

Bluffton Police Department



2018
Annual Report
Bluffton, South Carolina



LETTER FROM CHIEF

Dear Bluffton,

I would like to extend my gratitude to the citizens of Bluffton for their support and appreciation of the Bluffton Police Department. The officers of this department pride themselves on the philosophy of Committed to Community. Each day we serve you and protect you. It's an important job that I don't take lightly and strive to always serve you based on the core values of integrity, honesty, respect, professionalism and self-discipline.



In 2018, the Bluffton Police Department went through some transition of some officers leaving and some new faces coming on board, including myself. We currently have a staff of 53 sworn officers, 12 non-sworn positions, and more than a dozen volunteers. We are growing, just as Bluffton is growing. With growth, there are growing pains, but I am committed to Bluffton and want this department to be the best in South Carolina. To be the best, I need your help and support. Through a community-department partnership we can make great things happen.

On behalf of the entire Bluffton Police Department I want to thank you for your support and look forward to us all working together to make Bluffton even better than it already is.

Sincerely,

Chief Chris Chapmond



BLUFFTON POLICE

MISSION STATEMENT

"The mission of the Bluffton Police Department is to provide the highest quality of police services to our community and its visitors by promoting a safe environment through a police-citizen partnership, with an emphasis on mutual trust, honor, professionalism, and dedication to duty."

VISION

"Committed to Community."

VALUE

"We provide service with understanding, response with compassion, performance with integrity, and law enforcement with vision."





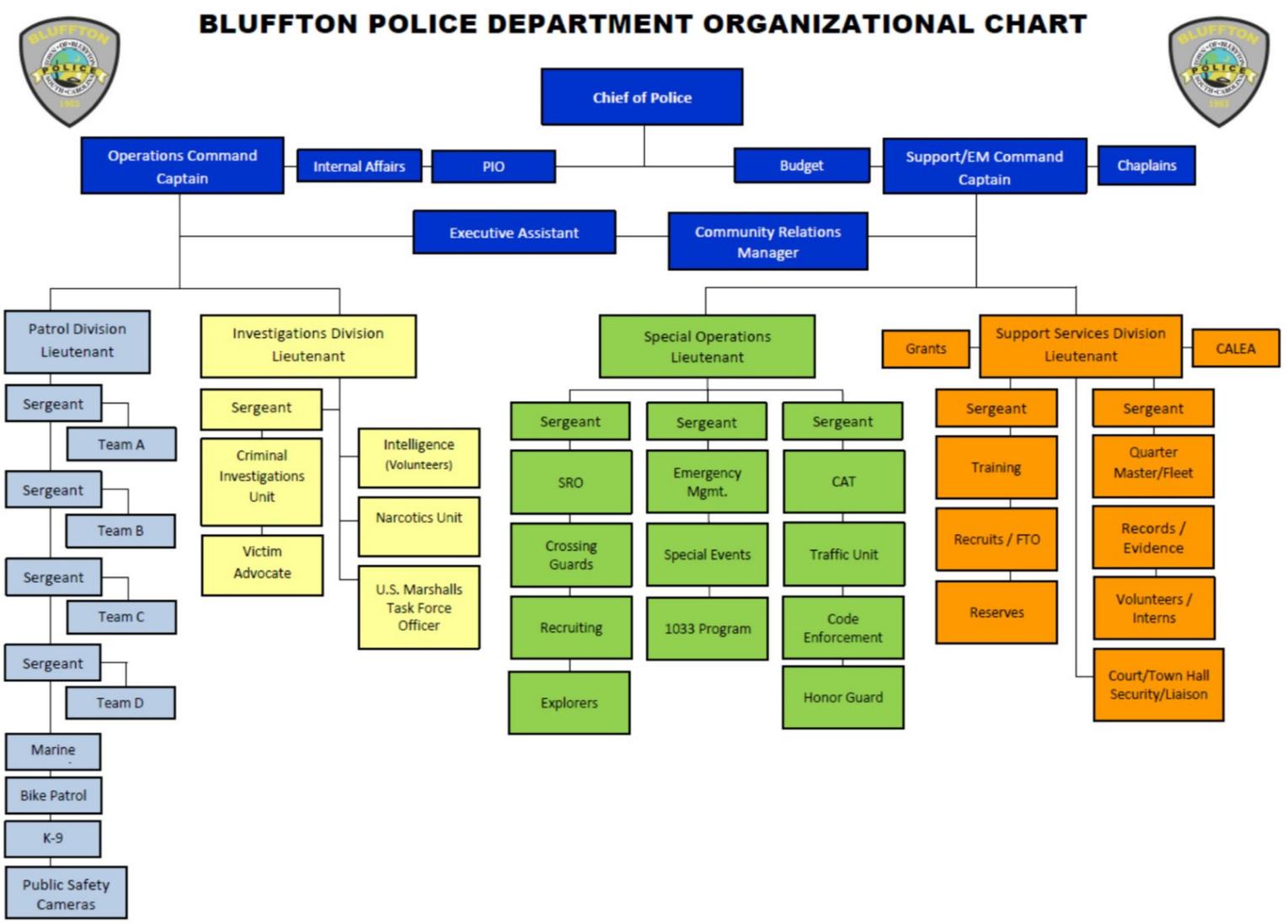
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ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

