

ACWORTH POLICE DEPARTMENT

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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ACWORTH POLICE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT



Dedicated to serving our community with honor and courage in a just and equitable manner to create a safer community in which to live, work, and play.

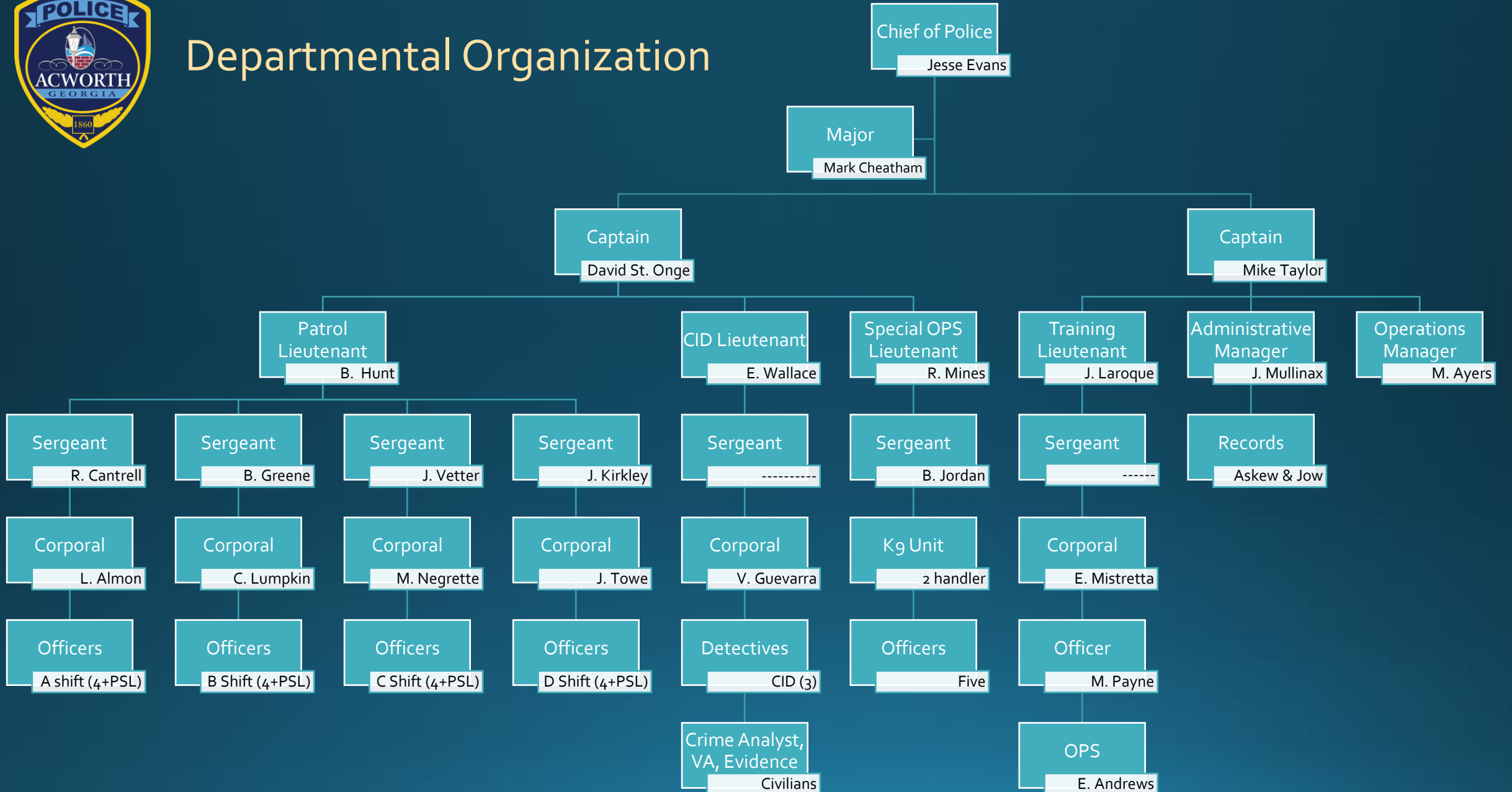
Departmental Leadership



Pictured from left to right: Lieutenant Brian Hunt, Captain David St. Onge, Major Mark Cheatham, Chief Jesse Evans, Captain Michael Taylor, Lieutenant Russell Mines, Lieutenant Jason Larocque



Departmental Organization



Sworn Officer Staffing

We continue to maintain high standards for hiring. In 2023, we interviewed 139 applicants and processed 61 background investigations for potential new hires. Ultimately, we hired 15 of the 61. While staffing has been a challenge across the law enforcement profession, we are pleased to have been fully staffed for most of the year. No matter the staffing challenges, our priority will always be to hire the right people with the right values to serve our citizens.



