

# Allegheny County Sheriff's Office

Annual Report for 2008



# ALLEGAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2008

BLAINE A. KOOPS  
SHERIFF

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## OVERVIEW

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In 2008 the Allegan County Sheriff's Office continued to focus on the use of technology, the services of volunteers, and streamlining current processes in order to meet the growing demand for services. In-car mobile computer terminals were installed in patrol vehicles, a major law enforcement software upgrade was completed, and a continually updated, interactive website all combined to enable us to maximize personnel efficiency with available resources. The use of volunteer services became more routine. Whether serving as Reserve or Mounted Deputies, as members of the Victim Services Unit, or as part of the Senior Citizen Triad, volunteers were another method used to *"provide excellent services that enhance the quality of life."* Policies and procedures have undergone continual review in an effort to keep current with ever-changing laws.

The financial turmoil in the nation also affected our activities; the Sheriff's Office staff processed more than twice the number of mortgage sales and adjournments than in 2007. Concern over the economy and rumored possible changes in firearms laws are believed to have been the reason the number of handguns registered in Allegan County increased approximately 43% over 2007. During the first three months of 2009, Concealed Pistol License applications have doubled compared to the same period in 2008.

A review of the graphs and charts included with this report will provide greater detail on specific aspects of this overview. The decrease in traffic crashes reported and traffic citations issued may be attributed to the sharp increase in fuel prices, along with a decrease in employment. While calls for service stayed relatively static, the proportion of those that came directly from citizens rather than being discovered while on patrol showed a significant increase. Part I crimes which are reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation appear to have leveled off after a steady climb for several years. The number of case reports transcribed increased, although it appears that most of the increase was for incidents of a non-criminal nature.

Even with the financial struggles, the Sheriff's Office was able to make progress on many of the goals outlined in the 2008-2010 Strategic Plan. A major update was installed on the software used by law enforcement, corrections, and clerical personnel. This update will allow greater ease of use and improved access to data. A Peer Support Team was developed by staff to assist their fellow employees with difficulties they may be facing. Emergency Management was integrated to become part of the Sheriff's Office. A multi-jurisdictional

Focused Investigation Team was brought together to work on major “cold” cases; four arrests were made in two cases.

The struggle to reach a consensus on the size, location, and funding of the badly needed corrections facility required a great deal of time and attention. Corrections staff continued to work closely with the Courts to keep the inmate population down as much as possible through the use of programs and other alternatives to incarceration. Unfortunately, the net result is that inmates who remain housed in the facility are those who are charged with the most serious crimes. This, combined with a facility that has been deemed unsafe, has led us to the critical state we face today. A safe and secure correctional facility is a must. It must be funded, whether through a millage increase, or a service decrease. The citizens of Allegan County should decide which scenario is acceptable.

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## BUDGET

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Holding expenditures to a minimum has led to cost savings in a number of areas of the Sheriff's budget in recent years. In five out of the last six years, the Sheriff's Office has actually returned money from its budget allocated funds back to the county.

In 2005 over \$315,000 was returned, and in 2006 that number rose to \$348,000. In 2007 \$189,000 was returned, and in 2008 \$255,000. In all, since 2003, the Sheriff's Office has returned over \$1.1 million dollars in unexpended budgeted funds back to the county.

During that same period, over 31,112 bed days were saved through the use of community corrections programming. Calculated at the rate of \$35 per day (which is the current average rate charged to house an inmate) community corrections programs can be credited with saving taxpayers over an additional \$1 million dollars in housing costs alone.

Additionally, several of these programs actually brought in funds, in addition to reducing bed days. Since 2003, over \$200,000 in revenue has come from community corrections programming, through charging weekend community service participants a fee to cover the cost of their supervision, to fees received from the agencies making use of the DEBTS (Detail Enabling Better Transition to Society) crews.

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## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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### **RESERVE DIVISION**

The Sheriff's Office and the community greatly benefitted from the services of this dedicated division. Combined, the members of this unit logged over 9,700 hours during 2008, with more than half of those hours being unpaid time. Reserve Deputies serve as second officers in a patrol unit during busy periods, help serve subpoenas, perform vacation property checks, work security at the Courthouse, perform traffic control, patrol at the County Fair, and serve at many community events.

