



MARENGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

2025 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: April 1, 2026

TO:

Hon. Travis Schlabach, Mayor
Marengo City Council
Ms. Ellen O'Rourke, City Administrator
Citizens of Marengo
Members of the Marengo Police Department

SUBJECT: Marengo Police Department 2025 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 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 FY2025, the council voted to fund four full time officers. The hiring process has continued to be challenging as has been experienced for many years now. The lack of interest in law enforcement as a profession continues to be an issue and concern to all of us in the management positions of agencies. We have tried to take steps within the City of Marengo to adjust benefits and negotiate with the Teamsters Union and council to try and bring attraction to employment with the City of Marengo.

I will continue to work with the council and city staff to develop more ideas of how to grow interest in our city. The cold hard truth is that we are competing against agencies within close proximity to us that are paying grossly more monies. As all department heads know, balancing budgets while trying to attract the best candidates who are capable of passing all of the screening and tests required to be hired for the position of a police officer.

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 we now have one new reserve starting. We also are working with another valid candidate who is progressing through the hiring process.

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. Events have included:

- Rotary Club Presentation
- Easter Basket Handout
- Bicycle Rodeo at IV Elementary
- July 3rd Activities
- National Night Out
- Trunk-Or-Treat
- Jingle Around the Square

In May of 2025, we worked with the Iowa Valley Schools to conduct some bicycle safety courses. 4th graders from the school were instructed by the school nurse on medical considerations and how to properly wear bicycle safety gear. Thanks to the partnership with Compass Memorial Hospital, each student was provided with a bicycle helmet and properly fitted with them. Our officers then took students outside where they completed a bicycle course to discuss how to safely navigate the streets and sidewalks, as well as follow all traffic laws applicable to bicycles and scooters. We look forward to continuing this program in 2026.



Our National Night Out Event that occurs on the first Tuesday of August each year is our highlighted event. We have done this event every year since I took the position of Chief of Police. We have added participants to this event to include not only our local first responders, but also including the Iowa National Guard and some social service groups who provide assistance to our citizens. Many local businesses donated supplies provide free hot-dogs and beverages to citizens who participated in this event. We continue to work to increase opportunities with this event.

I got caught program



We again partnered this year with the Marengo Ice Cream Shop who provided coins to hand out to citizens who officers found doing good things. These were handed out for things such as wearing your bicycle helmet, helping others, and other good actions that officers found while patrolling. We look forward to finding additional opportunities to partner with local businesses who wish to participate in offering this type of activity.

City Wide Cameras

The department also implemented a security camera project in 2024. This included installation of cameras on nearly all city owned buildings (City Hall, Public Works, Library, etc.) and parks. We expanded the cameras to include the SE Entry, SW Entry and NW Entry to the city. In partnership with Iowa County we were able to use space at both the county road shop and the CD Shed to install some of these cameras. These cameras have been used to solve numerous criminal activity reports and used for various calls for service. The Iowa County dispatch center also has access to view these cameras to assist in guiding emergency services with an real time viewing of these devices.

We have added a camera to the American Legion that does capture the boat launch to the south pit at Gateway Park. We continue to work with Iowa County Conservation on helping them secure additional cameras for more coverage for Gateway Park. We also worked with the Iowa County Fair Board to add cameras to their property that they funded, which uses our system as a foundation and provides us access to view them.

STAFF

The police department is currently authorized for 4 full time officers including myself. With the departure of an officer in March of 2025 we worked to fill that position but were unable to do so with the applicants available. We did lose our two Reserve Officers, as one took a full-time law enforcement job and the other did not complete the required certification with the Law Enforcement Academy. Reserve officers are volunteer officers authorized by Iowa Code to supplement full time staff. I continue to interview applicants and conduct the testing process on any qualified applicant.

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.