Civilian Staffing

Civilian staffing is an innovative solution to staffing challenges for our agency. We recognize that there are many roles within a police department that do not require sworn police officers. Creative, talented civilian team members have been added to our department to work in nearly all divisions this year, including our Criminal Investigations Division, our Records Division, and our Office of Professional Standards. We are looking forward to continuing this practice in the upcoming year with the hope of adding additional civilian personnel to our Office of Community Affairs. Ms. Williams, Ms. Andrews, and Ms. Jow all joined our team in 2023.



Madison Williams
Crime Analyst



Elizabeth Andrews
Certification Administrator



Jamila Jow
Records Technician



Emily Hall
Victim Advocate

Promotions

Please join us in congratulating the following personnel on their promotions this past year:

- Captain St. Onge
- Lieutenant Wallace
- Sergeant Green
- Sergeant Vetter
- Corporal Guevarra
- Corporal Lumpkin
- Corporal Towe
- Corporal Negrete
- Kg Handler Daniel
- Detective Hardy



APD Chaplain Mike Lindeman

- Connections pastor at Nothstar Church
- Joined APD as Chaplain in 2021
- Provides guidance and support to our staff and members of the community

Departmental Goals & Objectives



Chief Jesse Evans



Major Mark Cheatham



Captain David St. Onge



Captain Michael Taylor

- Our two main goals for the year are to practice precision proactive policing and to develop and grow our partnerships to further enable our practice of precision policing. Precision Policing refers to the strategic use of advanced technological tools and data analytics to enhance law enforcement practices with a focus on targeting specific crime hotspots, identifying high-risk individuals, and preventing criminal activity while minimizing unnecessary interventions and biases.
- Precision proactive policing relies heavily on data analysis to identify patterns, trends, and correlations in criminal activities. Law enforcement agencies gather and analyze vast amounts of data from various sources including crime reports, arrest records, social media, surveillance cameras, and sensor networks. Law enforcement agencies now employ surveillance technologies such as CCTV cameras, license plate readers, and gunshot detection systems to monitor public spaces in real time. These systems provide immediate alerts to law enforcement when suspicious activities or incidents occur, enabling rapid response and intervention.
- The catalyst for proactive precision policing is a grant award we obtained in 2023 total almost a million dollars. This technology based grant allowed for the purchase of computer hardware, Flock LPRs, and a Fusus cloud based digital platform.

Departmental Goals & Objectives (continued)



Chief Jesse Evans



Major Mark Cheatham



Captain David St. Onge



Captain Michael Taylor

- Fusus is a map-based interface that enables greater situational awareness and a common operating picture. Public & private video streams from fixed and mobile sources are seamlessly combined. Data from IoT applications, floor plans, ShotSpotter triggers, ALPR, and remote overwatch capabilities with the live positions of first responders like Police, Fire, EMS & Public Works are all layered in and accessible via a common interface.

- Overall, precision proactive policing through technology represents a paradigm shift in law enforcement practices, leveraging data-driven insights and advanced technologies to enhance public safety, improve crime prevention efforts, and build stronger relationships between law enforcement agencies and the community we serve.

- One of these partnerships includes the corporation RaceTrac which has agreed to be a “donor site”. This means they have agreed to share their live video feeds with law enforcement to improve community safety and situational awareness for the Acworth Police Department. For businesses like RaceTrac, a “Core” device, or virtual bridge between the business and the police department is free. There is no impact on the company network, building a separate tunnel on a secure network to transmit alerts and video to law enforcement.

- In summary, growing our Fusus partnerships will allow us to respond to incidents at various community locations faster, equipping officers with advanced knowledge of the situation, and helping to keep our residents and business owners safer while building closer ties within our community.

Officer of the Year

This year's Officer of the Year serves our agency in an undercover capacity as an Agent with the DEA. For that reason, we are unable to share his name or photograph. This officer was nominated by his peers for Officer of the Year for his lifesaving actions while off duty. On May 31st, 2023, this officer was on his way home from work, when he observed a woman who was attempting to commit suicide at the bridge over North Booth Road over Interstate 575. The officer called 911 to obtain additional assistance and talked to the woman to keep her calm and prevent her from committing suicide. She was on the outside of the fence with very little grip on the concrete section of the bridge. Luckily, the Christmas lights that she was using to attempt to hang herself actually helped to prevent her from falling. With the help of other officers, the fire department, and others on the expressway, our Officer of the Year was able to get the woman off the side of the bridge and transport her to the emergency room for care. We are grateful to this officer for his observational skills and the compassion that enabled this woman to get the help she needed.



