

**City of Morganton
Department of Public Safety**



***2023
Annual Report***



***Proudly Protecting the Lives & Property
of the Citizens of Morganton***



Jason Whisnant, Director

828-432-2676

jwhisnant@morgantonps.org



Ryan Lander, Assistant Chief

828-432-2673

rlander@morgantonps.org



Keith Bowman, Assistant Chief

828-432-2680

kbowman@morgantonps.org



**Tim Corriveau, Captain
Professional Standards**

828-432-2681

tcorriveau@morgantonps.org



**Josiah Brown, Captain
Field Operations**

828-432-2696

jbrown@morgantonps.org

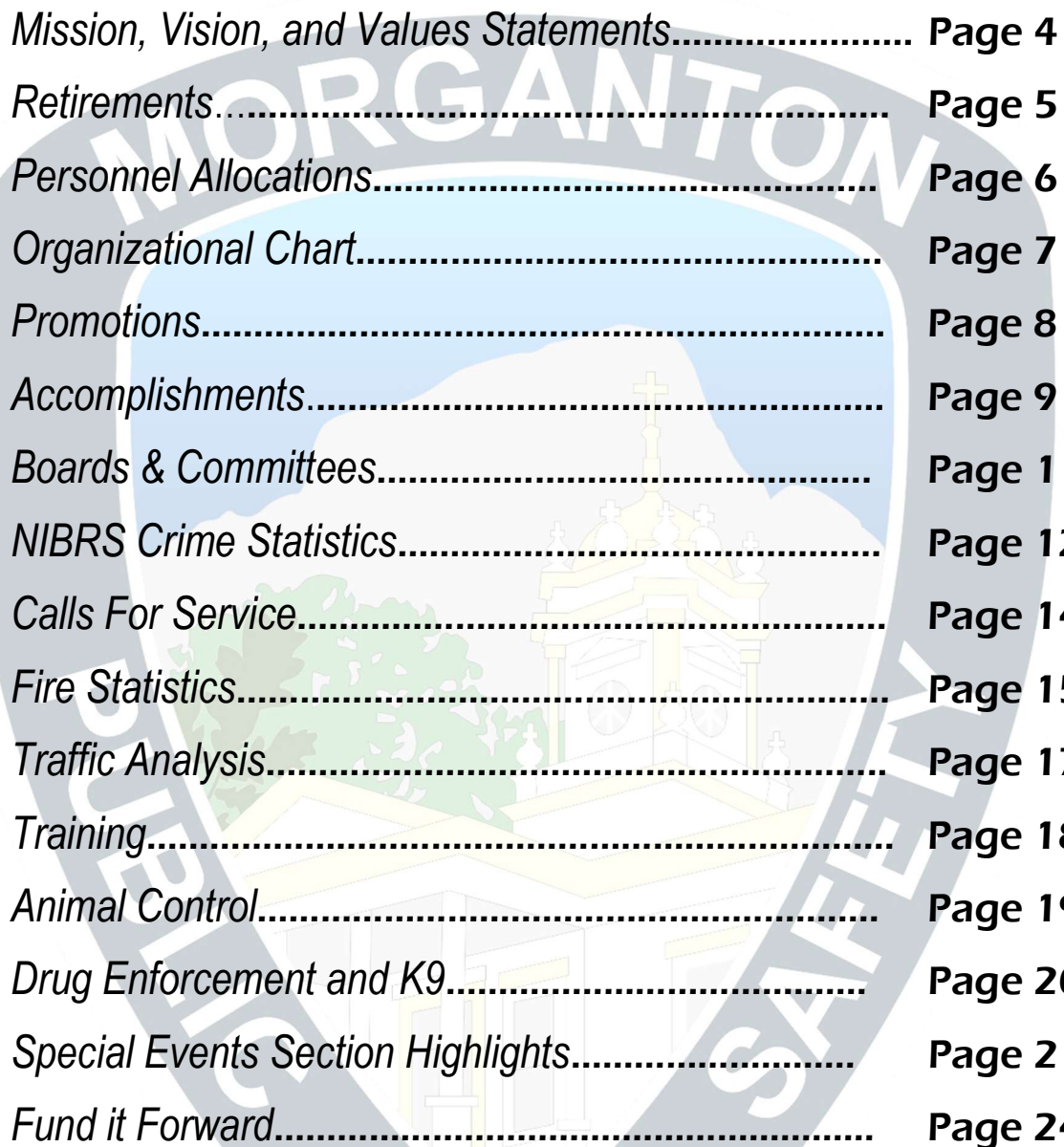


**Israel Gibson, Executive Fire Officer
Fire Services**

828-432-2522

igibson@morgantonps.org

Table of Contents



<i>Mission, Vision, and Values Statements</i>	Page 4
<i>Retirements</i>	Page 5
<i>Personnel Allocations</i>	Page 6
<i>Organizational Chart</i>	Page 7
<i>Promotions</i>	Page 8
<i>Accomplishments</i>	Page 9
<i>Boards & Committees</i>	Page 11
<i>NIBRS Crime Statistics</i>	Page 12
<i>Calls For Service</i>	Page 14
<i>Fire Statistics</i>	Page 15
<i>Traffic Analysis</i>	Page 17
<i>Training</i>	Page 18
<i>Animal Control</i>	Page 19
<i>Drug Enforcement and K9</i>	Page 20
<i>Special Events Section Highlights</i>	Page 21
<i>Fund it Forward</i>	Page 24

Mission Statement

Our Mission:

We, the members of the Morganton Department of Public Safety, are committed to protect the lives, property, and Constitutional Rights of all residents and visitors of OUR community by providing professional law enforcement and fire protection services.

