

SKAGIT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



**SHERIFF DON McDERMOTT
MOUNT VERNON, WA**

SHERIFF'S MESSAGE

SHERIFF DON McDERMOTT

The Skagit Sheriff's Office has continued to focus on our communities and public safety. We are committed to transparency and accountability. We will prioritize ensuring that we provide the highest quality public safety services to everyone in Skagit County.

The men and women of the Skagit County Sheriff's Office are dedicated public servants committed to our core values and mission. Their accomplishments and contributions to the Skagit County Sheriff's Office are part of the fabric of our agency, which epitomizes the best in law enforcement. We believe mutual respect, trust, and pride in our organization and the community, combined with traditional values and innovative techniques will make the community a safe place to live, work and visit.

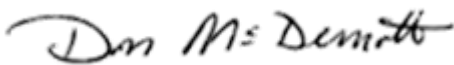
2024 Budgeted Positions

Position	Authorized	Current	Vacant
Sheriff	1	1	
Admin (Unclassified)	6	6	0
Lieutenant (Corrections - 2, Patrol 1)	3	3	0
Corrections Sergeant	8	8	0
Patrol Sergeant	9	9	0
Corrections Deputy	59	52	7
Patrol Deputy	50	40	10
Civil Assistant	1	1	0
Animal Control	1	1	0
Support Services Tech.	13	12	1
Evidence Tech	2	2	0
Registered Sex Offender Coordinator	1	1	0
Jail Accountant	1	1	0
Intern	0	0	0
Total	155	137	18

The Skagit County Sheriff's Office is fortunate to have such strong community support, the backing of county and city elected officials, great working relationships with neighboring communities, and partners throughout the state. I thank all our public safety partners, elected officials and our community. We can make a positive difference together.

Our annual report is our opportunity for us to share what we are called upon to do each day as public servants – serve and protect you. It is my honor to serve alongside a group of talented professionals who never stop answering that call.

Sincerely,



Don McDermott

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Mission Statement

"The Skagit County Sheriff's Office is committed to the safety of the citizens we serve, visitors to our community and our employees. Professionalism, enthusiasm and integrity shall be our guiding principles in accomplishing this mission."

Vision

"Safety through courage and professionalism."



2023: YEAR IN REVIEW

Superb Teamwork - Case 23-04631: Missing Child (April)

On 04/15/23, a 12 year old autistic child wandered from home around 2:30pm at Lake Sixteen. The Skagit County Sheriff's Office took quick action to return the child home safely.

Deputies Grant, Koback, Keyes, Brown, and Marsh conducted an in-depth canvas of the area and many doors were knocked on. Deputy Walker brought supplies and Cpl. Gonzales brought the boat. Deputies Kahns, Willis, Case picked up the call load while the night shift signed in. Our Search and Rescue team responded with about 10 people. We had the help of Snohomish county's SAR (about 25 people) with a dog, drones, and a diver. Fire Chief Skrinde signed in to help and the Public Works department brought our crew clean bathrooms and portable lights.

The child was missing in the woods for more than 4 HOURS when our SAR dog tracker (Angelyn) and Deputy Smith located her 1.25 miles away near Bulson Rd. The child fled initially, but using his new training, Deputy Smith calmed her down and built rapport. With wet muddy feet and scratches on her face from the brush, he got her to ride back with him in Chief Skrinde's fire SUV back home!

Three Deputies become Active Assailant Instructors (May)

Skagit County teamed up with the Center for Personal Protection and Safety to certify 10 Skagit County instructors. Three Skagit County Sheriff deputies entered the program and became certified.

The Active Assailant Preparedness Training Team will provide Skagit County employees and members of the public training that will help prepare them in case of an active event. Instructors will not only train fellow colleagues across Skagit County departments, but will train local businesses, school districts, and other entities on active assailant response and preparedness. Instructors will be trained to teach de-escalation skills, how to recognize and respond to an extreme violence event, and workplace violence prevention.

Speedway to the Rescue! (September)

Deputy Kuzminsky's patrol vehicle suffered a flat tire while he was performing routine patrol duties at a Skagit Speedway event. The Speedway push track staff graciously assisted and changed the tire!



2023: YEAR IN REVIEW

Case 23-14365: Search and Rescue (October)

The Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) and the Skagit Mountain Rescue Unit (SMRU) responded to a call out at Sauk Mountain this past Saturday regarding two subjects who had fallen off trail. When arriving on-scene, the teams were able to connect verbally with subject 1 and subject 2 via cellphone. Both subjects reported to be stable and absent of injuries. The teams set up a rope system and were able to successfully rescue both subjects and return them safely to their daughter.



Conway Pipe Bomb (December)

On 12/21/23 at around 8:15am, a Conway resident called in a suspicious device in her yard she believed was a pipe bomb.



WSP Bomb Squad was called and responded. It was filled with about 1 pound of black powder and attached with a 3 inch fuse, which would only give someone enough time to get about 20 feet away. One of the Bomb Squad technicians said it was the largest pipe bomb he has seen and estimated a lethal blast zone of 15-20 feet with shrapnel extending as far as 500 feet.

Bomb Squad technicians made the device safe and is handling the investigation. At this time, there are no indications where it came from. Deputies checked the immediate area but did not locate any other suspicious devices.

Winter Flooding in Skagit (December)

It would not be winter in Skagit County without flooding to accompany it. The Skagit River peaked at approximately 37ft and proceeded to recind shortly afterwards. The Sheriff's Office, Department of Emergency Management, Public Works, and many other County personnel teamed together to ensure the safety of the community and evacuate any affected residents. Fortunately the flood was brief and no major incidents occurred.



FIELD OPERATIONS BUREAU

CHIEF CHRIS BALDWIN

The Skagit County Sheriff's Office Field Operations Bureau is the second largest bureau in the Skagit County Sheriff's Office. Chief Chris Baldwin oversees the Field Operations Bureau and Lieutenant Jeff Willard oversees the day-to-day operations of the Patrol Bureau.

In 2023 the Skagit County Sheriff's Office responded to over 17,377 calls for service. The types of calls for service vary from crimes against persons, property crimes, traffic related issues, civil disputes, community caretaking issues, and animal problems.

The Field Operations Bureau is organized into a squad system and provides 24/7 law enforcement coverage throughout Skagit County. There are four primary patrol squads that provide law enforcement coverage to the central and western geographical areas of Skagit County. Each patrol squad has a sergeant and five deputies assigned.

The East Precinct provides law enforcement coverage to the eastern geographical area of Skagit County. The East Precinct has a sergeant and six deputies assigned.



(Left to right) Sgt. Caulk, Dep. Marsh, Cpl. Huehnerhoff, Dep. Grant, Dep. Mueller, Dep. Johnson, Dep. Chou, Dep. Brown



(Left to right) Dep. O'Reilly, Dep. Barnett, Cpl. Kahns, Chief Baldwin, Sgt. Moses

FIELD OPERATIONS BUREAU

CHIEF CHRIS BALDWIN

The Field Operations Bureau features several specialty programs and assignments.

The Traffic Unit has a sergeant and five deputies assigned. The Traffic Unit includes three deputies that are trained as motorcycle operators. Specialty programs also include a K9 Team, North Cascade Regional Swat Team (NCRS), Marine Patrol, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, Search and Rescue, Crisis Response Team, and Animal Control. The Town of Concrete and Town of La Conner contract with the Sheriff's Office to provide law enforcement services within the city limits.