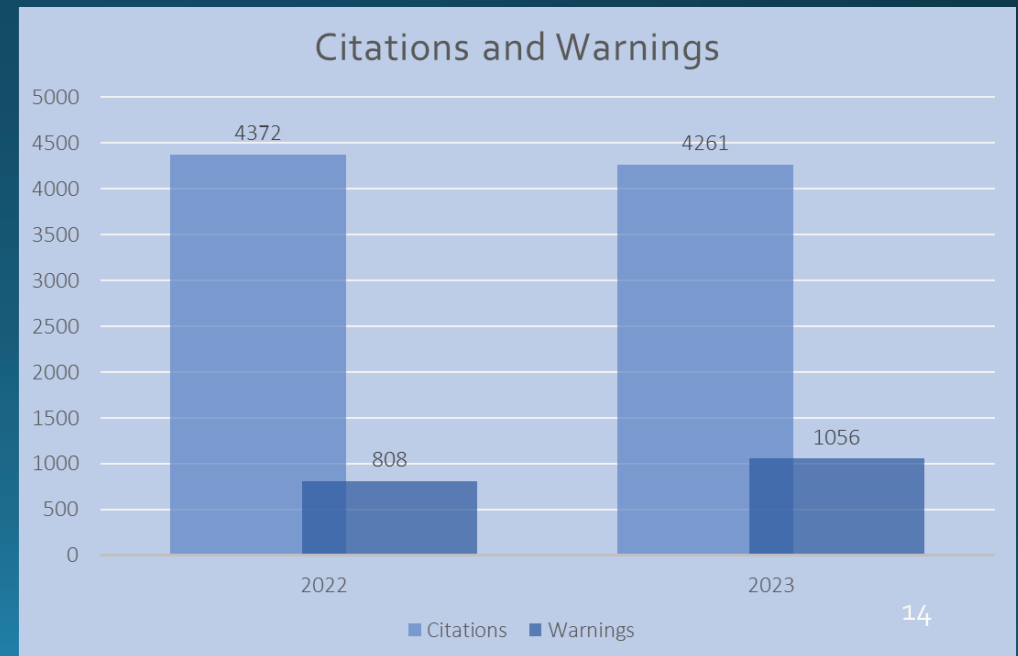
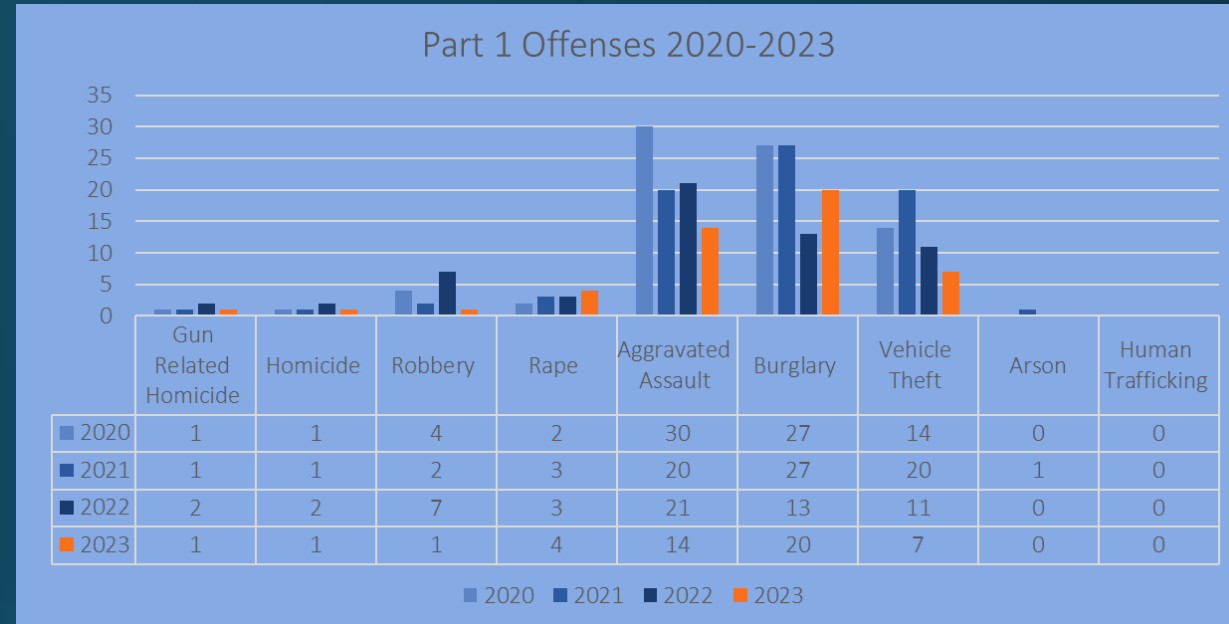
Uniform Patrol Division Review