Our Values:

- ♥ **Integrity:** High ethical standards, honesty and fairness
- ♥ **Professionalism:** Individual excellence, education and training
- ♥ **Honor:** Official dignity, repute, and esteem
- ♥ **Accountability:** To take responsibility for all actions and decisions
- ♥ **Respect:** Treating others as you would like to be treated
- ♥ **Equality:** Fair, impartial, and equitable treatment of all people

Our Vision:

The *Morganton Department of Public Safety* strives to be a leader in the delivery of public safety services, which combines law enforcement and fire protection. Our employees strive to be leaders in OUR community in name and deed, conducting themselves in a manner to which others will aspire.

Retirements

The Morganton Department of Public Safety proudly recognizes the retirement of the following employees in 2023. Upon retirement, the City of Morganton and the Department of Public Safety offers their sincere appreciation for their dedicated and exemplary service:



Jason Smith
Support Service Supervisor
Effective: May 31st 2023
19 Years of Service



Kim Davis
Public Safety Officer
Effective May 31st 2023
18 Years of Service



Jamie Clark
Fire Service Lieutenant
Effective: January 31st 2023
19 Years of Service



Robert Bailey
Fire Services Engineer
Effective: July 31st 2023
19 Years of Service



Danny Lyle
Fire Services Engineer
Effective: December 31st 2023
27 Years of Service

Department Personnel Allocations

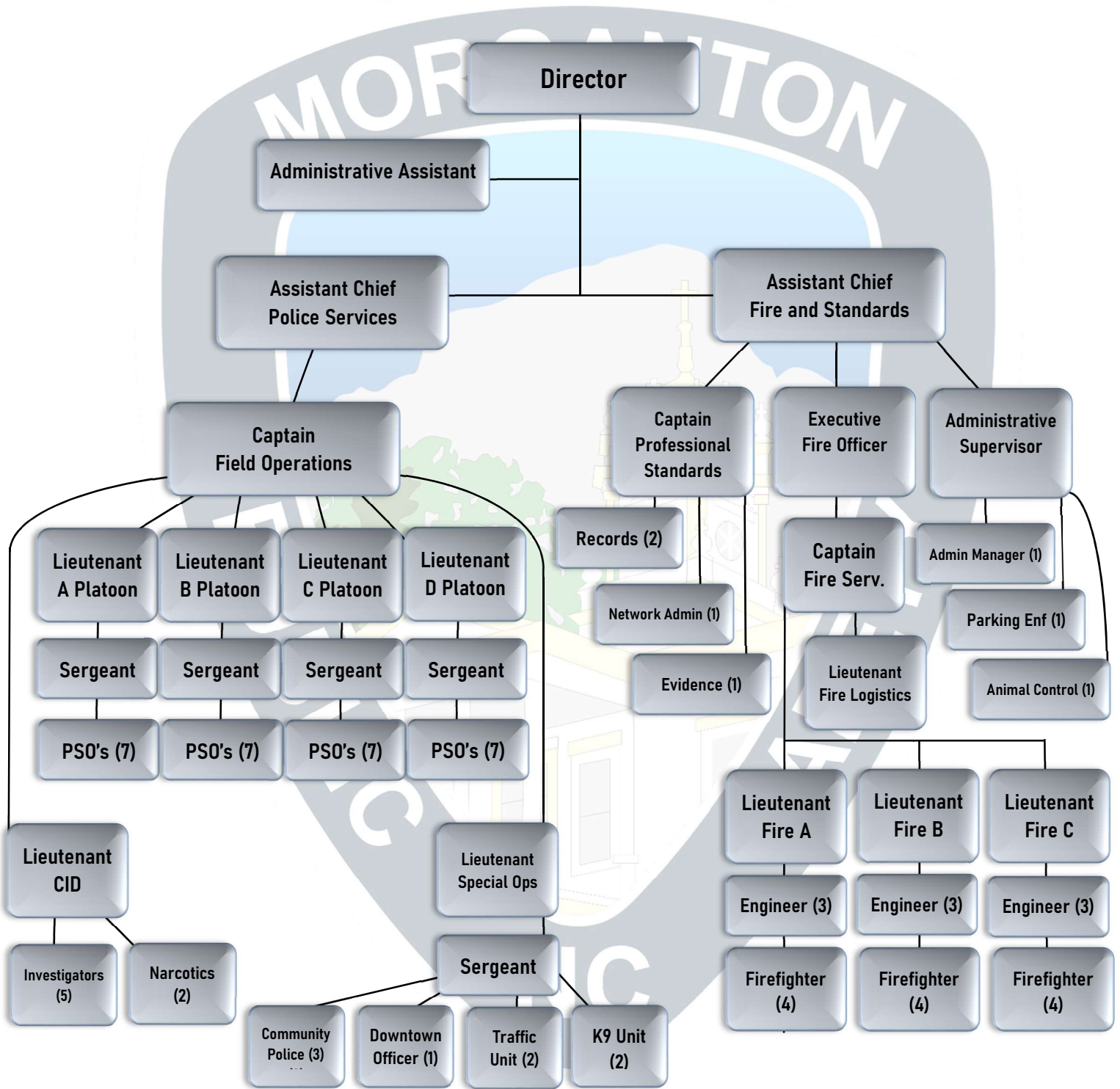
January 2023

Department Position	Allocate	Assigned	Frozen	Vacant
Public Safety Chief	*1	*1		
Assistant Chief	*2	*2		
Captain	*2	*2		
Lieutenant	*6	*6		
Sergeant	*5	*5		
PSO	*45	*43	*2	
Fire Chief	1	1		
Fire Capt	1	1		
Fire Lt	4	4		
Engineers	9	9		
Firefighters	12	11		1
Admin Supervisor	1	1		
Admin Manager	1	1		
Admin Specialist I	2	1	1	
Network Admin	1	1		
Evidence Custodian	1	1		
Customer Service Rep	2	2		
Parking Enforcement	1			1
Animal Control	1	1		
Total Sworn*	*61	*59	*2	
Total Civilian	36	33	3	2
GRAND TOTAL	97	92	3	2

