

Little Egg Harbor Township Police Department

2015 Report

Overview

Total calls for service in 2015 were 18,089. This represents a 15% increase from the 15,801 calls in 2014. Most alarming about this rise in call volume, is the 16% increase in incidents involving subjects with mental health issues. This disturbing trend is most graphically illustrated by the unfortunate incident that occurred on November 17th 2014. I have no indication that this trend is likely to reverse any time soon, as the State has continued to increasingly shift the responsibility of caring for individuals with mental health issues from residential hospitals to private entities who then place these individuals in our community. We recently learned, in fact, that the state contractor that houses and is supposed to supervise these individuals has placed some 14, of the county total of 80, here in Little Egg Harbor. We find it troubling that one municipality has somehow been assigned, without notice, to host about 18% of the total for the entire county. On a positive note, reported thefts have remained about at the same level as they were in 2014, decreasing 1%, while burglaries have decreased a dramatic 27% in 2015. I believe this decrease in property crimes is due to our continued commitment of resources to battle the ongoing heroin epidemic in our region.

Motor Vehicle Enforcement Activity

In 2015 this Agency made 3503 traffic stops, up from the 3190 it conducted in 2014. This 10% increase in this proactive area led to the detection of many of the issues that led to some of the arrests detailed in the next paragraph. On those stops, we issued some 1518 traffic summons as opposed to the 1456 that were issued in 2014. This represents a 4% increase in overall summons productivity in 2015, on top of a rather impressive improvement in the 2014 stats.

Criminal Arrests

In 2015 this Agency filed some 486 criminal charges, with many of those arrestees facing multiple counts. This was an increase of around 1.25% over the 480 criminal charges that were filed in 2014. Again, this indicates that the improvement demonstrated in 2014 was no fluke, rather, indicative of an established trend based on the hard work of our personnel.

Contractor Fraud

In 2015 the Little Egg Harbor Investigations Division prepared close to a dozen individual contractor theft cases. In addition to those cases which were handled directly by our detectives, the Investigations division has developed a close working relationship with the NJ Attorney General's Office, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office. Our detectives assisted and cooperated with these agencies in preparing multiple other cases in which our residents, victims of Hurricane Sandy, were

victimized a second time by these unscrupulous contractors. Contractor theft cases require meticulous, detailed investigations, and are very manpower intensive.

Criminal and Narcotics Investigations

Our street crimes unit continues to aggressively combat the regional heroin epidemic. In 2015 the SCU along with our Patrol division effectuated over 128 narcotics related arrests and several weapons offenses. These arrests were attained through investigations using confidential Informants, surveillance, interviews and well as a close working relationship with the Patrol Division. During this time frame the SCU also developed a relationship with the NJSP Task Force in Atlantic City and Trenton which resulted in Search Warrants and additional arrests out of our jurisdiction which had a direct impact on the supply of narcotics to the Township of Little Egg Harbor. We continue our close relationship with the Ocean County Narcotics Strike Force Southern Unit, and continue to have one investigator assigned to that unit full time. Once again this year, that Unit was responsible for numerous investigations leading to many search warrants and arrests. This, in turn, led to the seizure of drugs, currency, automobiles and weapons. By late in the year these combined efforts led to a significant overall reduction of drug availability on our streets. This story was repeated several times to us by credible street resources.

Operating efficiencies

Despite the fact that the shooting incident lead to 3 patrol officers being sidelined for many weeks and we had several officers engaged in field training for much of the year, we made some tough reassignment decisions in an attempt to curb the overtime normally attendant to these events. With that said, we are pleased that our overtime rose only a total of \$2,533.00 or a total increase of approximately 1%. The unfortunate fact, however, is that many initiatives had to be placed on hold for the duration of the emergency, temporarily halting some of the progress that would have otherwise been more apparent. We believe that this, once again, argues strongly for the type of personnel redundancy that we have repeatedly requested and this, along with our steadily increasing call volume, argues for the personnel requests that I have made several times and recently repeated.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Richard Buzby