

THE SENTINEL

ANNUAL BULLETIN

JULY 1, 2024



Past, Present, and Beyond: Charting Our Course to Serve and Protect



A Message from the Chief

I am pleased to share with our community the very first Sentinel publication. Historically, the Sentinel was an internal bulletin shared bimonthly amongst all employees at the Sierra Vista Police Department in the 1990s and early 2000s. The Sentinel bulletin was discontinued in 2003. Over 20 years later, we are bringing back the Sentinel as an external publication that will be made available to citizens annually with the start of the new fiscal year in July. The new Sentinel will share our year-in-review and our operational tempo with transparency, as we work to strengthen our community policing strategies moving forward. We hope to earn healthy readership of this annual publication as we encourage an engaged and informed community on police matters. This publication's content may lead to future meaningful community policing discussions with the public at various forums.

Fiscal year 2023-24 was a historic year for the Sierra Vista Police Department. Both Chief Adam Thrasher and Deputy Chief Jon Kosmider retired, prompting the largest promotion ceremony amongst sworn staff in the agency's history.

I was appointed the 11th Police Chief in the history of the Sierra Vista Police Department on July 15, 2023. As I approach the one-year mark in this assignment, I am pleased to share the agency's staffing level

protect and serve our community. We have been able to fill vacant specialty assignments that are needed in our community. One such example is the assignment of a school resource officer at Joyce Clark Middle School, starting in the Fall of 2024. Our Drug Recognition Expert certification program has grown in partnership with the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, enhancing our ability to detect impaired driving due to drug influence. Lastly, the two largest local police agencies in the region, the Cochise County Sheriff's Office and the Sierra Vista Police Department, have worked this past year to align their respective tactical units through monthly joint training.

FY 2023-2024 has proven to be challenging internally for the SVPD as a landmark year for unprecedented promotions and internal change. Several newly promoted employees have taken on higher responsibilities and learned new roles. Cross-training and leadership mentorship have become heightened priorities within the agency. Internal efficiency and organizational leadership have a direct impact on how we deliver professional police services



has improved significantly and we are strengthening our regional partnerships with other entities. Both dimensions play a critical role in catalyzing the needed adaptability and growth of a stronger posture to

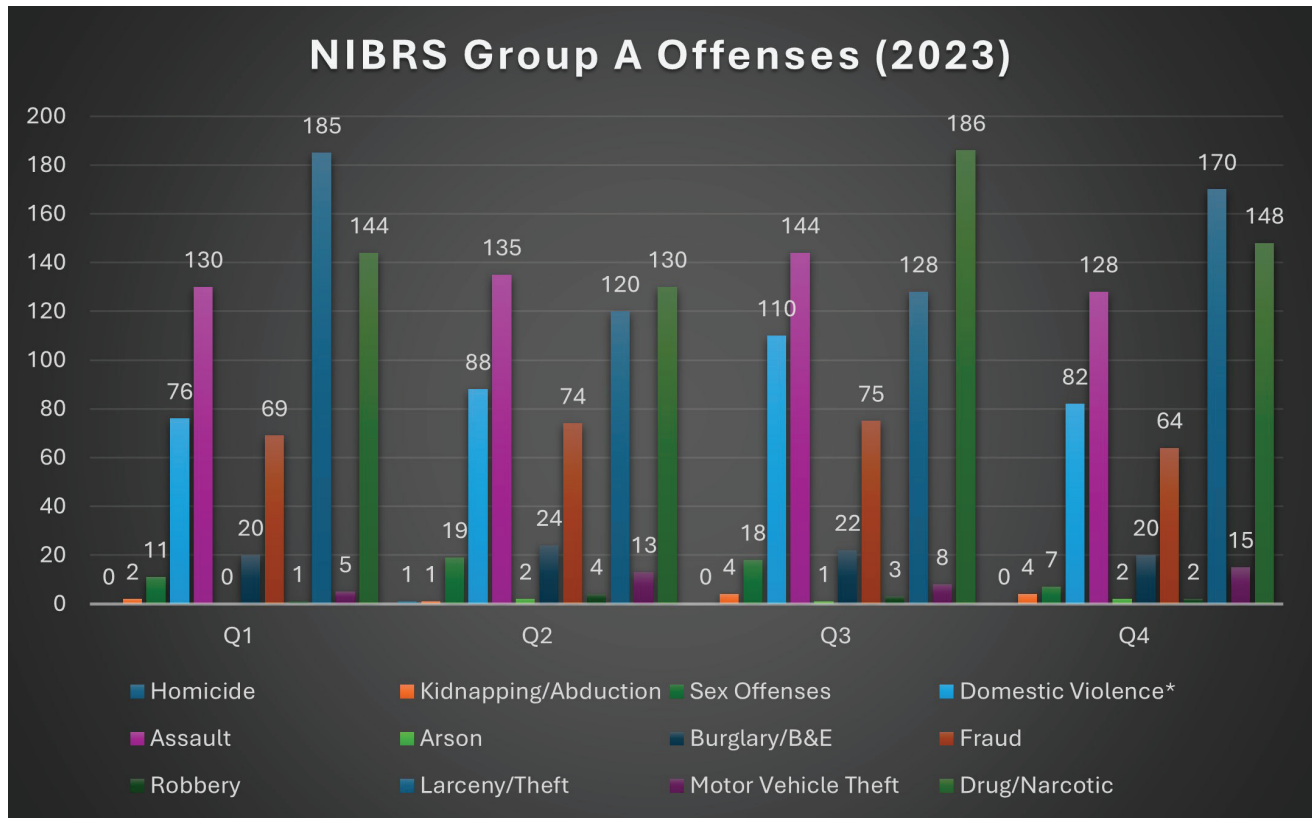
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Patrol Calls for Service

SVPD saw 42,331 total calls for service in 2023, a small rise over 2022 (41,785). Some areas that saw a slight increase were vehicle burglary and criminal damage, while aggravated assault and domestic violence calls were lower than the previous year.



