

*Serving with Honor  
and Integrity*

# ALLEGAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2006

**Blaine A. Koops**  
**Sheriff**

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## OVERVIEW

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The Allegan County Sheriff's Office was presented with many challenges during 2006: rapidly increasing fuel costs, the retirement of experienced personnel and the hiring and training of new recruits during the always busy summer months. In spite of these issues, we were pleased to be able to implement several new or expanded programs. We also were the recipients of several grants to purchase lifesaving equipment at low or no cost to local taxpayers.

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## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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### ***BEAT THE HEAT***

The "Beat the Heat" program was initiated at the Allegan County Sheriff's Office several years ago by Sgt. Delbert "Bud" Randall. Sgt. Randall looked into the details of the nationwide program that allows youth to race against local police officers in the controlled environment of a race track. This program is designed to prevent street racing by moving it to a safer environment, as well as to build relationships between law enforcement and youth. Sgt. Randall and local teens worked on a Chevy Camaro that was forfeited by a drug offender, and used donations from the community to prepare the vehicle for the race track. The summer of 2006 was the big debut of the Camaro, racing at the US 131 Motor Speedway. The event was well attended, and provided a lot of positive contact between the community and law enforcement officials.

### ***ALLCOPS SCHOLARSHIP***

The Sheriff-Community Relations Advisory Board (SCRAB) introduced the ALLCOPS scholarship program for criminal justice professionals. SCRAB is committed to encouraging and assisting students who desire to become criminal justice professionals. To that end, the ALLCOPS Criminal Justice Professional Scholarship Endowment Fund was established to support Allegan County

residents who will be enrolling in a criminal justice program or track. More information is available at [www.alleganfoundation.org](http://www.alleganfoundation.org)

### ***CITIZEN COMPLAINT REVIEW***

Citizen complaints received by the Sheriff's Office are now subject to a review by the Sheriff-Community Relations Advisory Board's Complaint Review Board. This additional review allows the public to monitor what types of complaints are being received and how they are being resolved, while at the same time protecting the privacy of the complainant.

### ***"STOPPED"***

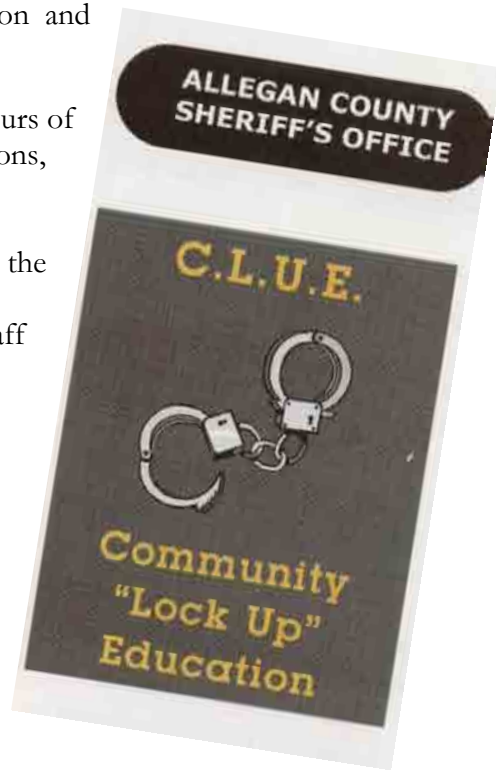
400 young adults were killed in Michigan traffic crashes last year. *Sheriffs Telling our Parents and Promoting Educated Drivers* is a new program, implemented through the Michigan Sheriffs' Association that notifies parents if their vehicle was pulled over by police. The goal of this program is to reduce the number of young people who are seriously injured or killed in traffic crashes each year. Parents voluntarily register any motor vehicle that will be operated by a driver under age 21, then if that vehicle is stopped, the parents receive notification and details of the traffic stop by mail.

### ***OTHER COMMUNITY PROGRAMS***

Many safety and education programs were offered at locations throughout Allegan County. The T.E.A.M. program is active in a number of schools, providing elementary through high school students with age appropriate programs in personal protection, drug prevention and many other topics.

A sampling of other programs offered includes: tours of the Sheriff's Office-Jail Complex, car seat inspections, identity theft prevention, and self defense.