BLUFFTON POLICE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART





MAYOR AND COUNCIL



Town Manager Marc Orlando

Front row: (l-r) Mayor Lisa Sulka, Councilman Fred Hamilton, Councilman Dan Wood
Back row: (l-r) Mayor Pro Tempe Larry Toomer, Councilman Harry Lutz

The Town of Bluffton was incorporated in 1852 and adopted a Council-Manager form of government in 1999. Town Council is responsible for policy making and is responsible for appointing the Town Manager. The Town Manager provides policy advice, directs the daily operations of town government, handles personnel functions, and is responsible for preparing the budget.

In July 2018, Town Council adopted a \$32.8 million consolidated annual budget.



COMMAND STAFF



**Chief Chris
Chapmond**



**Lieutenant
Joe George
Patrol**



**Captain Joe
Babkiewicz
Operations
Commander**



**Lieutenant
Kelly
McCauley
Investigations**



**Captain Scott
Chandler
Support Division
Commander**



**Joy Nelson
Community
Relations
Manager**



**Lieutenant
Christian
Gonzales
Support
Services**



**Dana Smith
Executive
Assistant**



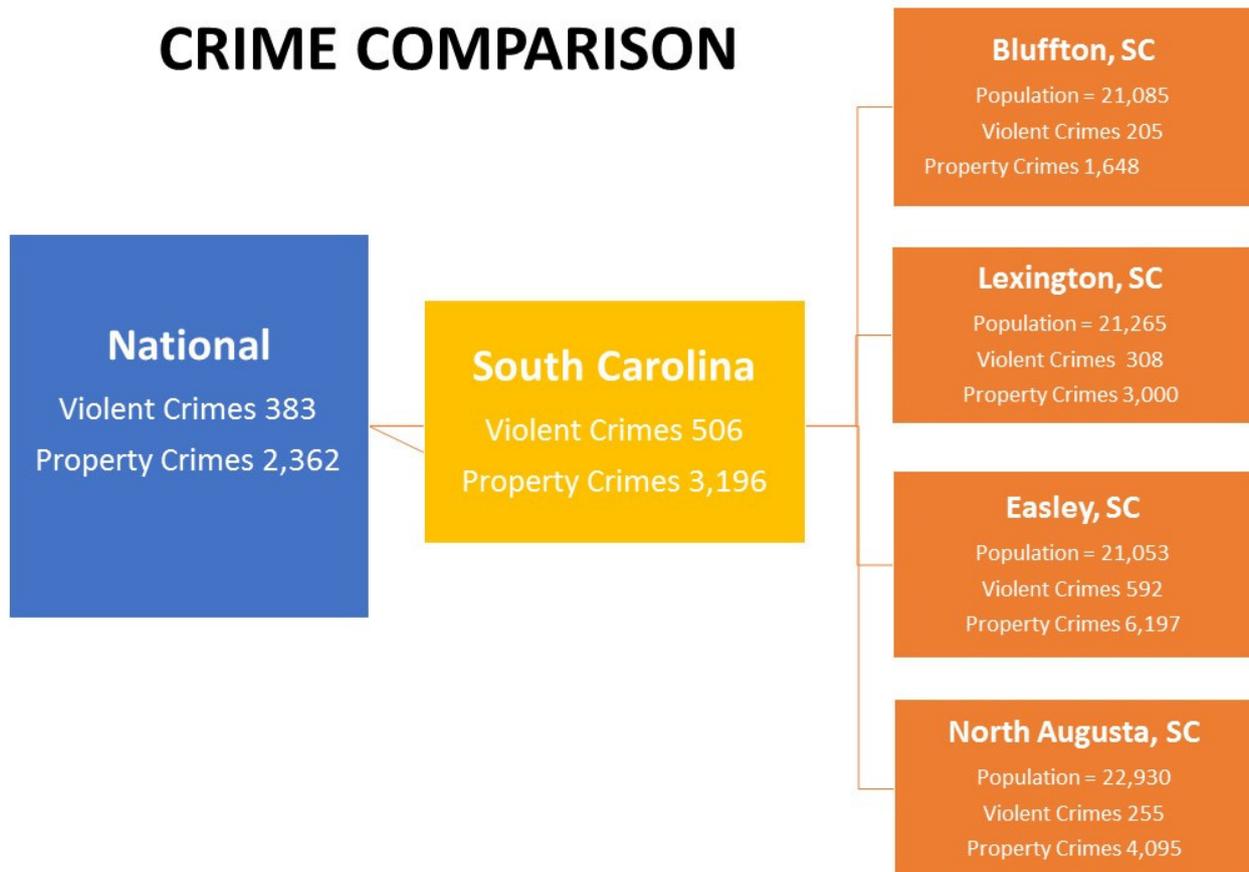
DEPARTMENT BY THE NUMBERS

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Officers | 53 |
| Civilians | 12 |
| Budget | \$6.5M |
| Bluffton population (estimated) | 21,085 |
| | |
| Calls for Service | 48,905 |
| Murders | 1 |
| Burglaries | 25 |
| Aggravated Assaults | 38 |
| Larceny Theft | 205 |