In 2023, the Patrol Bureau trained several deputies to be instructors in workplace violence and active assailant prevention, intervention, and response.

The deputies will start providing instruction throughout Skagit County government in 2024. The training will then be offered to members of the public to include local businesses, school districts, and other entities who would like the training.



(Left to right) Dep. Halttunen, Cpl. Dalton, Sgt. Gonzales, Dep. Waller, Dep. Kuzminsky, Dep. Koback, Sgt. Case, Dep. Meldrum



(Left to right) Dep. Kading, Sgt. Moses, Dep. Ibarra-Mendez, Cpl. Beisler, Dep. Eichman, Dep. Willis, Dep. Betts, Dep. Murdock

TRAFFIC UNIT

SGT. CRAIG CAULK

The Traffic Unit is responsible for around the clock traffic enforcement and collision investigation on over 850 miles of Skagit County roads. The mission is to reduce collisions that result in injuries and property damage to the citizens of Skagit County and the people who visit our community. The unit is staffed with five deputies and a sergeant.

The Traffic Unit leads the traffic safety effort in the county and is committed to the Target Zero goal. Target Zero is a strategic highway safety plan with the goal to reduce the number of traffic deaths and serious injuries on Washington’s roadways to zero by the year 2030. It also serves as the state’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Emphasis patrols during high traffic volume events, such as the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival, Big Lake Fireworks, Oyster Run, and major holidays are another important part of providing traffic safety to our community. The Traffic Sergeant is the Region 11 Law Enforcement Liaison to the Washington State Traffic Safety Commission and is responsible for all county wide emphasis patrols funded by the Washington Traffic Safety Commission such as “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over”, “Distracted Driving,” “Click it or Ticket” campaigns and Motorcycle Safety Enforcement.

Sergeant Craig Caulk was appointed to the position of Traffic Sergeant in 2022 with 16 years of traffic experience as a traffic deputy, police motorcycle instructor and being trained in our ARIDE program (Advanced Roadside Impaired Drivers Enforcement). In 2023, the Traffic Unit concluded a decades long tradition of leasing and using Harley Davidson Motorcycles. Instead, the unit has transitioned into BMW motorcycles that were purchased from a neighboring agency. This acquisition means we no longer have the need to lease patrol motorcycles. The Motors Unit (motorcycle unit) plays a key role in traffic safety during congested traffic events to include Tulip Festival and the Oyster Run motorcycle event. Additionally, they participate in high visibility public safety events such as parades and marathons and assisting the United States Secret Service and other Motor Units in the Puget Sound region with escorting dignitaries during their visits.

The Motors Unit has two instructors that assist in teaching motorcycle safety familiarity to agencies across the state at the Washington State Patrol Academy.



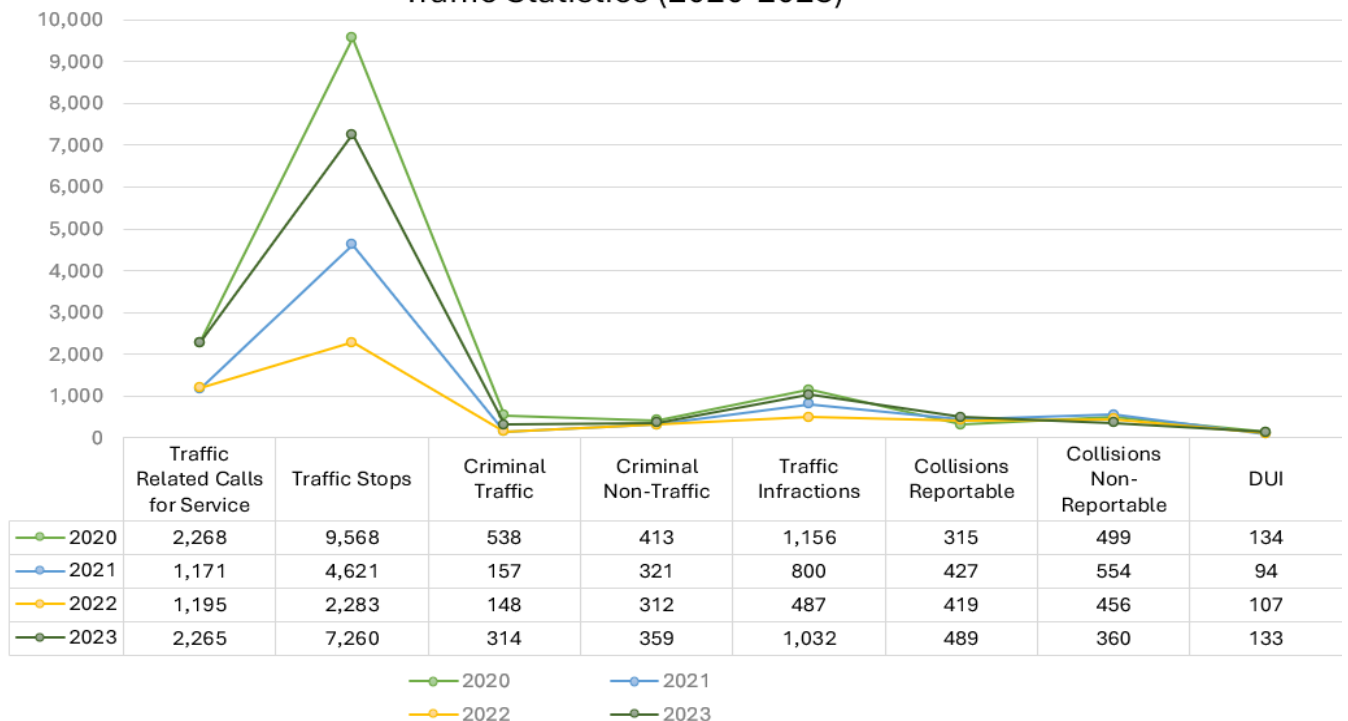
TRAFFIC UNIT

The motors unit works cooperatively with neighboring agencies to ensure safety and monitor traffic during high volume events. The Traffic Unit works in conjunction with the Washington State Traffic Safety Commission to spearhead a “Motorcycle Safety Emphasis.” The emphasis was held Friday, Saturday and Oyster Run Sunday, which included a motorcycle speed emphasis during the day shift and a DUI emphasis during the night shift. This high visibility emphasis was fully funded through the Washington State Traffic Safety Commission. It yielded numerous contacts and no motorcycle collisions or fatalities reported on county roadways during the emphasis.



Three of our traffic deputies worked as Field Training Officer’s (FTO) with newly hired deputies to teach them the mission of the Traffic Unit and how it relates directly to safety in our communities. Our traffic deputies received training in basic and advanced collision investigations. Working collaboratively with Skagit County Public Works on education, enforcement, and engineering issues, the Traffic Unit assists public works with enforcement while the summer chip seal process is occurring on county roads. This is an important step in reducing speeds which keep people safe and reduce damage to private property and the road surface.

