



MARENGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

2022 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: March 7th, 2023

TO:

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

SUBJECT: Marengo Police Department 2022 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 third 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 FY2023, the council voted to fund three and a half officers. It was done with the intent that we would maintain a full-time staff of four officers and that if needed additional monies would be provided if required. We became fully staffed in July of 2022 when the fourth full-time position was filled. The hiring process was challenging as has been experienced in recent years. 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. 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. We continue to look for additional staff including part-time officers to help us fill schedule gaps when vacancies occur (e.g. vacation, sick, military leave, etc.) We also are authorized to utilize reserve officers and have as of the date of this report, one certified reserve officer.

Our staff continues to deliver 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.

Crime Prevention Activities

The Marengo Police Department Continues to partake in multiple activities and events to interact and benefit the community. Another significant highlight for the year was holding the second annual National Night Out event in August of 2022. 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 partnered with the Iowa County Cattlemen this year and offered free hot dogs and burgers for the community event.



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.

The Department offered several stranger danger talks to local daycares. Officers interact with kids and talk about stranger danger prevention. Officers hand out coloring books, stickers, and other promotional material we have acquired.

As a new event for 2022, I participated in providing instruction to the Iowa Valley Elementary School 2nd grad class for Junior Achievement. The class was called Junior Achievement Our Community. The focus was to get students to get a better understanding of how communities work. The classroom work included a 45-minute block of time once a week for six weeks. It was a great joy to get to interact with the students in a classroom setting and help them to understand our community in a greater way.



STAFF

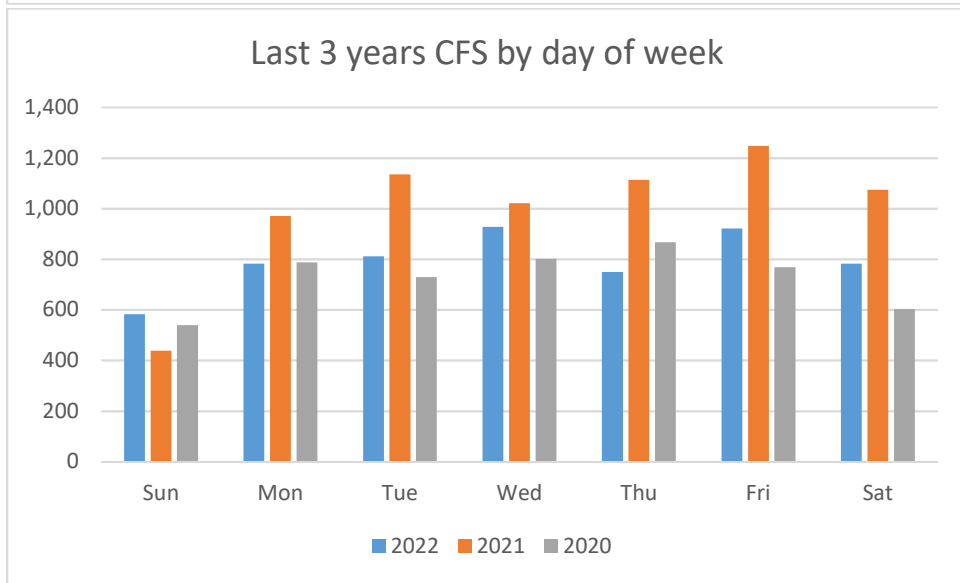
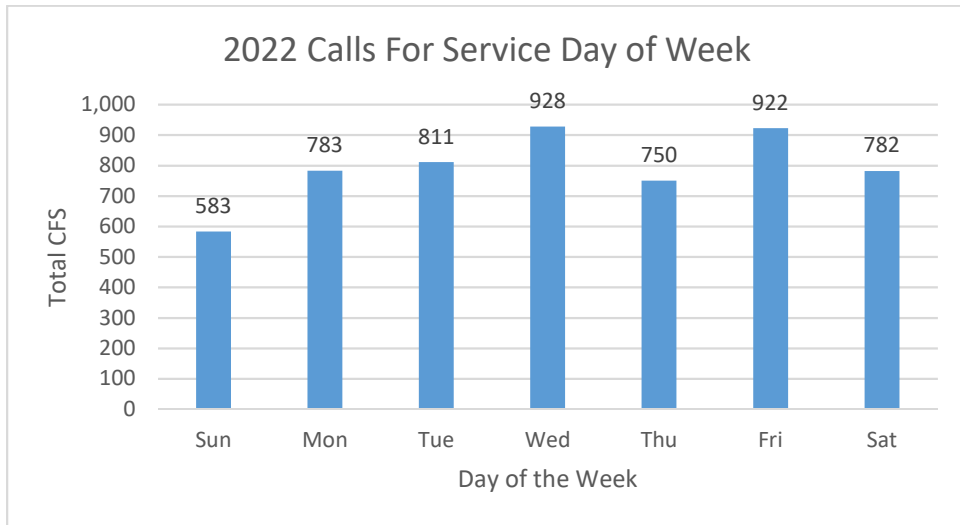
The police department currently has a 4 full time officers including myself. We are also fortunate to have a reserve police officer as well. Reserve officers are volunteer officers authorized by Iowa Code to supplement full time staff. We have strived and will continue to add staff both from a Full Time and Reserve Officers. I would like to find qualified part-time staff to assist us with patrol operations.

