



Fort Walton Beach Police Department

Year in Review 2022

Robert Bage, Chief of Police



Throughout 2022, the Fort Walton Beach Police Department continued its commitment to the success of the community. Officers partnered with many different organizations to further our goal of community engagement and making the community safer. We were able to successfully utilize social media to increase our outreach in 2022 in order to bring awareness on a variety of topics and to aid in bringing more investigations to a close.

Core Responsibilities:

- Ensure a highly visible police presence by utilizing innovative strategies, technology, equipment, to create a safer community for all.
- Provide professional and courteous services to all members of the community.
- Reduce the fear of crime and improve the City of Fort Walton Beach's quality of life through proactive crime prevention and investigative initiatives.
- Utilize intelligence-based policing through timely statistical analysis of crime trends to optimize crime reducing strategies based on specific problems and geographic locations.

2022 Major Accomplishments:

- Major Community Events:
 - Hosted: Construction Junction, Star Wars Day, School Crossing Guard Appreciation Day, National Night Out, National Coffee with a Cop, Grinch Glow Ride, Winter Wonderland, and a Junior Police Academy.
 - Parades: coordinated and participated in numerous small parades for special occasions, coordinated a holiday parade around an assisted living facility for the residents who could not have visitors, participated in the annual MLK parade, FWB Mardi Gras parade, Billy Bowlegs Torchlight parade, and the FWB Christmas parade.
 - Participated in: Kenwood Elementary School Field Day and Carnival, FWB Fourth of July Event, numerous trunk-or-treat events with local community groups, Children Clothing Project at HSU Foundation, Brooks Street Community Halloween event, and Wreaths Across America.
- Obtained our accreditation status from the State of Florida.
- Hosted a Winter Wonderland at the police department which 703 toys and \$827 in cash donations were collected for Toys of Tots. Over 1,000 people attended the event.
- The Department received two prestigious awards from the Florida Police Chief Association (FPCA). Corporal Weddington received Lee McGehee Police Officer of the Year Award for her exceptional contribution to increasing community engagement through social media and the Department has a whole received Rocky Pomerance Law Enforcement Excellence Award for its commitment to community policing.
- The Department increased its social media outreach to over 2,848 Instagram and 23,023 Facebook followers.
- During localized flooding caused by summer storms the department made several highwater rescues.
- Updated several City Codes which directly effect the quality of life in the community.
- The Department aided in the Sanibel PD recovery efforts from Hurricane Ian from Thanksgiving to New Years.
- The Department Received a first-place award from the Florida Department of Transportation at its Traffic Safety Awareness Challenge for being one of the top Traffic Safety Agencies in the State.
- Traffic crashes decreased by 10% (in 2021 they were also down) and traffic citations increased by 16%.
- Narcan deployment increased by 15% and overdose calls increased by 8% (both these numbers have increased each year over the past four years).
- The overall number of part one crimes reported increased slightly to the same number of crimes as reported in 2020. The number of crimes reported in 2022 was the second lowest number since 1995.
- Developed a validated Physical Abilities Test for all police officers to help ensure fitness and wellness of the officers.



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Quantitative Performance Measures	2022	2021	2020
Part One Crimes (murder, manslaughter, sex offenses, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and arson)	547	532	547
Use of Force Incidents	22	21	22
Officers Hired	3	6	8
Traffic Crashes	809	899	1,193
Traffic Tickets	2,224	1,920	1,566
Adult Arrests	587	590	513
Juvenile Arrests	68	38	79
DUI	139	92	79
Public Requests for Calls for Service	17,214	18,856	18,396
Officer Initiated Calls for Service	18,449	21,841	19,305
Total Calls for Service	35,663	40,697	37,701
Response Time to Priority 1 Calls	5:52	4:42	:56

2023 Major Projects and Initiatives:

- Continue to partner with local stakeholders to educate the public and mentor the youth.
- Enhance the daily operations by providing state-of-the-art technology and practical training.
- Focus on professionalism and respect throughout daily activities within the community and department.
- Maintain our accreditation status.
- Identify and apply for grants from public and private sources to expand capacity and resources with minimal fiscal impact.
- Launch the Fusus video system to allow for the sharing of video from community sources to the Department to enhance real time intelligence and aid in criminal investigations.
- Enhance the in-car video capacity for marked units with LPR and advanced video recording.
- Update the Record Management System for the Department to a more stable platform to provide better data retrieval and analysis.
- Identify strategies to mitigate the opioid epidemic and other illegal drug issues.
- Continue to work on the feasibility of a police training facility center at One Hopeful Place and opportunities for natural resource and boating enforcement.
- Continue to partner with other City Departments on beautification efforts and quality of life issues.