

BENTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

581 Highway 23 NE • P.O. Box 159 • Foley, MN 56329
Administrative: (320) 968-7201 • FAX: (320) 968-6885
Jail: (320) 968-8180 • FAX: (320) 968-6347
Records: (320) 968-8150



Troy Heck, Sheriff
Neal Jacobson, Chief Deputy

05-31-23

Benton County Commissioners,

For many years it has been tradition for the sheriff to provide an annual report to the board to summarize the activities of the Office of Sheriff over the past year. The purpose of this report is to provide a broad overview of the activities conducted in the office to help strengthen communication and awareness of our services to the people of Benton County. It is my hope that this report will accomplish this goal. Should you have any questions in regard to this report, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Troy Heck

Sheriff

Executive Summary

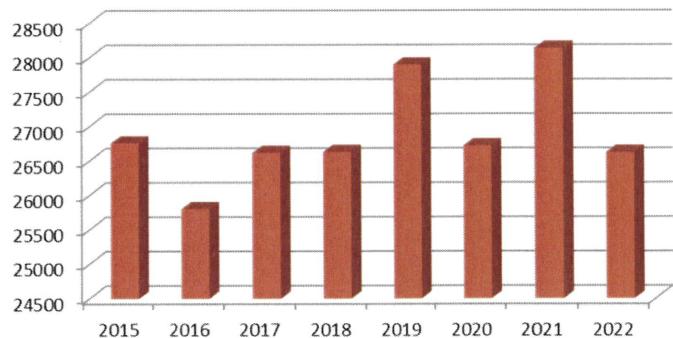
Throughout the year 2022, we transitioned back into what has become our new normal. The pandemic and all its flash point issues have mostly faded into memory, replaced by new concerns of the day. Benton County remains a very safe community with a falling crime rate. Our top three crime challenges continue to be property crimes with the person crimes of domestic assault and other assaults taking up the fourth and fifth positions.

Recruitment and retention of qualified staff, particularly in our jail, continue to be a focus of our work. Quality public safety service is dependent upon finding and hiring good people. Our current labor shortage has made this part of our work extraordinarily difficult and an important part of our daily activities. Our office regularly takes part in recruitment efforts in the community and on our social media platforms. We have also instituted employee wellness programs intended to support and retain the talented people currently serving our community.

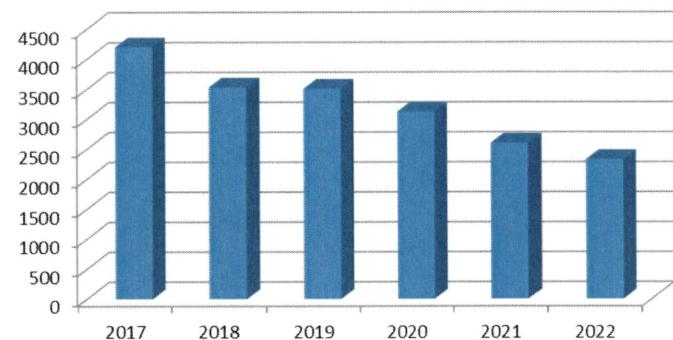
Slightly lower demand for public safety services, likely a by-product of less crime in the community, is seen in our metrics. Running counter to the falling trends in other metrics, our office experienced increasing jail populations and a continued demand on the time of our investigative division.

Community outreach and crime prevention efforts remain a primary focus. An engaged and involved community is our best

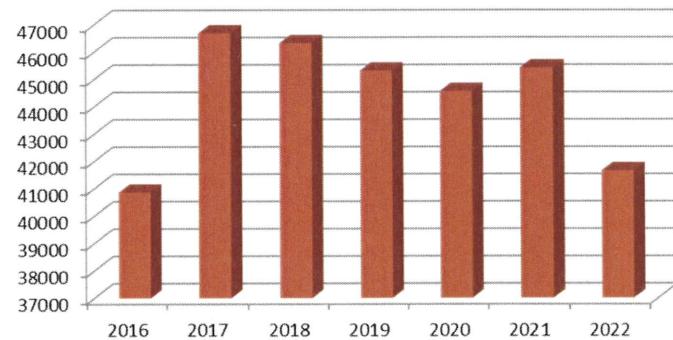
ICRs by Year



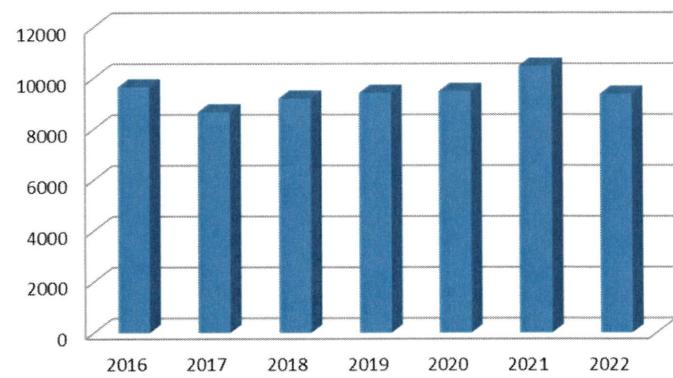
Crime Rate by Year



Incoming calls in the PSAP

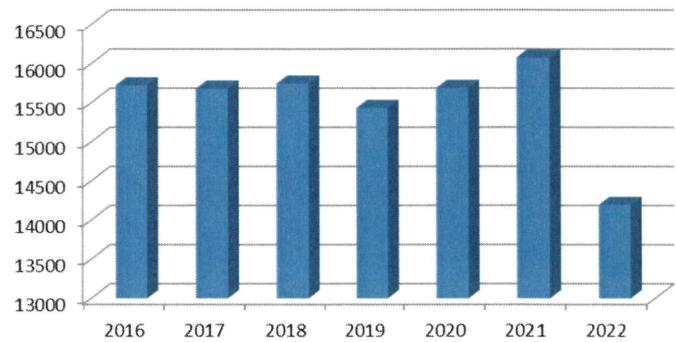


911 Calls in the PSAP

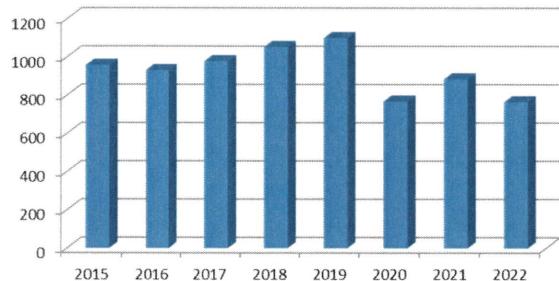


defense against crime in our neighborhoods. It is our hope that the information contained within this report will aid in generating a closer connection to the people and the communities we serve.

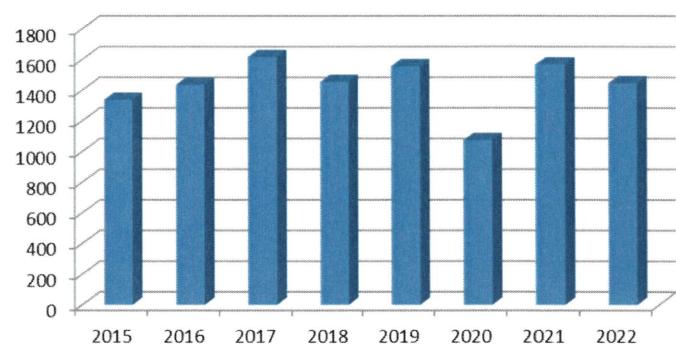
Patrol Division Calls for Service



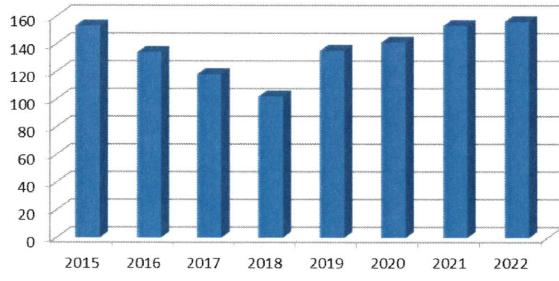
Civil Process Service



Arrest Warrants



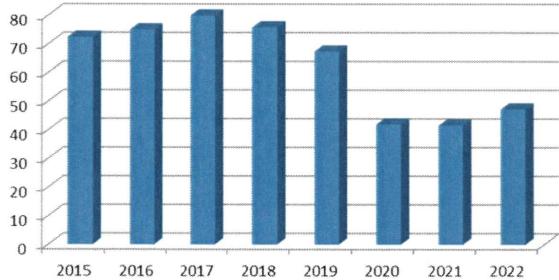
Cases Assigned to Detectives



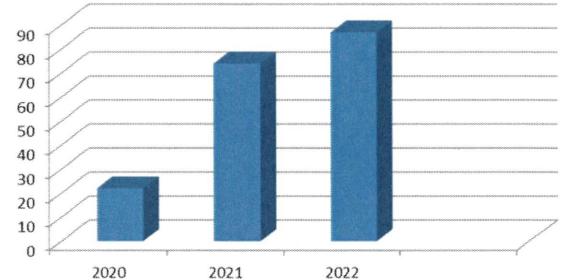
Top 5 most reported crimes for 2022

- 1. Theft**
- 2. Fraud**
- 3. Harassment**
- 4. Domestic Violence**
- 5. Assault**

Jail Avg Daily Population



Text to 911



Annual Report

A return to the new normal was seen in the year 2022. Many of the metrics used to measure the work of public safety in Benton County showed a downturn when compared to 2021. Calls into our office, incidents assigned to staff members, civil process request, and arrest warrants all reveal a slight decrease in demand from the public in 2022. At the same time, the number of inmates in our jail, number of texts to 911, and number of cases assigned to our investigative division showed slight increases.