Members of the Sheriff's Office also participate in the Senior Citizen TRIAD in which police work with seniors to help ensure their safety. Corrections staff implemented the CLUE program to teach young people about choices and losses, and how those choices change a person's life and shape their future—either for good OR for bad.



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## CORRECTIONS

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### ***STAFFING***

Jail staffing has been a top priority in the last several years. A staffing plan was developed which resulted in additional corrections positions being approved by the Board of Commissioners. These positions were to be added over a period of several years. As of February 2007, all positions are now staffed.

Corrections Officer Mike Barton announced his retirement after 24 years of dedicated service. We wish Mike all the best!

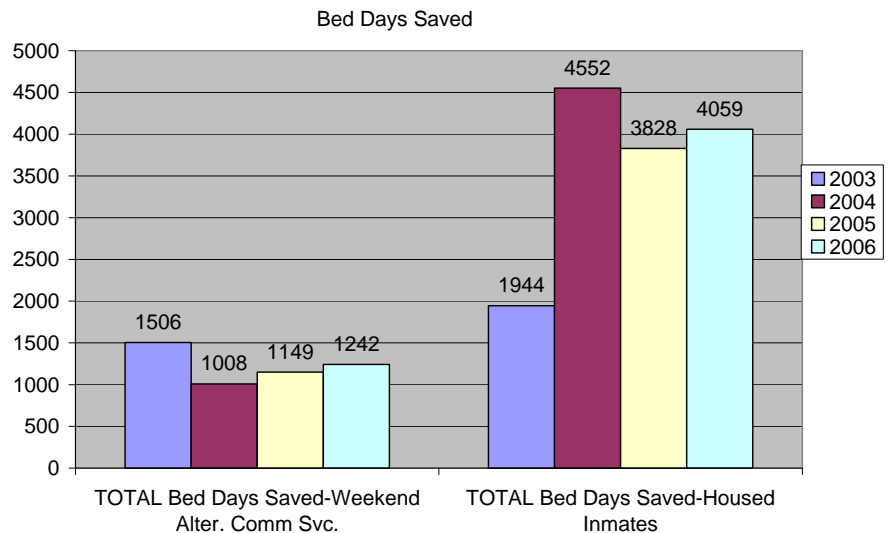
### ***CERTIFICATION***

Allegan County was one of the first jails in Michigan to be in 100% compliance with state mandated training standards. In addition, fifteen of our corrections officers have now achieved national certification through the American Jail Association. Certification in jail operations is a demonstration of competency and professionalism in the field of corrections and documents the officers' continuing education and growth. Allegan County Jail Administrator Lt. Deborah Marculis achieved the certified corrections executive rating through testing administered by the American Correctional Association.



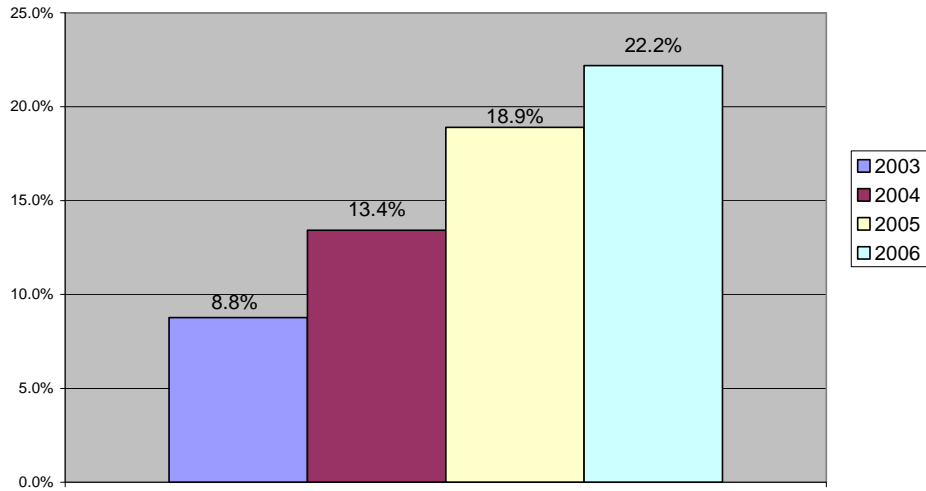
### ***OVERCROWDING***

The number of bed days saved through inmate participation in community corrections programs continued to increase to a total of 5,301 total bed days saved in 2006.



