

Benson Police Department



2007 Annual Report

Presented on January 22, 2008

January 21, 2008

Rob Wolfington, City Manager
City of Benson

Re: 2008 Annual Report

Dear Rob,

This report contains a detailed overview of the Benson Police Department's activity for 2007. Included in the report are statistics related to the department's calls for service and total offenses charged. Also included is information regarding Police Department activities and updates on some of our significant programs for your review.

You will see that I have offered my opinion on why the department is seeing increases in particular areas of interest and decreases in others. This report is not an all- inclusive document, but rather a synopsis of events occurring in 2007, along with explanations/opinions on why we are seeing these trends. Also attached to this report is a all - inclusive list of statistics without any explanations of trends.

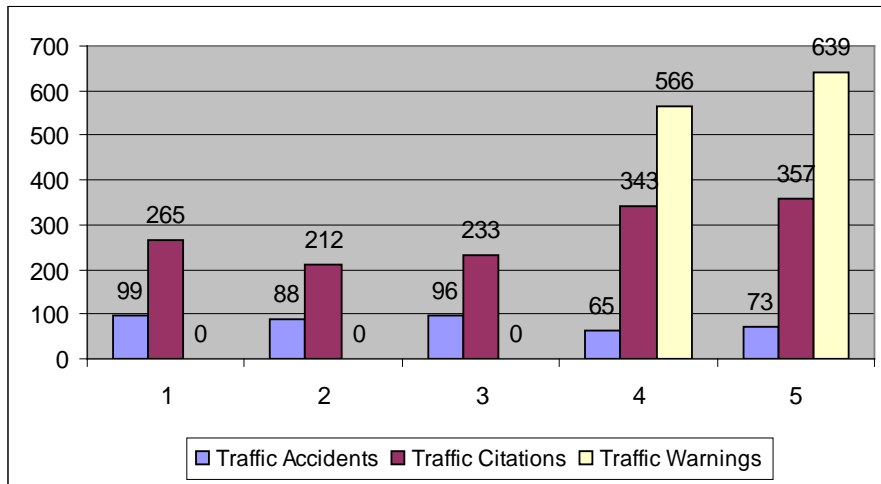
I hope you enjoy the reading and if you or anyone else should have any questions regarding this document they should feel free to call or see me. I do plan to present this at the next city council meeting and ask that you have this item put on the agenda for discussion. Thank you for your support in 2007!

