

2022

# ANNUAL REPORT

BLOUNT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



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Sheriff Berrong



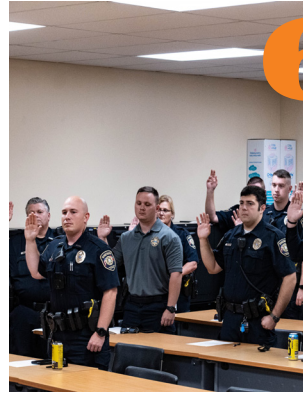
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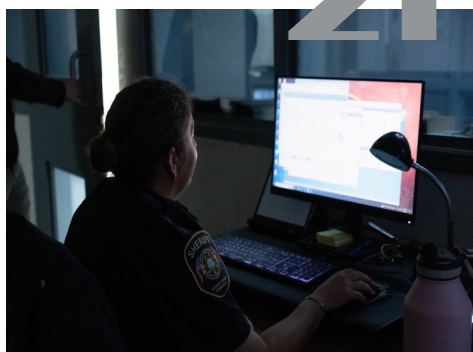
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# Sheriff's Message



## Mission Statement

*The men and women of the Blount County Sheriff's Office are committed to providing law enforcement, corrections, and criminal justice services through a partnership with the community that builds trust, reduces crime, creates a safe environment, and enhances the quality of life.*

It is with pride that we present to you our 2022 annual report. This is a story of our accomplishments and a record of our activity throughout the year.

Every law enforcement agency has a story to tell, especially following the unforgettable year two-thousand and twenty, and we are no different. However, aside from a few glitches along the way, I am happy to report that we are continuing to rebound from everything that memorable year dumped on us. Like many law enforcement agencies, we continue to struggle to keep positions filled. Some deputies are leaving to enter new professions, while others are taking better paying positions at other agencies. In 2022, Blount County Government contracted with an organization to study our pay scale as well as the job tasks of our employees to determine if they are receiving fair pay compared to other law enforcement officers in East Tennessee. Though we are awaiting final results of the study, regardless of the outcome, my number one goal in 2023 is to assure our deputies are paid fairly for the difficult and taxing work they perform.

Blount County is thriving. Regardless of how you feel about growth, one look around our county seat, Maryville, as well as the rest of our area, and you can see we are not hurting for business. I trust our local government leaders to control the growth in our area while continuing to attract businesses that are good for Blount County. There are plenty of good paying jobs available in our county for anyone who wants to work.

Our investigators assigned to the Fifth Judicial Drug & Violent Crime Task Force continue to work toward quashing the bad actors who attempt to bring deadly illegal drugs into our community. Heroin and fentanyl are still a problem, but county-wide, overdoses and related deaths declined in 2022. Overall, overdoses decreased 34.26% from 397 in 2021 to 261 in 2022. Deaths decreased as well, with 64 in 2021 compared to 52 in 2022. Investigators are working with the TBI and federal agencies and are focused on cutting off the flow of these illegal drugs before they reach the hands of our citizens. In early 2023, the TBI created the *313 Initiative* as a way to stop drug trafficking between Detroit and East Tennessee. Early reports and multiple arrests indicate this initiative is working, so hopefully I can share more good news about this in our 2023 annual report.

I am blessed beyond measure that you, our CITIZENS, allow me to continue serving YOU. My deputies and I will continue to put forth our best to protect and serve you. Best wishes and God Bless!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James LaBennett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



# BCSO - A Brief History

We've come a long way from horseback, gallows for hangings, and stocks and pillories for discipline on the Courthouse Square. From our humble beginnings in 1795, the BCSO has developed into an internationally accredited agency with 350 law enforcement professionals.

Blount County's first Sheriff, Littlepage Sims, was born in Virginia and fought in the Battle of Kings Mountain (South Carolina) in the American Revolution. Littlepage was appointed in 1795 by Gov. William Blount. He was also brother-in-law to Gen. John Sevier.

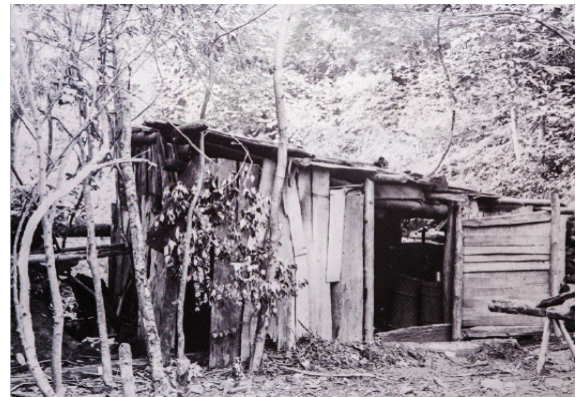
The first jail was built along Pistol Creek. In 1807 a two-story jail was built on McCammon Avenue. Since then, the Sheriff's Office has resided in four other locations, including the Courthouse. In 1999, the Blount County Justice Center opened, built on land that was once the site of a Coca-Cola plant. The Justice Center is 169,000 square feet and is also the home to the District Attorney General, Court Clerk, and Clerk & Master.

Other notable individuals have served as Blount County's Sheriff. Gen. William Wallace served from 1820-1842. Gen. Wallace served in the U.S. Army during the War of 1812. Two deputies served under Gen. Wallace. His wife, Mary Houston, was the sister of Sam Houston (*"Remember the Alamo!"*) who served as governor of both Tennessee and Texas. Wallace is Blount County's second longest running Sheriff, second only to current Sheriff, James Lee Berrong.

From our early beginnings in 1795, the Blount County Sheriff's Office has faithfully and proudly served the community without disruption.



Blount County Courthouse, located on the northwest corner of Main Street (Broadway). The building was destroyed by fire in 1906.



One of the many moonshine houses located in Blount County. Long before prohibition, brewing corn whiskey was a profitable way for farmers to market their own crop, and easier to transport than bags of shelled corn.