### **DIVE TEAM**

The Dive/Rescue Team accomplished a great deal during 2008 including a badly needed update to some of their equipment, public safety diving certification of all divers, specialized training in diving in currents, diving in icy waters and diving physiology. Four new members were added to the dive team, and procedures and guidelines were developed and finalized. The dive team responded to 9 calls for service in 2008, five of which were fatal drownings.

### **CITIZEN SATISFACTION SURVEY**

The Sheriff-Community Relations Advisory Board (SCRAB) continued polling citizens who had recently had contact with a member of the Sheriff's Office in order to gain their feedback on the services obtained.

Results from 2008 surveys essentially mirrored those obtained in 2007. Thirty-six percent of respondents advised that the deputy arrived within 6-15 minutes of their call; 60% of respondents reported that they had called for service one time in the last five years; 36% reported they were involved as the victim of a crime and 38% had personal contact with a uniformed officer. The majority of respondents rated Sheriff's personnel as "most satisfactory" regarding professionalism, courtesy, explanation provided, personnel's knowledge, and timeliness. For more in-depth data, see the Sheriff Department's website at [www.allegancounty.org/sheriff](http://www.allegancounty.org/sheriff)

### **175<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Sheriff-Community Relations Advisory Board (SCRAB) is working jointly with the Allegan County Historical Society to develop and promote a celebration of the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Allegan County Sheriff's Office. The celebration will take place in August

of 2010, and the public will be invited to participate in the festivities. Watch for further details as they become available.

## VICTIM SERVICES UNIT

The Allegan County Victim Services Unit (VSU) has been providing assistance to victims and victims' family members during the traumatic time immediately following a fatal vehicle crash, suicide, homicide or similar incident since it was established in 2001. The team is made up of volunteers from throughout Allegan County who rotate through a 24/7 on-call schedule. These volunteers not only provide needed assistance to victims, but in turn free up law enforcement personnel so they may continue investigation of the incident. The VSU is available upon request to any law enforcement agency in Allegan County. During 2008, the 25 member Victim Services Unit responded to 105 requests for service, including assisting on 40 death notifications, 4 fatal crashes, 4 suicides and 5 accidental deaths. Volunteers continued to follow-up with families through hospital visits, funeral attendance and phone calls.

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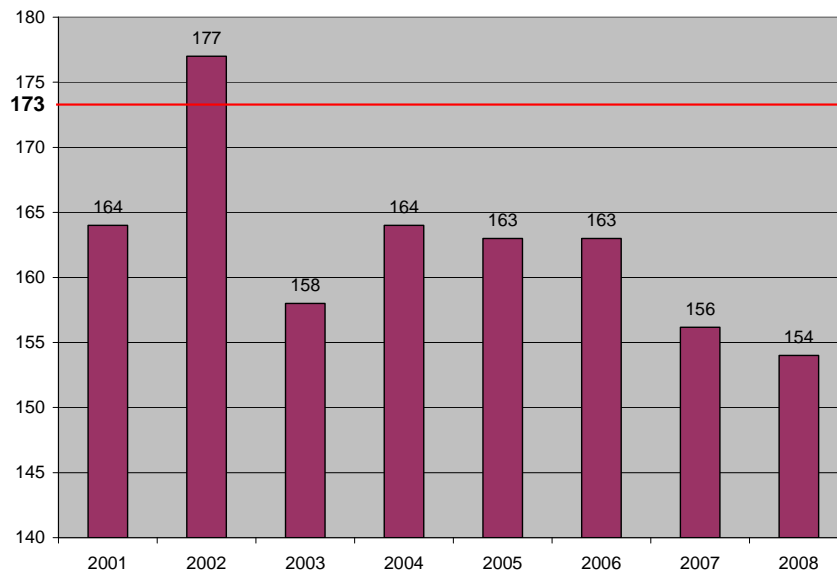
## CORRECTIONS

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### JAIL POPULATION

Even though jail bookings were at 4,891 for 2008 (their highest point since 2003), the daily average inmate population in the Allegan County Jail continued to decrease slightly, largely due to the expanded use of community corrections programs. The average number of sentenced inmates decreased noticeably from 2007, while the number of unsentenced inmates rose slightly. These factors combined to show the jail officially over capacity 5.5% of the time during 2008.

