

Benson Police Department



**2006
Annual Report**

January 31, 2007

Glen Pederson, Acting City Manager
City of Benson

Re: 2006 Annual Report

Dear Glen,

This report contains a detailed overview of the Benson Police Department's activity for 2006. Included in the report are statistics related to the department's calls for service and total offenses charged. Also included is information regarding Police Department activities and updates on some of our significant programs for your review.

You will see that I have offered my opinion on why the department is seeing increases in particular areas of interest and decreases in others. This report is not an all- inclusive document, but rather a synopsis of events occurring in 2006, along with explanations/opinions on why we are seeing these trends. Also attached to this report is an all - inclusive list of statistics without any explanations of trends.

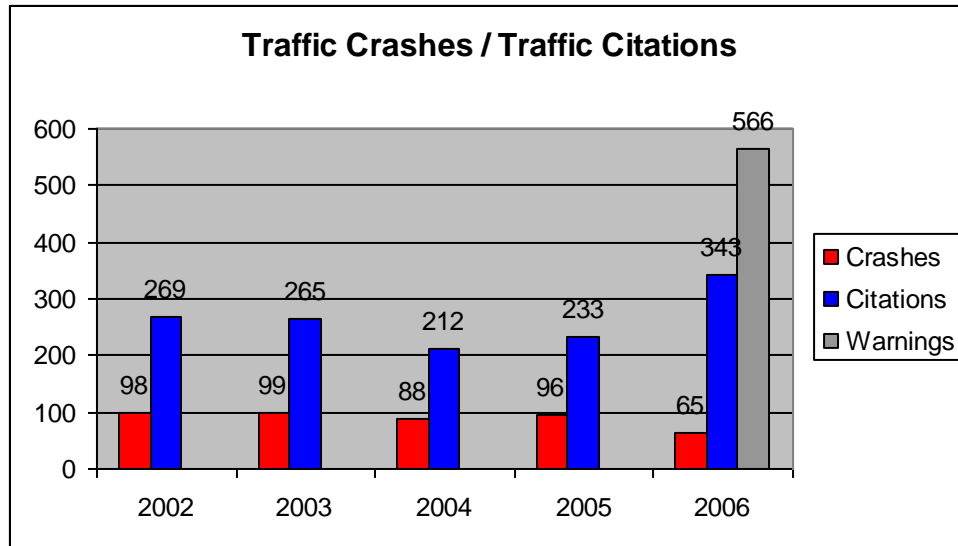
I hope you enjoy the reading and if you or anyone else should have any questions regarding this document they should feel free to call or see me. I do plan to present this at the next city council meeting and ask that you have this item put on the agenda for discussion. Thank you for your support in 2006!

Respectfully,

James M. Crace
Chief of Police

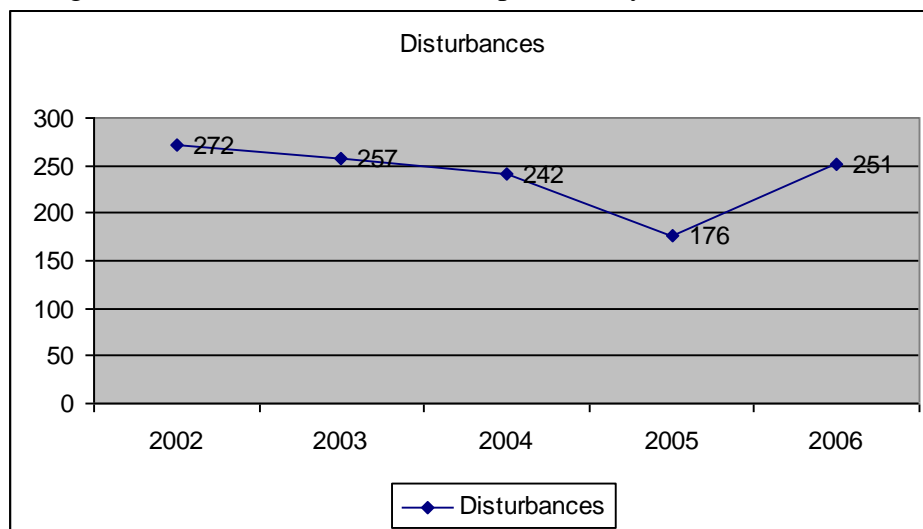
Traffic Accidents / Traffic Citations

In 2001 we had 119 *Accident Calls* reported. Since 2001, we have seen an average of 95 per year, until 2006 when we experienced a major decline with only 65 crashes reported. Stepped up enforcement of traffic laws can be attributed to the decrease in accidents since 2001. The department has been very active in the Minnesota Safe and Sober Program for the past 5 years, winning awards and grants in the past two years. Effective January 1, 2006, the department started to document all traffic warnings. In 2006 BPD officers issued 566 warnings for various traffic offenses and 343 citations; this equates to 1.6 warnings for every citation written.