| Vandalism | 76 |
| Drug Violations | 372 |
| | |
| Traffic Collisions | 1,238 |
| Traffic Citations | 4,520 |
| Speeding Tickets | 1,503 |
| Driving Under the Influence | 218 |
| | |
| Internal Affairs | 4 Investigations involving 6 officers |
| | - 3 officers sustained |
| | - 2 officers exonerated |
| | - 1 officer not sustained |
| | |
| Special Events | 341 |
| Officer Extra Duty Assignments | 456 |



DEPARTMENT BY THE NUMBERS

CRIME COMPARISON



The data has been arranged to find the gross total of reported crimes and the number of crimes reported per 100,000 people. The rate of crime in Bluffton, SC averages 50% lower than the rest of South Carolina while the rate of crime on a national scale is 33% lower. The occurrence of violent crime in Bluffton, SC is 60% lower than the average rate of crime in South Carolina and 47% lower than the rest of the nation. Crime involving property stands 48% lower than the remainder of the state of South Carolina and 30% lower than the nation's average.

- AreaVibes.com & Niche.com



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community Involvement for the Bluffton Police Department is very important and necessary. If the police officers don't know who they are protecting, how can they serve the community? It isn't a police policy to be involved and know those who live, work, and live in Bluffton. It's a mind frame of how to efficiently and effectively police Bluffton.