Traffic Statistics (2020-2023)



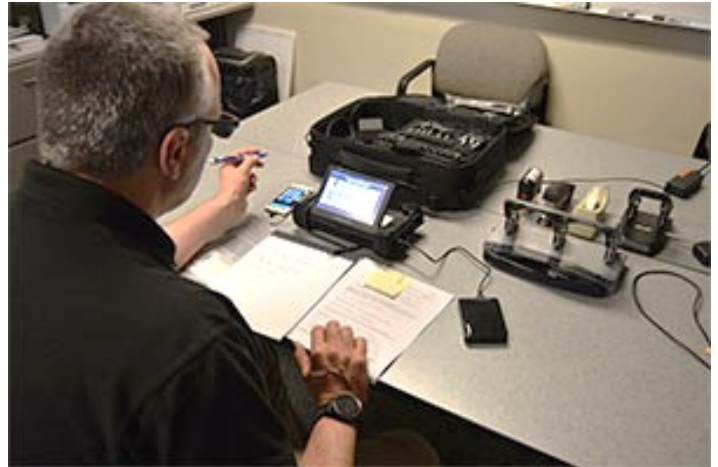
INVESTIGATIONS BUREAU

CHIEF TOBIN MEYER

The Investigations Bureau of the Skagit County Sheriff's Office is comprised of the Criminal Investigations Division (CID), Evidence Unit, Internal Affairs, Unmanned Aerial Unit, in addition to overseeing the Skagit County Inter-Local Drug Enforcement Unit (SCIDEU) and the Skagit and Island County Multi-Agency Response Team (SMART) administration and operations.

Criminal Investigations Bureau

The criminal investigations bureau provides professional and expert criminal investigative support to Skagit County by conducting complex and often highly technical criminal investigations. The bureau is responsible for criminal investigations into serious felony level or highly technical offenses to include arson, major assaults, special victims, sex crimes, kidnapping, homicides, robberies, missing persons, and high-tech crimes.



Detectives assigned to the bureau go through an intensive selection process that includes a work history review, scored oral interviews, and are required to attend specialized training and maintain a higher level of expertise in their field. Every detective within the Investigations Bureau attends advanced on-going training relevant to their assignment on an annual basis to ensure they are current with their knowledge, training, and tactics and to ensure their effectiveness in the field. SCSO detectives recognize their responsibility to the community they serve and are committed to investigating all criminal allegations professionally.

Staff from the criminal investigations bureau and evidence unit participate in the independent investigative team known as the Skagit and Island County Multi-Agency Response Team (SMART). SMART is primarily responsible for conducting independent investigations into officer involved deadly use of force incidents in the region.

SMART's secondary role is to provide investigative resources for large scale criminal investigations or other unusual occurrences that may include mass-casualty incidents stemming from criminal acts or other criminal investigations that may require an independent criminal investigation.



INVESTIGATIONS BUREAU

CHIEF TOBIN MEYER

SMART conducted several investigations in 2023 that included deadly force investigations and support investigations in the region. Each deadly force investigation requires strict adherence to state law and state prescribed best practices. Deadly force investigations may comprise up to 30 detectives from surrounding agencies and can take up to one year or longer to complete.



CASE TYPE	NO. OF CASES
AGENCY ASSIST	77
ASSAULT	2
CHILD ABUSE	23
DEATH	8
DOMESTIC	4
FRAUD	4
HOMICIDE	1
INFORMATION	45
MISSING PERSON	1
OD	1
RAPE	3
SEX OFFENSE	55
SMART	1
WEAPON OFFENSE	3
WELFARE CHECK	2
OTHER CASES	38

Amongst the team of five detectives and one supervisor, the Investigations unit received 268 cases in 2023. Of all the cases in 2023, the most frequent were agency assists and sex offenses.

The Skagit County Sheriff's Office detectives contributed to 77 agency assists. Agency assist cases consist of providing support to neighboring agencies during a significant event.

The second and third most common cases were sex offenses and child abuse. Sex offenses specifically saw an increase of 77% from 2022.

SKAGIT COUNTY INTER-LOCAL DRUG TASK FORCE

CHIEF TOBIN MEYER



MISSION — *The Skagit County Interlocal Drug Enforcement Unit (SCIDEU) was created in 1987 to disrupt, dismantle, and effectively prosecute criminal organizations such as gangs, drug traffickers and other high to mid-level criminal elements within Skagit County and beyond.*

(SCIDEU) is a multi-agency task force commanded by the Skagit County Sheriff's Office and comprised of personnel from several Skagit County law enforcement agencies. In addition to the core agencies, SCIDEU conducts complex joint investigations with surrounding county and city agencies as well as state and federal agencies to include the Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Federal Bureau of Investigation, (FBI) the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the Naval Criminal Investigative Services, (NCIS). Several detectives hold collateral duties as Task Force Officers with the FBI, allowing them to work cases into the federal justice system.

In 2019, with input from our partner agencies, SCIDEU broadened its scope of work and aligned the needs of the agencies and the communities we work in, with the operational output of the unit.

A broader mission expanded our scope from primarily focusing on drug trafficking, up to multi-jurisdictional international criminal investigations.

SCIDEU detectives utilize an extensive amount of electronic technology including cell phone forensics to assist in fugitive apprehensions, human trafficking, money laundering and extortion.

The Task Force achieves their goals through covert surveillance, undercover evidence buys, and in-depth investigation to gather the evidence needed for a successful prosecution.



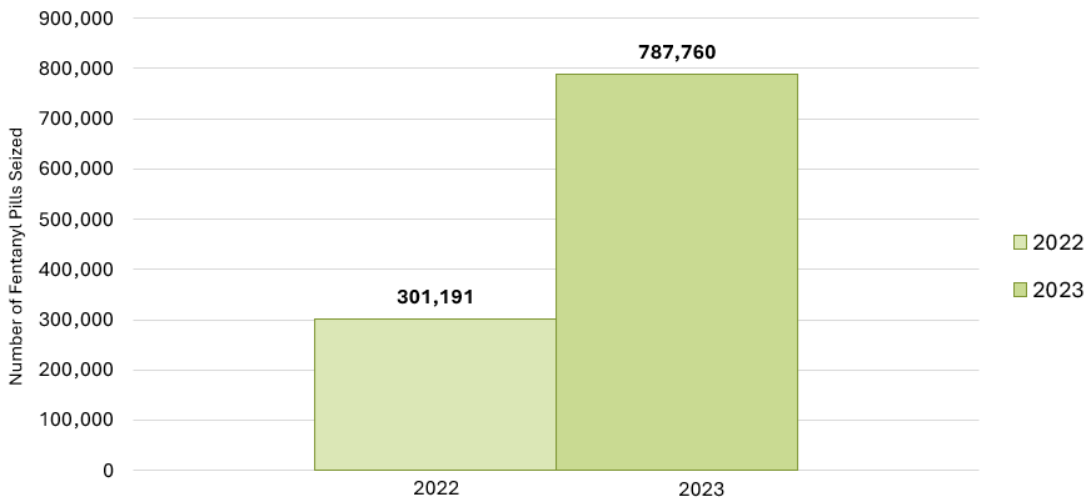
SKAGIT COUNTY INTER-LOCAL DRUG TASK FORCE

2023 also brought recognition for the outstanding cooperative investigative work performed by SCIDEU. In December 2023, the Homeland Security Investigations “PARTNERSHIP AWARD” was presented to SCIDEU at the Seattle HSI headquarters.