Attributing causes for these trends is difficult to do, however it is worth noting that this downturn in demand for public safety services coincides with the 5th straight year of declining crime rates in Benton County.

Shortages of qualified candidates who meet the standards required of those who work in public safety continues to be a significant issue our office and law enforcement statewide battles. Candidate pools for licensed peace officer positions grow shallower every year as recruitments for non-licensed positions prove to be even more challenging. The peace and safety enjoyed by the people of Benton County is dependent upon talented individuals stepping forward to serve and better their communities.

Mission statement and strategic plan

The mission of the Benton County Sheriff's Office is:

To keep Benton County safe by enforcing laws, providing public safety services, and building community partnerships with respect and integrity.

Our vision for Benton County:

The Benton County Sheriff's Office strives to reduce crime and build community trust while ensuring accountability to the people we serve.

Our strategic plan was created in 2016 and was updated in 2023. Our office continues to use it and our mission and vision statements as guides while we carry out our work.

Dispatch services

The Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), also known as the dispatch center, is the first point of contact for a majority of the public who are seeking public safety assistance. The Benton County PSAP answers not only incoming 911 calls but also administrative calls for the Benton County Sheriff's Office, Foley Police and Fire departments, Rice Police and Fire departments, and Sauk Rapids Police and Fire departments. Once a call or request for service is received, the PSAP dispatches appropriate emergency services using the public safety radio system. The calls received

in dispatch which generate a public safety response for any of the agencies in Benton County are recorded on an Initial Complaint Report (ICR). In 2022 the Benton County PSAP generated 26,623 ICRs. This was 1,516 fewer ICRs than 2021. The time period from 9:00 am to 11:00 pm generated the highest number of ICRs with the time period from 1:00 pm to 7:00 pm representing the peak hours. Of the 26,623 ICRs made in 2022, 10,831 were generated between 1:00 pm and 7:00 pm, representing 41% of all calls. Fridays generated the most ICRs in the PSAP, while Sundays generated the fewest ICRs. The months of May through August were the busiest months in the PSAP. In 2022 the PSAP received 9,376 calls on our 911 lines, 1,097 fewer than in 2021. Since 2017, Minnesotans have been able to send text messages to 911. In 2022, our PSAP handled 87 text-to-911 sessions, 13 more than in 2021. The PSAP also dealt with a total of 41,653 incoming and outgoing telephone calls on our administrative telephone lines, 3,764 fewer calls than in 2021. Of these calls, 26,022 utilized one of the 5 non-emergency lines for the Sheriff's Office and 5,333 came in on 320-251-9451 (the main published non-emergency number for the Sauk Rapids Police Department). The volume of telephone calls was highest in the months of May through August. The time period between 8:00 am and 8:00 pm saw the highest volume of telephone calls in the PSAP.

Civil Process and Warrant division

One of the statutory duties of the sheriff is to serve and execute civil papers, court orders, and arrest warrants. In 2022, the sheriff's office received 765 requests to serve civil process, 120 fewer than 2021. Legal process related to orders for protection and harassment orders dominated the work, making up 204 of the 765 requests. The next 5 most common classes of legal process were subpoena, summons and petitions, writs of recovery, order to show cause, and eviction summons. Notable in these numbers is the marked increase in writs of recovery and eviction summons. Writs of recovery are generally obtained by lenders who have a collateral interest in property when the loan goes into default. In 2021, our office processed 25 such writs with that number increasing to 77 in 2022. Similarly, our numbers for eviction summons climbed from 37 in 2021 to 66 in 2022. The increase in these legal papers is likely the result of pandemic-related restrictions falling away as the 2022 numbers represent a return to the historical average for these actions. The sheriff's office conducted 14 mortgage foreclosure sales in 2022, three more than in 2021. For the year, 1,447 arrest warrants were received in the sheriff's office, 122 fewer than in 2021.

Patrol Division

The most visible and recognizable division in the Benton County Sheriff's Office is the patrol division. These are the uniformed deputies on patrol who respond to calls for service, investigate crimes, and perform proactive patrols. In 2022, 14,172 ICRs were assigned to units within the Benton County Sheriff's Office (1,903 fewer than in 2021), most of which were handled by the patrol division. Traffic stops accounted for the single largest category of activity for the patrol division in 2022. Assistance to the public and other agencies, medical emergencies, Toward Zero Deaths traffic detail activity, suspicious activity reports, and animal complaints were the next 5 most common functions performed by the patrol division. The 5 most reported crimes in Benton County in 2022 were Theft, Fraud, Harassment, Domestic Abuse, and Assault. The majority of ICRs assigned to our office were generated between 10:00 am and 6:00 pm, with a spike in calls for service between 1:00 pm and 5:00 pm. Fridays saw the most activity within the patrol division with Sundays showing the least activity. Unsurprisingly, the busiest months for calls were May through September, with March making a surprising strong showing in the numbers.

In 2021, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) made changes to the system used by criminal justice agencies when reporting crimes. Prior to 2021, crimes were broken down into Part 1 crimes and Part 2 crimes. Part 1 crimes were the most serious offenses and include violent crimes against a person. Part 2 were less serious offenses and include some person offenses and less serious property crimes. In 2021, the BCA instituted the Minnesota Crime Data Explorer system, changing these crime categories to Group A crimes and Group B crimes. Group A crimes include serious crimes against a person, property, and society. Group B crimes are less serious crimes and include:

Bad Checks	Nonviolent Family Offenses
Curfew/Loitering/Vagrancy Violations	Liquor Law Violations
Disorderly	Peeping Tom
Driving Under the Influence	Trespass of Real Property
Drunkenness	All Other Offenses

As of the writing of this report, the BCA does not provide a means to access agency-specific statistic on Group B offenses. Due to this limitation, this report is only able to comment upon trends in Group A offenses. According to the 2021 data set from the

Minnesota Crime Data Explorer, Benton County's Group A crime rate¹ was 2,601. The 2021 BCA Uniform Crime Report reported Minnesota's overall crime rate was 4,870, meaning that Benton County's Group A crime rate in 2021 was 47% lower than the state average in 2021. An examination of 2022 data from the Minnesota Crime Data Explorer showed Benton County's Group A crime rate declined to 2,328. Statewide crime rate data for 2022 is not yet available. This marks the 5th consecutive year of a declining crime rate in Benton County.

Within the 14,172 ICRs assigned to the Benton County Sheriff's Office staff are a number handled by administrative or support staff. These include records checks (448), permits to carry a pistol (630), and permit to purchase a pistol (161). For 2022, our applications for permits to carry were down by 40% and our applications for permits to purchase were down by 17% when compared to 2021 numbers. It is important to point out that the 2021 represented an all-time record for permit to carry applications.

Investigative division

The investigative division of the Benton County Sheriff's Office is tasked with investigating and solving felony level crimes and other crimes requiring more in-depth examination. In 2022 there were 156 cases assigned to this division, a 2% increase from 2021. Of those 156 cases, 135 cases were cleared, creating an 87% clearance rate for the Investigative Division. The Investigative Division is also tasked with receiving and securing items of evidence at the Benton County Sheriff's Office. In 2022, the evidence room received 788 items.

Violent Offender Task Force (VOTF)

The Benton County Sheriff's Office is a participating member of the Central Minnesota Violent Offender Task Force. This group of investigators work on in-depth investigations aimed at arresting the most dangerous and violent criminal offenders. Much of their work is focused on combating drugs and gang activity in Central Minnesota. As sheriff, I have stressed to our two full time staff members assigned to this unit the importance of working long term investigations aimed at arresting those who distribute the largest quantities of illegal drugs and those who are at the highest echelon of leadership in local criminal gangs. These investigations require time and patience, which is often difficult to express in terms of numbers. VOTF investigators continued to see a steady supply of controlled substances and a steady demand for them as well. Methamphetamine continues to be the most commonly found controlled substance in

¹ "Crime rate" is a term used in evaluating criminal statistics. It is the number of crimes reported by law enforcement per 100,000 in population.

