isabella  
Liefer



Matthew  
Wentworth



Jakob  
Mueller



J. Owen  
Pulliam



Brandon  
Webster



Mark  
Brooks



K9  
Bary



K9  
Karo

## 911 STAFF



Ariana  
Kitty



Patrick  
Bugg



Tony  
Coraggio



Tara  
Martin



Amber  
Spears



Stephanie  
Goins



Taryn  
Reed



Hillary  
Fowler



Auston  
Scutt



McCall  
Buckingham



Emilee  
Jones



Mackenzie  
McDonald



Coby  
Fauver



Ryan  
Sallee



Kim  
Lauderdale



Harlie  
Curry



Emily  
Parks



Nicholas  
Meeks



Sarah  
Lambert



Laura  
Peery

## CIVILIAN STAFF



Vicki  
Miller



Kim  
Newlon



Jon  
Boulton



Mary  
Farrell



Sabrina  
Miller



Jessica  
Young



Sarai  
Maguire-Hernandez



Allison  
Blackwell



Michael  
Cubley



John  
Biller



Mary  
Stanley



## PROMOTIONS



**Captain Jordan Murphy** was hired by the Paducah Police Department August 4, 2016, and was promoted to sergeant July 1, 2021. He previously served with Louisville Metro Police Department. He has served as a detective and a member of the Digital Forensics Unit.



**Sergeant Beau Green** was hired on Oct. 15, 2007, and is a legacy officer—his father served with the PPD some years ago. He has worked as a detective in the Support Services Division since November 2015.

## RETIREMENTS



### Robin Newberry

In 2024, we celebrated the 27-year career of our friend and colleague, Robin Newberry. Robin began her career at the Paducah Police Department in 1997 as the Assistant to the Chief of Police and Public Information Officer. As we try to sum up what she means to us, we decided that we simply can't because words can't express the impact she has made at this agency and in the lives of every officer who has worked here.

She was given a final walk out, a tradition normally reserved for retiring officers, and she went "out of service" over the radio. We also held a reception at the Paducah Police Department in which she was named a Duchess of Paducah, an honor bestowed upon citizens for their notable contributions made to or on behalf of Paducah. She was also presented her retirement certificate and a shadow box with her own Paducah Police Department Badge. She will truly be missed by all who walk the halls of the police department. We wish her a happy retirement, and we will always be "her boys" and "her girls."



### Officer Gretchen Morgan

joined the police department in 2003. She served as a Police Training Officer, a CPR/First Aid Instructor, a Verbal Defense Instructor, a DARE Instructor, a Community Resource Officer, and a School Resource Officer. We wish her all the best in her retirement after nearly 21 years of service.



### Officer Jarrett Woodruff

joined the police department in 2005. He served as a Police Training Officer, a CPR/First Aid Instructor, an EMT, a DARE Instructor, and a SWAT Operator and Sniper. We wish him all the best in his retirement after nearly 20 years of service.



**K-9 Joker** graduated from K9 training in the summer of 2020. While serving four years with the Paducah Police Department, K9 Joker performed numerous vehicle searches, article searches, tracks, and community presentations. In retirement, he will live with his handler, Officer Hendrickson.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Paducah Police Department remains committed to fostering meaningful relationships with the community through various outreach programs and events. By engaging with residents in positive and interactive settings, our officers strengthen trust and promote collaboration between law enforcement and the public. This past year, the department participated in several events to build these essential connections.

## Shoot With A Cop

Officers joined youth, volunteers, and staff from the 4-H Hot Shots program for a day at the firearms range. This event taught young participants about firearm safety, marksmanship, and responsible gun handling under the guidance of trained professionals. More importantly, it allowed officers to interact with local youth in a supportive and educational environment.



## Coffee With A Cop

The department also continued its tradition of Coffee With A Cop at Etcetera Coffee House. This informal gathering allowed officers to engage in open and meaningful conversations with the public in a relaxed and welcoming environment. Events like this allow community members to voice concerns, ask questions, and get to know the officers who serve them daily.



## Battle of the Badges

The Paducah Police Department teamed up with the Paducah Fire Department for the Annual Battle of the Badges Softball game. Paducah Police came out on top with a final score of 22-18. The cost of admission was canned goods or cash donations for the Family Service Society, whose mission is to serve as a crisis support for those in need.

## Paducah Police Department Resource Expo

The Paducah Police Department held its 2nd Annual Resource Expo. In conjunction with the DEA Drug Take Back Day and in partnership with Bethel Tabernacle, the police department brought together several community groups and organizations to inform Paducah residents about available services and programs.

## Golf Day

Another notable engagement was the Golf Day with the Oscar Cross Boys & Girls Club, where School Resource Officers and Officer Quinn spent the day teaching young club members golf fundamentals. The event featured lessons on how to properly swing a golf club and a skills course designed to challenge and develop their abilities. This initiative introduced children to the sport and provided an enjoyable way for officers and youth to bond outside of traditional law enforcement settings.





### CPA

The Paducah Police Department graduated class 27 of the Citizens' Police Academy. CPA attendees receive some of the same training that police officers receive and witness presentations from the department's specialized units, including the Drug Unit, SWAT, K-9, and the Bomb Squad. They also participate in mock traffic stops, investigations, and simulations. The classes expose citizens to current law enforcement issues and the latest Paducah Police Department procedures.



### Christmas Parade

Paducah Police Department Officers and their families rode and walked in the 2024 City of Paducah Christmas Parade. Officer Logan Barrow led the parade in our patrol vehicle. At the same time, our Honor Guard and members of the Paducah Fire Department presented the colors. The theme was Christmas in Toyland, so we hopped in our Radio Flyer to pass out candy and spread Christmas Cheer to those watching the parade.



### Christmas in the Park

For nearly 15 years, the Paducah Police Department has volunteered at Paducah Power System's Christmas In The Park. Employees and their families volunteer to collect canned goods for local food pantries and community service organizations.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



## JCPA

The School Resource Officers hosted the department's Junior Citizens' Police Academy. This year's academy had students ages 11-17 participating from the surrounding area. The students could see firsthand what it is like to train as a police officer. The students participated in physical agility tests, traffic stops, building searches, and crime scene investigations. They also observed demonstrations from the Bomb Squad, SWAT, and K-9 unit. For more information, contact Officer Cassandra Ravens at [cravens@paducahky.gov](mailto:cravens@paducahky.gov).