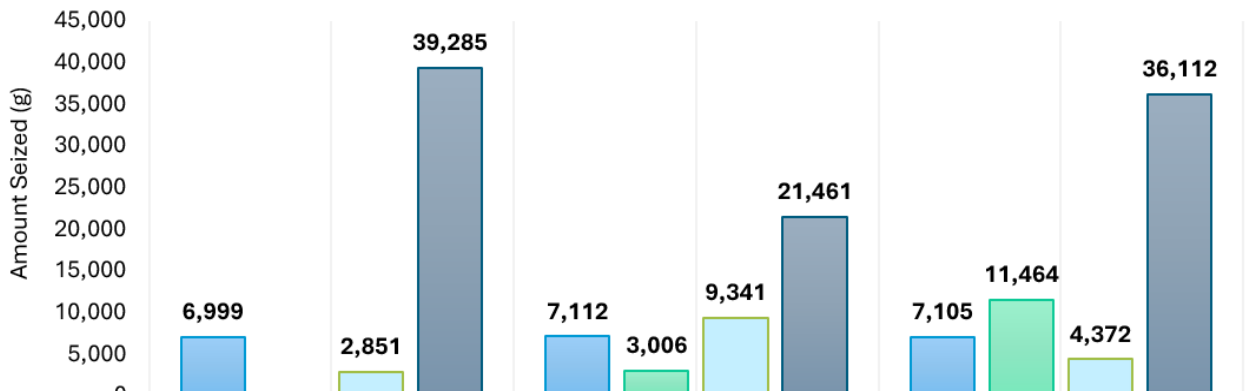
Fentanyl continues to gain a foothold in Skagit County, resulting in an exponential increase in controlled substance overdose deaths. SCIDEU detectives continue to work with local investigators and the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office in taking an aggressive stance in addressing Controlled Substance homicides.



2022 vs. 2023 Fentanyl Seizures



SCIDEU Drug Seizures (2021 - 2023)



Drug	2021	2022	2023
Cocaine	6,999	7,112	7,105
Fentanyl (Powder form)		3,006	11,464
Heroin	2,851	9,341	4,372
Methamphetamine	39,285	21,461	36,112

LA CONNER DETACHMENT

SGT. BRAD HOLMES

Since 2001, Skagit County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) has contracted law enforcement services for the town of La Conner. A full time Skagit County Sheriff's Sergeant is attached to the town of La Conner as well as 24-hour patrol support. The assigned Sergeant provides policing services to the community as a liaison between the town of La Conner and the Skagit County Sheriff's Office. Along with community policing services, SCSO supports the La Conner School District, prioritizing the safety of their students and district personnel. Additionally, SCSO coordinates policing efforts with the Swinomish Police Department, establishing a positive working relationship between the departments while ensuring a common goal of safety and well-being of residents of La Conner.



2023 brought changes to the La Conner detachment with the retirement of Sergeant Beau Montgomery. After a lengthy career in both the military and law enforcement, Sergeant Montgomery saw a chance to start a family business and jumped at the opportunity. Sergeant Brad Holmes was moved into the vacancy and has taken over as the Sergeant for La Conner and the liaison between the town and Sheriff's Office. Sergeant Holmes has 24 years in law enforcement and is looking forward to spending time working with community and town officials to make La Conner a safe and happy place to live, visit, and work.

EAST DETACHMENT

SGT. STEVE DILLS

The East Precinct operates out of the town of Concrete, holding office space next to Concrete Town Hall. Concrete, with a population slightly over 750, has contracted with the Sheriff's Office for law enforcement services since 2004. Law enforcement services are provided to the towns of Lyman, Hamilton, Concrete, Rockport, and Marblemount. The Skagit County Sheriff's Office East Precinct is supervised by one Sergeant and six patrol Deputies.

The East Precinct is the primary law enforcement unit in Eastern Skagit County. The patrol area stretches east of Sedro-Woolley all the way to the North Cascade pass, making up a little over 1,250 miles of the county. For context, that's almost half of size of the entire county!

Situated in the most rural part of the county, The East Precinct maintains a close working relationship with many law enforcement partners. Some of those partners include Skagit County Parks, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Patrol, and the National Park Service.

Community Oriented Policing and the East Precinct are one in the same. Deputies assigned to the East Precinct regularly attend community meetings, town councils, and meet with stakeholders in the upriver area. The East Precinct works closely with organizations in the area, including Community Action, Concrete School District, Puget Sound Energy, Concrete Chamber of Commerce, and local businesses.

This year long time East Precinct Deputy Craig Mullen retired after 35 years of service to the citizens of Skagit County. We wish Deputy Mullen the best in his future endeavors after law enforcement.

The most common calls deputies responded to out of the East Precinct were Suspicious complaints, Civils, and Thefts.

The East Precinct handled 4005 calls for service and an additional 559 calls for service in the Town of Concrete.



ANIMAL CONTROL UNIT

ACO EMILY DIAZ



During the year Animal Control seized 50 dogs, 8 cats, 2 head of cattle, 9 chickens, 2 horses, and a pig. In 2023 Animal Control Officer Diaz investigated and charged a man with two counts of Animal Cruelty for torturing two cats that lead to the death of one. The man ran from Law Enforcement. Animal Control worked closely with our Mental Health Professionals and our multi-agency Task Force to locate the suspect. He was placed in custody and is expected to plead guilty in the coming days.

10 dogs were removed from a residence after several emaciated animals were observed. The owners admitted to not feeding the animals for days. Charges are pending at this time.

In November of 2023, a man was arrested for Assault and Animal Cruelty in Hamilton after assaulting a man when he tried to prevent the subject from beating his dog. After the arrest was made, Animal Control removed 6 dogs, 1 horse, 2 cows, 9 chickens, and 1 pig from the suspects property. A man was charged with Animal Cruelty after he left his two dogs inside a crate, inside a vehicle while he went fishing. One dog died as a result of heat exhaustion.

As always, Officer Diaz continues to participate in end of year school activities, and Community events to spread awareness and educate the youth on appropriate animal care. This year ACO Diaz appeared at the YMCA Healthy kids event, City of Burlington Touch a Truck Event, and Shop with a Cop.

Another part of the Animal Control job is the responsibility for declaring aggressive dogs as Potentially Dangerous and Dangerous. In 2023 we had 9 Potentially Dangerous Dog cases and 2 Dangerous Dog cases. Animal Control then follows up to monitor these dogs to ensure the owners are in compliance with the laws.

Call Type	2020	2021	2022	2023
L/F Animals	231	288	217	281
Traffic Hazard	74	99	79	57
Cruelty/Neg	209	251	217	187
Barking			160	115
Aband. Animal			46	46
Dog Bite			57	65
Total Calls	1,298	1,118	1,352	1,424

MARINE PATROL UNIT

SGT. BRAD HOLMES

The SCSO Marine Unit is a specialized group that responds to boating calls and rescues year-round for the waters of Skagit County. The marine unit puts an emphasis on summer patrols to enhance the safety and enjoyment of water recreation in Skagit County.

2023 was a bounce back year for the Marine Unit after losing several members the previous years to retirement and new assignments. The Marine Unit added three new members and got each member through the Washington State Parks Marine Law Enforcement Academy. The Marine Unit now consists of 10 members who are trained in both rescue and patrol. The Marine Unit spent time this year working on joint training with local SAR groups and building a better co-response with those groups.

