



MARENGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

ABSTRACT

This is the annual report from the Marengo Police Department. Information compiled within is designed to show the activities and accomplishments of the department and staff

[Marengo Police Department](#)

**MARENGO POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF MARENGO, IOWA**

FROM: Ben Gray, Chief of Police

DATE: February 14th, 2022

TO:

Hon. Adam Rabe, Mayor
Marengo City Council
Ms. Karla Marck, City Administrator
Citizens of Marengo
Members of the Marengo Police Department

SUBJECT: Marengo Police Department 2021 Annual Report

It is my honor and privilege that I present to the citizens of Marengo, the Marengo governing body, and members of the Marengo Police Department the annual report. This is my second annual report as Chief of police. This report is only possible due to the ongoing efforts of the police department staff and their dedication to the City of Marengo and the police department. This report will detail the numerous activities and crime statistics of the department and its operations. It will also address changes made to the department and its structure.

During the budget process for FY2022, the council voted to again fund a fourth full-time officer. I started the process of hiring for that position in May of 2021. We faced the same problem every other law enforcement agency across this county face; a simple lack of qualified and capable applicants. The lack of interest in law enforcement as a profession has been a growing issue and concern to all of us in the management positions of agencies. I along with other agency heads have been ringing the alarm bell that between the media and politicians demonizing law enforcement we would have major recruiting problems. Unfortunately, those fears have come to reality and then compounded by the effects of the pandemic. Now not only is law enforcement short on applicants, most other businesses face similar challenges. The majority of us have been affected by un-filled employment positions.

For many professions this has meant business being closed early and operating hours being reduced. This is not something public safety is capable of doing. Citizen's and visitors to our city expect that when they call for emergency services that a quick response will follow. Projected ideas to reduce the police department staffing is met with the real affect of reducing response time from minutes to hours. As this report was being compiled I have still been testing applicants and attempting to find qualified candidates to serve on our department. We are currently authorized for a staff of 4 full time officers. We also are authorized to utilize reserve officers.

Fortunately, the staff we have had has stepped up to the plate and delivered quality law enforcement services to the City of Marengo. We also have fantastic law enforcement partners with the Iowa County

Sheriff's Office, Williamsburg Police Department, and Iowa State Patrol. We are very fortunate in Iowa County to have some of the most cooperative law enforcement agencies who are always willing to assist each other whenever possible.

Even with the staffing challenges, the Marengo Police Department was able to partake in multiple activities and events to interact and benefit the community. A significant highlight for the year was holding the first ever National Night Out event in August of 2021. This event is a nationwide event sanctioned by the National Association of Town Watch. They event is highlighted to be a community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie.

We made this event as joint public safety event including: the Marengo Fire Department, Iowa County Ambulance, Iowa County Sheriff's Office, and Iowa County Emergency Management. The event had food vendors and activities and hand-outs for all to enjoy. We look forward to continuing this event in August of 2022 and making it an even larger event.