Respectfully,

James M. Crace
Chief of Police

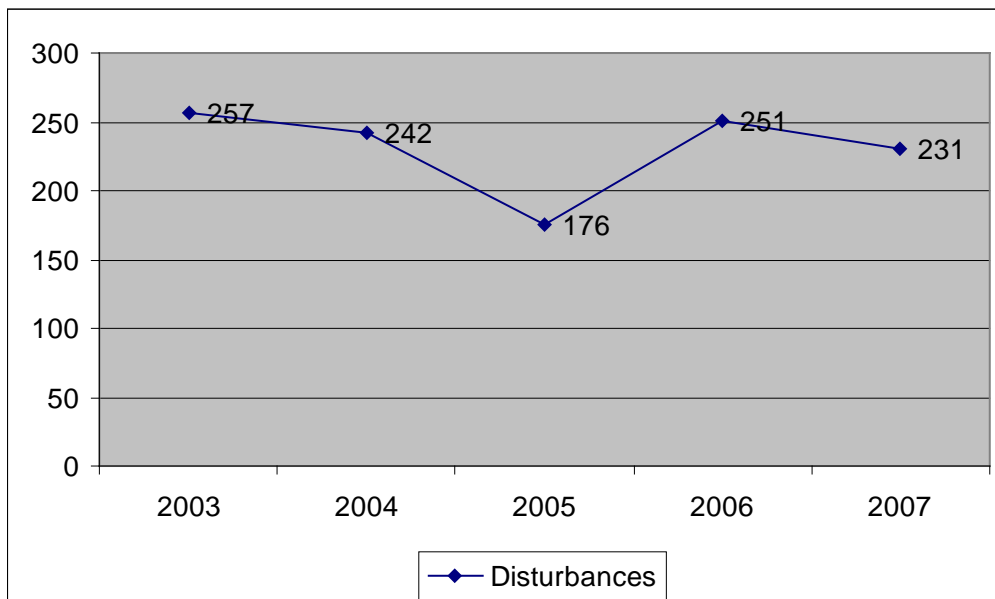
Traffic Crashes / Traffic Citations

In 2001 we had 119 *Accident Calls* reported. Since 2001, we have seen an average of 95 crashes per year, until 2006 when we experienced a major decline with only 65 crashes reported. The number of crashes has leveled off at 73 in 2007. Stepped up enforcement of traffic laws may have attributed to the decrease in accidents since 2002. Effective January 1, 2006, the department started to document all traffic warnings in order to have a more accurate picture of our traffic contacts with the public. In 2007 BPD officers issued 639 warnings for various traffic offenses and 357 citations. As a department, we issue 1.8 warnings for every citation written.



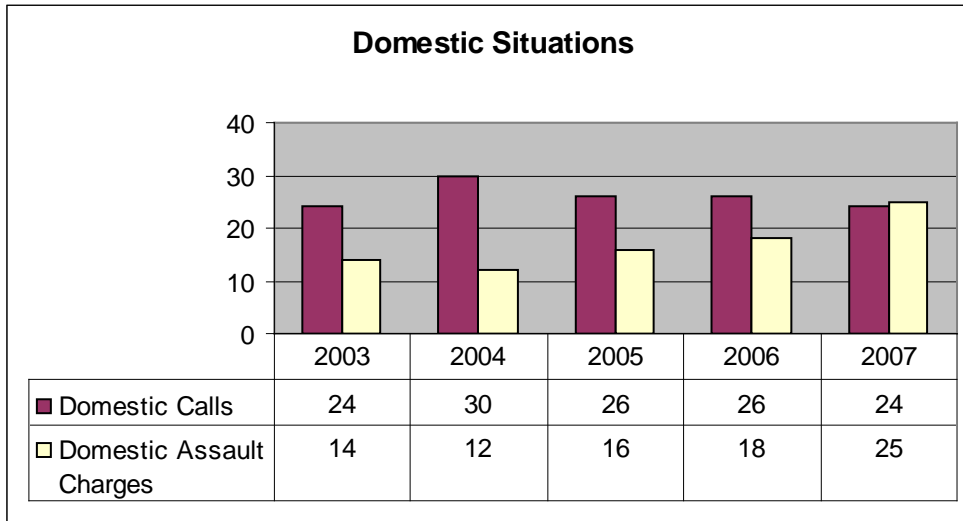
Disturbance Calls

Our calls for *Disturbances* have decreased from 251 complaints in 2006 to 231 complaints in 2007. Coincidentally, the 5 year average is 231 calls each year..