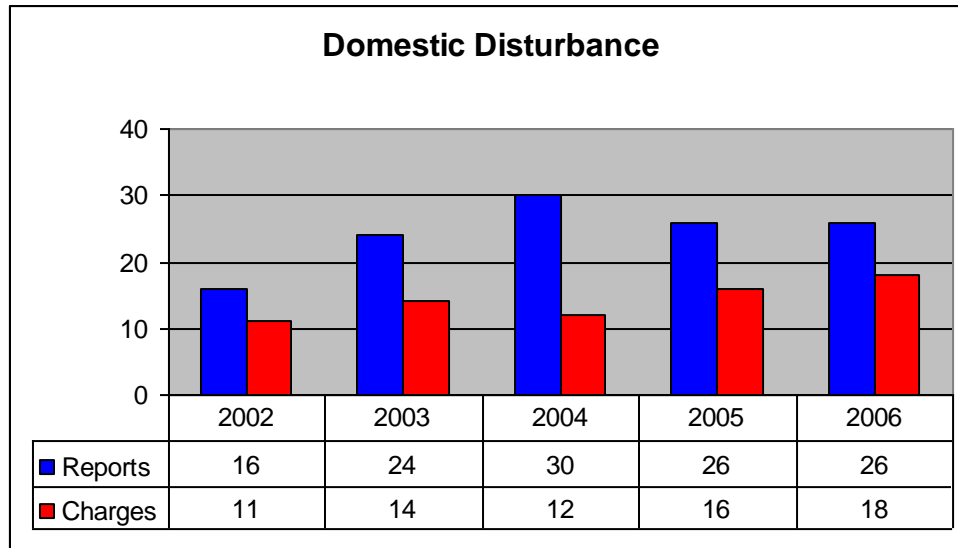
Disturbance Calls

Our calls for *Disturbances* have increased back to 251 complaints in 2006 from 176 in 2005. The annual average calls for disturbances over the prior four years were 240.



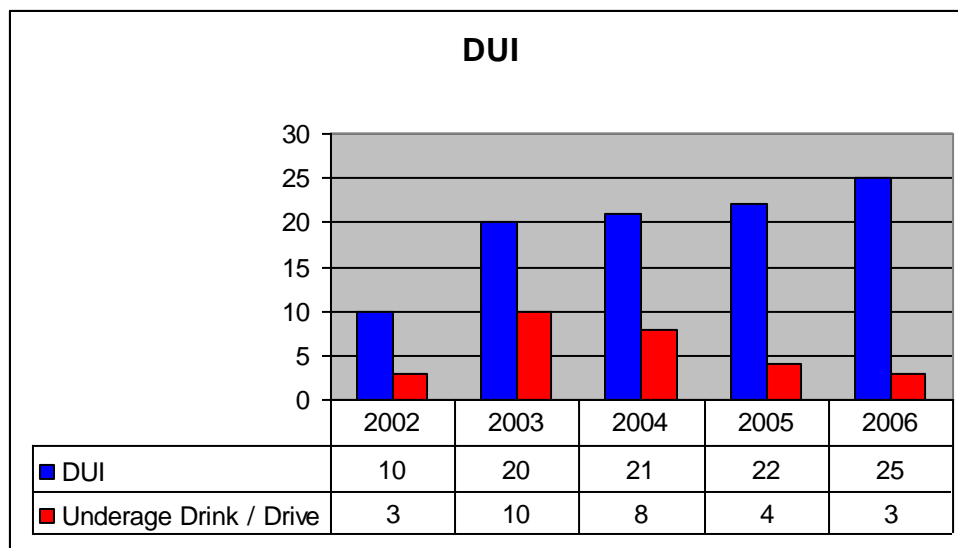
Domestics Disturbance

We are continuing to answer numerous *Domestic Assault* and *Domestic Disturbance* calls every month. (We investigated 14 Domestic Assaults and 12 Domestic Disturbances in 2006). The department continues to work closely with the Swift County Attorney's Office, Swift County Human Services and Victim's Advocates in these cases. Eighteen suspects were successfully charged with Domestic Assault in 2006.