Our fleet did not change in 2023 and still consists of 4 patrol/rescue boats. Marine 33 is a 33-foot Safeboat and is the primary vessel used for saltwater response in the bays of Skagit County. Our 21-foot Safeboat is the primary patrol vessel for Skagit County lakes and can be used as a backup vessel in the saltwater. We also have two 18-foot Koffler boats with outboard jet motors that are used for river patrols and flood water rescue.

During 2023 the Marine Unit was used on multiple calls for searches, rescues, and emphasis patrols. Skagit County had 80 marine related calls in 2023 with 60 calls for boating problems, 14 calls for water rescues, 4 boating accidents, and 2 assists for boat fires. The Marine Unit also completed 399 boat safety inspections during 2023 patrols.



The Marine Patrol Unit is being turned over to Sgt. Steve Gonzales for 2024 and we are looking forward to his leadership and efforts in promoting boating safety for Skagit County.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

SGT. STEVE DILLS

The Skagit County Search and Rescue program remains one of the most capable and recognized units in the state. Search and Rescue or (SAR) is made up of highly trained volunteers whose mission remains, to help those in peril and rescue those in need. The group is supervised by Sergeant Steven Dills along with Skagit County Deputies who take on individual groups as a collateral assignment.



Skagit County Search and Rescue is a diverse team that works together to assist the Sheriff's Office under a multitude of collateral duties. Specifically, Search and Rescue has assisted in evidence collection, flood preparedness and consistent training evolutions to be ready at a moment's notice. Skagit County Search and Rescue consists of eight groups divided between land and water operations.

Each group specializes in their own discipline and works together cooperatively on missions. The land operation groups consist of, Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR), Mountain Rescue, K9, and Off-Road Vehicles (ORV). The Marine operation consists of Skagit Bay, East County, and Skagit Technical Water Rescue. Our communication group is made up of trained radio operators, Ares Races.

In total, Skagit County Search and Rescue is made up of over 131 certified members.

Through community involvement and an active presence online, Skagit County Search and Rescue will look to continue to recruit and retain highly motivated individuals.

Search and Rescue members go through rigorous training prior to deploying in the field.

Training for Search and Rescue team includes our Search and Rescue Support Academy. Volunteers from the County completed six weeks of training to assist in logistics and radio communication. Recruits that are

interested in furthering their training in ground search and rescue then move on to the four-month ground academy or they report to the group that they are interested in for additional training opportunities.



SEARCH AND RESCUE

Our search and rescue members were also busy assisting in community outreach by participating in the Concrete Youth Appreciation Day and speaking to community groups such as the Rotary club. Several members participated in training opportunities like avalanche training hosted by the Washington Department of Transportation and a mapping class utilizing a program called SAR Topo.

This year we welcomed in our new search and rescue volunteer coordinator Lindsey Juen. She has been working with our volunteer search and rescue groups to assist in scheduling training, flood preparedness, and working to bring outside training opportunities to our groups.

The search and rescue program also welcomed Deputy Kyle Wiggins to our program as our full-time search and rescue deputy. Deputy Wiggins brings over 18 years of experience as a

patrol deputy and search and rescue deputy. He will oversee day to day operations of our search and rescue program and assist with the Skagit County Sheriff's office marine program.

The total amount of SAR missions for the year was 38. This was a decrease from 2022 where the team responded to 45 total missions. These missions speak to the level of preparedness and ability to always answer the call for service.



NORTH CASCADES REGIONAL SWAT

North Cascades Regional SWAT (NCRS) is a multi-jurisdictional unit of law enforcement officers specifically trained and equipped to work as a coordinated team to resolve critical incidents that are so hazardous, complex, or unusual that they may exceed the capabilities of first responders or investigative units including, but not limited to, hostage taking, barricaded suspects, snipers, terrorist acts and other high-risk incidents.

The team is composed of members from the Skagit County Sheriff's Office, Oak Harbor Police, Sedro Woolley Police, Burlington Police and medics from Anacortes Fire Department. In 2023, NCRS added a new rescue vehicle which will help to provide a safe approach when handling tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving situations.

North Cascades Regional SWAT members participate in monthly training exercises which include weapon proficiency, emergency vehicle operation, less lethal munitions, building searches, high risk warrant service, and tactical medical operations.

Furthermore, NCRS has a Sniper element, Open Air Scout Intervention Specialists (OASIS). OASIS members assist in bringing about the safe and peaceful resolution of critical incidents through stealth, tactics, and skills by providing real time information and protective overwatch.

SWAT team members must demonstrate good judgment and understanding of their critical roles. Members of the team are subject to 24-hour callouts and unusual working conditions and training obligations. NCRS works closely with Skagit County Inter-Local Drug Enforcement Unit (SCIDEU), Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT), Unmanned Aerial Systems Team (UAS), Investigations, Marine Patrol, and other tactical teams to bring resolution to calls exceeding the capability of the patrol unit.

In 2023, North Cascades Regional SWAT (NCRS) responded to 12 calls for service. A few examples include:

- NCRS responded to the Mount Vernon area for a subject armed and barricaded in a residence. The suspect was under investigation for Robbery and Assault after firing a gun at another person. The team deployed and the subject attempted to flee on a motorcycle. NCRS members were able to subdue him seconds before he was able to make it past containment units.
- NCRS worked with neighboring law enforcement agencies in serving search warrants on multiple rooms at a local motel. Numerous subjects were detained or arrested during the investigation without using any force.
- NCRS members assisted detectives in the execution of a high-risk search warrant in the Anacortes area. A subject was arrested for Robbery, Kidnapping, Burglary and Conspiracy to Commit Murder. NCRS, along with the UAV team, Investigations, Crisis Negotiation Team, Deputies and Anacortes Police worked together to bring this to a safe resolution.

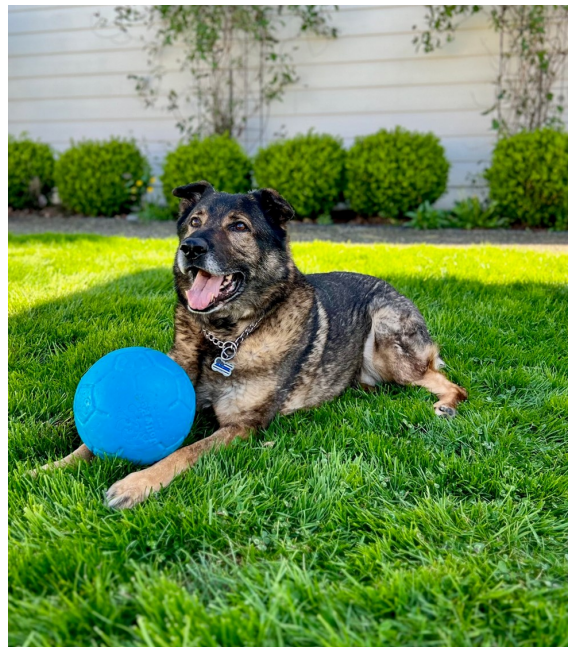


K-9 UNIT

In December of 2022, K9 Espo officially retired from duty. Due to a staffing crisis, K9 Espo was not immediately replaced, but we are in the process to select a new K9 Handler in early 2024. K9 basic handler training will take place in Bellingham with hopes to be on the road before summer.

