

# ***STRONGSVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT***



## ***2024 YEAR-END REPORT***

# ***CONTENTS***

Message from the Chief of Police	3
Organizational Chart	4
Vision, Mission, and Values	5
Compliance with Ohio Collaborative Standards	6
Organizational Integrity	7
Retirements, Recruiting & Hiring, and Promotions	8
Southwest Emergency Dispatch Center (SWEDC)	12
Records Room	16
Patrol Division	17
Detective Bureau	18
Traffic Unit	19
K-9 Unit	20
Strongsville City Jail	21
Southwest Enforcement Bureau (SEB)	22
Drone Unit	23
Mobile Field Force and Ceremonial Unit	24
Drug Recognition Expert (DRE)	25
Victim / Witness Advocate and Community Diversion	26
Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE)	27
Quick Response Team (QRT) / Chaplain Program	30
Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)	31
Rx Drug Drop Box Program and National Drug Take Back Day	32
Shop with a Cop	33
Heroes and Helpers	34
Agency Awards	35

## ***MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OF POLICE***

Thomas J. O'Deens



On behalf of the Strongsville Police Department, it is my privilege to present the 2024 Year End Report. I want to express my gratitude to each of you for your continued cooperation, support, and commitment to making Strongsville a safer place. I am proud of the partnerships we have built, and I am grateful for the trust you have placed in our department. Whether it was working alongside schools, businesses, houses of worship, community organizations, or simply having conversations with officers on patrol, your involvement has made a significant impact on the safety and well-being of our community.

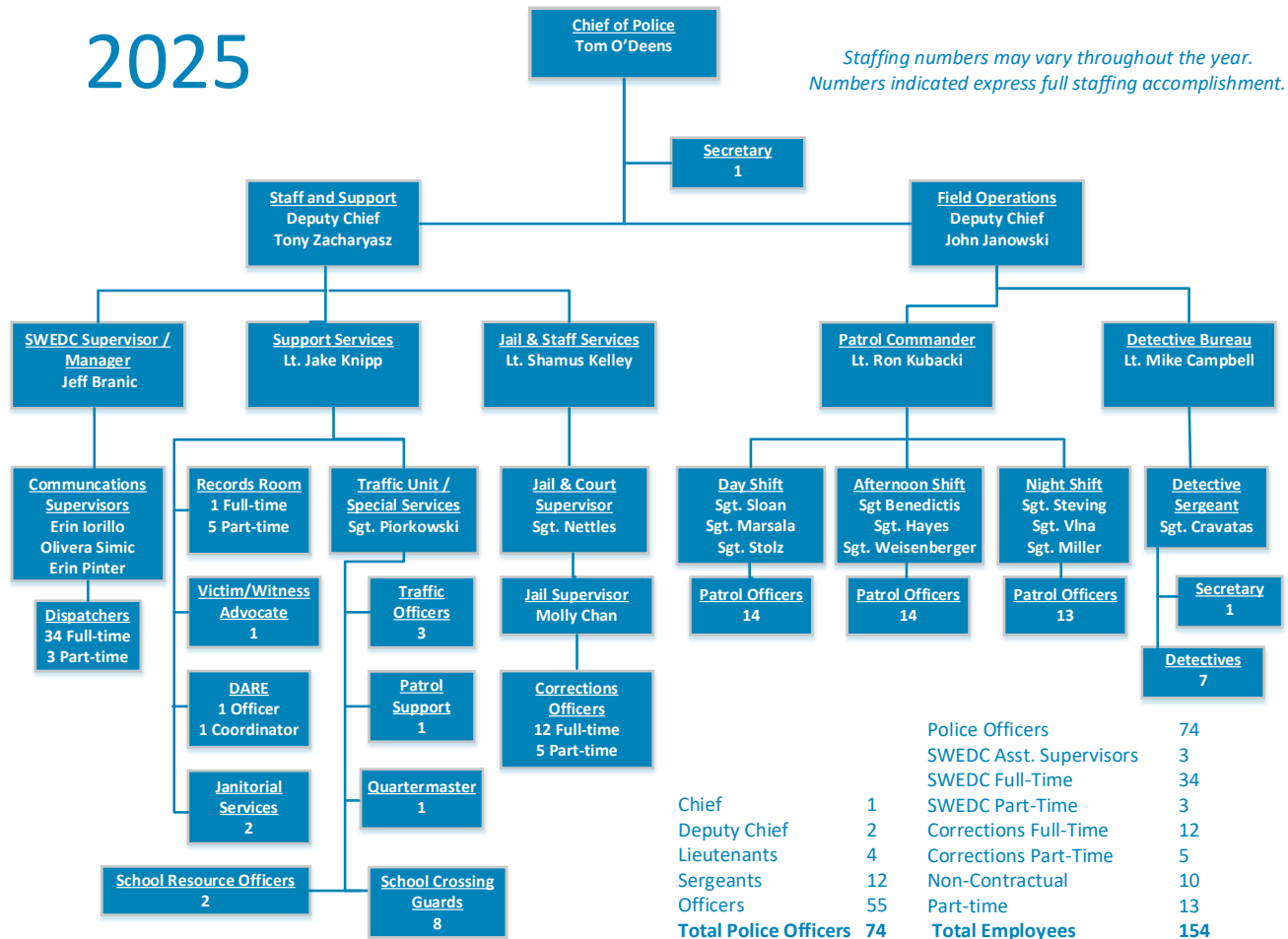
In 2025, we are focusing more than ever on community engagement. Our officers will be working every day to be proactive, not just reactive. We are actively investing in initiatives that promote dialogue with the residents. This includes the purchase of eBikes and a Polaris Ranger so that we can patrol every corner of our city. You will see us at local events such as the Rib Burn Off, Homecoming, Christmas Tree Lighting, high school football games, and the City's newest gem, the Town Center Rec Park. We want to hear your concerns, your ideas, and your hopes for a safer stronger city. Every interaction matters. Every connection counts.