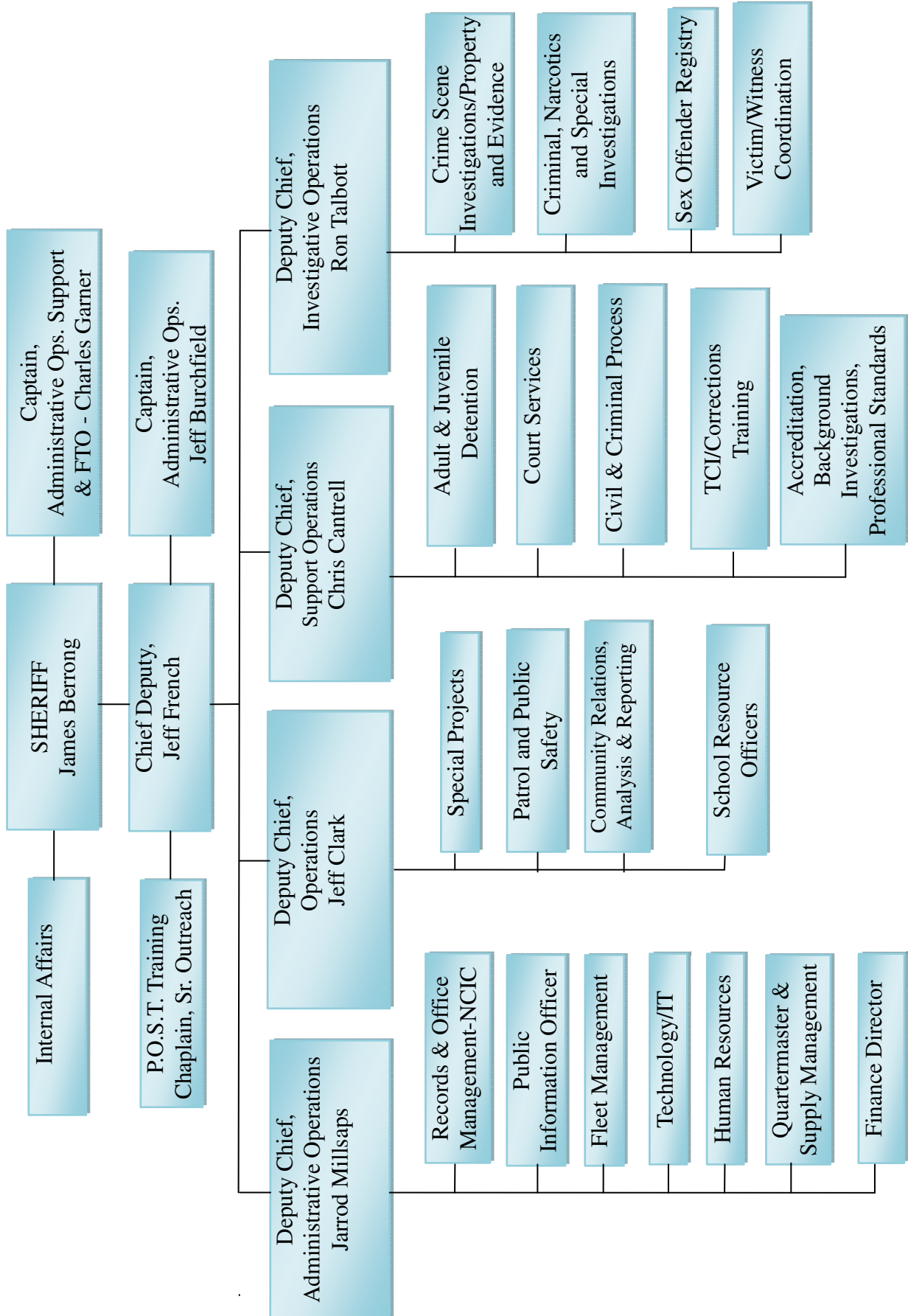


A badge worn by a supervisor of the Blount County Sheriff's Office, in use during the late 1960s/early 1970s. There are several stories regarding the origin of the five-pointed star. Historically, a five-pointed star supposedly held magical powers that deflected evil. Another story is that it denoted authority and was seen as a symbol of protection in the early American colonies and also conveyed a sense of justice to the people. Five-pointed stars were prominent in western states, as officers would make their badges from tin cans and other metals.



# Command Structure

## BLOUNT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE ORGANIZATION CHART – January 1, 2022





# Command Staff

Chris Cantrell  
Deputy Chief - Support Operations



James Lee Berrong  
Sheriff



Ron Talbott  
Deputy Chief - Investigations



Jarrold Millsaps  
Deputy Chief - Administration



Jeff French  
Chief Deputy



Jeff Clark  
Deputy Chief - Operations



Capt. Jeff Burchfield  
Administration



Capt. Lee Slagle  
Juvenile Corrections



Capt. Charles Garner  
Administration



Keith Hackney, Director  
Technology



Capt. Keith Gregory  
Adult Corrections



Capt. James Yrentham  
Investigations



Pam Comer, Manager  
Records





# Honors & Commendations



## 2022 Employee of the Year - Corporal Joe Dudley

Cpl. Joe Dudley was named Employee of the Year during the Employee Appreciation Lunch on December 16, 2022. Cpl. Dudley received the honor due to his efforts in gaining accreditation for the corrections facility through TCI (Tennessee Corrections Institute). The Sheriff's Office was one of just two correctional facilities in Tennessee to receive this accreditation in 2022. In addition, Cpl. Dudley navigated the facility through five audits and inspections in 2022. Cpl. Dudley is a valued employee of the Sheriff's Office and we are proud of him!

## 2022 Employees of the Month

**January** - Deputy Jerry Traxler, Deputy John Morton, Deputy Joey Hartline, Deputy Susie Stevens, Investigator David Henderson

**February** - Deputy Mandy Eggers

**March** - No selection

**April** - Sgt. Dustin Burger

**May** - Deputy Drew Clanton Williams, Deputy Jeff Ledford

**June** - Deputy Natalie McMurray

**July** - No selection

**August** - Deputy Owen Solmen, Deputy Garrett Rolhfs

**September** - Kelly Wheeler

**October** - Deputy Patrick York

**November** - Investigator Magahn Mattocks

**December** - Cpl. Joe Dudley

### Lifesaving Commendations

Deputy John Crabtree  
Deputy Gillis Rhodes  
Deputy Devin Teaster  
Deputy Ryan Olive  
Deputy Ryan Bumbalough  
Deputy Jole Payne  
James Thomas  
Denny Garner

### Law Enforcement Commendation

Officer Jason Russell,  
Townsend Police Department

### Citizen Service Award

Mr. Rose Sherwood  
Mr. Landen Conner



# Programs & Services

## Records Management

The Sheriff's Office Records Unit processes thousands of documents annually. In addition to providing prompt and courteous service to citizens, the Records staff maintains and archives thousands of records and documents for the Sheriff's Office. Records handles the distribution of background checks, tow slips, and incident reports to the public. Clerks are also responsible for establishing and maintaining personnel records, payroll, purchasing, accounts payable and receivable, as well as coordinating employee travel to conferences and training. Clerks complete all the requirements for expungements and other paperwork from the courts. In addition, they update and maintain documentation related to all controllable and fixed assets, as well as employee-issued phones.

Records staff must also comply with annual audits through TBI, FBI, Department of Children's Services, and the Tennessee State Comptroller's Office. The Records Office is responsible for processing and ensuring data integrity of all incident reports generated at the Sheriff's Office. Data Entry Clerks who are certified through TIBRS (Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System) must prepare and submit incident data weekly to comply with certification requirements. Data Entry Clerks who are Basic NCIC (National Crime Information Center) Certified are required to validate records, enter stolen items, missing persons, and warrants. The office also coordinates and maintains NCIC Query and Basic certification of all employees.

Many times, the Records Office acts as the liaison between the public and the rest of the Sheriff's Office employees. The clerks provide answers to many of the public's questions via telephone, email, and in-person at our window. It is the goal of the Records Office to provide as much assistance as possible to both the public and employees.



## Child Safety Seat Installations

The Sheriff's Office partners with the Tennessee Highway Safety Office and the Blount County Fire Department to certify some deputies as child safety seat installers. In August 2022, the Sheriff's Office resumed child safety seat clinics, hosting four clinics in 2022.

## Human Resources

Human Resources oversees the hiring of personnel. Job candidates are vigorously vetted, including an extensive background investigation, criminal records check, previous employment, psychological and medical exams, and a drug screen. The Sheriff's Office recruits prospective applicants from area high schools, colleges and universities, job fairs, social media, and by word of mouth.

The Sheriff's Office is always looking for the best and brightest candidates, and we actively seek female and minority applicants.

To apply for the position of deputy sheriff, go to [www.bcsco.com](http://www.bcsco.com) and click on the Employment tab from the home page.

# Community Outreach & School Resource Officers

## Explorer Post

The Sheriff's Explorer program is open to high school students who are currently enrolled in a Criminal Justice program in high school and who are interested in a career in law enforcement. Explorers meet monthly and learn about different aspects of the Sheriff's Office and law enforcement. Explorers assist the Sheriff's Office with parades, festivals, and community events. Many current and past deputies started out as Explorers before working full-time.