* Indicates sworn personnel

Morganton Department of Public Safety

Organizational Chart



MORGANTON

Promotions

Captain Keith Bowman promoted to Assistant Chief

Lieutenant Josiah Brown promoted to Captain

Sergeant Ben Carswell promoted to Lieutenant

PSO Eric Conner promoted to Sergeant

PSO Anthony Paterno promoted to Sergeant

ACO Kyle Bradshaw promoted to Supervisor

Fire Captain Israel Gibson promoted to Executive Fire Officer

Fire Lieutenant Kevin Woody promoted to Fire Captain

Engineer Hal Horton promoted to Fire Training Lieutenant

Engineer Aubrey Hendricks promoted to Fire Lieutenant

Firefighter Jose Bao promoted to Engineer

Firefighter Josh Lowdermilk promoted to Engineer

Firefighter Nicholas Westmoreland promoted to Engineer

Firefighter Bryan Brewer promoted to Engineer

Accomplishments

The following personnel were recognized for their career progression achievements:



Lieutenant Tayler Alexander successfully completed the *Administrative Officers Management Program (AOMP)* at N.C. State University. AOMP is a twelve-week on-site Management and Leadership Education program designed specifically for Law Enforcement Professionals. This unique educational experience, operated as part of a nationally accredited Public Administration Program, offers participants the opportunity to earn fifteen college credits. AOMP is a continuing education activity of the Public Safety Leadership Initiative (PSLI) in the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHASS) at North Carolina State University.



PSO Michael Christobal was recognized at Cloninger Ford in Hickory as a Hometown Hero nominee. He was nominated by his supervisors for the award and was described as “an extremely competent and patient officer who values making strong ties in the community on every call. His attitude and actions have always been that he puts others before himself; and he will do anything for the good of the shift, agency, and community”.

PSO Michael Christobal also received the Officer of the month award in April from the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (Burke L.E.A.D.)



Lieutenant Aubrey Hendricks and Engineer Nick Westmoreland completed the North Carolina Breathing Equipment Firefighter Survival School held at the Gaston College Regional Emergency Services Training Center. This rigorous school consists of self-survival and team based rescue scenarios in live fire conditions. This school consists of a demanding physical assessment, self-survival techniques, a Swede Survival Flashover Simulator, and air consumption / stress course.

Accomplishments Continued

Advanced Law Enforcement Certification

- ♣ Sgt. Joseph Belanger
- ♣ Inv. Jessica Bess
- ♣ PSO Tou Vue

Intermediate Law Enforcement Certification

- ♣ PSO II Jenell Vonbargen
- ♣ PSO Samantha Lunsford
- ♣ PSO James Hunt



PSO Samantha Lunsford: Intermediate Law Enforcement Certification, Radar Operator, Lidar Operator, Accountability and Use of Force Certification, At-Scene Traffic Crash Investigation Certification, Western Carolina University bachelor degree



Investigator Chris Clark: Criminal Investigations Certificate Program

Boards & Committees

- ♣ **Chief Jason Whisnant:** Burke Substance Abuse Network, Burke County Safe Communities Task Force, Morganton Homeless Task Force, Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion-Burke Case Review, Burke County Homeland Security Task Force, Morganton-Burke Crimestoppers (ex officio member), Board of Directors member for Mission Ministries Alliance, and Burke Law Enforcement Assistance Foundation (Executive Advisor)
- ♣ **Assistant Chief Ryan Lander:** Burke County United Way, Domestic Violence Task Force, Burke County Communication Technical Advisory Board, Burke County Homeland Security Task Force, NC-FBINA Dist. 5 Rep.
- ♣ **Assistant Chief Keith Bowman:** Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, Critical Mentorship Freedom High School
- ♣ **Fire Chief Israel Gibson:** DPR 8 Municipal Fire Core Chair Member, LEPC Committee member
- ♣ **Captain Tim Corriveau:** Burke Substance Abuse Network
- ♣ **Captain Josiah Brown:** Morganton-Burke Crimestoppers
- ♣ **Kyle Bradshaw:** City Safety Committee
- ♣ **Amy Swanson:** Morganton-Burke Crimestoppers, MDPS Social Media Committee, MDPS Recruitment Committee, Burke Law Enforcement Assistance Foundation (board member)
- ♣ **Lt. Tayler Alexander:** The Outreach Center (Secretary), North Carolina Law Enforcement Women's Association (Secretary), MDPS Interview Board, MDPS Social Media Committee, MDPS Recruitment Committee
- ♣ **Lt. Nick Edwards:** Explorer Post Committee Chair, Law Enf. Assistance Diversion
- ♣ **Lt. Joseph Beaver:** MDPS Social Media Committee, MDPS Recruitment Committee, MDPS Interview Board, WPCJ Criminal Justice AAS Degree Board
- ♣ **Sgt. Eric Connor:** Burke Law Enforcement Assistance Foundation (Secretary)
- ♣ **Sgt. Tony Paterno:** : Burke Law Enforcement Assistance Foundation (President)
- ♣ **Eng. Aubrey Hendricks -** New Truck Committee, Rescue Committee, MDPS Social Media Committee and Honor Guard
- ♣ **Investigator Kyle Goforth** – International Association of Arson Investigators, National Tactical Operators Association
- ♣ **PSO Justin Walker** – NC Governors Highway Safety County Coordinator

