

WISE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE ANNUAL REPORT

2016



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Message from the Sheriff

Dear Citizen,

The Wise County Sheriff's office is committed to providing quality services for all citizens. Our office has established the highest performance standards and expectations from which there can be no deviation. The employees of the Wise County Sheriff's Office are aware of the important responsibilities and duties they have as public servants. It is important that the citizens of the County of Wise and the City of Norton have complete confidence in their sheriff's office. Should we fail to meet your expectations in any manner, I want to hear about it. We welcome and appreciate your feedback.

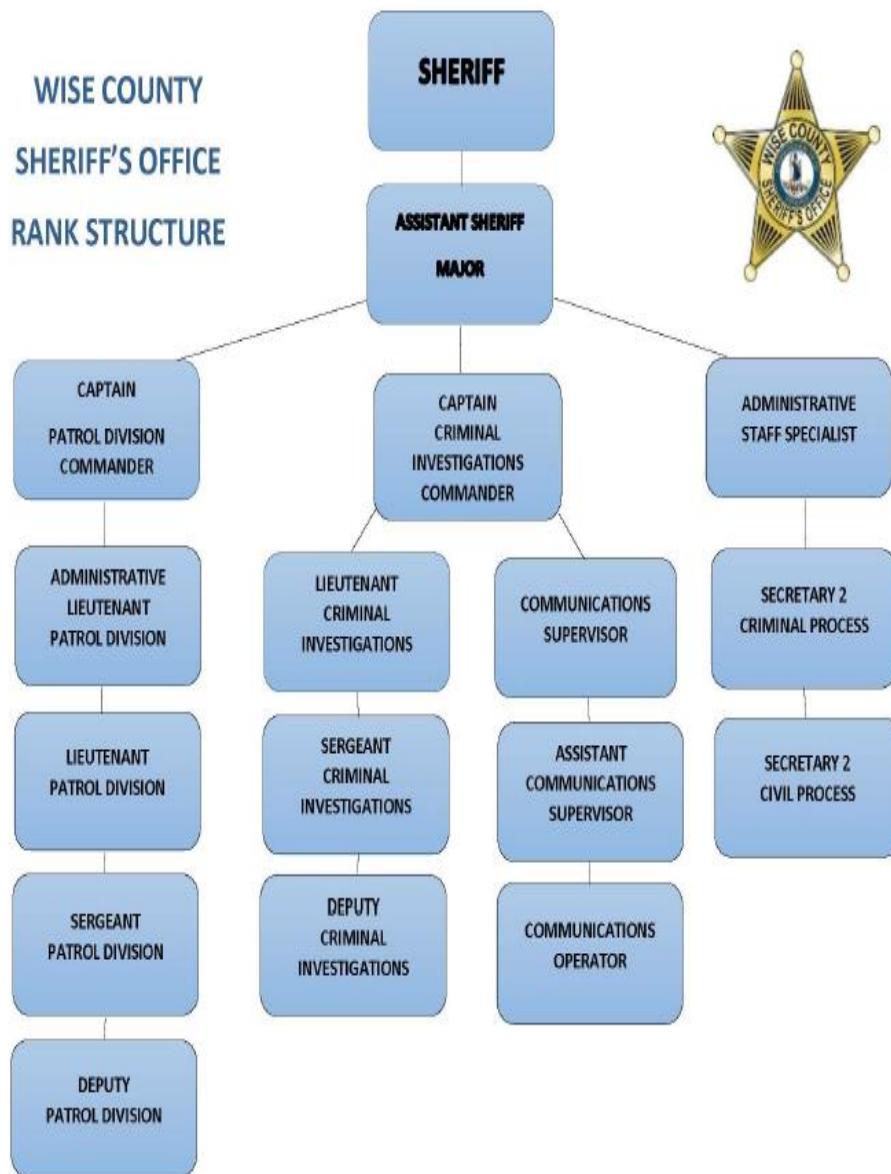
Sincerely,

R.D. Oakes
Sheriff

The Wise County Sheriff's Office Mission Statement:

**“Committed
to
Excellence”**

Rank Structure





Accreditation

In 2002, the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC) accredited the Wise County Sheriff's Office. This agency governs law enforcement accreditation in the State of Virginia.

Accreditation recognizes the Wise County Sheriff's Office as exemplifying the best in current law enforcement practices.