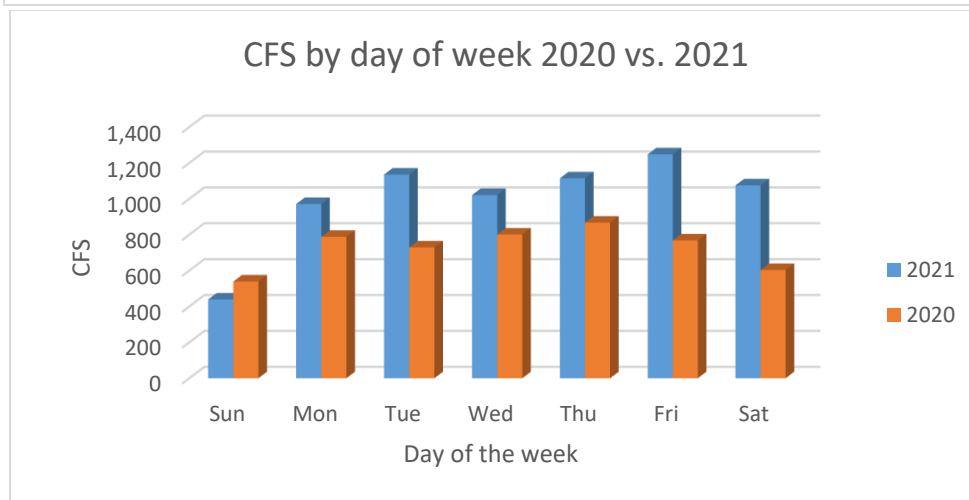
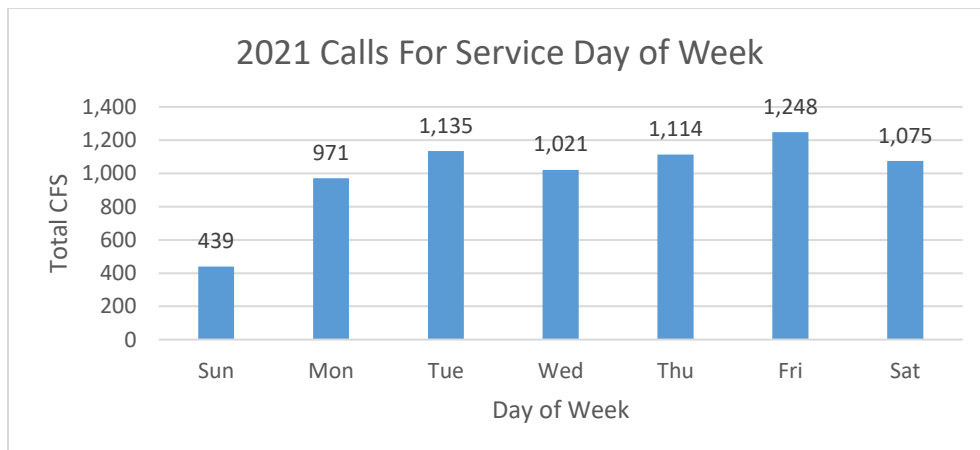


STAFF

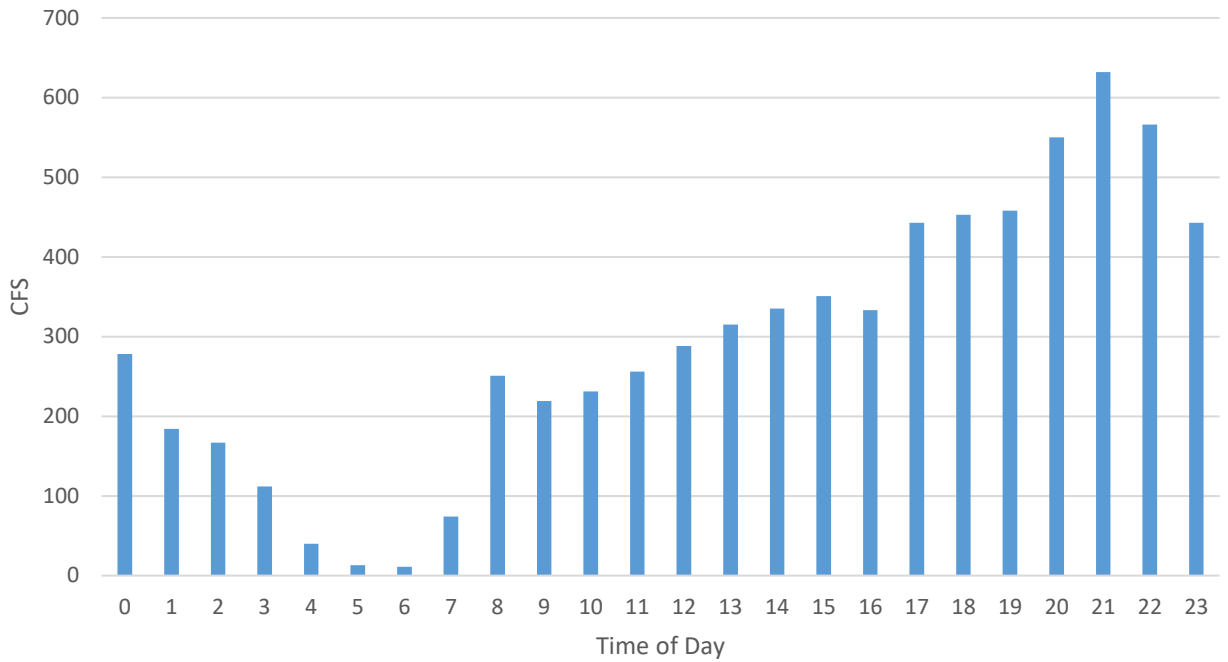
The police department currently has a 3 full time officers including myself. We are also fortunate to have a total of 2 reserve police officers. Reserve officers are volunteer officers authorized by Iowa Code to supplement full time staff. We have strived and will continue to add staff both from a Full Time and Reserve Officers.