BUILDING

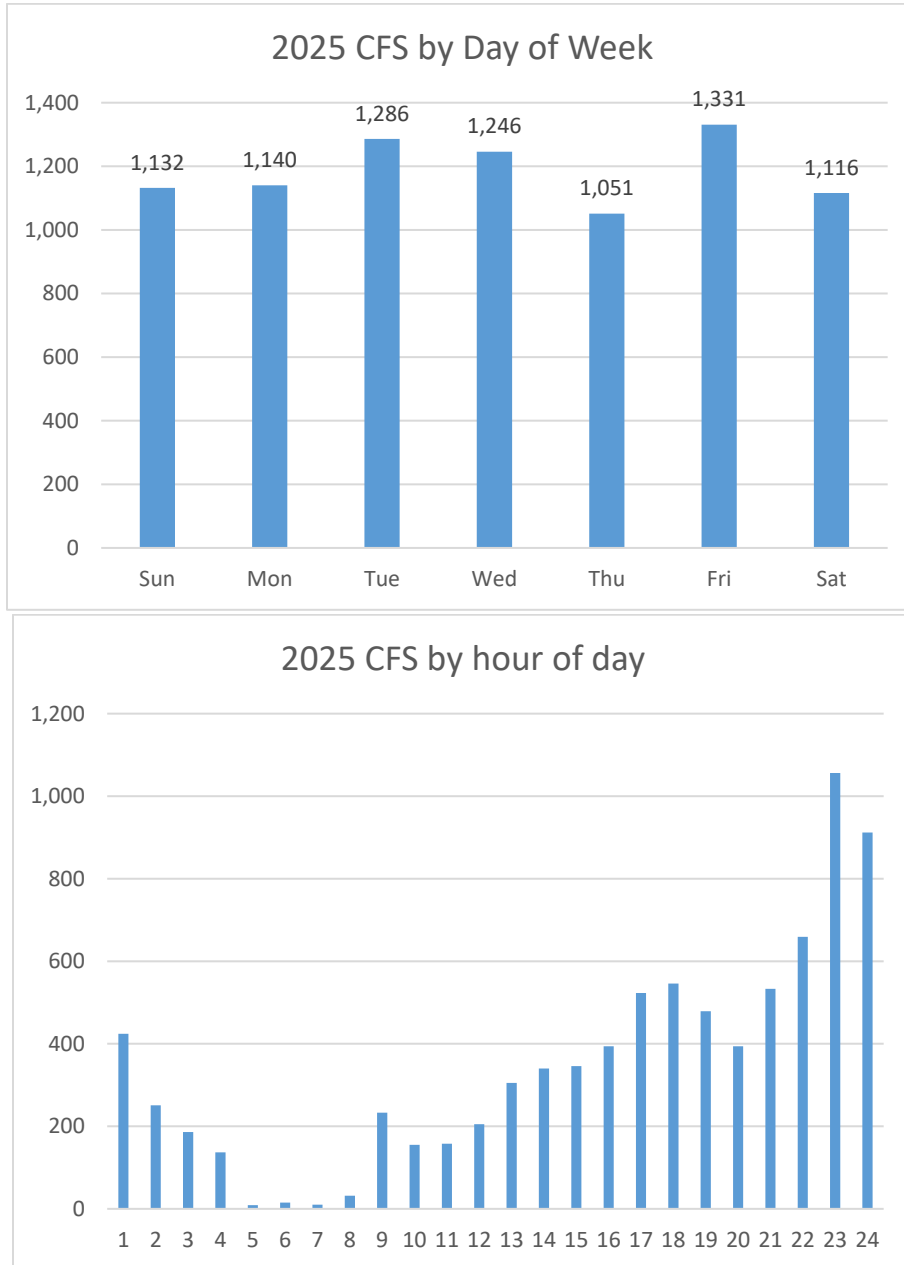
We were fortunate over the last year to make several improvements to the police department building. The new bathroom remodel is finished which now provides officers with all necessary facilities including a more spacious restroom facility. We also had a shower installed, which if needed, can help officers clean up after what can be a less than clean type of call for service.