## Office of Public Information

The PIO serves as the agency's spokesperson and acts as the liaison between the Sheriff's Office and the media. The PIO coordinates media interviews and press conferences and provides information to the media. The PIO also produces agency publications, media releases, maintains social media sites, and photographs events.



Explorers receive certification in **STOP THE BLEED**, a grassroots national awareness campaign that encourages bystanders to become trained, equipped, and empowered to help in a bleeding emergency before professional help arrives.

## Chaplain Corps

All chaplains receive accreditation through the International Association of Police Chaplains (IACP). Chaplains assist with death notifications, suicides, grief counseling, and victims of domestic violence. Chaplains work under a strict code of confidentiality. In 2022, chaplains responded to 37 calls for service.

## RAD Training

The Sheriff's Office offers RAD - Rape Aggression Defense System, a program of realistic self-defense tactics and techniques for women that begins with awareness, prevention, risk reduction and avoidance, while progressing on to the basics of hands-on defense training. The courses are taught by certified instructors over a period of 12 hours, usually consisting of three hours over four evenings. Classes are open to women ages 13 and up. Class sessions are announced by way of our Facebook page.



## Citizens Academy

Since its inception in the 1990s, hundreds of Blount County citizens have taken part in the Sheriff's Citizens Academy classes which are normally held in the spring. Citizens Academy allows individuals to experience aspects of the Sheriff's Office and see for themselves the day-to-day operations. Individuals participate in hands-on activities and learn about Patrol, Investigations, Crime Scene, Corrections, and Special Units such as SWAT, CERT, and K-9. The mission of Citizens Academy is to increase communication between the Sheriff's Office and citizens to make them better informed of how we operate. To apply for an upcoming class, go to [www.bcsoco.com](http://www.bcsoco.com) and link "How Do I" at the top of the home page.



# Senior Outreach

Thirty-five dedicated Senior Outreach volunteers regularly visit Blount County's elderly and shut-in citizens. Sheriff Berrong started this program in 2001 after seeing firsthand the number of people who were not receiving the assistance they need to maintain their health and well-being. Senior Outreach volunteers receive training on elder abuse, suicide prevention, CPR, fire and fall prevention, as well as police procedures. Following a brief hiatus of in-person visits due to the COVID pandemic, Senior Outreach volunteers resumed their normal visits in early 2022. In 2022, 13 teams visited 116 individuals and dedicated close to 3,000 hours of time to the program.



## SROs

The BCSO SRO program is one of the earliest and longest running programs in Tennessee. Sheriff Berrong formed the program in 1996 with two deputies. In the proceeding years, the Sheriff's Office added additional SROs in all county schools. There are three SROs at Heritage and William Blount high

schools. SROs are trained in tactical response, crisis management, conflict resolution, and child development. SROs also train regularly on active shooter scenarios.

During the summer months, SROs are assigned to other functions, including Special Teams such as the Marine Unit and the Horse Mounted Patrol Unit.

The Sheriff's Office actively uses Text-a-Tip and TipSoft to allow students and the general public to anonymously report issues. SROs are able to intercede on issues of bullying, child abuse, drugs, fights, and suicide prevention. For additional information, visit [www.bcsso.com](http://www.bcsso.com) and Submit a Crime Tip from the home page.

The Sheriff's Office also partners with Blount County Schools to provide Criminal Justice instruction at Eagleton College and Career Academy.



Patrol & Public Safety is comprised of uniformed patrol deputies, Highway Traffic Safety Unit, SROs, and the K-9 Unit.

**Patrol** consists of three shifts, and deputies are assigned to each zone at all times. Patrol deputies answer calls for service, conduct proactive patrol, traffic enforcement, traffic accident investigations, and preliminary criminal investigations. Blount County is divided into four geographical patrol zones (see Page 14). There is also a Zone 5 deputy who is stationed at the Blount County Justice Center Monday through Friday to respond to requests for phone calls and walk-in reports. Patrol deputies are responsible for the safety of Blount County's 558 square miles. In 2022, deputies responded to 71,583 calls for service.

In addition to our full-time patrol deputies, the Sheriff's Office also utilizes **reserve deputies**. At the end of 2022, there were five reserve deputies who are certified for solo patrol status. The Sheriff's Office requires all reserve deputies to have equivalent training as a full-time certified deputy. In 2022, reserve deputies worked nine special events in addition to filling gaps on patrol shifts. Reserve deputies worked and trained 1,446 hours in 2022.

The Sheriff's **EMR program** was developed in 2017 as a way to enhance medical services in Blount County, as deputies are 80% more likely to arrive on a scene prior to EMS. EMR-certified deputies are able to provide some medical services to improve emergency medical care in the county and provide a faster response to begin life-saving measures on our citizens. EMRs are equipped with additional lifesaving skills and equipment and they have the ability to get information more quickly when it comes to life-and-death emergencies. EMR-certified deputies are spread among the three patrol shifts and other operations within the Sheriff's Office. This EMR program is one of a kind in Tennessee.







Deputies volunteer for the program and must pass a national certification exam to be part of the program.

In 2022, EMRs responded to 3,189 medical calls, including 111 calls for narcotics-related overdoses, 462 injured persons, 113 car accidents, 157 assaults, 2,314 sick persons, six suicides, four shootings, and one stabbing.



The **Traffic Safety Unit** is comprised of deputies who concentrate on traffic issues. The Traffic Safety Unit is funded partially with grants through the Tennessee Highway Safety Office. A portion of the grant is used for saturation efforts on a portion of U.S. Highway 129 referred to as "The Dragon," an 11.2 mile stretch of roadway with 318 hairpin curves that appeal to motorcyclists and car club enthusiasts from all corners of the earth. In 2022, deputies investigated 812 crashes on Blount County's roadways, including 5 fatalities.





# Patrol & Public Safety

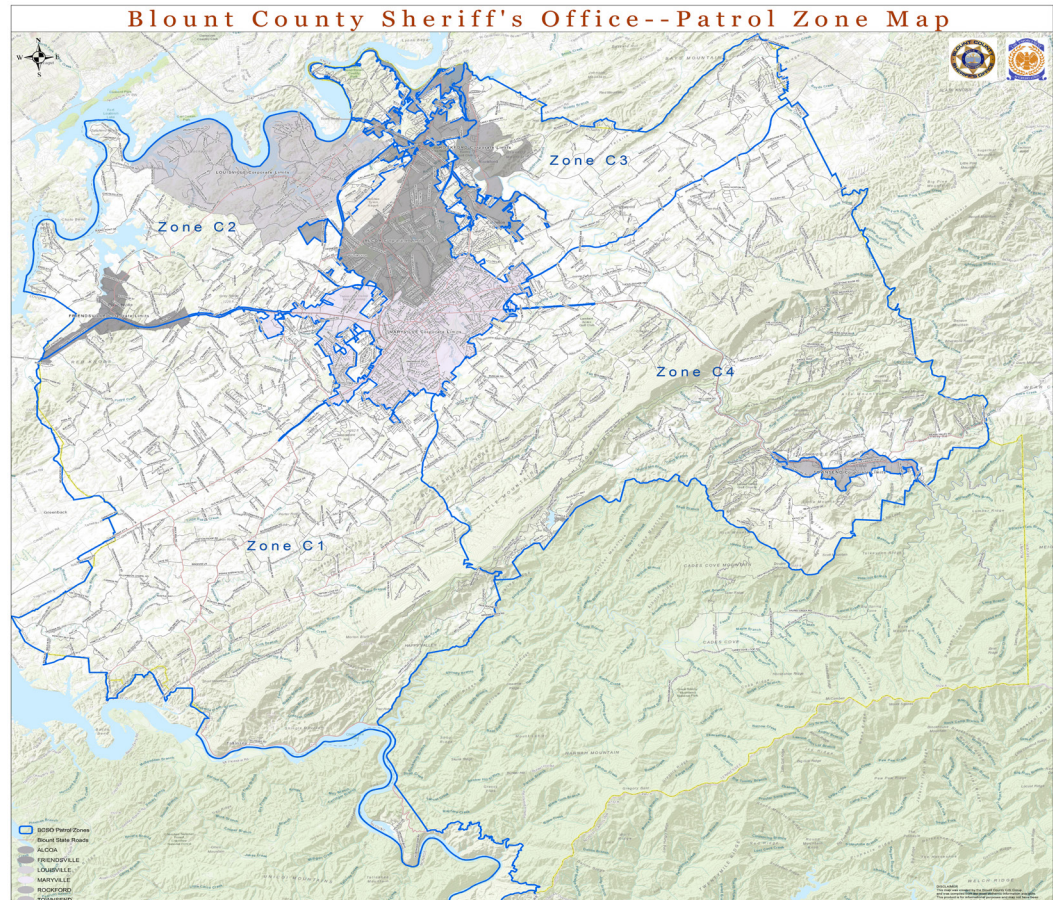
The Sheriff's Office is divided into four patrol zones:

