



Annual Report 2021

Wheat Ridge Police Department



A Letter from Chief Chris Murtha



I am approaching my two-year anniversary with the Wheat Ridge Police Department, and I thought I would share a partial summation of the past 24 months. It was truly a dream come true when I was hired to start working in Wheat Ridge on February 10, 2020. I inherited an impressive group of officers in a great city with a well-run government. What could possibly go wrong?

It was just over a month after my arrival when COVID really became an issue. I was standing outside Clancy's Irish Pub with one of the owners, discussing whether it was a good idea for crowds to gather for St. Patrick's Day. In that moment I realized COVID was going to be a much larger problem than anyone had envisioned.

Back at the police department, we began planning what we needed to do. Our team continued to work. We didn't live in fear; we problem-solved, and we persevered. We never missed a day, and we never missed a call for service. Soon we were back in rhythm.

I was sure things were going to be smooth from that point forward, until May 25, 2020, when the world watched footage of the horrible death of George Floyd at the hands of a police officer. I believe it was at that point that the perception of

police changed in the minds of many Americans. Suddenly we were met with disdain, insults, and resistance. Despite this new reality; however, we felt the support of our local community and continued to be the professional and progressive agency that we have always been.

Our elected state officials swiftly passed reform acts and other legislation that dramatically changed the policing world. It was a difficult time and we lost good police officers who chose to leave the profession. To this day, we continue to struggle to combat an unfair national narrative and to provide the level of safety and service that we demand of ourselves. Still we move forward.

Despite the challenges of my first two years, I am proud of the response from the Wheat Ridge Police Department. The reasons are simple. First, the people who are here, sworn and professional staff, are the best in the business. And, equally as impressive, is that the community we serve has never wavered in their support of our department, nor have they questioned the professionalism or the need for this agency.

I am often asked what the community can do to support the WRPD. My response is always to please continue to engage with us and continue to support those who are willing to take such a great share of societal responsibility, despite the hurdles we face in a changing world. We need you and we need to grow our relationship with you, now more than ever.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Murtha".

Relationship-Based Policing

The Wheat Ridge Police Department focuses on relationship-based policing which is defined as strengthening connections between the Wheat Ridge Police Department, City government, and the community through interactions and dialogue that build mutual respect and trust. Together we share the responsibility to develop strategies to decrease crime and increase quality of life for everyone who lives, works, plays, and travels within the City of Wheat Ridge.

Many calls for service are effectively handled by focusing on the problem and planning for a long-term resolution. The benefits to the community from this type of approach are:

- Officers are able to spend more time working with community members to solve crime and disorder problems;
- With better communication, officers can more effectively use and share crime information with the public;
- Officers who know both a community's problems and its residents can link people with other public and private agencies that can help solve community concerns; and
- No single agency can solve complex social problems alone - a combined community-police effort restores the safety of our neighborhoods and business districts.

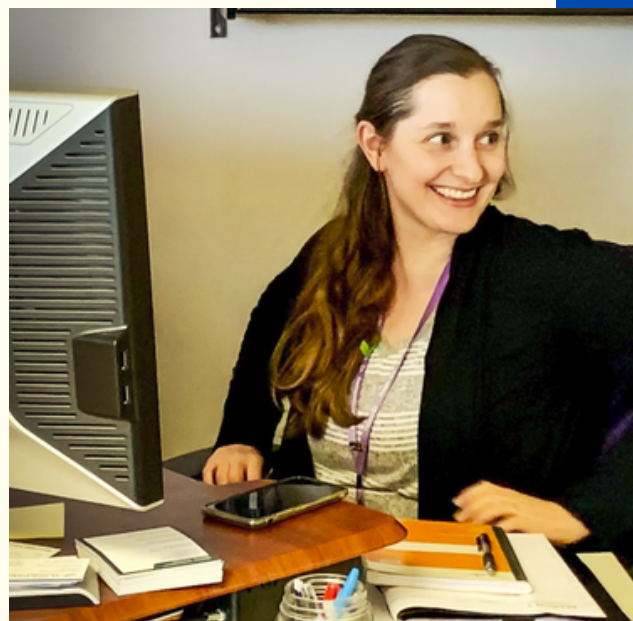


Mental Health Co-Responder

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Co-Responder programs utilize a mental health professional embedded in law enforcement agencies to assist in de-escalation, support in stabilizing a crisis through clinical and needs assessment, and to connect people with appropriate mental health, substance abuse, and other services after a crisis. Co-Responders provide follow-up support, field responses, and interventions for community members in Wheat Ridge who are experiencing a mental health crisis or other mental health issue. In 2021, Co-Responders received 228 referrals with 124 of those referrals having successful outcomes.