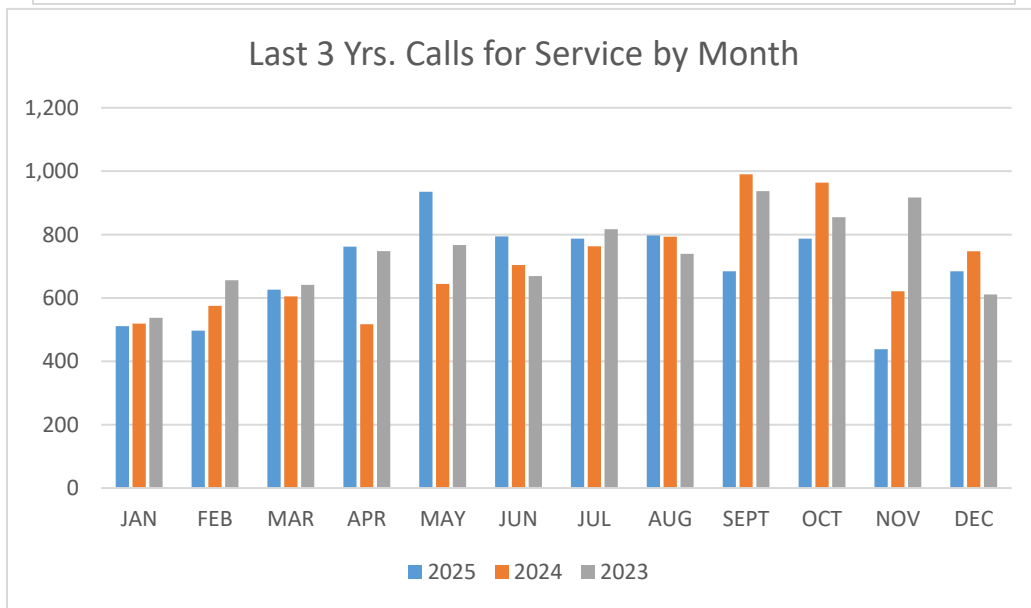
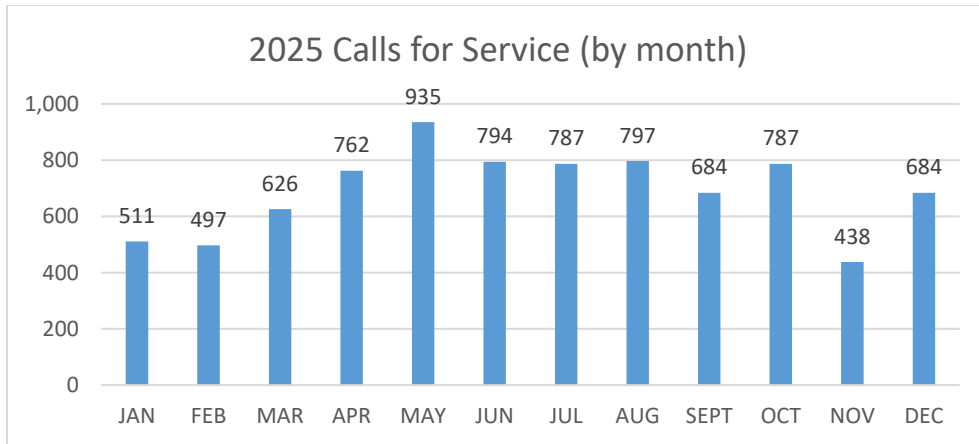
New ceiling and lights have been installed and a new counter has been installed at the beginning of 2026. These improvements make the space much more inviting for staff and citizens doing business with the police department. We are thankful that these improvements were funded through capital improvement funds and carry-over funding.