## West KY Crime Stoppers

In 2024, West Kentucky Crime Stoppers continued its partnership with the Paducah Police Department. Established in 1984, West Kentucky Crime Stoppers has played an important role in our community. The board consists of leaders from both the community and local businesses, while the Paducah Police Department provides three liaisons along with a Community Engagement Officer. In 2024, the group organized its annual golf scramble to support West Kentucky Crime Stoppers and successfully launched a new tip software and platform. This tool allows tipsters to remain anonymous while providing information to the relevant departments.

**IN 2024 WEST KY  
CRIMESTOPPERS  
RECEIVED 336 TIPS  
AND HAS PAID OUT  
\$3,200 IN REWARDS**

# SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS



The Paducah Police Department currently has two school resource officers. Officer Eric Abbott serves as the school resource officer for Paducah Tilghman High School. He can often be seen patrolling the halls, ensuring that locked doors remain secured, assisting during lunch periods, participating in spirit week, and ensuring that various sports activities are properly staffed to keep athletes and fans safe.



Officer Cassandra Ravens is the school resource officer at Paducah Middle School. She is committed to school safety and takes the time to listen to students who need someone to talk to. One moment, she may be checking on classes, while the next, she could be helping a student navigate issues involving peers, staff, or parents. Additionally, Officer Ravens teaches the DARE program to middle and elementary school students.



Both school resource officers participate in the Paducah Police Jr. Citizens Police Academy during the summer. This week-long event is designed to give participants insight into the duties of police officers in our city. They learn about patrol tactics and special units such as the Bomb Squad and SWAT, as well as the detective division. At the end of the week, participants who attend all sessions are rewarded with a special outing; in 2024, for example, this included a trip to Venture River.



The School Resource Officers also attend career fairs, back-to-school events, and summer camps. One ongoing initiative is a trip during fall break to Camp Ondessonk, where students recommended by teachers, administrators, and staff can enjoy a camping experience that promotes team building, confidence, self-sufficiency, and friendship.



Additionally, they participate in initiatives such as Christmas Cops, help children shop for back-to-school supplies, and attend school dances to provide support. Through their involvement, they serve as mentors and positive role models for children in the community.





# OPERATIONS DIVISION

The Operations Division is the largest division within the police department and is commonly referred to as the patrol division. Officers in marked police vehicles respond to calls, conduct traffic stops, engage with the public, patrol neighborhoods and businesses, and assist with community events.

When fully staffed, the division consists of an assistant chief, four captains, seven sergeants, 45 officers, three school resource officers, three K-9 officers, a training officer, and a community engagement officer. These personnel dedicate most of their time to full-time positions.

Officers and supervisors work across three shifts, typically eight or ten hours long. This hybrid shift model benefits both the officers and the community. The overlap of shifts provides additional officer coverage during peak times and offers the officers more flexibility with their work hours, contributing to a better work-life balance. Twice a year, officers select their preferred shifts and days off based on their seniority in the department.

Additionally, the division includes part-time positions that many officers undertake. These roles encompass areas such as Crisis Negotiation, Collision Reconstruction, Unmanned Aerial System pilots, Bomb Squad, SWAT, Police Training Officers, Honor Guard, Public Information Officers, Explorer Advisors, and departmental instructor positions. Officers commit significant time to training and maintaining proficiency in all aspects of their jobs, ensuring they are always prepared to handle any situation. Emphasizing training enhances our professionalism and is a key attribute that defines who we are.



**Officer Keith Thuline** won the 2024 Governor's Occupant Protection Enforcement Award for his efforts to increase seat belt and child restraint usage in Kentucky. This is Officer Thuline's fifth time winning this award for our agency.



**Officer Rachel Bertrand** won the 2024 Governor's Impaired Driving Enforcement Award for Region 4 (agencies with 51-100 officers). Between October 2023 and October 2024, Officer Bertrand made an impressive 106 impaired driving arrests.



## Commitment to Training and Professional Development

The Paducah Police Department is committed to providing comprehensive training at all levels, including individual officers, specialized units, and the department as a whole. We firmly believe that a well-trained police force is essential for reducing use-of-force incidents, enhancing officer safety and wellness, improving service quality, and building trust within the community.

## Ongoing Training and Specialized Instruction

Training does not stop after the academy. Each year, officers participate in at least 40 hours of state-mandated continuing education, covering a broad range of law enforcement topics. However, the Paducah Police Department goes beyond this requirement, providing additional in-house and specialized training opportunities to ensure our officers remain highly skilled and prepared for any situation.



## Our certified instructors conduct in-depth training sessions on:

**Firearms Proficiency & Safety:** Regular live-fire training, judgment-based shooting scenarios, and qualification courses to ensure officers maintain peak proficiency with their service weapons.

**Defensive Tactics & Use of Force:** Hands-on training in suspect control, ground defense, non-lethal force techniques, and scenario-based exercises emphasizing de-escalation.

**Active Shooter & Tactical Response:** Advanced training in rapid response tactics, coordinated team movements, and threat neutralization in critical incidents.

**Emergency Vehicle Operations:** Training on pursuit policies, high-speed driving techniques, precision maneuvering, and defensive driving strategies.

**Less-Lethal Force Options:** Proper use of tools such as Tasers, pepper spray, impact munitions, and restraint devices to minimize harm while ensuring compliance.

**Crowd Control (Mobile Field Force):** Strategies for managing large gatherings, de-escalating tensions, and responding to civil disturbances in a controlled and professional manner.

**First Aid, CPR & Trauma Response:** Life-saving medical training, including the application of tourniquets, wound packing, and CPR certification to assist both officers and civilians in medical emergencies.

**Reality-Based Scenario Training:** Simulated real-world incidents where officers practice decision-making, verbal commands, and tactical responses under stress.

**Verbal De-escalation & Crisis Intervention:** Training in effective communication strategies to defuse tense situations, particularly when dealing with individuals in crisis or experiencing mental health episodes.

In addition to these core training areas, officers have opportunities to attend advanced training courses and specialized certifications offered by state and federal agencies, ensuring they remain at the forefront of modern policing practices.