Quarterly breakdown of calls for service (Group A offenses)

Subject Management

Occasionally, an officer may be required to use subject management (commonly known as “use of force”) to protect the public or a subject from harm, to prevent a suspect from escaping, or to overcome resistance during an arrest. Subject management is used within the bounds of the law and the force used is based on the threat level or resistance the officer encounters.

To ensure that every SVPD officer’s use of force is legally justified and within department policy and ethical standards, a comprehensive review process analyzes each incident. A four-member subject management review board, which includes at least one defensive tactics instructor and one firearms instructor and is overseen by the patrol bureau commander, reviews each report. Then the report is routed through the officer’s chain of command up to the chief of police. The following topics are involved in the review process:

- **Incident documentation (Subject Management Report (SMR)):** completed SMR document including reports and body worn

camera. Officers are required to complete this report prior to their end of shift.

- **Policy analysis:** review of subject management policy to determine if the officer’s actions align with established guidelines.
- **Training evaluation:** assess whether the officers involved received adequate training on subject management protocols to include de-escalation techniques and safety.
- **Supervisory review:** examine the actions of supervisors at the scene to ensure they provided appropriate guidance and intervention.

- **Legal analysis:** Determine if the subject management applied was legally justified based on relevant statutes and case law. The Graham factors, derived from the Supreme Court case *Graham v Connor*, are often considered during this review. These factors include the severity of the alleged offense, whether the suspect posed an immediate threat, and whether the suspect was actively resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest.

The multi-faceted SMR process aims to ensure that SVPD upholds standards of professionalism and accountability while maintaining public trust.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Special Operations

Major crimes detectives were assigned 125 cases in 2023 and achieved a 45% clearance rate. Group A offenses that were sent to major crimes detectives for investigation (e.g., assault, narcotic offenses, larceny/theft, sex offenses, etc.) increased by 29%, while Group B offenses (e.g., disorderly conduct, DUI, trespass, etc) was lower by 54%. They maintained strong sentencing numbers, including 178 years with AZDOC (Arizona Department of Corrections); 48 years probation, plus seven on lifetime probation; and fines and restitution over \$97,000.

Property Crimes Unit (PCU) detectives were assigned 42 cases (Group A offenses) with a 50% clearance rate. Statistics were heavily influenced by clusters of burglaries involving one or multiple subjects committing a string of crimes. In four separate instances, PCU detectives cleared multiple burglaries with arrests of these subjects. Following the arrests, there was a subsequent lull in burglary activity.

Sex Offenders

At the end of 2023, there were 69 registered sex offenders in the Sierra Vista area. Level 0 is not an official sex offender level but includes Pre-Megan law and some juvenile offenders for tracking purposes only. Although the law does not require community notification or law enforcement action on Level 0 offenders, SVPD makes follow-up visits to update offenders' information. There were eight newly registered sex offenders, two offenders arrested for non-sex offenses and sentenced to prison, one arrested for failure to register, and 13 offenders were visited to update required information.

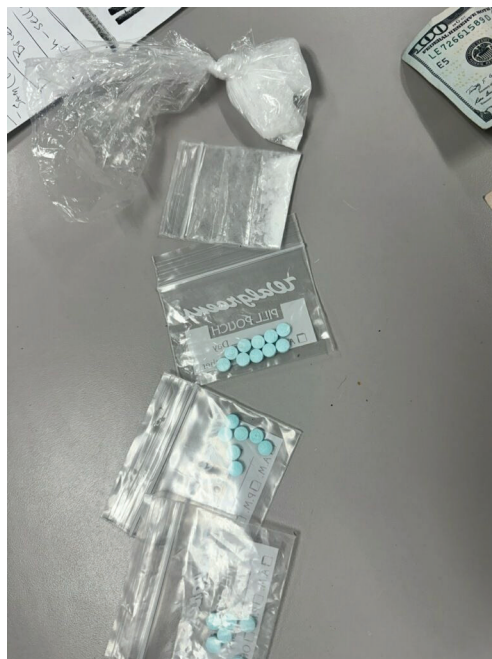
Sex Offender Category	#
Level 0 (Pre-Megan)	5
Level 1 (low-risk)	37
Level 2 (intermediate)	25
Level 3 (high-risk)	2
Total	69

NARCOTICS

Community Response Team

The Community Response Team (CRT) is part of the SVPD detective bureau and is primarily focused on narcotics investigations within the City. The CRT is currently down to one narcotics detective; however, the detective is very adept at forming good relationships with other local law enforcement narcotic detectives and federal agencies, to leverage the ability to rid the City of drug dealers and the amount of narcotics available to users.