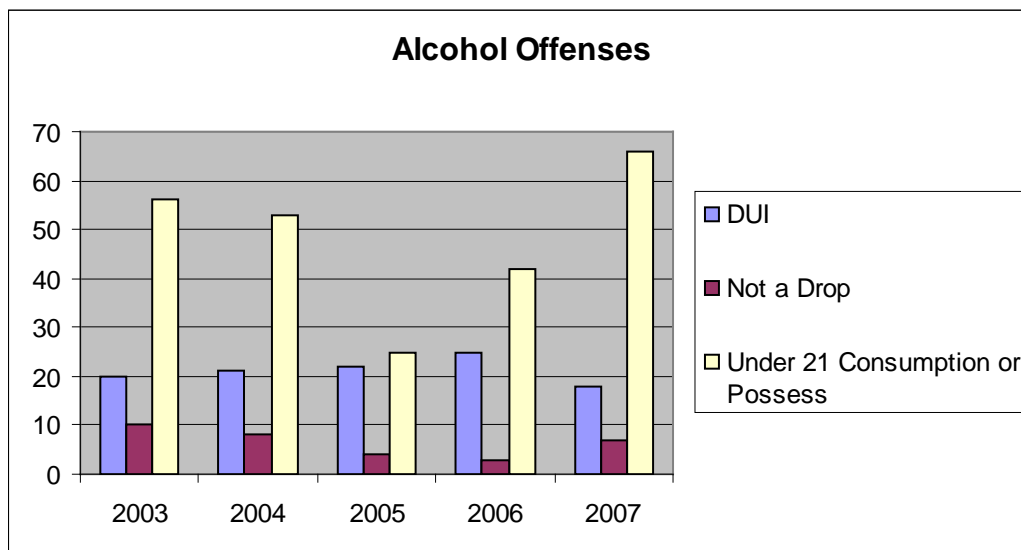
Domestics Situations

We are continuing to answer numerous *Domestic Assault* and *Domestic Disturbance* calls every month. (We investigated 13 Domestic Assaults and 11 Domestic Disturbances in 2007). The department continues to work closely with the Swift County Attorney's Office, Swift County Human Services and Victim's Advocates Teams in these cases. Out of the 13 Domestic Assault cases in 2007, 14 suspects were charged with Domestic Assault (one case included an arrest of both participants).



Alcohol Offenses

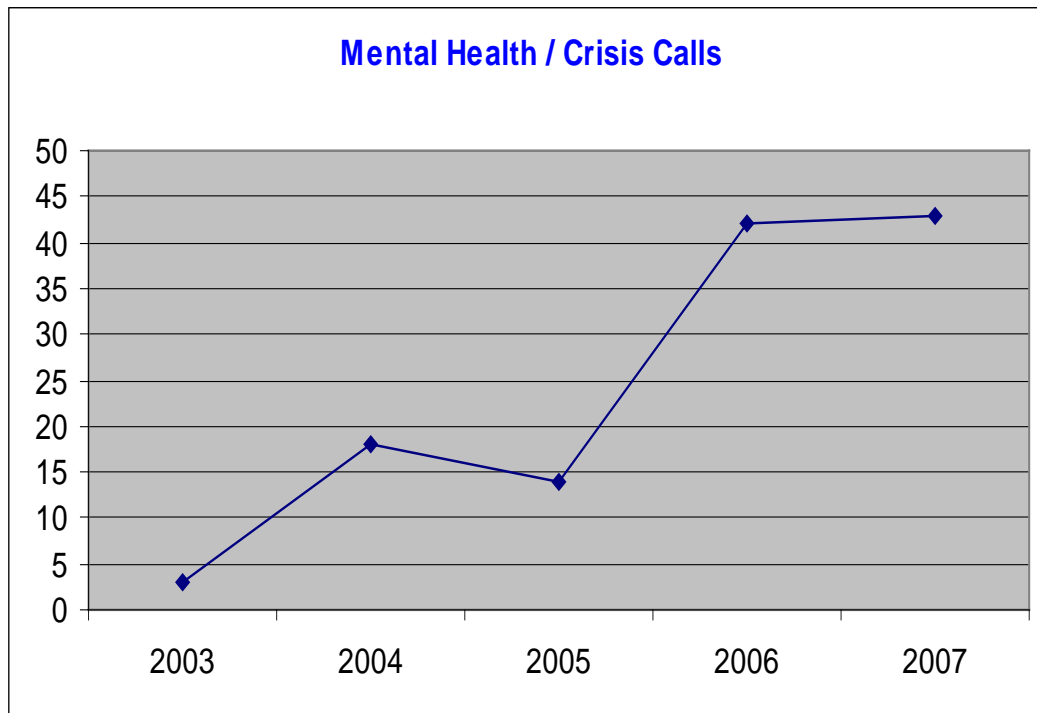
Over the past few years, we have experienced minor increases in *DUI* arrests until 2007 when *DUI* arrests actually dropped 25 arrests in 2006 to 18 in 2007. The bad news is that we have experienced a steady increase in *Underage Drinking Offenses* since 2005.



Mental Health Calls

The department responded to 43 *Mental Health* calls in 2007. This number represents a sharp increase from the four year average of 24. In late 2005 and early 2006, our community was overwhelmed with a few members taking their own lives. This fact, coupled with the reality that we are experiencing more and more mental health calls reported everyday, was enough to cause concern. I decided that the police department needed to arm its officers with more knowledge and training in the area of responding to and de-escalating mental health crisis situations. I wrote a grant that funded four officers, two from Benson PD, one from the Swift County SO and one from Appleton PD to attend a 40 hour Crisis Intervention Team course that I had attended in 2002. The officers returned from the training with increased knowledge and understanding of mental illnesses and additional skills in managing and de-escalating mental health crisis situations.

