

**2019**

**Annual Report**

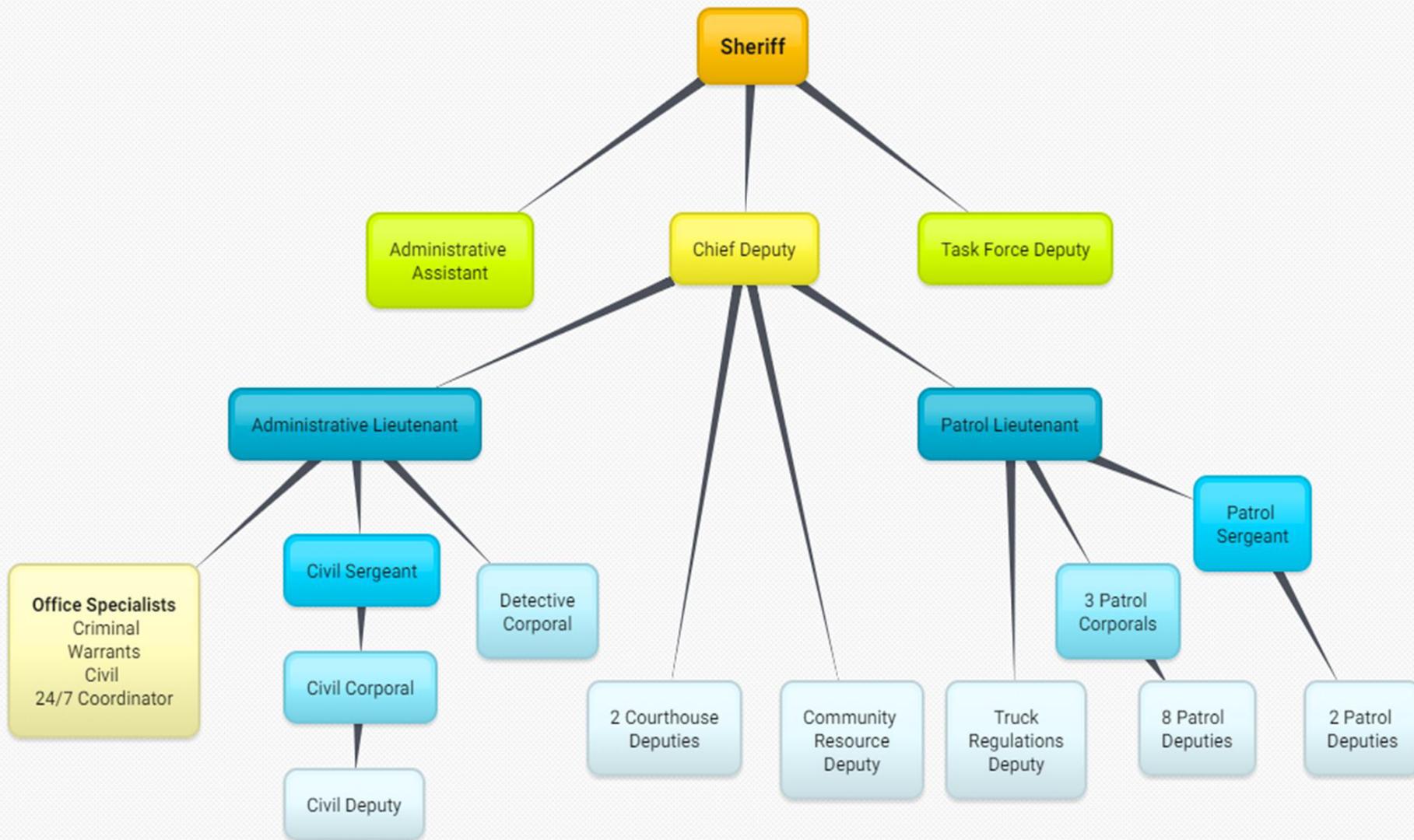
**Stark County Sheriff's Office**



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# Stark County Sheriff's Office Organizational Structure



# Letter from Sheriff Corey Lee



It is my great honor and privilege to introduce our new administration's first Annual Report. We have accomplished a great many things in 2019 and are proud of the strides we have made in such a short period of time.

