

**BLUFFTON
POLICE
DEPARTMENT
2019**

ANNUAL REPORT



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LETTER FROM THE CHIEF

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I would like to first thank you for taking the time to read the 2019 Bluffton Police Department annual report and being interested in how this department is serving the Bluffton community.

Each year, the Bluffton Police Department presents to the community its statistics from the year before and provides insight into how the department runs on a daily basis.

In this report, you will learn some history of the department and community, about its officers and civilian staff, how our divisions are run and what special programs we offer to our citizens.

It is important for the Bluffton community to understand who we are and why we police the way we do. I truly believe in a partnership between the police department and the community we serve. I am confident this type of engagement will ultimately make this community stronger and safer.

Thank you,

Chief Chris Chapmond

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to enforce the law and serve the community with professionalism and integrity; with an emphasis on community policing.

VISION

The Bluffton Police Department will strive to be a model agency noted for professional law enforcement service and community policing by adhering to our core values.

CORE VALUES

Professionalism
Respect
Accountability
Courage
Transparency
Integrity
Commitment
Effort

The Bluffton Police Department understands that Values are developed over time. We understand our officers must "PRACTICE" our values every day until they become our habits. The decisions we make on a regular basis are a reflection of our values. The Bluffton Police Department strives for excellence and high-character officers, therefore, we will ensure all officers adhere to, and "PRACTICE", our core values.



BY THE NUMBERS



23,097

\$7,270,955

57

16

7

10

1

64,635

1

4

10

124

43

194

195

1,251

3,058

168

855

409

Estimated Town Population

Department Budget

Sworn Officers
Civilian Employees
Chaplains
Volunteers
Reserve Officers

CALLS FOR SERVICE
Homicide
Forcible Rape
Robbery
Aggravated Assault
Burglary B&E
Larcey - Theft
Drug Violations

Traffic Collisions
Traffic Citations

Driving Under the Influence
Speeding Citations

Special Events

Internal Affairs:

- 2 officers investigated
- 2 cases sustained
- 2 officers resigned



INSIDE THE DEPARTMENT

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Officers with the department have been protecting and serving the people of Bluffton since 1903, when the town was one-square mile. Since its inception, the Bluffton Police Department (BPD) is committed to providing professional police services to residents, visitors, and businesses. Officers are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to protect the life and property within city limits. Police officers are required to maintain order, control, prevent crime, assure citizen safety, protect personal freedoms, and provide service support to the entire community. Certified Police Officers have the power and authority to arrest others, detain them in secure custody, conduct search of persons, places, and personal effects, and seize others' property as evidence of crime. With this level of responsibility, law enforcement agencies must be very thorough in their hiring practices. Due care must be taken to ensure applicants are both physically and mentally able to take on the job.