**Zone 1** - The area west of Montvale Road and south of U.S. 321 West. The area is primarily rural residential with some industry on William Blount Drive and U.S. 411 South.

**Zone 2** - Begins north of U.S. 321 West and west of Alcoa Highway. The area includes Louisville and sections of Fort Loudon Lake, McGhee Tyson Airport, and parts of Maryville and Alcoa are included in Zone 2.

**Zone 3** - Starts east of Alcoa Highway and north of Sevierville Road. It includes Eagleton, Rockford, and Porter communities. It is primarily residential with some industry and business on Alcoa Highway and Old Knoxville Highway.

**Zone 4** - Comprises communities south of Sevierville Road and east of Montvale Road. Communities include Top of the World, Oakview, and Rocky Branch. This zone is primarily rural. It also includes part of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Cades Cove.



## 2022 Calls for Service - 71,583

|                     | 2022  | 2021  | 2020  | 2019  |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Homicide            | 0     | 1     | 3     | 1     |
| Kidnapping          | 10    | 7     | 12    | 1     |
| Rape                | 32    | 28    | 28    | 37    |
| Robbery             | 6     | 4     | 11    | 11    |
| Aggravated Assault  | 236   | 218   | 232   | 156   |
| Simple Assault      | 845   | 893   | 764   | 621   |
| Arson               | 4     | 1     | 4     | 3     |
| Burglary            | 255   | 320   | 449   | 229   |
| Theft of Property   | 640   | 786   | 884   | 419   |
| Theft of Vehicle    | 138   | 171   | 210   | 100   |
| DUI                 | 98    | 131   | 115   | 77    |
| Vandalism           | 153   | 204   | 188   | 140   |
| Drugs/Narcotics     | 532   | 607   | 369   | 349   |
| Domestic Trouble    | 1,659 | 1,598 | 1,810 | 1,628 |
| Animal Problem      | 1,259 | 1,252 | 1,292 | 1,242 |
| Juvenile Complaint  | 655   | 810   | 688   | 564   |
| Suspicious Incident | 3,171 | 1,762 | 1,880 | 858   |
| Missing Persons     | 184   | 113   | 127   | 140   |
| Property Damage     | 189   | 209   | 208   | 222   |
| Citizens Assist     | 227   | 288   | 315   | 378   |
| Traffic Accidents   | 812   | 931   | 910   | 953   |
| Welfare Checks      | 1,686 | 1,736 | 1,772 | 1,756 |
| Fireworks Calls     | 74    | 70    | 97    | 70    |





## Crisis Negotiations

The Crisis Negotiations Team works hand-in-hand with the SWAT team to diffuse and resolve critical and potentially life-threatening incidents. Team members receive advanced training in crisis communications. The mission of team members is to work with SWAT members toward a peaceful resolution of crisis situations. Negotiators are on-call 24/7, and at least two negotiators remain on-call at all times. The thirteen member team was called out on seven occasions in 2022. The team trains monthly, and they often join SWAT training to ensure a seamless coordination of efforts during incidents. Crisis negotiators are representative of several Sheriff's Office functions, including Patrol, Investigations, Adult and Juvenile Corrections, and Court Services.

## SWAT -Special Weapons & Tactics

SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) is comprised of highly trained members who respond to incidents such as hostage situations, barricaded suspects, suicidal persons, and high risk search warrants. SWAT members are trained to make entry into structures that may contain armed subjects and take them into custody. Team members are issued additional personal protective equipment, including ballistic helmets, tactical body armor, and eyewear to protect them from chemical exposure. SWAT team members all have primary assignments in other functions and report for SWAT duty when necessary. SWAT members are on-call 24/7, and they participate in mandatory monthly training.



The SWAT team was called out 24 times in 2022, including 5 barricaded suspects, 12 high risk search warrants, six high risk suspect searches, one high risk prisoner detail, four security details, and 10 surveillance details. Throughout the year, law enforcement agencies throughout East Tennessee request the BCSO SWAT team for assistance due to their excellent reputation and highly trained operators. In 2022, the SWAT team assisted other agencies and counties on nine occasions. Members also participated in 30 community engagements.



# BSORT & Marine Unit

## BSORT – Blount Special Operations Response Team

BSORT is a joint effort between area first responder agencies, including the Sheriff's Office, Maryville Police Department, Alcoa Fire Department, AMR, and the Blount County Rescue Squad. BSORT members specialize in search and rescue and recovery missions on water and land. Team members are well-trained and equipped, and they are ready to respond at a moment's notice. BSORT members train monthly. In 2022, BSORT responded to 23 call-outs, including 15 other agency assists.

The annual Gary Lindsey Firecracker Fishing Tournament generates thousands of dollars for BSORT. These funds are utilized to purchase needed dive and rescue equipment.

BSORT uses a ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle) equipped with sophisticated live imaging SONAR and a GPS mapping system. A benefit of this system is that it can reach depths down to 300 feet, a depth much farther than is safe for divers to reach. There are only a few of this type of ROV in East Tennessee.

## Marine Unit

The Sheriff's Marine Unit patrols Blount County's waterways during the warmer months. Marine patrol deputies assist stranded boaters and inspect private boats to ensure compliance with Tennessee state laws. The unit also acts as support for divers during water rescue and recovery operations. The unit is manned by SROs during their summer break. In 2022, the unit made 270 community contacts, conducted 31 marina checks, assisted two stranded boaters, and conducted 58 boat access checks.





# K-9 & Mounted Patrol



*Deputy Tim Pace & his K-9 partner Jimbo*

## 2022 K-9 Teams

|                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| Sgt. Allen Russell     | K-9 Daisy  |
| Sgt. Gary Perkins      | K-9 Celo   |
| Deputy Scott Tipton    | K-9 Toby   |
| Deputy Ryan Bumbalough | K-9 Gino   |
| Deputy Justin Summers  | K-9 Wiskey |
| Deputy Billy Madore    | K-9 Braum  |
| Deputy Jerry Burns     | K-9 Marley |
| Deputy Skip Kindig     | K-9 Veki   |
| Deputy Jole Payne      | K-9 Cliff  |
| Deputy Cory Phillips   | K-9 Kodi   |
| Deputy Tim Pace        | K-9 Jimbo  |



## K-9 Unit

The Sheriff's K-9 unit is comprised of ten teams and includes five breeds -- a Dutch Shepherd, a German Shepherd, five Belgian Malinois', one German Shorthair Pointer, and one Bloodhound. All K-9 teams are certified in-house and through the National Narcotic Detector Dog Association. In 2022, the Sheriff's Office added a new K-9 team to its roster -- Deputy Tim Pace and K-9 Jimbo, a Belgian Malinois. This new addition was possible through the generosity of a community member and supporter.