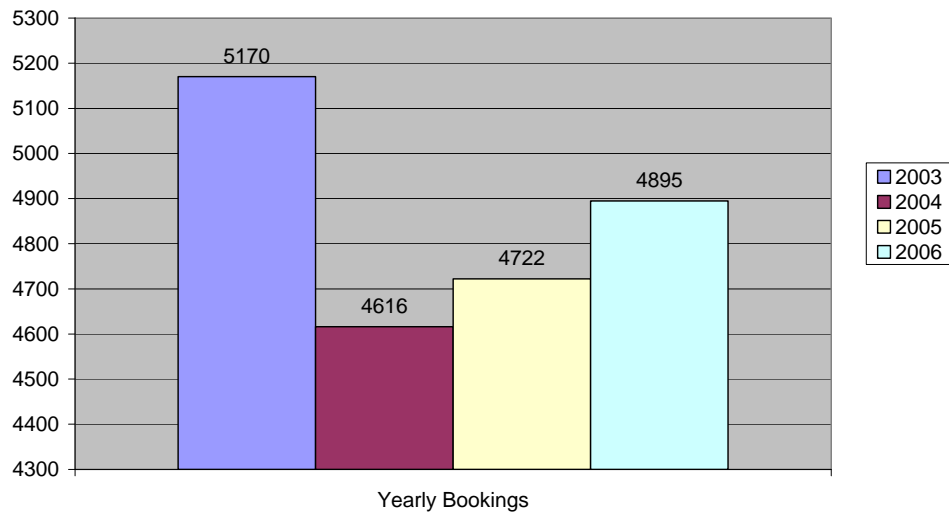
Even with the growing number of bed days saved, the number of days the jail is over capacity continues to increase, reaching 22.2% for 2006.

ALLEGAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
Percentage of Days over Capacity



A steady increase in the number of bookings was a contributing factor in the percentage of days the jail was over its maximum rated capacity of 173 inmates.

ALLEGAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
Yearly Bookings 2003 - 2006



## ***METHAMPHETAMINE***

The Methamphetamine Diversion Program continues to make a real difference in the lives of current and former inmates. This multi-agency cooperative program graduated 5 former drug abusers during 2006, in addition to 2 others in the program's first year, 2005. No inmates have been rearrested after graduating from this groundbreaking program. Currently the program has 17 participants in various stages who are working hard to make a new, drug-free life and become productive citizens.

The Methamphetamine Diversion Program has gained national attention in both 2005 and 2006. Members of the team that built this program have again been asked to speak to a national audience to share their experiences, this time at the National Methamphetamine Summit in 2008.

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## **SERVICES**

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### ***TESTING AND HIRING***

The Services Division conducted two rounds of testing and hiring for road patrol candidates, which resulted in nine vacant positions eventually being filled. Several of the new recruits have already progressed through their field training and have been assigned to their shift.

Background investigations are completed on all applicants before being offered employment with the County. These vary in scope, but are accomplished with assistance from deputies in the Services Division. Several deputies received intensive training as Mission Team investigators, who may be called on to assist other law enforcement agencies with internal investigations.

### ***SERVICES TO SENIORS***

The partnership of law enforcement agencies and senior citizens, the Senior Citizen TRIAD hosted the first annual *Safe, Sound & Secure* conference. This conference helped to make seniors aware of ways they could protect themselves from fraud and provided many other safety tips. Detectives from the Sheriff's Office gave several other presentations to groups of seniors on fraud prevention methods.

**SERVICES TO YOUTH**

The TEAM program is offered through the Allegan County Sheriff's Office during the school year. TEAM stands for *Teaching, Educating and Mentoring* and includes programs for students of all ages. Programming was provided for over 800 students each week. Various community safety programs were offered throughout the year as well.

Deputy Martin Mendell, our department's primary TEAM instructor, also serves as a member of the coordinating board for the criminal justice program at the Allegan County Area Technical Education Center. This new program gives those interested in criminal justice a head start before college, and the Sheriff's Office is pleased to be a part of it.

**COURTHOUSE SECURITY**

The courthouse security program was fully staffed and implemented in 2006. The addition of a walk-through metal detector has allowed the screening process to be completed much more efficiently.

Over 100,000 persons were cleared by security officers before entering the County Building during 2006.