CALLS FOR SERVICE

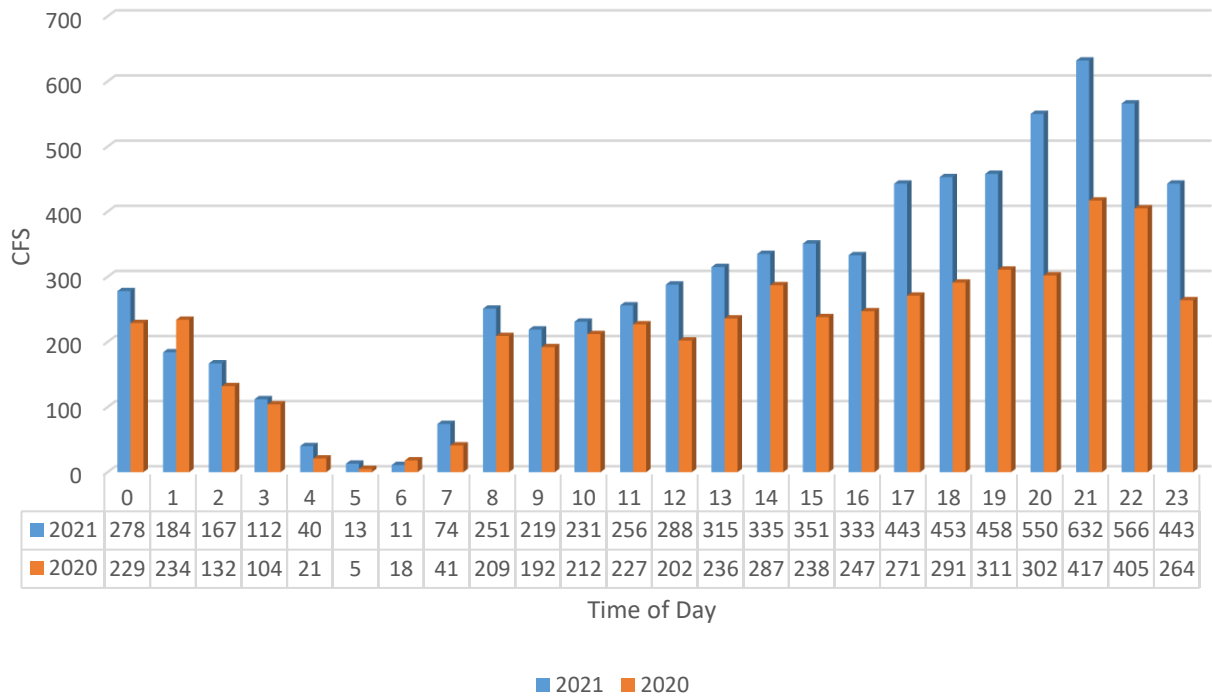
I was told that we previously estimated that we handled 5000 calls for service annually, but that number was not able to be confirmed as good records were not kept. With the acquisition of Zuercher Suite Records Management Software which went live in March of 2020, we have a much more accurate data set. For 2021 the Marengo Police Department had a total of 5,875 calls for service. These calls for service include but are not limited to: reports of criminal activity, motor vehicle crashes, traffic enforcement, assist to other agencies, medical and fire emergencies, business and property checks, and other service related functions.