Two officers attended the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy Basic Training courses this year, Officer Botsford and Officer Parkinson. Officer Botsford was injured during the academy and will have to make up some missed hours when he recovers from his injury, during 2023. This training left us with a difficult position of staffing patrols. Fortunately, we had assistance from the Iowa County Sheriff's Office who will respond if available to emergency calls when no Marengo Police Officer is on duty.

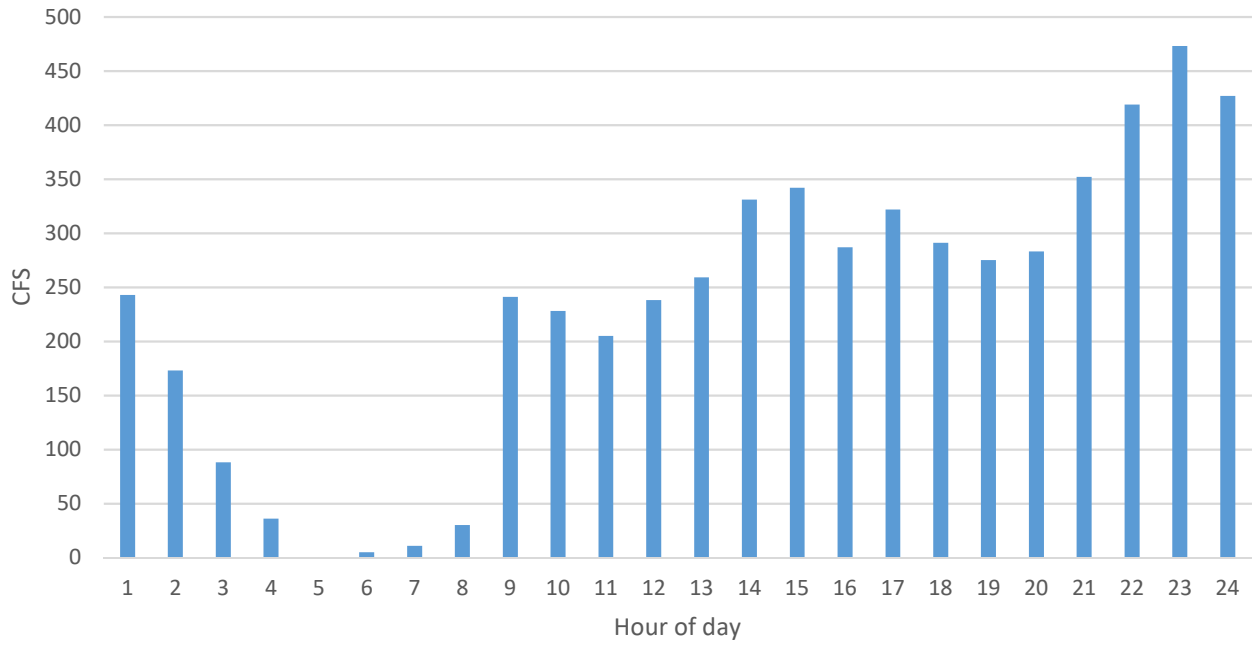
CALLS FOR SERVICE

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 2022 the Marengo Police Department had a total of 5,559 calls for service. These calls for service