A recent assignment process to add an additional CRT detective was completed, and an officer was selected to join the CRT in September 2024. CRT will continue to work closely with other agency narcotic detectives to continue reducing the illegal narcotic trade in the City.



CHIEF'S MSG

Continued from page 1

to our community. We continue to strengthen the fabric of our organization by building upon an organizational culture that embraces respect, humility, and compassion. I'm proud of the men and women of the Sierra Vista Police Department who apply these values to policing our community.

I hope this publication is both helpful and informative to our community as we openly share a "behind the scenes" look at our agency with our most valued stakeholder—the public we serve. Very soon SVPD will announce via social media various "Coffee with a Cop" sessions in which all members of the public are invited. I look forward to meeting community members at these events and discussing our mission to protect and serve.

Humbly in your service,

Christopher Hiser

Chief of Police

Drugs

The main trend in Sierra Vista, as well as for the rest of the nation, is the growing progression of the smuggling and use of fentanyl. Fentanyl is the narcotic compound that is being processed into the fake Oxycodone M-30 pill, primarily manufactured illegally in Mexico. Millions of these pills are smuggled into the US and they have become the number one illegal narcotic. While methamphetamine and cocaine seizures trended downward in 2023, SVPD fentanyl seizures have increased over 375% in the past three years. Sierra Vista is also seeing an increase in intel regarding powder fentanyl coming into the area.

SVPD's Community Response Team (CRT) 2023 efforts resulted in:

- CRT seized: over three kg methamphetamine, 26 grams heroin, 42 grams cocaine, nearly 15,000 fentanyl pills, 48 grams crack, 168 grams psilocybin mushrooms, 33 grams MDMA (ecstasy); over \$5500 USC
- 86.5 years prison time; five years probation time
- 86 drug-related investigations, 94 suspects



Counterfeit M30 pills using bright colors thought to be used to mimic candy for younger users

Naloxone/Narcan Administration by SVPD Officers

2023 saw a decrease in incidents compared to 2022. However, fentanyl continued to be the primary cause of overdose, contributing to 75% of the year's incidents, with one resulting in death. The remaining overdoses were attributed to methamphetamine use and unknown substances. However, the administration of Naloxone/Narcan countered the effects of the unknown substance. Patients' ages ranged from 19 to 65. Seven of the 12 incidents required more than one dose with one patient requiring three total doses.

Opioids continue to present a significant threat and SVPD is committed to maintaining the program. The department receives free Naloxone/Narcan from AZDHS because of its commitment to reporting all uses through the AZDHS portal and training all officers on use and administration.

Having every officer equipped with Naloxone/Narcan allows for rapid field deployment. Police officers are frequently on scene before medics arrive and having Naloxone/Narcan available allows for life-saving efforts to begin immediately. Given the nature of law enforcement work, officers may encounter illegal pills

or even fentanyl in its raw form, and any accidental exposure could cause death; having Naloxone/Narcan readily available gives the officer ready access to lifesaving medication for themselves or their fellow officers.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Incidents	6	4	9	12	16	12	59
Male subject	3	2	5	6	13	10	39
Female subject	3	2	4	6	3	2	20
Doses	10	6	11	18	23	20	88
Subject survived	5	4	8	11	14	11	53
Subject died	1	0	1	1	2	1	6

Police K9 Unit

During 2023, the Sierra Vista Police Department K9 Unit consisted of two active canine teams: Cpl. Slusser and his K9 partner, Layla, and Corporal Durham and her K9 partner, Jucon.

K9 Layla, a 5-year-old Belgian Malinois, is a narcotics detection canine trained to detect the odor of methamphetamine, heroin, and cocaine. Also a patrol canine, she is trained to apprehend suspects. When conducting an area search for human detection, Layla can detect human odor carried by the wind and will lead her handler to the source of the odor. She and Cpl. Slusser have been partnered for a little over 3 years. Layla loves socializing with kids and enjoys showing off for them when she is doing demonstrations. Her favorite toy is a 3-foot chew bone that she gets on special occasions.

K9 Jucon (pronounced "Yukon") and Cpl. Durham, a 9-year department veteran, have also been partnered for a little over three years. Jucon is a 9-year-old German Shepherd trained in narcotics detections. In addition, Jucon completes article finds for items dropped by people fleeing from police. Jucon loves the water and he loves to run through the sprinklers in the parks while working foot patrols with his partner. He also loves to interact with kids by doing demonstrations during school presentations or events.

Both canine teams completed their annual certification for narcotics

detection, and Canine Layla and her officer also completed their patrol use certification, all through the National Police Canine Association.

The SVPD K9 Unit had another busy but successful year:

- 239 deployments (232 narcotics, 7 patrol)
- Paraphernalia seized: 526 items; methamphetamine seized: 2,436 grams; heroin seized: 25.39 grams; cocaine seized: 171.597 grams; Estimated number of fentanyl: 6955 pills
- Persons arrested due to deployments: 143



Cpl. Slusser and K9 Layla



Cpl. J. Durham and K9 Jucon

PURSUIT

SVPD Employs New Technology

Police vehicle pursuits are an unfortunate and rare — but necessary — part of the apprehension of suspects and keeping the public safe. For the last three to four years, Cochise County and Sierra Vista have experienced a large increase in human smuggling behavior, often resulting in vehicle pursuits. Unfortunately, even when law enforcement officers disengage with high-speed pursuits, the suspect’s driving behavior at times remains erratic, creating a danger to the public.