During this last year we have conducted, what I would explain, as a complete overhaul of our department. We have restructured to increase efficiency and productivity, increased morale, moved our focus to community involvement, and modernized almost every facet of what we do for Stark County. This aggressive and progressive approach, as I call it, has led to increased involvement in our communities in ways that we hoped and believed it would.

None of what we have accomplished would be possible without every member of our team. The men and women of the Stark County Sheriff's Office have truly shown, in this past year, what can be accomplished with teamwork, transparency, and the desire to provide Stark County with the services and protection that the public expects and deserves.

The following report will give you a glimpse of the changes we have made, the accomplishments of 2019, a summary of the services we have and will be providing, as well as a snapshot into what your Sheriff's Office has become.

We thank you for your continued support and we look forward to continuing with our new vision and mission in 2020.

# Chief Deputy



The Chief Deputy position is responsible for managing the Patrol Division, Courthouse Security Personnel, the School Resource Officer, coordinating our community involvement, and additionally oversees the Reserve Program.

The Stark County Sheriff's Office reserve program consists of armed license peace officers and civilian staff from within Stark County. Their main focus to assist with transports, which in turn, keeps patrol deputies available to fulfil their primary functions.

As the transport needs of southwest N.D. continue to rise, the logistics of organizing transports has been a growing hurdle within the Sheriff's Office. The coordination of these transports, both in, and out of state is assigned to our Chief Deputy. This is a forever challenging and evolving task

and our Reserve Program allows us to stay on task and up to the challenge.

The community programs and events in Stark County are where we find it important to show our presence and interact with the citizens living in and traveling to Stark County. Some of the bigger events we took part in 2019 were Opry land days in Richardton, National Night Out in Dickinson, Belfield Hoedown, Trick-or-trunk in Dickinson, Trunk-or-treat in Belfield, the back pack program, parades in each of the towns in Stark County throughout the year, and each of our communities school programs and events.

Appointed to this role in 2019, was Ray Kaylor and he brought great strengths to this position with his vast experience in Law Enforcement, Corrections, and the court system itself with the many years he has served in his communities. Ray leans on this experience acting as a liaison to the multiple agencies and organizations we interact with.

# **Stark County Sheriff's Office**

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### **Administrative Division**



The Administrative Division of the Stark County Sheriff's Office is led by Lieutenant Eldon Mehrer and comprised of the Investigative Unit, Civil Process, Warrants, 24/7 Program and all other administrative services.

In 2019, the division took steps to assure all of the personnel in the division were aware of their responsibilities. The concept of a team approach has been implemented to be sure duties and responsibilities as well as job tasks are completed effectively and efficiently.

Lieutenant Mehrer has the responsibility of supervising the criminal investigative unit, the civil division, front office personnel, he is refining the Sheriff's Office policies and the policy manual, assigned as the Public Information Officer, and prepares and seeks out grant opportunities.

In addition to all of this, Lt. Mehrer manages the entire evidence area and procedures.

Matt Keesler was promoted to the rank of Sergeant and spearheads the Civil Process and Criminal Warrants responsibilities. A dedicated team for civil process was implemented to consist of a corporal and one deputy. Fern Moser serves as Corporal and Ralph Poikus rounds out the division as the civil deputy. These personnel are responsible for handling service of civil process, criminal warrants, protection and restraining orders. They also take care of the majority of the daily court, mental health and medical transports to and from our local facilities. They also do other transports as are needed to other facilities. Sgt. Matt Keesler processes and files returns, executions and levies with the court, conducts sheriff's sales and also manages the "Defendant Not Found" (DNF) paper service attempts.