## Commitment to Continuous Improvement

In 2024, the officers of the Paducah Police Department completed an extra 44 hours of in-person skills training on top of the state's required 40 hours. This demonstrates our strong commitment to professional development, preparedness, and excellence in law enforcement. By continually improving our training programs, we equip our officers with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to serve and protect our community effectively and responsibly.

# CRIME REPORT

The Paducah Police Department, in its commitment to ensuring the safety of our community, voluntarily participates in the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Uniform Crime Reporting Program. This program, which collects data from over 18,000 federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, is a crucial tool for criminal justice research and is most helpful when examining law enforcement trends across the country.

In addition to looking at trends nationally, we can review our data comparatively over time. We can identify trends and scrutinize increases and decreases over a specified period. This is useful when evaluating new programs, technology, and initiatives.

When reviewing data, we conduct a thorough analysis, looking for irregularities such as significant increases, decreases, or crime clusters within areas. Once these are identified, we delve into the reasons behind them and adjust our resources to address them. At the end of 2023, we filled a vacant crime analyst position to further enhance this evaluation process.

The FBI breaks crime into two categories: Part 1 and Part 2. Part 1 crimes are serious and sometimes violent and include: murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson. Part 2 crimes are less serious in nature. They include fraud, drug offenses, simple assault, driving under the influence, and disorderly conduct.

In 2024, our officers worked hard to identify trends and address crime issues in Paducah. As a result, there was a 6% reduction in Part 1 crime and a 20% reduction in Part 2 crime for an overall combined 16% reduction in crime in Paducah. This marks six years in a row crime has decreased in Paducah, leading to a safer environment for our residents and businesses.

As previously mentioned, we routinely review data to determine how to utilize our resources most efficiently and noticed an increase in auto theft. There was an increase from 60 in 2023 to 90 in 2024. This increase is attributed to a security vulnerability in 2011 to 2022 KIA and Hyundai model vehicles. According to several major news outlets, these vehicles were not equipped with an electronic immobilizer to prevent the car from being started without the correct key fob. This allowed thieves to bypass the ignition with a USB cable and start the car. Once this hack hit the internet, the number of Hyundai and KIA thefts increased nationally.

In Paducah, there were 20 thefts associated with this security vulnerability. They involved groups of juveniles stealing multiple vehicles. In many cases, they would steal the vehicle, joyride in it for a while, and then look for another Kia or Hyundai to steal. Hyundai and Kia have since sent a recall to install a security update in vulnerable vehicles, which has significantly reduced the risk of future thefts.

PART 1 CRIMES	2023	2024	CHANGE
MURDER	1	2	↑ 1
RAPE	19	23	↑ 4
ROBBERY	10	11	↑ 1
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	43	54	↑ 11
BURGLARY	69	67	↓ 2
LARCENY-THEFT	708	608	↓ 100
AUTO THEFT	60	90	↑ 30
ARSON	3	8	↑ 5

PART 2 CRIMES	2023	2024	CHANGE
OTHER ASSAULTS	458	416	↓ 42
FORGERY/COUNTERFEITING	37	25	↓ 12
FRAUD	108	88	↓ 20
STOLEN PROPERTY(BUY/REC)	33	22	↓ 11
VANDALISM	275	274	↓ 1
WEAPON OFFENSES	23	20	↓ 3
PROSTITUTION/VICE	1	2	↑ 1
SEX OFFENSES	80	75	↓ 5
DRUG VIOLATIONS	1,062	747	↓ 315
DOMESTIC OFFENSES	96	74	↓ 22
DISORDERLY CONDUCT	179	165	↓ 14
OTHER OFFENSES	308	280	↓ 28
RUNAWAYS	9	4	↓ 5

# TRAFFIC REPORT

Officers continued to focus on citizen concerns identified when we held neighborhood meetings throughout the City. A good portion of the concerns were traffic-related. With this information, officers placed speed monitoring trailers in areas with reported traffic issues to gather data and educate the public.

With the information from the speed trailers, we took a data-driven approach to address the issues. We were able to deploy officers more consistently into areas of concern that had the most violations. Knowing we cannot see every violation across the city, the speed trailers help us to narrow our focus to the most critical areas.

Officers issued 2,721 traffic citations in 2024 (3,810 in 2023). Speeding was the most commonly reported neighborhood issue, with 695 speeding citations issued (677 in 2023). Officers also utilized traffic stops to educate the public about traffic violations in hopes of deterring future violations. During these stops, 4,476 warnings were issued (5,715 in 2023).

This community-oriented approach resulted in an eight-year low for the total number of collisions (1,746) and fewer injury collisions: 310 in 2023 to 289 in 2024. Unfortunately, four of the collisions resulted in a fatality, two of which were single-vehicle collisions involving impaired drivers.

When officers are called to the collision scene, they gather evidence to determine what occurred and why. Police report data suggests that 47% of all collisions in Paducah are caused by the operator's inattention (818). Inattention can be glancing down at the radio, a cell phone, or anything else that takes the driver's focus off of operating the vehicle.

As mentioned, the police department takes a data-driven and community-oriented approach to address traffic-related issues. The top five areas where collisions occurred in 2024 were Hinkleville Road (Mall area), Lone Oak Road/I-24, Lone Oak Road/Jackson Street, Irvin Cobb Drive/Wayne Sullivan Drive, and downtown North 3rd and North 4th Streets. Officers have begun focusing on traffic-related efforts in these areas with this information.





# SUPPORT SERVICES

If you've ever been greeted by a friendly clerk at the police department, experienced the reassuring voice of a 911 emergency dispatcher, engaged with a professional police detective, or received invaluable assistance from the Deflection Team, you've had the pleasure of interacting with a dedicated member of the Support Services Division of the Paducah Police Department.

Made up of forty-six talented individuals, the Support Services division works hard to serve our community's multifaceted needs. At first glance, you might wonder how an investigative unit, a records and evidence team, the Deflection Team, and a 911 Center can be interconnected. The answer lies in our shared commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all citizens. We harness cutting-edge technology alongside the expertise and training of our officers to provide exceptional service.

This collaborative spirit shines brightly when the General Investigative Unit, Drug Unit, Deflection Team, and Crime Analyst come together to tackle complex investigations. Each team possesses unique strengths that play a pivotal role in addressing the various layers of causation surrounding criminal activity.