Many of the Sheriff's K-9s are raised and trained by Shallow Creek Kennels in Sharpsburg, Pennsylvania.

## 2022 Statistics

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Agency Assists            | 62  |
| Alerts                    | 228 |
| Apprehensions             | 50  |
| Drug Detections           | 86  |
| Building Searches         | 21  |
| Vehicle Searches          | 191 |
| K-9 Tracks                | 26  |
| Public Demonstrations     | 27  |
| Narcotic /Tobacco         |     |
| Searches in Jail Facility | 142 |

## Illegal Drug Seizures

|                         |             |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Cocaine & Crack Cocaine | 10 grams    |
| Crystal Methamphetamine | 184 grams   |
| Heroin                  | 96 grams    |
| Marijuana               | 64.5 pounds |
| Ecstasy (MDMA)          | 14 grams    |
| Tobacco (Jail)          | 3 grams     |
| Drug Currency Seized    | \$46,868    |

## Mounted Patrol Unit

Two deputies are assigned to the Sheriff's Mounted Patrol Unit. In 2022, Good Luck Chuck and Cookie and their partners Deputy Elizabeth Best and Deputy Marshal Davis conducted several direct patrols in Blount County communities. The equine teams are also utilized for searches for missing persons in rugged terrain, parades, and community outreach.

Chuck and Cookie were donated by a citizen. The horses are boarded at Heritage High School. Cookie retired in 2022, and plans are underway to replace her with a new horse in early 2023.

Mounted patrol deputies receive 40 hours of in-service training annually at Nashville Metro Police Department.

# Investigative Operations - Criminal Investigations



**Criminal Investigations** is part of the Investigative Operations arm of the Sheriff's Office. Investigators work jointly with members of the Fifth Judicial Drug Task Force to solve crimes. Criminal investigations is responsible for investigating major crimes, including homicides, sex crimes, child abuse, missing persons, domestic violence, robberies, burglaries, cyber crimes, and arsons.

The unit is comprised of four supervisors; 13 investigators, including two child abuse investigators; two full-time and one part-time sex offender investigators; four crime scene investigators; a property and evidence custodian; a victim/witness coordinator; and an administrative assistant. The two child abuse investigators are assigned to the Blount County Children's Advocacy Center.

In 2022, the investigative team worked 1,781 cases involving crimes against people and property. There were no reported homicides in 2022, however investigators worked 20 suicides (up from 13 suicides in 2021), 31 natural deaths, 19 accidental deaths, five child deaths, one undetermined cause,

and five cases that are pending complete autopsy results.

One investigator is assigned to work the majority of the hundreds of domestic violence cases that are reported each year. In 2022, the domestic violence investigator reviewed and worked 613 cases. The number of cases is down slightly from 2021 when victims reported 621 cases.

The Sex Offender Registry falls under investigations, and sex offender registry investigators handle all sex offender registrations in Blount County. In 2022, investigators monitored 241 sex offenders who reside in Blount County. In 2022, investigators arrested 12 individuals on 14 warrants for violations of the sex offender registry. Investigators arrested 3 sex offender absconders. A list of the 241 sex offenders currently registered in Blount County is available at [www.bcsco.com](http://www.bcsco.com) and click "Links" and look for the "Sex Offender Registry" under the "Public Information" tab.



Sheriff's Crime Scene Investigators play a vital role in solving cases. They are responsible for the recovery and preservation of evidence found at crime scenes, and they are equipped with advanced equipment to help in the process. All crime scenes are unique, and CSIs use a step-by-step approach to every situation including locating, recovering, securing, and documenting evidence. CSIs also maintain AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System) which tracks fingerprints to identify latent prints found at crime scenes.

The investigations team was assigned 1,542 activities in 2022.

The Sheriff's Office also retains a polygraph examiner, Capt. James Trentham. He is certified through the American Polygraph Association and Tennessee Polygraph Association. In 2022, Capt. Trentham conducted 53 polygraphs consisting of pre-employment and criminal investigations.



# Investigative Operations – Fifth Judicial Drug Task Force

The Fifth Judicial Drug & Violent Crime Task Force is a joint effort between the Sheriff's Office, Maryville and Alcoa Police Departments, and the Office of the Attorney General of Blount County. The Drug Task Force is comprised of 10 investigators, a deputy chief, lieutenant, a sergeant, and two support staff that handles the hundreds of cases that are assigned each year. The Drug Task Force has investigators assigned full-time to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the FBI, as well as investigators assigned part-time to task forces with TBI, U.S. Marshals Service, and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.

During 2022, the Fifth Judicial Drug Task Force continued to focus on the illegal sales of heroin and fentanyl within our community. Investigators aggressively pursued these sellers along with the sellers of methamphetamine and individuals who committed firearm-related offenses.

Large quantities of heroin and fentanyl have become scarce within Blount County. This has resulted in a significant decrease in overdoses and the seized amounts of overdose-related substances. Overall, overdoses decreased 34.26%, from 397 reported overdoses in 2021 to 261 reported overdoses in 2022. Overdose deaths decreased as well. There were 64 overdose deaths reported in 2021, compared to 52 overdose deaths reported in 2022.

While weapon seizures remained consistent, the DTF increased the total number of firearm-related arrests. The majority of those arrests were for being a felon in possession of a firearm during the course of a dangerous felony as well as federal firearm charges. The DTF remains committed to investigating these primary offenses. Heroin/fentanyl, methamphetamine, and firearm investigations make up 54% of all DTF arrests. These types of cases will continue to be their focus in 2023.



## 2022 DTF Stats

Arrests 217 with 285 charges

Conviction Rate 90%

Countywide Overdoses 261

Countywide Overdose Deaths 52

BCSO deputies administered 53 doses of Naloxone and saved 42 people.

The photos are from a marijuana distribution case that the DTF worked in 2022 in a residential neighborhood in Blount County. In this case, investigators seized over \$10,000 in illegal drug sales and more than 30 pounds of marijuana. The operators of this distribution ring kept most of their cash in glass cabinets.

# Adult Corrections

Adult Corrections is staffed by more than 100 professional deputies who are in charge of the care of an average daily inmate population of 465 individuals who are incarcerated while they await trial on state charges as well as those who are court-sentenced to less than one year in jail. The Sheriff's Office also holds a contract with the U.S. Marshals Service to house a limited number of federal inmates.

In December 2022, the Correctional Facility was awarded Tier 2 accreditation through Tennessee Corrections Institute (TCI). This accreditation is held by only one other correctional facility in Tennessee.



All Corrections deputies attend a four week Corrections Academy which is held in-house at the Sheriff's Regional Training Academy. All Corrections deputies also receive 40 hours of in-service training annually. Upon employment, Corrections deputies are issued Tasers and stab-resistant vests.

Though the average daily population in 2022 was 465 inmates, the Correctional facility is certified for 350 beds. For many years, the average daily population has far exceeded that. The Sheriff's Office is looking at different options to help ease overcrowding, one of which includes a three-phase plan that addresses the current facility, programming and services, and a transitional facility for individuals re-entering society following incarceration.