**Daily Average Inmate Population**



## **COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS PROGRAMS**

While the Allegan County Jail is home to approximately 173 inmates each day, we don't simply "warehouse" them while they serve their sentence. Efforts are made wherever possible to return them to society better prepared to live a productive life. One program that assists in this goal is the GED program, which is offered through a contract with the Fennville Public School System. For the 2008 school year, 172 inmates enrolled as students in the GED program. The students passed 86% of the GED tests administered, and 58 students earned their GED certificates while incarcerated during this school year.

The varied programs available as an alternative to "in cell" time have combined to create not only a great deal of cost savings, but have also been beneficial to community agencies and to inmates. During 2008, a total of 6,237 bed days were saved through the use of programming, saving housing costs of over \$200,000. Nine hundred forty one of those days were saved through the DEBTS Crew's services, 1,403 through Probation residential services, 1,486 through inmate work programs (in-house), 850 through work release, 653 through the Methamphetamine Diversion program, and 672 through weekend alternative community service. A total of 573 inmates participated in the various programs, with over \$40,000 collected in fees from agencies and participants.

The successful Methamphetamine Diversion Program had 3 graduates in 2008, bringing the total number of program graduates to 15. Word of this successful program is gradually spreading nationally, due in part to a documentary video that was prepared through a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice.

## **LIFE SKILLS DORM**

Under development since 2008 is an addition to the community corrections programming, a Biblical Life Skills Unit or BLSU. This unit will be designed to house 'outmates' instead of inmates. The cell will hold up to eight people and has been painted in a light yellow color to set it apart from other housing units. The requirements and rules of this cell will be stricter than those of the normal jail population. A screening process will take place for inmates wishing to be a part of the BLSU. They may not have any disciplinary incidents, must have an interest in spiritual growth, and will be interviewed. These inmates will be required to get up in the mornings and to sleep at night. There will be a variety of classes offered for these 'outmates' as well.

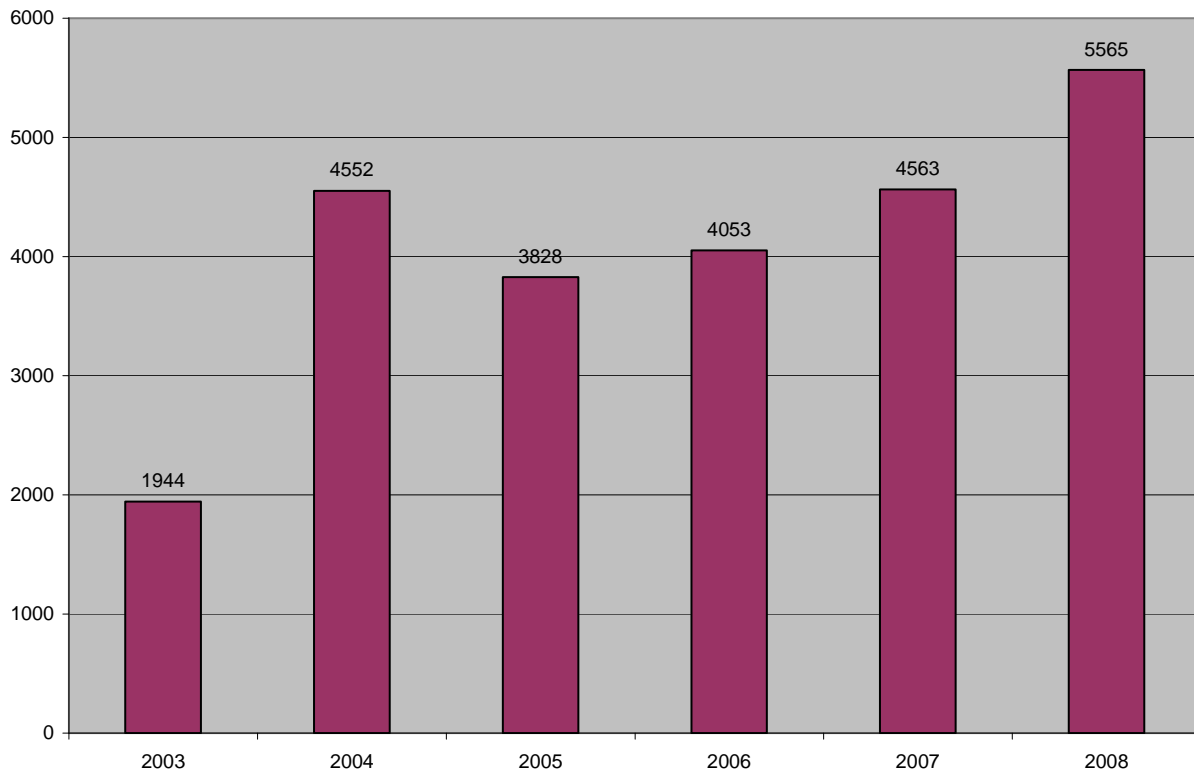
A Successful Thinking Class will be part of the programming, where the inmates will learn to process their thought patterns and identify criminal thought processes. The Chaplain will hold