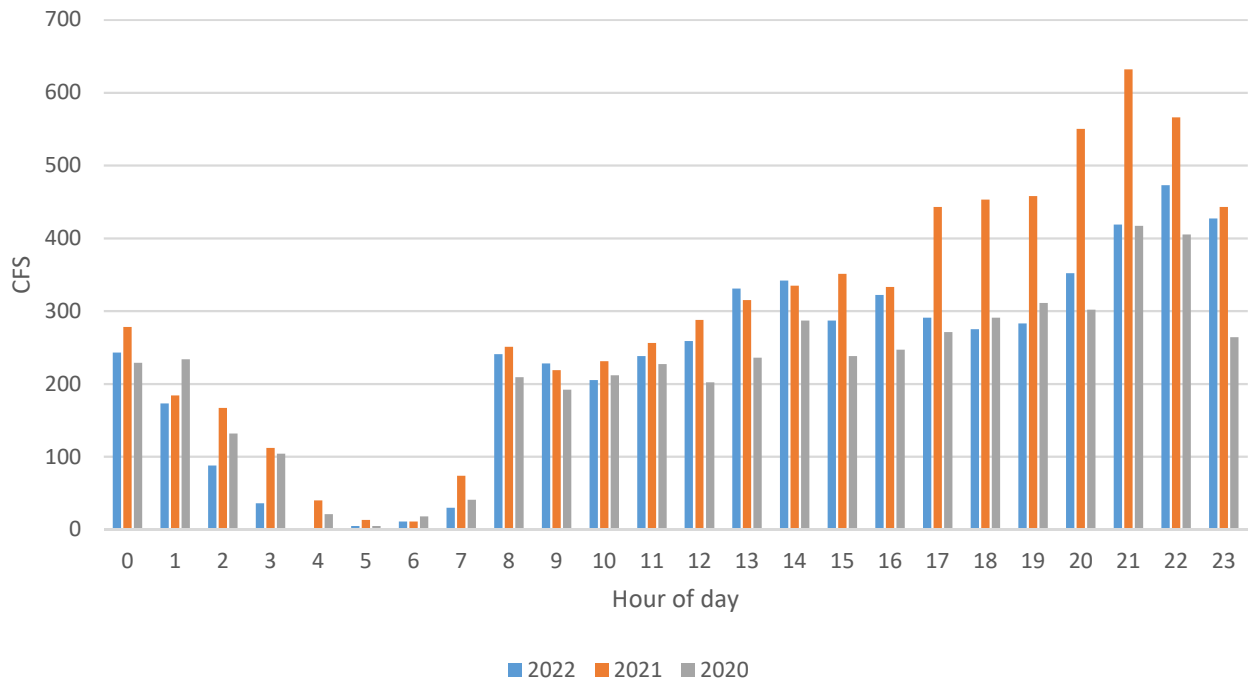
include but are not limited to: reports of criminal activity, motor vehicle crashes, traffic enforcement, assist to other agencies, medical and fire emergencies, business and property checks, and other service related functions.