Driving Under the Influence

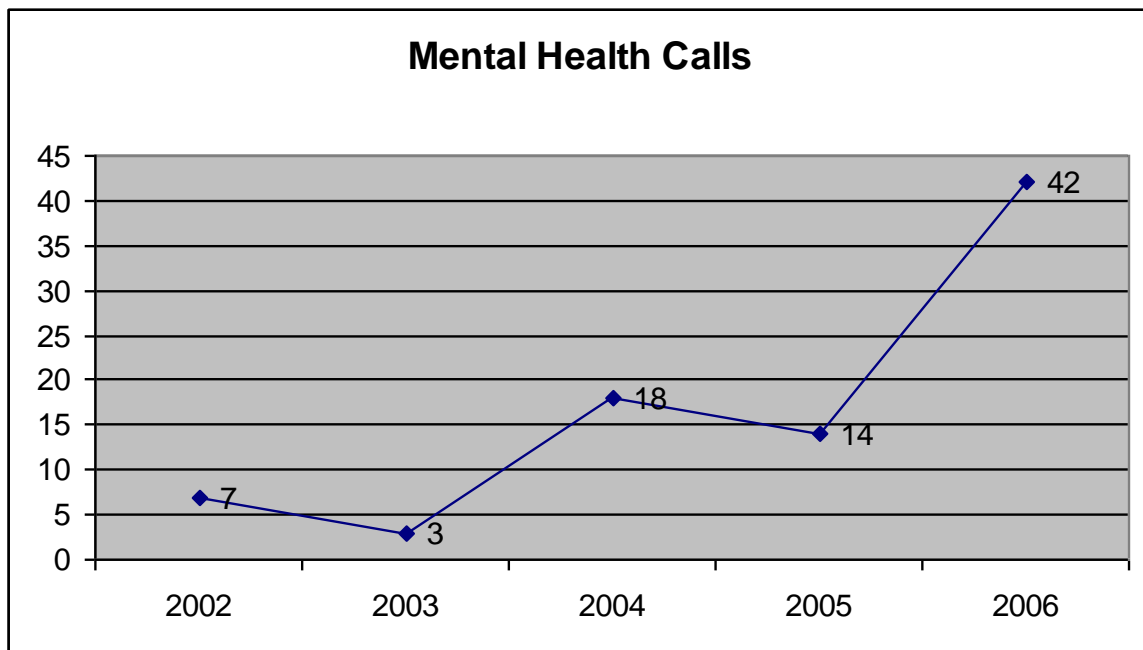
Over the past four years, we have seen minor increases in *DUI* arrests from 20 arrests in 2003 to 25 arrests in 2006. The good news is that we have experienced a steady decline in *Underage Drinking and Driving* since 2003, leading us to believe that our education and outreach efforts are helping.



Mental Health Calls

The department responded to 42 *Mental Health* calls in 2006. This number represents a sharp increase from the four year average of 10. In late 2005 and early 2006, our community was overwhelmed with a few members taking their own lives. This fact, coupled with the reality that we are experiencing more and more mental health calls reported everyday was enough to cause me concern. I decided that the police department needed to arm its officers with more knowledge and training in the area of responding to and de-escalating mental health crisis situations. I wrote a grant that funded four officers, two from Benson PD, one from the Swift County SO and one from Appleton PD to attend a 40 hour Crisis Intervention Team course that I had already attended in 2002. The officers returned from the training with increased knowledge and understanding of mental illnesses and additional skills in managing and de-escalating mental health crisis situations. Currently, the department has three officers trained as Crisis Intervention Team officers.

Because of the fact that BPD normally only has one Patrol Officer on duty at a time and because we only had three trained CIT officers, we quickly found that we were not able to provide adequate CIT response coverage. With these facts in mind, I recently wrote a proposal for another grant that would pay for additional officers to be trained in CIT. We received the grant and are planning to use the funds to host the same 40 hour course here in Benson. Officers from throughout west-central Minnesota will be invited to attend the course. Plans are to have all BPD fulltime officers trained as CIT officers by the end of 2007. By having all fulltime officers trained, we can assure the same level of service being delivered on every shift. Also, by hosting the course locally it will enable us to get the remaining officers trained and certified at a reduced cost versus sending them out of town to attend the training.