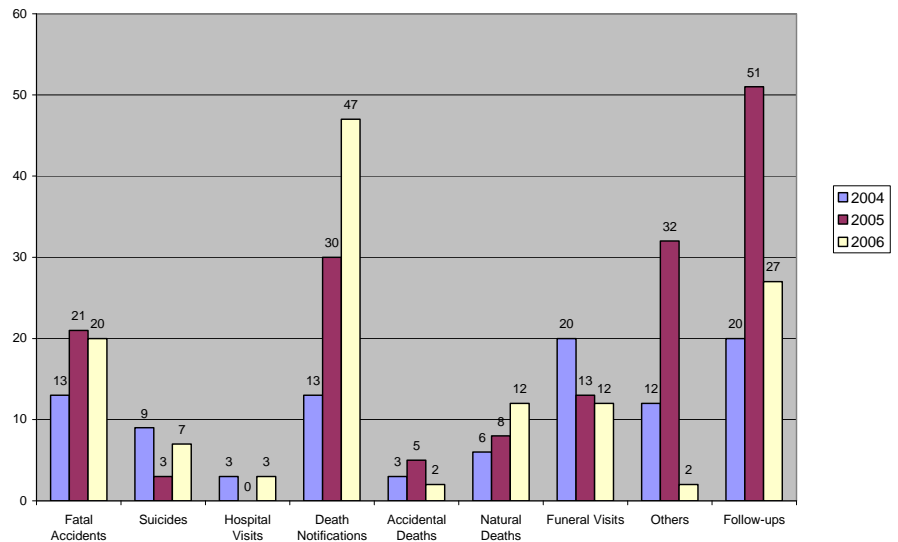


**VICTIM SERVICES UNIT**

The Victim Services unit continued its volunteer service to the citizens of Allegan County, responding to 132 calls for assistance in 2006.

These dedicated volunteers traveled over 5,000 miles to respond to calls at all hours of the day and night, helping to assist victims and their families during the critical period following a major incident.

**Victim Services Unit Activities**



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## PATROL

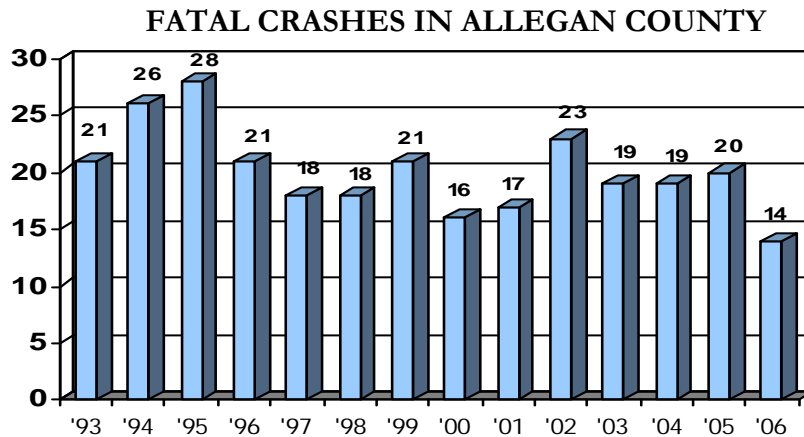
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### *FUEL COSTS*

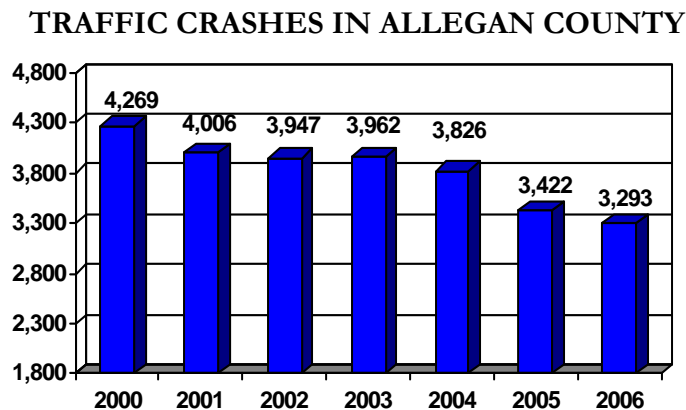
Rapidly escalating fuel costs caused a great deal of concern during 2006. Patrol deputies implemented additional fuel-saving measures, a reallocation of funds was requested, and with assistance from the County Commission, fuel expenses were met without decreasing critical patrols.