Because of the fact that BPD normally only has one Patrol Officer on duty at a time and because we only had three trained CIT officers, we quickly found that we were not able to provide adequate CIT response coverage. With these facts in mind, I wrote a proposal for another grant that would pay for additional officers to be trained in CIT. We received the grant and hosted the training in July of 2007. Officers from throughout west-central Minnesota attended the course. Currently, the department has seven officers trained as Crisis Intervention Team officers. By BPD hosting the CIT course locally; it enabled us to get our remaining untrained officers in to the course for free.



Narcotics Investigations

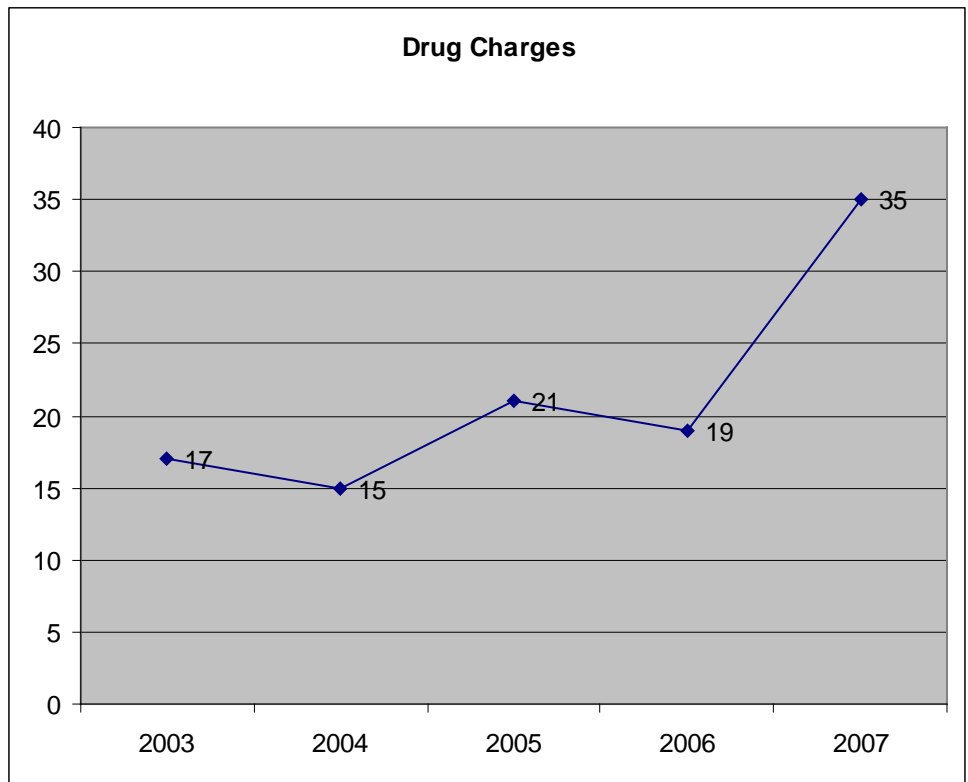
We saw a major increase in *Drug Related Calls* in 2005 and it has continued into 2007. In 2004, we answered only 9 Drug Related calls. This number increased to 31 in 2006 and leveling off at 29 in 2007. We have answered these calls with aggressive investigation and enforcement. We continue to have an officer working, when time permits, working directly with the CEE VI Drug Task Force to combat these problems.

BPD's enforcement efforts in 2007 resulted in 35 drug related charges. These statistics represent narcotics incidents that the Benson Police Department investigated either as the primary agency within the City of Benson, or as an assisting agency- assisting the CEE VI Drug Task Force, outside of the City of Benson.

It should be noted that all of the investigations were directly related to narcotics trafficking going out of (or coming into) Benson. There is a great deal of work yet to be done in this area. In June of 2007, the City Council voted to increase the authorized full-time strength of the police department to seven officers. This increase in man-power has enabled us to spend more time on pro-active drug enforcement. BPD also added a Narcotics Detector Dog to the force in November of 2007. This move will undoubtedly have a positive effect on our efforts in this area.

