



**Allegan County Sheriff's Office**  
*"Serving with Honor and Integrity"*



112 Walnut St. Allegan, MI 49010 269.673.0500  
[www.allegancounty.org/sheriff](http://www.allegancounty.org/sheriff)

# Annual Report for 2005



**BLAINE A. KOOPS**  
**SHERIFF**

**February 23, 2006**

**An Open Letter to the Allegan County Board of Commissioners  
and the citizens of Allegan County**

2005 was again a challenging year for the Allegan County Sheriff's Office. Budget constraints and retrenchment continued to be the order of the day, causing an ongoing reassessment of priorities. Allegan County's population continues to grow and the level of service demanded from these constituents remains constant. Still, the energetic and ever resourceful members of the Allegan County Sheriff's Office again showed their superior ability to service the needs of the law enforcement, corrections and court security clients, even under these difficult circumstances.

The shining star of 2005 was the community itself. Community members and partnerships took on even greater importance. With stretched resources and lean budgets the Sheriff's Office relied on our volunteers at an even a greater level. In 2005 our Reserve Deputy Sheriff's Unit was finally officially incorporated into the Sheriff's organizational structure. The Mounted Division showed their expertise by winning a number of prestigious awards in competition and serving at parades, the ever popular Allegan County Fair, and in special duty at various communities around the County. The Victim Services Unit and our Senior Citizen TRIAD volunteers served their community with compassion; giving emotional support to citizens who had experienced the emotional tragedy of traffic crashes or crimes that resulted in great bodily injury or death. These volunteers place themselves in the midst of these emotional situations to try to bring what comfort and assistance they can offer—not an easy task. TRIAD Senior Citizens give of their time by assisting our front desk staff in receiving customers at our front window—a very challenging position, without being compensated for their time. The Sheriff's Community Relations Advisory Board (SCRAB) began a process to understand citizen complaints. They are also looking into the development of a Criminal Justice Scholarship program in Allegan County.

Internally, the Allegan County Sheriff's Office began the process of the reorganization of our office staff and revitalizing our commitment to timely and accurate recording and reporting of statistical data. This is a complicated and time-consuming process. But again, the administrative team rose to the challenge, resulting in a professional work product that we can be proud of. The Sheriff's Office also formally implemented a professionally operated courthouse (County building) security program in May of 2005. This is a program that has been recommended for many years. This year, with the support of the County Board of Commissioners, we made it a reality.

The challenges brought by the current facility remains at the forefront. Our staff has worked very hard to keep jail overcrowding to a minimum through various programs, sentence reductions and stricter intake requirements, yet the average daily inmate population continues to increase. In the last three years, the percentage of days over capacity has climbed from 9% to 14% to over 21% for 2005.

These are challenging times. Our public expects that when they call for a deputy one will respond to the call. Furthermore, they demand that the response be provided in a timely manner. Our citizens also expect that when a person is convicted of a crime that they will serve their sentence as set by the Courts, not be returned to society prematurely, and without any attempt at rehabilitation. We must work together as a team--State, County, Townships and Cities to protect and serve the citizens of Allegan County, if we are to continue to be a desirable place to live, work and raise a family.