COVID forever altered the way Corrections deputies handle intakes of inmates into the facility. All inmates entering the jail are screened for COVID. As a way to prevent the

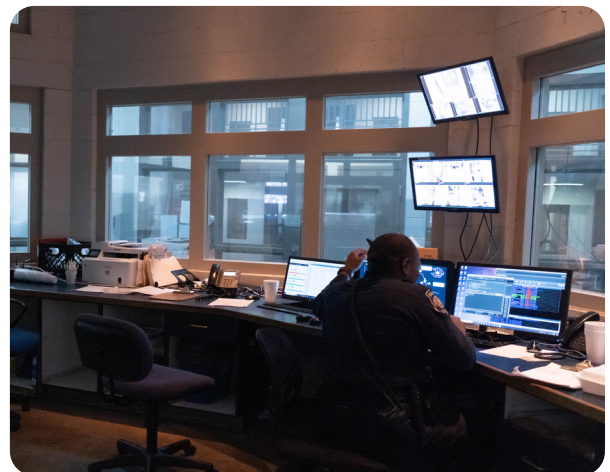
spread of illnesses, inmates within the facility attend court hearings by way of video conferencing with the exception of trials and sentencing hearings. This is also safer for the inmates as well as the Corrections deputies since deputies aren't required to regularly move inmates from the Corrections facility to the courtrooms.

There are two full-time jail investigators who look into incidents that occur within the facility as well as to gather intelligence. In addition, Deputy Skip Kindig and K-9 Veki, a German Shorthair Pointer, are teamed together to prevent contraband from coming into the facility.

Adult corrections also has a team similar to the SWAT team. CERT (Corrections Emergency Response Team) responds to high risk situations inside and outside the jail, including riot conditions, crowd control, security extractions of violent inmates, and searches for contraband inside the facility. CERT members use less-lethal means of control, and it is comprised of full-time corrections deputies. In 2022, CERT was deployed one time and participated in two community events. CERT members train monthly.

The facility's medical provider is MEDIKO Correctional Healthcare. MEDIKO provides medical care to inmates. Commissary services are provided by Tennessee Bureau Enterprises, a state office that offers vocational training and employment opportunities for individuals who are legally blind.

The inmate litter crew goes out most weekdays to pick up trash along Blount County's roadways. In the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the litter crew picked up 432,340 pounds of litter and covered 860 miles of roadway. Over the years, litter crew members have picked up hundreds of thousands of pounds of trash in Blount County.





The Blount County Juvenile Detention Center is located on the 2nd floor of the Blount County Court-house. It is a 33 bed, hardware secure facility used to detain youth who are awaiting adjudication and/or disposition in Juvenile Court. The facility is operated 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and is staffed by 24 Sheriff's deputies. All deputies receive training specific to supervision of youth in custody and complete 40 hours of in-service annually. Each employee places an emphasis with the juveniles on accountability, fairness, education, and rehabilitation. The mission of the Detention Center is to encourage positive life skills and attitudes with each juvenile as well as encourage continual personal, positive community involvement.

While booking a juvenile, each individual is assessed for medical, emotional, and educational needs. Immediate emergency services are always available, and non-emergency and mental health issues are communicated to Juvenile Court and other appropriate agencies. Medical services are provided by MEDIKO. In cooperation with Blount County Schools, two part-time educators teach life skills, continue the juvenile's current level of education, and prepare for GED testing, if applicable.

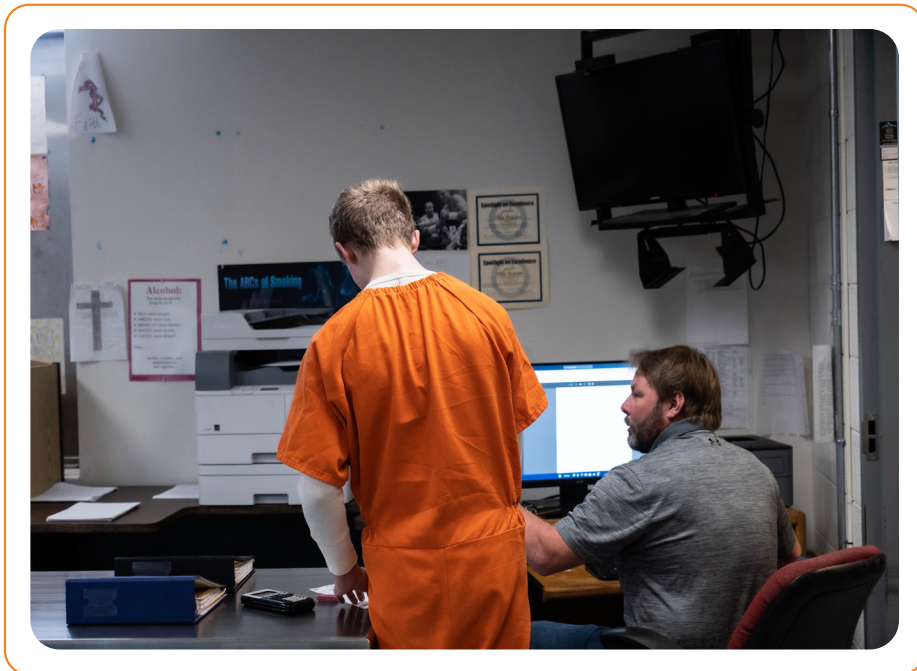
The facility is also a Safe Haven for newborns when mothers opt to surrender her child, with no questions, under the Safe Haven Law (TCA 34-11-103).

The facility is available for use, on a per diem basis, for Federal, State, and County agencies for the housing of juveniles in their custody.

The facility is inspected on a regular basis by the Department of Children's Services, the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, the Department of Education, the U.S. Marshals Service, Fire Marshal, and Tennessee Health Inspector. The facility passed all inspections with no violations.

The Temporary Holding Resource (THR) was opened and staffed two times in 2022.

In 2022, the facility processed 276 youth for an average length of stay of 3.01 days. The average daily population was 3.3 juveniles. Out of county agencies were billed \$29,160 for the detention of their youth.



In cooperation with Blount County Schools, two part-time educators teach life skills, continue the juvenile's current level of education, and prepare the student for GED testing, if applicable.

The BCSO Training Unit is well-known across the state for its excellence in training. The Sheriff's Office training staff not only provides annual in-service training for all law enforcement agencies within Blount County, the staff also provides instruction to law enforcement officers from across the state by way of the Sheriff's Regional Law Enforcement Training Academy.

The Training Unit plans and coordinates much of the training deputies undertake. Deputies who are POST (Peace Officer Standards and Training) certified as well as corrections deputies in Tennessee are required to complete 40 hours of continuing education annually to maintain certifications. The training staff assures that all deputies receive this required professional development training. POST-certified deputies are trained in many law enforcement subjects, and all law enforcement officers in Blount County train together to assure efficiency and professionalism while working together on joint incidents and operations.

Most of the training takes place at the Sheriff's Training Facility off William Blount Drive. The facility includes a five acre driving track, a covered 21-lane firing range, and a high and low ropes course. The Air National Guard assisted with the financing and labor for much of the work at the firing range. In exchange, personnel with the ANG from McGhee Tyson Airbase use the facility on occasion for their training needs.

With a continued increase in mass shootings across the country, the training staff places an emphasis on preparing Blount County's law enforcement officers to remain at the ready should the threat become a reality. Deputies also provide community education and provide church and business assessments and training to help citizens prepare for a possible active shooter situation.

Since 2020, Tennessee's POST Commission began mandating additional required training for all law enforcement officers in the areas of de-escalation techniques and duty to intervene, public assembly interaction, officer wellness, and community involvement.





