

BRATTLEBORO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief's Message

I am pleased to present the 2015 Annual Report for the Brattleboro Police Department. The men and women of the Department work very hard each and every day to accomplish our mission to reduce crime, reduce the fear of crime and deal with the various livability issues by working together with the members of the community. I am proud of the work that the men and women of this Department have done.

This past year we have continued to focus our efforts around the neighborhoods and downtown district. We understand proactive policing, problem-solving, and the development of police/community relationships as well as social bonds among residents.

We also understand the importance of engaging the public, building relationships and utilizing intelligence and information to prevent the next crime. Evidence of this can be seen in the increase in meetings and speaking engagements with various civic groups, schools, merchants and concerned neighborhoods. Sharing the responsibility for safety in our community has opened important lines of communication between these organizations and the Police Department. I am grateful for their willingness to partner with us. We have encouraged our officers to have a sense of ownership and to be available by having direct contact rather than depending on random patrols to solve neighborhood problems.

We realize that we cannot address crime problems alone. We have a duty to involve members of the community in matters that impact upon the quality of their lives. We are renewing and developing new community bonds every day to ensure that the people most impacted by crime have a voice in identifying and resolving problems in their neighborhoods. We understand that our efforts must be tailored to the unique needs of each neighborhood and we recognize our success would not be possible without citizens who are willing to work with us and take steps to prevent crime. We are grateful for all of your help and your willingness to work with us.

Respectfully,
Michael R. Fitzgerald, Chief

Finally, while we have accomplished much, we know we're not done. We will continue to make improvements within our organization and we will never stop trying to do better. We are in this together and we look forward to working with each of you on the problems that present themselves in 2016.

Staffing

Currently we have 22 full time, sworn police officers. Our authorized staffing is 27. We have 5 vacancies for patrol officer.

Chief	1	Detective	4
Captain	1	Patrol Officers	9
Lieutenant	4	Administration	3
Sergeant	3	Dispatchers	7

In 2015, Officers Lindsey DeFord and Caleb Currie left the Department to continue their law enforcement careers in other agencies. Lt Robert Kirkpatrick retired after 24 years with the BPD and his knowledge and wisdom is greatly missed.

We have expanded our recruitment practices by sending members of the Department to various job fairs held at universities and colleges throughout New England in order to attract the best possible candidates. This strategy is bringing in a greater number of candidates and making a very competitive selection process going into 2016.

Calls for Service

During 2015, officers responded to nearly 10,537 calls for service, 15 Aggravated Assaults, and 131 Simple Assaults. Of those numbers, 4 were Assaults on a Police Officer. There were 12 Robbery incidents, 56 Burglary incidents, 98 Disorderly Conducts, 140 Vandalisms, 103 Family Disturbances, 348 Larceny complaints, and 350 Trespass Violations. The Department also handled 868 Animal Problems.

774 arrests were made in 2014, with Officer Jason Hamilton accounting for 116 of them.

Brattleboro Officers responded to 668 accidents and assisted citizens with 498 vehicle unlocks. In working towards safer roadways, officers made 4762 traffic stops resulting in 1019 tickets and levied fines of almost \$142,318. There were 3,453 warnings issued for motor vehicle infractions. Officer David Cerreto led the department in traffic enforcement in writing, 264 tickets.

Officer Adam Petlock supervised and coordinated a motor vehicle safety checkpoint. Participating in these events were officers from the Vermont State Police, Windham County Sheriff's Department, Dover Police Department and the Brattleboro Police Department. During the checkpoints they made contact with over 800 motorists.

Making the roadways safe for pedestrians and motorists is a high priority for the Department. Everyone shares a stake in making this possible.

Major Cases

Opiates and substance abuse continue to be a significant part of police work in Brattleboro. Through arrests and street contacts, officers continue to work with other community organizations in an effort to get addicts the treatment they need and to hold dealers accountable.

Brattleboro Police Department responded to 37 reports of overdoses in our community in 2015. This number represents the times BPD was called to a scene with medical personnel. The total number of overdoses that occurred is significantly higher as friends or family frequently take overdosed subjects directly to the hospital.

As part of the Department's community outreach programs, officers routinely patrol the downtown area on foot. During these patrols officers also take enforcement action when needed. In one instance an aggressive panhandler was arrested for disorderly conduct. After his arrest he was found to be in possession of heroin. Officers made arrests for possession of heroin during car stops, while investigating domestic disputes and as a result of proactive surveillance by both the patrol and detective divisions.

In an effort to keep the motoring public safe, BPD targeted drivers under the influence of drugs. Fully 10% of our DUI arrests this year were of suspects under the influence of drugs, the majority of them high on opiate pills or heroin.

BPD's ongoing efforts to keep drivers safe were rewarded with approximately \$40,000 in traffic enforcement grants. Further, one of our officers was selected to become a drug recognition expert, a designation reserved for officers highly skilled and trained in detecting drugged drivers. Officer Adam Petlock will attend nearly a month of specialized training, some of which will occur on the west coast, in order to increase our ability to protect travelers. This training and assignment is grant funded and will not impact the Brattleboro budget.