Respectfully submitted,

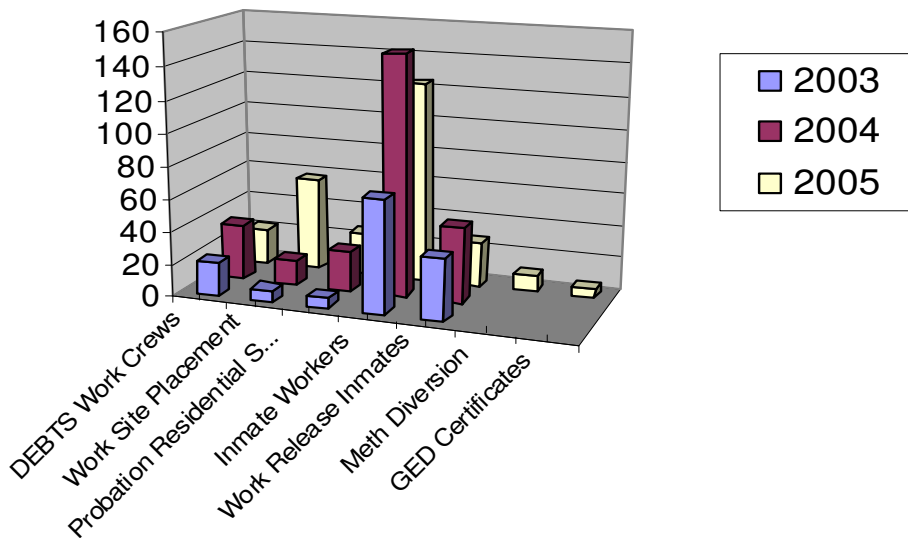
Blaine A. Koops  
Sheriff

# CORRECTIONS

The Corrections Division continued to be challenged by facility and staffing issues. Through partnerships with a variety of community agencies, and diligent use of programs, the number of bed days saved exceeded 3800 in 2005, and the number of days the facility was overcrowded was held to 79. Many persons who would previously have been lodged in the jail are now being issued citations and released, helping to hold the overall number of bookings to 4722, just a 2% increase over 2004. The average daily inmate population continues to increase, as those who are kept in the facility tend to be those involved in more serious crimes.

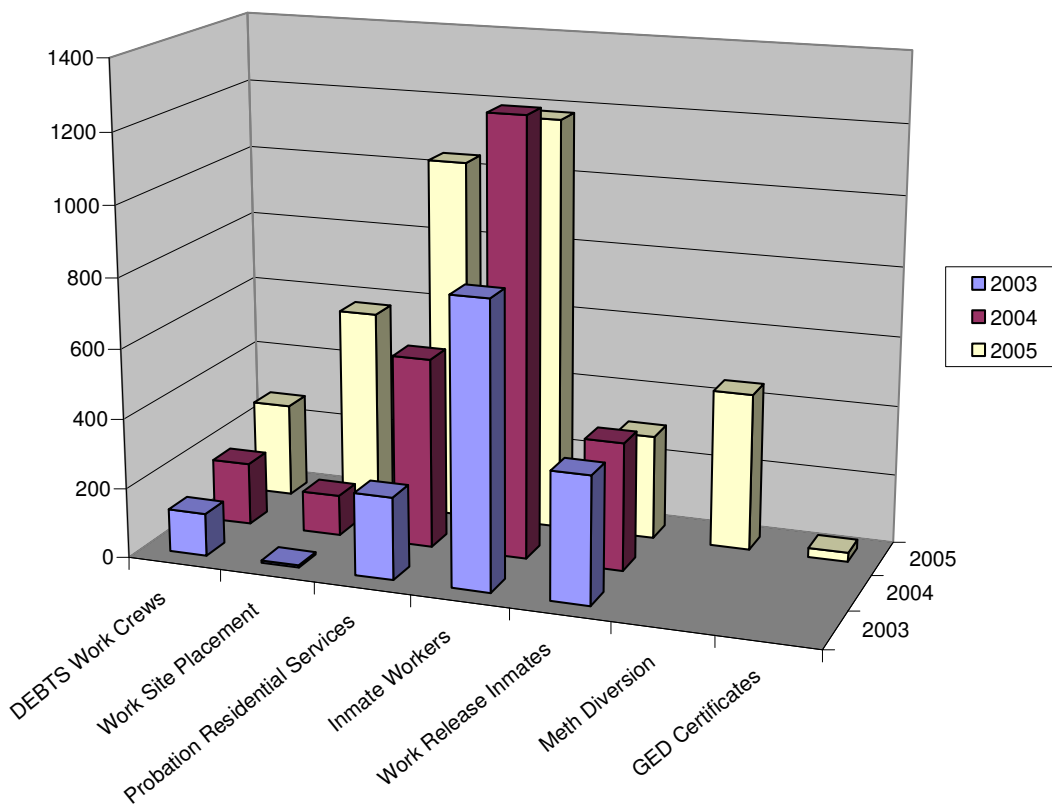
The Methamphetamine Diversion Program celebrated its first graduate in 2005. There are currently 18 people enrolled in the program which seeks to first to detox the inmate, then to educate them about the causes and effects of addiction, assist them in completing their education and obtaining a job and a drug-free place to live. Once the inmate is released from the facility, continuing random drug tests and visits from Probation Officers ensure compliance. This grant funded program is currently being studied by Michigan State University as a national “Best Practice” model.