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More than 700 law enforcement officers from across Tennessee have graduated from the Sheriff's Regional Law Enforcement Training Academy since its inception in 2007. Each year, the academy grows, and with it, so has its stellar reputation of graduating the best law enforcement officers in the state. During the 12 week academy, recruits learn many aspects of law enforcement, including criminal justice, firearms, emergency vehicle operations, report writing, defensive tactics, Taser and chemical spray certifications, DUI, traffic stops, accident reconstruction, domestic violence, Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC), as well as other law enforcement-related topics. Recruits are also put through a rigorous physical fitness regime to help prepare them to meet the physical standards set forth by Cooper Institute, a global leader in preventative health research. POST law enforcement academies are held at least once a year.

In 2022, the Sheriff's Regional Law Enforcement Training Academy held two academies. Class 024 was held from January through April, and Class 025 took place August through November. In total, 81 recruits graduated in 2022.



The Training Unit was granted permission by the Tennessee POST Commission to host a lateral transfer school to allow the training of new hires from other states and bring them up to Tennessee POST standards to be certified by the State of Tennessee. This 120 hour course consists of firearms, driving, defensive tactics, Tennessee's laws, and other law enforcement topics. This has been of great benefit, as it allows the Sheriff's Office to on-board new hires from other states quickly and cost effectively.

The BCSO is also certified through Tennessee Corrections Institute (TCI) to train agency Corrections deputies. New Corrections deputies attend a three week TCI Basic Training Course in which they learn defensive tactics, firearms, Taser and chemical spray certifications, transport procedures, and other Corrections-related topics. The Sheriff's Office holds one or two Corrections Academies a year, based on need.



# Court Services

Court Services serves five courtrooms in the Blount County Justice Center and three Juvenile courtrooms at the Blount County Courthouse. Court Services deputies have many responsibilities, including the movement of offenders in and out of the courtrooms. They also provide support and assistance to agencies and individuals in the judicial process.

A major task of Court Services is to keep up with the thousands of criminal and civil process papers that flow in and out of the Sheriff's Office. In 2022, Court Services deputies served 7,695 civil papers, which included 370 Orders of Protection, and served 297 warrants. They also moved 6,523 inmates for court proceedings.

Though most COVID protocols were disbanded beginning in 2021 and into 2022, county, state, and federal inmates continue to attend most of their hearings by way of video conferencing from the jail facility with the exception of trial and sentencing hearings. The general public attended court in-person.

All persons who enter the Justice Center and Juvenile Court must pass through a metal detector, and all purses, packages, and briefcases are reviewed through an X-ray scanner. Firearms, knives, and chemical spray are prohibited. A new change went into effect in 2022. The public can bring their cell phones and electronic devices into the Justice Center, but they must remain on the first floor only. Cell phones and electronic devices are not allowed in the Courtrooms. In 2022, Court Services deputies screened 100,948 people who entered the Blount County Justice Center.

When court is not in session, deputies assigned to court security assist in serving civil judicial documents. Court Services is also responsible for collecting unpaid business, property, and personal taxes. This also extends to seizures mandated by court order.

Warrants deputies are assigned to locate wanted individuals for whom the Court has issued criminal warrants. In addition to arrest warrants, these deputies serve orders of protection. Another important duty of Court Services deputies is to assist citizens serving as jurors and provide protection and transportation for sequestered jurors.





# Information Technology & sUAS

The Office of Information Technology is comprised of five I.T. professionals who are responsible for establishing and maintaining all of the computers and information systems and cyber security for the Sheriff's Office. The unit also maintains the video cameras and security system in the Justice Center. Another large responsibility is the maintenance of the communication systems in Sheriff's Office vehicles.

The unit also manages the Sheriff's records management system, Spillman. This system allows for reporting from the mobile data terminals (MDT) in the patrol cruisers. The system streamlines the booking process and allows personnel to track and manage various records, such as name, property, and incident reports and it stores it all in a centralized database. The system allows connectivity of records to one another with a goal of more easily identifying relationships within the data and streamlining processes within the agency. It is a paperless system, which saves patrol deputies time by inputting reports directly into the system. All patrol vehicles are outfitted with MDTs that connect wirelessly to the Sheriff's Office servers.

I.T. is responsible for maintaining in-car and body-worn cameras utilized by front-line deputies. The Sheriff's Office uses Axon Body 3 body-worn cameras and Axon Fleet 3 in-car cameras. Data from these systems is uploaded in a cloud as opposed to a server, and data is uploaded to the cloud when deputies return to the Justice Center.

The Sheriff's Office began using sUAS systems in 2017. Three deputies are licensed to operate the systems, which are also known as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or drones. The use of sUAS provides a unique aerial perspective to law enforcement operations. They allow for the possible detection of dangers that might not otherwise be seen without endangering personnel. They also allow deputies to more easily locate missing or wanted persons, and they serve as an investigative tool in visual reconstruction of crime or crash scenes. They are also useful for damage assessment for disasters and observation for large-scale events. The sUAS pilots also supports other agencies when they are requested.

## 2022 sUAS Stats

Missions Flown 174 flights

Hours Flown 34 hours, 34 minutes

Miles Covered 104 miles

Crash Scenes 4

Fire Scenes 5

Crime Scenes 4

Missing Persons 3

Fugitives 5

Other Patrol Activities 4

Support for SWAT Operations 11

Support for Disaster Drill 1

Public Events 2

Miscellaneous 14



# Office of Accreditation

The Sheriff's Office is accredited through CALEA - Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. Initial accreditation took place in 2003, and CALEA has re-accredited the agency every accreditation cycle since. We received our last re-accreditation in April 2022, and we are working toward our next re-accreditation in 2026. The purpose of accreditation is to safeguard all personnel, improve management, provide systematic evaluation of all areas of operation, recognize achievement, and demonstrate accountability to the public. Accreditation is an ongoing program to maintain superior professional standards, and is overseen by an accreditation manager.

The Blount County Sheriff's Office is one of five Sheriff's Offices in Tennessee to hold accreditation through CALEA. In Blount County, Maryville and Alcoa police departments as well as Blount County Communications are all accredited through CALEA.

The Sheriff's Office is also accredited through the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police. The BCSO was the first Sheriff's Office in Tennessee to be awarded state accreditation in 2012. The Tennessee Law Enforcement Accreditation exists to improve the quality of law enforcement agencies in Tennessee and the quality of services provided to the citizens of Tennessee.