- In 2023, the Patrol Division focused on leadership, and supervisors helped their officers to develop short and long-term goals and to assist them in identifying and taking steps to reach those goals. In addition, all supervisors had the opportunity to attend the Guardian Leadership Trilogy training. Developing leaders within our agency is vital to our success, and we are grateful that our city team is supportive of our continuing leadership development.
- With the goal of increasing public awareness, deterring criminal activity, and reducing traffic accidents, this year the Patrol Division has worked on increasing productivity in terms of traffic enforcement. As a result, traffic enforcement and citizen contacts were increased by 71%.



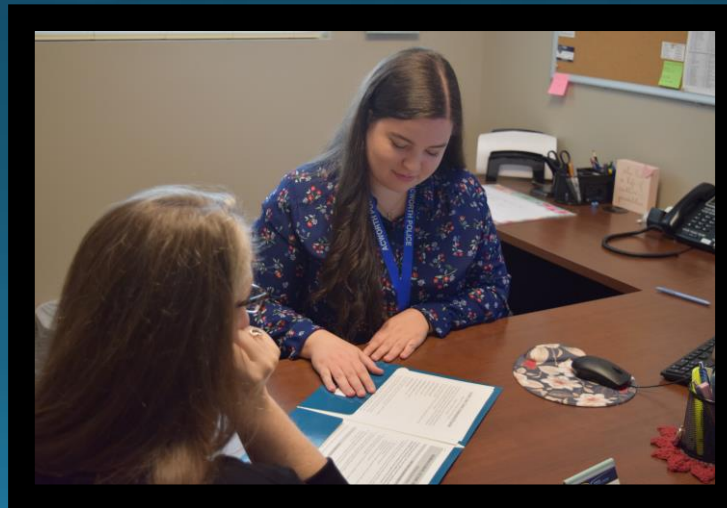
Uniform Patrol Division Goals

- In the upcoming year, the Patrol Division will continue to develop our officers and leaders by increasing our training requirements for new officers. All new officers will be required to complete Crisis Intervention Training, Standardized Field Sobriety Testing, Advanced Traffic Law, and Family Violence First Responder within 18 months of completing F.T.O. status. We will also send officers who have already completed the F.T.O. program to the same training pending availability. Along with the required training, we will also start a progressive training schedule. Although officers are encouraged to take training classes that pique their interest, such as drug enforcement, speed detection, etc., they also should take classes that will benefit the department and the officer's career development. In other words, every other training request will need to be for a class working toward their Intermediate and Advanced certificates.
- Safety is our number one priority, and accident prevention is key to protecting the public. With that in mind, we will use collected data, to will identify accident and criminal activity hot spots. Once the hot spots have been identified we will have officers heavily patrol the area with the desired outcome of deterring traffic infractions and other criminal activity. This will be accomplished through citations or warnings, zone patrols, community outreach, etc.