2006 (First Re-accreditation)

On April 26, 2006 representatives from VLEPSC met with members of the Sheriff's Office to observe agency components, equipment, and programs; a standard's folder review, and a thorough inspection of the agency's equipment and organization. The team completed its assessment in well under the normal time period and gave the department high praise. Sheriff Oakes, Major Vanover, and Sgt. Meade attended the annual VLAEC Conference where Sheriff Oakes was presented with the Certificate of Re-accreditation.

2010 (Second Re-accreditation)

A VLEPSC assessment team visited the Wise County Sheriff's Office on April 27-29 to thoroughly review Sheriff's Office procedures to determine compliance with program standards, which included Administration, Operations, Personnel, and Training. The team unanimously recommended the Sheriff's Office be re-accredited at the VLEPSC Board meeting in May. A Certificate of Re-accreditation was presented to Sheriff Oakes.

2014 (Third Re-accreditation)

A VLEPSC assessment team visited the Wise County Sheriff's Office in May to thoroughly review Sheriff's Office procedures to determine compliance with program standards, which included Administration, Operations, Personnel, and Training. The team unanimously recommended the Sheriff's Office be re-accredited at the VLEPSC Board meeting in July. A Certificate of Re-accreditation was presented to Sheriff Oakes.

PATROL DIVISION

The patrol division of the sheriff's office provides the front line of law enforcement services to the citizens of Wise County and the City of Norton. The patrol division consists of four platoons providing services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In addition, the patrol division is responsible for responding to calls for service, conducting preliminary criminal investigations, responding to emergencies, enforcing traffic laws, and investigating accidents.

Other duties of the patrol division:

- Escorts for charity events: walk-a-thons, hike-a-thons, etc....
- Funeral escorts
- Speaking arrangements for school career days
- Assist Fire and Rescue at emergency scenes/Hazmat/Disaster/Severe Weather
- Search and rescue for lost/missing person(s)
- Assist Crime Prevention Unit with presentations/demonstrations
- Transport of mentally ill to other counties
- Transport inmates to and from court
- Unlock vehicles

The patrol division provides law enforcement and peace keeping services to over 412 square miles in Wise County and the City of Norton with a population of 43,657. Our patrol deputies conduct follow-up interviews, with victims and witnesses, bringing investigations to a conclusion, which plays a very active part in law enforcement.

The sheriff's office and its' patrol division's main purpose is to serve the public while protecting and defending lives and property. The department is also dedicated to the prevention and repression of criminal and delinquent

behavior, identification, apprehension of and conviction of offenders, traffic flow and collision reduction, and the maintenance of order and public peace.

The following information is intended to provide a brief overview of some of the more notable statistics and occurrences during 2016.

Calls for Service – 18,390
Criminal Warrants Served – 3,260
Mental Patient Transports – 116
Emergency Custody Orders - 92
Juvenile Transports – 84
Summons Issued – 960
Reportable Motor Vehicle Accidents – 70
DUI Charges – 87
Out of State Extraditions – 82
In State Transports - 39

The patrol division consists of several units including:

Sheriff's Response Team: The Wise County Sheriff's Office Sheriff's Response Team is a unit of specially selected, trained and equipped personnel to contain, stabilize and/or conclude situations including, but not limited to, armed and barricaded criminal or demented persons, hostage cases, high risk search warrants, sniper incidents, and any known or threatened ambush attacks with the ultimate goal to protect the lives of citizens and resolve the special situation task. The team was formed in 1994, and has made several advancements in training and equipment under the guidance of Sheriff Ronnie Oakes during its 23 year existence.

SRT trains on a monthly basis and was activated a total of twenty-one times in 2016. These activations ranged from high risk arrest warrant service and execution of high risk search warrants.

Canine: This function is responsible for answering calls for service and enforcement as requested as well as providing back-up assistance, building searches, tracking/locating persons, and school searches when requested.

The K-9 teams are a critical part of this agency's work. They have a long history in this office going back 21 years with the arrival of K-9 Bau in 1996. Since then, our units have grown in numbers, skill and professionalism. Today they are valued more than ever and play a key role in building goodwill for WCSO in the local community. Through constant appearances in parades, fairs, and other community events, these teams create a

connection with people and particularly with children that is absolutely unique. The teams consist of Canine Handler Sgt. Ryan Vanover and K-9 Jeckyll; and Canine Handler Deputy Garth Nicely and K9 Dixie.