One method SVPD officers have long employed to stop a dangerous fleeing vehicle is the Controlled Tire Deflation Device, and more recently, the Stop Stick. These intervention devices can provide slow and controlled tire deflation to bring a vehicle to a controlled stop.

A new technology SVPD now employs is the Grapppler Police Bumper. This device is mounted to the front of a police vehicle to stop or prevent vehicle pursuits by using a lowered net to seize a rear tire,

axle, or suspension component. The operator provides braking to bring the target vehicle to a controlled stop. This technology is expected to assist in safeguarding the public by stopping extreme and reckless driving behavior before it gets extended.

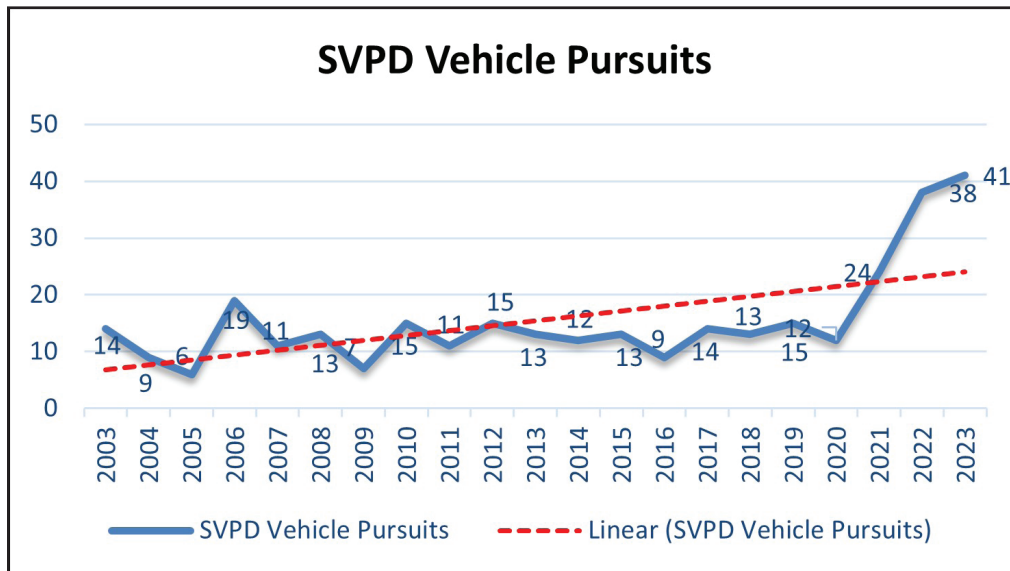
SVPD has partnered with the Cochise County Sheriff’s Office and other state, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies through Operation Safe Streets to target smuggling activity in and around

Sierra Vista. Additionally, SVPD participates year-round in a federally directed task force known as Operation Stonegarden, in which state, county, and municipal law enforcement officers work overtime hours to assist in combatting human trafficking, smuggling, and narcotic transportation. These deployments have a secondary effect of apprehending DUI offenders as well as added traffic enforcement.



Vehicle Pursuits Are on the Rise

The number of pursuits continued to rise, for a total of 41 in 2023, the highest level of activity in the past 20 years. Twenty pursuits, or 49%, had a border nexus. The average maximum suspect vehicle speed was over 90 mph. For border-related pursuits only, the average speed was 100 mph. Nineteen pursuits involved other law enforcement agencies. The pursuits concluded as follows: officer termination 44%; suspect stopped 27%; suspect crashed 19%; and other 10%.



DUIs and Accidents

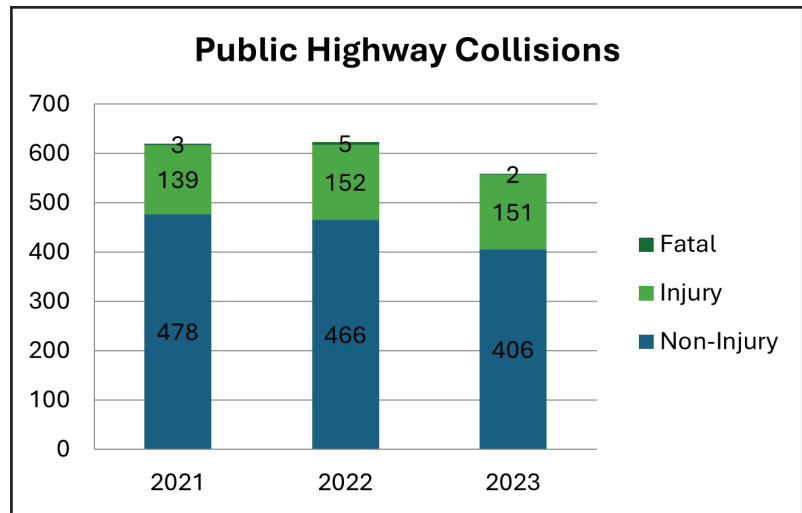
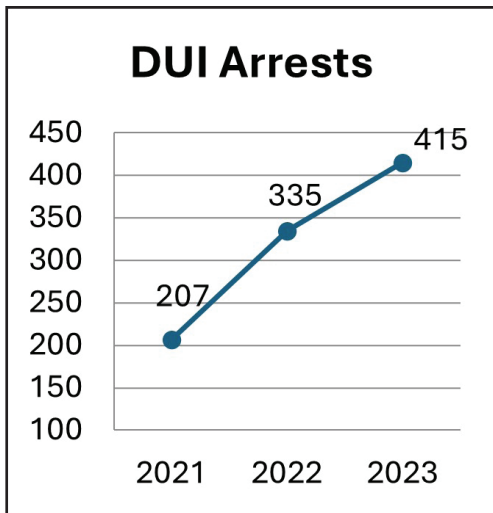
Traffic enforcement statistics show a slight decrease in traffic stops in the last year, for a total of 7,791 stops. There was a 100% increase in DUI arrests from 2021. In conjunction with other law enforcement agencies, SVPD officers participated in multiple DUI enforcement details around the county.