## Crime Analyst

The crime analyst position was established to promote data-driven policing. This approach analyzes historical and real-time crime data to identify problems within communities. The insights gained are then used to create proactive response plans that community stakeholders and law enforcement can implement to reduce crime and disorder.

Analyst Hernandez actively participates in two groups in Western Kentucky: the joint statewide fusion center analyst group and the International Association for Crime Analysts. She collaborates with analysts across the state to maintain an ongoing information network that assesses potential threats.

Crime analysis is crucial in directing and allocating resources for daily operations, helping to prioritize and plan responses effectively. Analyst Hernandez specializes in statistical research and the development of community outreach programs. She also utilizes open-source data to analyze criminal intelligence, aiding in information gathering and assisting with investigations.

## The Drug Unit

The Paducah Police Department's Drug Unit focuses on complex drug investigations and investigates dangerous felons within the City of Paducah. The Unit works closely with the community, responding to complaints of drug trafficking and tips while relying heavily on the information it receives.

In 2024, the Unit investigated over 150 drug-related cases, resulting in charges for more than 110 persons. In Kentucky, the distribution of fentanyl is an enhanced crime within the Kentucky Revised Statutes. Individuals charged with the enhancement face 10-20 years in prison with having to serve 85% of their sentence before being eligible for release.

Fentanyl has led to thousands of deaths across the nation, and the Drug Unit is doing its part to make an impact to reduce these numbers. The Unit seized approximately 11,000 fentanyl pills. According to local medical statistics, the community saw a 10% reduction in overdoses in 2024. The Unit was also able to seize approximately 29g of cocaine, 570g of methamphetamine, and 3 lbs of marijuana.

The Unit continues participating in the Drug Enforcement Agency's National Drug Takeback events in the spring and fall. The events collected over 210 lbs of unwanted medication.

## General Investigations Unit

The General Investigations Unit investigates major cases ranging from felony theft to homicide. This Unit consists of four detectives and one sergeant. The General Investigative Unit provides 24-hour/365-day-a-year coverage for in-depth investigative attention to major crimes and incidents. They also perform pre-employment background checks on all department hires. In addition to attending 40 hours of state-required in-service training, detectives receive at least 80 hours of advanced investigative training throughout the year. This training ranges from homicide investigations to crime scene processing and digital forensics.



In 2024, this division investigated 187 cases with a clearance rate of 89%, an increase from the 2023 clearance rate of 83%. According to FBI statistics, the national average clearance rate for violent crime investigations was 45%, and it was 17% for property crimes in 2019. Kentucky's average for violent crime clearance was 40% in 2023. Our Department strives to work investigations thoroughly with community partnership and satisfying results for our victims.

## Records and Evidence

The Records and Evidence Unit plays a critical role for the Department and the community we serve. It is staffed by two Records personnel, two Evidence personnel, and the Records Manager. The Unit maintains all records and evidence to Kentucky State standards.

The Records Unit is responsible for assisting all visitors to the Department, preparing case files for use in court proceedings, maintaining Police records, and fulfilling open record requests. In 2024, 1,731 open records requests were completed. This is 60(3.4%) fewer requests than the 1,791 requests from the previous year. There were 814 video record requests consisting of hundreds of hours of video footage. There was an increase of 5% from the 774 video requests completed in 2023.

The Evidence Unit is responsible for securely storing every piece of physical and digital evidence that comes into Police Department custody. Maintaining the integrity of this evidence is imperative for the prosecutorial process as well as the transparency of the agency. Evidence currently houses 14,478 pieces of physical evidence and more than 731,000 pieces of digital evidence. These figures are up from approximately 13,000 pieces of physical evidence and 561,000 pieces of digital evidence in 2023. Digital evidence has had an increase of approximately 170,000, or 30.3%. The current amount of digital evidence is 134.6TB of data and would fill more than 26,900 DVDs.



# DEFLECTION TEAM

The City of Paducah is fortunate to have a strong network of community resources, and its citizens are even more lucky to be part of a compassionate community. However, our community, like many others, have individuals that are trapped in a cycle of substance abuse and suffer from mental health disorders. More often than not, these individuals find themselves in contact with the criminal justice system for various reasons. As a result, law enforcement officers frequently encounter the initial stages of individuals entering this destructive cycle of substance abuse and mental health instability.

The Deflection Team's approach is unique and innovative. Begun in response to the increase in deaths across the nation due to substance disorders and increasing mental health crises, the Deflection Team was established in 2024. It aims to reduce police contact with individuals in mental health and substance abuse crises, where incarceration has proven ineffective. The team achieves this by fostering empathetic relationships and connecting individuals with community stakeholders who promote mental health stability and recovery from substance disorders. The ultimate goal is to divert individuals experiencing substance abuse and/or mental health disorders away from incarceration and towards community-based support systems.



With this goal, in the Summer of 2024, the department hired Allison Blackwell and Matt Wentworth. Blackwell has a degree in forensic psychology and previously worked as a Police Response Clinician with the St. Louis City Metropolitan Police Crisis Response Unit and Behavioral Health Response. Matt Wentworth previously worked as a patrol officer and drug detective for the department before retiring in 2020 to work with faith-based organizations and boys without fathers. Wentworth returned to our department to work as the Deflection Team Police Officer.

The Deflection Team started with twenty clients gathered by our crime analyst. These individuals were selected based on the volume of interactions with police and their drug history. Since then, the team has acquired more clients through police officer referrals, community outreach, and the review of current data.



The first step was to build relationships with the clients. This was accomplished through empathetic conversations, frequent check-ins, and providing them with food in addition to other basic needs. While building these relationships, we also formed strong community partnerships and identified additional resources.

## How does the Deflection Team help?

After connecting with a person in need, the Deflection Team evaluates what resources that person may need and helps them gain access to resources. This is accomplished by helping the person obtain state issued identification, establishing health insurance, connecting with mental health resources, placement in substance disorder recovery centers, coordinating transportation to doctor appointments, helping obtain employment, and connecting with temporary and permanent housing.

The Deflection Team has made significant impact in a short amount of time. They made over 325 phone calls to coordinate services and care, navigate resources, and establish relationships with the community. They also had more than 226 contacts with individuals in need during the last quarter of 2024. The team is currently assisting over 50 clients and beginning to see the positive impact of their efforts. Many of the individuals they serve are starting to experience positive changes, leading to fewer contacts with emergency resources and police.