### *CRASH TRENDS*

One area we are especially pleased to highlight is the decrease in fatal crashes. Drunk driving cases are also showing a decrease for 2006. These numbers are decreasing nationwide, as well.



The numbers for total traffic crashes on Allegan County Roads decreased to a total of 3,293 for 2006.



## ***STAFFING***

2006 brought the retirement of several long-time members of the Sheriff's Office. Sergeant Dean Kapenga, Sergeant Lon Hoyer, and Deputy Jim Mentzer from the patrol division all announced that the time had come for them to move on and begin their retirement. These fine officers will surely be missed.

K-9 "Basco", a police dog who was a long-serving member of the Sheriff's Office also retired this year. He's living the good life now with Deputy Holmes and his family. The funds to purchase and train a new police dog were donated by a couple from Dorr. K-9 "Garro" is now on active duty, protecting the citizens of Allegan County.

Sgt. Todd Wagner worked closely with the agency's field training officers to redesign the process by which new deputies are trained. The nine new deputies hired during 2006 were the initial personnel to be trained using this updated program. The results so far have been encouraging.

## ***EQUIPMENT***

The department's aging Mobile Command Center was replaced in 2006 with funding from the Department of Homeland Security. This vehicle is deployed during major incidents, serving as the central contact point for all personnel responding.

Eight automatic external defibrillators, eleven pair of night vision goggles and four thermal imaging units were also added to the equipment available to Sheriff's deputies. Sgt. Cory Hunt reported that in the first two months of using the thermal imager, he apprehended seven suspects who had fled from Sheriff's deputies. One suspect had been so determined to escape that he jumped into a river, where he could easily have succumbed to hypothermia if he hadn't been apprehended.

## ***SPECIALIZED PATROL UNITS***

The Dive Team responded to 9 incidents during 2006. The dedicated members of this specialized unit also spent 85 hours training. Several new scuba tanks and full face masks were obtained for the divers' use, along with an underwater exposure dry suit, which protects divers from contaminated water and hazardous waste. The Dive Team again proved instrumental in the recovery of evidence related to several major crimes.

The Marine Patrol Division logged over 2,000 patrol hours during 2006, making contact with 5,144 persons. This unit also responded to search and rescue incidents, and investigated boating crashes. Marine deputies arrested four persons for operating a boat while intoxicated. Members of the unit held 16 Boater Safety Classes at various locations, training 455 safe boaters.

A Snowmobile Patrol Unit patrols trails in Allegan County as weather allows. While some years provide more snow than others, these deputies keep busy with prevention efforts by training youth in snowmobile safety.

The Allegan County Sheriff's Office Reserve Division is currently 36 members strong. Each reserve deputy must attend and graduate from an in-depth training program that takes place weekly over a four month period. This program was designed several years ago by Sgt. Dean Kapenga and has speakers ranging from the Sheriff to Judges, emergency management personnel and prosecutors, as well as members from throughout the Sheriff's Office. A training program is currently underway, so it is expected that the number of reserve deputies will increase in 2007.

Reserve deputies assist the agency in many ways; by serving as a second officer in a patrol vehicle during busy shifts, by serving subpoenas, performing vacation property checks, etc. Reserves also provide additional law enforcement presence at many events throughout the county, from high school sporting events to the Allegan County Fair.



The Mounted Division continued its proud tradition of service to the Sheriff's Office and the citizens of Allegan County. This team of devoted deputies supply their own horses and equipment, and represent the Sheriff's Office in many events throughout the County. They are highly visible during the Allegan County Fair, and are a crowd favorite in the many community parades. They

provide special patrols at large events, and are instrumental in search and rescue incidents. In 2006, the mounted division received grant funding to purchase updated police radios.