VOTF investigations, however fentanyl is a growing threat to the area. This substance, more than any other street drug, results in fatal or near fatal outcomes for users. In 2022, VOTF investigators completed 28 cases in Benton County. VOTF investigators executed 12 search warrants, made 7 felony level warrant arrests, and seized 4 firearms and almost \$22,000 in cash associated with controlled substances. As part of our crime prevention efforts, VOTF investigators conduct educational presentations to the community on the dangers of drugs and the current trends in the world of drugs and gangs.

Jail division

As we have moved further in time from the COVID-19 pandemic, our jail populations have continued their upward trend. For most of 2022, there continued to be a lack of demand for surplus jail capacity. As 2022 drew to a close, we began to see a shift in this pattern with our facility once again beginning to board inmates for other agencies. We continue to deal with a very challenging population of inmates in our jail. At times in 2022, nearly a quarter of the inmates held in our jail were displaying either dangerous levels of aggression or signs of severe mental illness. For 2022, the jail had an average daily population (ADP) of 47.22 inmates, an increase of 5.64 ADP compared to 2021. The jail booked in a total of 1,595 inmates in 2022, 56 more bookings than in 2021. Of these 1,595 inmates, 1,212 of them were males and 383 were females. The average length of an inmate's stay in 2022 was 10.81 days, a decrease of 5.4 days when compared to 2021.

The jail division continues to encounter significant struggles with retention and recruitment of detention officers in 2022. During 2022 our vacancy rate for detention officers remained between 10% and 20%. The labor shortage and challenges of the work environment make detention officer a very difficult position to fill.

Like all jails across the state, Benton County struggles to cope with the influx of inmates battling mental illness. Managing individuals with mental illness in a jail setting presents a challenge for staff to maintain the safety and security of both the inmate and the safety and security of our staff. Individuals with mental illness can engage in unpredictable, unhealthy, and sometimes violent behavior. Unless this societal issue is addressed in meaningful ways, we anticipate that jails will continue to be a repository for under-served individuals with mental illnesses to languish in a facility that was neither designed nor intended to treat them.

In an effort to recoup some of the costs associated with housing prisoners, the Benton County Jail charges a booking fee, a work release fee, and (for inmates serving a

sentence after being convicted) a daily boarding fee. For 2022, the jail collected a total of \$42,388 in these fees. In order to make the most efficient use of the jail space in our facility, the jail boards inmates for other criminal justice agencies for a daily fee. For 2022, the jail collected just over \$4,000.00 in jail revenues from prisoner boarding.

Our Sentenced to Service (STS) crew transitioned from a state-based program to a county-based program in 2021. In July of 2022, enough detention officer positions had been filled to make it possible for STS Crew Leader James Luckhurst to regularly assemble the STS crew and begin work on projects. In 2022, the STS crew worked on 30 projects within Benton County. These projects included work performed for Benton County, the cities of Rice and Sauk Rapids, the townships of Watab and Langola, and the Foley School District. Nine inmates performed work on the STS crew working off 88 days of jail time and \$3,120.00 in fines in 2022.

Volunteers

The Benton County Sheriff's Office is fortunate to have several citizens who are willing to volunteer their time to assist us in our mission in a number of ways. With the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions and lessening concerns regarding outbreaks, volunteer programs have transitioned back to a more normal state in 2022.

The Benton County Mounted Patrol is a volunteer organization whose mission is to use horses and riders in providing assistance with crowd control, search and rescue, and other law enforcement functions. This group puts in many hours of training to ensure their readiness for such missions. The Mounted Patrol also provides security at the Benton County Fair and other similar events in the county. In 2022, Mounted Patrol members worked a total of 589 hours.

The sheriff's office maintains a group of citizens who serve this office and our community as reserve deputies. These non-licensed volunteers assist in several capacities, such as providing traffic direction, performing winter cabin checks, staffing entry points at the county fair, and several other duties appropriate for non-licensed staff. In 2022, the 10 volunteer reserve deputies performed a total 627 hours of service on various projects.

The sheriff's office also has approximately 50 individuals who volunteer in the jail to assist with various programs provided to the inmates. In 2022, these volunteers performed 419 hours of work in programs in the jail. The Benton County Sheriff's Office is very grateful for the assistance provided to our mission by these volunteers.

Public outreach

Our outreach efforts are an important part of a proactive approach that aims to prevent future problems and build rapport between law enforcement and the community. In 2022, 484 DARE students in six Benton County schools were presented with the DARE curriculum. Our Police Activities League program re-emerged as a great opportunity for our staff to work with Foley and Rice police officers in building rapport with children aged 5 to 15 on a weekly basis throughout the summer. Our office also hosted full classes of Youth Snowmobile and Youth ATV certification courses.

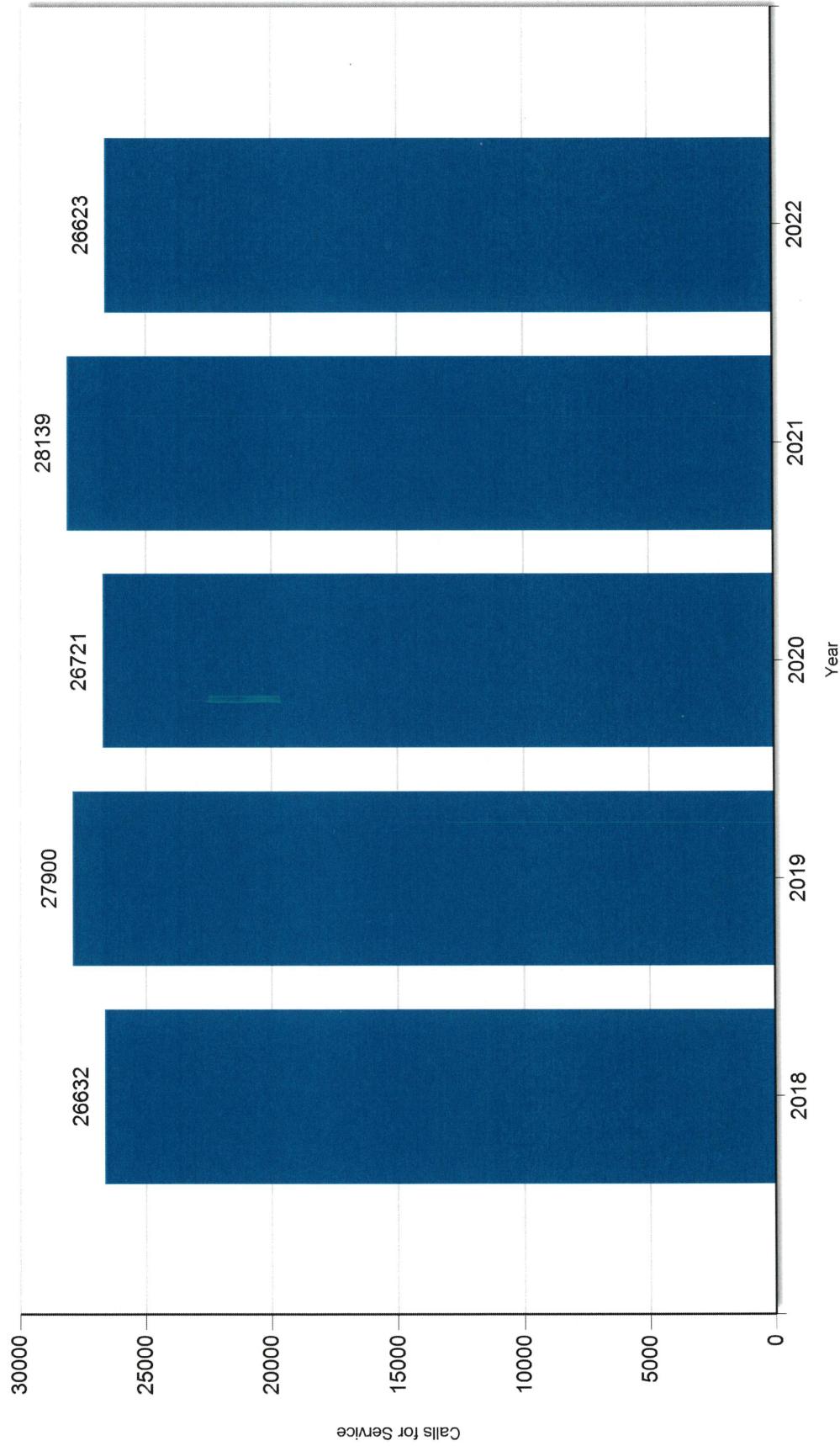
Social Media and Print Media

In 2022 the Benton County Sheriff's Office continued to make use of our Facebook, Twitter, and Nextdoor accounts to distribute information and crime prevention strategies. For those not already following us, our Twitter account may be found @BentonMNSheriff and our Facebook page is found at Facebook.com/BentonMNSheriff. Our audience on all of these social media platforms continues to grow regularly. On a number of occasions, we have successfully used social media to obtain leads on criminal investigations and locate individuals with active warrants. In 2022 our office continued our partnership with the Benton County News and Sauk Rapids Herald to provide a once monthly column on crime prevention and safety topics. The goal of this column is to enhance the safety of Benton County citizens by reaching out to a wider audience with our crime prevention messages. We hope to use these tools to help make Benton County a safer place.