In summary, the Deflection Team is a unit comprised of caring and dedicated individuals who connect those in need with the help they require. With this simple vision and their unwavering commitment, they are bringing about long-term positive change in our community, inspiring hope for a better future.

# COMMUNICATION SERVICES DIVISION

The 911 Communications Services Division is the vital hub for all Paducah and McCracken County emergency services. Being the only Certified Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) in McCracken County, we are responsible for answering all 911 calls within the county; the division dispatches for the Paducah Police Department, McCracken County Sheriff's Office, seven fire departments, McCracken County Emergency Management, and the McCracken County Rescue Squad. In addition to emergency response, the division provides essential administrative support such as Criminal History Requests, Open Records Requests, and NCIC entry to the McCracken County Jail, McCracken County Attorney's Office, McCracken County Commonwealth Attorney's Office, and the McCracken County Circuit and District Courts.

Agencies must meet stringent requirements to achieve and maintain a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) certification in Kentucky. These include maintaining reliable infrastructure, using advanced mapping software, and employing telecommunicators certified by the Department of Criminal Justice Training (DOCJT).

In 2024, the Paducah Communications Services Division experienced key leadership changes, which brought a wealth of experience to the team.

In 2024, the Paducah Communications Services Division answered 84,655 total phone calls and processed over 100,000 calls for service. The division maintained an impressive 99% overall Grade of Service, reflecting its commitment to rapid emergency response. The Grade of Service measures the percentage of 911 calls answered within 10 seconds, a critical industry standard that dispatch centers must meet to ensure timely assistance to the community.

## CJIS Audit

In 2024, the 911 Communications Services Division underwent a Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) audit, a critical review of its compliance with national standards. CJIS is a secure system that enables telecommunicators to enter and manage records for missing persons, wanted individuals, stolen property, and other law enforcement data within the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). Thanks to the dedication and expertise of the CJIS team, the division received an excellent rating from the Kentucky State Police. CJIS Operator Tara Martin and assistants Hillary Fowler and Coby Fauver were promoted. Their efforts were instrumental in organizing and ensuring records' accuracy and training staff to uphold the highest data integrity standards.

## Radio Project Update

Significant progress was made during 2024 on the Paducah City and McCracken County Radio Infrastructure project. On December 12, 2023, the City of Paducah and the McCracken County Fiscal Court signed an agreement accepting Communications International's 911 radio system project bid. During the first few months of the project, leasing agreements were obtained for the use of space on two privately owned towers. Communications International identified the towers as needed for the required system coverage. Improvements were made at the two-tower locations owned by McCracken County and the 911 center. A new radio and phone recording system was also installed in November. So far, the City and County have made the first two project milestone payments for a total of \$2,299,538.52. The project continues to move forward, with system testing slated to begin in November 2025 and the completion of the project in the spring of 2026.



Supervisor Tony Coraggio joined from Broomfield, Colorado, with an impressive 35 years of experience in 911 dispatch. A U.S. Navy veteran, Tony has a strong leadership and public safety communications background.



Patrick Bugg was promoted to Assistant Manager after serving as a Supervisor. In 2024, Patrick was recognized as Supervisor of the Year for the State of Kentucky at the Kentucky Emergency Services Conference in Louisville, KY.



Emily Parks completed our 6 month in house Telecommunicator training program.



# TECHNOLOGY & POLICING

The Paducah Police Department is dedicated to investing in technologies that enhance our policing structure, increase efficiency, and improve our ability to serve and protect the community.

## In-Car Camera Upgrade

As technology continues to advance, it aligns with our department's mission. One of our significant initiatives was upgrading our in-car camera systems. The Paducah Police Department has maintained a successful partnership with Axon Enterprises, a trusted vendor for Tasers, body cameras, and fleet cameras over the years. During the summer, Axon installed their Fleet 3 system in 56 of our patrol vehicles. This upgrade involved removing the old system, running new wiring, and setting up the new equipment.

The Fleet 3 system offers enhancements such as improved GPS positioning, stronger signals, upgraded routers, higher-quality cameras for clearer video, and better audio capabilities. Additionally, it allows for the uploading of fleet and body camera videos throughout an officer's shift without the need to park near a hotspot. Each Fleet 3 camera is equipped with an Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR), enabling officers to run license plates without manual input.

These advancements benefit our dispatch team by providing real-time mapping of vehicles and officers. This capability allows dispatch to send the nearest officers to an incident as it unfolds, facilitating a more efficient response to calls.

## FLOCK

This year, we expanded our partnership with Flock Safety, which provides stationary, solar-powered license plate readers. We began collaborating with Flock in April 2023, and their cameras averaged 200,000 plate reads per month, with at least 80,000 of those being unique, non-duplicated license plates. Our Flock camera network now includes 21 cameras placed throughout the city's major roadways, averaging 80,000 license plate reads daily, including around 40,000 unique reads each day.

These cameras alert officers to vehicles involved in criminal activity within our city. They notify us of vehicles reported as stolen or flagged in ongoing investigations, including missing persons and Amber Alerts. Most of the cameras are strategically located at the busiest intersections around the city. Over the past year, the camera systems have helped officers locate multiple stolen vehicles, connect suspects to theft rings across the country, and identify wanted individuals.



## Drone Expansion

Finally, the Paducah Police Department has expanded its Unmanned Aircraft Systems Unit (Drone Unit). We added four smaller drones to our aerial systems for officer use. The Drone Unit assists in handling specialty events, overseeing foot pursuits and K9 tracking, and supporting search warrants and high-risk arrests. Additionally, our Accident Reconstruction Team has started using drones to capture digital images necessary for scene reconstruction. With the introduction of these smaller drones, officers who have completed their UAS Pilot training can check out a drone for use during their daily patrols, allowing for much faster deployment in various situations. Our drone pilots are certified by the FAA and hold their Part 107 licenses.

# OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The Office of Professional Standards is responsible for a wide range of functions within the department. Its duties include conducting and reviewing internal affairs investigations and complaints, monitoring incidents involving the use of force, managing department grants, contributing to the permitting process for city special events, overseeing department policy, representing the department in Homeland Security activities, and ensuring compliance with state training standards. Additionally, the Office of Professional Standards takes on special projects assigned by the Chief of Police.