The Skagit County Sheriff's Office Administration is committed to our K9 program and believes it is a vital tool to help keep our community and deputies safe. Police K9s not only assist in locating dangerous suspects who pose a threat to the public but they can deter crime by just being available.

Here are a few photos of K9 Espo in retirement.....



CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM (CRT)

MISSION: *The Crisis Response Team is committed to providing immediate and temporary support for both community members and visitors in crisis.*

The Skagit County Sheriff's Office partnered with Skagit County Public Health last year to continue the co-responder program (AKA Crisis Response Team or CRT). CRT puts mental health clinicians / social workers in the same car as a deputy. The Crisis Response Team has proved successful reaching those that have been dealing with varying types of mental health issues, substance use addiction, and those struggling through tough times. CRT consists of two deputies, one mental health professional, a substance use disorder counselor, a support clinician, and a program manager, with room to grow.

CRT continues to partner with many community resource agencies such as Community Action and the Recovery Navigator Program. This partnership has proved to be vital in connecting some Skagit County residents with housing support as they have found themselves without shelter. The partnership with the Recovery Navigator Program has been vital in reaching those who need help in east county. CRT has also partnered with Helping Hands. Helping Hands has supplied CRT with many items such as food and toiletries to hand out to those who need it most. Deputies have contact with unhoused individuals on a regular basis. Due to the partnership between Helping Hands and CRT, deputies have some much-needed support items to pass out when the need arises. When other community resource programs feel that a location within Skagit County is unsafe to visit alone, they will often reach out to CRT for support.

One of the many responsibilities that deputies have is to assist with civil evictions. Evictions may present additional problems that require the attention of a social worker. CRT is equipped to assist with these calls for service. There have been numerous evictions this past year where CRT has stepped in and was able to provide resources to those in their time of need.



CRT connected with over 1000 community members in a variety of ways. Some contacts were directly from a 911 response where the leading Mental Health Professional (primary) and the Co-Response Manager were embedded with law enforcement. Other referrals to CRT were from Skagit County deputies by email, phone, or personally speaking with the team—whether in the halls, squad room, CRT office....or even parking lots!

CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM (CRT)

Of those 1000 people contacted, 34 were diverted from the criminal justice system, 238 were connected to mental health services, 75 were referred to substance use disorder treatment, 34 were connected to housing in some way, and 91 included collaborating with the Designated Crisis Responders (DCR's). The Crisis response team, alongside Skagit County Deputies, provided agency assistance to other jurisdictions within the County when a behavioral health component was present 67 times.

Other accomplishments of the Crisis Response Team include implementing community collaboration and referral software called Julota (Just Love On Them Always) alongside Mount Vernon Integrated Outreach Services and the Anacortes Community Paramedic Program.

The goal in 2024 is to expand the use of Julota within Law Enforcement and to onboard other community organizations. Julota will provide a seamless way to make referrals to community-based programs, give history and real-time information on current services accessed by community members, and allow law enforcement to access information on persons entered into Julota. This information will assist law enforcement by providing law enforcement officers with suggestions on the best ways to approach and communicate with specific community members while responding to 911 calls.

We look forward to 2024 as we continue to grow the Crisis Response Team! The expansion started in March 2023 when Rose Ness accepted the position of Co-Response Program Manager, and the most recent addition to the team is Erika McCulloch. Erika brings a history of working with the Skagit Valley Community, having worked as an elementary school teacher and then spending the last few years at Didgwalic Wellness Center, providing substance use disorder and case management services.

Finally, the CRT office is proud to share that due to the diligence, perseverance, and sound clinical work of Julie Wright, MHP, a high utilizer of the 911 system, will remain hospitalized where she can get the support and help she desperately needs. The additional treatment was only possible because of Julie's advocacy, attention to detail, and impeccable clinical recommendations, including Julie's willingness to testify on her day off. Julie's dedicated time spent composing an account of historical events and behaviors that continually jeopardized this woman's livelihood. Parents, friends, family, and the crisis system can be rest assured that this individual is now safe.

The Crisis Response Team looks forward to adding additional clinical staff to support the continued goals of improving interactions, promoting safety, and collaborating to facilitate access to appropriate care with first responders as we support the residents of Skagit County.

FIELD TRAINING UNIT

SGT. BRAD HOLMES

The Skagit County Sheriff's Office Field Training Unit is responsible for the development and training of all new recruits and recent graduates of the Washington State Basic Law Enforcement Academy. The training program is guided by instruction from the State of Washington but is also left to develop its own training methods based on the needs of the recruits and the department.

The Field Training Officer's (FTO's) have been selected as mentors and leaders who are working on developing the future of this office. There were 10 FTO's for 2023 who were certified with the state to perform the duties and documentation involved in training. These FTO's often work adjusted shifts and take on more work than others to make sure the program is a success. Our department is grateful for all they do and know our success is because of them.



CJTC Academy graduation of new hires Hank Chou, Gavin Pfuhl, Nick Johnson, and Hilton Hostler

The Skagit County Sheriff's Office has been hiring continuously for several years to try and reach staffing levels necessary to serve the citizens that live, work, and visit our county. The office has hired 10 recruits this past year with 4 making it all the way through the process and on patrol, 3 currently in the academy, 1 withdraw for personal reasons, and 2 that did not pass the program.

In 2024 we anticipate the continue growth of our department and look forward to the challenges that come with training new recruits. We believe the Skagit County Sheriffs Office is a great place to work and it is our duty to put out the best product possible to ensure that continues in the future.

UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS (UAS)

SGT. BEN HAGGLUND

The Skagit County Sheriff's Office began operations in early 2018 with Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS). SCSO maintains a UAS section primarily for search and rescue incidents, locating missing persons or fleeing suspects, and public demonstrations. The UAS section exists to further the Sheriff's Office mission of public safety.

Pilots are commissioned patrol deputies that receive initial training and complete testing and pilot certificates with the FAA. The Sheriff's Office currently has eight certified pilots, including seven deputies/detectives and one sergeant. After initial training, pilots are evaluated individually on each aircraft the unit maintains. The section works toward 24x7 availability; pilots are called out as needed.

In 2023, the UAS section completed 26 total missions. Training flights include night operations, familiarization, maintenance, and competency. Active missions include search and rescue, assisting K9, searching for suspects, and other events such as flood survey. SCSO regularly assists allied agencies including local police, and government agencies such as the Town of Lyman.

In 2023, the SCSO received two new Mavic 3 Enterprise UAS. These aircraft help in Search and Rescue applications with FLIR and attached loudspeakers, or anywhere an announcement could be helpful. The UAS section maintains multiple aircraft for a wide variety of missions:

- (2) *Mavic 3 Enterprise* carry thermal and zoom cameras. They can be flown with attached loudspeakers for announcements.
- *Brinc Lemur* is used for indoor operations, primarily with the SWAT team.
- *Matrice M210* carries thermal and zoom cameras. It can fly day or night.
- *Inspire 1* can also fly day or night and can easily deliver a payload such as a life jacket.
- *Phantom* model is flown in daytime flights with quick launch and longer flight times.
- *DJI Spark* allows for interior and Hazmat operations.