ACCREDITATION

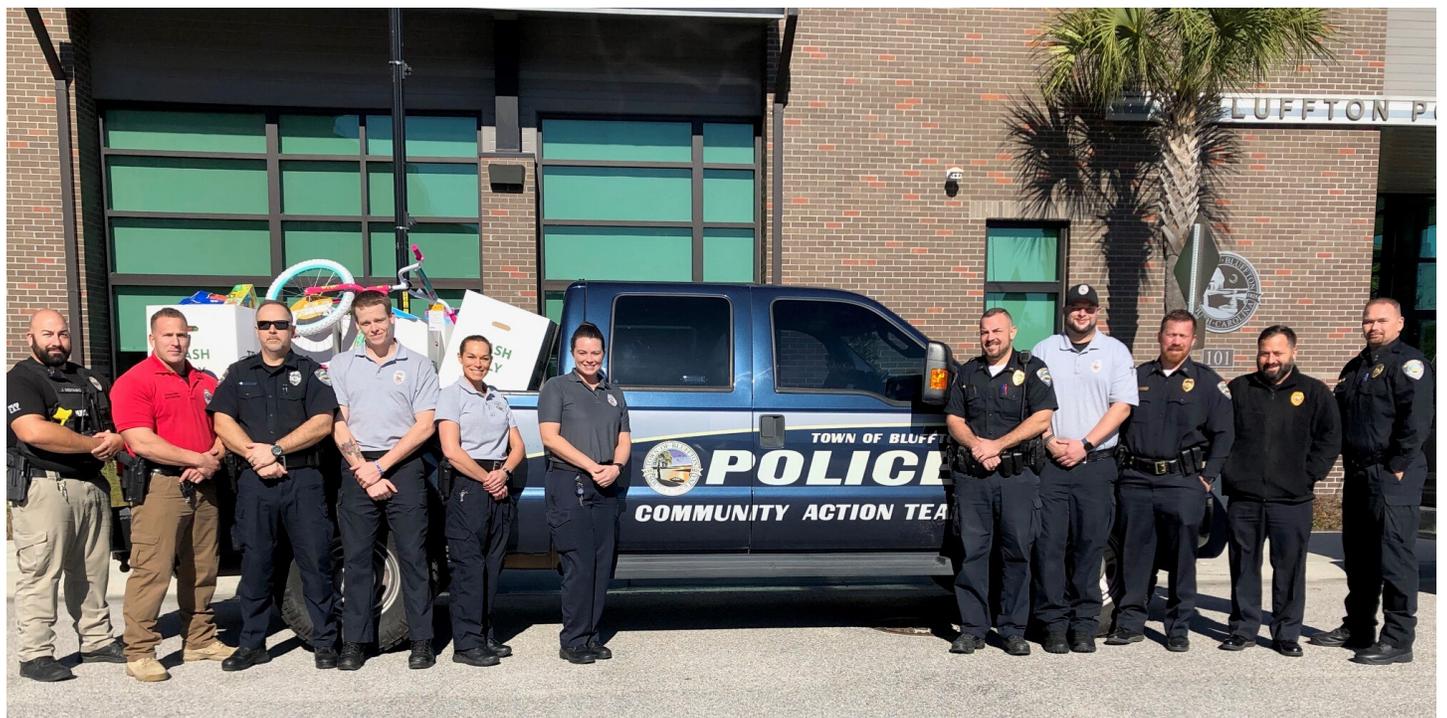
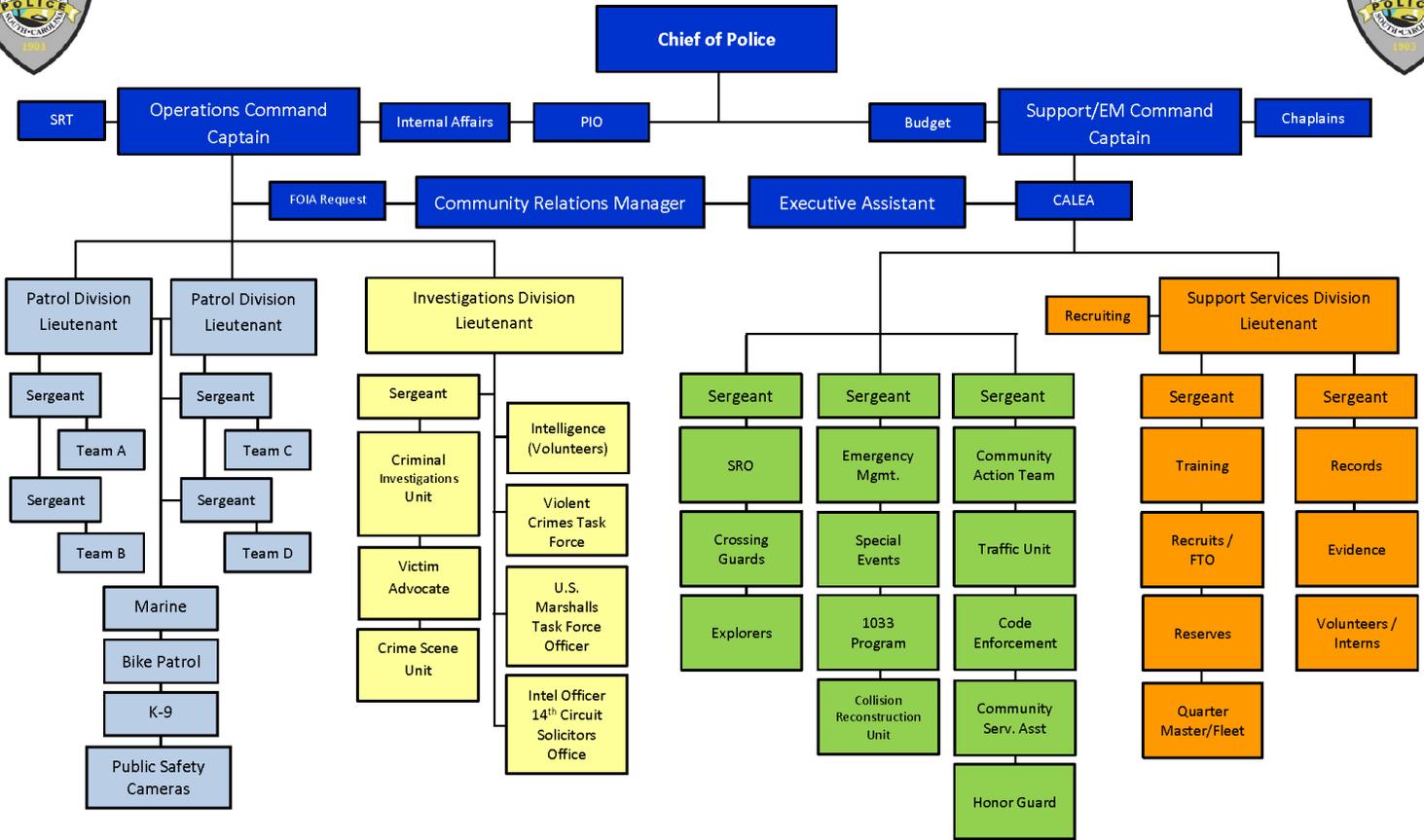
Accreditation is a large and important aspect of the Bluffton Police Department. The men and women of the department have worked very hard to become dual accredited with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies and the South Carolina Law Enforcement Accreditation Inc. We were first granted accreditation status at the 88th CALEA Conference in Raleigh, NC in 2009, and reaccredited in 2012, 2015 and 2018. The Bluffton Police Department is continually striving to meet the high expectations that CALEA and SCLEA set. To maintain accreditation status, a large amount of internal review takes place. The purpose of CALEA and the process law enforcement agencies go through to obtain the honor is to raise the professional standards of the agency. A great deal of research is required to prove the department has been following its Standard Operation Policy (SOP) each year. To prove this, each SOP must be closely reviewed and then documentation must show we have followed and correctly carried out each SOP. There is also an on-site visit made by CALEA professionals who will speak with various Bluffton Police Department officers, as well as other local law enforcement agencies, and most importantly these professionals will speak to the public to hear how well the police work with the community.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