NIBRS Crime Statistics

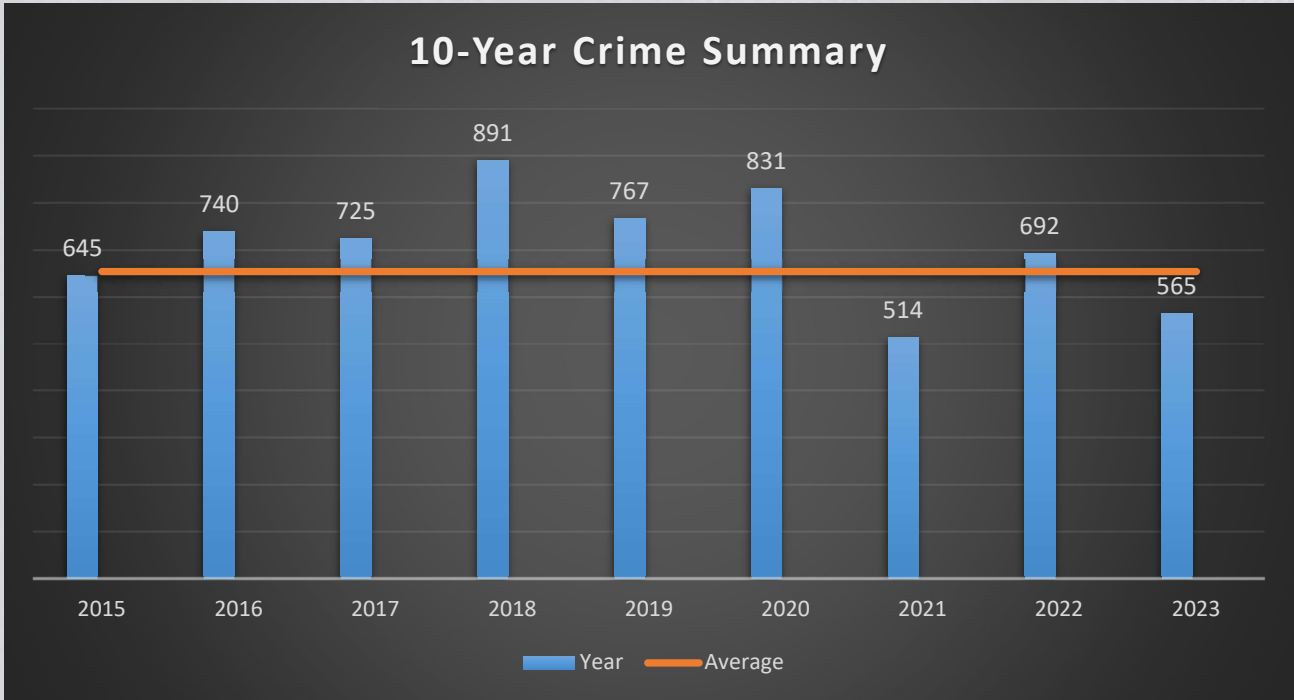
In 2021, the FBI implemented the National Incident-Based Reporting System, NIBRS, replacing UCR to improve the overall quality of crime data collected by law enforcement. Unlike data reported through the UCR Program—an aggregate monthly tally of crimes—NIBRS goes much deeper due to its ability to provide circumstances and context for crimes like location, time of day, and whether the incident was cleared. Not only does NIBRS look at all of the offenses within an incident, but it also looks at many more offenses than the traditional SRS does. NIBRS collects data for 52 offenses, plus 10 additional offenses for which only arrests are reported.

Violent Crimes	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Murder	1	0	1	0	0
Forcible Rape	17	19	7	17	11
Robbery	7	7	7	6	7
Aggravated Assault	37	36	23	53	39
TOTAL	62	62	38	76	57

Property Crimes	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Burglary	203	177	85	160	91
Larceny	453	542	354	409	378
MV Theft	47	49	34	44	37
Arson	2	1	3	1	2
TOTAL	705	769	476	614	508

2023 Monthly Summary													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
<i>Murder</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Rape</i>	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	11
<i>Robbery</i>	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	7
<i>Aggr. Assaults</i>	4	1	3	1	4	4	4	2	2	2	9	3	39
<i>Burglary</i>	11	2	8	2	6	6	9	7	2	6	7	12	91
<i>Larceny</i>	38	34	38	24	42	33	33	31	35	30	22	21	378
<i>MV Theft</i>	2	3	1	1	2	4	4	3	1	6	1	3	37
<i>Arson</i>	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
TOTAL	59	43	52	29	54	51	51	44	43	45	40	41	565

NIBRS Crime 10 – Year Summary



10-YEAR SUMMARY

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Murder	3	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0
Rape	6	4	11	15	18	17	19	7	17	11
Robbery	11	16	12	11	22	7	7	7	6	7
Assaults	47	56	59	52	43	37	36	23	53	39
Burglary	149	132	154	223	326	203	177	85	160	91
Larceny	466	413	474	415	460	453	542	354	409	378
MV Theft	18	20	28	7	18	47	49	34	44	31
Arson	11	3	2	2	2	2	1	3	1	2
TOTAL	711	645	740	725	891	767	831	514	690	565