**“Alone, we can do so little;
together, we can do so much”
– Helen Keller.**





DEPARTMENT 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 re-accredited 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. Each CALEA accreditation has a duration of three years.

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 conducted 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.



DEPARTMENT CAPTAINS



Captain Joe Babkiewicz is the Commander over Bluffton Police Department Operations. He oversees the day-to-day duties of all officers in Patrol and Investigations to ensure compliance with the Department policies. He also investigates accusations of misconduct of all department employees. Captain Babkiewicz is the primary spokesman to all media, and is the acting Chief in the absence of Chief Chapmond.



Captain Scott Chander is the Commander over the Bluffton Police Department Support Division and Special Operations. This includes several important functions of the department to include the budget, Emergency Management, Records and Evidence, Community Events, School Resource Officers, Training, and the numerous specialized units within the department.

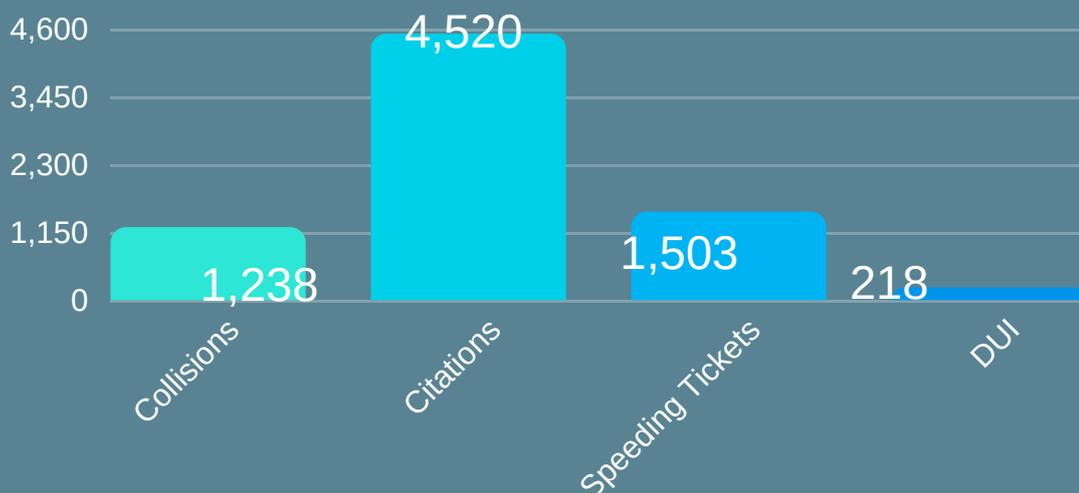


PATROL

The Patrol Division is made up of one (1) Lieutenant, five (5) Sergeants, and twenty-one (21) officers. It is led by Lieutenant Joe George.

The Division has four Teams of officers that work 12-hour shifts and is known as the backbone of the department. The officers rotate between day-shift and night-shift every 28 days. During a shift, the officers patrol throughout the Town limits answering a variety of calls to include: shootings, burglaries, domestic violence, drug use, missing persons, injured animals, and traffic collisions. In 2018, the Patrol Team responded to 48,905 calls for service. This number includes all emergencies and non-emergencies officers are dispatched.

Within the Patrol Division, there are several specialized units to include the Traffic Team, Collision Reconstruction Unit, Bicycle and Marine Patrol, the Strategic Response Team, the Community Action Team and the K9 Team.



The Marine and Bicycle Patrol are units used when necessary. The Marine Unit is utilized each weekend along the May River from May through September to provide law enforcement, search and rescue, public health and marine security for boaters and fishermen. The department has two bicycle patrol units that are used primarily during special events, festivals and parades allowing officers to maneuver easier through large crowds.



The Bluffton Police Department has 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. Below, pictured from left to right are Officer Rodriguez and K9 Hunden, Officer DeLong and K9 Teeko, Officer DeCrane and K9 Frankiie and Officer Grant and K9 Koda. In 2018, Bluffton Police K9s conducted 130 traffic and drug searches, 36 search and rescues, 29 school searches, attended 19 community relation events, and assisted other agencies, at their request, for 12 incidents.