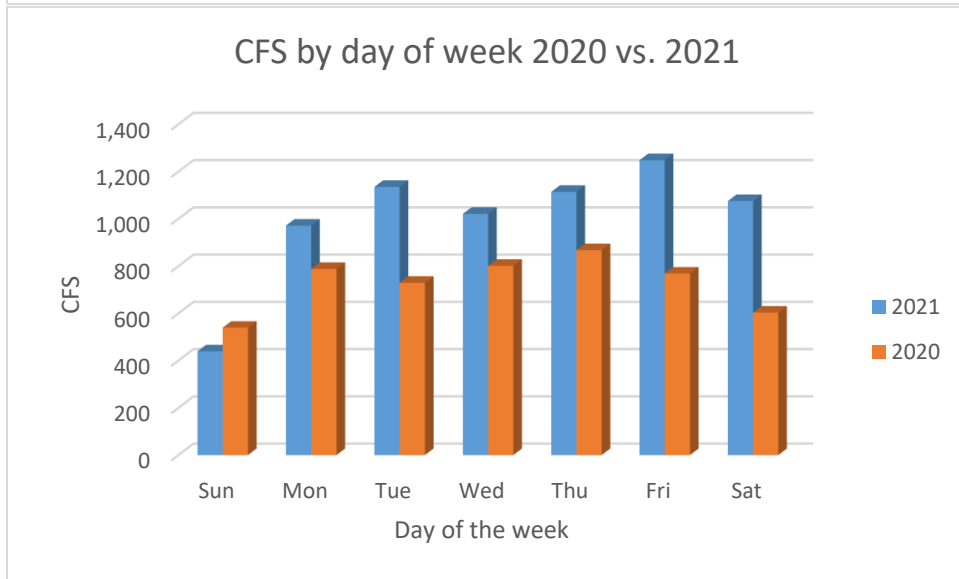
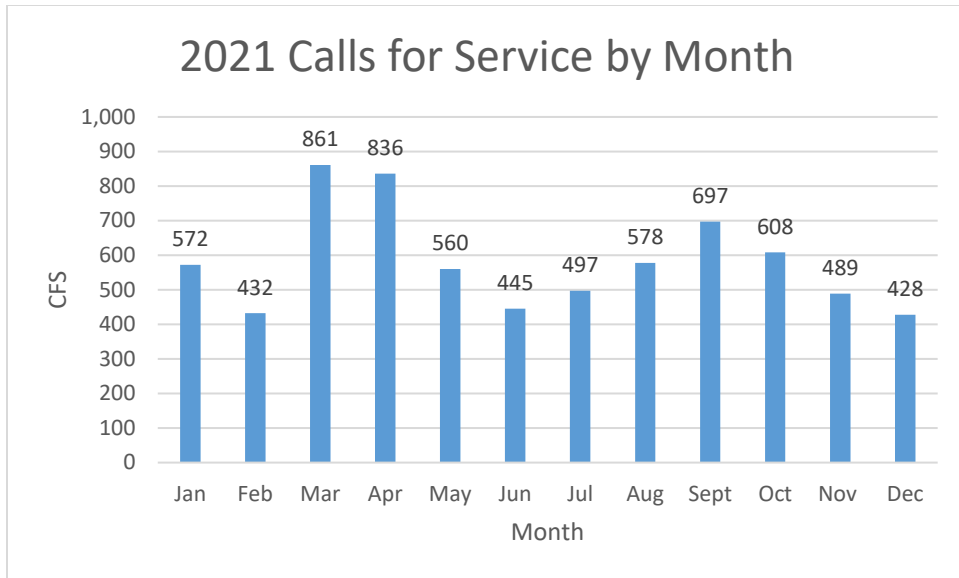