CALLS FOR SERVICE

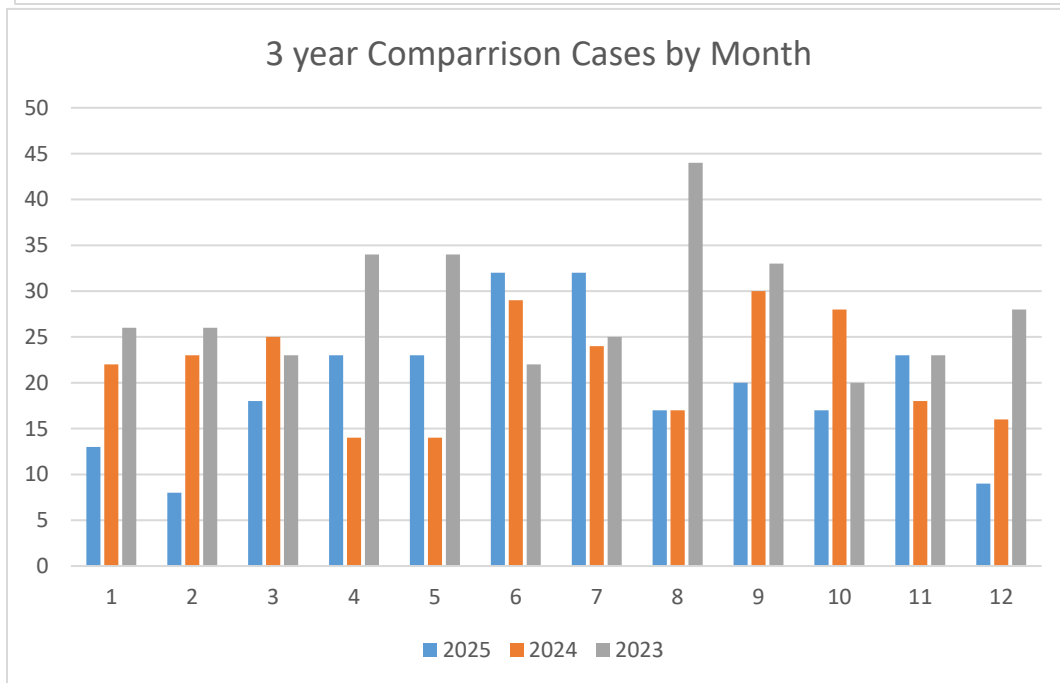
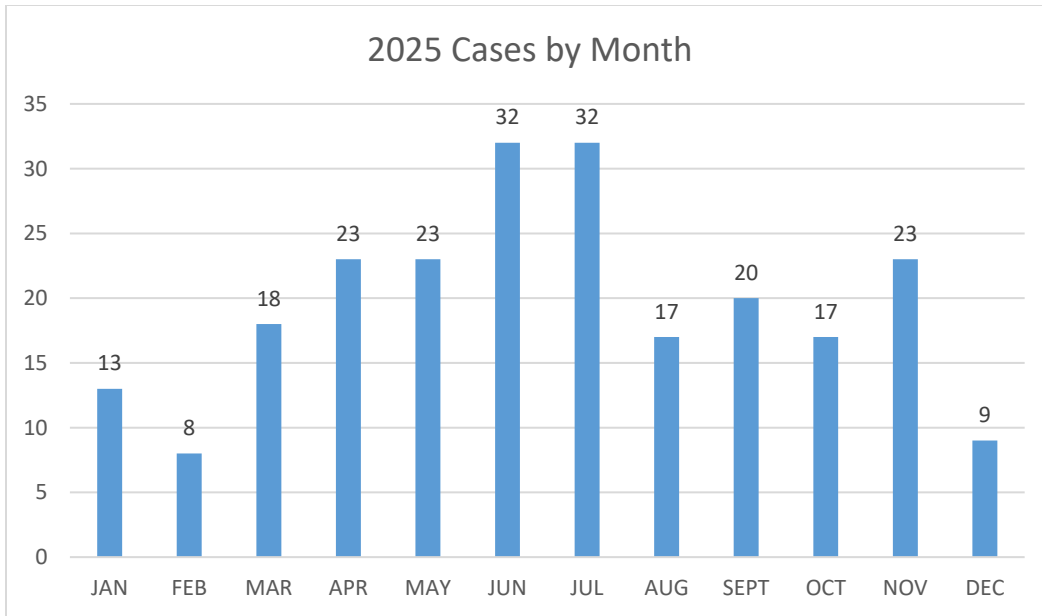
For 2025 the Marengo Police Department had a total of 8,302 calls for service. These calls for service include but are not limited to: reports of criminal activity, motor vehicle crashes, traffic enforcement, assist to other agencies, medical and fire emergencies, business and property checks, and other service-related functions.