Jefferson Center for Mental Health Co-Responder Caitlin Haden is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and received her Master's of Social Work from Arizona State University. Caitlin has a passion for interdisciplinary crisis work and started as a co-responder right out of graduate school. Caitlin left the co-responder field for a few years to be a child and family therapist, but eagerly returned in 2020. From July 2020 – December 2021, Caitlin and another co-responder were assigned to three law enforcement agencies: Wheat Ridge Police Department, Golden Police Department, and Jeffco Sheriff's North and Mountain Precincts.



Despite being split between three agencies, Caitlin was able to establish the Co-Responder program at Wheat Ridge Police Department in a part-time position. The police department and Wheat Ridge City Council will continue their partnership with Jefferson Center for Mental Health in 2022 as they plan to bring Caitlin on full-time for Wheat Ridge.

Homelessness

Across the country, communities are facing the challenge of an increasing number of people experiencing homelessness. While many believe the police have primary responsibility for responding to complaints about camping, trash and panhandling, managing all of the impacts of homelessness is a shared community responsibility and can't be addressed with just one approach.

The comprehensive approach taken by the Homeless Navigation Program that is part of the City Manager's Office to address homelessness includes the Wheat Ridge Police Department, Public Works, the Community Services Team, staff from Parks and Recreation, Forestry and Open Space as well as a collaboration with local and regional agencies.

Wheat Ridge Patrol Officers serve an important role when responding to calls for those experiencing homelessness. Patrols are conducted during each shift in areas often frequented by those experiencing homelessness. Officers provide mental health referrals to the Co-Responder

and make referrals to the Homeless Navigator to follow up and provide individualized resources such as housing, food banks, and job placement services. The department's Community Services Team will also assist with proactive patrols throughout Wheat Ridge, monitoring city-owned and maintained properties, and along with Public Works, respond to calls about graffiti and trash, including residential/business and vacant lots.



Homeless Navigator

In 2020, Rebekah Raudabaugh was hired as the Homeless Navigator for Jefferson County serving the cities of Wheat Ridge, Edgewater, and Golden. Raudabaugh responds to inquiries and works with individuals experiencing homelessness to create goals and a plan of action/strategy to exit homelessness, as well as facilitate and support efforts to obtain resources and services.

While solutions to this complex issue aren't simple, they also don't rest solely in the hands of one department, agency, or one organization. This is a shared community responsibility, and the most effective response is one in which municipalities, police departments, social service agencies, businesses, and community members work together.

Patrol Operations Division

The Patrol Operations Division led by a Division Chief and two Commanders, includes sworn officers who patrol the City of Wheat Ridge during three shifts covering 24/7. The total number of Calls for Service in 2021 was 43,868, which represented an increase of almost 17% over 2020. These calls included responses to crash and traffic issues, reports of domestic violence and child abuse, robbery and attempted robbery, code enforcement, animal concerns, issues at area schools as well as other crimes. Calls for Service may also include those from the West Metro SWAT and other local agencies like Arvada Fire, West Metro Fire, and the Lakewood and Arvada Police Departments.

In 2021, the Patrol Division returned to operations interrupted by COVID-19 and were able to focus on a more proactive approach to policing. Some of the jail restrictions due to COVID and county budget impacts were also relaxed resulting in an increase in the serving of arrest warrants.



Jim Lorentz
Division Chief



Crash and Traffic Team (CATT)

This was a very busy year for the CATT, highlighted by 14 significant traffic crashes including six fatalities. Other notable traffic concerns included two Neighborhood Traffic Management Programs (NTMP) that were initiated with speed studies conducted in specific neighborhoods. Traffic Engineering will be installing speed calming measures in these areas. CATT also conducted two commercial vehicle enforcement days in conjunction with Colorado State Patrol. The CATT used traffic education and pro-active enforcement measures through the use of grant funding to address traffic and pedestrian safety awareness in the area of I70 and Kipling. CATT Officers continue to attend advanced training in order to bring team members up to speed on accident reconstruction investigations.

Crime Prevention Team

The Crime Prevention Team (CPT) is responsible for building relationships with community members, local businesses, service clubs, schools, faith-based organizations, and other government agencies. The team works with these groups to develop and implement programs to deter crime and disorder, enhance public safety, and implement the department's Life Quality and Crime Prevention/Reduction philosophy. Some community events hosted by the Crime Prevention Team include Coffee with a Cop, Cops in the Community, National Night Out, and the Dog Walker Watch program. The CPT focused efforts on the issue of Homelessness in Wheat Ridge, working closely with the Homeless Navigator.

The Crime Prevention Team includes two School Resource Officers (SROs) for 17 schools located within the City of Wheat Ridge. The SROs work closely with school administration to assist with anti-bullying and school safety protocols. The SROs can act as peer counselors and help mediate situations with students and their parents. For many students building that initial positive bond with SROs establishes a foundation for future relationships with law enforcement that are based on a greater understanding of the value of relationship-based policing.