Another part of Patrol, vital to every day law enforcement, are the 62 Safety Cameras situated around Bluffton. These cameras allow officers to retrieve information important to traffic collisions and various investigations.



INVESTIGATIONS



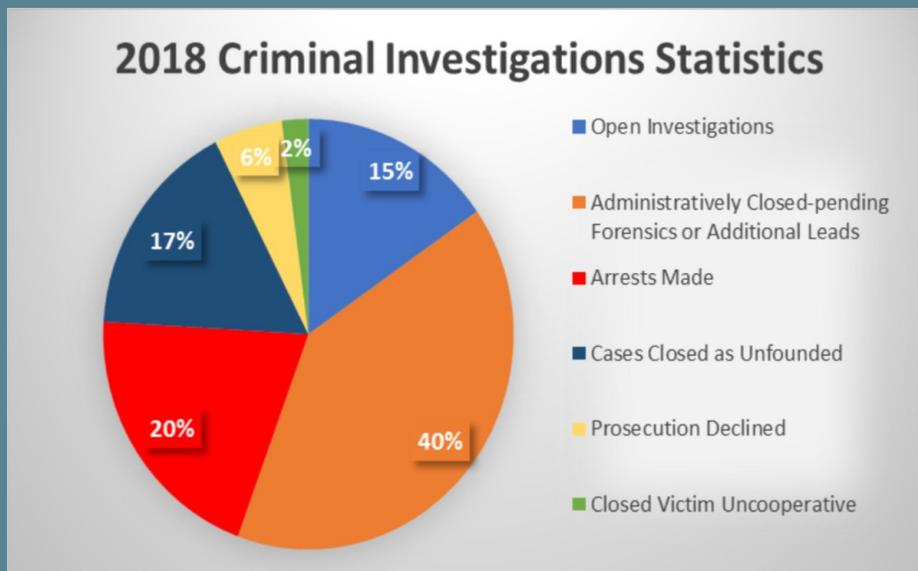
The Investigations Division is led by Lieutenant Kelly McCauley. She oversees one Sergeant, four officers, and one civilian employee. The Division is made up of Criminal Investigations, the Narcotics Unit, and the Victim Advocate.

The Criminal Investigations Team (CID) is made up of one Sergeant and two Investigators. They respond to various calls and

investigate a wide variety of crimes from domestic violence, robberies, and murders. While these investigators provide most of their time to felony crimes against persons, they do investigate criminal acts involving the loss of, or damage to, property such as burglary, arson and larceny. In addition, investigators with CID also act as a liaison with representatives from federal, state, other municipal agencies, and exchanges information concerning known criminals and criminal activity. They also coordinate information with the Fourteenth Circuit Solicitor's Office for upcoming court cases.

The Narcotics Unit develops intelligence relative to narcotics and gang activity within the Town. They develop informants, execute search warrants, make arrests, and initiate counteractive measures to combat illegal activity. The Victim Advocate

assists victims of crimes with information, emotional support, finding resources, filling out paperwork and often times will attend court with the victims to help them through the process.





SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Special Operations consists of numerous teams within the department who specialize in various areas of law enforcement. It is led by one (1) Lieutenant and three (3) Sergeants.

Emergency Management is a large part of Special Operations that has the purpose to prepare, respond, mitigate, and coordinate recovery to any Town of Bluffton natural disaster or incident. In 2018, the Emergency Operations Center was erected for a January snow storm, and hurricanes that threatened the area in September and October. Prior to the beginning of hurricane season, Emergency Management offered classes to the public and other Town employees on how to best prepare family and property if a hurricane were to strike Bluffton.

