

Brown Co Sheriff releases 2019 stats

Editor's note: the following was submitted by Brown Co Sheriff John Merchant

I would like to inform county residents of some of our statistics for the 2019 year.

For 2019, the Brown County Sheriffs dispatchers had received approximately 18,550 calls for service, approximately 51 calls per day, this includes Sheriffs Office, City of Hiawatha, Town and Country Ambulance, Squad 48, Hiawatha Fire, tribal police, and telephone inquiries that go directly to dispatch. Brown County deputies were responsible for approximately 9,500 of those calls for the 2019 year or approximately 26 calls/cases per day. We are very fortunate to have the caliber of dispatchers that we currently have. These folks are responsible for obtaining and disseminating accurate information to the proper agencies in a timely and efficient manner. Their duties and responsibilities are many. By statistic, dispatch positions are the hardest to fill due to the amount of multi-tasking involved and the high stress that comes with the position. Our 911 calls increased drastically this year due to the fact we had above normal traffic for approximately 6 months due to the flooding in Iowa, Nebraska and Missouri and traffic was rerouted through US 36 and 75 Hwys.

The following are most of the statistics of what was handled at the Brown County Sheriffs office level.

911 calls, misdials, hang-ups 5330

warrants 192

chase-pursuits 9

DUI, K-9 and Narcotics 113

accidents 213

domestic 17

animal calls 126

traffic stops 2264

criminal damage 10

assist other agencies 180

assist motorists 447

community policing/civil 77

illegal dumping 16

alarm calls 64

burglary/theft 62

trespass 10

offender registration 295

process service 1760 --over 5,000 attempts of service by deputies

pedestrian checks/suspicious person 142
vehicle unlock 266
VIN's 212
reckless driving 228
welfare checks 146
misc calls 310
fire test 360
transports 111
road blocked 72

The jail portion of the Sheriffs Office has held over 570 different inmates in the 2019 year with an average daily population of approximately 20. These inmates are all arrests of Brown County entities. Very seldom do we house any out of county inmates and if so, is done for a very short period of time under special circumstance. Jail staff are responsible for many areas of the jail and have many duties. From inmate observation, booking, timely jail inmate checks and documentation, preparing meals, kitchen and utensil clean-up, general upkeep, taking inmates to court, visitation, washing inmate uniforms, handling inmate complaints/concerns, medical observation, jail maintenance, etc.

We have been very blessed to be a location where the "NO HUNGER SUMMER" program has been offered to children and families in our basement during the summer months. This is a wonderful project that has brought together some very dedicated volunteers to make sure kids have noon meals during the week, so hunger wouldn't be an option.

The Sheriffs office car seat program has helped more than 850 families to provide safe travel for children in the last 12 years. This program is funded through grants from the State and donations from the public. We also inspect car seats and provide safety information to parents and caregivers about the importance of proper car seat use, installation and care. We have 5 deputies who are CPS Techs and one who is an instructor.

Since we are a 24/7 agency, I decided that we should accept unwanted, unused or expired medications at all hours of the night and day, any day of the year. At any time people can drop off this medication at dispatch. We have been participants of the NATIONAL TAKEBACK event since its inception approximately 8 years ago and have turned in more than 2,000 pounds of medication to be destroyed by the DEA.

We are also very proud of the fact that as of this year, we have certified over 1200 high school students and staff in First Aid, CPR and AED. Last year, Kansas required all students learn these very important life saving skills before graduating. We have been certifying students for the last 5 years through the generosity of the Ruth and Roger Wolf Charitable Trust, grants and other

donations. We have 5 certified instructors at the Sheriffs office as well as Horton Police Chief John Calhoon. By providing these life saving skills, we have enabled the students to render aid to each other in case of an active shooter situation, vehicle accident, farming accident, while baby-sitting or family medical emergency. We have had several students and staff inform us that they had actually put these skills to use and have saved lives, that is quite a testimony for the importance of this program. This also provides us the opportunity to work with students at a different level in hopes to inspire them to pursue a career in law enforcement or emergency services.

Each deputy patrols an average of 150-200 miles per shift, going through the small towns daily. Deputies are responsible for serving papers, traffic stops, rendering aid to citizens, answering complaints, working cases, making arrests, serving warrants, attend multiple training classes, Sheriff briefings, testifying in court, proper maintenance of their vehicles, etc., etc. Vehicle stops are an important part of crime deterrent as officer presence is not favored by those who choose to break the law. Statistics have proven that a proactive law enforcement agency has a major impact on reducing crime rates, this is verified by the 2018 KBI CRIME INDEX. By this statistic, Brown County has the lowest crime rate compared to many other counties in our region. Brown County has an estimated county population(excluding Hiawatha and Horton) of 4741 with a property crime offense rate of 1.7 occurrences per 1,000 people. City of Hiawatha has a estimated population of 3132 with a property crime offense rate of 37.7 occurrences per 1000 people and the City of Horton has an estimated population of 1687 with a property crime offense rate of 14.2 occurrences per 1,000 people. I encourage everyone to research the KBI CRIME INDEX and review all the statistics and feel free to ask any questions.

We introduced a new program this year which focuses on teaching teen drivers the perils of reckless driving and the consequences that follow. A Ford Raptor was purchased as a way to introduce students to the teaching method and to provide common ground. Many people have over exaggerated the cost of the vehicle, but with the support of the community and law enforcement alliances, donations brought the cost Brown County paid to just over \$15,000. A special thank you to the Rodney and Sandy Paden family and many others who had faith in this program and made it a reality. By educating our young people, we are hoping to save lives and offer them better choices when it comes to aggressive or reckless driving behaviors.

I firmly believe in the effort that we have put forth in notifying the public on scams that are circulating our county has made a positive difference. By informing and educating our county residents, we have a much safer county and have very few victims when it comes to money loss or identity theft due to scammers. Many residents thank me for coordinating and forwarding this information to our local media so they can be kept up to date.

I would like to express my thank you to our county residents for their cooperation and support of the Brown County Sheriffs office. Many are very comfortable reporting issues that happen within the county which helps us solve crime due to increased patrol and passing on of the information to the appropriate authorities. We have made and solved many cases due to the fact that you feel comfortable sharing in formation with us, our citizens are our greatest assents when it comes to crime prevention. Recently, I put out a press release on concerns that our county citizens made me aware of unscrupulous contractors in our area. We had some very attentive citizens in the northern part of the county inform us that they were soliciting in their area. We responded, and not only made several arrests, but were notified by many other counties and surrounding states that these people were using questionable tactics to promote their services and many complaints have been lodged against them. This is prime example of what can be achieved by working together. It has always been my goal to provide Brown County citizens with the best employees as possible so their concerns and issues are met satisfactorily, and provide them a safer place to live and raise a family.

**Sheriff John D Merchant
Brown County Sheriff's Office
709 Utah Street
Hiawatha KS 66434
(785) 742-7125**

Many Signals Communications