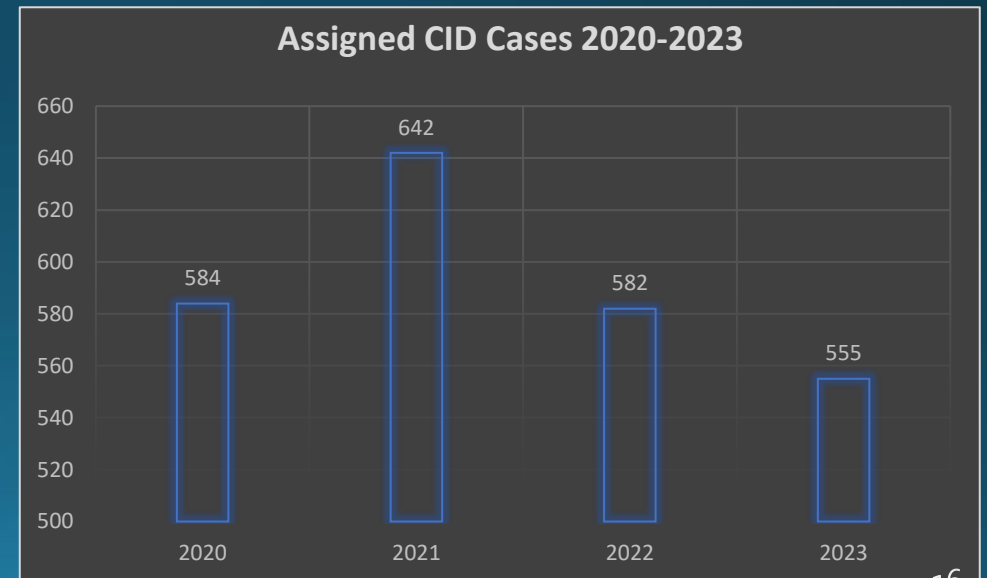
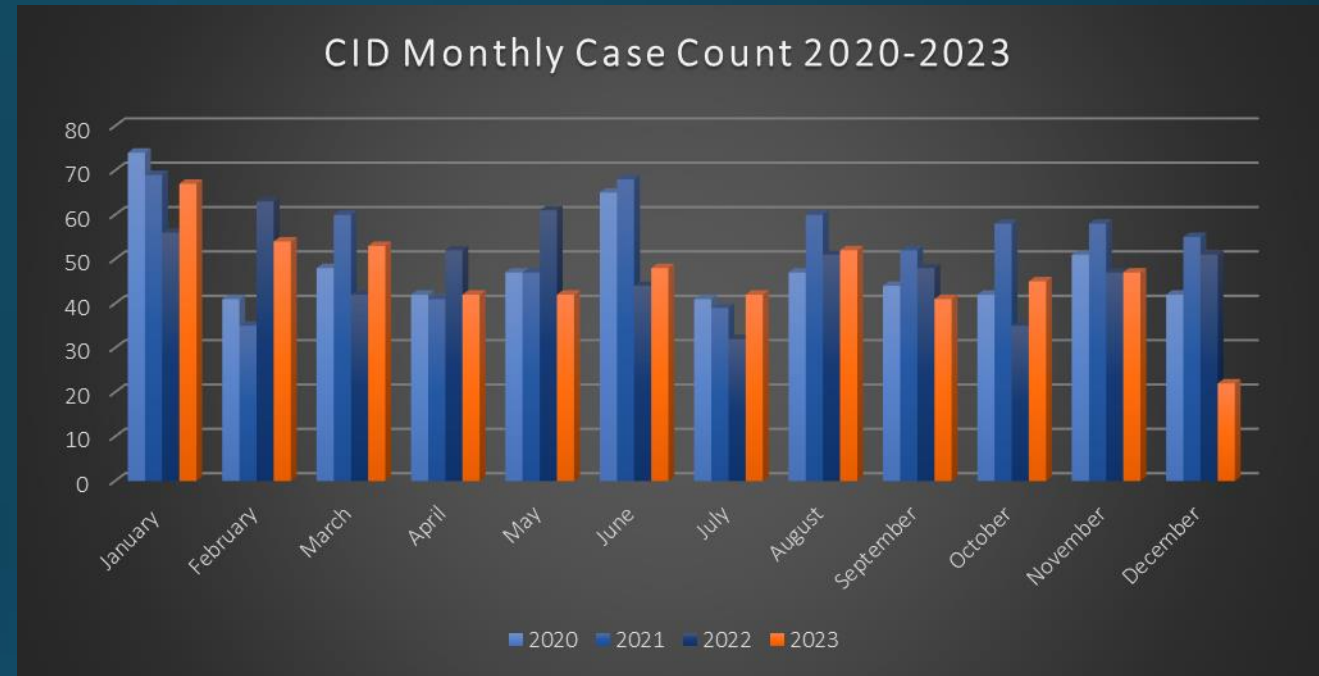
Criminal Investigations Division Review

- In 2023, the Criminal Investigations Division experienced a great deal of growth. Recognizing the unique value that civilian staff can provide, our division added 2 new positions to our ranks: a Victim Advocate and a Senior Crime Analyst. Our agency is the first in Cobb County to have a full-time Victim Advocate on staff. The talented person in this position is tasked with assisting victims both on the scene as well as throughout the investigation and prosecution of their cases. In addition to guidance and support, victim advocates can provide access to resources for counseling, food, shelter, and other services to assist crime victims.
- Our new Senior Crime Analyst assists investigators through every step of the investigation process by providing supportive criminal investigations by using a variety of online databases and resources. In addition, our Senior Crime Analyst also helps to staff the Fusus Real Time Crime Center in Marietta every week and provides support and partnership to law enforcement agencies throughout the metro area.
- In addition to new civilian positions, our sworn personnel also experienced growth with two promotions this year. Please join us in congratulating Lieutenant Wallace and Corporal Guevara on their exceptional leadership and their well-deserved new positions.