The majority of reported collisions are typically caused by driver inattention or following too closely. These behaviors are normally cited under the Failure to Control Speed statute. Failing to yield while making a left turn, unsafe lane changes, and failure to stop at a stop sign were significant causes for collisions in the

City. The number of injury collisions was similar to 2022, while fatal and non-injury collisions decreased.

To minimize the number of public highway collisions, the department utilizes a variety of tactics, including traffic enforcement details and directed enforcement. Enforcement details were executed at various

locations throughout the City to gauge and identify the driving behaviors and issues specific to those areas. Social media posts are designed to educate the public on traffic safety and the driving behaviors that most commonly lead to vehicle collisions, with a particular focus on school-zone violations.



TACTICAL & AIR UNITS

SVPD Tactical Unit

In 2000 the Sierra Vista Police Department saw a need for a specialized unit of officers with advanced training, tactics, and skillsets to respond to critical incidents. In 2002, this need was realized by a seven-person unit named the SVPD Special Response Team (SRT). Since inception, the SVPD Tactical Unit has grown to include up to 15 operators including a precision rifle team (snipers), a crisis negotiation team, and support elements to include police K-9, UAS, and robots.

Currently the SVPD Tactical Unit responds to a variety of situations, which include hostage rescue, barricaded criminal suspect(s), sniper situations, apprehension of armed or

high-risk arrests, personal protection, and other special assignments. Team members attend trainings hosted by the Arizona Tactical Officers Association (ATOA) and the National

Tactical Officers Association (NTOA) to keep up with team trends and tactics.

Training with CGSO

As department needs and relationships have evolved, SVPD has seen a need to collaborate and train with other tactical teams in the area. In 2023 SVPD began conducting joint training with the Cochise County Sheriff's Department SWAT. This relationship has continued to grow in 2024, with a collective effort to attend and participate in multiple joint training exercises. This relationship has fostered a more cohesive working environment with other departments, which have seen a growing need to work together in an environment where criminal elements don't begin and end at City limit boundaries. This relationship will only continue to grow in the future.



Air Unit Overview

The SVPD Air Unit was created September 11, 2019, with an original crew of six FAA certified remote pilots to fly the unit's first all-in-one unmanned aircraft. Five years and many aerial missions later, the unit has grown to seven remote pilots and a fleet of six aircraft.

The newest aircraft is a tactical indoor aircraft, capable of carrying payloads, livestreaming video, creating real-time floorplans, two-way communications, and breaking glass to make entry into structures without putting officers at risk. Our patrol pilots carry at least one aircraft with them during their shift, for fast aerial deployments when needed.

Since 2019, pilots have conducted 110 missions, ranging from searching

for missing adults and children and suspects, to mapping crime scenes and traffic accidents, to assisting patrol in any incident requiring an aerial perspective. The SVPD Air Unit has conducted missions for other law enforcement agencies, prompting several to create their own air units. For the future, SVPD anticipates adding additional remote pilots and is looking into the possibility of having unmanned aircraft serve as first responders to police incidents.

WORKING TOWARD A BETTER AGENCY

CALEA Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies

SVPD was first accredited by CALEA in 2014, after extensive review and revision of policies and procedures by self and external assessment. SVPD is one of 11 CALEA accredited Arizona agencies. The initial accreditation process included a self-assessment and an on-site assessment of the agency's compliance with CALEA standards. The current assessment process involves four annual web-based assessment reviews and an on-site assessment at the end of the fourth year.



SVPD is nearing the end of its current four-year cycle and will have its on-site assessment in October of 2024. When the assessment is successful, SVPD will receive its fourth consecutive accreditation, or third reaccreditation. The personnel conducting the reviews and assessments are typically retired law enforcement and hold extensive public safety experience.

Benefits to CALEA accreditation include ensuring officers are trained on specific topics and procedures so they are following the best industry standards and practices. The department's management analyst/

CALEA administrator regularly reviews policy and works with police staff to ensure the department is either following the policies as they are written or is addressing any deficiencies and outdated practices. Additionally, accreditation draws increased community and government support. The CALEA process creates greater agency and officer accountability and ensures SVPD is continually working diligently to stay abreast of best practices at a national level.