School Resource/D.A.R.E.: This function conducts the school resource and D.A.R.E. programs in the Wise County Public School system. The Wise County Sheriff's Office currently has seven deputies assigned to schools. They are supervised by Lt. Brad Mullins. There are currently four SROs certified as D.A.R.E. instructors, and they have taught the program to well over 400 students in 2016.

Civil Process: This function receives, processes, and serves all legal documents requiring sheriff's service. They include summons, subpoenas, writs, levies, warrants in debt, and other legal notices as disseminated by the courts. The sheriff serves as the enforcement officer of the courts and legal community regarding civil matters. Within the Sheriff's Office, civil process servers execute and serve various legal processes issued by the non-criminal courts of the state and its subdivisions, as well as the legal community and the general public. The purpose of civil process is to give a defendant notice that a legal action or a proceeding is going to commence. Specific civil processes include income executions, property executions, evictions, orders of attachment (seizures of property which may be used to satisfy a judgment); orders of seizure (seizures of items of personal property whose ownership and possession is disputed); and civil arrests. In each case, papers must be delivered in person to the defendant.

Below is a summary of the performance of the civil process servers during 2016:

Subpoenas Received - 6,498
Jury Summons Received – 647
Levies Received – 107
DMV Notices Received - 125
Other Civil Process Received – 17,753
Total Civil Papers Received – 25,130
Total Civil Process Served – 19,959

Domestic Violence: This function receives, processes, and provides seventy-two hour follow up on all domestic violence cases. The Domestic Violence Program for Wise County was established in January 1999, when Sheriff R.D. Oakes applied for and was awarded a grant through the Department of Criminal Justice Services. This program provides follow-ups to the citizens of Wise County and the city of Norton who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. The domestic violence officer conducts follow-

ups, which require them to re-contact the victim and provide them with information on the resources that are available to them, such as, the Hope House, counseling centers, victim/witness program, and hotline numbers. They answer any questions the victim may have regarding referrals and the service we provide. The Wise County Sheriff's Office also has a cellular phone program whereby we issue recycled cellular phones to victims so they can call 911 should their abuser continue to harass or harm them.

The Wise County Sheriff's Office responded to 339 domestic disturbance calls in 2016.

COURT SECURITY

The court security staff is responsible for maintaining order and proper decorum in all courts. Our court security staff is also responsible for assisting the public. The Wise County Courthouse went through a major security upgrade during 2014, to include secured doors, alarm systems, camera systems, and a central check-in and screening area for all visitors to the courthouse. In 2016 there were 102,346 visitors that came through this screening area before entering the courthouse.

Court Security Deputies attended advanced courthouse security training at the academy in Bristol, VA. This training was provided by RAD training Inc. All Bailiff's Received NARCAN training and are now equipped with NARCAN medication. Three Bailiff's received Judicial Security Specialist training. One Bailiff received FBI Crisis Negotiation Training. Two Bailiffs attended Surviving Verbal Conflict.

In 2016 Court Security was responsible for the following courts and judges:

Circuit Court

Circuit Court Days - 443

Average Number Circuit Court Judges - 2

Grand Juries – 12

Multi-Jurisdictional Grand Juries – 4

Special Grand Juries - 3

General District Court

General District Court Days - 242

Average Number General District Court Judges - 2

Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court

Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Days - 204

Average Number Juvenile and Domestic Relations Judges – 2

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

The sheriff's office promotes safety and crime protection through community involvement and targeted campaigns, which benefit and educate citizens. The sheriff's office is also proud to participate in festivals, parades and community days. During the year deputies conduct several community presentations to schools and community groups on safety, security, and general law enforcement issues. The sheriff's office has an active presence on social media with Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts. These social media platforms are used to interact with the community, provide emergency updates, and give a glimpse into the inner workings of the sheriff's office. Below are a few of the community programs we conduct.

Project Lifesaver - Project Lifesaver is an innovative and rapidly growing program aiding the victims and families suffering Alzheimer's Disease and related disorders such as Down's Syndrome and Autism. Project Lifesaver uses state-of-the-art technology employing wristband transmitters to locate wandering and lost adults and children.