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 235 cases in 2025. This is down from 260 cases in 2024. This is likely impacted by the lack of a full-time position being filled for a significant part of 2025.



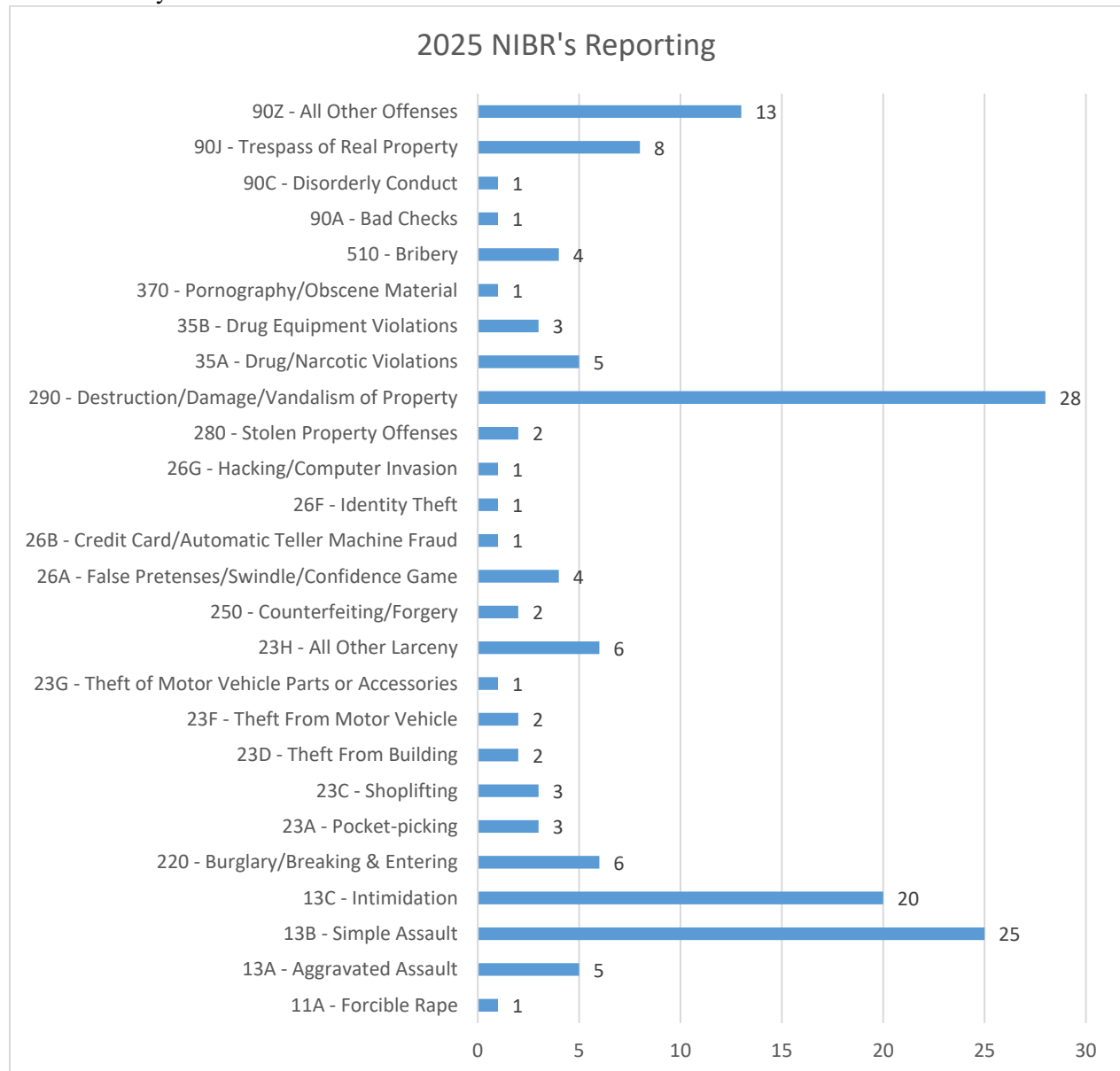
Incident Types

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 Harassment, 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. For 2025 the Marengo Police Department had a total of 149 reportable offenses. This is down from 178 reported offenses in 2024.

This type of data can be hard to compare year to year in regard to how the State of Iowa and the Federal Bureau of Investigation change classification and what can and cannot be reported. For instance, in 2024 the State of Iowa changed its reporting as bad checks. Bad check cases are now classified as all other larceny.