**Inmates Participating in Programs 2003 - 2005**



The “Pay to Stay” inmate room and board cost recovery and the DEBTS Program (Detail Enabling Better Transition to Society) have helped to relieve some of the financial burden of incarceration to taxpayers. Helping inmates to obtain a G.E.D. better prepares them for employment once they are returned to society.

**Bed Days Saved Through Programming 2003 - 2005**



Many participants have learned new skills that they can apply to jobs in the public sector. Again, the ability to offer some programs is prohibited by the facility shortcomings, so our efforts are directed at those programs that are able to make the biggest difference in our current situation.

Allegan County is proud to have eight nationally certified jail officers on staff. Certification in jail operations is a demonstration of competency and professionalism in the field of corrections and documents continuing education and growth. The required written examination covered topics such as Jail Operations, Safety and Security, Professional and Legal Concepts, Special Population Issues, and Support Services. Including the eight Allegan County officers, there are currently only 24 jail professionals nationwide to have achieved this designation.

## SERVICES

The Services Division provides a wide variety of support to the Sheriff's Office, and in turn, the community. Some of the many functions under the Services "umbrella" include training, the Animal Control Unit, Court Security, the Victim Services Unit, the Senior Citizens TRIAD, evidence management, fleet management, and youth services.

The Sheriff's Office's fleet travels more than 1.6 million miles annually, responding to calls, patrolling, and performing other agency duties. With the high cost of gasoline in recent years, every effort is made to conserve fuel.

The Animal Control unit has initiated cost savings through reduced hours of operation and the use of volunteers and inmate workers. The number of animals handled has remained relatively stable. The County's Animal Control Ordinances were organized in booklet form and printed.

The Sheriff's Office conducts very detailed background investigations of all prospective employees. These investigations are handled by the Services Division.

Training is a critical area for both law enforcement and corrections officers. The Services Division assures that mandatory training is completed, and expands the knowledge and professionalism of all officers and staff whenever possible with additional training opportunities.

The T.E.A.M. program (Teaching, Educating and Mentoring) is another program that is organized under the Services Lieutenant. While the size of this unit has dramatically decreased in recent years, the one Deputy assigned still is able to provide programming for 800 students each week.



***Victim Services Unit 2005***

The award winning Victim Services unit provided more than 300 hours of volunteer assistance to those experiencing a traumatic life event. These volunteers provide comfort, relay information, and help navigate "the system" for those who are affected by major crime, a serious traffic

crash, or similar event. Another volunteer program in place at the Sheriff's Office is the TRIAD. This program includes an annual presentation and booth at the Senior Fest, a "File of Life" program to keep medical information readily available to First Responders, and a volunteer clerical staff member to help provide customer service to citizens.

In May, the Services Division began operating a full-time Court Security detail. These certified officers performed searches of 62,746 persons entering the County building. During the period from May through December of 2005, those searches uncovered 609 weapons, including 482 knives, 1 gun and various other weapons. Court Security Officers also assisted by transporting inmates on 130 separate occasions.

The administrative support staff partnered with the Alliance for Safer Communities to present a methamphetamine information booth at the Allegan County Fair that was viewed by hundreds, perhaps thousands of visitors.

A Cadet Program was implemented to allow college students studying Criminal Justice an opportunity to gain experience working inside a law enforcement agency.

Office hours were evaluated, and found to be comparable to other area law enforcement agencies, so no changes were made.

## **DETECTIVE BUREAU**

In 2005 the Detective Bureau continued to investigate the most serious crimes, with 15% of those being crimes against persons, and 85% considered property crimes. The vast majority of crimes against persons were criminal sexual conduct incidents, followed by assaults. For property crimes, the number of burglaries and larcenies were nearly equal, at 125 and 124, respectively.

The number of cases solved by arrest showed a dramatic increase for 2005. Part of this may be because many of the property crimes are committed by the same suspects—those who are looking for money to buy drugs. Once the suspects are arrested on one case, frequently many other cases are able to be cleared as well.

Working together with the Dive and Rescue Team, Sheriff's Detectives were able to recover a gun barrel from the Kalamazoo River, as well as other key evidence that assisted in bringing a homicide case that had remained unsolved for over a year to completion. A Silent Observer tip played a critical role in solving this crime.

