

Brown Co Sheriff's Office 2023 statistics

Editors note: the following was submitted by Brown County Sheriff John Merchant

For 2023, the Brown County Sheriff's dispatch center received approximately 4,654 911 calls, which averages approximately 13 calls per day. Total number of calls other than 911 to dispatch was approximately 47,663 or 131 calls per day on average. When you combine the two, over 50,000 total calls were handled by dispatchers in 2023 which average to 137 calls per day.

The Sheriff's Office dispatches for the City of Hiawatha, Town and Country Ambulance, Squad 48, multiple fire departments, tribal police as well as Brown County deputies. As you can see from the number of calls received, dispatchers have a huge responsibility for fielding multiple calls, obtaining information and forwarding that information to responding agencies. These positions are some of the hardest to fill, stress is extremely high and dealing with individuals who are frightened, angry or upset is a challenge. We are very fortunate to have the caliber of dispatchers that we currently have.

Recently, dispatchers have been classified as first responders in the state of Kansas and I supported this effort wholeheartedly.

The following are a majority of the statistics of occurrences that were initiated or assisted by Brown County deputies. Over 7,200 occurrences for 2023 in which deputies were involved in, which is approximately 20 per day average.

We have also noticed an alarming increase in drug cases from 2022. DUI/Drug cases increased by almost 50% in 2023 with 185 compared to 2022 with 123 cases. The public has expressed many concerns to me about holding those accountable who participate in illegal drug use in Brown County and we will continue to do so in the 2024 year.

Accident reports-1 fatality - 203

Animal Calls - 144

Assist other Agency Calls - 318

Assault/Battery calls - 22

Building Checks - 155

Burglary Calls - 5

Car Seat/ CINC - 62

Civil Calls - 26

Community Policing - 68

Criminal Damage to Property - 13

Criminal Threat/Trespass - 4

Drone Deployments - 10

Illegal Dumping - 17

Fire Assist - 40

Funeral Escort - 35

Informational/Miscellaneous - 1,562

Medical - 83

Pedestrian Check - 31

Offender Registrations - 348

Narcotics/DUI- - 185

Reckless Driving, Traffic Complaints - 140

Subpoena Service - 1,320

Suspicious Vehicle/person - 52

Theft - 34

Traffic Stops - 1,488

VIN - 234

Warrants - 166

Welfare Check - 98

Vehicle Lock Outs, Vehicle Checks - 423

Each deputy patrols an average of 150-200 miles per shift, going through the small towns almost daily. Deputies are responsible for serving papers, traffic stops, rendering aid to citizens, answering complaints, working cases, making arrests, serving warrants, investigations, attending a minimum of 40 hours continuing education, Sheriff briefings, testifying in court, proper maintenance of their vehicles, etc. Vehicle stops are an important part of crime deterrent as officer presence is not favored by those who choose to break the law.

The jail portion of the Sheriffs Office booked in over 450 different inmates in the 2023 year with an average daily population of approximately 18. 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. Some duties include 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. Higher food costs have been a challenge to operate under the current budget but we have an obligation to meet the dietary requirements of inmates.

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. They averaged over 100 sack lunches per day throughout the summer and is operated at no cost to county residents. We are fortunate to have a core group of volunteers who take an active part to help children.

The Sheriff's office car seat program has helped more than 900 families to provide safe travel for children in the last 14 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 three staff members who are CPS Techs and one who is a CPS instructor. We have partnered with Amberwell and their technicians to broaden services to the public.

Since we have dispatchers available 24/7, 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 10 years ago and have turned in more than 3,000 pounds of medication to be destroyed by the DEA. By active participation we have an avenue to individuals who can drop off medication at any time for proper disposal.

We are also very proud of the fact that as of this year, we have certified approximately 1,900 high school students and staff in First Aid, CPR and AED through the Teen Lifesaver Initiative. This is provided at no cost to the student or staff members. Several years ago, Kansas required all graduating seniors to learn these very important life saving skills before their graduation. We have been certifying students for the last nine years through the generosity of the Ruth and Roger Wolf Charitable Trust, grants and other donations. We have six certified instructors at the Sheriff- Office. We are also pleased to announce that we are classified as a Training Facility by KS CPR which will allow us to certify our instructors in-house. 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.

We are very thankful for the generosity of supporters of the Brown County Sheriff's Office which enabled us to purchase a drone several years ago. The drone was 100% funded by donations and has been used on various situations in our county and surrounding counties. We have specific staff who train regularly so they can keep up to date on operation and maintenance. This is a resource that we would have been unable to have without the community support and we appreciate you all!

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.

Since being elected as your Sheriff, we have worked many major cases involving successful prosecution as well as protecting and serving the citizens of Brown County in a professional manner. Your safety and welfare is and always will be one of the most important aspects of my office. I am very appreciative of the people who come to me to express their opinions or concerns. I have always believed in doing the right thing versus the popular thing. I have a very proactive group of employees that I am very proud of and they deserve all the credit when it comes to all of our accomplishments in the county. As time goes by, law enforcement positions are getting harder and harder to fill so I consider myself blessed when it comes to my staff.

I would like to express my sincere thank you to all 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 trust us when you share information. You, our citizens, are our greatest assets when it comes to crime prevention. It has always been my goal to provide Brown County citizens with the best employees and service possible and to make sure your concerns and issues are met satisfactorily. I will always do my best to make Brown County a safer place to live and raise a family.

Many Signals Communications