BLUFFTON POLICE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



TOWN OF BLUFFTON

The town of Bluffton was established in 1825; incorporated in 1852 and adopted a Council-Manager form of government in 1999. The Council-Manager form of government consists of an elected Town Council, which is responsible for policy making, and a professional Town Manager, appointed by the council, who is responsible for administration. The Town Manager provides policy advice, directs the daily operations of town government, handles personnel functions and is responsible for preparing the budget. Town Council is comprised of a mayor and four council members who serve staggering four-year terms. Town Council members serve at-large, which enables all voters the opportunity to vote on a candidate for each seat. Town elections occur every two years. There are more than 130 employees who work for the Town of Bluffton, providing a wide range of services. There are 9 principal functional areas of the Town: Executive; Police; Public Information; Growth Management; Finance/Administration; Engineering; Human Resources; Municipal Court and the Don Ryan Center for Innovation.

2020 Fiscal Year Consolidated Budget - \$34,941,440



Councilman
Harry Lutz

Mayor Pro
Tempore
Larry Toomer

Mayor
Lisa Sulka

Councilman
Fred Hamilton

Councilman
Dan Wood



Town Manager
Marc Orlando

OPERATIONS

Operations is one of two main Divisions of the Police Department. It is led by Captain Joe Babkiewicz and is comprised of Patrol, Investigations, Internal Affairs, the Strategic Response Team and K9 Units.

The primary objective of Patrol is to provide prompt professional service to the Town of Bluffton's residents and visitors. Working with the community, Patrol officers strive to prevent and reduce crime through a problem solving partnership. Maintaining a 24 hour a day/ seven day a week presence, the Patrol Division is the most visible and recognizable part of the department. Officers cover 56-square miles of the Town and do so by being divided into four teams that work rotating shifts. While on shift the officers are divided into Patrol Grids. These grids divide the Town into workable areas for the officers. While patrolling, officers respond to all calls for service as dispatched by the Beaufort County Emergency Services Division. The calls can range from an alarm activation, parking complaint, reckless driver, shoplifting, runaway child, domestic dispute, traffic collisions, shots fired, and more.

Within Patrol, there are other branches where officers can serve to include, Bicycle Patrol which is used primarily during parades and events, and Marine Patrol utilized from May through September along the May River.