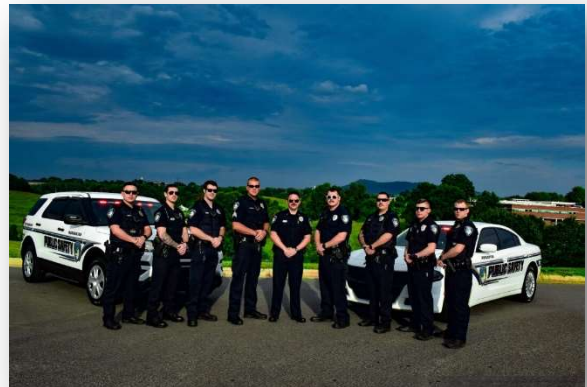
Calls for Service

2023 Top-10 Call Types

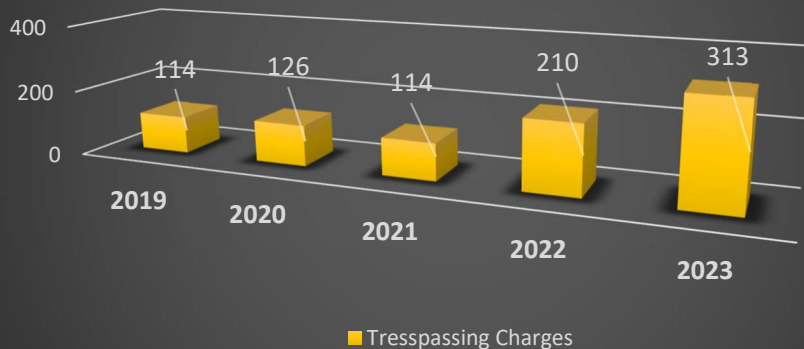
Calls for Service (125 total categories)	2020	2021	2022	2023
Vehicle Stop	4,964	4,782	5,433	8,735
Extra Patrol	4,980	4,055	4,099	2,878
Security Check	2,961	4,116	3,499	3,029
911 Hang-up	2,622	3,049	2,419	3,424
Speak to Officer	1,848	1,647	1,849	1,767
Investigation	1,218	1,341	1,361	1,568
Alarm Activation	1,431	1,315	1,337	1,291
Suspicious Person	1,230	1,174	1,258	1,471
Property Damage MVA	987	1,167	1,123	1,123
Follow-Up	1,258	1,183	1,019	1,051
All other call categories	11,835	11,403	12,082	12,276
TOTAL	35,334	35,232	35,479	38,613

🛡️ The total *Calls for Service* increased more than **9%** from previous year

🛡️ Public Safety responded to an average of **106** *Calls For Service* each day utilizing 6-8 personnel per 12-hour shift