Special Events is also a key component of Special Operations. In 2018, there were 86 community events that occurred in the Town of Bluffton. This coordination involves issuing permits, drafting security plans, and communication between private and public sectors. Signature annual Bluffton events that must be planned through the Special Events coordinator are MayFest, Arts and Seafood Festival, Christmas Parade, and Farmer's Market, just to name a few. The Special Events Coordinator also manages the rental of the Town owned Rotary Community Center in Oscar Frazier Park and Oyster Factory Park. Both of these facilities were rented for 255 events throughout 2018.



The Community Action Team (CAT) is the newest addition to the department. It was created in May 2018 and consists of one Sergeant and two Officers. It is their mission, using community-oriented policing methods, to solve law enforcement problems that arise in Bluffton neighborhoods, businesses or schools. However, the C.A.T. program is far more than a mere extension of law enforcement. These officers attend community meetings, and gather information that can be taken to the other divisions of the police department, so that they too can function in the best interests of the Bluffton residents. C.A.T. members, through constant, reliable participation in community activities become well known to community leaders, civic and religious groups, and other neighborhood organizations. They become a trusted, dependable advocate for their community. The goal of the entire C.A.T. program is to give law enforcement its most powerful tool - unity with the community that we serve.



The Traffic Team is made up of officers funded through a South Carolina Department of Public Safety grant. It allows the officers to concentrate their entire 12-hour shift to enforcing traffic laws. In 2018, through pro-active traffic enforcement and safety checkpoints, the Traffic Team and Patrol units issued 218 DUI arrests or citations. The Collision Reconstruction Unit (CRU), which is part of the Traffic Team, was created in 2016. It consists of officers who investigate crashes that occur when death or serious injury are involved. These officers have undergone extensive training in areas to include, identify, collect and analyze tire marks, pavements scarring, vehicle damage and debris patterns. In 2018, CRU investigated six collisions. Of those, there were three serious injuries and 2 deaths.



The School Resource Officers are made up of one Sergeant and five officers. The SROs are located in three middle schools and two high schools in Bluffton. They provide safety on school campuses, but also allow an option for students to speak to if they don't feel comfortable going to a teacher or administrator. While each middle and high school has a SRO, there are also six School Crossing Guards that are paid part-time employees of the police department. The Crossing Guards ensure the safety of students who walk or ride their bike to and from school.



Recruitment is a very important aspect of Special Operations and the future of the department. In 2018, the department attended job fairs, produced a recruiting video that was placed on all social media sites and websites, and held its first Open House in which interested candidates were able to tour the department and speak with other officers.

The Strategic Response Team (SRT) is made up of six officers who are called to assist extreme situations the Patrol Team isn't equipped to handle. They respond to call-outs like demonstrations, hostage situations, and barricaded subjects. These officers train monthly with other local law enforcement departments with similar units.





SUPPORT SERVICES

Support Services is vital to the department due to it overseeing the department's budget and evidence. Other key components of the division include the department's records, Training, Quartermaster/Fleet, Court and Town Council security, Chaplains, and Volunteers. Lieutenant Christian Gonzales leads Support Services.

Over the last 12 months, 796 items have been logged into Evidence. Majority of those items were drugs. A total of 461 drugs were processed and entered into Evidence and 52 firearms were recovered by police and also entered in to Evidence. We do process some evidence in our own lab, but we also utilize the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office lab, the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office digital forensics lab and the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) lab in Columbia, SC. The partnership with these other agencies is paramount when solving cases.



Training is an ongoing aspect of law enforcement. It's important to learn new techniques, while becoming more proficient with skills already known. In 2018, Bluffton Officers conducted a total of 3,560 hours of training. This number includes classes they attended here in Bluffton or outside of the immediate area.

Court and Town Council security is a weekly and bi-weekly responsibility of officers to keep Council members and those attending Court safe. Each person attending a Town Council meeting or attending court proceedings will have to undergo a search of all bags and purses. Officers additionally use a search wand on individuals as they enter Council meetings or the Court room.



Currently, the department has eight Chaplains who are from different local churches. They respond to accidents to console victims or family members of victims. They also provide officers with appropriate assistance, advice, comfort and counsel.