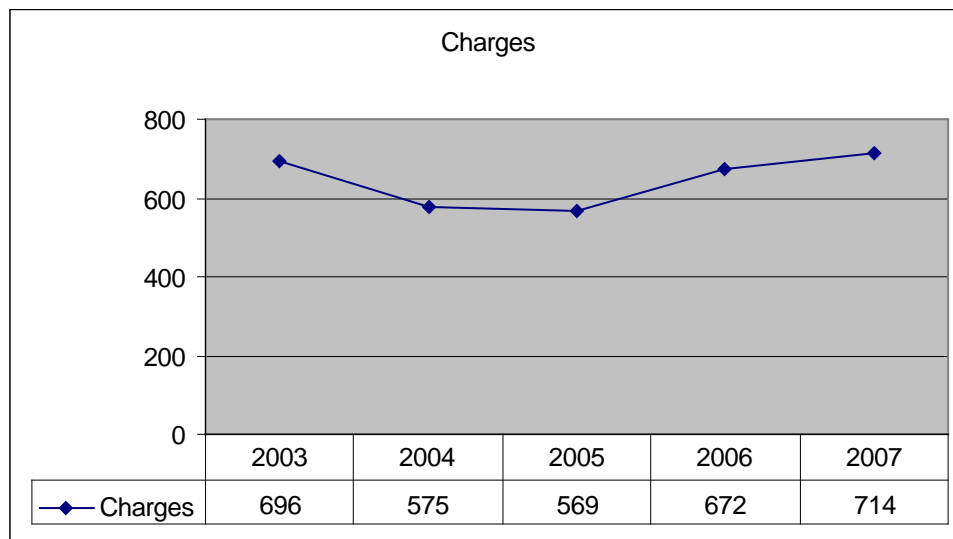


BPD's Narcotic Detector Dog "Major"



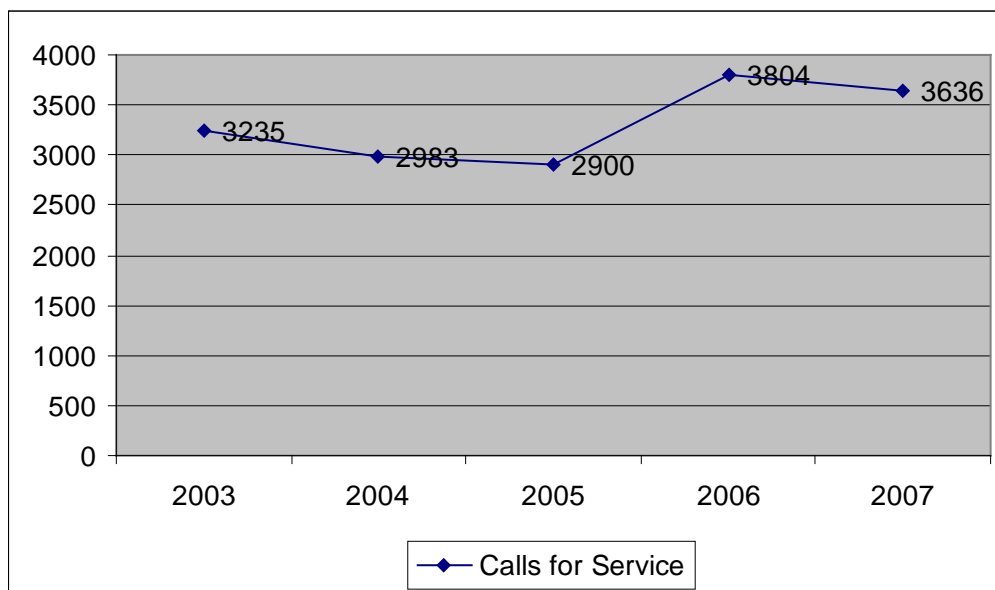
Total Charges

The total charges filed in 2007 surpassed the 2003 total of 696 when the department had an authorized strength of 7 Full-time officers. (The department was staffed at 6 full time officers from 2004 through 2006.) We had 7 full time officers for about half of 2007.



Total Calls for Service

Your police department answered 3,636 calls for service in 2007. This number is skewed a bit due to the department's new practice of documenting all traffic warnings, initiated in 2006. Another consideration to these numbers is attrition of staff. For two months, we were short-staffed with officers in Field Officer Training.