In 2024, the Office of Professional Standards completed several important projects for the department. One of the three main initiatives focused on was transitioning from .40 mm GLOCK handguns to 9 mm GLOCK handguns, along with the introduction of Holosun optics. This shift to a 9 mm firearm is expected to save the agency money on training and duty ammunition. The addition of optics improves officers' marksmanship at close ranges and enhances target identification in stressful situations.

The Paducah Police Department has successfully completed phase 2 of its upgrade project with Axon. The department has partnered with Axon for in-car or fleet cameras since 2017 and upgraded to the Fleet Series 3 camera this year. This upgrade involved removing the old camera system and cabling and installing the new one. Axon's team completed the installation in just under two weeks, covering 56 vehicles. The new system allows for faster and more reliable storage of videos, as they can be uploaded directly into the system. In contrast, the previous system required the vehicle to be in the parking lot or near a hotspot to download large files.

The upgraded cameras feature improved microphones and lenses for capturing both audio and video, and each camera is equipped with a GPS unit. This enhances the ability of Central Dispatch and other officers to track an officer's location while on calls, adding an extra layer of protection for both officers and the individuals they are assisting. For instance, dispatchers can see the location of officers on a map, enabling them to send the nearest officer to an incident rather than just one assigned to that area. Additionally, officers can monitor the locations of fellow officers during incidents, ensuring that areas receive better coverage when needed.

The Paducah Police Department has partnered with FLOCK Safety to install 15 new FLOCK camera locations throughout the city. Since 2023, a total of 21 FLOCK cameras have been deployed in Paducah to help identify and locate stolen vehicles. These cameras function as license plate readers and operate 24/7, allowing Dispatchers to monitor plates that are reported as stolen. This real-time information is then relayed to officers who are responding to incidents or are in the area. The cameras have been strategically placed around the city to detect any stolen vehicles entering the limits of Paducah.

## Complaints

Receiving feedback is a crucial step in providing quality service to our community. Community members can submit feedback via email, phone, or in person. A supervisor will then investigate the information provided. Once the investigation is completed, the findings are sent through the chain of command for review and quality assurance. Ultimately, the Chief of Police has the final authority to review all cases.

In 2024, there were a total of 28 complaints. Of these, four were external complaints, meaning they originated from outside

the agency, while 24 were internal complaints initiated by a supervisor or an officer who observed issues.

Out of the 28 complaints, 15 were found to be sustained. In 12 cases, the allegations were either deemed unfounded, or the officer was exonerated. In cases where the allegation is sustained, the goal is not to punish the officer, but rather to modify their behavior or actions.

The department's disciplinary philosophy takes into account the entire context of the incident, the officer's experience, any previous disciplinary actions, and the officer's intent. As a result, two officers received Employee Improvement Notices (EINs), ten officers received verbal counseling, one officer received a written reprimand, and two officers faced suspension.

## Response to Resistance

Response to Resistance reports document the force used by officers. According to department policy, officers must document any force that exceeds standard handcuffing. This process begins when a suspect is taken into custody.

The on-duty supervisor responds to the scene to assess the situation and evaluate the health of both the officer and the suspect. These reports go through a multi-level evaluation process. In each case, the Chief of Police makes the final decision regarding the justification of the force used.

In 2024, officers were involved in 50,603 calls for service, of which 138 incidents involved the use of force. This data indicates that officers used force in less than 0.19 percent (0.19%) of all police encounters. Each of these incidents underwent an objective and thorough review process and was determined to be an appropriate use of force.

In most of these incidents, officers encountered individuals experiencing a mental health crisis or who were under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Specifically, 57 incidents involved individuals under the influence, while 15 incidents involved individuals experiencing a mental health issue.

In the majority of these cases (86 incidents), officers employed what are known as soft empty-hand techniques. These techniques typically include wrist or arm locks used to restrain a resisting suspect.

In three incidents, officers used hard empty-hand techniques, which may involve strikes with a hand or knee but often consist of an officer tackling a fleeing suspect.

Our officers are equipped with various "less than lethal" force options, including OC Spray (pepper spray), Taser, baton, impact munitions (such as bean bags), Pepperball, K-9 units, and Bola Wrap restraint devices. In 2024, there was one instance of OC spray usage, eight instances involving a Taser, and one instance where bean bags were used to gain control of a suspect. In 41 incidents, officers were able to gain compliance simply by pointing a firearm at the individual. In each of these cases, the officer articulated a heightened threat to their safety or the safety of others. In six instances, the suspects were armed with firearms, and in another six instances, suspects were armed with knives or edged weapons. In all 41 incidents, suspects were taken into custody without further incident, and no officers discharged their firearms.

As previously mentioned, the health of both the suspect and the officer is evaluated after force is used. Out of the 138 incidents, only 8 involved a suspect reporting an injury. In each of these cases, a Taser was used, and the suspect received evaluation from a medical professional.



# RECRUITMENT & HIRING



In 2024, the Paducah Police Department revived its recruitment team to meet potential applicants and assist them through the hiring process. Officers participated in job fairs, visited college campuses and classes, and collaborated with military personnel to identify prospective candidates.

To address the demand for qualified personnel, recruitment team members also helped administer the physical tests required for applicants to begin the hiring process as peace officers.

## Foundational Training for New Officers

All new officers begin their careers at the Department of Criminal Justice Training (DOCJT) on the Eastern Kentucky University campus in Richmond, Kentucky. The 20-week academy program provides intensive instruction in the fundamentals of law enforcement, including Kentucky law, constitutional rights, criminal investigations, defensive tactics, firearms proficiency, de-escalation techniques, emergency vehicle operations, and ethics in policing. This rigorous training ensures officers are well-prepared to serve their communities with professionalism and integrity.

After completing the academy, officers transition into the department's Police Training Officer (PTO) Program, where they are paired with experienced senior officers. This phase connects classroom learning with real-world application, allowing new officers to develop critical decision-making skills, refine their response tactics, and gain firsthand experience in handling calls for service. Successful completion of this program enables officers to operate independently and confidently in the field.