Our volunteers are also a large part of the Bluffton Police Department. Currently, there are 12 volunteers who provide their time weekly to assist with various tasks at the department. The hours they give up from their daily lives to dedicate to this department and community are valuable and very much appreciated.

The last part of Support Services includes the Quartermaster who is over all department vehicles and uniforms. This is a huge task to ensure the police fleet is up to date, and the officers are dressed according to the department's standard operating procedures.





SPECIAL PROGRAMS & EVENTS



C.A.R.E. Program - The Community Assistance Response Efforts is an outreach program in which Bluffton Police volunteers call disabled or homebound community members to check on their welfare.



Citizens Police Academy - Since 2014, the Bluffton Police Department has offered this 11-week course that takes members of the public behind the scenes for an in-depth look into being a law enforcement officer. Thirty students graduated from the class in October 2018.



Explorer Program - This program allows youth, who have an interest in law enforcement, take part in a rigorous weekly class over a five-month period. It gives the cadets an inside look into all aspects of law enforcement and how they can pursue a career as an officer.



Hispanic Hotline - This unique resource is a way the Hispanic community can communicate with police and request help, even if they aren't able to speak English. It allows the Spanish speaking community members to call and leave a message if they need help.



Cookout with Cops - Every other month, the officers take their grill, hot dogs, and drinks to a different neighborhood to talk with neighbors and citizens on topics they need assistance with.



SPECIAL PROGRAMS & EVENTS



Bluffton Safety Day - This event is held in May of each year to promote boat and summer safety. Many of those living in Bluffton enjoy the local waterways. While we want this to continue, we also want everyone to be safe. This event allows the police to partner with other local law enforcement to educate and make the public aware while on the water.



National Night Out - This is an annual event that allows the officers to thank the community for their constant support. It also allows the public to meet, speak, and laugh with officers outside a police setting. The police partner with the Fire Department, local businesses and local non-profit organizations to provide a night of food, fun, and facts.



Shop with a Cop - 2018 was the first year for this event. Money was raised to take a few selected children from local schools holiday shopping with officers.



Toy Drive - Each year, the police department collects toys that are given to local Bluffton families in need. Between the partnership we have with Bluffton Self Help and the generosity of Bluffton residents, thousands of children have benefited from this program since it began in 2014.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS



5th Safest City in SC - According to Safewise, a research company finding people the best home security, announced Bluffton as South Carolina's 2018 5th Safest City. They acquired this ranking by looking at FBI crime statistics. Based on those statistics they then ranked the top 20 safest cities in South Carolina.



New Hiring process - The Bluffton Police has high standards of who wears a badge. In order to recruit and acquire outstanding candidates, the department changed how it hires from the outside and promotes within. There is now an automatic disqualifier list, as well as an agility test all candidates must pass,



Distracted Driving Campaign - The Distracted Driving Campaign is a proactive and ongoing educational tool the police department created to make the public aware of how dangerous and deadly distracted driving can be. Campaign elements include: placement of signs around Bluffton, media interviews, social media posts, and video displays.



Captain Scott Chandler - In December 2018, Captain Scott Chandler was promoted from Patrol Lieutenant to Captain overseeing the Support Services Division. He also graduated from the very competitive and prestigious FBI National Academy Associates (FBINAA).



Master Police Officer Jake Higgins was named the 2018 Bluffton Police Officer of the Year. He was given this honor based on several qualities Officer Higgins embodies. He cares about the people in this community, he is a team player, and is always looking at ways to improve himself.



CRASE class - Chief Chapmond began teaching the Citizen Response to Active Shooter Events class to teachers in local schools, churches and hosting the class at the Police Department. It teaches citizens how to be more aware of their surroundings and how to handle an active shooter situation.

PHONE DIRECTORY

Bluffton Police Department

843-706-4550

Emergency

9-1-1

Non-Emergency

843-524-2777

Crime Tip Line

843-706-4560

Hispanic Holtine

843-706-7806