Good Morning Wise County Program – This is a program where a volunteer assists the Sheriff's Office in contacting senior citizens, who have enrolled in the program, and checks on their welfare. It creates a mechanism to provide family members peace of mind knowing the Sheriff's Office is checking on their loved one.

Neighborhood Watch Program – This is a program that brings community members together that are devoted to crime prevention. Meetings are conducted that are led by the crime prevention officer. Community members can express concerns and report any suspicious activity, as well as receive updates on crime occurring in the area.

TRAINING

The Wise County Sheriff's Office currently has 22 instructors certified through the Department of Criminal Justice Services and are responsible for teaching academy curriculum. In addition to teaching at the academy instructors conduct in-house training at the sheriff's office. Many are certified in more than one specialty. Their certifications are as follows:

General Instructors – 23
Firearms – 11
Defensive Tactics – 3
Driver Training – 4
Standardized Field Sobriety Testing – 1
RADAR - 2
ASP Baton – 2
Chemical Munitions/Less Lethal Munitions/Flashbangs – 3
Ballistic Breaching - 1
Taser – 4
VCIN – 1
CPR/First Aid – 3
Active Shooter – 4
Active Shooter (Woodland) - 3
NARCAN Trainers – 3

In 2016, sheriff's personnel received 5,493 hours of training.

GRANTS

The Wise County Sheriff's Office actively seeks grant funding to improve the capabilities of this office, without placing an additional financial burden on the tax payers of Wise County. During 2016 the sheriff's office received a total of \$322,309 in grant funding. Grant funds of \$141,500 covered the costs of three additional positions, two school resource officers and one domestic violence officer. Equipment with a value of \$103,919 was funded, along with \$23,250 that was allocated for overtime pay. Grant funds in the amount of \$15,000 were awarded that were used to continue our Synthetic Drug Education Outreach program. This grant funded program has provided educational materials to be handed out in schools, neighborhood watch meetings, and community outreach events to help combat the growing synthetic drug problem Wise County faces. Grant funds in the amount of \$37,390 were obtained from the Department of Criminal Justice to purchase evidence storage upgrades to house firearms for persons under protective orders. The sheriff's office also received a community grant from Wal-Mart in the amount of \$1,250 to purchase the opioid antidote NARCAN to be issued to all deputies.

The sheriff's office is an active participant in the federal government 10-33 military surplus program. This program repurposes military equipment for the use of law enforcement. During 2016 we received approximately \$36,520 worth of equipment to be used by deputies. We also received an equipment donation valued at approximately \$4,500 for training mats, training batons, and training pads from the United States Deputy Sheriff's

Association. Adapt Pharma donated 54 doses of NARCAN valued at \$4,266 to help supply deputies with the opioid antidote.

COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

The Communications Division provides a central location for the public and all emergency services to report and receive emergency assistance. This is achieved primarily through the use of the emergency phone number 911, however, they also answer four administrative phone lines. The call volume for all lines is over 11,000 calls per month. This volume includes over 13% cellular phone calls. From the communications center we dispatch assistance to the public from the following agencies: the sheriff's office, and emergency service providers for the towns of Appalachia, Big Stone Gap, Coeburn, Pound, St. Paul, and Wise. They also dispatch for other entities including; the University of Virginia's College at Wise Campus Police Department, Wise County Animal Control, Wise County Litter Control, Wise County Social Services, court service units, the conservation police, and the federal and state forestry officers.

In addition to providing a basic communications service the dispatch center is able to provide officers and others with mapping, blueprints, and other information critical to successfully managing an emergency situation.

Each dispatcher is trained and certified through the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. This certification allows access to the VCIN files for information regarding histories, stolen guns, articles, boats, and motor vehicles. Another required certification is Emergency Medical Dispatch, through the National Academies of Emergency Dispatch. This certification provides dispatchers with professional training, as well as sound medical protocols, which help them deliver quality care and instruction to the calling public with emergency medical needs.

Radio communications with all agencies are handled through the 911 communications center. Our radio system supports the sheriff's office and all municipal police departments in the county. Expansion capabilities are built in and can accommodate other uses such as county agencies, fire and rescue, as the need arises.