*In their final report, CALEA assessors commented "The department's philosophy is heavily based on principles of community-oriented policing and providing the highest quality of service possible to the Blount County Community. Department members are vested in their community and the department is always looking for new ways to positively engage its community members." Assessors also commented "...it was obvious that the community supports and appreciate the outreach efforts from the department."*

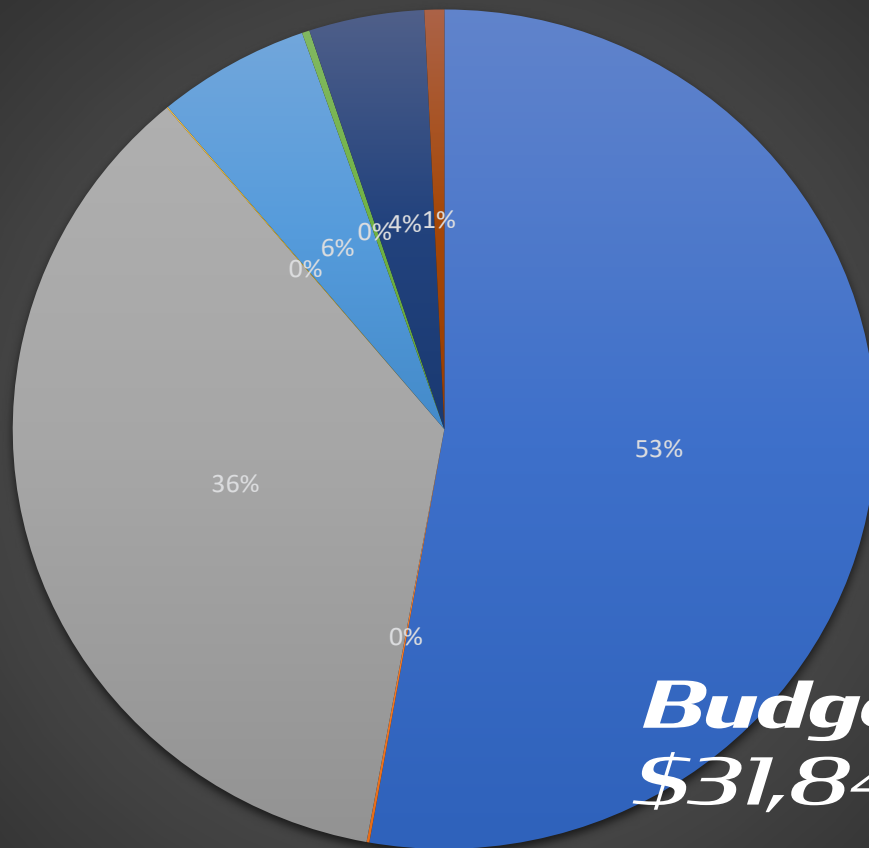


# Sheriff's Budget

## 2022 - 2023 Sheriff's Office Budget

|                       |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Sheriff's Office      | \$17,707,528 |
| Sex Offender Registry | \$35,000     |
| Jail                  | \$12,076,374 |
| Workhouse             | \$15,429     |
| Juvenile Services     | \$1,919,500  |
| Litter Pick-up        | \$95,068     |

### 2022-2023 Budget



***Budget Total***  
***\$31,848,899***

■ Sheriff's Office    ■ Sex Offender Registry    ■ Jail    ■ Workhouse  
■ Juvenile Services    ■ Litter Pick-up    ■ Public Safety    ■ Sheriff's Drug Fund

# Retirements & Promotions

## R E T I R E M E N T S



Cathy Knouff retired June 18, 2022 after 35 years of service with Blount County Sheriff's Office and Blount County Government. Cathy served as the assistant officer manager for the 5th Judicial Drug Task Force.



Deputy Jerry Orr retired November 30, 2022 following 37 years of service with the Blount County Sheriff's Office. Deputy Orr served as an investigator with the 5th Judicial Drug Task Force and for many years as an investigator assigned to the DEA.



Deputy Terry Orr retired November 30, 2022 following 36 years of service to the Blount County Sheriff's Office. Deputy Orr was assigned as the SRO at Heritage Middle School.



Deonna Woodlief  
Promoted to Assistant Office Manager  
Fifth Judicial Drug Task Force

## P R O M O T I O N S



# In Memoriam ...

*In 2022, we lost two retired Blount County deputies who passed away as a result of illnesses.*

*In addition, the Loudon County Sheriff's Office lost Sgt. Chris Jenkins on February 3, 2022 after he was struck by a vehicle and killed on the Interstate. Sgt. Jenkins' life touched many, and his death was mourned by hundreds of thousands of people. Several law enforcement agencies from East Tennessee, including the Blount County Sheriff's Office, provided deputies and officers to assist working patrol, the jail, as well as provided administrative support while the agency mourned his death and prepared for his funeral services.*

*To all of these departed, you are not forgotten.*

*"The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion."  
Proverbs 28:1*

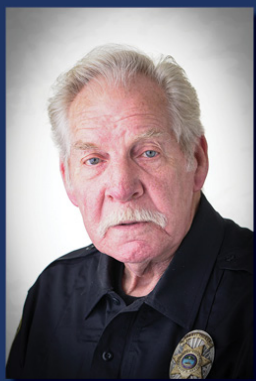
*Deputy Jim West (retired)*

*Badge #437*



It is with sadness that we learned of the passing of former Deputy Jim West, or "JW" as we knew him. JW passed away June 18. JW worked for the Sheriff's Office first as a reserve deputy and began full-time in Court Services beginning in 1999. He retired in February 2015. Sheriff James Lee Berrong extends his condolences to JW's family and friends.

May he rest in peace.



It is with great sadness that we learned of the passing of retired Deputy Bob Evans on January 23, 2022. Deputy Evans retired from the Blount County Sheriff's Office in 2016 following 19 years of faithful and dedicated service in Adult and Juvenile Corrections.

Sheriff James Lee Berrong extends his sincerest condolences to Deputy Evans' family and friends.



Sgt. Chris Jenkins  
Loudon County Sheriff's Office  
End of Watch February 3, 2022





# A Look Back

County hosted the  
Tyson Airbase. The  
d the crowd with their  
of the pilots. BCSO  
success of the event,  
affic control.



family in  
in. Blount  
ing which  
etermined



fire on  
cluding  
the fire

No photos, but we probably won't soon forget the Arctic  
23 - 25, 2022, followed by several inches of snow on Dec  
in the single digits and teens, causing TVA to conduct rolling  
country experienced this weather anomaly, which forecast

life on February 3, 2022  
puties provided support  
2022.

rt

*On September 10 & 11, 2022, Blount County hosted the Smoky Mountain Air Show at McGhee Tyson Airbase. The Blue Angels took center stage and wowed the crowd with their acrobatics and the amazing flying skills of the pilots. BCSO deputies played an integral part in the success of the event, providing assistance with logistics and traffic control.*



*On January 3, 2022, a 7-year-old girl vacationing with her family in Townsend was killed when a tree fell on the family's rental cabin. Blount County received several inches of wet, heavy snow that morning which provided the catalyst for the event. The BCSO investigation determined no foul play in the incident.*



*On January 7, 2022, the Sheriff's Office investigated a house fire on Sevierville Road that claimed the lives of three individuals, including a 7-year-old boy. Sheriff's investigators confirmed the cause of the fire was electrical.*



*Sgt. Chris Jenkins of the Loudon County Sheriff's Office lost his life on February 3, 2022 after being struck by a vehicle on I-75. Multiple Blount County deputies provided support for LCSO following the incident until the funeral on February 9, 2022.*



# Week on 2022



*BSORT joined forces with Knox County Sheriff's Office, Knoxville Police Department, Tennessee Army Guard Task Force Smokey, and the 134th Air Refueling Wing to conduct water rescue training on June 5, 2022 at the Sheriff's Office's water rescue training facility. This first-time joint training involved hundreds of personnel from all of these agencies.*



*Sheriff James Lee Berrong was sworn into office to begin a new term on September 1, 2022. Sheriff Berrong is now the longest running Sheriff in the State of Tennessee. He was appointed Sheriff in 1989, and he continues to earn the support of the citizens due to his strong stance on law and order and community policing.*



*We continued the tradition and held Operation Safe Halloween along with Emergency Services Day on October 31, 2022 at Everett Recreation Center. This community event always draws large crowds, and we enjoy it as much as the kids!*

*blast we experienced in East Tennessee December 26, 2022!! Blount County saw temperatures dropping and power outages due to demand. Two-thirds of the residents were without power. The event was dubbed a "bomb cyclone."*



# ***Blount County Sheriff's Office***

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