The criminal investigations unit handles all of the major criminal cases that are reported to the agency. The detective corporal assists the deputies in investigating their cases which are usually class B misdemeanors or lower level class A misdemeanors. The detective assists with the management of evidence and the evidence area and handles most felony cases. Detective Corporal Trey Weyer was placed into this role and has been getting up to speed with various training courses over the past year. Drug cases, theft cases and sexual assault cases were the bulk of crimes the investigative unit processed in 2019.



Our administrative office specialists provide valuable support to the day to day operations of the Sheriff's Office. They process, file and prepare for the deputies, much of the paperwork needed for serving the civil, criminal warrants and other paper processes. The four office specialists are a pretty tight knit group with a team mindset. They assist with the 24/7 program as needed by accepting payments, answering phone questions, and assisting with drug patch changes. Some other daily tasks include the mail run being done every day, which consists of the office specialists taking mail or other documents down to the courthouse for the Attorneys office, Clerk of Courts, Juvenile Court, DPD, and the Auditors. They routinely answer the phone and assist the public at the window with whatever they might need.

Lyn Welk--Lyn's duties mainly focus on the maintenance of arrest warrants and traffic citations. Arrest warrants are received via email from the Clerk of District Courts throughout the day. The arrest warrants need to be made available for deputies and officers for service. Lyn Welk prepares the warrants for service, enters them into the state or nationwide database, as well as taking care of the backend paperwork once the arrest warrants has been served. Traffic citations, warnings, and accident reports are maintained by Lyn. In addition, she assists the Chief Deputy with coordination of inmate transports from around the state back to Stark County to be seen in court for their Stark County charges.

Marinna Marsh-- Marinna's main focus as an Office Specialist for the Sheriff's Office is processing civil papers. Some examples include: Divorce papers, garnishments, small claims, mental health, Three Day Notices, child support, subpoena's and debts. She processes them, put them out for service, scans the return affidavits, and mails the return along with the invoice back to whomever it was received from.

Some of Marinna's other focuses are Truck Regulatory, Fingerprints and assisting with the 24/7 program. Truck Regulatory consists of Marinna reviewing permit requests in the Loadpass Permit System and approving them or sending them back for changes. Fingerprints are done on Tuesdays and Thursdays by appointments only.

Marinna also prepares bank deposits for the auditor. The bank deposits include the payments for civil paper service as well as for fingerprints.

Trudie Neurohr-- Trudie's position is Office Specialist/24/7 Coordinator. The Office Specialist duties include but are not limited to answering phones and referring calls to the appropriate department, greet individuals, serve papers and provide office support for the entire department.

Trudie's primary duties as the 24/7 Coordinator concentrate on ensuring court order participants comply with the 24/7 Sobriety Program. The program is court ordered and includes alcohol and/or illegal drug related charges. Court ordered participants sign up with the Sobriety Program at the Stark County Sheriff's Office and from that point their compliance is monitored. Monitoring includes a SCRAM (Secure Continuous Remote Alcohol Monitoring) bracelet, twice daily breath tests and drug patch. Non-compliance with the court ordered program involves writing reports to send to the States Attorney's Office to testifying in courts. Participants become non-compliant when levels of drug use have not ceased, appointments are missed, alcohol is detected during a breath test or reported on the SCRAM Bracelet and/or tampering with any device or patch placed on the person. In addition, it is Trudie's duty to monitor the finances and making sure that all participants are up to date with payments. Other duties include but are not limited to continuously monitoring the participants court cases, recording participants test results and providing test results to outside law enforcement agencies.

Andrea Zimnawoda-- Andrea's duties as an Office Specialist include the processing of criminal and juvenile summons & complaints and subpoenas; release of accident and/or records requests; management of the Stark County Sex Offender Registry; processing & entry of Restraining/Protection/No Contact Orders; and management of Extraditions from out-of-state warrants served within Stark County. Along with extraditions, Andrea is the county contact for the Northwest Shuttle Transport system. She is one of three certified Child Passenger Safety technicians at Stark County Sheriff's Office. Andrea is able to assist the public with properly installing child passenger safety seats and providing general safety information on child passenger safety.