Trespassing



MORGANTON



PUBLIC SAFETY

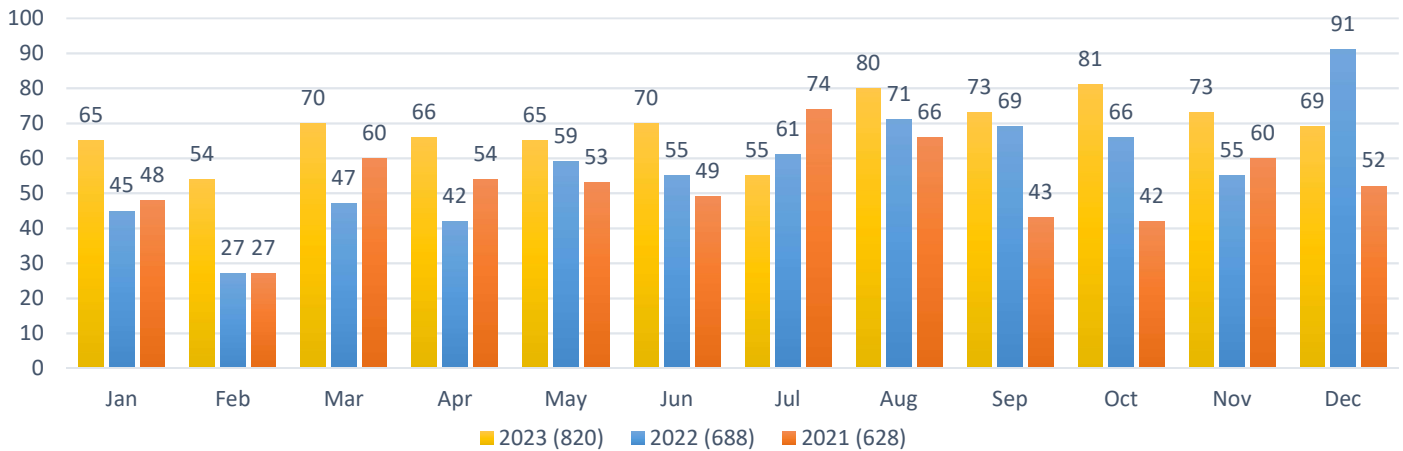
PUBLIC SAFETY



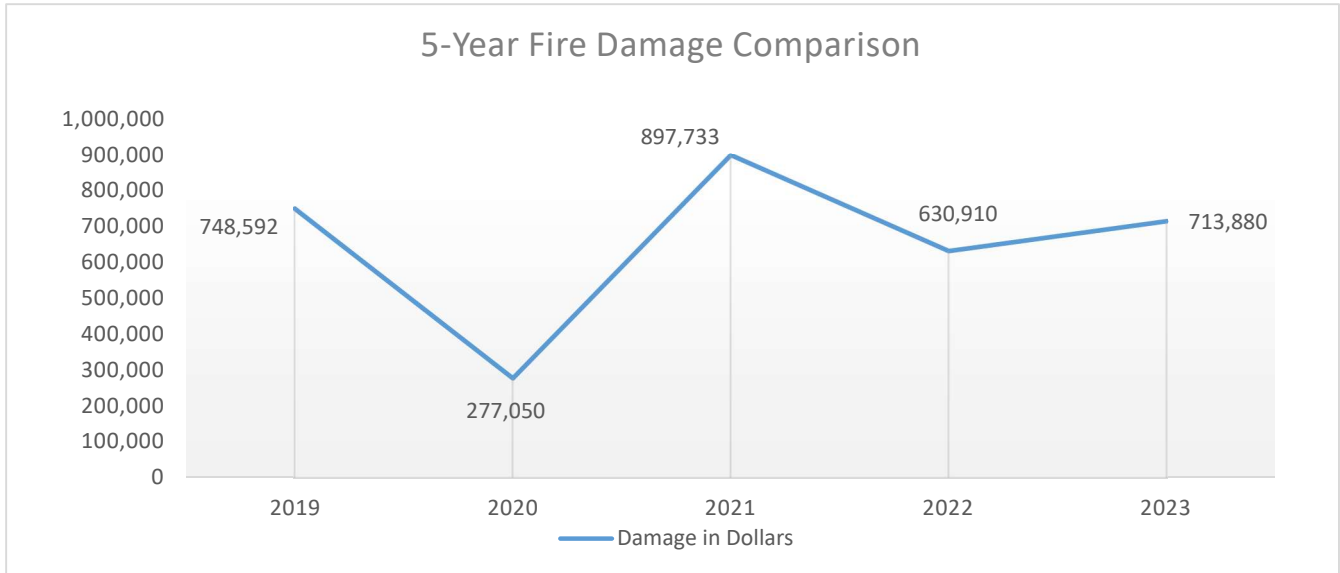
FIRE RESPONSE 2023

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
NUMBER OF CALLS	65	54	70	66	65	70	55	80	73	81	73	69	820
PROPERTY DAMAGE	\$8,250	\$56,479	\$800	\$10,200	\$24,493	\$10,000	\$102,000	\$1,600	\$202,750	\$36,800	\$40,005	\$60	\$713,880

Fire Incidents Each Month



Fire Statistics Continued



Traffic Analysis

5-YEAR SUMMARY – TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<i>Accidents Reported</i>	1,215	1,029	1,253	1,167	1148
<i>Number Injured</i>	251	163	244	241	220
<i>Fatalities</i>	2	2	2	2	0
<i>Acc. Arrests/Citations</i>	990	785	1,043	959	955
<i>Property Damage</i>	\$3,750,000	\$2,998,713	\$4,196,424	\$4,262,867	\$3,913,664

5-YEAR SUMMARY – DWI ARRESTS, CITATIONS

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<i>DWI Arrests</i>	167	132	191	200	195
<i>Traffic Citations</i>	6,759	3,724	3,122	4000	6055

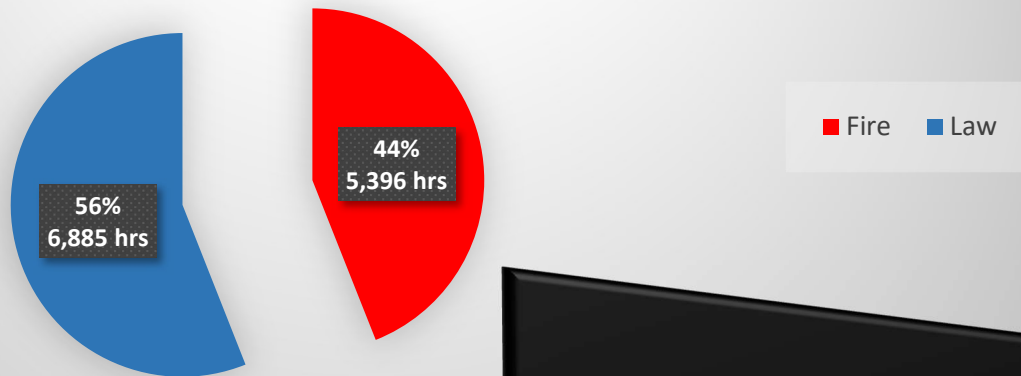
Traffic Checkpoints:

Public Safety conducted a total of **71** traffic related events during 2023 at various locations throughout the city and as a result **2,473** charges were issued. Checkpoints include seat belt enforcement, saturated patrols, speed enforcement and educational events.