CAD Calls for Service Yearly

Start Date: 1/1/2018

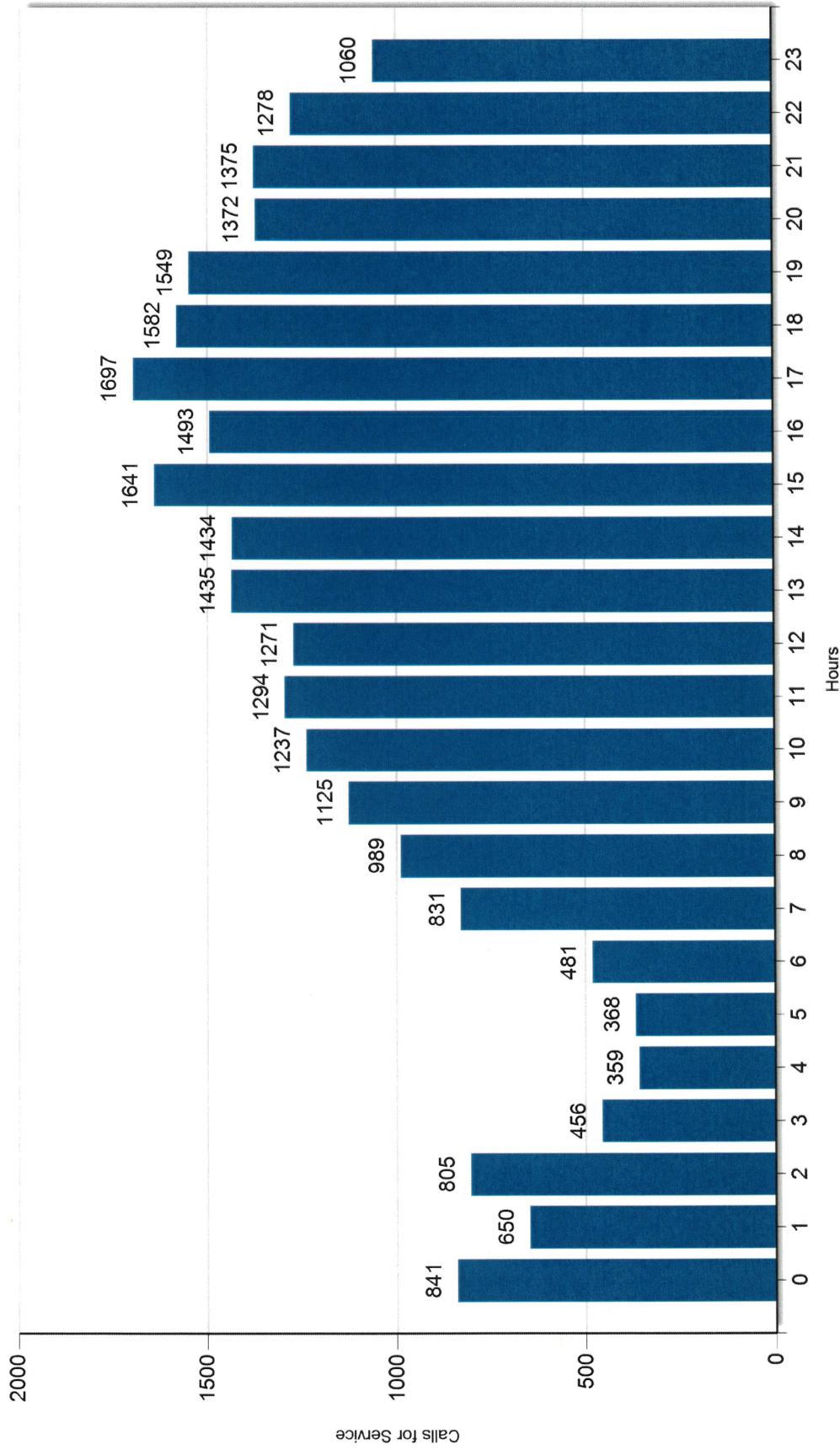
End Date: 12/31/2022



CAD Calls for Service Hourly

Start Date: 1/1/2022

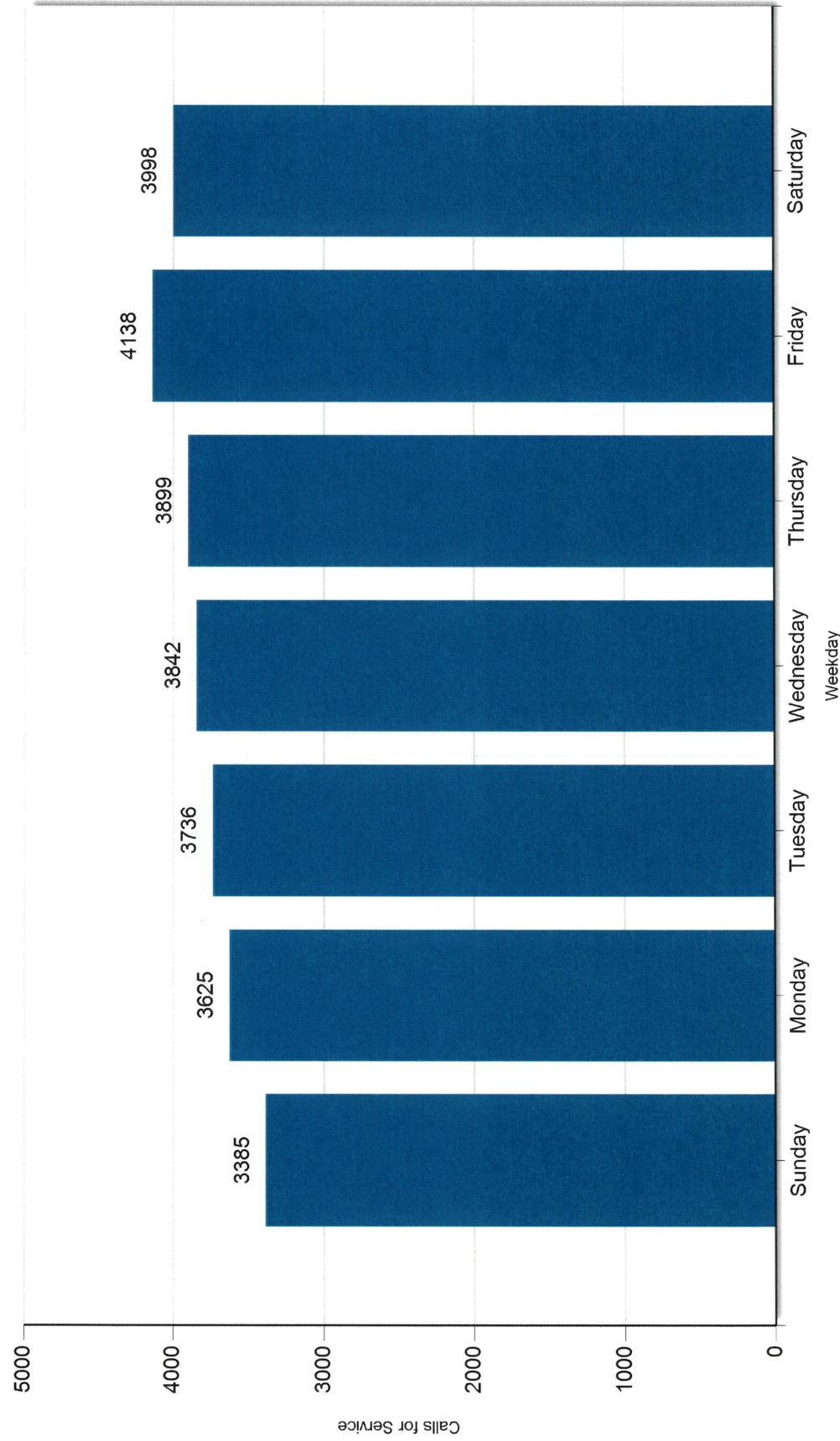
End Date: 12/31/2022



CAD Calls for Service Day Of Week

Start Date: 1/1/2022

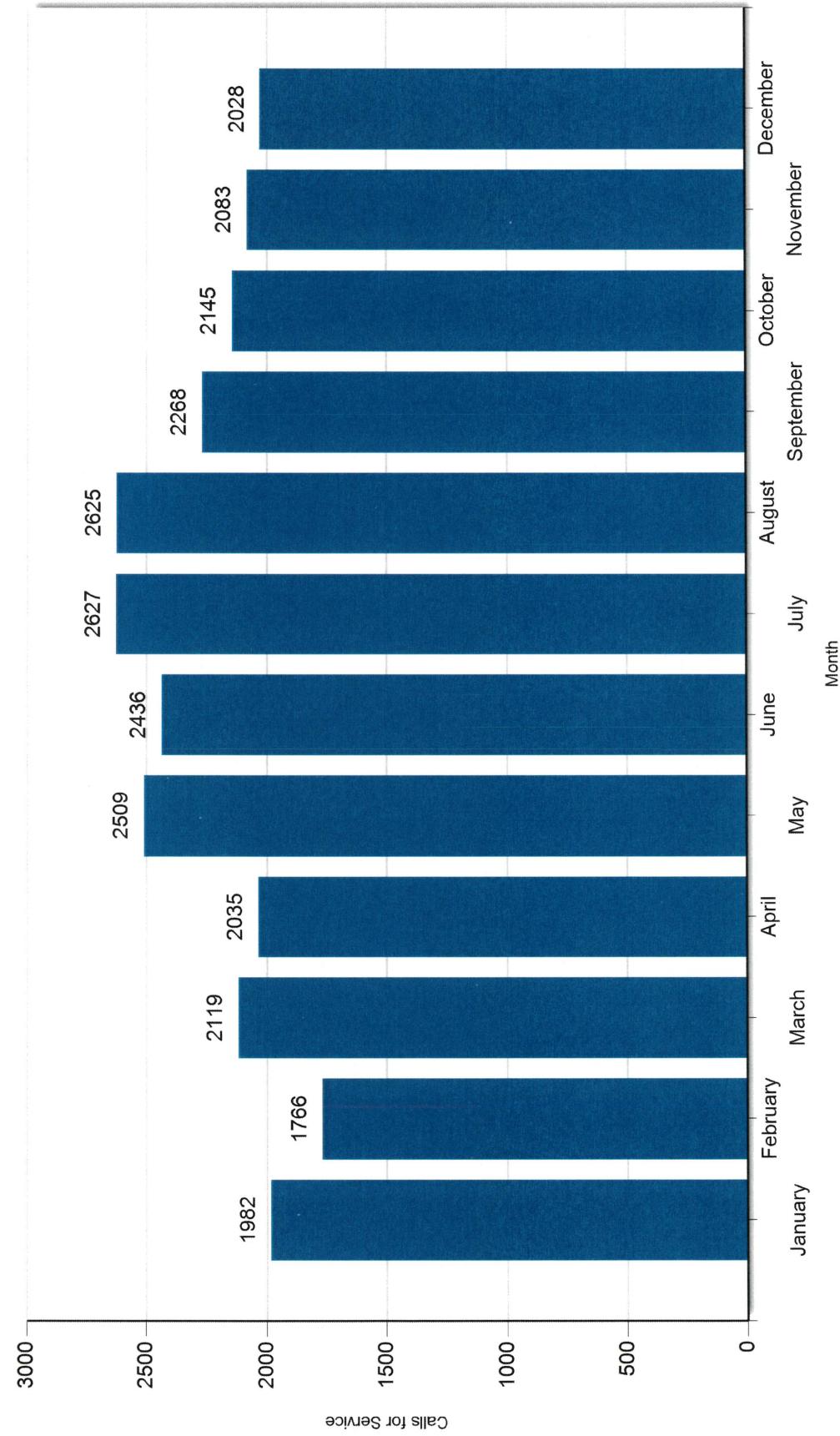
End Date: 12/31/2022



CAD Calls for Service Monthly

Start Date: 1/1/2022

End Date: 12/31/2022



Call Volume per Line

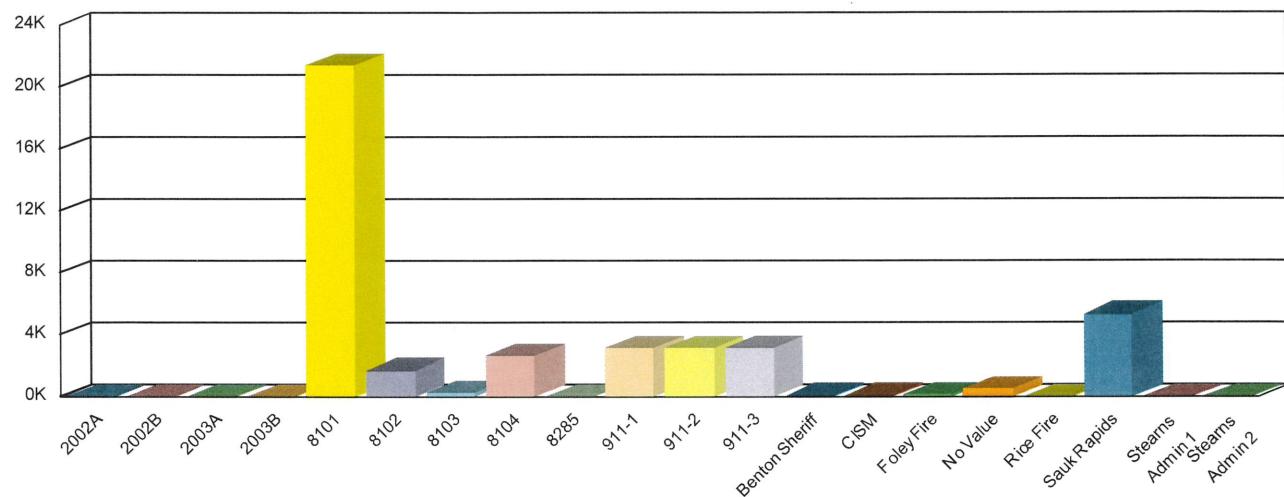
From:

01/01/2022 00:00:00

To:

12/31/2022 23:59:59