It is a privilege to be the Chief of this Department. I believe the men and women of this Department are the best. I want to thank Mayor Tom Perciak, who has been a staunch supporter of the police department. We are lucky to have such a leader. I also would like to acknowledge and thank Safety Director Charlie Goss, whose wisdom has helped me navigate the challenges of being Chief of Police. Also, I would be remiss to not thank members of our City Council. They have always been strong supporters of our police department. In closing, I thank all of you for the opportunity to build partnerships and make Strongsville a great place to raise a family, have a business, go to school, attend church, and have fun and feel safe!

Chief O'Deens

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

2025



1-15-2025



# ***VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES***

## **Our Vision:**

*To develop together as a team who enjoys our work, takes pride in our integrity, professional public image, and commitment to constant excellence in our service.*

## **Our Mission:**

In partnership with the community, we pledge to:

- Protect lives and property of our fellow citizens
- Persist in the pursuit of our violators of our laws, while protecting the constitutional rights and freedoms of all
- Enhance the quality of life by identifying and solving community problems, preventing crime and extinguishing fear
- Preserve the proud reputation of quality service, professionalism, integrity, and compassion

## **Our Values:**

We value our proud reputation of:

**Quality Service, Professionalism, Integrity, and Compassion**

# COMPLIANCE WITH OHIO COLLABORATIVE STANDARDS

The Ohio Collaborative and their established standards were implemented at the State level in 2015. The Ohio Collaborative is designed to hold law enforcement agencies accountable and instill a greater confidence with the public by establishing high certification standards that must be met. These standards include: Use of force, body-worn cameras, bias-free policing, investigating employee misconduct, response to mass demonstrations, dealing with people in crisis, recruiting and hiring, telecommunicator training, agency wellness, vehicle pursuits, positive youth interaction and community engagement.



The Ohio Collaborative works closely with communities and law enforcement agencies throughout Ohio with the goal of optimizing police services. Participating law enforcement agencies like the Strongsville Police Department are expected to meet or exceed these standards as they develop policies and procedures to meet new expectations.

*The Strongsville Police Department is proud to report that we are completely certified in all of the Ohio Collaborative Compliance Standards for 2024 and into 2025!*

2024 OHIO COLLABORATIVE BIAS FREE POLICING DATA <sup>1</sup>	
RACIAL AND GENDER MAKEUP OF DRIVERS STOPPED BY SP. OFFICERS	
Race/Gender of Driver	# of Traffic Stops
White Males	3147
White Females	1937
Black Males	970
Black Females	544
Hispanic Males	174
Hispanic Females	53
Asian Males	57
Asian Females	28
Native American Males	66
Native American Females	15

<sup>1</sup>

Citations and warnings statistics are for the motoring public and not the residential race and gender demographics.



## ***ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRITY***

The Strongsville Police Department works hard to maintain organizational integrity through an internal review process. It is an internal system where objectivity, fairness and justice are ensured by intensive and impartial investigation and review of the actions of departmental employees. Its purpose is to provide guidelines for the reporting, investigation, and dispositions of complaints regarding the conduct of members of the Strongsville Police Department

The Strongsville Police Department will investigate all complaints, alleged or suspected (signed or anonymous) made against the department or its employees. In addition, the following is a summary of the various internal quality control checks completed in 2024:

### **Citizen Complaints**

Total Complaints: 12

Dispositions: 6

Unfounded: 1

Exonerated: 2

Sustained: 2

Not Sustained: 1

### **Use of Force<sup>1</sup>**

Justified: 34

Not Justified: 0

### **Pursuit Policy<sup>2</sup>**

Compliant: 23

Not Compliant: 12

### **Cruiser Accidents**

Not Negligent: 6

Negligent: 2

### **City Property Damage**

Not Negligent: 3

Negligent: 3

<sup>1</sup> TASER deployment on 5 of the 34

<sup>2</sup> Policy 306 - Motor Vehicle Pursuits

## ***RETIREMENTS***



Detective Steve Borowske retired on April 5, 2024 after 34 years of service with the Strongsville Police Department. Detective Borowske spent a majority of his career in the detective bureau where he specialized in financial crimes. Prior to that, he was a K-9 handler with his partner K-9 Piquee for over 10 years.



Detective Steve Dzurisin retired on May 24, 2024 after 25 years of service with the Strongsville Police Department. Detective Dzurisin was assigned to the detective bureau for most of his career and also served with the Cleveland Police Department for 5 years before coming to Strongsville. Shortly after retirement, he was hired to serve as the quartermaster.



Lt. Jeff Mason retired on May 31, 2024 after 30 years of service with the Strongsville Police Department. Lt. Mason had many leadership positions to include: road supervisor, dispatch supervisor, patrol commander and detective lieutenant. Lt. Mason also spent time as a traffic officer and was a range instructor for the department.



## *RETIREMENT*



Marie McManus retired on February, 29, 2024 after 27 years of service with the Strongsville Police Department. Marie served as the DARE coordinator with Officer Don and Officer Aaron.

Margaret Hintz retired on January, 31, 2024 after 25 years of service with the Strongsville Police Department. Margaret worked in the records department and finished her career serving as the secretary to the chief of police.