The most important item to highlight about this group of office specialists is that they truly work as a cohesive team as they support one another on a daily basis, especially to support the requirements of administering the 24/7 program. Each has a good understanding of the other's responsibilities and are able to support one another if there is an absence. The Sheriff's Office is able to function seamlessly on a day to day basis.



# Courthouse Security

The primary focus for Security Deputies Greg Barros and Niel Badilles has been to provide a safe and secure environment for all those who work within the Stark County Courthouse and its visitors. Duties include a security screening process at the main entrance on all visitors/defendants entering the Courthouse to conduct business. Security includes that all visitors must walk through and clear the metal detector. Included in the metal detector is an x-ray machine to check all bags, purses, and cases for any dangerous items.

Security Deputies monitor defendants arriving for court and check them for possible warrants. It is their duty to monitor surveillance cameras located throughout the Courthouse, both inside and outside; as well as monitor the courthouse alarm systems and take appropriate action.

In the event there is a situation requiring a response, it would fall upon them to take the appropriate action, which may include putting the courthouse on total lock down, or in a case of a fire alarm clearing the building. These Deputies make assessments after an incident, clear the alarm and let everyone go back to their daily business.

Deputies may be requested to be in a courtroom for safety and/or security to either monitor a certain case or assist in removing a disruptive individual(s) from the courtroom, this is a vital part of daily operations for all courthouse functions.

At the end of the day it is their job to shut down security systems appropriately and to ensure the courthouse is locked and secure before leaving.



# School Resource Officer Position

In 2019, Deputy Megan Wenisch was assigned to our S.R.O. program. The jurisdiction covers Richardton-Taylor, Belfield, Taylor Elementary and South Heart Public schools respectively.

Building strong relationships with students, teachers, staff, and community members was a goal of ours in 2019. This position places a law enforcement presence in the schools and helps act as a deterrent to any potential school violence. Investigation involving both criminal allegations and status offenses (offenses unique to juveniles) is the responsibility of the School Resource Officer. The S.R.O. provides a presence at school dances and sporting events as well! Most of all, Deputy Wenisch made it her personal goal to just chat with students and staff about whatever they'd like and continues to make each school know they are her priority.

Education not only comes from our fine schools; the School Resource Officer is involved with education in the schools. Deputy Wenisch has taught classes on search and seizure, the dangers of vaping, and responsible social media use.

Social media has become the mainstay of communication, both in and out of our schools. Unfortunately, online bullying and the distribution of inappropriate images continues to be a challenge. Investigations and several allegations of these offenses were reported with remarkable clearance rates in 2019, and continuing to teach students constructive consequences of their actions will continue to be a work in progress. Hopefully, this will lead to students making better choices in the future.

Referrals to Juvenile Court and investigations in 2019 are listed below:

- Tobacco violations: 17**
- Runaways: 2**
- Unruly: 2**
- Truancy: 5**
- Sex crimes: 10**
- Speak with an officer: 46**



# Patrol Division



The patrol division of the Stark County Sheriff's Office is led by Lieutenant Jesse Hoff and consists of 14 sworn deputies patrolling the 1,340 square miles of Stark County. The deputies are split into four shifts; A, B, C and D. These shifts provide 24/7 service to the county, with a minimum of two deputies on-duty. This division handled the vast majority of the years 14,339 calls for service.

Sergeant Dan Kensinger leads B shift. In August, we were proud to promote three patrol deputies to the rank of Corporal. Corporals John Hiltunen, Kevin Eldridge and Davie Wallace Jr. then took the lead of A, B and D shifts respectively. In addition to these shifts, the Patrol Division also included the truck regulatory deputy, Deputy Barbara Tessier. In 2019 our Truck Regulatory Deputy performed

76 contacts in Stark County and collected \$30,781 in civil overload penalties. In September, we added the 15<sup>th</sup> member to the patrol division – K-9 Archer. Archer is the first Stark County Sheriff's Office K-9 since the retirement of K-9 Lunar in 2014. Archer is a two-year-old Belgian Malinois and came to us from Slovakia. He is a single purpose K-9, trained in narcotics detection, tracking, and evidence recovery. He is now paired with his handler, Corporal Kevin Eldridge. Archer's purchase and maintenance costs are funded through donations from several county citizens and businesses.