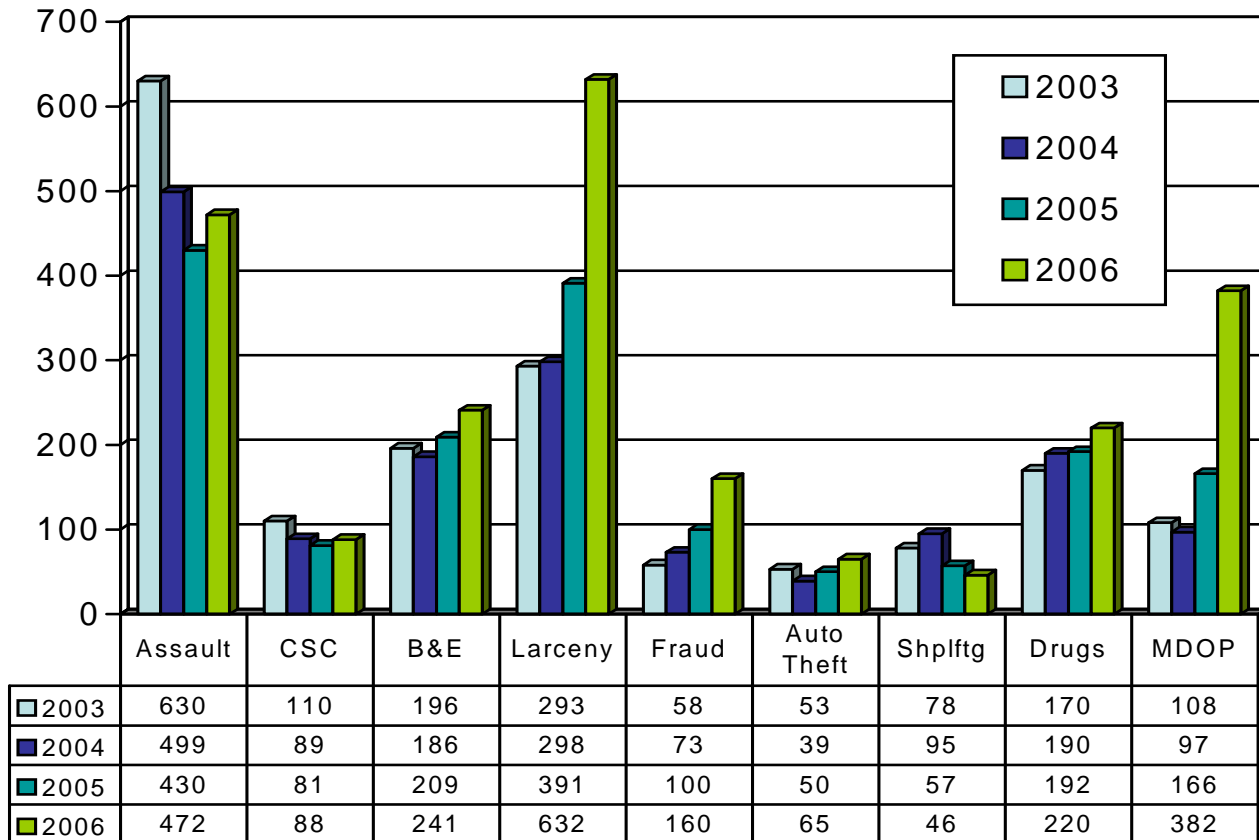
## DETECTIVE BUREAU

### *CRIME TRENDS*

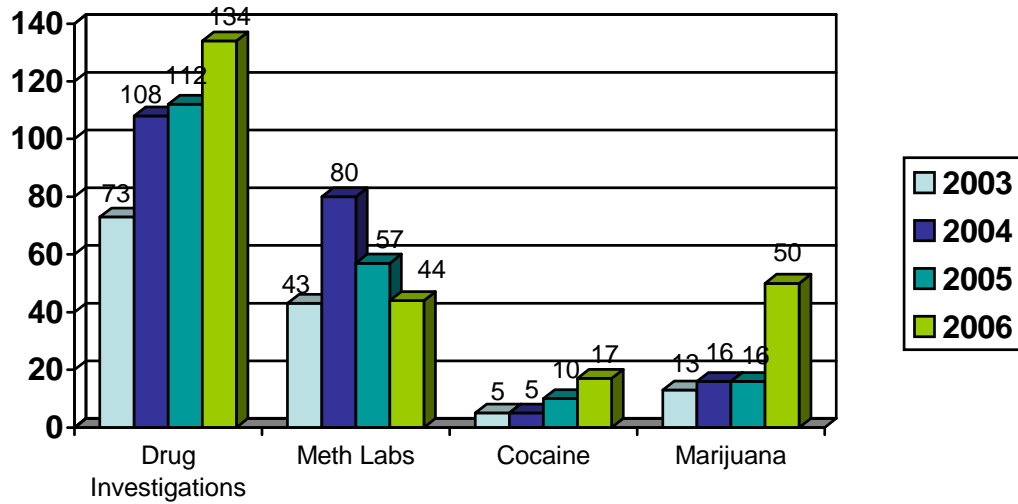
Detectives noted an increase in embezzlements during 2006, as well as in crimes involving elder abuse, especially fraud. Detective Len Mathis presented programs on fraud prevention to seniors several times during the year which were well attended, but at the same time criminals keep working to refine their techniques and come up with new schemes to separate unsuspecting victims from their money. Many thousands of dollars were lost by Allegan County residents during 2006.