The backbone of our emergency system is the 911 phone system and related equipment. This system allows our dispatch personnel to have visual information regarding the call location immediately upon receiving the call. This is immensely helpful in today's environment. With the expansion that has taken place in our county, there is no way one could quickly obtain the necessary driving directions needed to dispatch emergency personnel to a given area. Additionally, emergency responders assigned to that particular location are displayed for the dispatcher to have immediate knowledge of

where and who to respond to the specific location. This system is supported financially with a monthly surcharge placed on all telephone lines.

There are currently twelve full time tele-communicators working in central dispatch. During the year of 2016 we had a turnover rate of 50% due to scheduling and a lower salary base compared to the average salary rates of other PSAP's in the state and nationwide.

The 911 communications center is fully operational 24 hours a day 7, days a week.

The total number of calls received for 2016 was 134,153. The Wise County Sheriff's Office was dispatched to over 20,000 of those calls.

Criminal Investigative Division

When a citizen reports a crime most often a patrol deputy is the first to respond to the incident. If the responding patrol deputy cannot resolve the reported case it is referred to an investigator.

The Wise County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigative Division is comprised of five full time certified deputies. The investigators are veteran deputies who have experience and extensive training in investigation techniques. Their primary duty is to provide in-depth investigation of cases.

Investigators are designated the duty and responsibility of case and crime scene management. Through their training in criminal investigation techniques they have the experience to approach the crime in a systematic method to bring the case to a conclusion. Our investigators analyze large quantities of information, establish leads and pursue those leads through contacting and questioning victims, witnesses and potential perpetrators.

Our investigators have completed comprehensive instruction in death, arson, fraud, larceny, burglary, sex crimes, cyber-crime and juvenile investigations. The sheriff's office does have two deputies who have completed the Virginia Forensic Science Academy, a 10-week school of crime scene technology, taught by the Department of Forensic Science.

Of the five investigators one of the investigators is assigned full time duty to investigate controlled substance violations. This investigator has the responsibility to follow up on complaints or information provided by citizens or law enforcement. This investigator also has the responsibility of apprehension and arrest of persons possessing illegal controlled substance with intent to sell or distribute.

Some Specific functions of the criminal investigative division are as follows:

- Investigate serious crime - and less serious crimes upon request or as needed
- Perform drug suppression operations
- Collect, analyze and disseminate criminal intelligence
- Liaison with other local, state and Federal investigative agencies/units
- Liaison with Commonwealth Attorneys, Attorney General, and the United States Attorney's Offices
- Conduct pre-employment background investigations
- Conduct internal affairs investigations
- Collect and examine evidence at crime scenes
- Maintain custody of physical and drug evidence
- Provide protective services
- Conduct sensitive or special interest investigations as directed by the Sheriff

In 2016 the criminal investigative division managed 194 reported investigations to the Wise County Sheriff's Office. In addition to these reported cases the division also assisted other agencies or investigated numerous other unreported case as well as writing and conducting search warrants.

CID investigated the following reported cases in 2016:

- Narcotic Violations - 51
- Drug Overdose Deaths – 8
- Accidental deaths--1
- Suicides - 2
- DOA – 35
- Homicides – 1
- Infant/Child Deaths—1
- Suspicious/Uncertain Death--1
- Sex Offences Against Children – 25
- Sex Offences Against Adults -8
- Child Pornography - 3
- Child Abuse – 5
- Missing Juvenile--1
- Felony Assault – 6
- Attempted Murder--3
- Weapon Violations – 2

Accidental Gunshots--4
Robbery – 2
Threats – 1
Breaking & Entering - 11
Grand Larceny – 13
Destruction of Property--1
Identity Theft, Fraud, Forgery, Embezzlement - 3
Arson/Fire – 6
Warrant Service -1

Citizens are encouraged to call or contact an Investigator should they have information regarding a crime or ongoing criminal activity.

CONCLUSION

As you can see from our annual report the Wise County Sheriff's Office has been extremely busy during 2016. Our dispatch center received 134,153 calls, of which the sheriff's office was dispatched to 20,208 of them. We have seen the resignation of eight employees, the hiring of one patrol deputy, and six dispatchers. We have continually tried to improve our training, equipment, and capabilities to better serve the citizens of Wise County and the City of Norton. We received several thousands of dollars in grant funding which has allowed us to better equip and serve our citizens. We have implemented a department wide body camera program, which was funded through grant money, and trained all deputies in the use of NARCAN which may potentially save a life. We look forward to an even more successful and productive year in 2017.