While Brattleboro experienced nearly 668 collisions this year, most did not involve injury and none were fatal.

Brattleboro's detective unit investigated 18 unattended deaths in 2015, including the drug-related murder of a well-known citizen. With the assistance of the state police the suspect in this crime was arrested in less than a week and is currently incarcerated awaiting trial.

The number of robberies reported in Brattleboro remained nearly the same with 12 reported. These were all aggressively investigated by our criminal investigation division. Several higher profile cases stand out. In June a man robbed People's United Bank on Main Street. He was identified and in custody within a week.

A woman robbed several restaurants on Putney Road. Within an hour surveillance photos went out on the department's Twitter and Facebook feeds. Thanks to information provided by the public and hardworking investigators; the woman was arrested several days later without incident.

Over the summer a subject committed three robberies in the downtown area within a period of a few weeks. CID detectives put in many hours on these cases and the suspect was identified and arrested.

In December a man robbed People's United Bank with a fabricated hoax bomb. This subject was identified by CID and arrested within a few weeks. The dangerous man was part of a multistate crime spree of armed robberies and it was through dedicated work and a lot of interagency cooperation that he was identified and arrested.

Court rules limit what information can be released related to specific cases, but in many of these robberies heroin addiction was found to be the motivating factor behind the crimes.

Special Investigations

The Southeastern Unit for Special Investigations (SUSI) or Safe Place goal is to facilitate an integrated, multidisciplinary response to victims of child physical and sexual abuse and victims of adult sexual assault that reduces trauma, promotes prevention and advocacy, and supports healing for all in our community affected by these offenses. In support of this mission, we provide a safe environment for individuals who may have been abused to come to talk with professionals. Our goals are to:

- Investigate criminal allegations of child and adult sexual assault and severe child physical abuse using specially trained investigators.
- Minimize further trauma to victims by providing a safe place to talk with investigators.
- Refer children and adult victims and non-offending family members to services designed to help them heal.

· Create public awareness of the challenges of child abuse through outreach and education.

The Brattleboro Police Department investigated approximately 40 SUSI cases for the year 2015. The Brattleboro Police Department's Criminal Investigation Division (CID) has two Detectives who have received specialized training who investigate these types of cases. The Supervisor of the CID also acts as the Chair on SUSI's Directors/Policy Board which consists of no fewer than seven (7) or more than fifteen (15) members. Members of the Policy Board are drawn from a cross section of the Windham County community.

The CID conducted 41 forensic analyses on computer/cell phones. We are the only Department that conducts forensic exams in Southern VT. In addition to performing forensics on computer devices we spoke to over 150 students, from elementary to high school, on the dangers of the internet.

The Brattleboro Police Department's Criminal Investigation Division has been operating with 4 Detectives during the 2015 year which has contributed to our high solvability rate in major cases

Drug Drop-Off

Most prescription medications should not be flushed down the toilet or thrown into the trash. Since 2012 the Brattleboro Police Department has been involved in the Drug Drop Box program which addresses the vital public health and safety issue. The Drug Drop Box program increases the ability for patients to easily and properly dispose of unneeded, expired, or unwanted medicines. Since the implementation of this program, the amount of unused, expired, or unwanted medicines has increased every year. For the year 2015, the BPD collected approximately 237.00 pounds of these types of medications.



In 2015 the Brattleboro Police Department organized three Coffee with a Cop events hosted by Detective Ryan Washburn and Officer Adam Petlock. These events are becoming increasingly popular and are held at local coffee shops. One of the keys to Coffee with a Cop's success is that it removes the physical barriers and crisis situations that routinely define interactions between law enforcement officials and community members. Instead it allows for relaxed, informal one-on-one interactions in a friendly atmosphere. This informal contact increases trust in police officers as individuals which is a foundation to building partnerships and engaging in community problem solving.

The Coffee with a Cop program is based on a simple concept. Police and community members come together in an informal, neutral space to discuss community issues and build relationships.

This year's sponsors were the Brattleboro Food Co-Op, The Work's and the Restless Rooster.

Dispatch

Brattleboro Central Dispatch is the communication center for the Town. They answer calls for service and dispatch for the first responders of Rescue Inc., Brattleboro Fire Department and the Brattleboro Police Department. The Brattleboro Police Department responded to 10,537 calls for service. The Brattleboro Fire Department responded to 2,345 calls for service, and Rescue Inc. responded to 5,068.

Jeanette VonFeldt and Neena Sweeney left Brattleboro Central Dispatch to take positions with the Vermont State Police 911 center. Jaymi Ferno switched from part-time to full time and was a welcomed addition. We currently have 7 full-time employees and 3 part-time. We hopefully will be adding an 8th fulltime employee in January so we will be fully staffed.

Dispatchers participated in various exercises with other local first responders to ensure that their service is of the highest quality. Some of the highlights include; a tabletop exercise that tested the School Crisis Plan and a Mass Causality drill.

The Town transitioned from BENS (Brattleboro Emergency Notification System) to VT-Alert and implemented a new paging system town wide. None of these could have been made possible without the hard work of the Dispatch team.