OPERATIONS

Criminal Investigations is directed by Lieutenant Kelly McCauley and consists of Investigations, the Crime Scene Unit, the Victims Advocate, the Beaufort County Violent Crimes Task Force, and Intelligence Analyst.

Detectives assigned to Investigations are proficient in the application of crime scene and forensic service practices, interview and interrogation techniques, and the use of a variety of resources to conduct thorough comprehensive investigations. The officers assigned to this unit work a 'regular' work schedule Monday thru Friday, however they are also placed on a rotating on-call status. This means when a major crime occurs in the middle of the night, Criminal Investigations Detectives are called out to assist in processing the scene and interviewing witness and suspects. Other officers who are part of the Crime Scene Unit are also called to a scene to collect evidence and assist the Detectives.

These detectives are tasked with conducting investigations into a variety of crimes including, but not limited to, violent crimes, property crimes, financial crimes, and crimes against children. It can take anywhere from two to 12 hours on an initial investigation, depending on the type of crime and the amount of evidence and witnesses available. Additional investigation can then extend for weeks or months as additional witnesses and evidence is located and analyzed, or as forensic results are received. Detectives with the Criminal Investigations Division investigated 259 cases in 2019

In the latter part of 2019, the Bluffton Police Department became partners with the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Career Criminal Task Force. This allows our investigators to work closely with prosecutors, other investigators and the Intel unit to focus on sending repeat offenders and the worst of the worst to prison.



OPERATIONS

The Violent Crimes Task Force is a partnership with the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office, Beaufort City Police Department, and Port Royal Police Department. They work together to collectively solve crimes and make arrests in various crimes committed across Beaufort County. Part of the responsibilities of this unit is to investigate drug activity within the Bluffton jurisdiction.



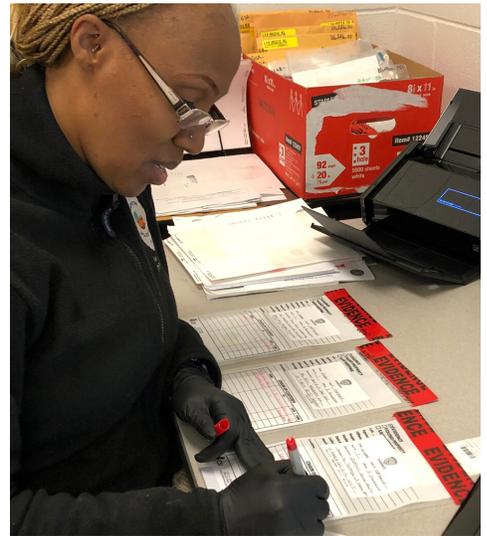
Crime is an unfortunate part of everyday life, and nobody suffers more than the victims. From handling the emotional aftereffects of a crime, to understanding courtroom procedures, to finding victim resources, the Bluffton Police Department's Victim Advocate can help guide victims and witnesses. Victims and witnesses to a crime have certain rights and are entitled to information

regarding expectations of the criminal justice system and what assistance is available as a result of the crime. Victims and witnesses are also entitled to certain rights within the criminal justice system, and for assistance from the State Attorney in asserting these rights.



SUPPORT SERVICES

The Support Services Division is led by Captain Scott Chandler. This Division is the least heard about but involves key units that make up most of the department. Some of these units you have heard of, others you probably haven't. Budget, Chaplains, Community Action Team, Community Service Assistants, Code Enforcement, Emergency Management, Fleet Management, Hiring and Recruiting, Records and Evidence, Reserve Officer Program, Training, School Resource Officers, School Crossing Guards, and Volunteers.



In 2019, the Emergency Operations Center, shown above, was activated once for Hurricane Dorian. The Emergency Management unit was in charge of all Police and Town Operations during the storm. In addition, Emergency Management educates the public throughout the year on different emergencies that could affect the area.

As far as the Records and Evidence unit, 1,285 pieces of evidence were processed in 2019. Evidence can be anything from a piece of paper or cigarette butt found at a crime scene, to a weapon or vehicle involved in the crime. The Evidence section has the overall mission to accept, catalog, safeguard, store, produce as required, and then dispose of all evidence and property that comes into the custody of the Bluffton Police Department. The Records section stores all police reports, forms and documents for the Department. It holds files pertaining to arrests, incidents, and accidents, and distributes these files in accordance with Department policy and federal guidelines, such as the Freedom of Information Act. In 2019, the Bluffton Police Department fulfilled 107 FOIA requests.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Six Officers are assigned to Bluffton schools. They are known as School Resource Officers. There is an officer in both high schools, two middle schools and one K-8 school. The sixth officer oversees the SROs and fills in when needed. In addition to the SROs, the department employs six part-time School Crossing Guards. These men and women are placed at schools to ensure the safety of the students who walk and ride their bikes to class.