Multi-Disciplinary Team

The Sierra Vista Police Department is also proud to announce the creation of an internal multidisciplinary team (MDT), which will begin July 1. This is part of a strategic objective put together by SVPD employees. The goal of the multidisciplinary team is to tackle complex issues to help grow and enhance internal operations to implement positive change and improve efficiency, communication, and performance. Examples include using the team to discuss ways to streamline the subject management report and vehicle pursuit documentation processes by making the reporting and review system paperless. The team will have a representative from each bureau/section and may include representatives from other City departments. The team will meet on a quarterly basis and update the Chief on innovative ideas to be shared with City management.



SVPD officers collaborating in the Real Time Crime Center

AZTraCS

The Sierra Vista Police Department has implemented the Arizona Traffic and Criminal Software (AZTraCS), an Arizona Department of Transportation program designed to handle collision and citation data. SVPD received grant funding through the Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) to purchase the software, vehicle printers, and imaging scanners needed to operate AZTraCS in the field.

Through City-wide teamwork, the City's fleet department installed the necessary vehicle hardware; the IT department ensured the software was fully integrated with the current records management system; and the AZTraCS support team assisted in training officers in the use of the software. At the conclusion of this process SVPD began utilizing AZTraCS in the field for collisions,

citations, and warnings.

This electronic, form-based platform allows SVPD to issue forms and store collected data from traffic stops and collisions, to report crash statistics to the state by electronically transmitting crash data, and to perform ad hoc and analysis-based reports for our community regarding traffic trends and hot spots within

our jurisdiction. Using imaging scanners, officers can scan driver and vehicle information and pull that data directly into the necessary forms, reducing data entry errors. Like the department's collision reports, AZTraCS is able to electronically transmit citations through the Administrative Office of the Courts to the local Sierra Vista Justice Precinct 5, reducing time and paperwork.



In-car printer



License scanner

ANIMAL CONTROL

Animal Care and Control Expansion

An expansion of the existing Nancy J. Brua Animal Care Center began in June 2024. This project will expand the shelter's physical infrastructure to add 18 new kennels. Existing kennel space is limited and animals' length of stay is increasing. In addition to expanding the building, Animal Care Center staff are adopting a multifaceted approach to tackle the root causes of animal homelessness.

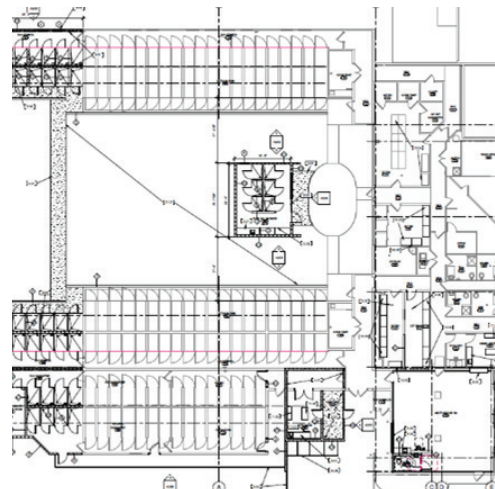
Through community outreach efforts, shelter staff will engage with local residents to raise awareness about responsible pet ownership and provide resources to support them in caring for their animals at home. Participating in events like SV Community Connect allows staff to connect directly with community members and offer assistance, whether it's through providing pet food and supplies or facilitating access to low-cost sterilizations and veterinary care.

Moreover, implementing the Dog Playing for Life program has been

instrumental in improving the well-being and adoptability of shelter dogs. By providing structured play sessions with other shelter dogs, staff not only ensure they receive much-needed exercise and enrichment but also enhance their socialization skills, making them more attractive to potential adopters.

Looking ahead to 2024, the Animal Control team's commitment to proactive support of animal welfare extends beyond the physical expansion of the shelter. Recognizing the importance of post-adoption support, staff will be exploring new

initiatives aimed at helping pet owners successfully integrate their new companions into their homes and communities. By addressing the underlying factors contributing to animal surrender and return, we strive to create a more sustainable and compassionate approach to animal welfare in our community. In other good news, the shelter is exploring options to provide our community with the ability to purchase/renew pet licenses online.



Citizens should never care for wild animals on their own, even babies. Please contact ACO if you encounter wild animals that need rescuing.

AWARDS & PROMOTIONS

Award Winners

Citizen of the Year: Lee & Charla Henney

Volunteer of the Year (Alternate): Rick Tutor

Volunteer of the Year: Robert Lorentsen

Client Service Award Officer: Lonnie Loper-Carbajal

Rising Star Award (Alternate): Ofc. Michael Goodman

Officer of the Year: Det. Matthew Quinn

Steve Ritchie Professional of the Year Award (Sworn): Ofc. Earl Franklin

Steve Ritchie Professional of the Year Award (Civilian): Susan Immes

Rising Star Award: Ofc. Brighton Yarbrough

Supervisor of the Year: Cpl. Branden Eaton

Civilian of the Year (Alternate): LeAnn Schmidt

Civilian of the Year: Trisha Clark

Officer of the Year (Alternate): Ofc. Michael Arellano

Lifesaving Award

Ofc. Caleb Ramage

Ofc. Josh Humphrey

Det. Samuel Brady

Ofc. Michael Arellano

Critical Response Award

Ofc. Nathan Tuggle

Ofc. Caleb Ramage

Meritorious Service Award

Cpl. Josh Nicola (Ret.)