2021 Calls For Service by Time of Day



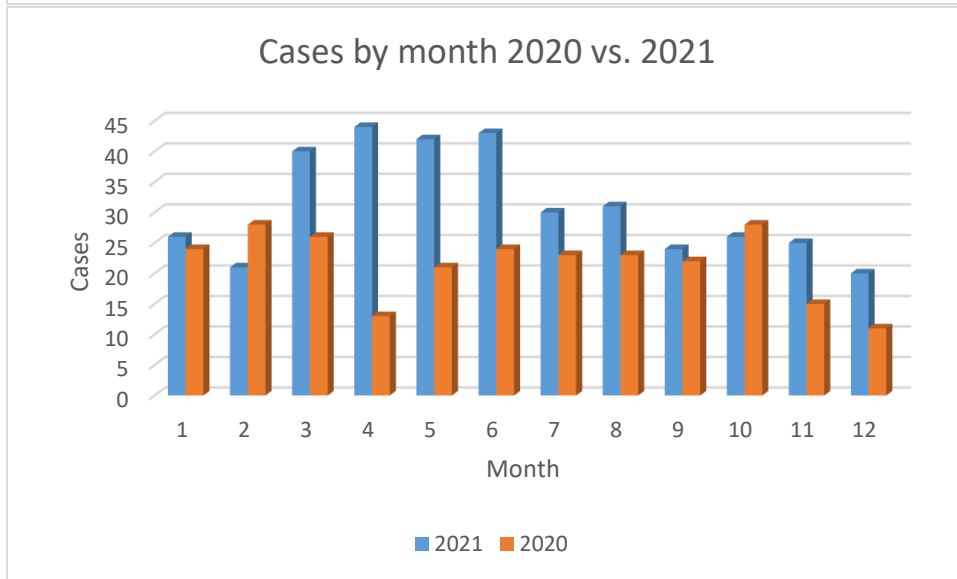
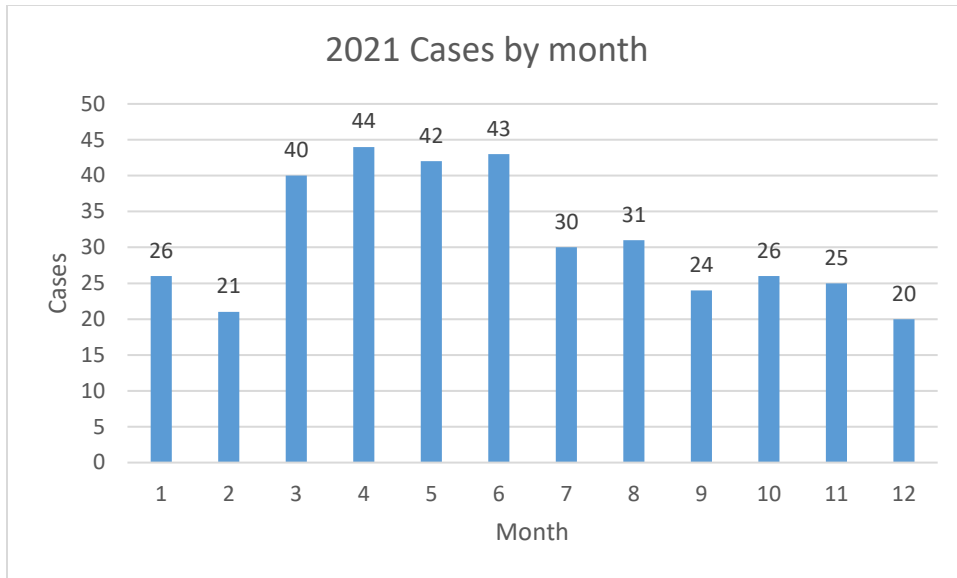
CFS by time of day 2021 vs. 2020