In 2019, the department changed its hiring process. Applicants are now subject to a 12-step hiring process that begins with a list of automatic disqualifiers. These disqualifiers include illicit drug usage and misconduct issues. After this initial screening, applicants are invited to take the department's physical fitness and written tests. If applicants pass both the physical fitness and written tests, they are subjected to a law enforcement interview panel. The scores from the written test and the law enforcement panel are compiled to create a hiring eligibility list. Following an extensive background check, polygraph and medical exams, the applicant will be interviewed by Command Staff personnel. Applicants must be unanimously approved by the Command Staff board in order to be recommended for hire.



SUPPORT SERVICES

The Community Action Team is a unit made up of officers who focus on educating the community on various aspects of the department. The officers primarily visit schools, hospitals, businesses and various types of organizations like the local Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs.



There are currently two (2) Community Service Assistants. Both are most visible in the Old Town area and work out of the Bluffton Police Department sub station located on May River Road. They act as ambassadors for Old Town businesses and visitors, as well as assist uniformed officers with a variety of tasks.

The Traffic Team was created in 2016 after the department received a grant from the South Carolina Department of Public Safety totaling \$205,000. The grant allowed the department to hire two officers with the intent to decrease traffic collisions, decrease collisions with injury and decrease fatal collisions. The areas the Traffic Team targets are US Highway 278, Bluffton Parkway and SC Highway 170.

The Collision Reconstruction Unit is made up of officers who are called out to vehicle collisions that result in serious bodily harm or death. These officers are trained in calculating and determining the cause and who is at fault for these serious collisions.

The Town's one Code Enforcement Officer ensures all Town ordinances are followed. This position is a unique public servant whose responsibility lies between policy making and the realms of law enforcement and litigation.



SPECIAL TEAMS

Strategic Response Team - The Strategic Response Team (SRT) is a group of officers who are trained and called to assist in extreme situations where the Patrol Team isn't equipped to handle. They respond to call-outs like demonstrations, hostage situations, and barricaded subjects.

K9 Team - In 2019, The Bluffton Police Department had four K9s and handlers. Each is assigned to one of the four Patrol Teams. The K9s are crossed trained in narcotic detection, suspect apprehension, person tracking, and building searches. All four are German Shepherds that work and live with their handlers. Pictured to the top right is K9 Hunden and handler Sgt. Rodriguez. The department's other K9s are Teeko, Koda and Frankie. In December, Frankie retired. The department also has K9 Justice who is the department's mascot who attends events and visits the local schools. He also acts as a therapy dog to the officers.



Honor Guard - This group of volunteer officers was created to represent the Bluffton Police Department, the Town of Bluffton and its citizens at community functions. They are present at police funerals, parades, and other ceremonial occasions. It is our intention to assist officers and their families in time of need as well as show the pride and honor held by the Bluffton Police Department.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Bluffton Police Department's vision strives to be an agency noted for professional law enforcement service and community policing by adhering to our core values. Strong relationships of mutual trust between police agencies and the communities they serve are critical to maintaining public safety and effective policing. We strive each day to build trust with our citizens and therefore hope for trust in return. Here at the Bluffton Police Department we hold various events throughout the year to engage the public and let them see a different side of our officers. It's important the community speaks to and sees our officers outside of being given a speeding ticket or at their home during an emergency. These events, like Cookout with Cops, tours of the department, visits to schools, National Night Out and Bluffton Safety Day, are just a few examples.



PROGRAMS

AED Campaign - In the fall of 2015, the Bluffton Police Department partnered with the Arrhythmia Alliance and the Quance family to raise funds to place an automated external defibrillator in each patrol vehicle. This partnership was a result of 8-year-old Gavin Quance being pulled unconscious from a swimming pool in 2014. Since then, the department has been able to raise funds for 31 AEDs. This partnership continues today, hoping to raise more funds to purchase pediatric pads for each AED.