## ***RECRUITING AND HIRING***

When officers retire, are promoted, or other vacancies occur, candidates are selected from a civil service eligibility list or as a lateral transfer from another agency. In order to get the highest qualified candidates, the Strongsville Police Department utilizes a recruitment team. The recruitment team visits local police academy classes and distributes recruitment materials throughout Cuyahoga and surrounding counties at local recreation centers, community colleges, fitness centers and other locations.

The Strongsville Police Department welcomed five new officers in 2024. Ptl. Brian Rossman and Ptl. Nick Prochaska attended the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) Training Academy, graduating in July. Ptl. Derek Smith, Ptl. Megan Kane and Ptl. Logan Plas joined as lateral transfers from other police departments.



Ptl. Rossman sworn in on 2/11/24.



Ptl. Prochaska sworn in on 2/12/24



Ptl. Smith sworn in on 1/8/24

Ptl. Kane sworn in on 5/6/24

Ptl. Plas sworn in on 9/30/24.

*The Strongsville Police Department is an Equal Opportunity Employer*



## PROMOTIONS



Jake Knipp was sworn in as a lieutenant on June 1, 2024 and is assigned to the position of Support Services Lieutenant. Lt. Knipp has been with the department since August 2007 and was previously promoted to the rank of sergeant in April 2017, serving as a patrol supervisor.



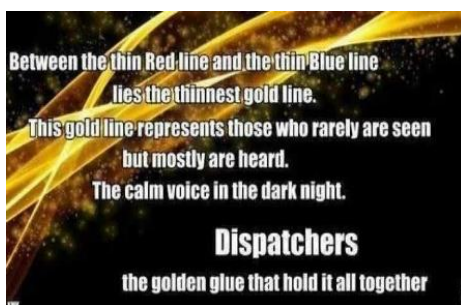
Ryan Weisenberger was sworn in as a sergeant on June 2, 2024 and is assigned as a patrol supervisor for afternoon shift. Sgt. Weisenberger has been with the department since September 2018 and previously served as a Field Training Officer (FTO) in the patrol division.



# ***SOUTHWEST EMERGENCY DISPATCH CENTER (SWEDC)***



The Southwest Emergency Dispatch Center (SWEDC) is the second largest regional emergency dispatch center in Cuyahoga County. In 2024, SWEDC served the communities of **Berea, Brook Park, North Royalton, Middleburg Hts., Olmsted Falls, Olmsted Township, and Strongsville** as a primary public safety answering point (PSAP). SWEDC answers 9-1-1 calls and administrative phone calls for member communities in addition to providing emergency dispatching services for each member community's EMS, Fire, and Police agencies.



Jeff Branic serves as the SWEDC Administrator / Manager for SWEDC. Erin Iorillo and Olivera Simic served as Communications Supervisors, augmenting the line telecommunications staff when necessary, in addition to their supervisory duties. In September of 2024 Erin Pinter was added to the SWEDC Supervisory Team. The addition of Erin Pinter to the team allows for the likelihood of supervisory presence around the clock.

Resignations in 2024, long term, and intermittent FMLA absences reduced the working number of telecommunicators (Dispatchers) for periods of 2024. This created stress and overtime costs for the telecommunicators who had to shoulder an increased work load. We hired a part time dispatcher in July who has helped greatly and currently have another part time person in training. In September of 2024 Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township announced that they were separating from SWEDC and that move was completed in December. That precipitated the departure of several SWEDC Dispatchers who were concerned with job security. The issue of job security among the less senior SWEDC telecommunicators remains a concern to them.

SWEDC staffing dropped from 38 full time telecommunicators to 35, with 2 part time, 3 supervisors, and one manager / supervisor on staff.



SWEDC continues to provide a Tactical Telecommunicator unit to work with the Southwest Enforcement Bureau (SEB) and member Fire Departments for large scale incidents. SWEDC tactical telecommunicators have become a valuable asset to the SEB unit. The SWEDC Tactical Telecommunicator unit is a resource available to Fire as well where the Telecommunicator's skill sets would aid to the success of managing a large incident. Currently there are four Tactical Telecommunicators at SWEDC.

## ***SOUTHWEST EMERGENCY DISPATCH CENTER (SWEDC)***

SWEDC also maintains a Telecommunicator Emergency Response Team (TERT). The TERT Unit is a State of Ohio asset that can respond to intra-state as well as out of state disasters. The



team is activated in the event of a catastrophic incident to provide relief assistance for local 9-1-1 Dispatchers impacted by a disaster. A request is made from the governor of the state impacted and the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) is activated. SWEDC TERT members join with Ohio TERT and deploy. Costs for aiding are reimbursed back to the City through the EMAC agreements. In 2024 a total of seven SWEDC telecommunicators deployed due to

Hurricane Helena to North Carolina for two, two-week missions, as two platoons, for a total thirty-day mission.

Dispatcher Richard (Rick) Miller was selected by his peers and the Knights of Columbus as the 2024 Dispatcher of the Year. He serves as a lead dispatcher for his shift. He has excellent situational awareness and jumps in to help without having to be asked. He is the first to call for any FD mutual aid outside of the SWEDC cities. He is aware when someone has a busy police radio and will call for tows, the jail, or other departments as needed. He is consistent in attendance and is more than capable on all radios. He also is essential in helping with IT issues on night shift when there is not access to IT personnel. He has been an integral part of provisioning with P1 CAD and adding short cuts that assist us. He is truly an asset to SWEDC.



At SWEDC our most important asset is our Dispatchers. We are also very fortunate to enjoy outstanding support from the City's IT and Communications Department personnel who are essential to our operations. We continue to embrace new technologies. The combination of all three factors make SWEDC an exceptional and efficient regional PSAP agency.