Cases

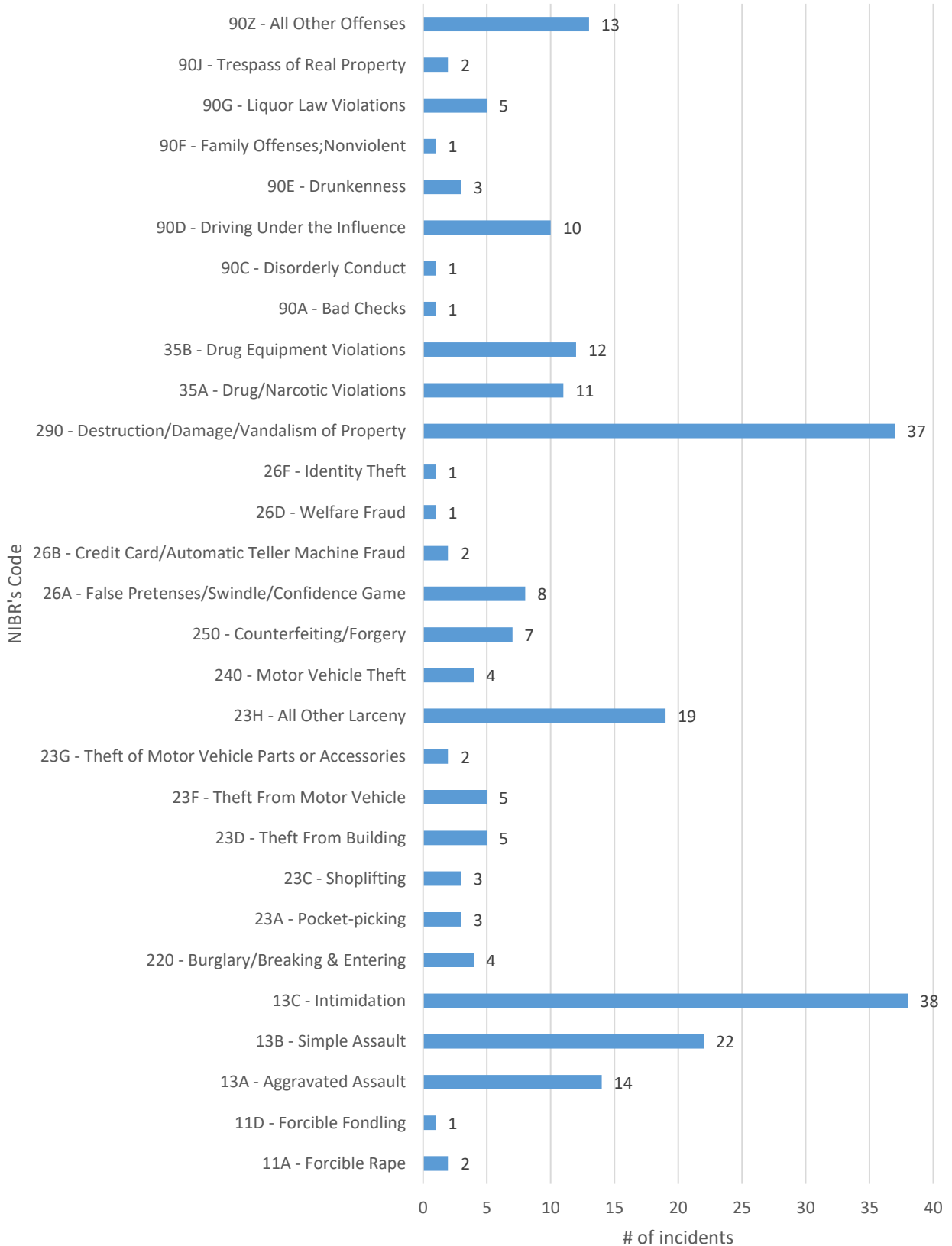
All case reports completed by the police department were documented in the records management software for this year. These cases are used to document and report crimes against persons and property crimes. For some types of calls for services, cases are automatically generated requiring an officer to complete that report.



Incident Types

The Marengo Police Department submits crime data to the State of Iowa who in turn sends that data to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in a process called NIBR's (National Incident Based Reporting). This data is created when officers' complete reports and select offenses (State Codes) which have corresponding NIBR's codes associated with them. NIBR's codes include things such as Drug/Narcotic Violations, Destruction/Damage/Vandalism, and Shoplifting, to name a few. NIBR's reporting only submits the most severe type of incident regardless of how many incidents are reported in each case. For instance, if you respond to a call for a report of an assault, but during the report also determine a theft occurred, only the most severe is included. Below is a list of these 237 NIBR's reportable incidents.