C.A.R.E. - The Community Assistance Response Efforts or CARE is an outreach program. The program is designed for disabled, homebound, or elderly residents to receive calls from department volunteers to check on their health and welfare. The volunteers call citizens, who have elected to participate in the program, several times a week to chat and check on their well-being. If volunteers are unable to make contact or if the volunteer detects a problem an officer is sent by the home to check on the individual.

CPA - The Citizen's Police Academy offers insight on how Bluffton Police conduct their job and why they make the decisions they do. Our CPA is a 10-week class that many have experienced since its inception in the fall of 2014. In 2019, twenty-four citizens took part and graduated from the class.

Explorer Program - This career-oriented program is a partnership between the police department and the Boys and Girls Club of Bluffton. It provides young adults the opportunity to explore a career in law enforcement by working with Bluffton Police Department officers. It consists of weekly classes over a five-month period. During the 2019 program, many of the department's officers provided time to teach the classes and offer their expertise. Each class typically consists of thirty students who receive hands-on experience in a variety of law enforcement areas.

Hispanic Hotline - The Hispanic Hotline is a resource for the Hispanic speaking community to voice concerns and problems. There are some parts of the Hispanic community in every Town, City and County who don't feel comfortable and safe to call the police. The hotline can be utilized as an anonymous tip line or it can be a resource for Hispanics who need immediate help and otherwise aren't able to call 9-1-1 because they can't speak English. The number to the Hispanic Hotline is 843.706.7806. Anyone calling and needing a response will receive help.

Town Toy Drive - It was December 2013 and a kind member of the Bluffton community dropped off an anonymous donation to our Police Department to buy less fortunate children Christmas presents. After that first anonymous donation, one of our officers felt it was important for the entire department to begin our own fundraising efforts each Christmas. The Annual Toy Drive began in 2014. Since then, the Bluffton Police Department has provided thousands of children toys for Christmas. The toy donations come from residents, businesses and officers themselves who choose to donate their own time and money towards helping the children of Bluffton. In 2019, more than 2,500 toys were collected by the department for Bluffton children.

DISTRACTED DRIVING CAMPAIGN

In the spring of 2019, the Town of Bluffton became the first municipality in the country to partner with the Lutzie 43 Foundation to educate the public on the dangers of distracted driving. Mike Lutzenkirchen, the founder and CEO of the Foundation came to Bluffton and shared his story with students at Bluffton and May River High Schools, USCB and during a joint press conference. His story involves losing his 23-year-old football star son, Phillip, in a car accident that involved the driver being impaired, distracted, and Phillip not wearing his seat belt. As a result of this tragedy in 2014, Mike started the 43 Key Seconds Campaign as part of the Foundation. The 43 Key Seconds Campaign is a simple way for all drivers, no matter the age, to conduct a driving safety checklist in the first 43 seconds they get into a vehicle. The checklist involves having a CLEAR HEAD, CLEAR HANDS, CLEAR EYES, AND CLICK IT. To help motorists remember to complete this checklist, there are keys and lanyards the Town made allowing a tangible symbol to hang in the car to remind the driver the importance of not driving distracted before turning the key. While Bluffton may be the first municipality to partner with the Lutzie 43 Foundation, we don't want to be the last.

Distracted Driving is a serious issue affecting all motorists, despite their age and experience behind the wheel. We want everyone to stay safe every time they are driving or riding in a vehicle. To do that we must work together to educate the public. Bluffton is proud to partner with the Lutzie 43 Foundation, and we hope our partnership will bring more awareness to others. We also hope one day, the Lutzie 43

logo will become the official symbol for Distracted Driving, just as the pink ribbon represents Breast Cancer.

Since the beginning of the Lutzie 43 program and the Town of Bluffton partnership, more than 2,000 students have heard directly from Mike Lutzenkirchen about his son. More than 4,000 students have been handed Lutzie 43 lanyards and checklist cards to place in their vehicles as a constant reminder. Police Officers have also handed out more than 800 cards promoting the Foundation and checklist to motorists they come in contact with. In addition, the Town has partnered with local businesses and municipalities to assist in educating and engaging the public on the dangers of Distracted Driving. Our largest partner is Peacock Auto Mall who has graciously helped create videos and spread the word of the campaign.



Bluffton Police Department

843-706-4550

Emergency:

9 - 1 - 1

Non-Emergency

843-524-2777

Crime Tip Line

843-706-4560

Hispanic Hotline

843-706-7806

101 Progressive Street

Bluffton, SC 29910

