

Brown Co Sheriff provides 2022 annual report

Editor's note: the following was submitted by Brown County Sheriff John Merchant

(KNZA)--For 2022, the Brown County Sheriffs dispatchers received approximately 5800, 911 calls which averages approximately 16 calls per day, this includes Sheriffs Office, City of Hiawatha, Town and Country Ambulance, Squad 48, multiple fire departments, tribal police. Total number of calls other than 911 to dispatch was approximately 55,000 or 150 calls per day on average. When you combine the two, over 60,000 total calls were handled by dispatchers. We are very fortunate to have the caliber of dispatchers that we currently have. These folks are responsible for obtaining and disseminating accurate information to the proper agencies in a timely and efficient manner. Their job is very demanding and detail oriented. By statistic, dispatch positions are the hardest to fill due to the amount of multi-tasking involved and the high stress that comes with the position.

The following are a majority of the statistics of what was handled at the Brown County Sheriffs office level.

Accident reports--3 fatalities 193

Animal Calls 121

Assist other Agency Calls 286

Assault/Battery calls 13

Building Checks 155

Burglary Calls 4

Car Seat/ CINC 37

Civil Calls 35

Community Policing 58

Criminal Damage to Property 22

Criminal Threat/Trespass 10

Pedestrian Check 45

Offender Registrations 315

Narcotics/DUI's 123

Subpoena Service 1268

Suspicious Vehicle/person 61

Theft 33

Traffic Stops 1488

VIN 286

Warrants 211

Welfare Check 120

Vehicle Lock Outs, Vehicle Checks 414

Drone Deployments 13

Informational/Miscellaneous 562

Reckless Driving, Traffic Complaint, etc 140

The jail portion of the Sheriffs Office has held over 450 different inmates in the 2022 year with an average daily population of approximately 18. These inmates are all arrests of Brown County entities. Very seldom do we house any out of county inmates and if so, is done for a very short period of time under special circumstance. Jail staff are responsible for many areas of the jail and have many duties. From inmate observation, booking, timely jail inmate checks and documentation, preparing meals, kitchen and utensil clean-up, general upkeep, taking inmates to court, visitation, washing inmate uniforms, handling inmate complaints/concerns, medical observation, jail maintenance, etc.

We have been very blessed to be a location where the "NO HUNGER SUMMER" program has been offered to children and families in our basement during the summer months. This is a wonderful project that has brought together some very dedicated volunteers to make sure kids have noon meals during the week, so hunger wouldn't be an option.

The Sheriffs office car seat program has helped more than 1000 families to provide safe travel for children in the last 14 years. This program is funded through grants from the State and donations from the public. We also inspect car

seats and provide safety information to parents and caregivers about the importance of proper car seat use, installation and care. We have 3 deputies who are CPS Techs and one who is a CPS instructor. We have partnered with Amberwell and their technicians to broaden services to the public.

Since we have dispatchers available 24/7, I decided that we should accept unwanted, unused or expired medications at all hours of the night and day, any day of the year. At any time people can drop off this medication at dispatch. We have been participants of the NATIONAL TAKEBACK event since its inception approximately 10 years ago and have turned in more than 2,800 pounds of medication to be destroyed by the DEA.

We are also very proud of the fact that as of this year, we have certified over 1800 high school students and staff in First Aid, CPR and AED at no cost to them. Several years ago, Kansas required all students learn these very important life saving skills before graduating. We have been certifying students for the last 9 years through the generosity of the Ruth and Roger Wolf Charitable Trust, grants and other donations. We have 7 certified instructors at the Sheriffs office. We are also pleased to announce that this year we have been classified as a "Training Facility" by KS CPR which will allow us to certify our instructors in house. By providing these life saving skills, we have enabled the students to render aid to each other in case of an active shooter situation, vehicle accident, farming accident, while baby-sitting or family medical emergency. We have had several students and staff inform us that they had actually put these skills to use and have saved lives, that is quite a testimony for the importance of this program. This also provides us the opportunity to work with students at a different level in hopes to inspire them to pursue a career in law enforcement or emergency services.

Each deputy patrols an average of 150-200 miles per shift, going through the small towns daily. Deputies are responsible for serving papers, traffic stops, rendering aid to citizens, answering complaints, working cases, making arrests, serving warrants, attend multiple training classes, Sheriff briefings, testifying in court, proper maintenance of their vehicles, etc., etc. Vehicle stops are an important part of crime deterrent as officer presence is not favored by those who choose to break the law. Statistics have proven that a proactive law enforcement agency has a major impact on reducing crime rates, this is verified by the 2021 KBI CRIME INDEX. I encourage everyone to go to the KBI website and view the statistics.

We are very thankful for the generosity of supporters of the Brown County Sheriff's Office which enabled us to purchase a DRONE over a year ago. The DRONE was 100% funded by donations and has been used on various situations in our county and surrounding counties. We have specific staff that train regularly so they can keep up to date on operation and maintenance. This is a

resource that we would have been unable to have without the community support and we appreciate you all!

I firmly believe in the effort that we have put forth in notifying the public on scams that are circulating our county has made a positive difference. By informing and educating our county residents, we have a much safer county and have very few victims when it comes to money loss or identity theft due to scammers. Many residents thank me for coordinating and forwarding this information to our local media so they can be kept up to date.

Since being elected as your Sheriff, we have worked many major cases involving successful prosecution as well as protecting and serving the citizens of Brown County in a professional manner. Your safety and welfare is and always will be one of the most important aspects of my office. As with any political or law enforcement position, there will always be those who criticize or condemn but thankfully, there aren't too many. I have always believed in doing the right thing versus the popular thing and there are some who do not agree with this philosophy and I am OK with that. I have a very proactive group of employees that I am very proud of and they deserve all the credit when it comes to all of our accomplishments in the county. As time goes by, law enforcement positions are getting harder and harder to fill so I consider myself blessed when it comes to my staff.

I would like to express my thank you to our county residents for their cooperation and support of the Brown County Sheriffs office. Many are very comfortable reporting issues that happen within the county which helps us solve crime due to increased patrol and passing on of the information to the appropriate authorities. We have made and solved many cases due to the fact that you feel comfortable sharing information with us, our citizens are our greatest assets when it comes to crime prevention. It has always been my goal to provide Brown County citizens with the best employees as possible so their concerns and issues are met satisfactorily, and provide them a safer place to live and raise a family.

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