# SKILLBRIDGE PROGRAM

The Paducah Police Department has an active program to recruit veterans who are interested in serving our community. This program is done in collaboration with the Military, the Department of Defense (DOD), the Kentucky Department of Criminal Justice Training (DOCJT), and the Kentucky Law Enforcement Council (KLEC). The program is called "M2-LE" (Military to Law Enforcement) and was initiated by the KLEC. It uses the DOD's "Skillbridge" program to enable active duty soldiers to prepare for a career in law enforcement. This is done by providing soon-to-be-separated service members up to 180 days while still on active duty to attend the police academy and receive the training required to become an officer. Once the academy is completed, service members can seamlessly transition to becoming employees of the Paducah Police Department.

# SPECIALIZED UNITS



## SWAT

The Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team regularly assists the department in the planning and execution of search and arrest warrants. The team added two new members in May. Both new members successfully graduated from the KTOA (Kentucky Tactical Officers Association) two-week introductory SWAT course. One team member completed a basic sniper course while another completed a four-day less lethal course. Two members who serve in the military were deployed and are still currently overseas. The team received over 240 hours of specialized training in 2024, with 80 of those hours being conducted by NORSE tactical. In October, the SWAT team completed the 15K Tough Mudder in Nashville, TN, showcasing their physical fitness and team spirit. The SWAT team was activated seven times with all incidents ending peacefully, with the dangerous suspect(s) being apprehended.

## CRT

The Paducah Police Department's Collision Reconstruction Team responds to major collisions that result in death or serious injury. The team consists of five officers with extensive training in mathematics, physics, kinematics, and damage causation assessment. They utilize special equipment to document and measure major collision scenes. This documentation is used to help determine contributing factors to the collision, which in turn establishes causation. One example of specialized equipment is Unmanned Aerial Systems (Drone) technology. The use of drones significantly reduces the amount of time necessary to completely document a scene. This reduces the amount of impact on the general public, such as how long a roadway has to be closed. This past year, the CRT was activated three times.

## CNT

The Crisis Negotiations Unit consists of four officers with above-average communication skills necessary to

de-escalate highly stressful situations. They respond to hostage incidents, barricaded subjects, and other conditions that may involve persons in crisis. The CNT's primary purpose is to bring a peaceful resolution to volatile situations through communication. The CNT often works closely with the other specialty units, specifically the department's bomb squad. The team assisted the McCracken County Sheriff's Office with two incidents in 2024.



## Honor Guard

The Paducah Police Honor Guard assisted with several events in 2024. These events include the Paducah Police Awards Ceremony, the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 15 Memorial Week Ceremony, the Paducah Christmas Parade, and the inauguration of elected City officials. The year's most significant accomplishment was adding five new members to the team. With these new members, this brought the team to 11 members. Four of the five new team members attended the Supporting Hero's Kentucky State Police Honor Guard school to earn certification. The five new members are James Whitworth, Dylan Cook, Michael Foster, Brooke Adams, and Coy Dotson.

The Department's Honor Guard has grown to be known region-wide as well. Two Illinois agencies requested our assistance with officer funerals, and the team was honored to participate.

## Bomb

The Paducah Police Department Bomb Squad is a regional bomb squad that responds to 13 counties in Western Kentucky. The squad consists of four members, all certified bomb technicians, who have gone through the six-week FBI Hazardous Devices School. Team members undergo approximately 240 hours of annual training, in addition to 40-80 hours of specialized training





courses provided by the FBI and ATF. These trainings cover various topics to include: homemade explosives, electronics, post-blast investigation, and advanced disposal procedures, to name a few.

The squad was activated seven times in 2024. They responded to situations related to suspicious packages, military ordinance, homemade explosives, and to assist other agencies. All situations were resolved without incident. In addition to the call-outs and training, the bomb squad conducted demonstrations and presentations for educational institutions, community organizations, and other government entities throughout 2024.

The Bomb Squad participated in Raven's Challenge, held at Fort Knox, KY, again this year. This is a week-long training event that encompasses a variety of real-life scenario-based events. Public Safety Bomb Technicians collaborate with military EOD units to resolve various challenges and build on each other's skill sets.

## K9

Paducah Police Department K-9 teams are the only full-time specialty units. The teams search for fleeing suspects and discarded evidence, search buildings, and locate illegal narcotics. The officers and canines comprising these units spend much time together training, working, and playing, so much so that they form lifelong bonds.

The department typically maintains three K-9 teams at any given time. 2024 was certainly a transitional year for the K-9 teams. K-9 Don retired because his handler was promoted, and K-9 Joker retired because his handler was deployed with the Kentucky National Guard.

The department currently has two K-9 teams. Officer Ben Anthony and K-9 Bary have been working together since 2021. While Officer Noah Willett and K-9 Karo completed their training in November of 2024.



Officer Anthony and K-9 Bary



Officer Willett and K-9 Karo

# OUR VETERANS

The Paducah Police Department currently employs 22 United States Armed Forces veterans. Some of these veterans still serve in the National Guard or Reserves. We want to take a moment to recognize those who served their country before serving our community:

Assistant Chief Joe Hayes, *Marine Corps*

Captain Nathan Antonites, *Army*

Sergeant Matt Hopp, *Navy*

Officer Travis Counts, *Navy*

Officer Keith Thuline, *Army*

Officer Blake Quinn, *Army*

Officer Lucas Stone, *Air Force*

Officer Danny Kimball, *Army*

Officer Eric Abbott, *Army*

Officer Will Hendrickson, *Army*

Officer Matt Strohmeier, *Army*

Officer Matt York, *Army*

Officer Noah Willett, *Marine Corps*

Officer Michael Vowell, *Army*

Officer James Whitworth, *Army*

Officer Thomas Shiels, *Army*

Officer Jackson McCormick, *Army*

Officer Steven Leady, *Army*

Officer Tyree Owens, *Army*

Officer Brooke Adams, *Army*

Officer Matthew Crisman, *Army*

Officer Brandon Webster, *Army*

## DEPLOYED OFFICERS



In the fall of 2024, Officer Will Hendrickson, Officer Alex Whitworth, and Officer Jackson McCormick started a deployment to Europe. They left the department on orders in 2024 and are not expected to return until late 2025.

## WELCOME BACK!



In 2024, we were happy to welcome Officer Eric Abbott back to work from his military deployment to Poland. Officer Abbott, a Master Sergeant with the 2113 Transportation Company of Paducah, was stationed in Swietoszow, Poland in support of Operation European Assure, Deter, Reinforce.