Twenty-Four Hour Patrol

In January of 2006, taking into account the rise in activity and increased expectations from the community, I committed the Benson Police Department to providing the city with 24 hour active patrol coverage. Previously, the department patrolled the city for 20 - 22 hours a day and had an officer in an “on-call” status for the remaining portion of the day. Officers typically work 12 hour shifts to accomplish 24/7 patrol coverage of the city. This transition to 24 hour patrol has shown to be a benefit to the department and the community. We have had success in solving some significant cases and arrests on incidents that have occurred during hours that in the past, we did not have an officer on duty. In May of 2007, the city council voted to staff the police department with seven full-time officers showing a commitment to keep this level of service.

Technology Advancements

Squad computers enable your officers to run drivers license and vehicle checks through the Minnesota State Patrol’s computer-aided dispatch system. They also are able to communicate with State Troopers by instant messaging through the laptops. The department also has a server with remote access capabilities. The laptops and the server allow officers to be more effective and efficient in their daily duties. In addition to the computer technology, we have Digital Video Cameras in four of the five department vehicles. Officers use this technology day in and day out and the video footage serves as evidence in court. The department has digital video, photo and audio capabilities. These files are stored on our server and linked to cases within the department’s records management system.



This picture shows the laptop, and the video camera. The monitor screen for the video camera is embedded into the mirror.



This picture shows a close-up of the mirror and the camera. The mirror also contains a rear facing camera that can monitor the prisoner area.

Community Involvement

The Benson Police Department continues to be very active in and involved with the community. Officers are currently involved in a number of Community Policing Projects to include:

- Senior Citizen Assistance Program
- Child Seat Assistance Program
- School Resource Officer Program
- DARE Program
- Safe Communities Coalition
- CEE VI Drug Task Force Liaison
- Driver's Education
- Crosswalk Safety Campaign
- Crisis Intervention Team
- Safe & Sober
- Swift County Child Protection Team
- Swift County Adult Protection Team

In addition, Chief Crace serves on the Minnesota Chief's of Police Association's Executive Board, the CEE VI Drug Task Force Board of Directors, the Swift County Emergency Management Organization and the City of Benson Safety Committee.

Off-duty, Benson officers are active in community organizations such as: Benson Area Jaycees, local Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Deer Hunters organizations and Boy Scouts of America.



Citizens at the BPD Farm and Home Show Booth; observing information regarding illegal drugs.



The Benson Police Department's 2007 Farm and Home Show Booth.

Training

Police Officers have to put their life on the line occasionally, but they make life and death decisions on a regular basis. They also make decisions on whether or not to take someone's freedom by incarcerating them. With this in mind; proper training is paramount to the successful delivery of effective service to the community. Benson Police Officers are trained to the highest level possible while staying within budget constraints. Last year your officers received a total of 843 hours of training in areas ranging from narcotics investigations to crisis intervention and many other things in between. Proper training is directly related to quality delivery of service to the community and also minimizes potential for litigation. Officers attended the following courses in 2007:

- Death Investigations
- Narcotics / Methamphetamine Investigations
- Critical Incident Management and Response
- Response to School Shootings Course
- High Risk Warrant Service
- Taser Recertification Course
- Firearms Qualification Course
- Use of Force Refresher Course
- First Aid Refresher Course
- Intoxilyzer Refresher Course
- Basic Field Sobriety Training
- Advanced Field Sobriety Training
- High Risk Traffic Stops Course
- Crisis Intervention Team Training

In January 2007, the Benson Police Department entered into a cooperative agreement with the Swift County Sheriff's Office and the Appleton Police Department. The contract was for 96 hours of training for each officer. The intent of the agreement was to have all officers in the county trained in the same manner and to the same level in regards to officer tactics. Due to the program's success, all three departments plan to continue the agreement in 2008.



This picture shows officers on the range.



This picture shows officers wearing Simunition gear during a simulated High Risk Vehicle stop.

I hope this document was informative and interesting to you. See the attached documents for a full list of statistics.