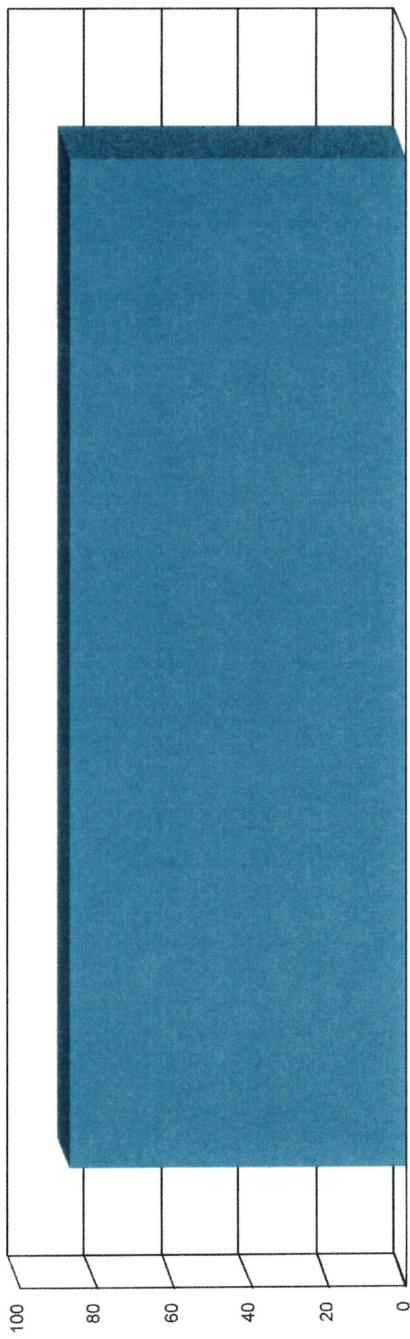
Number of Calls : 41,665



Line	Incoming	Outgoing	Abandoned	Number of Calls
2002A	0	2	0	2
2002B	0	1	0	1
2003A	0	1	0	1
2003B	0	1	0	1
8101	12,479	8,931	0	21,410
8102	1,130	598	0	1,728
8103	213	31	0	244
8104	2,620	7	0	2,627
8285	3	10	0	13
911-1	3,118	0	4	3,122
911-2	3,125	0	3	3,128
911-3	3,124	0	2	3,126
Benton Sheriff	0	70	0	70
CISM	90	2	0	92
Foley Fire	69	70	0	139
No Value	0	0	551	551
Rice Fire	5	8	0	13
Sauk Rapids	5,333	13	0	5,346
Stearns Admin 1	10	17	0	27
Stearns Admin 2	11	13	0	24
31,330		9,775	560	41,665