For their traffic enforcement efforts in 2019, Corporals John Hiltunen and Kevin Eldridge, along with Deputies Colten Trout, Barbara Tessier, Dylan Scheitlin and Ryan Fahy were awarded commemorative coins by the North Dakota Department of Transportation. The award citation highlights the importance of traffic safety and enforcement, reading; "On average in North Dakota, motor vehicle crashes account for more than 100 lives lost and over 4,000 injuries each year." To enhance our commitment to traffic safety and enforcement, the Stark County Sheriff's Office purchased a handheld L.I.D.A.R. unit in December.

In September, we completed a trade, swapping our department 1911 handguns, which were in two different calibers, to the Glock 17 and 19, both in 9mm. In the process, we upgraded our duty holsters and handgun mounted flashlights. This was all done at no cost to the department. In December, we also purchased additional Stinger Spike tire deflating devices to assist in stopping vehicle pursuits.

The enormous amount of generosity and support shown by the community is greatly appreciated and largely reinforces our commitment and drive to provide the citizens of Stark County the best service we are able. The patrol division looks forward to continuing to serve in 2020 and beyond.



# South West Tactical Team

In 2019, the Stark County Sheriff's Department had personnel who were part of the South West Tactical Team (SWTT). The SWTT also has personnel from the Dickinson Police Department and Dunn County Sheriff's Department. Operators on the team are required to train an additional 104 hours of in-

service training locally. They are also required to pass a SWAT related physical agility test and firearm qualifications. Sgt. Dan Kensinger and Deputy Ryan Fahy were both operators on the team. Cpl. David Wallace Jr. was part of the Crisis Negotiation Team. Sgt. Dan Kensinger has received additional SWAT training in SWAT Team Leader, Tactical Breaching and precision marksmanship.



The year of 2019 was a record low for callout activation, with tactical responses numbering just two. Our bimonthly training consists of firearms, scenario, and classroom work. We schedule an eight-

hour tactical scenario, which acts as a simulated call-out. In 2020 we will continue to train and hone our skills.





At the 2019 NDPOA Conference, Sgt. Kensinger took first place in the four-gun shooting competition (handgun, patrol rifle, shotgun and sniper rifle). He also took seventh place in the Governor's 20 shooting competition. This consists of the top 20 law enforcement handgun shooters in the state. We would like to recognize Sgt. Kensinger for this impressive achievement.

# Southwest Narcotics Task Force

The Southwest Narcotics Task Force (SWNTF) is supported by the Stark County Sheriff's Office who provides the SWNTF with one deputy. We provided the use of a marked patrol unit to perform a more direct interdiction within Stark County. A number of K9's were added to agencies throughout SW ND in 2019. The parent agencies of these K9 units have made them available throughout our area which has had a marked impact in the availability of this resource.

The SWNTF initiated 137 cases in 2019. This is up from 88 cases initiated in 2018. These cases resulted in 85 arrests throughout our service area. Agents assigned to the SWNTF conducted 25 community presentations on various drug/law enforcement related topics. These presentations included schools, emergency responders, recurrent training for law enforcement, and community organizations. The SWNTF through our partnerships with local LE agencies conducted 505 intelligence reports in 2019. These were performed through an intelligence analyst who supports these agencies. The intelligence analyst worked very hard in 2019 to open up communication between agencies throughout the state as well as enhance how intel is shared between agencies.