Historical Breakdown of Cases

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Abandoned Bikes	11	11	15	13	12
Accidents	99	88	96	65	73
Alarms	27	40	51	45	49
Ambulance Calls	125	146	109	132	111
Animal Complaints	26	25	24	28	29
Assaults	28	23	8	17	23
Assaults/Domestic	11	13	15	14	13
Assist Other Agencies (includes warrant arrests)	155	108	133	162	102
Bike Thefts	11	10	6	6	15
Burglaries	10	22	14	20	24
Child Abuse/Neglect Intakes	23	11	21	15	15
Civil Matters	44	46	48	50	42
Criminal Damage/Vandalism	63	41	42	52	41
Curfew	17	5	0	3	2
Death Investigation	0	1	2	5	6
Disorderly Conduct	40	14	14	6	7
Disturbance Calls	257	242	176	251	231
Dog Complaints	162	148	156	191	187
Domestic Disturbance(not including domestic asslts)	13	17	11	12	11
Driving Complaints	117	86	76	87	88
Drug Related Calls	22	9	28	31	29
DWI (alcohol and drugs)	19	20	20	23	16
Extra Patrols	15	29	27	29	17
Fire/Assist Fire Dept	24	16	25	25	38
Flee Officer	1	1	1	7	5
Forgery and Related	3	5	11	3	2
Handgun Permits	26	26	22	31	24
Harassing Phone Calls	1	1	0	1	3
Keys Locked in Vehicle/House	245	226	191	191	206
Mental Health Calls	3	18	14	42	43
Miscellaneous	535	539	535	587	503
Missing Person/Abduction (& attempted)	2	0	3	6	5
Money Escorts	574	575	555	525	456
Motor Assists	22	31	19	22	29
Motorized Vehicle Thefts	9	8	9	10	3
Obstruct Legal Process/Crimes Against Justice	12	6	6	5	8
Open Doors/Windows	27	15	15	14	13
Presentations	46	33	22	26	17
Procure Liquor for Minor	2	2	0	0	0
Recovered Property (thefts from other jurisdictions)	0	1	3	1	1
Residence Watch	23	20	29	23	21
Runaways	4	3	6	2	6
Sex Assault and Related	6	9	8	3	8
Snowmobile/ATV Complaints	14	4	9	4	5
Solicitor Permits and complaints	6	6	3	3	4

Suicide Attempts/Suicide	4	3	6	4	0
Theft and Related	90	86	92	98	87
Traffic Offenses/City Ordinances	173	114	150	250	286
Traffic Warnings	0	0	0	566	639
Traffic Direction	22	27	31	32	25
Transports	11	0	3	5	3
Travelers Aid	3	2	6	3	3
Trespass	1	3	3	15	6
Underage Drink and Drive	7	5	4	0	6
Underage Alcohol Consumption and Possession	19	23	9	15	21
Underage Tobacco Violations	6	3	3	4	2
Violate Protection and Harassment Orders	17	10	7	20	11
Vulnerable Adults	2	6	6	4	3
Weapons	0	1	2	0	1
TOTAL	3235	2983	2900	3804	3636

Historical Breakdown of Charges

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Assaults	35	29	11	18	27
Assaults/Domestic	14	12	16	18	25
Burglary	5	11	3	7	6
Crimes Against Justice	8	14	8	18	11
Crim Sex	2	3	5	0	0
Criminal Damage/Trespass	16	17	31	25	11
Curfew	32	10	8	6	3
Disorderly Conduct/Disturb Peace	95	49	27	19	21
Dog Citations	14	11	13	16	26
Drugs & Paraphernalia	17	15	21	19	35
**DWI (alcohol & drug)	54	48	46	50	44
Forgery	1	5	3	2	1
Juvenile Tobacco Use	10	10	9	11	5
Miscellaneous	4	5	1	4	10
Obscenity/Indecent Exposure	1	0	0	0	0
Procure Liquor for Underage	1	5	4	0	0
Snowmobile Citations	23	2	0	0	3
Theft and Related	32	59	72	63	53
Traffic Citations/Misc City Ordinances	265	212	233	343	357
Underage Alcohol Consumption & Possession	56	53	25	42	66
Violate Protection and Harassment Order	11	5	5	11	8
Weapons	0	0	28	0	2
TOTALS	696	575	569	672	714
**DWI Cases	20	21	22	25	18
-charges per case differ from year to year due to new DWI laws					
**Underage Drink & Drive	10	8	4	3	7