Bible Studies in the BLSU. Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and Narcotics Anonymous meetings will also be offered to members of the BLSU. A parenting class called 'Proud Fathers' will be offered as well; this class assists those who are parents or are interested in becoming parents to develop the skills of a successful parent. Some inmates may also be involved in group and individual counseling.

### **BED DAYS SAVED**

During the years 2003-2008, over 31,112 bed days were saved through the use of community corrections programming. When calculated at the rate of \$35 per day (which is the current average rate charged to house an inmate) community corrections programs can be credited with saving Allegan County taxpayers over \$1 million dollars in housing costs alone. Additionally, these bed days reduced the average daily population, and the total number of days the facility was overcrowded, which have allowed us to prevent more early releases of inmates due to overcrowding emergencies.

**Total Bed Days Saved-Housed Inmates**



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## SERVICES

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### **ANIMAL CONTROL**

Animal Control Officers (one full-time and one part-time) responded to a total of 2,166 domestic complaints in 2008, handling 1,360 cats and 989 dogs. Of those, 165 dogs and 4 cats were returned to their owners, 135 dogs and 15 cats were adopted, and 466 dogs and 1,179 cats were euthanized.



Citizens are now able to file Animal Control requests for service on-line through the Sheriff Department's website, and can look for lost or adoptable animals through [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com)

### **THE FUTURE OF ANIMAL CONTROL**

The Allegan County Animal Shelter Task Force was created to work toward resolution of several problems with the current shelter facility that have resulted in potential sanctions from the state. Options to satisfy state requirements will be explored to find the best solution for the County and its animal population.

In 2008 the Allegan County Animal Shelter was also approached by a private organization comprised of various rescue groups that formed the "Wishbone Pet Rescue Alliance". This group plans to submit a proposal to assume shelter operations and expand services in Allegan County. Initial talks have identified goals such as increased hours of operation, lower euthanasia rates, higher adoption rates and increased funding through donations.

### **COURTHOUSE SECURITY**

Retired Sheriff's Deputy Dick Brooks oversees the deputies working the Courthouse Security Detail. Together, these deputies screened over 100,000 people entering the courthouse, and performed more than 400 transports of persons between the Jail or Youth Home and court appearances. Their diligence prevented 2,341 weapons (from knives to mace to syringes) from being taken into the courthouse. Courthouse Security deputies also arrested 283 persons upon the order of Judges or Probation Agents, and confiscated 84 items.