Total text to 911 sessions in the PSAP
01/01/2022 to 12/31/2022

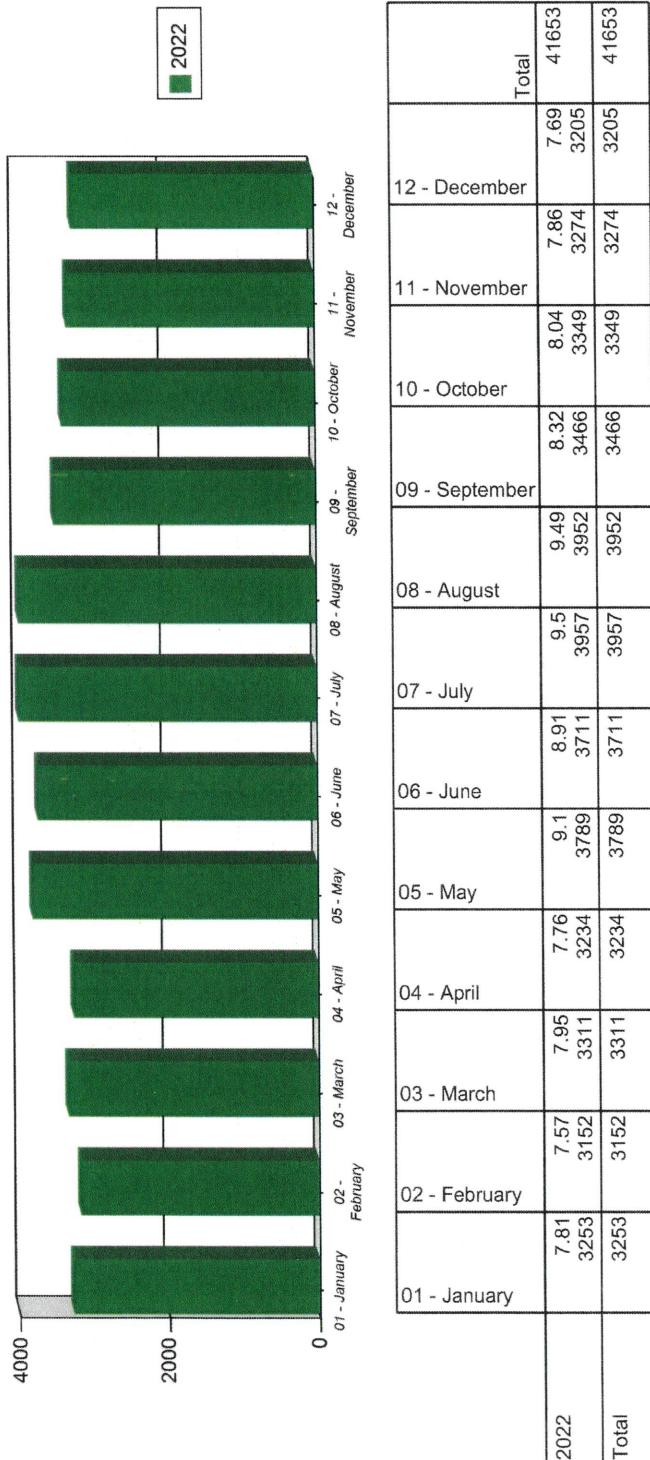
Number of Text : 87



<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Text</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>	<u>Cumulative (%)</u>
2022	87	100.00	100.00

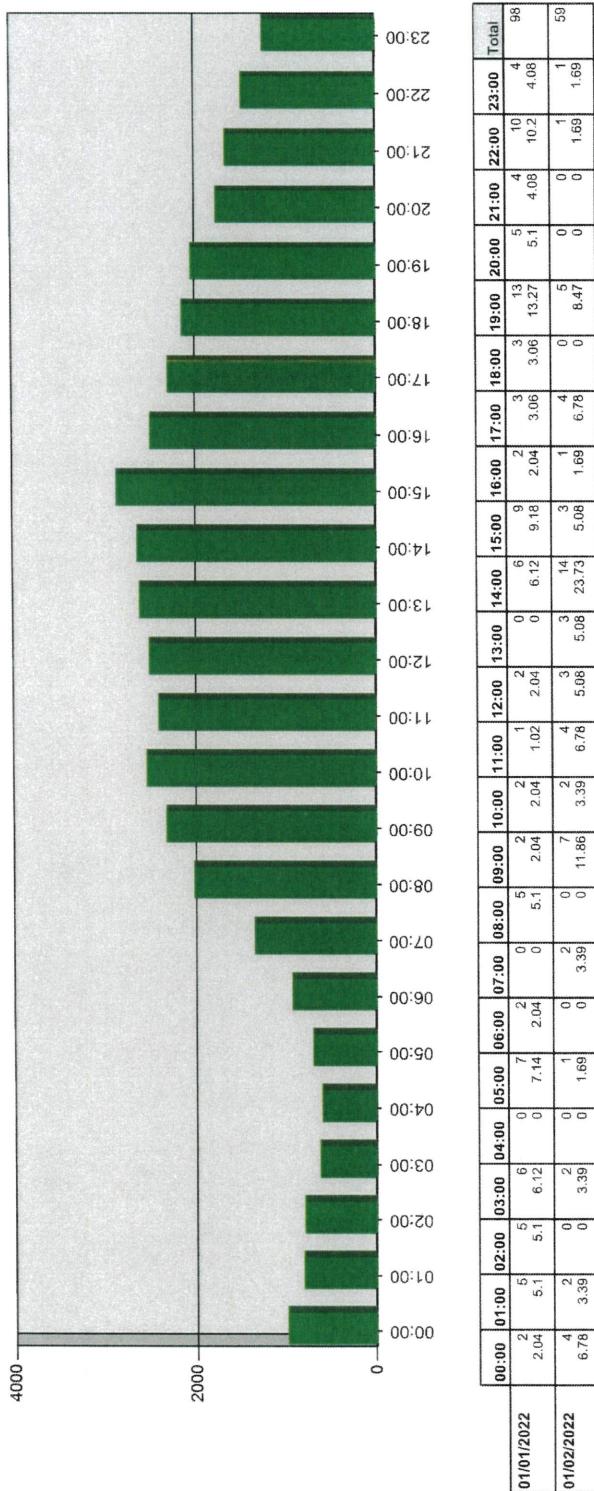
Calls in the PSAP per month of the year
01/01/2022 to 12/31/2022

Number of Calls : 41,653



Calls in the PSAP per hour of the day
01/01/2022 to 12/31/2022

Number of Calls : 41,653



Civil Process for 2022

Type	Count
Affidavit and Motion to Modify Order for Protection	4
Affidavit in Support of Registration	1
Amended Harassment Restraining Order	7
Amended Order for Protection	3
Amended Order for Protection After Motion to Modify	4
Amended Summons	1
Application for Extension OFP	2
Cancellation of Contract for Deed	4
Criminal Domestic Abuse No Contact Order	1
Domestic Abuse No Contact Order	1
Domestic Abuse Order for Dismissal	4
Eviction Summons and Complaint	66
Ex Parte Order Granting Petition for Harassment Restraining Order	59
ExParte OFP	35
Extension of Order for Protection	5
Finding of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order for Judgment	1
Mechanics Lien Sale	1
Mortgage Foreclosure Sale	14
Motion	1
Notice	7
Notice of Hearing	46
Notice of Intent to Terminate	1
Notice of Intention to Redeem	2
Notice of Mortgage Foreclosure Sale	22
Notice of Motion and Motion	12
Notice of Sale	2
Order	5
Order Denying Application for Extension of OFP	1
Order Denying Harassment Restraining Order After Hearing	9
Order Denying Petition for ExParte HRO	9
Order Denying Petition for ExParte OFP	12
Order for Commitment Hearing	1
Order for Confinement and Notice of Hearing	1
Order for Continuance	7
Order for Dismissal of Order for Protection	2
Order for Harassment Hearing	7
Order for Hearing	1