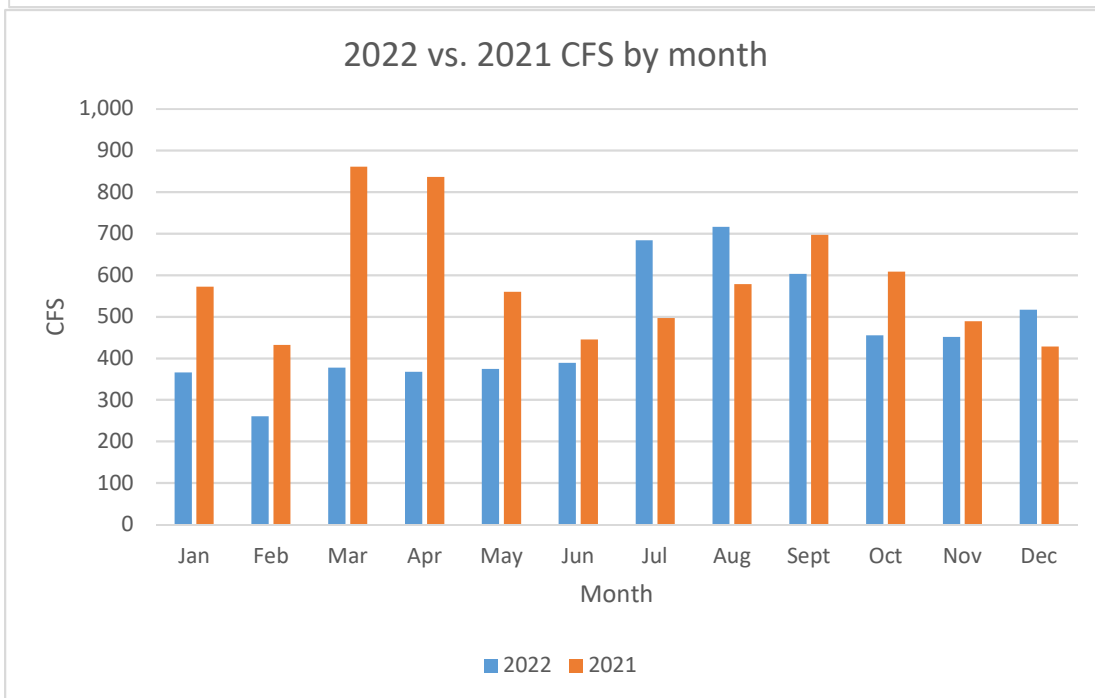
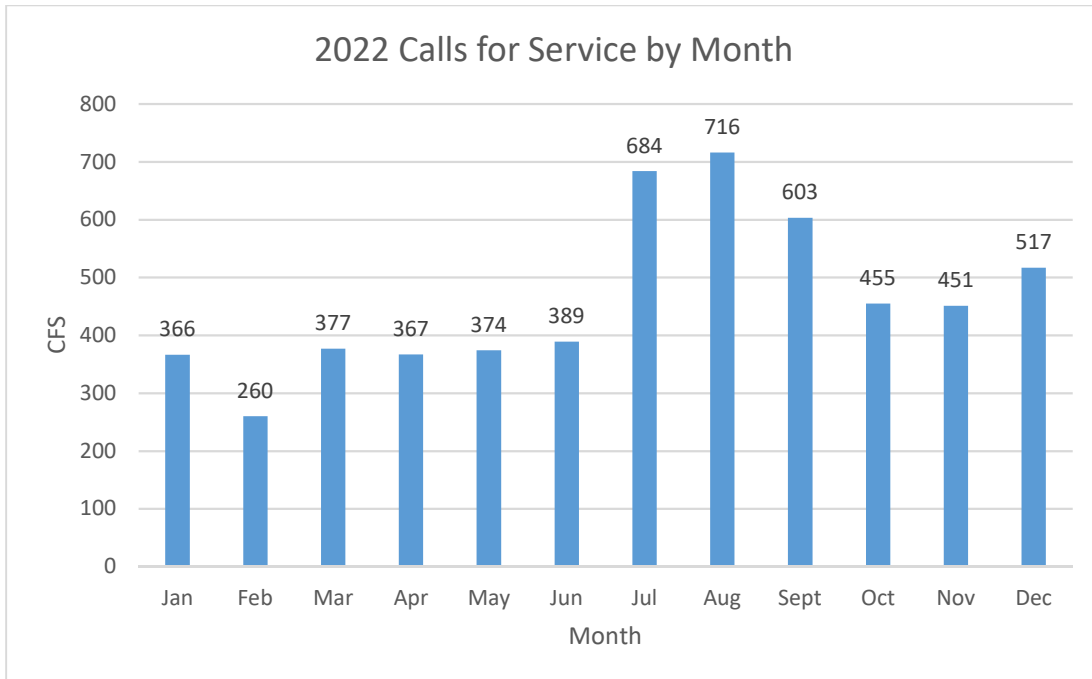