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## PATROL

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### NEW UNIFORM STANDARD

After many months of research and wear testing, a new uniform standard was selected for Sheriff's Deputies. Shown at left are Gun Plain Township contract Deputy Don Roberts with the winter patrol uniform, Deputy Kim Thorington with the uniform that is being



replaced, and Lt. Mike Larsen with the winter Command Staff uniform. Trousers are now khaki-type, made from black, water resistant fabric that won't snag as the previous dress slacks did. The Command Staff's uniform is completed with a campaign hat, while a ballcap-style hat is worn with the patrol uniform.

Uniforms are being phased in gradually, as old uniforms show signs of wear.

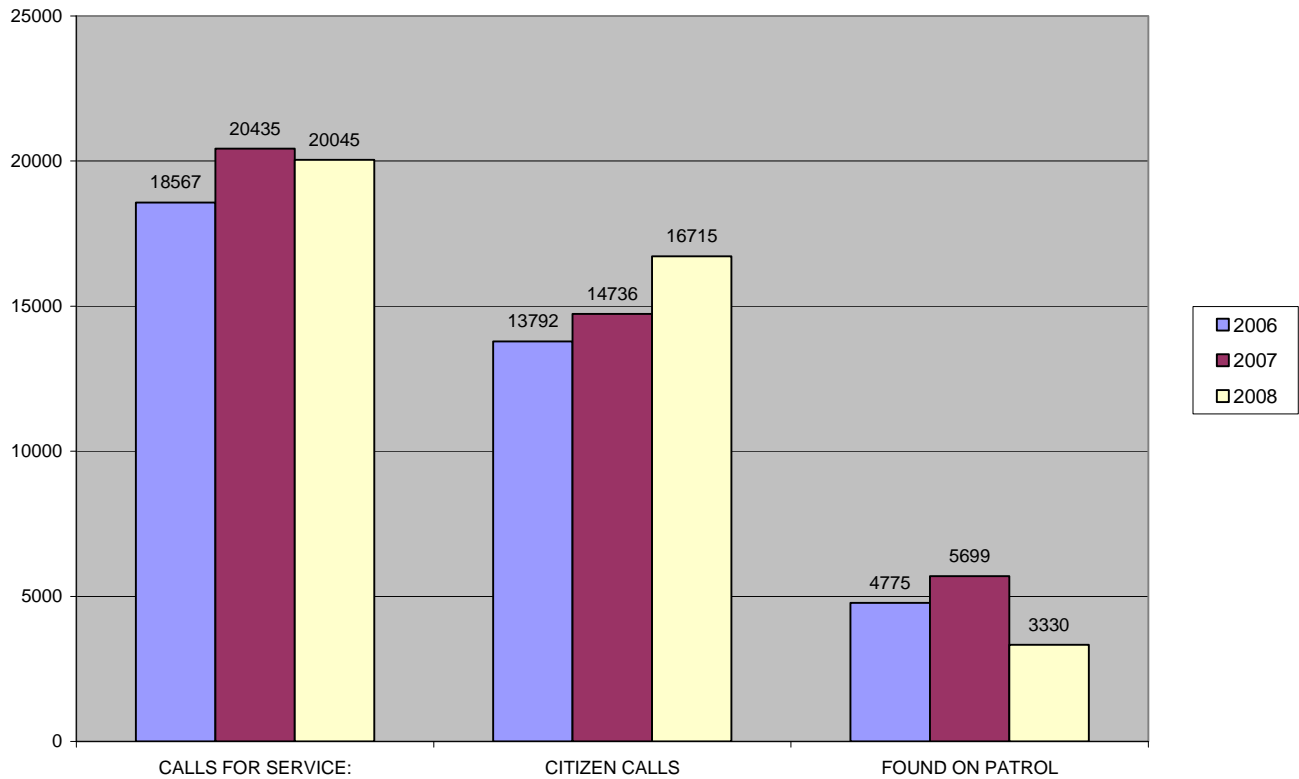
### MCT UPGRADE

Patrol cars in Allegan County were outfitted with an upgraded in-car mobile computer terminal (MCT) during 2008. This upgrade was instituted alongside the law enforcement computer software update and will serve as the basis for the expansion of features to officers' in-car computers in the coming months and years. Citizens will benefit through shorter wait times during traffic stops and improved promptness in obtaining crash reports.