I would note that we often hear rumor that incidents such as theft or harassment that go un-reported to the police department. We continue to ask all citizens to report any suspected criminal activity. Many times, it is those reports that lead to us identifying suspects and offenders who have victimized other citizens of our community.



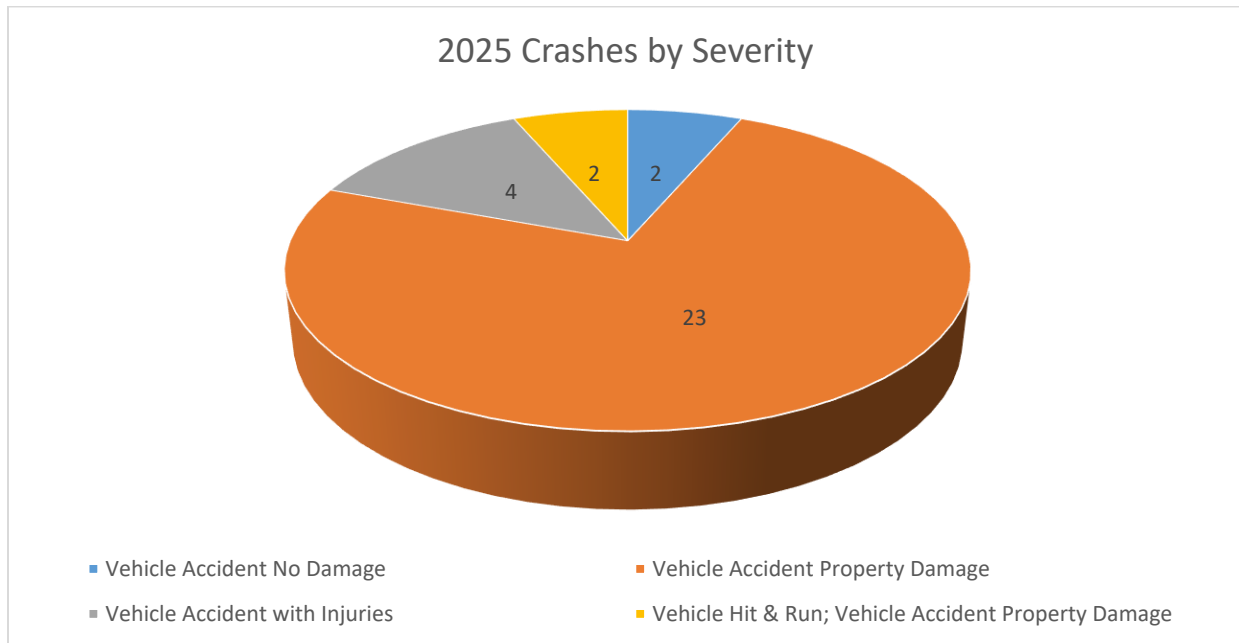
Traffic Enforcement

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 460 traffic stops, up from 413 in 2024 and 544 in 2023. These stops resulted in a total of 184 citations being issued and 435 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.