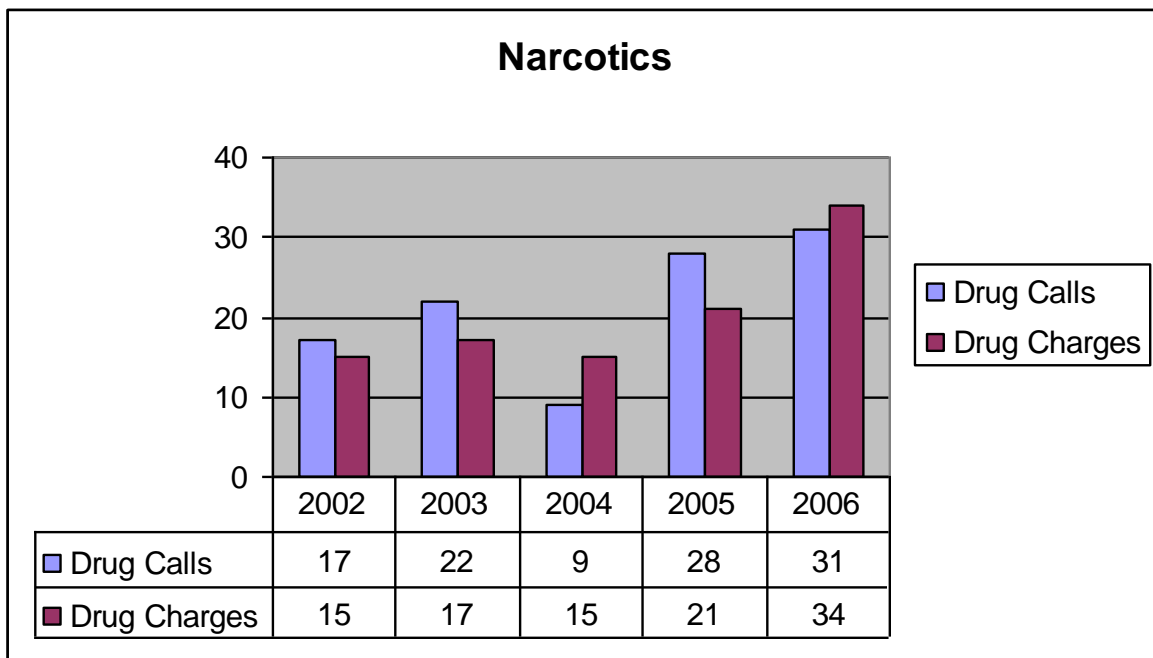
Narcotics Investigations

We saw a major increase in *Drug Related Calls* in 2005 and it has continued into 2006. In 2004, we answered 9 Drug Related calls, increasing to 28 in 2005 and 31 in 2006. We answered these calls with aggressive investigation and enforcement. We continue to have an officer working, when time permits, directly with the CEE VI Drug Task Force to combat these problems.

Over the course of 2006, the BPD Narcotics Liaison Officer was able to cultivate a couple of good informants. Information from these informants was used in a lengthy investigation regarding multiple suspects bringing narcotics into our community. The department invested 175 hours of covert investigation time during the investigation which spanned the summer of 2006. During the operation, over 48 grams of Methamphetamine and 4.5 grams of Marijuana were purchased by undercover operatives. Our efforts yielded 14 Felony arrests for narcotics trafficking. Nine (9) of these arrests were for *1st Degree Sale of a Controlled Substance* and five (5) were for *5th Degree Sale of a Controlled Substance*.