### CALLS FOR SERVICE

While calls for service stayed relatively static during 2008, the proportion of those calls that came directly from citizens rather than being discovered while on patrol showed a significant increase.

### Calls for Service by Source



Part I crimes, which include: homicide, murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft and arson, appear to have leveled off during 2008, after showing a steady increase for the past several years.

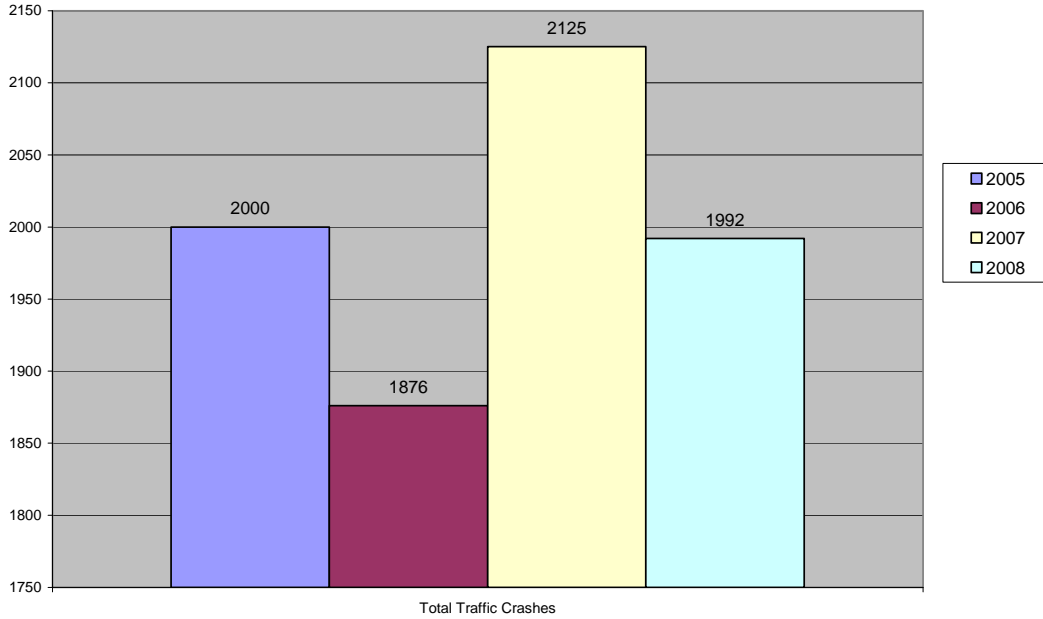
<b>Federal Uniform Crimes Reported-Part I Crimes</b>			
<b>Offense</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
HOMICIDE, MURDER AND NON-NEGLIGENT MANSLAUGHTER	1	6	3
FORCIBLE RAPE	35	16	28
ROBBERY	5	7	9
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	36	44	49
BURGLARY-BREAKING AND ENTERING	241	319	221
LARCENY	633	828	546
MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT	65	74	61
ARSON	8	6	3
<b>TOTAL of Part I Crimes</b>	<b>1024</b>	<b>1300</b>	<b>920</b>

Part II Crimes are all other reportable crimes not defined as Part I. Only the arrests for these crimes are reported to the FBI. Listed below are the number of offenses reported.