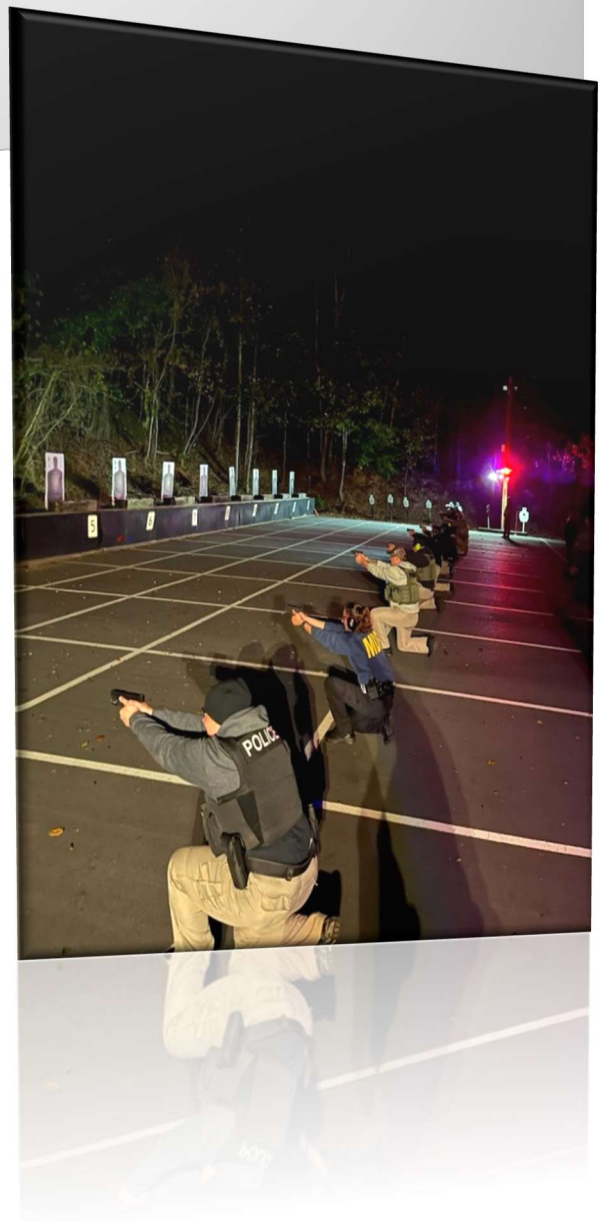


Training

Training Hours by Category Total Hours: 12,281

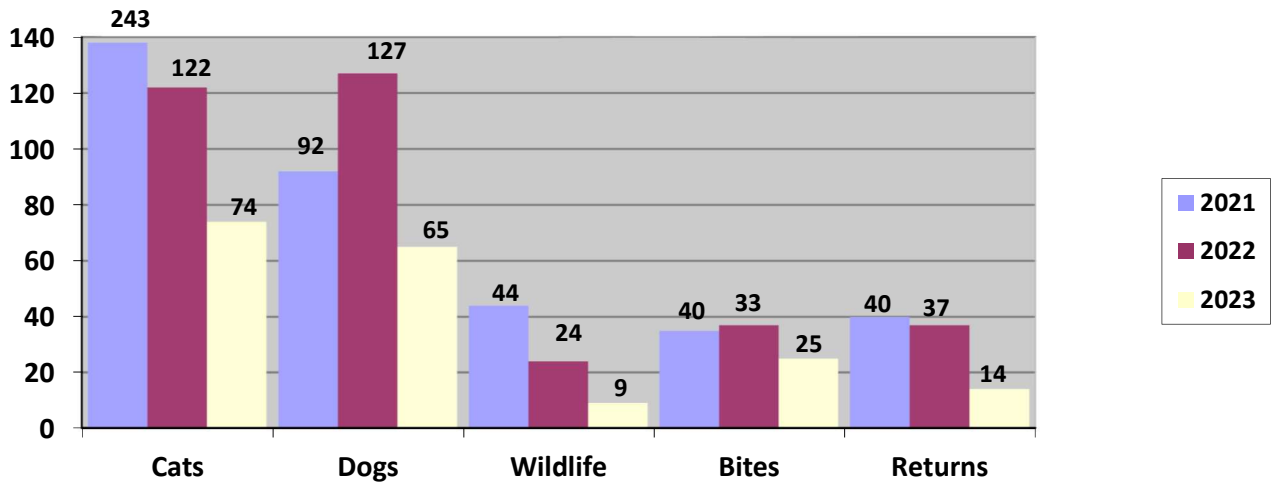


- 🛡️ Total police-related training for 2023 was **6,885** hours, resulting in each sworn officer (59) averaging **117** hours of training
- 🛡️ Total fire-related training was **5,396** hours, resulting in each firefighter (84) averaging **64** hours of training for the year
- 🛡️ In 2023, **8** PSO's attended WPCC BLET at over 720 hours each



Animal Control

	2020	2021	2022	2023
CALLS FOR SERVICE	1080	1092	942	564
CITATIONS ISSUED	125	78	69	46



Totals for 2023 are incomplete due to a 5-month vacancy in Animal Control



ACO "Shay" Skala

Drug Enforcement and K9

Drug Enforcement

The mission of the Public Safety *Narcotics Division* is drug interdiction and enforcement. Below is a summary of their activity for 2023:

Drug	Amount Seized	Value
🛡️ Meth	340 grams	\$17,045
🛡️ Fentanyl	49 grams	\$9,800
🛡️ Cocaine	54 grams	\$2,700
🛡️ Marijuana	2410 grams	\$8,435

Total estimated value: **\$29,130**

K9 Program:

PSO Huffman is assigned canine Jaros and PSO Holder is assigned canine Tigo. Canine units are responsible for apprehension of fleeing suspects, article searches, tracking subjects or missing persons, building searches, and narcotics detection. Below is their activity for 2023:



Training and Usage

Tracks.....	2
Vehicles searched.....	170
Building searches.....	3
Apprehensions without force.....	8
Apprehensions with force.....	0
Total training hours.....	336.3

Drug and Money Seizures

Marijuana.....	1.105 kilograms (street value \$22,100)
Methamphetamines.....	450.4 grams (street value \$49,544)
Cocaine/Crack.....	6.2 grams (street value \$558)
Heroin/Fentanyl.....	87.4 grams (street value \$8,704)
MDMA Seized.....	6 dosage units (street value \$180)
Money.....	\$98,391.00
Weapons.....	7
Drug Paraphernalia.....	512 Items