2021 NIBR's Reporting



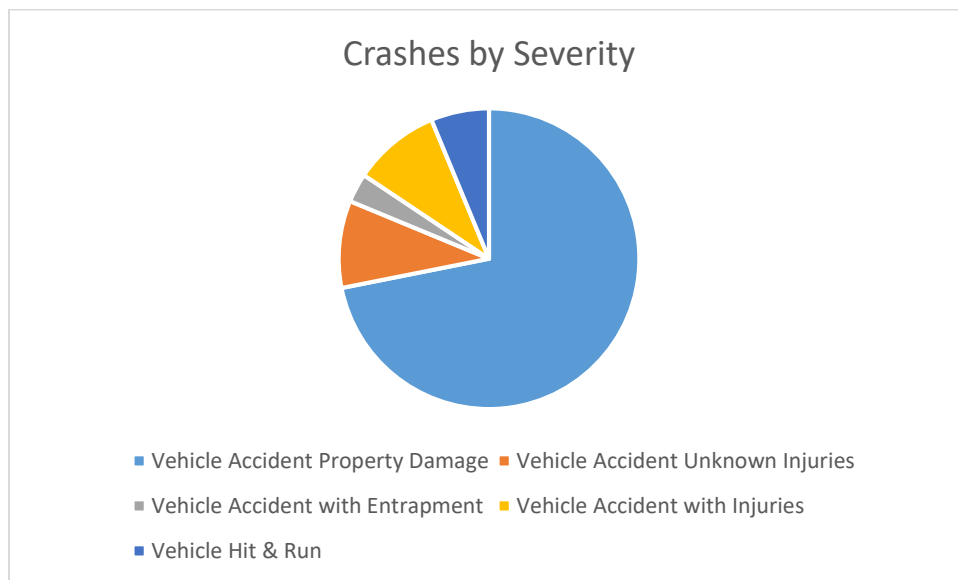
Traffic Enforcement

The three E's of traffic safety are Enforcement, Education, and Engineering. Officers use traffic stops of violators as ways to promote both the education and enforcement efforts of traffic safety. The department uses personal contact in the way of traffic stops and the departments speed trailer and newly acquired speed sign to assist in enforcement and education efforts.

Officers of the Marengo Police Department conducted a total an 889 traffic stops. These stops resulted in a total of 139 citations being issued and 432 written warnings being issued. It should be noted that officers are given discretion to determine the best way to resolve their interaction with the violator. By policy, all officers are required to issue either a written warning or citation via the use of the mobile computer so that accurate documentation of the stop can be completed.

The Marengo Police Department also participates in the Iowa Governors Traffic Safety Program (STEP) which provides for overtime funding and traffic safety equipment funding. With limited staffing, not all of the monies provided from this STEP grant were utilized for 2021. It is my intent to not have this issue repeat itself in 2022.

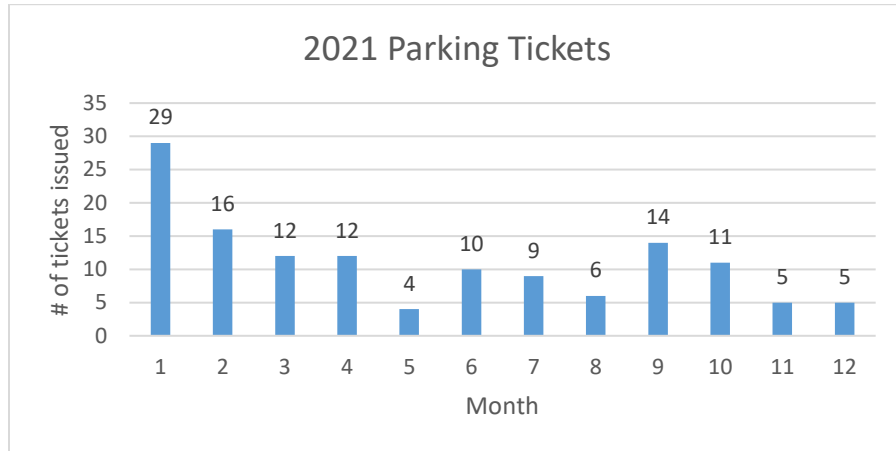
Officer responded to a total of 73 vehicle crashes. These include property damage, personal injury, and hit and run crashes. Per Iowa Code, a crash report is required to be completed any time someone is injured, killed, or damage is in excess of \$1,500. A total of 30 crash reports were completed by officers.



