



Fort Walton Beach Police Department

Year in Review 2023

Robert Bage, Chief of Police



Throughout 2023, 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 continued our strong commitment to community first policing.

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 led policing through timely statistical analysis of crime trends to optimize crime reducing strategies based on specific problems and geographic locations.

2023 Major Accomplishments:

- Major Community Events:
 - Hosted: Construction Junction, Star Wars 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: Zombie Walk, FWB Fourth of July Event, numerous trunk-or-treat events with local community groups, Ruck March Fundraiser, Children Clothing Project at HSU Foundation, Brooks Street Community Halloween event, and Wreaths Across America.
 - Winter Wonderland at the police department in which three truckloads of toys and \$2,718 in cash donations were collected for Toys of Tots and other organizations. Over 1,000 people attended the event. The event was moved from Chester Pruitt Park to the NW Florida Fairgrounds this year. This larger space enabled the event to be an indoor / outdoor event with the pallet houses being set up outside and the vendors indoors. This increased both vendor participation and attendance.
- Maintained our accreditation status from the State of Florida, assisted 5 other agencies with assessments and provided our attestation of our active shooter policy to be in compliance with FDLE standards.
- The Department increased its social media outreach to 3,162 on Instagram and 31,667 Facebook followers.
- Updated several City Codes to address quality of life issues in the community and started to issue civil citations.
- Traffic citations increased by 61%.
- Narcan deployments increased by 9% and overdose calls decreased by 6%.
- Launched the Fusus video system. This system allows for the sharing of video from community sources to the Department to enhance real time intelligence and aid in criminal investigations.
- Enhanced the in-car video capacity for marked units with license plate readers and advanced recording options.
- Evaluated CAD RMS Systems, and selected Tyler Technologies to be implemented in 2024.
- Applied for and received an FDLE Grant for funding to assist with the eradication of fentanyl.
- Applied for and received a Regional Dive Team Grant which provided 2 diver positions.
- Applied for and received an FDOT Traffic & Impaired Driving Grant to focus on impaired drivers.
- Continue to work with the Community Traffic Safety Team which was able to partner with FDOT for lane delineators on Perry Ave, a traffic study which showed a need for signal at Beal and 1ST Street and to move back the stop bar at Perry and Elgin to allow for better visibility. These enhancements improved traffic safety in our community.



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Statistical Comparisons:

Quantitative Performance Measures	2023	2022
Group A Offenses (Arson, Assault, Burglary, Narcotics Offenses, Fraud, Homicide, Kidnapping, Robbery, Sex Offenses, Weapons Violations & Theft)	1,255	1,148
Group B Offenses (any crime that is not a Group A Offense)	1,182	1,267
Total Crime	2,437	2,415
Total Use of Force	31	40
Officers Hired	6	3
Traffic Crashes	848	809
Traffic Tickets	3,586	2,224
Adult Arrests	647	587
Juvenile Arrests	67	68
Ordinance Violations	127	34
DUI	183	139
Public Requests for Calls for Service	17,928	17,214
Officer Initiated Calls for Service	17,767	18,449
Total Calls for Service	35,695	35,663
Priority 1 Calls: Call to Dispatch	2:53	2:33
Priority 1 Calls: Dispatch to on Scene	3:38	3:19

2024 Major Projects and Initiatives:

- Continue to partner with local stakeholders to educate the public, mentor the youth and reduce the fear of crime.
- 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.
- Identify strategies to mitigate the opioid epidemic and other illegal drug issues, such as forming your life was saved team which would respond to locations where reversal drugs were dispensed for an in-person follow-up.
- Continue to work on the feasibility of a police training facility center at One Hopeful Place.
- Explorer opportunities for natural resource and boating enforcement.
- Continue to partner with other City Departments on beautification efforts and quality of life issues.
- Implement the new CAD RMS System from Tyler Technologies. This will provide a more stable platform and will provide better data retrieval and analysis for intelligent led policing.
- Develop the Community Code Compliance and Crime Prevention Officer's role and focus on Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).
- Building Improvements:
 - Carport project – Once completed, this project will prevent degradation and loss of city assets by providing a covered area for specialty vehicles and speed trailers.
 - Functional Fitness Gym project – Once completed, the upstairs gym and training facility will provide our Officers with additional physical fitness opportunities, as well as advanced dynamic training scenarios.