# ***SOUTHWEST EMERGENCY DISPATCH CENTER (SWEDC)***



## **SWEDC Basic Phone Statistics for 2024 as provided by VESTA & Premier One CAD:**

Total of All Phone Calls Processed by SWEDC: 224,543

Total of 9-1-1 Calls Answered: 32,585

Abandoned 9-1-1 Calls: 1,080

Total of Administrative Calls Answered: 193,084

Abandoned Administrative Calls: 1,200

Outbound Phone Calls: 44,412

Total of 9-1-1 Calls Processed by SWEDC: 32,585

Total of 9-1-1 Calls: 31,238

Abandoned 9-1-1 Calls – 255

99.0% of all 9-1-1 Calls were answered in 15 seconds or less. (Goal is 90%)

99.75 % of all 9-1-1 Calls were answered in 20 seconds or less. (Goal is 95%)

Text to 9-1-1 Calls received – 25

90.0% of all inbound 9-1-1 calls were wireless.

Total CAD Entries as provided by Premier 1

All Police CAD: 124,947

All Fire / EMS CAD: 27,118

Total Fire & Police CAD: 152,065

Strongsville Police CAD: 35,610      23% of Total CAD



# ***SOUTHWEST EMERGENCY DISPATCH CENTER (SWEDC)***



## **2024 SWEDC Radio Broadcasts and Monitored Transmissions as provided by the Cleveland Regional Radio System**

### **Totals for Police Main Channels and Fire Channels Combined**

Number of Push to Talks (PTTs) – 4,300,950

Number of Seconds of Air Time – 18,694,346

Average Length of Broadcast – 4.5 seconds

### **Totals for all Police Agencies (6) Radio Main Channels (OF&OT combine on OLM)**

Number of Push to Talks (PTT) – 3,395,820

Number of Seconds of Air Time – 2,1660,667

Average Length of Broadcast – 6.4 seconds

Percentage of Radio Use time – 77%

Percentage of Push to Talk (PTT) – 83%

### **Totals for Strongsville Police**

Number of Push to Talks (PTTs) – 957,066

Number of Seconds of Air Time – 4,440,013.80

Average Length of Broadcast – 4.63 seconds

Percentage of Radio Use Time – 22%

Percentage of Push to Talk (PTT) – 22%

### **Totals for 7 SWEDC Fire Agencies - 11 Radio Channels**

Number of Push to Talks (PTTs) – 905,130

Number of Seconds of Air Time – 3,718,013.4

Average Length of Broadcast – 4.1 seconds

Percentage of Radio Use Time – 19%

Percentage of Push to Talk (PTT) – 21%

# ***RECORDS ROOM***



The Strongsville Police Department Records clerks are on duty during business hours and are dedicated to providing administrative services and honoring public records requests.

Records clerks fulfilled 2,752 records requests in 2024. 711 of these requests were for body camera and / or dash camera video.

## **Primary Duties**

- Data entry and data validation
- Parking citation processing
- Criminal charges / paperwork for local courts
- Handling bond paperwork and monies
- Tow releases
- Civilian background checks

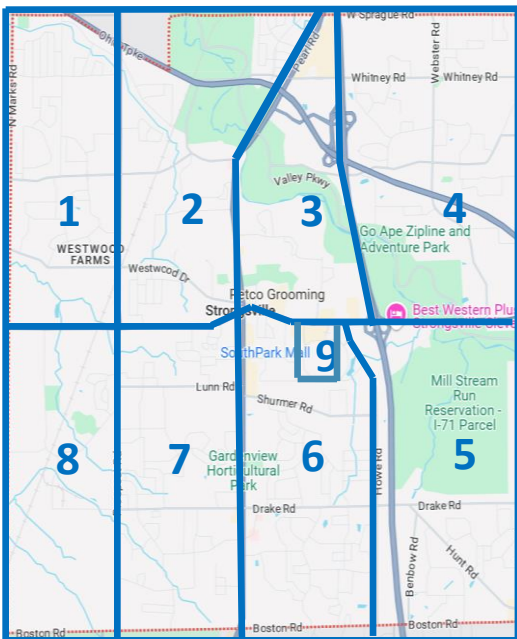
## **Additional Responsibilities**

- Fulfilling public records requests
- Answering phone calls
- Solicitor and deer hunting permits
- Expungement requests from courts
- Processing officer court subpoenas
- Providing patrol car and body camera videos

# ***PATROL DIVISION***

Patrol officers are the most visible component of a police department and are asked to handle a wide variety of calls on a daily basis. The patrol division is made up of three shifts consisting of nine (9) sergeants and around forty (40) patrol officers. Each shift has at least one K-9 officer, Southwest Enforcement Bureau (SEB) / SWAT officer, in-service instructor and drone pilot.

The city of Strongsville is divided into nine (9) separate zones, with zone 9 being SouthPark Mall. Patrol officers on each shift are assigned a permanent zone at the beginning of each year to ensure they are not only familiar with the businesses, schools and traffic issues, but also are more likely to notice something out of the ordinary.



It is essential that the patrol officers have the necessary equipment needed to perform their duties. The department recently added several vehicles to include Chevy Tahoes for supervisors and Dodge Durangos for patrol officers. Patrol officers and the vehicles they patrol in, have equipment that helps them respond to calls such as tactical, medical and numerous other types of calls to service.



Training is a very important aspect of the job for the patrol officers. They have to qualify on all weapon systems annually and meet a variety of mandated training / certifications each year. Additionally, the department requires officers to attend regular training in seven core training areas: 1) driving, 2) tactics / use of force, 3) disaster response, 4) investigations, 5) jail procedures, 6) legal, 7) patrol operations / traffic. Utilizing our in-service instructors, every patrol officer, including sergeants and the lieutenant, complete two hours of training every other month in the areas of firearms training, tactics, high-risk traffic stops and medical training.



