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Brown Co Sheriff releases 2020 stats

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

At the start of every year I like to make our statistics for the Sheriff's office available to the public for the past year. Who would have ever guessed so much has changed in a years time. I am very proud of the way our county has weathered the storm and I appreciate all of the support you have given all of our emergency responders over the years. Here's hoping things will be much better this coming year!

Deputies and the Jail Transport Officer delivered food, water, medicine, supplies and groceries to those in need at the start of the pandemic which resulted in many calls for service that were not officially counted in the statistics. I have to give credit to my staff, not once did they balk at the idea of interacting with the public in order to provide medication or provisions, dispatchers never complained about the increase in calls for information or assistance and jail staff always handled incoming prisoners without complaint even with the extra precautions they had to take due to COVID.

The following are some of our statistics from 2020:

911 calls 17,955

warrants served 145

DUI, K-9, and Narcotics 118

accidents 202

domestic disturbances 37

animal calls 146

traffic stops 1357

criminal damage to property 15

assist other agencies 107

assist motorists 380

community policing/civil issues 82

illegal dumpling complaints 7

alarm calls 50

burglary/theft 52

trespass 5

offender registration 282

process service 958, over 3,000 attempts

pedestrian checks/suspicious person 99

vehicle unlock 214

VIN 277

reckless driving complaints 143

welfare checks 119

misc calls 381

fire test 360

inmate transports 97

road blocked reports 146

The Brown County jail housed more than 450 inmates for the 2020 year with an average daily population of approximately 17. Inmates are the result of arrests from Brown County law enforcement entities. On rare occasions will we house out of county inmates. Jail staff have many responsibilities such as inmate observation, booking inmates, jail checks on all inmates, documenting incidents and filling out reports, preparing and serving meals, clean and organize, escorting inmates to court, general upkeep of the jail, laundry, handling inmate complaints/concerns, general jail maintenance, plan meals, etc.

Our dispatch center is responsible for all incoming calls for emergencies, service, information or general questions. Their duties are many. For 2020. the Brown County dispatch center received approximately 61,000 phone calls for service or approximately 167 phone calls per day. This does not include radio traffic. More than 40,000 radio transmissions were documented in 2020, which equals approximately 109 per day. As you can see, dispatchers have quite a bit going on.

Not only do they have the radio and telephone to monitor, they also have to enter and confirm warrants, run information for jail staff, check on officers, identify and notify officers and emergency workers of potential risks or hazards to the calls they are being dispatched to, validations, enter protection orders, VIN's, clock staff in and out, MVR driving history, run III's for officers, Weather alerts and notifications, NIXLE alerts, set off tornado sirens, collect unused, unwanted or expired prescription medications, etc.

My deputies patrol an average of 150-200 miles per shift. Small town patrol is essential in keeping crime down throughout the county. Deputies are responsible for traffic stops, serving papers, providing aid to citizens and motorists, investigating cases, answering complaints, serving warrants, making arrests, attend training, testifying in court, vehicle maintenance and care, attend Sheriff briefings, proactively protecting the citizens of the county, etc. Vehicle stops and visible patrol are important factors in deterring crime and helps prevent criminal elements from relocating in Brown County. Deputies are on patrol 24/7 in Brown County.

Many things have been modified this year due to COVID-19. The NO HUNGER SUMMER program was adapted so lunches could still be served to children and families in the county. Sack lunches were prepared by volunteers and were picked up in the alley behind the Sheriffs Department. I believe they averaged 80+ lunches per day. In a year like this, it is especially important that children and families have food available. Other communities in our county also made sure children and families were fed with similar programs. GOD bless you all!

While things have changed this year, we still accepted outdated, unused or expired medication at the Sheriff's Office. Since we started participation in this program about 9 years ago, we have collected over 2200 pounds of medication that has been turned over to the DEA for disposal. That service is still ongoing so if you have any meds to dispose of, bring them to dispatch at the Sheriff's office. Our car seat program is still in operation under the supervision of Sgt. Robbie Parker who has recently been certified as an instructor as of October 2020. Many families have benefited from this program and the Brown County Sheriff's office has been widely recognized for their efforts in child safety and protection. This program is funded mainly through grants and donations.

We still hold FIRST AID, CPR and AED certification classes through some modification. We have certified over 1400 students and staff on these much needed life saving skills. We were able to do this through the generosity of others through grants and donations. These life saving skills are now mandatory for high school seniors in order to graduate. Kansas became the 38th state to require this approximately 2 years ago. If you think about it, teen drivers are in the highest age bracket for motor vehicle accidents. With that being said, they can use these skills if they are ever in such a situation. By teaching these skills to

students, we are providing them the skills needed to render aid to each other in the event a school violence issue would arise. I have had several students who have told me that they have had to put these skill to use and have saved lives, this makes the program worthwhile.

Our K-9 program has been very busy this year with over 60 deployments netting some pretty impressive results. They have networked with several other law enforcement agencies which have resulted in arrests. quantities of drugs and recovered stolen property in several jurisdictions. By working together and sharing information we can make a big difference.

With the troubling times, scammers have used this to their advantage. Many different scams have circulated that revolved around the COVID pandemic. I try to make sure that the public is well informed to keep from becoming a victim. Remember, NEVER GIVE OUT PERSONAL INFORMATION OVER THE PHONE OR COMPUTER. If you ever have questions or concerns about phone calls, text messages or computer issues, contact your local law enforcement.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to all of the county residents for their support and cooperation of the Sheriff's office. During this last year, many county residents have made and donated masks, supplies, food, etc. I can't count the number of cards, letters and prayers that were given to us. It has made a huge difference!! Hopefully we can put last year behind us and focus on a positive year ahead. We have a great partnership with our county residents and the information that you share with us helps in many ways. It will always be my goal to make Brown county a safer place to live and raise a family. If you have any questions about this information, please call or come see me at the Sheriff's office.

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