Criminal Investigations Division Goals

- In 2024, the Criminal Investigations Division plans to make a concerted effort to build and develop close relationships with the business owners of Acworth. As a division we plan to spend one Friday morning a month going to different businesses around the city. Growing these relationships will build greater trust from our business owners, which will help with case resolution. This will also afford us plenty of opportunities to educate business owners on FUSUS.
- This year, we plan to invest in future generations by spending time teaching in different schools. We will reach out to different schools K-12 for opportunities to educate. This will be something we will accomplish once per quarter. The hope will be to gain interest in our profession from kids of all ages and have positive interactions.
- Our Detectives and Civilian Personnel have a wealth of knowledge that we hope to do a better job sharing within our department. Roll-call training will be a focus. Each person within the division will be tasked with conducting one roll-call training for the year. These will be great opportunities to educate the Patrol Division and answer any questions they may have. Another area of focus will be assisting Lt. LaRocque with teaching the pre-academy recruits. Each Detective will select at least two blocks of training in 2024.



Special Operations Review

- 2023 was a great year for the Special Operations Division, especially for our K9 Unit. After K9 Jogi retired, Ms. Regina Robuck donated the funds for a new K9 member of our team. Ms. Robuck donated in memory of her father, Philip Robuck, who was a beloved member of our Acworth community. Our new K9 officer is named Robuck in his memory.
- In addition, we were able to certify an additional K9 handler this year and add an additional K9 officer as well. Officer Daniel and K9 Amper are our newest K9 team. This addition enables us to increase our enforcement efforts and to ensure the safety of our community.
- This year, the Special Operations Division was faced with some staffing challenges, but despite that they were able to work closely with the Patrol Division to ensure that our parks patrols and special events were properly supported.



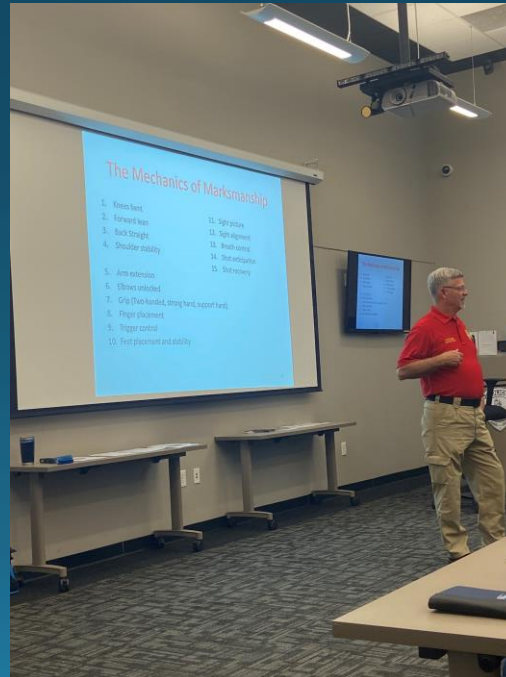
Special Operations Goals

- We have a busy year planned for the Special Operations Division. First, we will continue to assist with workforce recruitment by assisting with physical agility testing and conducting background investigations. In addition to ensuring that our agency is well-staffed, we will also ensure that our existing personnel are supported by providing our division with expanded training opportunities. This year, the following training is planned:
- Officer Trapani will attend SFST and ARIDE, Field Training Officer, Health Awareness, Tactical diffusion, Specialized Patrol Technique, Crime Scene Processing.
- Officer Daniel will attend Health Awareness, Criminal Procedure, Crime Scene Processing, and Specialized Patrol Techniques.
- Sgt. Jordan will attend the Guardian Leadership classes, Gang Intelligence, Tactical Leadership (MLMPI), Specialized Patrol Techniques, Officer Survival, Health and Awareness, Crime Scene Processing, and Criminal Procedure.
- In the next year, we will look at ways to expand the unit to provide additional traffic enforcement, parks patrols, and reserve officers.