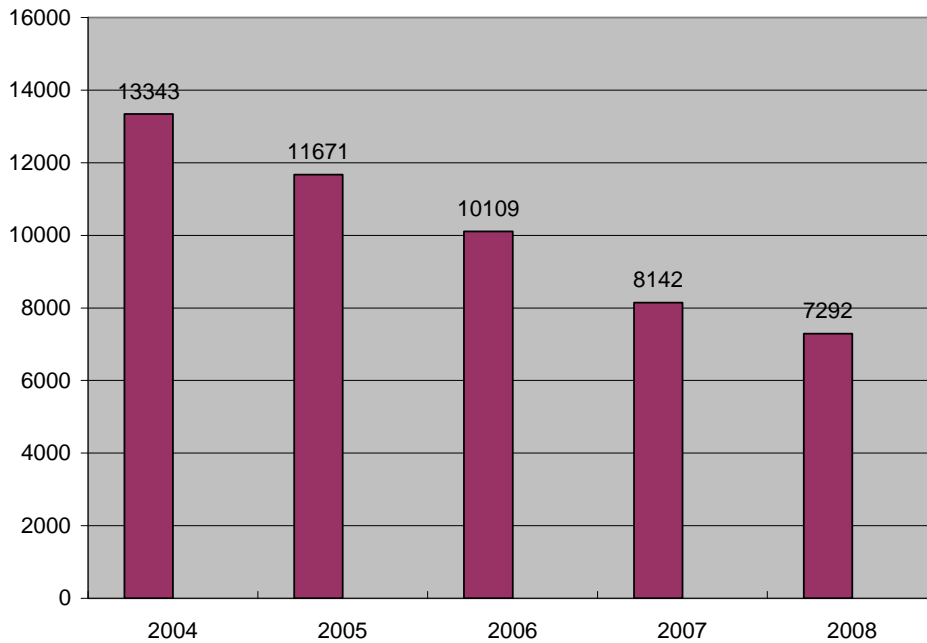
<b>Offense Code</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
09003 NEGLIGENT HOMICIDE - VEHICLE/BOAT	0	0	2
10001 KIDNAPPING	0	2	4
11002 SEXUAL PENETRATION-PENIS/VAGINA CSC 3RD DEGREE	2	2	4
11004 SEXUAL PENETRATION ORAL/ANAL - CSC 3RD DEGREE	22	26	21
11005 SEXUAL PENETRATION OBJECT - CSC 1ST DEGREE	2	0	0
11007 SEXUAL CONTACT FORCIBLE - CSC 2ND DEGREE	10	15	16
11008 SEXUAL CONTACT FORCIBLE - CSC 4TH DEGREE	19	32	24
13001 NON-AGGRAVATED ASSAULTS	415	522	536
13003 INTIMIDATION STALKING	23	30	15
21000 EXTORTION	3	1	1
22004 POSSESSION OF BURGLARY TOOLS	1	0	0
25000 FORGERY/COUNTERFEITING	25	21	19
26001 FRAUD-FALSE PRETENSE/SWINDLE/CONFIDENCE GAME	64	53	51
26002 FRAUD-CREDIT CARD/ ATM	8	9	11
26003 FRAUD - IMPERSONATION	34	45	25
26005 FRAUD - WIRE FRAUD	1	0	2
26006 FRAUD - BAD CHECKS	43	41	21
27000 EMBEZZLEMENT	11	7	5
28000 STOLEN PROPERTY	4	3	3
29000 DAMAGE TO PROPERTY	379	326	290
35001 VIOLATION OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE ACT	206	128	146
35002 NARCOTIC EQUIPMENT	2	4	1
36003 PEEPING TOM	0	2	0
36004 SEX OFFENSE - OTHER	14	15	13
37000 OBSCENE MATERIAL-TRANSPORT	1	7	1
38001 FAMILY OFFENSE-CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT	21	21	24
38002 FAMILY OFFENSE - NON SUPPORT	1	0	0
38003 FAMILY OFFENSE - ALL OTHER	6	0	5
41002 LIQUOR VIOLATIONS - ALL OTHER	142	123	218
42000 DRUNKENNESS	1	2	16
48000 OBSTRUCTING POLICE	63	70	75
49000 ESCAPE/ FLIGHT	7	4	4
50000 OBSTRUCTING JUSTICE	338	1917	1560
51000 BRIBERY	0	2	0
52001 WEAPONS OFFENSE - CONCEALED	26	42	20
52002 WEAPONS OFFENSE - EXPLOSIVES	0	7	6
52003 WEAPONS OFFENSE - OTHER	2	5	9
53001 DISORDERLY CONDUCT	80	106	133
53002 PUBLIC PEACE - OTHER	124	253	236
54001 HIT & RUN MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT	0	2	3
54002 DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF LIQUOR OR DRUGS	523	396	458
55000 HEALTH & SAFETY	53	98	137
57001 TRESPASS	67	92	78
57002 INVASION OF PRIVACY - OTHER	4	2	1
62000 CONSERVATION	35	25	12
63000 VAGRANCY	1	1	0
70000 JUVENILE RUNAWAY	68	56	65
73000 MISCELLANEOUS CRIMINAL OFFENSE	3	3	0
75000 SOLICITATION (ALL CRIMES EXCEPT PROSTITUTION)	1	2	0
<b>TOTAL OF PART II CRIMES</b>	<b>2855</b>	<b>4520</b>	<b>4271</b>