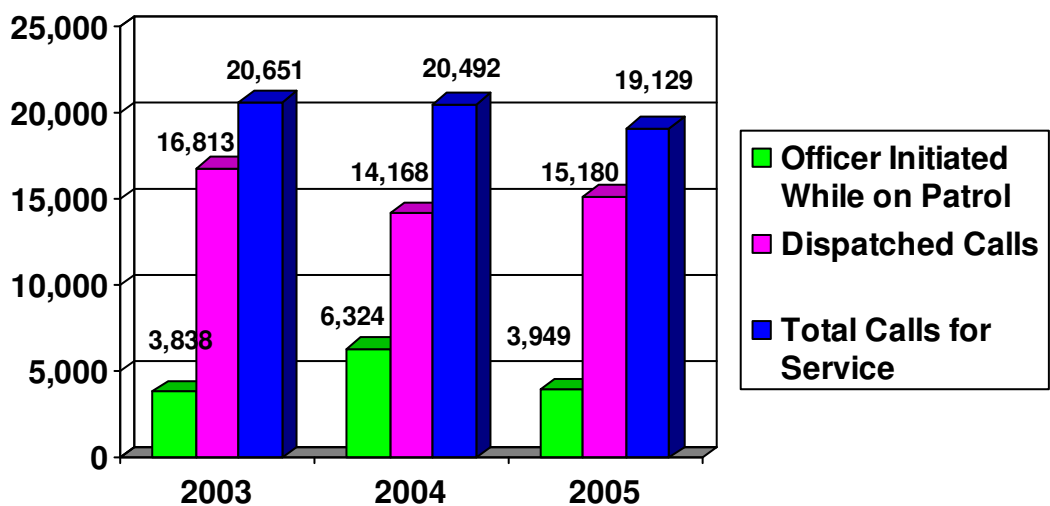
The number of methamphetamine labs being discovered in Allegan County is decreasing, both through the eventual imprisonment of the meth cooks, as well as by the cooks moving to other counties where they may not be as readily apprehended. New laws created to curb the availability of meth's key ingredient, pseudoephedrine, are also a contributing factor.

## PATROL

The Patrol Division includes general road patrol, contracted road patrol, specialized patrol units including traffic, marine and snowmobile, as well as volunteer reserve and mounted units. While our overall staffing for certified law enforcement officers has decreased approximately 15% since September 11, 2001, the Patrol Division has concentrated its resources where they are most needed.

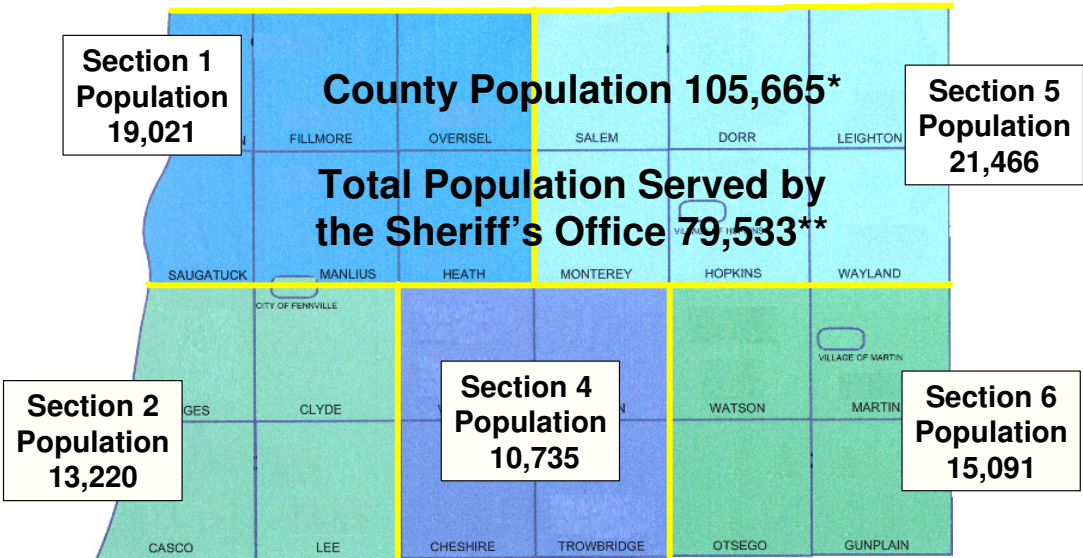
The chart below shows that while there was a slight decrease in the calls for service in 2005, that decrease actually occurred in the officer initiated calls, showing less hours available for proactive policing.