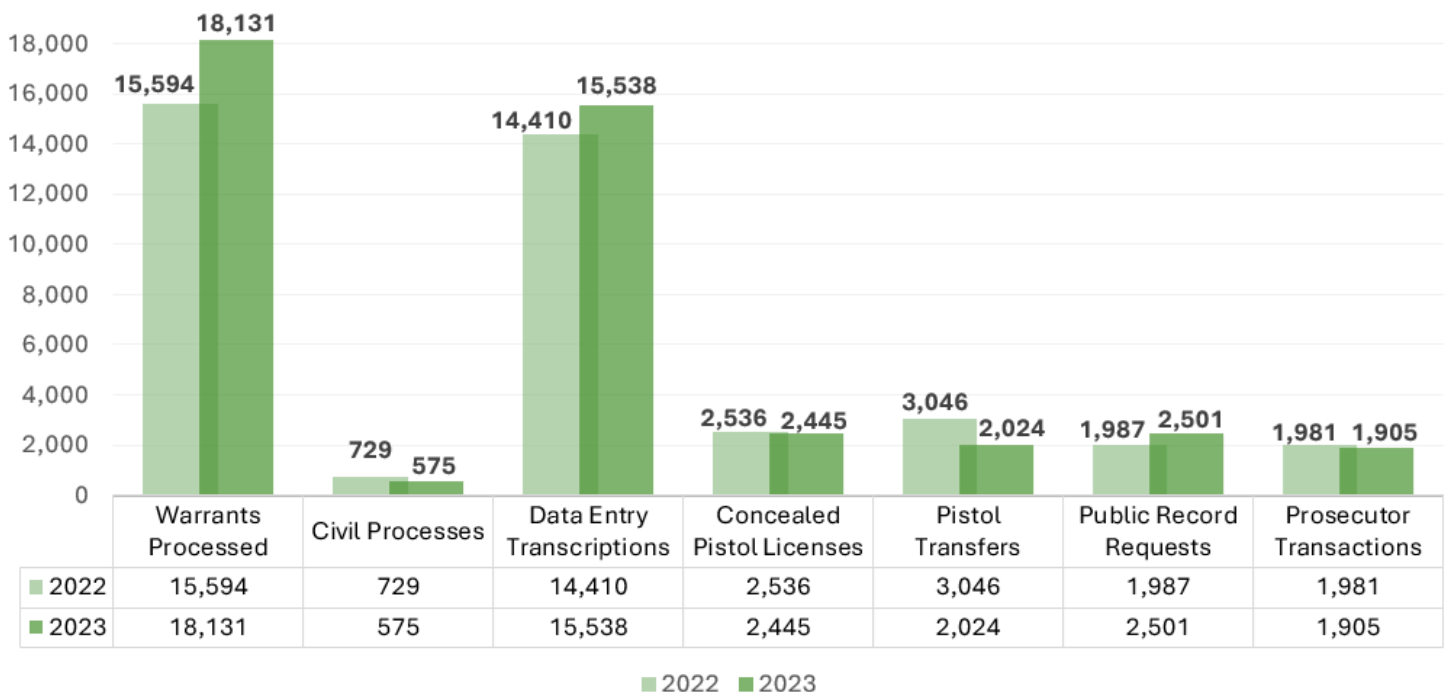
We are looking forward to continued training in 2024.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES BUREAU

CHIEF ANNETTE LINDQUIST

- **Prosecutor Transactions:** Preparing cases to send to the PA for review/charging. Tracking updates and correspondence to and from the PA.
- **Concealed Weapon Permits and Renewals:** New applications or late renewals require fingerprints all require mental health and background check.
- **Pistol Transfers Completed:** Requires background and mental health check.
- **Fingerprinting:** Hard printed cards for submission to other agencies for employment/ other purposes.
- **Registered Sex Offender Coordinator:** Processes sex offenders that are required to register and live in Skagit County.
- **Civil Division:** Processes all orders from the court, evictions, property sales, writs, restitutions and subpoenas.
- **PDR Requests:** Public Records Act RCW 42.56 Rules governing the release of records including exemptions, special privileges and protections
- **Report Dictation:** Deputies dictate case reports, and two data support services techs transcribe them adding them to the SPSS computer system.
- **Warrant/Court Orders/Stolen Property:** Added, removed or modified into multiple data bases by warrant support services techs as information is received.
- **Background screening** for Search and Rescue volunteers, other county departments and screening for LE employment.
- **Daily reception service** at the Justice Center and Sheriff's Office.

2022 vs. 2023



COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER

CHIEF DON MARLOW

2023 was the beginning of the return to pre COVID operation of the Skagit County Community Justice Center. The major hurdle that impeded this process was a staffing crisis which is not only occurring locally, but throughout the country in the law enforcement field-both Corrections and Patrol. By April we had 21 vacancies out of 59 positions. Working with our Commissioners and Human resources personnel, we were able to put together an aggressive incentive package to not only recruit new employees but, to retain the ones we had. This help stop the departures as we only had 3 after April and increased our staff from 38 to 47 deputies by December. As we gain more employees, we are able to accommodate more trials and provide better supervision of inmates.

Transport

The SCCJC Transport Unit is responsible for all inmate movement to the courts, professional visits, medical and other offsite appointments. A major challenge was accommodating all of professional visits which competes with court hearings. A solution was to add another transport deputy and have some of the visits take place in our classroom area. This relieved some of the pressure in the court hallway and as attorney visits become more in depth has served as a solution to maintain efficient operations.

Notable stats from last year:

- The Professional Visits were 198 more than 2022 at 7,430 successful visits which is the all-time high.
- The Visit Success Rate increased 2%. A big contributor to the increase was going to “visits only happen while the inmate is out” solution in June/July 2023. The amount of “refusals” from inmates decreased significantly and also allowed the transport team to facilitate more visits with a better logistical flow of not having to lock down entire pods to retrieve “opposite tier” inmates less frequently.
- 4,096 inmates were transported to Superior Court in 2023, which is an all-time high.

TRANSPORT/VISIT TOTALS					
SCCJC COURT TOTALS	SUPERIOR COURT		PROFESSIONAL VISITS		OUT OF FACILITY
Municipal Court: 888	January: 18	July: 5	January: 601	July: 563	Medical: 67
Superior Court: 4,096	February: 7	August: 7	February: 517	August: 753	Other: 2
Misdemeanor Rights: 1,860	March: 7	September: 7	March: 703	September: 633	
Felony Rights: 1,234	April: 5	October: 11	April: 503	October: 708	
District Court: 649	May: 2	November: 12	May: 604	November: 598	
Zoom Court/Other*: 201	June: 9	December: 13	June: 659	December: 588	
TOTAL: 8,928	TOTAL: 103 transports		TOTAL: 7,430 visits		TOTAL: 69 transports

*Zoom court includes out of county, dependency, child custody/civil, criminal, and drug court

COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER

CHIEF DON MARLOW

*Professional visits include representatives such as attorneys, probation, and investigators. These numbers only account for visits held in the video court area and do not include visits in the booking/intake or classroom area.

*Medical: Total number of scheduled appointments (through Naphcare) that deputies have transported inmates to.

*Other Facilities: These facilities include Yakima, Western State Hospital, the Department of Corrections, and other jail facilities.