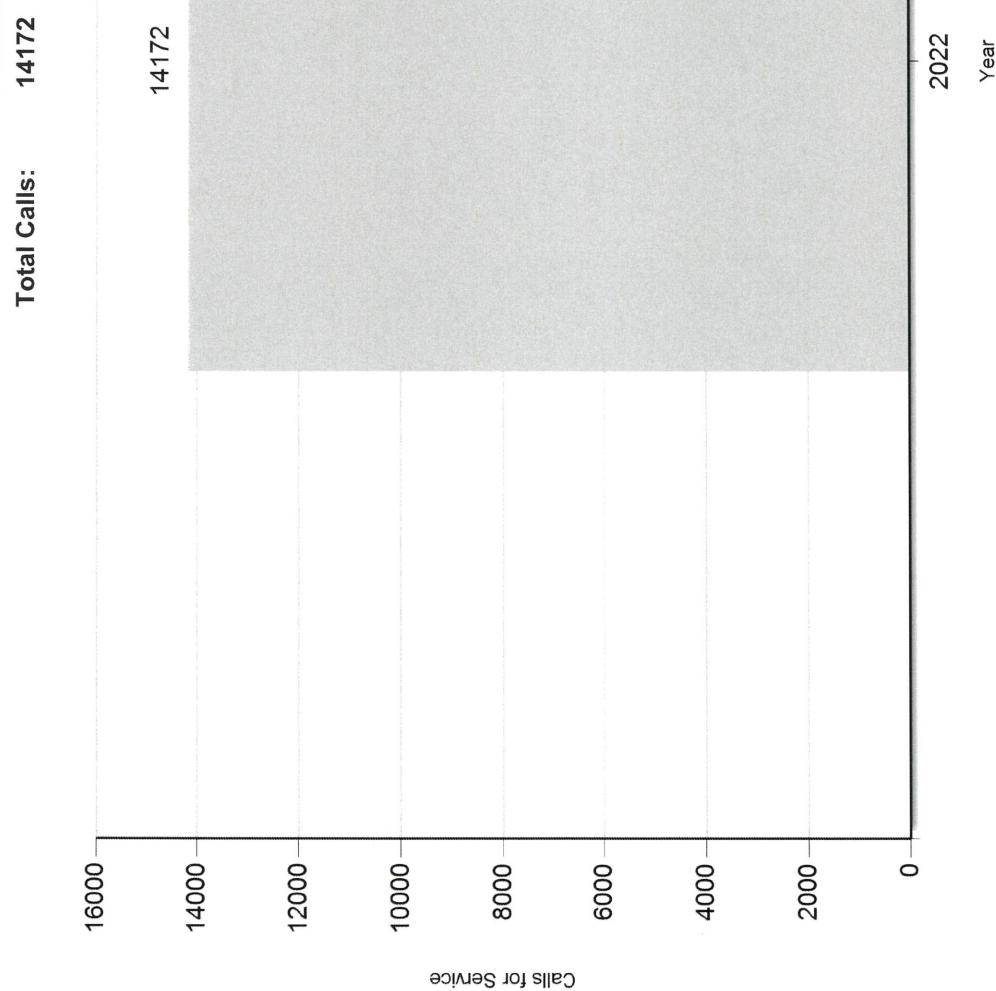
Order for Hearing (Domestic Abuse)	1
Order for Protection	6
Order for Protection Following Hearing	13
Order Granting Harassment Restraining Order After Hearing	18
Order to Appear for Modification OFP	2
Order to Show Cause	70
Petition	5
Redemption	2
Replevin Order	2
Statement of Claim and Summons	13
Stipulated Order Granting HRO without Hearing	1
Subpoena	93
Summons	15
Summons and Citation	2
Summons and Petition	77
Writ of Execution	7
Writ of Recovery	77
Total for 2022	765



Calls for Service Yearly

Start Date: 1/1/2022

End Date: 12/31/2022





Incident Summary by Incident

Date Range: 1/1/2022 to 12/31/2022

Incident Type	# of Incidents
911	1812
Traffic Stop	1531
Warrant	1301
Permit	926
Assist	778
Agency Assist	540
Medical	538
Records Check	448
Warrant File	405
Tzd	373
Suspicious	360
Miscellaneous	349
Animal	289
Vehicle	287
Alarm	282
Attempt To Locate	246
Void	233
Traffic Accident	211
Welfare Check	195
Car Killed Deer	192
Civil	190
Driving	176
Theft	164
Traffic Hazard	148
Child	134
Property	121
Extra Patrol	119
Civil Process	108



Incident Summary by Incident

Date Range: 1/1/2022 to 12/31/2022

Disturbance	98
Predatory Offender	98
Fire	87
Fraud	85
Harassment	80
Jail Incident	77
Request For ?????	76
Administrative	71
Test	66
Domestic	65
Background Check	57
Assault	44
Trespassing	44
Dumping	39
Dvs	38
Burglary	37
Transport	37
Suicidal Person	34
Human Services Report	33
Bcat	32
Violation Court Order	31
Missing Person	24
Vulnerable Adult	23
Criminal Damage To Property	22
Dui/dwi	21
Lift Assist	21
Burning Complaint	20
Unwanted Person	19
Drunk	18
Open Door	17



Incident Summary by Incident

Date Range: 1/1/2022 to 12/31/2022

Utility Problem	17
Death	15
Gun	15
Water	15
Weather	15
Dispute	14
Emergency Management	14
Fireworks	14
Terroristic Threats	14
Unwanted	13
Compliance Check	12
Police Proactive Visit	12
Alert	11
Repo Vehicle	11
Special Event	11
Controlled Substance	10
Gas Leak	10
Hit & Run	10
Tow	10
Disorderly Conduct	9
Parking	9
Accident	8
Fleeing	7
911 Text	6
Escort	4
Dnr Violation/complaint	3
Public Nuisance	3
School Bus Stop Arm Violation	3
Unknown Issue	3
Validations	3



Incident Summary by Incident

Date Range: 1/1/2022 to 12/31/2022

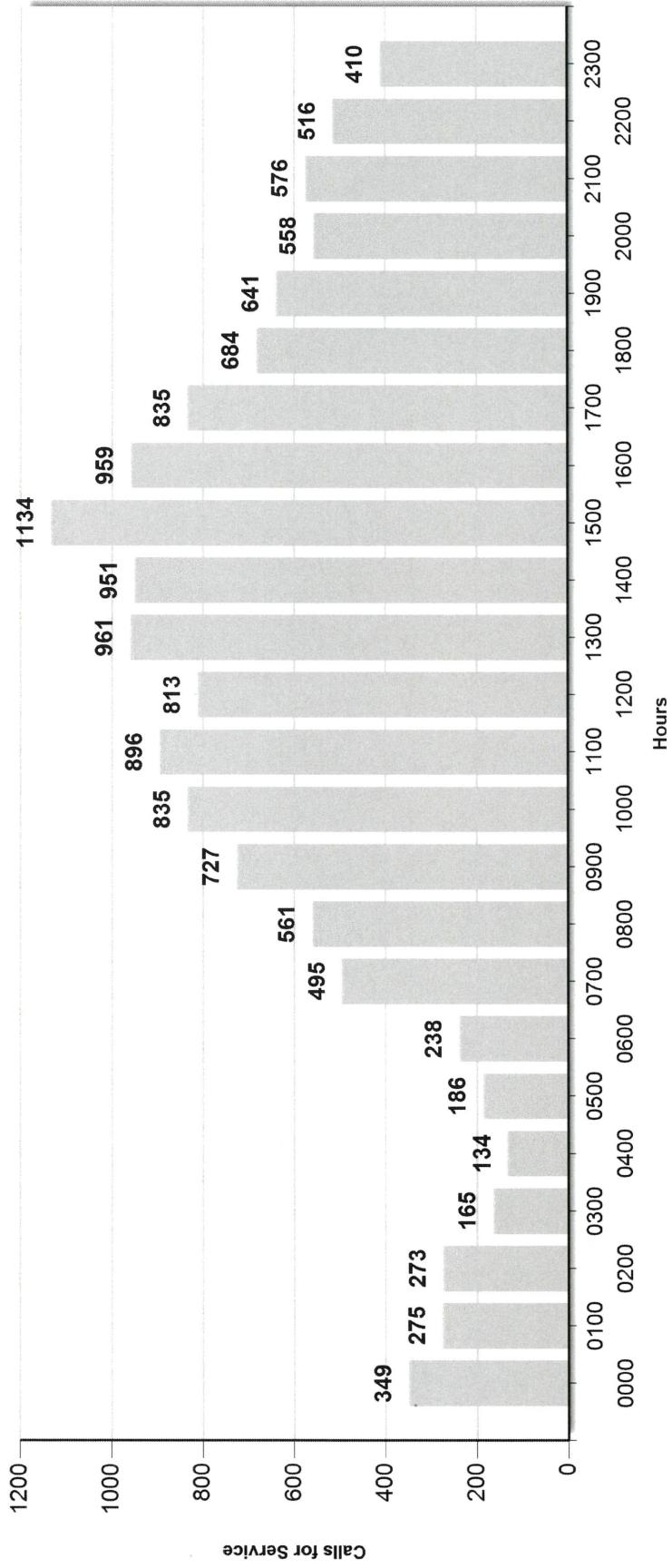
Arrest	2
Citation	2
Emergency Message	2
Predatory Offender Registry	2
Rms Import	2
Search Warrant	2
Train	2
Alcohol Violations	1
Environmental Complaint	1
False Info To Officer	1
Obscenity	1
Probation Violation	1
Robbery	1
Warning	1
Weight Restriction Enforcement	1
Written Warning	1
Total: 14194	