2022 CFS by hour of day



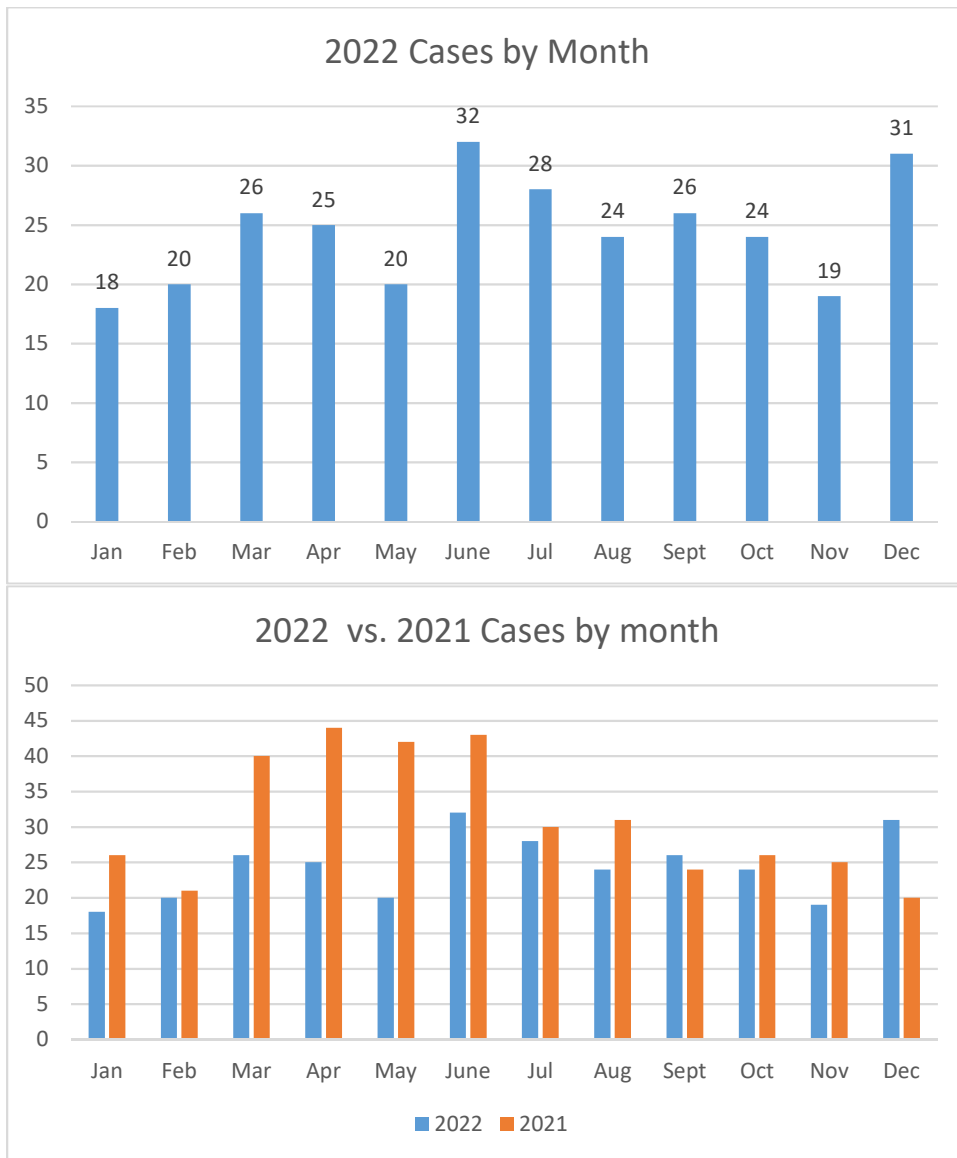
3 year comparssion CFS by hour of day





Cases

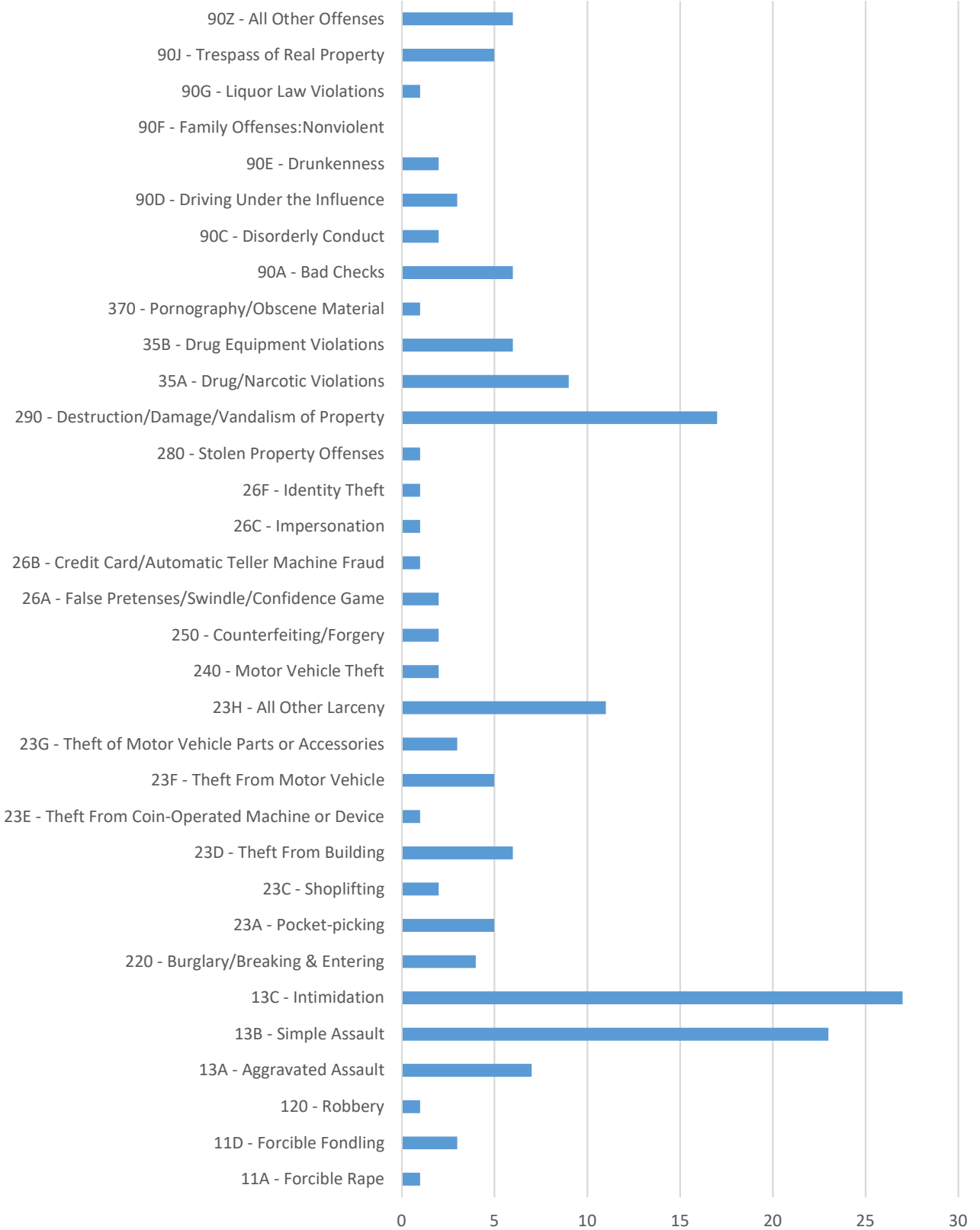
All case reports completed by the police department were documented in the records management software for this year. These cases are used to document and report crimes against persons and property crimes. For some types of calls for services, cases are automatically generated requiring an officer to complete that report. The policy manual sets forth requirements when an officer must complete a report. Officers sometimes do reports albeit not required for documentation purposes. Officers completed a total of 293 cases in 2022. This is down from 372 cases in 2021.



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 167 NIBR's reportable incidents. This is down from 237 in 2021.