## ***DETECTIVE BUREAU***

Uniformed patrol officers investigate reported incidents to the fullest extent practical. However, detectives will conduct secondary investigations when additional time or expertise is required. Each day, the detective supervisor conducts daily electronic reviews of all calls for service and case reports. Based on case screening and solvability factors (that indicate the offense may be solved with a reasonable amount of investigative effort), the detective supervisor determines which will be assigned for additional follow-up.

- All case reports are reviewed by the detective bureau for completeness and for assignment.
- It is the goal of the detective bureau to review all cases reported to the department and use available resources in the most efficient manner.
- In 2024, 469 cases were assigned to detectives based on seriousness of the offense.

### **How are cases assigned to a Detective?**

Cases that may be assigned to a Detective

*(based on case screening and solvability factors)*

- Additional follow-up needed that would indicate significant reason to believe that the offense may be solved with a reasonable amount of investigative effort.

Cases that will be assigned to a Detective *(regardless of solvability factors)*

- Homicides
- Rape and associated sexual crimes
- Kidnapping/abduction
- Felonious/aggravated assault
- Extortion
- Arson
- Any other complaints the Chief of Police assigns



## ***TRAFFIC UNIT***

The primary function of traffic violation enforcement is to address traffic concerns before they become dangerous problems. Responsibilities of the traffic unit include: 1) meeting with business owners and residents to identify and address community traffic issues, 2) providing technical assistance relating to traffic crash investigations or reconstruction, coordinating, deploying, and maintaining traffic enforcement trailers and speed survey devices, 3) gathering data and providing reports, providing escorts and directing traffic at special events, parades, funerals, football games, etc., 4) working with the engineering departments in an effort to minimize traffic congestion and correct hazardous situations, such as those that occur during road construction, 5) assist our DARE program with Safety Town graduations, OVI Task Force / Safe Kid's meetings and traffic control for DARE dances and other events.



In 2024, the traffic unit statistics included:

- Affected 1,347 traffic enforcement stops.
- Installed or checked 40 child safety seats and educated participants on correct installation.
- Deployed speed display trailers at 38 locations.
- Utilized traffic counters 5 times to focus enforcement.



On December 23, 2024 the traffic unit attended "Operation Santa's Sleigh." Over 100 vehicles participated in a Christmas parade led by Santa Claus himself. The parade traveled past several hospitals including; The Cleveland Clinic, UH Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital, Louis Stokes VA medical Center and the Ronald McDonald House. The goal of the parade was to spread holiday cheer to the children, families in the hospital, and those working during the holiday season.

## ***K-9 UNIT***



Mr. Terry Grealis with Ptl. Lehman and K-9 Jaxx at K9 graduation.

The Strongsville Police Department's K-9 Unit began in 1995. Our K-9 teams are valuable law enforcement tools that improve the operating efficiency and effectiveness of the patrol division. These canines are registered with the Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office, and are certified by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy as both Police Service Canines and Narcotics Detection Canines. K-9 teams have many capabilities to include: narcotics detection, building searches, tracking, criminal apprehension, and community relations and demonstrations.

The Strongsville Police Department has a K-9 team assigned to each of the three shifts and we are happy to announce a new K-9 team with the addition of K-9 Jaxx and his handler, Ptl. Justin Lehman. K-9 Jaxx and Ptl. Lehman completed a rigorous seven-week training program from June to August. The two other teams consist of K-9 Storm with handler Sgt. Jason Miller and K-9 Tito with handler Ptl. Pat O'Sullivan.

We would like to recognize and thank Terry and Sharon Grealis who generously donated the money, thru Brady's K-9 Fund, to purchase a ballistic vest for K-9 Jaxx.

In 2024, the K-9 team statistics included:

- 128 narcotics searches
- 47 public relations events
- 7 tracks
- 6 article searches
- 5 apprehensions



K-9 Tito and K-9 Storm in front of Crossroads Animal Hospital.



## ***STRONGSVILLE CITY JAIL***

The Strongsville City Jail is located within the police department and is operated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. The jail is staffed with a jail supervisor, 12 full-time corrections officers and 5 part-time corrections officers that cover three shifts. The jail has a maximum capacity of 24 inmates and can house inmates for up to 12 days.

The Strongsville City Jail has contracts with 19 local law enforcement agencies to provide prisoner house. These include:

Berea	Newburgh Heights
Brecksville	North Olmsted
Broadview Heights	North Royalton
Brooklyn	Olmsted Falls
Brooklyn Heights	Olmsted Township
Brook Park	Parma Heights
Cuyahoga Heights	Seven Hills
Linndale	Southwest General
Metroparks	Valley View
Middleburg Heights	

STRONGSVILLE CITY JAIL – INMATE COUNT					
	2024 Count	Highest Month		Lowest Month	
Males	958	June	91	Feb & June	69
Females	412	May & Sep	42	October	20
TOTAL	1370				



## ***SOUTHWEST ENFORCEMENT BUREAU (SEB)***

The Southwest Enforcement Bureau (SEB) is a council of governments made up of eighteen cities that share resources and staffing, enabling its members to field SWAT, Bomb Squad, Crisis Negotiations and Tactical EMS for situations beyond the capabilities of individual police agencies.

The following is a summary of SEB West SWAT activations / calls for service in 2024. In total, SEB West SWAT responded to 29 calls for service throughout this year.