Monthly Client Service Awards

Sgt. Justin Dannels

Ofc. Brighton Yarbrough

Ofc. Jeromy McGee

Ofc. Carolanne Frisby

LeAnn Schmidt

Jen Charest

Hollie Sheriff

Ofc. Johnny Wood

Det. Jessica Ferrel

Trish Harman

Ofc. Michael Arellano

Ofc. Lonnie Loper-Carbajal

Ofc. Sean McHunting

Cpl. Ethan Slusser

Ofc. Richard Benjamin

Ofc. Antonio Chavez



Promotion Ceremony

The largest round of promotions in the department's history was celebrated in August. Following the retirements of Chief Adam Thrasher and Deputy Chief Jon Kosmider, promotable positions opened throughout the ranks. Promotees were: Chief of Police Chris Hiser, Deputy Chief Lawrence Boutté, Cmdr. Armin Lewis, Cmdr. Sean Brownson, Cmdr. Lis Chatham, Lt. Bill Heiple, Sgt. Paul Youman, Sgt. Justin Dannels, Records Supervisor Megan Sariñana, Cpl. Jené Stewart, Cpl. Ethan Slusser, Cpl. John Andela, and Sr. Records Clerk Trisha Clark.

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, & TRAINING

Hiring/Recruitment

Hiring remained a priority in 2023. SVPD began the year with 64 sworn officers and finished the year with 67. Thirteen new officers were hired and 10 officers separated from the department, five of whom were retirements. There were 107 recruit and lateral applications. SVPD sent nine recruits to the Southeast Arizona Law Enforcement Training Academy (SEALETA) during the year.

Recruitment & Retention

The Sierra Vista Police Department places a strong emphasis on recruitment and retention. The department understands the importance of adapting policing techniques to attract and retain skilled officers in today's environment. Our commitment involves implementing creative approaches to attract suitable candidates and continuously reviewing our standards, recruitment processes, and training programs to conform with modern policing standards.

The hiring process can differ between agencies, ranging from a few weeks to several months. Candidates generally prefer shorter processes and may consider other options if the hiring process takes too long. To address this, we regularly evaluate the hiring steps to expedite the process and make it more efficient. In addition, we have prioritized the inclusion of a personalized approach. Our recruiter consistently maintains close communication with



candidates, providing dedicated support throughout the entire process.

In our latest review of protocols, we pinpointed certain areas that need adjustment to keep pace with changing societal norms. As an illustration, we have recently revised our policies concerning visible tattoos and grooming standards.

There is a prevalent argument that both beards and tattoos play a role in humanizing law enforcement personnel, rendering them more relatable to the community than before. Although it might not directly increase recruitment figures, fostering strong community connections is equally crucial.



Training

Providing ongoing education and training opportunities to employees in any profession, including police officers, brings about cultural advantages. Our partnership with Cochise College, the Cochise County Sheriff's Office, and the Southeast

Arizona Law Enforcement Training Academy (SEALETA) is flourishing as we focus on supplying Recruit Training Officers, instructors, and advisors to enhance our officers' comprehension of community requirements, enhance response preparedness, and prioritize safety. SVPD ensures that officers are well-

trained and that they can carry out their duties with increased confidence. Taking all of this into consideration, we have initiated the process of improving our training methods, prioritizing quality over quantity. Our main objective is to assist our officers in achieving a healthy work-life balance.

SVPD Middle School Resource Officer

This Fall, due to staffing improvements, SVPD is able to once again place a school resource officer (SRO) at Joyce Clark Middle School. A top priority of the department, SROs bring countless benefits to the schools where they are placed. The safety of students and staff is the main priority, and this is accompanied by the educational benefits to the students through the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) and GREAT (Gang Resistance Education and Training) programs. The school resource officer has the opportunity to interact daily on a more personal level with middle school students, thereby fostering relationships that provide for positive interactions with law enforcement. Officer Tracy Grady was selected as the new SRO. An 18-year SVPD veteran, Ofc. Grady has worked to cultivate positive community relationships throughout her career. Her work with the Special Olympics has been recognized at the local and state level for multiple years in a row. Ofc. Grady's compassion and understanding lends itself to working with children of all ages and provides a fantastic opportunity to set a strong foundation for the JCMS SRO position for years to come.



Lori's Place

Supporting an Invaluable Resource

Partnerships and collaboration are vital components to the delivery of exceptional police services to the community. One such partnership is with a local non-profit that helps serve victims of domestic violence, child abuse, and sexual assault. That resource is the Cochise Family Advocacy Center, aka Lori's Place. Founded by Mike and Lori Rutherford in 2016, Lori's Place serves as a central location in Sierra Vista where law enforcement can take crime victims for forensic evidence collection in a safe, friendly, and private environment.

The staff at Lori's Place are available 24-7 to conduct forensic child interviews, sexual assault exams, and forensic medical exams of victims. Victims are also connected with advocacy services immediately to ensure there is adequate follow-up and timely communication on a case.

Prior to the establishment of Lori's Place, SVPD would frequently have to transport victims to Tucson for these services. Lori's place has been an amazing resource for Sierra Vista and Cochise County. They also provide services to Graham and Greenlee Counties.

Non-profits rely largely on grants and donations. A grant from the Legacy Foundation of Southeast Arizona made it possible for Lori's Place to purchase a state-of-the-art forensic camera system, capable of detecting latent bruising. This is the only camera of its kind in our jurisdiction. Lori's Place is always seeking donations, sponsorships, and fundraising support from the community. They may be reached at (520) 515-4444.