2022 NIBR's reporting



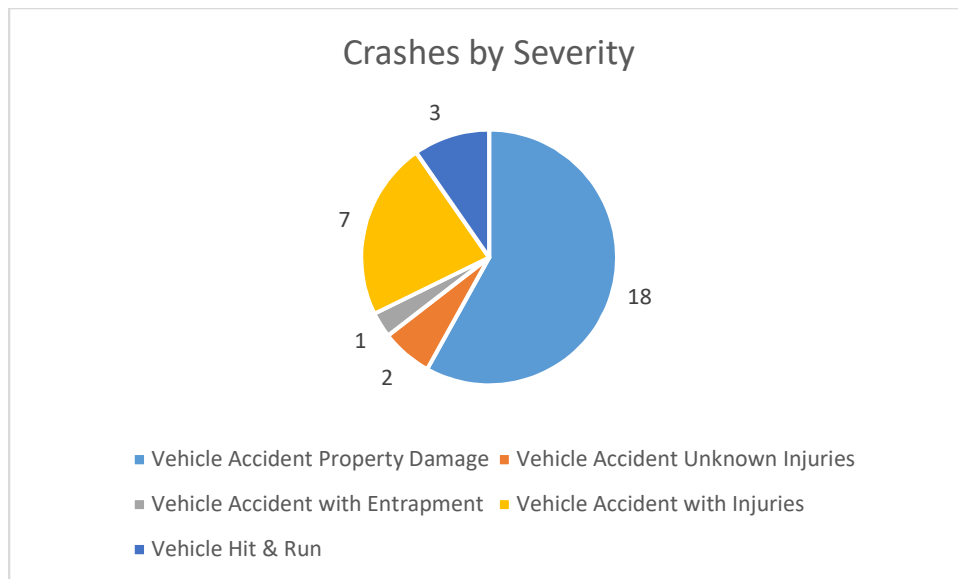
Traffic Enforcement

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 a 632 traffic stops. These stops resulted in a total of 119 citations being issued and 332 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.

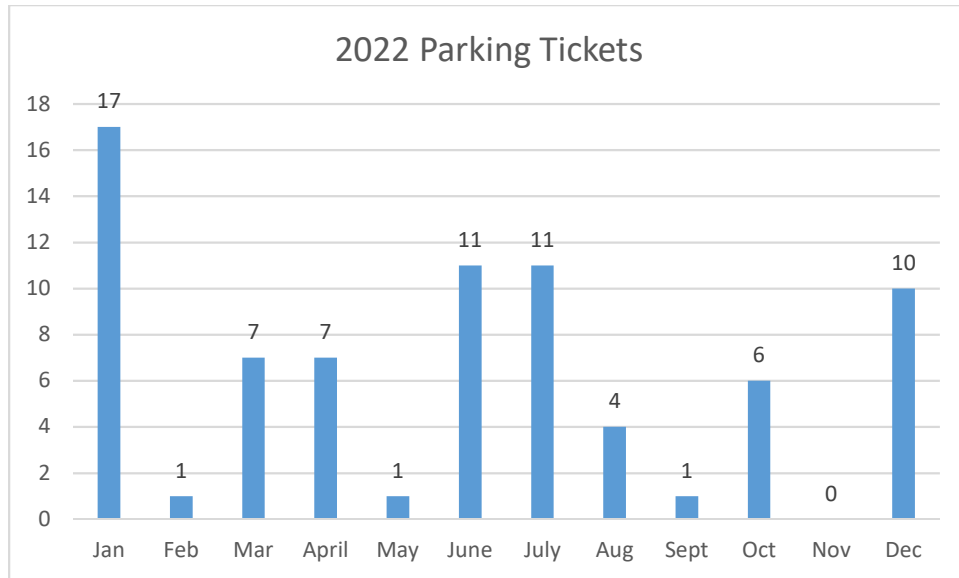
The Marengo Police Department also participates in the Iowa Governors Traffic Safety Program (STEP) which provides for overtime funding and traffic safety equipment funding. We continue to assign officers to overtime for each STEP wave that occurs.

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 31 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 maintain consistency in the issuance of these types of tickets, this is especially important since this is the most common complaint regarding parking tickets. In 2022 we issued a total of 76 parking tickets.



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. Topics 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 appropriate and allowed by the schedule challenges we face. 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. The issuance of DTB's was dependent on the policy manual being mostly completed. This was a goal in 2022 that I accomplished as nearly all policies have been issued. However, I was not able to initiate the DTB's prior to the end of 2022 but they did start in January of 2023. 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 2022, a total of 21 properties were served notice of having a 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 21 properties, at the end of 2021, five of the properties were still in an active state. One property owner was cited for a violation as he had previously been warned and was a repeat offender. The subject plead guilty and was given a fine by the court. That means a total of 30 property owners abated the nuisance after being served the notices.

School Activity

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 305 calls for service to the schools. Of these calls, 173 were specific school patrols which totaled a total of 59.1 hours of time dedicated to placing officers inside schools for nonspecific call related time.

We also participated in a joint effort with Iowa County Emergency Management, Iowa County Sheriff's Office, and Williamsburg Police Department to conduct school assessments for all schools in Iowa county. This was as a result of action by the State of Iowa to enhance school safety. By doing these assessments, we were able to provide security assessments to all schools which also ensured they could get access to funding from the State of Iowa.



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