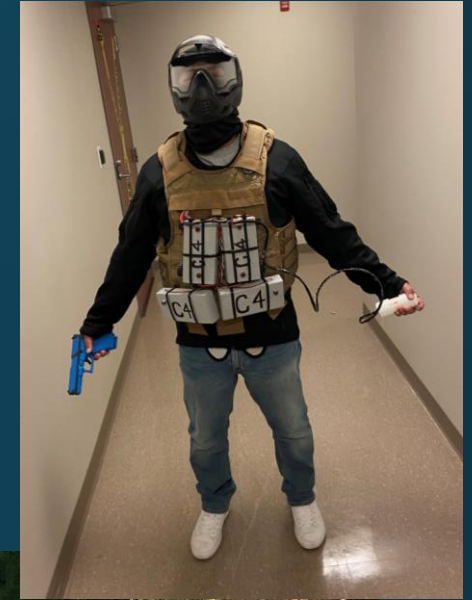
Office of Professional Standards and Training Review

- In 2023, the Office of Professional Standards looked at ways to incorporate professional civilian personnel to enhance our services. As a result, we hired a new Certification Administrator as well as enlisted the support of a GPAC Consultant in preparation for our upcoming State Certification renewal. These additions to our agency helped to guarantee a smooth assessment and enabled us to review all of our policies to ensure compliance with state standards as well as best practices for the law enforcement profession.
- Since closing our jail in 2022, we have been tasked with hiring uncertified personnel to send to the police academy. These classes are only available a few times a year, and as a result, we often have uncertified personnel who can participate in pre-academy training. This year, our division designed a program for our uncertified personnel. This training incorporates all divisions within our agency and enables new employees to learn and prepare before attending the police academy.
- In addition to creating our pre-academy training program, the division has also re-vamped our FTO training program this year. The Field Training Program was revamped in 2023 by the FTOs and the training division working together. The previous FTO manual was outdated (2009) and provided information that was no longer used or in practice. The FTOs and training division worked through the 68-page training manual and updated every page to the most current standards. The training division also created a 47-page PSL FTO manual for employee and FTO reference. It provides new policies, tests, procedures, and training standards



Office of Professional Standards and Training Goals

- This year, we are working on scheduling monthly in-person classes in our training room. The topics will consist of crimes in progress, combat shooting, criminal procedure, domestic violence response, standardized field sobriety, patrol rifles, courtroom testimony, and others. While we currently maintain 14 general instructors, we plan on need to increase the number to continue to allow for growth and opportunity. The monthly classes will also provide an opportunity for our general instructors to grow and gain experience
- In 2024, we are transitioning our primary weapon to red-dot sights. The entire process will take 3 months. In addition to the red dot primary weapon training, we are incorporating the addition of the red dot to the training simulator and sim-union weapon systems. The training simulator can be utilized as supplemental training with the optic transition and presentation of the weapon system. The goal would be to provide officers with a range of simulated training environments ranging from scenario-based training to target practice. The simulator could also reduce overtime due to it being performed on an on-duty basis.



Community Outreach

- During the 2023 year, the Community Affairs Unit has grown and expanded community engagement projects within the community promoting a positive outlook for the city. The community affairs office is tasked with promoting events community events, participating in events, sharing information about the department, and keeping a positive outlook for the department. This office is also tasked with recruitment and background investigations. In addition, responsible for maintaining constant social media information, public service announcements, and public information releases. The Community Affairs Unit is currently overseen by one Corporal and attached to the Office of Professional Standards Division.
- During the 2023 year, 139 interviews were conducted, 61 background investigations were conducted, and the agency hosted 8 physical agility tests. The agency hired 15 candidates out of the completed backgrounds. Background investigations were primarily conducted by Cpl. Mistretta with assistance from Officer Towe, Officer Trapani, Macey Williams, and Lieutenant Mines during their light-duty assignments.
- During the 2023 year, the Acworth Police Department participated in and hosted the following community outreach programs; Citizens Police Academy, Police Ambassador Camp, Special Olympics Fundraising, D.A.R.E. Program, National Night Out, Faith and Blue Weekend, Operation Recess, Christmas Toy Shoppe/Drive, Monthly Senior Citizen Outreach, Personal Transport Vehicles (PTV), Safe-O-Ween, Acworth Camera Connection, Homeowners Association Meetings, and City Clean Up Challenge. All of these programs have been very successful and only get bigger and better each year as we continue to make changes to things each year after learning how we can do something better.