A shift in strategy in 2019 led to an increased impact of the cases worked by the SWNTF. Previously, an exclusive emphasis was put on targeting large scale, out of state organizations that were often time consuming and had minimal ties to the area. Although these led to large seizures, they often did not impact the issues facing us locally. The strategy in 2019 and going into 2020 is one that focuses on local issues and has the maximum impact on the quality of life in the area. This strategy has resulted in increased case numbers and arrests. It has resulted in working closer with partner agencies to present a unified front on issues facing communities. An example of this would be working closely with detectives on property crime cases that often overlap with drug cases. This has eliminated a great deal of investigative duplicity and missed opportunities to resolve crimes.

Throughout 2019, the NDBCI has worked very hard to strengthen the capabilities of the SWNTF. In July, the NDBCI worked with the ND Dept. of Health to assign a TruNarc analyzer to the SWNTF. This device allows agents to test unknown substances without



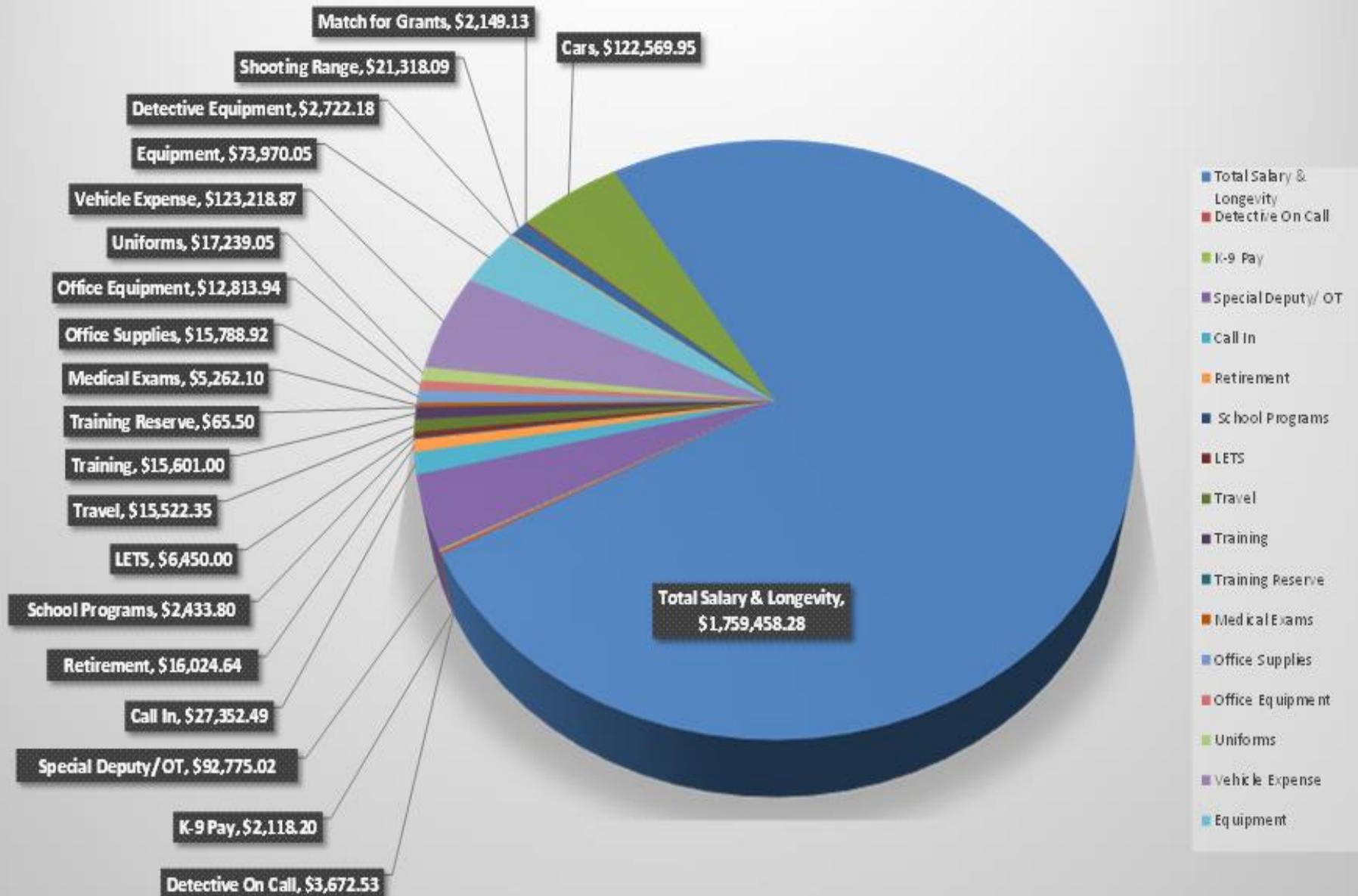
exposing themselves to the substances. In the Southwest Judicial District our State's Attorneys' have been very proactive in using the results from this device to help alleviate the backlog of cases sent to the state crime laboratory. The NDBCI also filled a vacant position at the Dickinson office with an experienced narcotics investigator who has been a great asset to the unit on both criminal and narcotics cases.