Officer responded to a total of 31 vehicle crashes in 2025. This is down from 52 crashes in 2024. 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 18 crash reports were completed by officers.

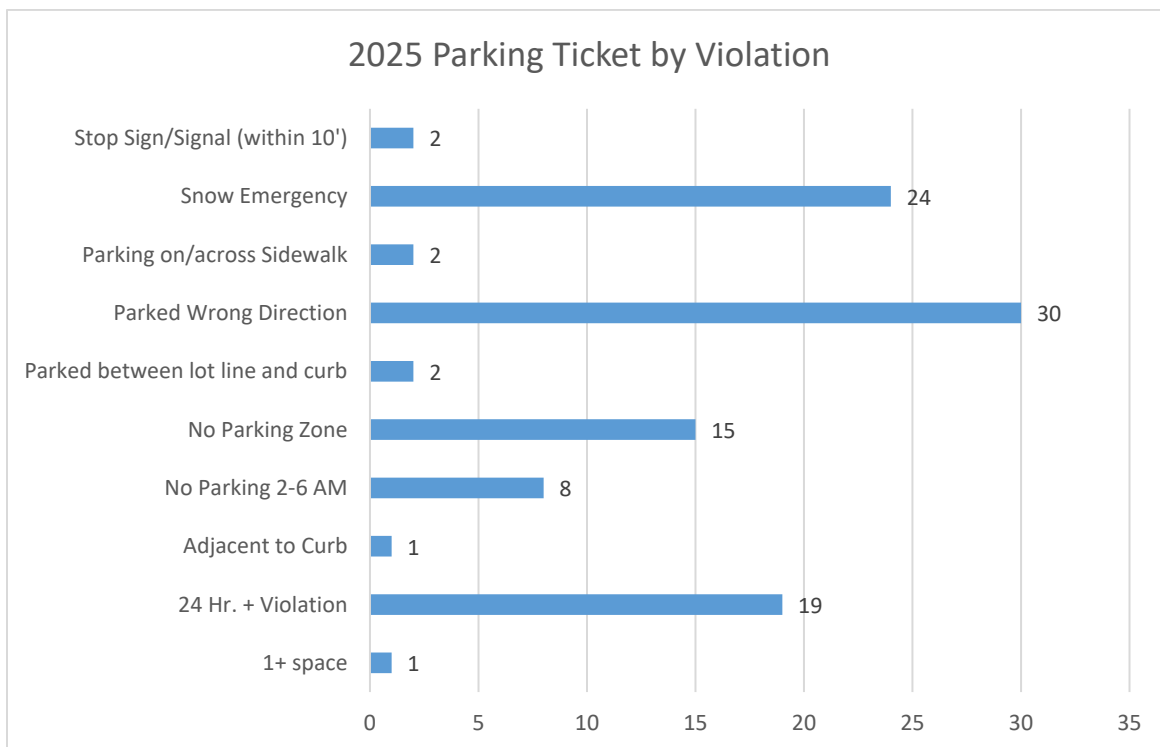
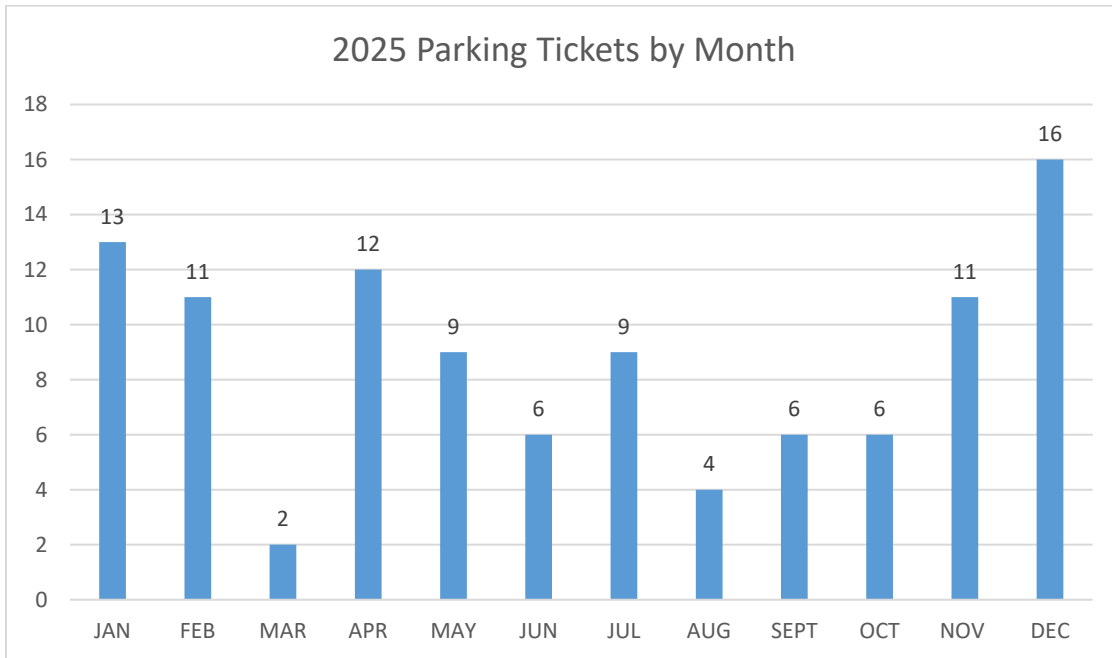
We did not have any fatality crashes in 2025. We did have 4 personal injury crashes. Per the Iowa Department of Transportation reporting regulations, a crash can be classified as a fatal car crash if a death happens at the time of the crash or as a result of injuries sustained from that crash, within 30 days.