Of these incidents, 23 were callouts and 6 were for Cat car deployments. The SEB West SWAT team responded to 9 of the 10 cities / townships within the region this year. SEB West SWAT had 3 mutual aid calls in 2024.



### Call Types

- 7 of the 23 calls for service, or 30% of the total calls were for barricaded subjects.
- 6 of the 23 calls to service, or 26% were for arrest and search warrants.
- 3 of the 23 calls to service, or 13% were for mutual aid outside of SEB cities.
- 2 of the 23 calls to service or 8% were for hostage situations.
- 2 of the 23 calls to service or 8% were fallen officer funerals.
- 1 of the 23 Calls to Service or 4% were for swatting.
- 1 of the 23 calls to service, or 4% were for grid search.
- 1 of the 23 calls for service, or 4%, were for dignitary security.

### Equipment Used

- On 16 calls to service the team utilized a drone.
- On 8 calls to service the team utilized the Bearcat ram.
- On 7 calls to service the team utilized a noise flash diversionary devices.
- On 2 calls to service the team utilized chemical munitions.
- On 1 call to service the team utilized energetic breaching.

## ***DRONE UNIT***

The Strongsville Police Department Drone Unit is comprised of officers who have taken and passed the FAA Part 107 Commercial Unmanned Aircraft System license exam. There are currently seven licensed pilots that participate in a dedicated drone training day each month of the year. Our drone program is one of the best in the area and has included officers and firemedics from multiple agencies in our monthly training.

The drone unit responded to 97 calls to service in 2024 for a multitude of missions, which included:

- Hostage situation
- Arrest / search warrants
- Attempted abduction
- SEB Bomb Unit assistance
- Fatal motor vehicle accidents
- Barricaded subjects
- Missing juveniles
- Executive protection details
- Assisting fire and other agencies
- Traffic surveys
- Overwatch at city events



The department has 3 drones with the ability to support indoor and outdoor operations. The ability to fly indoors has given the officers a safe way to clear a building before stepping foot inside. Our drones have been used in these circumstances in support of SEB / SWAT operations.





## ***MOBILE FIELD FORCE***

The Strongsville Police Department participates in a Mobile Field Force (MFF) - a group of law enforcement officers with specialized training who can be rapidly mobilized in anticipation of an exigent event. Its primary responsibility is to operate in support of an agency's regular police during periods of civil unrest by disrupting and dispersing crowds that are in the process of forming, or identifying and arresting leaders of crowds that have already formed.

The Mobile Field Force had zero activations in 2024.

## ***CEREMONIAL UNIT***

The Strongsville Police Department currently has nine (9) officers that serve in the ceremonial unit. This unit participates in parades, funeral services, and other special events. The Strongsville Police Department sent the ceremonial unit to Cleveland for Police Memorial Week.



## ***DRUG RECOGNITION EXPERT (DRE)***

The Ohio Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) Program is a traffic safety program that focuses on the detection, apprehension, and adjudication of drug-impaired drivers. A DRE is a law enforcement officer who is highly-trained to recognize impairment of drivers under the influence of drugs other than, or in addition to, alcohol.

There are currently 186 DREs in the state of Ohio and 19 DREs in Cuyahoga County, two of which are at the Strongsville Police Department.

- Sgt. Steving performed 4 DRE evaluations in 2024 and 74 total evaluations since becoming certified in 2015.
- Ptl. Alex Kurowski performed 3 DRE evaluations in 2024 and 18 total evaluations since becoming certified in 2023.

In addition to performing evaluations and assisting officers with processing and adjudication of drug and alcohol impaired drivers, both officers taught Standardized Field Sobriety Test (SFST) refresher courses in 2024. Sgt. Steving taught a youth police academy at the high school covering Operating Vehicle under the Influence (OVI) enforcement.

Sgt. Steving and Ptl. Kurowski received training by attending the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) three-day conference with other DREs from all over the country. Sgt. Steving also attended the Ohio Traffic Safety Summit in Columbus in May.



### **OVI Arrests in 2024**

- 104 total arrests for impaired driving.
- 7 arrests for suspected drug impairment
- Of the 104 OVI arrests, Sgt. Steving had 25; Ptl. Tohati and Ptl. Kaetzel each had 11.

## ***VICTIM/WITNESS ADVOCATE***

For 24+ years now, the residents of Strongsville have had the availability of utilizing the services of Cindy Vanderwyst, the Victim/Witness Advocate. Ms. Vanderwyst works very closely with victims and witnesses of crime, offering information, guidance, referrals and other assistance to get those persons through their often-traumatic experiences. In 2024, Ms. Vanderwyst assisted more than 200 victims of crime, which incidents included crimes of domestic violence, assault, menacing, menacing by stalking, criminal damaging, etc. These clients are provided with comprehensive information as to their rights under the law, and they are guided through the process of the criminal justice system. She also accompanies them to every court hearing, providing moral support and acting as a liaison between them and the city prosecutor. Ms. Vanderwyst is available for crisis intervention, assessing emergency needs and, thus, making referrals to the appropriate social service agencies for the individual clients.

## ***COMMUNITY DIVERSION***

The Strongsville Community Diversion Program has been successfully overseeing the judicial process of juveniles charged with first-time misdemeanor crimes and status offenses since 1999. The design of this program is to give juveniles the opportunity to successfully complete a program, specifically tailored to each individual's crime and/or circumstances surrounding the crime. Their cases are heard by one (1) of five (5) diversion conference facilitators who act on behalf of the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court. These facilitators impose sanctions on the juveniles, which must be fulfilled in an appropriate and timely manner. The successful completion of this program allows the juveniles to maintain a clear record with the Strongsville Police Department. Failure to complete the program results in the juvenile's crime being prosecuted in the Juvenile Court downtown.