### CALLS FOR SERVICE 2003-2005



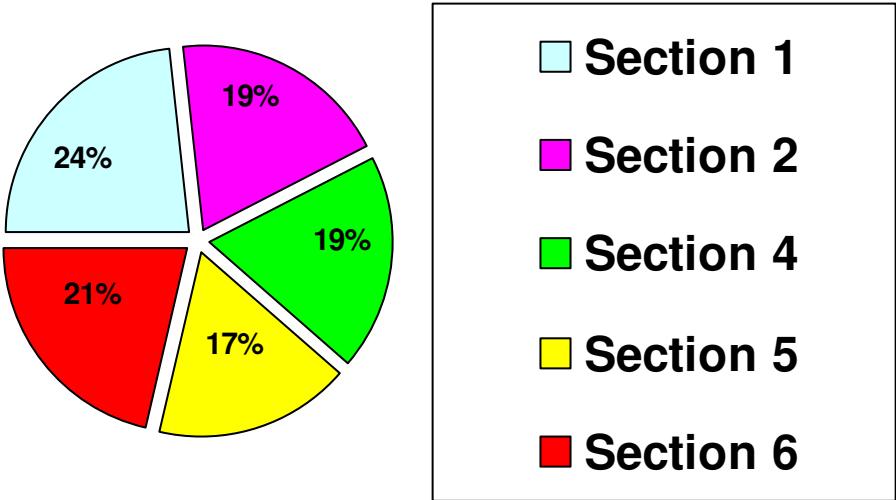
The map below shows the county divided into five sections, and the population in each section that is served by the Sheriff's Office.

### Population Served by The Sheriff's Office



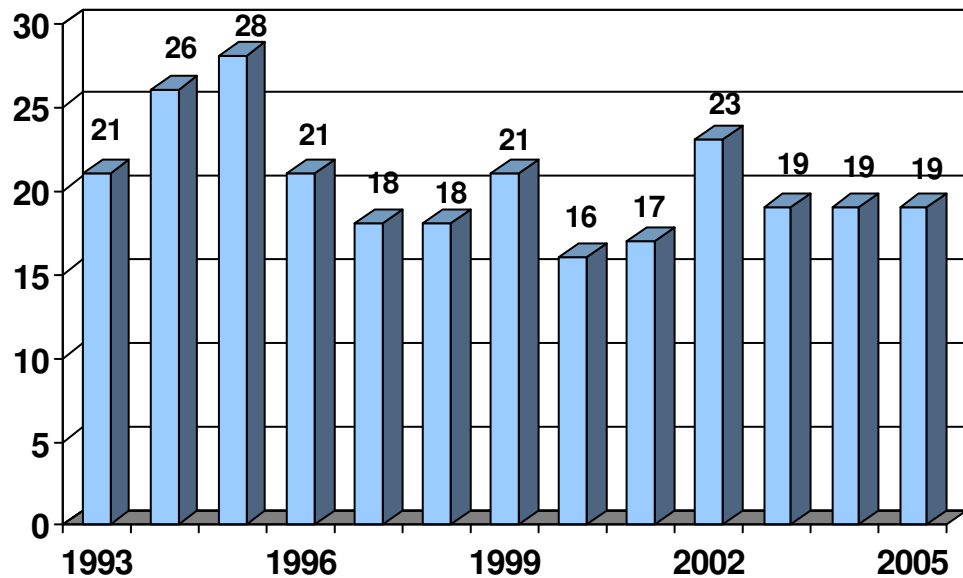
\*2000 Census data      \*\* Pop. does not include Cities or villages w/ Police Depts.

Each of these patrol sections generates approximately the same amount of calls for service, as illustrated by the chart below.



The fatal crash trends in Allegan County appear to have leveled off over the past three years. This is attributed to the additional safety features being provided in newer automobiles, as well as enforcement programs targeted at reducing speeds and increasing seatbelt compliance.

## FATAL CRASH TRENDS IN ALLEGAN COUNTY



By partnering with other law enforcement agencies, with public service agencies, and with the community, the members of the Allegan County Sheriff's Office are doing our best, with the resources available, to help keep Allegan County a safe and secure place to live, work, and visit.

*“Serving with Honor and Integrity”*