The SWNTF worked closely with ND Parole and Probation through 2019 to ensure that individuals who continue to commit crimes while on probation are held accountable. This relationship has been very successful and has led to multiple arrests and seizures. Similarly, the task force has worked with Sheriff's Offices' in the area to ensure those that are abusing court ordered drug testing are investigated.

They seized over 600 grams of methamphetamine directly from individuals in southwest North Dakota. The majority of this methamphetamine was seized through increased communication and strengthened relationships with patrol level officers/deputies. Methamphetamine continues to be the most prevalent substance encountered by the SWNTF. The SWNTF seized 4,512 grams of marijuana in 2019. In 2019, the SWNTF observed a resurgence of opioids/opiates in the area. This unfortunately led to multiple overdoses throughout the region. Fortunately, in many of these cases the administration of Narcan by responding officers saved lives and undoubtedly prevented more fatal instances. The SWNTF worked closely with local, state, and federal partners and were able to identify and prosecute members of the group responsible for distributing the drugs associated with the increased overdoses. In 2019, the SWNTF seized 240 dosage units of fentanyl. Each dosage unit has the potential to be a fatal dose of the drug.

Overall in 2019, the SWNTF demonstrated a great deal of growth as a group. The SWNTF will continue to adapt to changes in laws and drug trends to best serve our area. We will strive to maintain high levels of training and use modern equipment to achieve our mission in the safest manner possible. We will continue to provide our community and law enforcement up to date and relevant education. Going into 2020, the SWNTF will continue to proactively combat the use and sale of controlled substances in communities and work with all agencies to provide a unified approach to the issues facing our area. None of what we do would be possible without the continued involvement and support of our member agencies and the communities they represent.

# 2019 Budget



# Grants

In 2019, the Sheriff's Office was successful in applying for and receiving several grants/awards to assist us in our mission of better serving the citizens of Stark County.

BNSF Railway Foundation	K-9 and Public Safety Programs	\$2,500
NDDOT	Occupant Protection Enforcement	\$7,200
NDDOT	Impaired Driving Enforcement	\$3,000
Plains All American Pipeline	First Responder Medical Equip.	\$5,760
Wal-Mart Community Grant	K-9 Program	\$3,000



# 2019 Statistics

Total Calls for Service	14339
Accidents	102
Adopt a Cop	265
Agency Assist	428
Burglary	33
Disorderly Contact	47
Domestic Violence	109
Extra Patrol	135
Help Motorist/Pedestrian	252
MV Theft	17
Public Relations	1723
School Zone Patrol	370
Speak with an Officer	236
Suspicious Activity	341
Theft	79
Traffic Stops	2613
Transports	549
Truck Regulatory	76
Vandalisms	34
Warnings Issues	638
Welfare Checks	113

Total Citations Issues	1545
Assault/Terrorizing/DV	17
Drug	36
DUI/APC	33
DUS/DUR	81
Other Traffic	85
Speed Violations	954
Tobacco Violations involving a Minor	15

# 2016 - 2019 Comparison