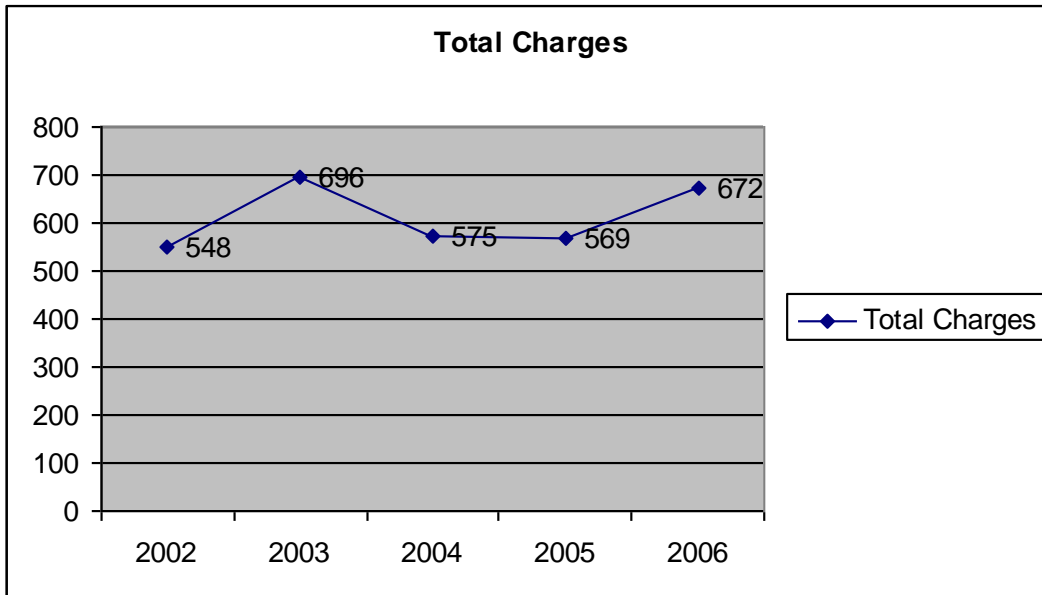
Our efforts in 2006 resulted in 19 local narcotics arrests and 14 arrests during the joint operation with the CEE VI Drug Task Force. These statistics represent narcotics incidents that the Benson Police Department investigated either as the primary agency within the City of Benson, or as an assisting agency- assisting the CEE VI Drug Task Force, outside of the City of Benson.

It should be noted that all of the investigations were directly related to narcotics trafficking coming into Benson. There is a great deal of work to be done in this area. As noted in the City of Benson's January/2006 Strategic Planning Session, further consideration should be given to allocating additional funding to combat narcotics trafficking in our community.



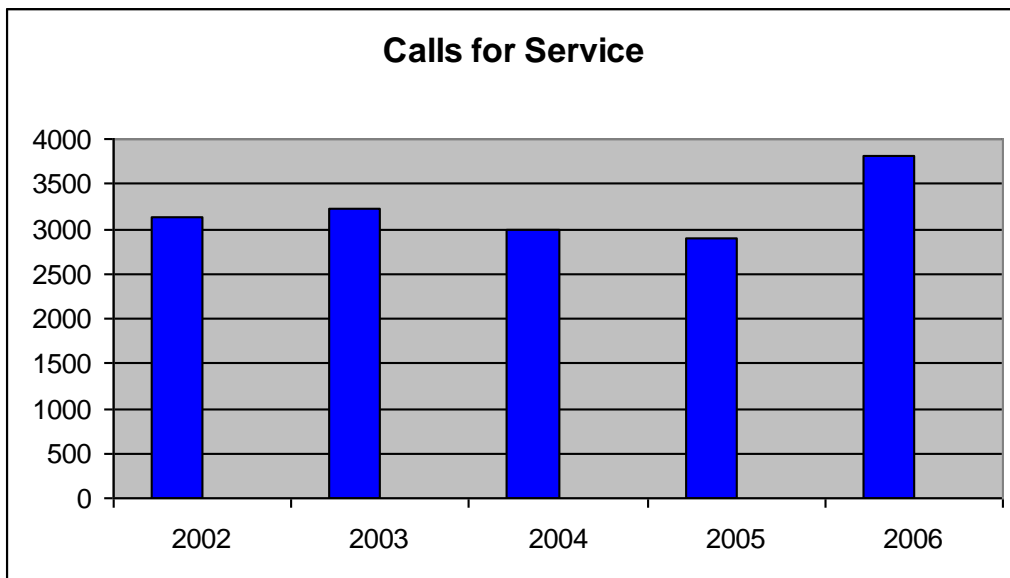
Total Charges

Our total number of charges has increased from 548 charges in 2002 to 672 in 2006. We nearly matched the spike of 696 charges filed in 2003 when the department had an authorized strength of 7 Full-time officers.



Total Calls for Service

Your police department answered 3804 calls for service in 2006. This number is skewed a bit due to the department's new practice of documenting all traffic warnings, initiated in 2006. Without the 566 traffic warnings that were issued, the department answered 3238 calls for service. This still represents a 12% increase over the 2900 calls in 2005.