The decrease in traffic crashes reported and traffic citations issued during 2008 are believed to be due in part to the sharp increase in fuel prices, along with a decrease in employment.

**Total Traffic Crashes**



**Citations Issued**



## MARINE PATROL

The Marine Patrol, which is funded in part with a grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, conducted 14 boater safety classes during 2008. As a result, 442 persons received their boater safety certificate.

Boaters enjoying inland lakes, as well as Lake Michigan benefited from over 2,500 hours of patrol by Allegan County Marine Deputies. 10 boating accidents were investigated, and 13 search & rescue operations were conducted. Nearly 2,000 vessels were checked, 103 citations issued, and 4 arrests were made for boating under the influence of alcohol or drugs.



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## DETECTIVE BUREAU

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### F.I.T. -- FOCUSED INVESTIGATION TEAM

With the recent progress in forensic science, many cases that were previously unable to be solved are now being given a second look. The Focused Investigation Team was created to address the most serious of these cases. The Team's mission is to utilize a multi-jurisdictional approach to investigate cold case homicides and missing persons cases to bring closure to families and loved ones, and to bring the perpetrator(s) to justice. The Team's motto is "*Justice delayed, not denied.*"

The Team was created in April of 2008 with input from all of Allegan County's policing agencies who were asked to submit their open missing persons and homicide cases. In all, eleven cases were initially submitted to the Team for possible investigation.

The Team utilizes a multiple-format approach to solve the cases. This approach consists of the use of improved forensic science such as DNA analysis, a repeat search for physical evidence, and interviews. The Team typically works on a single case at a time, until it is either

solved, or it is determined that nothing more can be done at this time, such as when waiting for laboratory analysis.

In keeping with the multi-jurisdictional foundation, some of the training for the Team was provided by the Kalamazoo Area Cold Case Team, the Kalamazoo County Prosecutor's Office, and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service Cold Case Unit. Resources were also provided by a multitude of other agencies and groups, including the Michigan State Police-Bay City Post, the Wyoming Police Department, the Kalamazoo Department of Public



Safety, the Holland Police Department, the Zeeland Police Department, and the Kent County Sheriff's Department, as well as the Allegan County Area Metal Detector's Club and the Michigan Department of Transportation. The Team is currently housed in a formerly vacant room at the Allegan County Courthouse.

During a portion of the Team's first eight months, it consisted of four full-time Officers and one Officer assigned part-time. These included members of the Michigan State Police-Wayland Post, the Allegan County Sheriff's Office, the Allegan City Police Department and the Saugatuck/Douglas Police Department.

The Team currently consists of two officers assigned full-time and two assigned part-time. Officers are from the Michigan State Police-Wayland Post, the Allegan County Sheriff's Office, and the Otsego Police Department. A Lieutenant and a Records Clerk from the Sheriff's Office also provide support to the Team.

During its first eight months of operation, the Team was able to close three cold cases. One was resolved—determined to have been an accident, and two others resulted in the arrest of a total of four persons on murder charges.

The Team is currently working on several missing persons cases. Through the Sheriff's Office website, through news releases, by re-contacting witnesses, and using information technology, it is hoped that many of these cases may be solved as well. The dedication shown by the members of this team is a credit to their agencies and to law enforcement in Michigan.