Special Events and Highlights

Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT):

Public Safety's SWAT team is comprised of 10 members and is responsible for hostage situations, barricaded persons, crisis negotiations, aggravated suicide attempts, high-risk building searches & arrest warrant services, sniper incidents, crowd control and other potential life threatening incidents which exceed the routine response of on-duty Public Safety personnel. During 2023, the SWAT team completed monthly specialized tactical training and conducted 5 call-out operations. These operations included a stand-off with an armed barricaded suspect with active warrants for arrest for possession of weapons of mass destruction as well as the execution of multiple high-risk warrant services of persons believed to be in the possession of narcotics and firearms. The SWAT team worked jointly with the Burke County Sheriff's Office SWAT team and Narcotics Task Force during multiple operations.



Community Services Division:

Community Services was part of over 100 special events, presentations, K9 Demos, and other community oriented activities throughout 2023 and it is anticipated to exceed that number in 2024.



"Coffee With A Cop" is a national event that focuses on connecting community members with Law Enforcement. In 2023, Public Safety hosted **6** events at businesses. The program continues to be well received by members in the community.



Public Safety's annual "Blue Elves" outreach event reached nearly **95** children in the city of Morganton, with assistance of over 40 volunteers made up of The Marine Corps League Toys for Tots, Morganton Housing Authority, Morganton-Burke Fraternal Order of Police, Morganton Recreation Department and other donors. These partnerships have allowed Public Safety to facilitate this event which includes toys, snacks and activities for youth and parents

Special Events and Highlights Continued

Explorers Program:



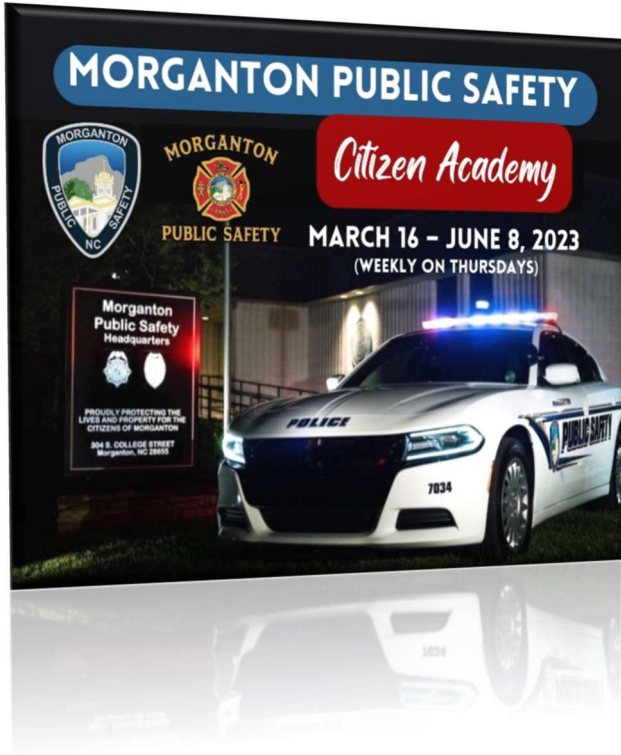
In 2023 Public Safety continued its Law Enforcement Explorers program which is a hands-on career-oriented program that gives youth from ages 14 to 21 years old the opportunity to explore careers in law enforcement and firefighting. We ended the year with **8** youth participating in the program. Explorers assisted our Community Services Division with community projects which included our annual Blue Elves toy giveaway, Spooky Meadows Haunted Trail, Historic Morganton Festival and Parades.

Fire Services:

Fire Prevention efforts included presentations to more than **5,402** citizens at **24** different events throughout the year totaling **105.5** contact-hours. Events were held at local elementary schools, recreation centers and community events. These events included information on fire prevention and life safety. We installed **100** smoke detectors, assisted hearing-impaired citizens with proper installation of smoke detectors and bed-shaker alarms. Performed **14** events assisting citizens on how to correctly install child car seats.



Special Events and Highlights Continued



Citizens Public Safety Academy

Citizens Public Safety Academy is a three month program for community members. The class meets weekly and discusses topics that are relevant to our agency. Each meeting includes: classroom instruction, hands-on activities and an invitation for the members to speak with public safety personnel and ask questions. The goal is for our community to have a better understanding of how Morganton Public Safety operates on a daily basis. At the end of 12 weeks, the participants attend a graduation banquet and receive a certificate of completion.

Safe Haven Camp

Safe Haven Summer Camp is an annual week-long camp hosted by Morganton Department of Public Safety. The Camp allows rising 6th grade students the opportunity to interact with Public Safety Personnel. During the camp we focus on instilling the fundamentals of being drug free, anti-bullying tactics and emphasize being an asset to the community. In 2023, 20 children participated in Safe Haven. Participants take part in a local service project, outdoor activities, emergency services presentations and a trip to a local amusement park. At the end of the week, the camp is brought to a close with a banquet for campers and their families.



Fund it Forward

Breast Cancer Awareness

Public Safety showed its support in the fight against breast cancer by designing and selling t-shirts and patches during October's *Breast Cancer Awareness Month*. We raised over \$1,400, which was donated to Blue Ridge Healthcare Foundation and will be used to help fund mammograms for those in need.



Autism Awareness

To show our support during *Autism Awareness Month* in April, Public Safety designed and sold patches. The autism patches raised \$1,500 in 2023 and the money was donated to North Liberty School to further their autism programs.