Property crimes such as burglary, larceny, fraud, vehicle theft, etc. accounted for 84% of crimes investigated by detectives in 2006. The other 16% of investigations were crimes against persons, which in 2006 included the crimes of manslaughter, criminal sexual contact, assault and robbery.

**SELECTED CASE INVESTIGATIONS BY TYPE**



## DRUG INVESTIGATIONS BY WeMET IN ALLEGAN COUNTY



Two Allegan County Sheriff's Office detectives are assigned to the West Michigan Enforcement Team (WeMET), a multi-jurisdictional drug investigation team. WeMET reported that cases involving the manufacture or use of meth showed a marked decrease in 2006. This is believed to have occurred for several reasons, including a change in laws that limit the availability of pseudoephedrine, a key ingredient in the manufacture of methamphetamine. A resurgence in the use of cocaine and an increase in marijuana arrests resulted in the overall increase of drug cases shown in the chart above.

### ***CASE MANAGEMENT***

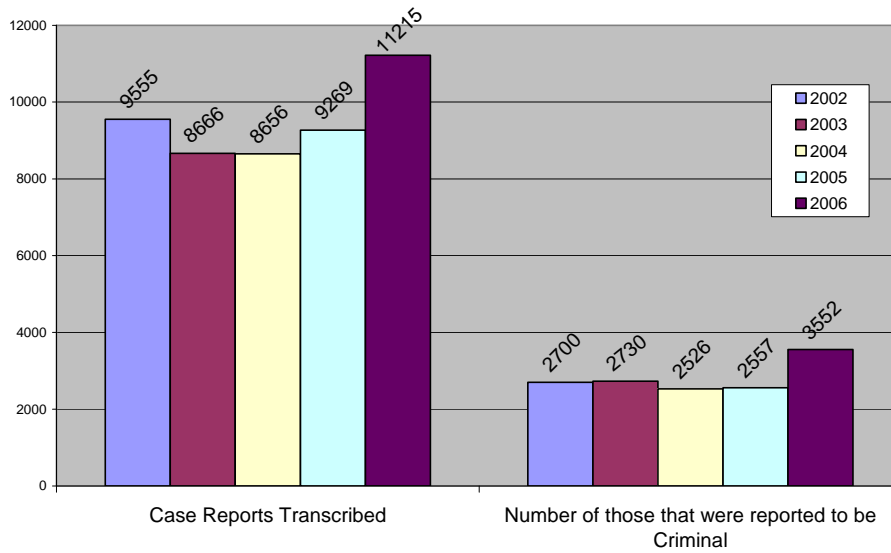
Lt. Ron Johnston and members of the Detective Bureau concentrated on implementing a case management system during the past year. Cases were assigned to individual detectives and the progress of each investigation was carefully tracked. The end result in 2006 was that 40 percent of cases investigated by detectives were solved and closed, 51 percent were unsolved, and 8 percent are still in the process of being actively investigated.



Records management staff reevaluated their methods of crime reporting and found several significant areas where the Sheriff's Office had been underreporting both crimes and arrests. Changes were then implemented in the reporting process to align the

records submitted to the State of Michigan and the federal government by the Sheriff's Office to be compiled in the same manner as those submitted by other agencies statewide. This has resulted in a much more accurate picture of crime in Allegan County, which reflects a significantly higher number of both the crimes reported and the arrests logged by the Sheriff's Office. It should be noted that this is not due to an actual increase in crime, but because of underreporting in past years. It is also important to note that because these corrections were not in place for the entire 2006 reporting year, that records for 2007 should be expected to show an additional increase.

### Case Report Summary



In all, working together to attain the utmost efficiency, making use of grant funds when available, and teaching citizens how to protect themselves from crime resulted in a successful year for the Sheriff's Office.

**We remain honored to serve and protect the citizens of Allegan County.**