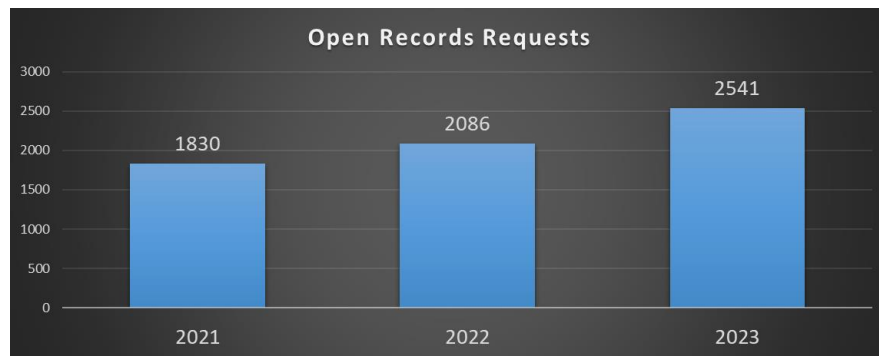


APD Public Safety Cadets

- The Acworth Public Safety Cadets currently has an enrollment of 14 Cadets. These Cadets vary from the ages of 14 years old to 18 years old. Over the 2023 year, our unit participated in five competitions including one National Competition in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. The Cadets represented Acworth well at each competition as they won several awards at each competition varying from events in Active Shooter, Domestic Dispute, High-Risk Stop, Officer Rescue, Unknown Trouble, Handcuffing, Searching, and many other categories. The Cadets currently hold the 2023 State Championship Title.
- This year we were able to form the first Honor Guard Team for the Cadet program in Acworth. This team of five Cadets will represent the unit in Uniform Inspection, Drill, and Color Guard events in competitions. In addition, these Cadets will have the opportunity to present the flag at various events.
- The Acworth Public Safety Cadets also become non-profit this year which has helped with the program obtaining donations over the year, covering the cost of all competition fees, travel expenses, uniforms, and equipment.



Records Division



- Over the past few years, the Records Division of the Acworth Police Department has undergone significant transformations and embraced innovative changes to better serve the public and the City of Acworth. These changes have improved the service that we can provide and have also created additional challenges for our personnel.
- One of the changes we've implemented in the past few years is the JustFOIA software to enhance our capabilities with open records requests. This has enabled private citizens, companies, and government organizations to request and receive open records requests through our online portal. As a result, over the past 3 years, the Records Division has seen a 38% increase in the number of open records requests, and our rate of completion is still less than a day. This is a significant accomplishment and is the source of one of the most common compliments that the Records Division receives

Public Safety Liaisons

In our ongoing efforts to enhance public safety and streamline police operations, our Public Safety Liaison (PSL) Team has been instrumental. Each member of the PSL team is strategically assigned to different patrol shifts, undertaking crucial roles that do not require a certified officer's intervention.

A central task of the PSL team is the transportation of detainees to the appropriate detention facilities. This role became particularly vital following the closure of the Acworth City Jail, prompting the formation of the PSL Unit. Their work ensures that our certified patrol officers can remain focused on their primary duty—safeguarding the community—without the additional burden of prisoner transport.

Thanks to the PSL team, our officers spend more time patrolling our streets and less time away on transport duties, thus maintaining a continuous and effective law enforcement presence throughout the city.





Technology

This year, our agency received a \$950,000 American Rescue Plan grant from the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget. The grant runs from 2023 through 2026 and provides funding for our department's Intelligence-Led Policing Initiative.

The Acworth Police Department's Intelligence-Led Policing Initiative incorporates the use of Fusus software, providing immediate access to data collection devices, including surveillance camera systems. Fusus offers devices called "COREs" that enable the police department to access private systems with the permission of the individual or business representative. The department partners with key businesses and individuals within its jurisdiction to enhance its capability to detect and potentially deter criminal activity through the use of these "CORE" devices. Fusus also offers community engagement programs, including notification, tip line, camera registry, and committed community representatives providing tutorial videos, hand-out cards, and other training for citizens. The Flock system allows the Acworth Police Department to receive early warnings when vehicles entering its jurisdiction have been involved in criminal activity, contain persons of interest in criminal activity, or are wanted for a previous criminal act. This information enables officers to intercept suspects before they have the chance to commit criminal acts within the Acworth community. If a criminal act occurs in the City of Acworth, the Coplink program enhances the investigative abilities of the police department by providing access to numerous points of data.