* Note: in 2002-2004 BPD was staffed at 7 FT Officers

Twenty-Four Hour Patrol

In January of 2006, taking into account the rise in activity and increased expectations from the community, I committed the Police Department to providing the city with 24 hour active patrol coverage. Previously, the department patrolled the city for 22 hours a day and had an officer in an “on-call” status for the remaining 2 hours per day. Officers typically work 12 hour shifts to accomplish 24/7 patrol coverage of the city. This transition to 24 hour patrol has shown to be a benefit to the department and the community. We have had success in solving some significant cases and arrests on incidents that have occurred during hours that in the past, we did not have an officer on duty.

Technology Advancements

The Police Department utilized funds acquired through a Safe and Sober Grant to install laptop computers in each of the patrol vehicles. The laptops have connectivity with the Minnesota State Patrol’s computer-aided dispatch system. Officers now have the ability to query the State of Minnesota’s driver license and motor vehicle files through the laptops. They also are able to communicate with State Troopers through the laptops. In addition to the laptop computers, the department spent drug forfeiture money and purchased a computer server. The new server allows officers to access the department’s records management system from the squad cars. The Chief of Police is able to access the records system from home on weekends to monitor activity. The laptops and the server allow officers to be more effective and efficient in their daily duties. In addition to the computer technology, we added Digital Video Cameras in three of the four department vehicles in 2006. Officers use this technology day in and day out and the video footage serves as evidence in court. The department has digital video, photo and audio capabilities. These files are stored and linked to cases within the department’s records management system.



This picture shows the laptop, and the video camera. The monitor screen for the video camera is embedded into the mirror.



This picture shows a close-up of the mirror and the camera. The mirror also contains a rear facing camera that can monitor the prisoner area.

Community Involvement

The Police Department continues to be very active in and involved with the community. Officers are currently involved in a number of Community Policing Projects to include:

- Senior Citizen Assistance Program
- Child Seat Assistance Program
- School Resource Officer Program
- DARE Program
- Bike Rodeo
- CEE VI Drug Task Force Liaison
- Driver's Education
- Crosswalk Safety Campaign
- Crisis Intervention Team
- Safe & Sober
- Swift County Child Protection Team
- Swift County Adult Protection Team

In addition, Chief Crace serves on the Minnesota Chief's of Police Association Executive Board, the CEE VI Drug Task Force Board of Directors, the Swift County Emergency Management Organization and the City of Benson Safety Committee.

Off-duty, Benson officers are active in community organizations such as: Benson Area Jaycees, local Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Deer Hunters organizations and Boy Scouts of America.

Chief Crace



This picture shows Chief Crace teaching an internet safety curriculum to children at the Northside Elementary School. The course teaches kids about the dangers of the internet and about on-line predators. He received the information at a class taught by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in Washington D.C.



This picture shows Officer Hovde and Sgt. Borden fingerprinting children at "Operation Mugs and Hugs". This event was collaboration with the school, Agralite Co-op, KSCR Radio and the Benson Area Jaycees. The identification packets would be very useful in the event that one of the children were ever lost or kidnapped.

Training

Police Officers make life and death decisions on a daily basis. They also make decisions on whether or not to take someone's freedom by incarcerating them; therefore proper training is paramount to the successful delivery of effective service to the community. Rest assured in the fact, Benson Police Officers are trained to the highest level possible while staying within budget constraints. During the Minnesota POST licensing period of July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006, your officers received a total of 592 hours of training in areas ranging from narcotics investigations to crisis intervention. Proper training is directly related to quality delivery of service to the community and also minimizes potential for litigation. Officers attended the following courses in 2006:

- Death Investigations
- Narcotics / Methamphetamine Investigations
- Critical Incident Management and Response
- Response to School Shootings Course
- High Risk Warrant Service
- Basic Spanish for Police Officers
- Taser Recertification Course
- Firearms Qualification Course
- Use of Force Refresher Course
- First Aid Refresher Course
- Intoxilyzer Refresher Course
- Commercial Vehicle Enforcement
- Basic Field Sobriety Training
- Advanced Field Sobriety Training
- High Risk Traffic Stops Course
- Crisis Intervention Team Training



This picture shows an officer on the live- fire firearms range, simulating that there is a "friendly" person in danger. He is looking down-range at the threat while pulling the "friendly" to safety.



This picture shows officers from the Benson and Appleton Police Departments on the firing range.

I hope this document was informative and interesting to you. See the attached documents for a full list of statistics.