During his unit's 10-month deployment, his company delivered supplies to 25 different countries and traveled nearly 2 million miles. Officer Abbott is currently assigned as a School Resource Officer at Paducah Tilghman High School.



# AWARDS



The Paducah Police Department hosted its 15th annual Awards Ceremony on Thursday, January 30th at Walker Hall. During the ceremony, a total of 43 officers and non-sworn personnel along with one citizen were all presented with awards for their exceptional acts of service in 2024.



Angel Smith was honored with a Citizen Service Award for her role in obtaining crucial information to reunite a young autistic woman with her family.



**Employee of the Year**  
Sergeant Matthew Hopp

**Meritorious Service Awards**  
Detective P. Casey Steenbergen  
Detective Thomas Shiels

**Lifesaving Awards**  
Officer Brandon Cupp (3rd)  
Officer Michael Vowell  
Officer Rachel Bertrand  
Officer Brandon Cupp (4th)  
Officer William Hendrickson (4th)  
Officer Rachel Bertrand (2nd)  
Officer Daniel Hunerkoch (2nd)  
Officer Julia Cross (2nd)  
Officer Brooke Adams  
Officer Coy Dotson  
Officer Rachel Bertrand (3rd)  
Officer Zane White (3rd)  
Officer Fred Harvey  
Officer Logan Barrow

**Citizen Service Awards**  
Angel Smith

**Administrative Award**  
Sergeant Matthew Hopp  
Officer Blake Quinn  
Officer Zane White (2nd)  
Officer Eric Abbott  
Officer Cassandra Ravens

**5-Year Safe Driving Award**  
Detective Corey Willenborg  
Detective Chelsea Breakfield  
Officer Matthew Strohmeier  
Officer Benjamin Anthony  
Officer Logan Barrow  
Officer Carlos Kerley  
Detective Casey Steenbergen

**15-Year Safe Driving Award**  
Captain Justin Hodges  
Officer Travis Counts  
Officer Derik Perry

**20-Year Safe Driving Award**  
Chief Brian Laird

**Service Commendations**  
Dispatcher Hillary Fowler (3rd)  
Dispatcher Auston Scutt (4th)  
Dispatcher Kimberly Lauderdale  
Dispatcher Taryn Reed (2nd)  
Dispatcher Stephanie Goins (2nd)  
Dispatcher Emilee Jones (3rd)  
Dispatcher Ryan Sallee  
Dispatcher McCall Buckingham  
Dispatcher Coby Fauver  
Officer Logan Barrow (5th)  
Dispatcher Tara Martin (2nd)  
Dispatcher Hillary Fowler (4th)  
Dispatcher Coby Fauver (2nd)  
Captain Steve Thompson (5th)  
Officer Derik Perry (6th)  
Officer Zane White (3rd)  
Officer James Robbins (8th)  
Officer Dana Davie (6th)  
Sergeant Matthew Hopp (4th)  
Detective Danny Slack (5th)  
Dispatcher Hillary Fowler (5th)  
Officer Cassandra Ravens (2nd)  
Records Clerk Vicki Miller (4th)  
Evidence Tech. Sabrina Miller (3rd)  
Sr. Admin. Assistant Jessica Young  
Officer Dana Davie (7th)  
Officer Cassandra Ravens (3rd)

Detective Casey Steenbergen and Detective Thomas Shiels were also honored, receiving a Meritorious Service Award for their outstanding efforts in stopping a suspect armed with a handgun during a robbery-in-progress in May of 2024.

# EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

## SERGEANT MATT HOPP



A positive attitude in leadership is a powerful tool. When a leader models positive attitudes and leads by example, it uplifts their team and sets the standard, giving them a shared vision and purpose.

Sergeant Matt Hopp embodies the standard for leading by example. In his nomination, Officer Robbins highlights the hard work and dedication that Sergeant Hopp demonstrates in every aspect of his job.

With nearly a decade of service to the Paducah Police Department, Sergeant Hopp has distinguished himself as a leader and a dedicated public servant. He joined the department as a lateral in 2014 and quickly became an invaluable member of the Bomb Squad in 2016, ultimately rising to the position of team leader. In 2017, he became a police training officer, and in 2018, he expanded his responsibilities by becoming a patrol sergeant, where he exemplifies positive and proactive leadership.

Sergeant Hopp stands out not only as a supervisor but also as a mentor. He is always available to assist patrol officers, often responding directly to service calls himself. This hands-on approach showcases his unwavering commitment to his team and the community, ensuring that help is always on the way when needed.

Sergeant Hopp's dedication to training and professional development is truly commendable. As the Team Leader of the Paducah Police Bomb Squad, he has overseen the certification process for all squad members. As a result, 2024 marks the first year in a long time that every member of the Paducah Police Bomb Squad is certified as a Bomb Technician through the FBI's Hazardous Devices School.

In his role as a Police Training Supervisor (PTS), Sergeant Hopp carried the responsibility as the sole PTS for over a year, at one point overseeing eight recruits simultaneously. He meticulously reviewed all paperwork for recruits, orchestrated training days for mid-term and final evaluations, and conducted bi-monthly re-evaluations to ensure each recruit's readiness. This commitment to developing new officers reflects his passion for fostering a knowledgeable and skilled department.

During roll call, Sergeant Hopp's engaging teaching style shines as he reviews pertinent case law and presents realistic scenarios. His methods encourage officers to think critically and prepare effectively for various real-life situations, helping new recruits and seasoned officers remain well-versed in the ever-evolving landscape of Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS).

In the spring of 2024, Sergeant Hopp, when responding to a domestic assault call, the suspect fled the scene. Sergeant Hopp pursued him with determination. In the course of apprehending the suspect, he sustained an injury that resulted in a broken leg. While this incident was unfortunate, it highlights Sergeant Hopp's dedication to his duty and the safety of our community. After his recovery process, he returned to work on light duty. Eventually, he returned to the streets with the same tenacity, responding to calls, supporting his fellow officers, and often taking on the role of primary officer, reaffirming his commitment to protect and serve.

In closing, Officer Robbins said in his nomination,

***"With a positive attitude, Sergeant Hopp inspires others to the same mindset. His dedication and professionalism embody the values the Paducah Police Department strives for in its officers and supervisors."***