Forensic camera system at Lori's Place



Children's playroom at Lori's Place

CPA

In 2023, 19 students enrolled in SVPD's Citizens Police Academy. The free program runs three hours per week for 12 weeks, covering topics such as firearms, K9 program, drug investigations, evidence, and records. Intended for citizens of all backgrounds and occupations, the program promotes police-community relations and is designed to give citizens a better understanding of law enforcement.



Better Bucks | Better Work | Better Meals

In 2020 the City of Sierra Vista researched the feasibility of bringing a voucher program to Sierra Vista to help the homeless and panhandlers. This led to the creation of the local Better Bucks program and the non-profit organization, Better Bucks of Sierra Vista.

Better Bucks Sierra Vista launched in 2021. The concept of the program is to provide a way for people to give to those in need, knowing their gift will be used for something positive. Better Bucks provides booklets with five \$1 vouchers that can be used at specific merchants in Sierra Vista to purchase living essentials such as food, clothing, toiletries, and pet food. Alcohol or anything that can be used with illegal drugs cannot be purchased. Also inside the booklet is a list of local service providers such as: shelters, veteran assistance, food/clothing and utility assistance, job service, domestic violence, sexual assault, and behavioral health assistance. Once a month, merchants' receipts and Better Bucks are collected and verified and the merchant is then reimbursed for the products purchased. Since the inception of the Better Bucks

program, merchants have been reimbursed over \$39,000.

In 2023 the Better Bucks of Sierra Vista Board of Directors decided to pursue the idea of creating a homeless work program. This is where the Better Work program was born. With the assistance of the City of Sierra Vista and a grant from the Arizona Department of Housing (ADOH), Better Work was launched to provide day labor a few times a month for those experiencing homelessness. Participants in the program must be homeless by ADOH standards and be registered in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The work consists of light landscaping and trash clean up on either City property or State Trust land. As of May 2024, the Better Work program has removed 58,400 pounds of trash from the desert areas in Sierra Vista. Participants also help

at the Nancy J. Brua Animal Care Center with kennel cleaning, dog walking, and anything else that needs to be done. Our participants have earned \$25,295 since the inception of the program in January 2023.

In October 2023 Better Bucks Sierra Vista launched yet another program, Better Meals. At an event someone asked if students could use Better Bucks to purchase meals at school. This was a great question. We started working with the Sierra Vista Unified School District and created Better Meals. We found out individuals cannot make a direct donation to a school district, but a nonprofit can. Better Meals is designed so people or organizations donate to the program, and the nonprofit then donates that money to the school district. As of April 2024, we have received \$6,371 in donations, which equates to 1,941 meals for students.



Community Events

Annual community engagement events include:

Tip-a-Cop (at Vinny's) | 8/7/23 & Tip-a-Cop (at Pitstop Gourmet Burgers) | 3/26/24



Torch Run | 5/2/23



17th Annual Bearcat Pull for Special Olympics 2023 | 10/1/23



National Night Out 2023 | 10/3/23



THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to read this publication. It is our objective to openly share both the internal and external operations of the Sierra Vista Police Department as we strive for continued improvement in our mission to protect and serve the community. We look forward to meeting you at a future “Coffee with a Cop,” where we can discuss community policing on a more personal level.

Respectfully,

The Men and Women of the Sierra Vista Police Department

Command Staff



Chief Chris Hiser



Deputy Chief Armin Lewis



Commander Sean Brownson



Commander Lis Chatham



Lt. Jordan Boltinghouse



Lt. Bill Heiple



Lt. Anthony Venditto

Sergeants



Sgt. Brian Sebastian



Sgt. Tyrel Essary



Sgt. Tim Wachtel



Sgt. Justin Allyn



Sgt. Justin Dannels



Sgt. Paul Youman



Records Supervisor Megan Sariñana



Animal Control Supervisor Arleen Garcia

BE BOLD. BE YOURSELF. BE THERE FOR YOUR COMMUNITY.



Become a Police Officer

Join a passionate team of police officers committed to making a difference in their community. In Sierra Vista, there is a real opportunity to feel the positive impact police officers have on the people they serve. It's not just a place to work, it's a home where you can enjoy a rich life out of uniform, even as you find fulfillment in one.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

Police recruits start at \$57,433 per year and increase to \$58,582 after completing training and a one-year probational period. *Lateral officers may start at a higher wage based on experience and years of service.**

Officers receive full benefits including take-home car, ballistic vest, uniform allowance, life and dental insurance, medical insurance coverage that continues after normal retirement until eligible for medicare*, state retirement plan, college tuition assistance, add-pay and incentives for specialty training and assignments through career enhancement program, and more.

**Visit SierraVistaAZ.gov for detailed pay and benefit information.*

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

21 years of age at time of academy graduation, HS Diploma or GED, minimum 30 college credits (Joint Military Service Transcripts accepted), or 1.5 years of experience as a sworn peace officer, and the ability to pass extensive background investigation. Contact our recruiter for more details.



To learn more, visit SierraVistaAZ.gov/SVPDjobs, contact our recruiter at SVPDjobs@SierraVistaAZ.gov, or call (520) 439-2370.



Sierra Vista

A R I Z O N A

EXTRAORDINARY SKIES.
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Sierra Vista Police Department

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