Calls for Service Hourly

1/1/2022 to 12/31/2022

Total Calls: 14197



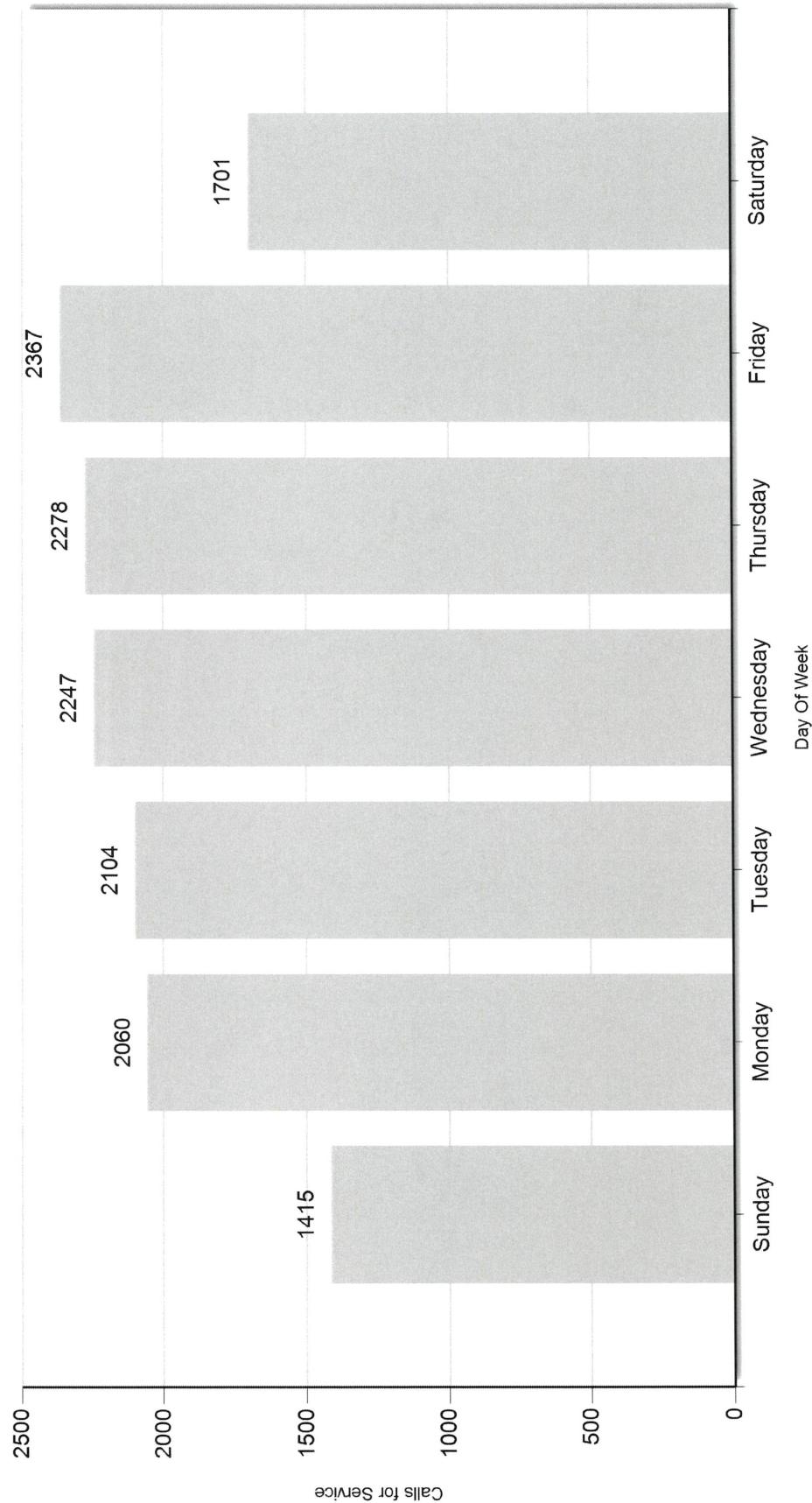


Calls for Service Day Of Week

Start Date: 1/1/2022

End Date: 12/31/2022

Total Calls: 14197



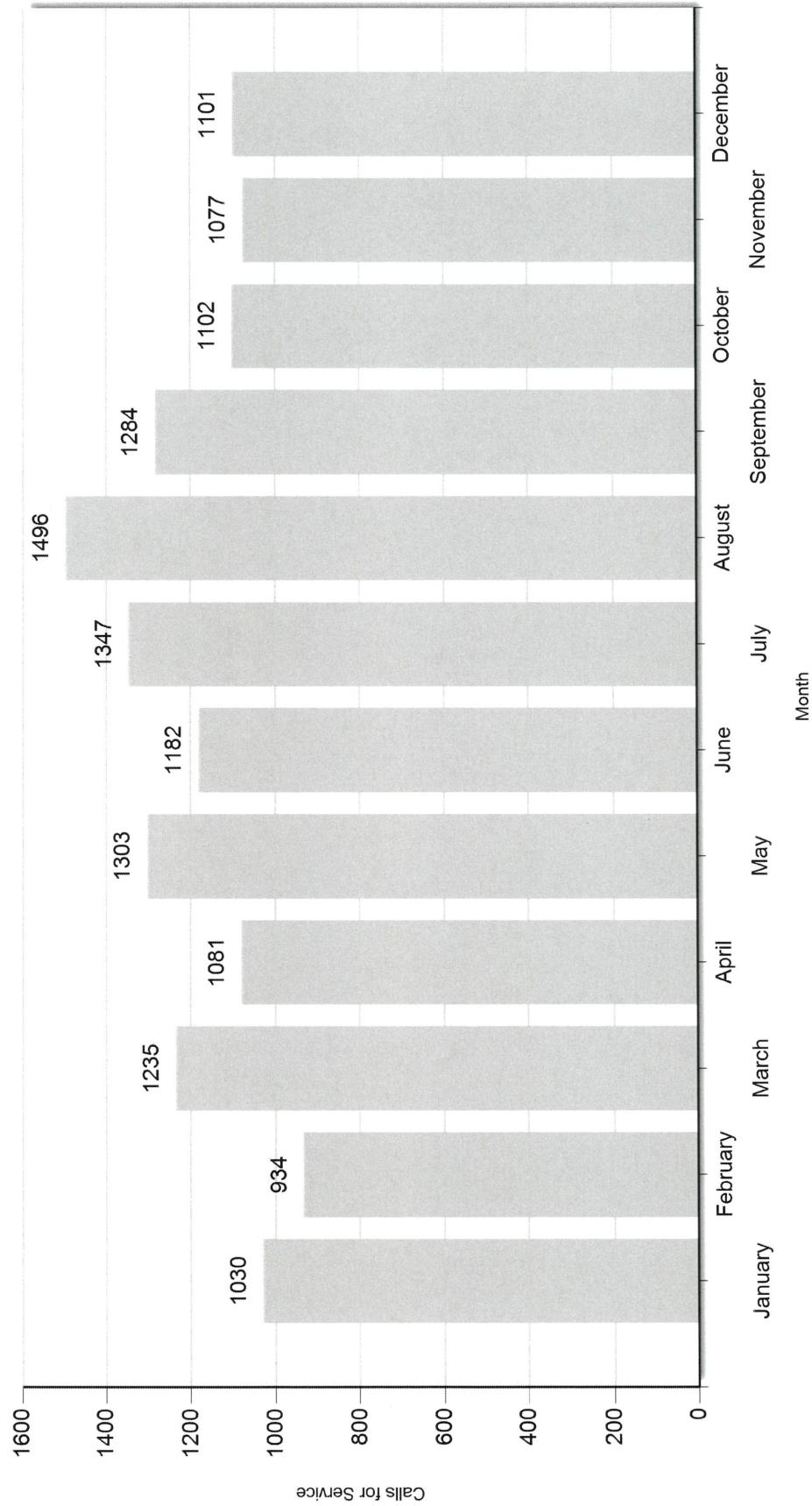


Calls for Service Monthly

Start Date: 1/1/2022

End Date: 12/31/2022

Total Calls: 14197



<u>BCSO 2022 Investigative Division Statistics</u>		<u>Increase/(Decrease) 2021</u>	
Total Cases Investigated:	156	153	+3
Total Cases Cleared:	135	132	+3
Clearance Rate:	87%	87%	5%

Types of Crimes:

Burglary	12	9	+3
Child Physical Abuse	3	7	-4
Criminal Sexual Conduct	10	7	+3
PREA	6	2	+4
Vulnerable Adults	10	8	+2
Death	4	8	-4
Other Person Crimes	5	4	+1
Other	69	68	+2
Conflict Cases	1	3	-2
Internal Investigations	6	3	+3
Background Investigations	30	31	-1
Investigation Requests	32	40	-8
Requests Evidence Copies	155	194	-39
Search Warrants	47	53	-6

Property Room

Items Received:	788	1220	-432
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BENTON COUNTY JAIL

581 HIGHWAY 23 NE

Phone: 3209688180 Fax: 3209686347

Census Report (Details)

Date From: 01/01/2022 00:00

Date To: 12/31/2022 23:59

Statistics	
Males	1212
Females	383
Total Count	1595
Total Inmates Released during period	1584
Total Inmates in Jail at end of period	11
Total number of days Inmates were held	17237
Number of Days in the period	365
Average Daily Population	47.22
Average Length of Stay	10.81

Statistics for inmates held more than 24 hours	
Males	776
Females	202
Total Count	978
Average Length of Stay	17.62