Calls For Service	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Abandoned Bikes	9	11	11	15	13
Accidents	98	99	88	96	65
Alarms	48	27	40	51	45
Ambulance Calls	98	125	146	109	132
Animal Complaints	19	26	25	24	28
Assaults	22	28	23	8	17
Assaults/Domestic	10	11	13	15	14
Assist Other Agencies (includes warrant arrests)	161	155	108	133	162
Bike Thefts	12	11	10	6	6
Burglaries	12	10	22	14	20
Child Abuse/Neglect Intakes	22	23	11	21	15
Civil Matters	29	44	46	48	50
Criminal Damage/Vandalism	41	63	41	42	52
Curfew	10	17	5	0	3
Death Investigation	2	0	1	2	5
Disorderly Conduct	17	40	14	14	6
Disturbance Calls	272	257	242	176	251
Dog Complaints	192	162	148	156	191
Domestic Disturbance(not including domestic assaults)	6	13	17	11	12
Driving Complaints	79	117	86	76	87
Drug Related Calls	17	22	9	28	31
DWI (alcohol and drugs)	10	19	20	20	23
Extra Patrols	30	15	29	27	29
Fire/Assist Fire Dept	23	24	16	25	25
Flee Officer	1	1	1	1	7
Forgery and Related	2	3	5	11	3
Handgun Permits	24	26	26	22	31
Harassing Phone Calls	2	1	1	0	1
Keys Locked in Vehicle/House	227	245	226	191	191
Mental Health Calls	7	3	18	14	42
Miscellaneous	495	535	539	535	587
Missing Person/Abduction (& attempted)	2	2	0	3	6
Money Escorts	601	574	575	555	525
Motor Assists	29	22	31	19	22
Motorized Vehicle Thefts	4	9	8	9	10
Obstruct Legal Process/Crimes Against Justice	14	12	6	6	5
Open Doors/Windows	56	27	15	15	14
Presentations	38	46	33	22	26
Procure Liquor for Minor	0	2	2	0	0
Recovered Property (thefts from other jurisdictions)	0	0	1	3	1
Residence Watch	22	23	20	29	23
Runaways	6	4	3	6	2
Sex Assault and Related	7	6	9	8	3
Snowmobile/ATV Complaints	12	14	4	9	4
Solicitor Permits and complaints	2	6	6	3	3

Suicide Attempts/Suicide	2	4	3	6	4
Theft and Related	65	90	86	92	98
Traffic Offenses/City Ordinances	190	173	114	150	250
Traffic Warnings					566
Traffic Direction	34	22	27	31	32
Transports	1	11	0	3	5
Travelers Aid	2	3	2	6	3
Trespass	6	1	3	3	15
Underage Drink and Drive	3	7	5	4	0
Underage Alcohol Consumption and Possession	9	19	23	9	15
Underage Tobacco Violations	10	6	3	3	4
Violate Protection and Harassment Orders	13	17	10	7	20
Vulnerable Adults	3	2	6	6	4
Weapons	1	0	1	2	0
TOTAL	3129	3235	2983	2900	3804

Charges filed in Swift County District Court	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Assaults	34	35	29	11	18
Assaults/Domestic	11	14	12	16	18
Burglary	4	5	11	3	7
Crimes Against Justice	9	8	14	8	18
Crim Sex	5	2	3	5	0
Criminal Damage/Trespass	11	16	17	31	25
Curfew	23	32	10	8	6
Disorderly Conduct/Disturb Peace	29	95	49	27	19
Dog Citations	25	14	11	13	16
Drugs & Paraphernalia	15	17	15	21	19
**DWI (alcohol & drug)	19	54	48	46	50
Forgery	2	1	5	3	2
Juvenile Tobacco Use	16	10	10	9	11
Miscellaneous	2	4	5	1	4
Obscenity/Indecent Exposure	1	1	0	0	0
Procure Liquor for Underage	0	1	5	4	0
Snowmobile Citations	0	23	2	0	0
Theft and Related	39	32	59	72	63
Traffic Citations/Misc City Ordinances	269	265	212	233	343
Underage Alcohol Consumption & Possession	26	56	53	25	42
Violate Protection and Harassment Order	7	11	5	5	11
Weapons	1	0	0	28	0
TOTALS	548	696	575	569	672
**DWI Cases	10	20	21	22	25
-charges per case differ from year to year due to new DWI laws					
**Underage Drink & Drive	3	10	8	4	3