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 2025 we issued a total of 106 parking tickets. This is up from the 78 tickets issued in 2024 and down from the 115 tickets issued in 2023.



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, 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. DTB's provide officer approximately five minutes per scheduled shift of training and review on departmental policies. Each DTB provides an officer an opportunity to review a scenario, review applicable policy, and then answer a test question. I did not issue DTB's every month of 2025 and intend to try and improve on my execution of issuing DTB's in each month of 2026.

Officer Jepson was able to attend the Mossberg Armorers course in March and obtained his certification to become a Mossberg armorer. This will allow him to properly and more thoroughly examine and repair our department shotguns.

In addition to our online training, we continue to conduct semi-annual firearms training. We also annually complete training on Tasers, NCIC recertification, and other training as applicable.

Nuisance Properties

At the city council's direction, the police department has continued its involvement with dealing with nuisance properties. For 2024, a total of 43 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 37 properties, at the end of 2024, and three of the properties were still in an active state. The city took action by either cleaning a property or citations being issued on 6 properties. A total of 28 property owners abated their nuisances. We continue to find most people will cooperate with us. We strive to work with property owners to get them to accomplish the abatements before we take action against them.

We have instituted a strict adherence to the deadlines on repeat offenders. Also thanks to council action, violations are now scheduled fines so offenders are no longer required to go to court to receive their fine notifications.

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. Night 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 2025 officers conducted a total of 502 calls for service to the schools. Of these calls, 124 were specific school patrols which totaled a total of 42.92 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