Parents and those juveniles who have been involved in the program found it to be a very rewarding program, and the participants found that they gained a greater sense of responsibility to themselves as well as their community.

Cindy Vanderwyst was the program coordinator for the diversion program and Cheryl Komora acted as the case manager. Ms. Komora oversaw the cases following the hearing with the conference facilitators, and helped to "guide" the juveniles to a successful completion. In 2024, 20 cases were heard by the volunteer facilitators, with 17 successfully completing the program.



# ***DRUG ABUSE RESISTANCE EDUCATION (DARE)***



In 2024, the DARE program welcomed Cheryl Komora as the new Strongsville Police Department DARE Coordinator. Cheryl replaced Marie McManus who retired from the department after 27 years of service. Cheryl has done an excellent job in her new role and together with Officer Aaron, they had a very successful year.



The DARE program has a number of students that participate, to include high school students. Many of these students have been thru the program and can now provide assistance with the younger students. Additionally, Officer Aaron and Cheryl will participate in numerous community events throughout the school year and will be teaching at Safety Town in the summer.

## **Student Participation**

**8<sup>th</sup> grade DARE program – 450 (SCS) plus 38 (SJJ) and 17 (AEA) – 505 total students**

**5<sup>th</sup> grade DARE program – 417 (SCS) plus 55 (SJJ) and 10 (AEA) – 491 total students**

**3<sup>rd</sup> grade safety belt presentations 497 total students**

- Officer Aaron and Traffic Unit Officers Damore, Young, and Kurowski taught lessons at Strongsville City Schools, Sts. Joseph and John School, and Albert Einstein Academy to all 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students.

**Strongsville High School Role Models 93 total students**

- Current 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders were split into groups of 5-10 and each group took part in attending an elementary and/or middle school visit to talk with 5<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade DARE students about transitioning to the middle or high school in the coming year. In addition, the Role Models have helped at various safety fair events.

# ***DRUG ABUSE RESISTANCE EDUCATION (DARE)***

## **Events**

### **DARE dances/parties**

- **End-of-year spring celebration** – grades 5-8 **505 total students**
- **Halloween party** – grades 5 and 6 **594 total students**
- **Halloween party** – grades 7 and 8 **345 total students**

### **DARE ice-skating events grades 5-8**

- **March** (Spring event) **226 total students**
- **November** (Fall event) **600 total students**

### **Community events**

- DARE participated in the annual Strongsville Business Expo at the Rec Center
- DARE participated in numerous safety fairs around the city and 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade
- Halloween events
  - Pre-School PTA Trick-or-Treat **60 total children**
  - Halloween at Safety Town **500 total children**
  - Strongsville High School Greet & Treat **800 total children**
  - Camp Cheerful Trick-or-Treat **50-60 camp members**

### **Safe Kids/Safe Communities and Strongsville police events @ Strongsville HS**

- **CIFAT Event** – held prior to prom season to promote safe driving and the importance of wearing safety belts.
- **Distracted Driving Simulator** – hands-on driving simulator for students to drive with distractions on the computer screen. SPD set up one campaign during traffic safety month (October) and before prom (end of April).
- **International Walk-to-School Day** at Kinsner Elementary School in October.

### **Safe Kids/Safe Communities Mock Tail Event**

- We won “Best Mock Tail Name.”



## **Food Bank Donations**

- Macaroni & cheese collected from spring celebration **350 boxes**
- Macaroni & cheese collected from the Halloween parties **575 boxes**
- Macaroni & cheese collected from ice skating events **150 boxes**
- Cereal collected from the Halloween parties **40 boxes**
- Cereal collected from ice skating events **157 boxes**

# ***DRUG ABUSE RESISTANCE EDUCATION (DARE)***

## **Grants Received**

### **Grant money received for DARE and the Community Diversion Program (CDP)**

- **DARE Program** – Drug Use Prevention Grant **\$18,891.35**
- **CDP** - \$300.00 per juvenile once they have successfully completed requirements.
  - Total juveniles **17**
  - Payment from court **\$5,100**
  - Admin fees collected from juveniles **\$750.00**
  - Community service required for one juvenile **10 total hours**



In 2024, there were a total of 9 separate Safety Town classes taught Monday thru Friday for two hours each.

- Pre-Kindergarten students: 268
- Student volunteers (ranging from grades 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>): 166



**New DARE vehicle**

## ***QUICK RESPONSE TEAM (QRT)***

The City of Strongsville was awarded a grant for the 2024 fiscal year for \$65,000. The grant was renewed for the 2025 fiscal year for \$65,000. The grant funds a quick response team made up of a police officer, a firemedic, and a counselor to combat the opioid epidemic. In 2024, the team made 316 follow-up calls and visits with individuals who had overdosed.

### **Quick Response Team (QRT) Objectives:**

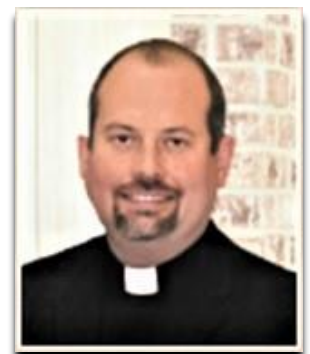
- Visits the survivor of an overdose at their residence within 72 hours of the overdose.
- Offers counseling and referrals to treatment centers for overdose survivors.
- Follows up with the survivor through the recovery process and provides support and advice.
- Provides support and resources to family members of those suffering from an addiction.

