

## From the Sheriff's Corner

Who are our deputies and what do they do?



“The only time I see a cop – is when I’m getting pulled over.” We have all heard it or said it. We have seven law enforcement agencies patrolling the varying cities, villages and townships in Allegan County. At 856 square miles and over 1,900 miles of roadway, Allegan County is a very large county. The law enforcement agencies in Allegan County work very hard at working together – we depend on each other. I want to focus on the Allegan County Sheriff’s Office law enforcement patrol deputies; the deputies in uniform in patrol cars that respond when you call. We are one of the few public services that come to you in any weather, any day, at any time - day or night. When you call you expect us to be there.

When you see a “marked” Allegan Sheriff’s vehicle it may or may not be on patrol. In the business of law enforcement we deal a lot with perception. So the more we can present the perception that we have many patrol cars with deputies “working the road”, the better it is for the sense of being safe. We have a term for this; it is called “force multiplier”. It is not unique to Allegan County; just about every law enforcement agency uses the force multiplier to some degree or fashion. Again, the more marked patrol cars, the better the sense of safety and security. Many of the marked patrol cars you may see on a daily basis may or may not be doing patrol work. Of course, they can be patrol deputies whose main duty is responding to calls for service. These calls can be anything from a barking dog to homicide investigations. They could be deputies going to and from court, on their way to or from training, on marine or snowmobile patrol, corrections officers transporting inmates, as well as reserve deputies serving subpoenas or doing other volunteer work.

Who are our deputies?

We have 38 deputies that are assigned to “Road Patrol”, 33 of them are men and 5 are women. Their average age is 37; they are married and have two kids. Nearly all of them live in Allegan County. The typical Allegan County deputy has worked for the Sheriff’s Office between 7 and 10 years. Our Road Patrol deputies work 12 hour shifts and they “bid” for shift preference every six months. Each deputy has an average patrol area of between 144 and 216 square miles. In the last ten years, every deputy hired has a minimum of a two year college degree with many of them earning bachelor degrees before they begin employment with us. A number of them are working to complete their Master’s degree. The majority of our sergeants and lieutenants have attended the Northwestern University Police Staff and Command School. The Command Staff of the Allegan County Sheriff’s Office ranks at the top of the list of law enforcement agencies in West Michigan who have completed this prestigious school for police command officers.

What do our deputies do while they are working?

- Each deputy responds to approximately 500 calls for service in a year.
- Allegan County deputies each average driving about 24,000 miles a year while on patrol.
- Each deputy responds to an average of 49 accidents in a year.
- Each Allegan County deputy investigates, on average, three deaths a year.
- Deputies typically issue around 275 tickets a year.
- An Allegan County deputy, on average, will make about 79 arrests a year, 14 of them for drunk driving.

Let me end by saying these are people you can be proud of – I know I am. They want to serve you and they are there when you need them. The next time you see a deputy; tell them you appreciate them and the work they do to keep us safe.

Next time I will discuss the Investigative Services we offer through the Sheriff's Office. In a subsequent article I will explain how we pay for law enforcement services in Allegan County. Until the next time I write – Stay Safe!!!

Your Sheriff,

Blaine Koops