Parking Tickets

Parking tickets are routinely issued by officers to ensure the safety of all traffic and pedestrian travel. Infractions that are often seen are parking in no parking zones, violation of the no parking 2-6 AM, parking the wrong direction, and snow emergency. My message to our department is for us to become more consistent in the issuance of these types of tickets, this is especially important since this is the most common complaint regarding parking tickets. In the spring of 2020 I ordered new parking tickets which are a newer style which allow the violator to clearly see the ticket. The new tickets also provide officers

with an easy check mark on common violations that are often issued which assist in identifying the specific violation easier.



Training

Training is a priority of mine and I have continued working to organize and enhance training that the police department staff participates in. There are mandatory training requirements that the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy requires in order to obtain and maintain positions of Police Officer or Reserve Police Officer. It is my goal to exceed those required trainings and to enhance each officers' abilities. One way to enhance this training was the purchase of Police Legal Sciences web based legal training. Officers complete on-line training each month with this program. Topic include: mental health, use of force, legal updates, bias policing, and other common topics within the law enforcement community.

Officers have also attended in person training as it has become available after the pandemic canceled most in person training. Copies of training certificates and supporting documentation is now entered electronically to each officer's personnel record.

In 2020 we purchased Lexipol which is a web-based policy manual. To accommodate extra training specific to departmental policy Daily Training Bulletins (DTB) are available within this program. Unfortunately, I have not had time to issue enough of the new policy manual to make DTB's a viable option so far. My goal for 2022 is to ensure that the policy manual is completely issued and then begin the DTB's an additional training opportunity for the staff. DTB's will provide officer approximately five minutes per scheduled shift of training and review on departmental policies. Each DTB will provide an officer an opportunity to review a scenario, review applicable policy, and then answer a test question.

Nuisance Properties

At the city council's direction, the police department has increased its involvement with dealing with nuisance properties. For 2021, a total of 37 properties were served notice of having an nuisance property in violation of Marengo Code of Ordinances Chapters 50 and 51. Once an investigation is started, property owners are served a written notice that describes the nuisance on what must be done to abate it. Property owners are given an initial 30 days to abate the nuisance but are encouraged to communicate with the police department if they will need more time. We routinely give extensions when property owners show progress being made.

Of the 37 properties, at the end of 2021, six of the properties were still in an active state. One property owner was cited for a violation including a junk vehicle which they had not removed from the property after the given time frame. That means a total of 30 property owners abated the nuisance after being served the notices.

It is the intent of the police department to have a much more stringent application of the nuisance property ordinances for those who are habitual or repeat offenders.

Iowa Valley School Patrols

In 2020 I instituted a practice of becoming more involved with the schools. This includes an effort to actively patrol the schools during the school hours. Nigh shift patrols also participate in school patrols during school functions that occur after normal school hours. These extra patrols are in addition to routine calls for service that the department handles at the schools. We have worked closely with school administration to address areas we believe can lead to safer environments for students, staff, and visitors.

In 2021 officers conducted a total of 417 calls for service to the schools. Of these calls, 105 were specific school patrols which totaled a total of 53.5 hours of time dedicated to placing officers inside schools for nonspecific call related time.

Conclusion

The Marengo Police Department will continue to strive to provide the best public safety services to the citizens and visitors of Marengo by adhering to our mission statement: to serve all citizens and visitors with respect, fairness and professionalism. We are committed to the preservation of peace, order, safety and the protection of life and property.

The Marengo Police Department will seek to continually enhance the quality of life Marengo by holding ourselves to the highest ethical and professional standards.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ben Gray
Chief of Police