### **2024 Overdoses Involving Opioids**

- 6 total reported drug overdoses
- 3 overdose deaths
- 4 overdoses involved Strongsville residents
- 2 overdoses involved non-residents
- 1 individual received treatment for their addiction

## ***CHAPLAIN PROGRAM – FR. JOE MAMICH***

In 2014, the Strongsville Police Department welcomed Fr. Joe Mamich, who has volunteered to be our Safety Forces Chaplain. Father Joe is a native of Strongsville. In 2024, he volunteered for 28 hours, assisting the police department.



### **Chaplain Duties Include:**

- May serve a role in line-of-duty deaths.
- Assist with department / citizen notifications.
- Assist with counseling and emotional support.
- Recognized by the International Conference of Police Chaplains.

## ***VOLUNTEERS IN POLICE SERVICE (VIPS)***

The Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) Program, designed to address the increasing demands on state and local law enforcement agencies in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, is a locally-driven program that enables community members to offer their time and talents to their local law enforcement agency. The Strongsville Police Department initiated its VIPS program in 2005, and currently has 12 members.

VIPS donate their time at events in the city including:

- Homecoming
- Rib Burn Off
- Winter Wonderland
- City council meetings
- Mayor's court
- 5k runs
- SouthPark Mall vehicle escorts



Strongsville Police Department VIP, Duke Evans, joins students in cheering on the Strongsville High School Mustangs football team.





## ***Rx DRUG DROP BOX PROGRAM***

The Strongsville Police Department, in partnership with the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department, is continuing to fight the battle against the heroin and opioid epidemic.



<b>Strongsville Police Drug Box Collection Totals - 2024</b>	
January	47.8 lbs
February	61.8 lbs
March	89.2 lbs
April	56.2 lbs
May	77.6 lbs
June	80.8 lbs
July	80.8 lbs
August	100 lbs
September	34.8 lbs
October	45.2 lbs
November	79.6 lbs
December	66.8 lbs
<b>Total :</b>	<b>820.6 lbs</b>

Drug Drop Boxes, like the one in the Strongsville Police Department lobby, provide a safe, environmentally friendly way for citizens to dispose of their unwanted or unused prescription drugs. Unused prescription drugs are typically the gateway to heroin abuse, as over 70% of Americans misusing painkillers obtain them from friends or relatives.

## ***NATIONAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE BACK DAY***

The Strongsville Police Department provided a drive-thru collection site on the National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. This program aims to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing of unneeded medications from residents' homes, while also educating the general public about the potential for abuse of medications.

The Strongsville Police Department is committed to our community's health and safety, and encourages the public to remove unneeded medications from their homes as a measure of preventing medication misuse and opioid addiction from ever starting.



## ***SHOP WITH A COP***

The annual Shop with a Cop® event was held on December 7, 2024. Officer Kellar, along with fellow committee members from Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #15 and Fraternal Order of Police Associates Lodge #14, organized the event. Police officers from 14 agencies within our lodge assisted 84 children that would benefit the most. The day began by having the children picked up in marked patrol vehicles from their homes and driven to the lodge for breakfast, optional face painting and a craft. From there, the children were escorted in patrol vehicles with lights and siren to Meijer in Brunswick. Each child was provided \$150.00 to spend on presents while shopping with a police officer. After shopping, the children were driven back to the lodge to enjoy lunch and a visit from Santa.



The program is funded by private and business donations, and local fundraising events. Generous sponsors that helped make the day possible included Meijer (Brunswick), Chick-fil-A (Brunswick/Parma/Strongsville), Dunkin Donuts (Middleburg Hts), Krispy Kreme (Middleburg Hts), Barley Jack's Pizza (Brunswick Hills), Mission BBQ (Brunswick), Giant Eagle (Strongsville), Aldi (Hinckley), Ehrnfelt Family (Strongsville), Optimist Club (Strongsville), Residence Inn (Middleburg Hts), Berea PD, Olmsted Falls PD, Parma Heights PD, American Legion Post 610 (Brook Park), American Legion Auxiliary Post 610 (Brook Park), Hinckley Hair Works, and North Royalton Lions Club. Officer Kellar and her Shop with a Cop® committee members spent many hours preparing for the reverse raffle fundraiser on April 26, 2024, where the majority of the funds for the program were raised. We are grateful for everyone's support!



## ***HEROES AND HELPERS***

Officer Kellar organized Strongsville's first Heroes and Helpers event with the Strongsville Fire Department, and in partnership with our local Target store. The morning began with Strongsville police officers and fire fighters picking up 11 children from their residences and meeting at Target to begin the activities. Target generously provided breakfast, a \$200 gift card for each child to shop with a first responder, and gift wrapping at the conclusion of the event. We are grateful to have Target's support in our community!



Strongsville Police and Fire  
Heroes and Helpers



## ***AGENCY AWARDS***

Each year an awards committee reviews all citizen and departmental commendations received during the previous calendar year in order to identify actions or performance commensurate with a departmental award. The awards ceremony is held during a city council meeting, where the Knights of Columbus Officer of the Year award is presented along with other departmental awards.



2024 Officer of the Year - Patrolman Luke Berry



Professionalism Award  
Patrolman Dave Gallagher  
Patrolman Ed Lajeski  
Sergeant Jon Hayes



Life-Saving Award  
Sergeant Ron Stolz



## AGENCY AWARDS



Quality Service Award  
Patrolman Kevin Schaefer



Joseph A. Gambino  
Prosecutor's Award  
Detective Mike Bertz



Chief O'Deens, Cheryl Komora and Ptl. Damore accept a 2024 Community Traffic Safety Platinum Award for outstanding education, enforcement, and engineering to improve public safety.



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*Chief of Police Thomas O'Deens*