Classification Unit

The Classification Unit is responsible for proper placement of inmates within the jail, processing inmate kite/grievances, coordinating pro-se inmate functions and inmate programs.

Jail Alternatives

The duties of the personnel in the Alternatives Section include Inmate Work and Treatment Programs, Courthouse Security, Trial Security Planning, Therapeutic Court Liaison and Fugitive Extradition.

The Jail Alternatives staff deal with

defendants after their conviction until their sentence has been completed. Defendants are screened to determine appropriate sentence resolution, followed by a specific program-oriented interview, booking, and supervision while completing the sentence. Alternatives inmates are tested for alcohol and drug use prior to and during their sentence. The Alternatives staff also maintains the “turn-in” schedule of those defendants who must serve straight jail time and is responsible for court notification if the defendant fails to report for their sentence.

- 32 referrals were submitted for failure to comply with Superior Court orders / commits.
- 14 referrals were submitted for Failure to Return to jail from a Temporary Release Order.

Electronic Home Monitoring (EHM)

- 118 defendants participated on EHM, serving 4,750 days.
- 1 defendant participated on the GPS Pre-Trial Monitoring program, for a total of 365 days.

Alternative Interview Bookings (AIB): Some defendants are allowed by the sentencing judge to serve their sentence in a program administered by agencies other than the Skagit County Jail

- 2 defendants were authorized to participate in other agency programs.

Task	Staffing Hours
STG (Security Threat Groups)	78 hours
AM buprenorphine Pass	2 hours daily/ 730 hours annually
PM buprenorphine Pass	1 hours daily/110 hours annually
Pro Se Rounds (Mon.—Fri.)/ digital discovery	81 hours
Criminal Pro Se Court Preparation	28 hours
Inmate Electronic Kites	10,125 Reponses
Inmate Isolation Movements	884 moves/210 hours annually
Initial Risk Assessments	1004
Re-Classifications	918
Disciplinary Hearings	328
Jail Operation Assistance	530 hours

COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER

CHIEF DON MARLOW

Litter/Work Crew: A joint program with the Skagit County Public Works department and Jail alternatives. These participants spend the day with a member of the Public Works department cleaning public areas such as illegal campsites and dumpsites. Numerous **tons** of garbage is collected by this crew each year. One particularly bad site was cleaned up in September.

- 60 defendants participated in the litter/work crew, completing a total **4,844 hours** of work.



Before and after photos of the cleanup of the BNSF Trestle Camp (Sept. 2023)

Fugitive Extradition

19 out of state fugitive extraditions were coordinated in 2023.

Trial Security

11 In-Custody trials took place in 2023.

Courthouse Security

The Court Deputy patrols 3 buildings, maintaining a uniformed presence in the corridors, outside premises and the 7 courtrooms. The Court Deputy is tasked with maintaining security and order within the courtrooms. The Deputy also assists with security of inmates being transported to and from hearings, fingerprinting of defendants upon conviction, DNA sample collections and arrest defendants with outstanding warrants or when ordered by a Judge. The Court Deputy also coordinates the transport to court of juveniles charged in adult court but held in Juvenile Detention.

The Court Deputy made 44 arrests, fingerprinted 26 defendants and conducted 30 DNA sample collections. There were 111 incidents where the Court Rover was requested by court staff to “stand-by” during a hearing due to the volatile nature of the hearing or an individual. 110,862 visitors entered through the security checkpoints and 8 after-hours events requiring security were held. 98 prohibited items were abandoned at the checkpoints.

COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER

CHIEF DON MARLOW

Therapeutic Court Liaison

Once an offender is admitted to Drug Court, they begin an approximately 24-month treatment program. Drug Court participants make monthly restitution payments and in order to graduate are required to attain certain treatment and life goals, including education, continuing sobriety, treatment and employment. Successful completion of Drug Court results in the charges eventually being dismissed.

The team consists of a Superior Court Judge, Court Coordinator, treatment professionals (Lifeline Connections) legal professionals (Prosecutor, Public Defender) and law enforcement (Mount Vernon Police Department and Sheriff's Office). As the liaison, the Alternatives Sergeant is responsible for ensuring good communication between the Court, Jail and Sheriff's Office. Other duties include security for the court, arranging transport for any in-custody participants, taking sanctioned participants into custody and reporting on their behavior while in custody.

Training

Our Training Unit is responsible for on boarding new employees and insuring they have the proper field training, first aid and defensive tactic trainings prior to being deployed to use in the jail environment. The other major focus of our training unit is the ongoing mandatory training of our staff and elective trainings.

The Mandatory trainings include annual firearms, taser, CPR and first aid, suicide prevention, communicable diseases, PREA, harassment, defensive tactics, restraints, and emergency response plan. The non-mandatory trainings we did this year were Simmunitions, Cell Extraction, Less Lethal Impact weapons, Transport Training, Gang Training, Body Cam Training, EVOG, Deter Detect Defeat, and Spillman. We hosted various multi agency trainings this year which included: Corrections Tactics Seminar, Tactical Medicine, FTO Academy through CJTC, and Cell Extraction Training.

The defensive tactics program was very successful.

We were able to train deputies in defensive tactics classes that were held multiple times throughout the year. The primary focus of the trainings due to current case law was on de-escalation tactics, post use of force protocol and treatment, scene safety and security, and mental health individuals in use of force incidents. These trainings were also provided to patrol deputies and corrections who are pre academy to better prepare them for during and post academy success.



EMPLOYEE AWARDS & RECOGNITION

2023 SHERIFF'S OFFICE AWARDS

LIFE SAVING AWARD

Awarded to a Sheriff's office employee who acted in a significant manner to save or prolong another's life or directly assisted in delivery of a child.

Corporal Gary Huehnerhoff

Corporal Mitchell Kahns

Sergeant Jason Moses

Detective Duane Neufeld

SCCJC CORRECTIONS DEPUTY OF THE YEAR



Corporal James Dennis

DEPUTY ANNE JACKSON AWARD

In remembrance of Deputy Jackson's characteristics of teamwork, commitment, thoughtfulness, charity, selflessness, humanity and humor. It serves as a reminder of the powerful impact we as individuals have on those around us.



Linda Eiford

HONORARY DEPUTY AWARD

An Honorary Deputy Award provides the ability for outstanding citizens of Skagit County to be recognized by the Sheriff's Office Benevolent Association for their support of individual sheriff's deputies or the Sheriff's Office as a whole.



Mount Vernon Police Dept. Chief Chris Cammock

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SCSO BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIPS

The **Anne Jackson Memorial Scholarship** is awarded to a High School senior whose parent or grandparent is or was employed by a law enforcement agency in Skagit County.

Abby Hagglund

Abby will graduate from Stanwood High School in June 2024 and plans on attending Grand Canyon University in the fall to study psychology.

The **Erick Valenzuela Memorial Scholarship** is awarded to an outstanding Skagit County High School senior.

Anthony Ortiz

Anthony will graduate from Mount Vernon High School in June 2024 and plans on attending Gonzaga University to study business.

LOCAL ACTIVITY/EVENT PARTICIPATION

Events pictured below: Burlington High School Tour, Shop With a Cop 2023, YMCA Healthy Kids Day 2023, Burlington Touch-A-Truck Event