WRPD Cadets

WRPD Cadets range in age from 14-20 and have an interest in a career in law enforcement. In its eighth year, the program offers individuals the opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding of the daily duties of police officers and detectives.

Each year new Cadets attend an academy and can earn ride-along hours with patrol through their volunteer service. In the late fall of 2021, the program returned to remote learning due to the Omicron variant of COVID. This year, the Cadets assisted with providing security and traffic control for the Carnation Festival and the Wheat Ridge Holiday Celebration. They also assisted with traffic control for Santa's drive thru event at Anderson Park.



Patrol Operations Division

West Metro SWAT

The Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT), serving the jurisdictions of Wheat Ridge and Lakewood, is a specialized unit maintained to handle critical incidents beyond routine police operations. West Metro SWAT personnel were utilized 33 times in 2021, including 16 callouts involving the full team. SWAT utilizes specialized weapons and training to respond to barricaded, hostage situations, VIP protection, and high-risk warrants. The West Metro SWAT's primary purpose includes the potential response to terrorist attacks and weapons of mass destruction threats.

In 2021, the SWAT received more than 240 hours of team training and provided local law enforcement agencies with advanced tactical training for patrol officers and future SWAT members. Five specialized vehicles are assigned to and maintained by the West Metro SWAT. The team maintains memberships in the Rocky Mountain Tactical Team Association (RMTTA) and the National Tactical Officers Association (NTOA) to remain current with best practices and resources.



Community Services Team

Community Services Officers (CSOs) are non-sworn members of the Wheat Ridge Police Department and provide community education, investigation, and enforcement of the Wheat Ridge Code of Laws specific to nuisance code, animal concerns, and parks and greenbelt regulations. CSOs form partnerships and build trust within the community and with City personnel.

CSOs enjoy taking part in annual community outreach programs like Spread the Love on Valentine's Day, Traffic safety, Life quality, and Crime reduction (TLC) Clean-Up Days, Hooked On Fishing, and Hotel/Motel Safety Inspections. Initiatives also include the monthly Combined Teams CDOT I-70 Contacts for the identification and assistance of people experiencing homelessness.

Support Services Division



Darrel Guadnola
Division Chief

The Support Services Division, led by a Division Chief, a Commander, three sergeants and a civilian supervisor, provides investigative and administrative support to the department and the Patrol Operations Division. The division includes the Investigations Bureau, the Records Team, the Training and Accreditation Unit, Crime Analysis, Property and Evidence, and the Special Investigations Unit (SIU).

Investigations Bureau

The Investigations Bureau employs one Commander, three Sergeants, 15 Detectives, two Investigations Technicians, and two Property and Evidence Technicians.

Special Investigations Unit

The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) Detectives are assigned to:

C-MATT - During 2021, CMATT investigated 11 major cases involving criminal auto theft organizations, opened 1169 cases, made 246 arrests, dismantled seven chop shops, and recovered 515 vehicles with a total value of \$7,071,750.00. During their investigations, they recovered 62 firearms and one IED.



The WMDTF - Identified a large and sophisticated drug trafficking organization with ties to Mexico and Central America. Several arrests and search warrants have been conducted and the case is still ongoing with additional suspects. The group is involved in dealing fentanyl, heroin, and methamphetamine. Several thousand fentanyl pills have been seized as well as over three pounds of methamphetamine, and several guns. The task force worked a tip leading to a traffic stop of a truck in Thornton with ties to Jefferson County. A search of the vehicle yielded 14 kilos of cocaine, the estimated street value at \$550,000.



Vice/Intelligence - A newly formed and modern Massage business ordinance was drafted and later adopted by the Wheat Ridge City Council on August 28, 2020. Throughout 2021, an aggressive enforcement effort was employed using inspections, compliance checks, and undercover police operations at 12 illicit massage businesses which resulted in 11 being shut down through an Administrative Hearing process and one being reclassified as a legitimate massage business. The enforcement efforts yielded 27 Municipal Court criminal citations and one person arrested on a warrant.



Crime Analysis

One full-time Crime Analyst staffs the Crime Analysis Unit and is responsible for gathering, analyzing, and often presenting data for WRPD bureaus and teams, as well as other law enforcement agencies and organizations. This includes case work, such as the analysis of cell phone communication and location data, social media accounts, financial records, surveillance video, and case connections, as well as suspect research and identification. The analyst also gathers, analyzes, and prepares data and information to assist with WRPD and city programs and planning.

In 2021, the Crime Analysis Unit received requests for 99 new projects, in addition to continued work on many ongoing projects and cases. Requests were for a variety of topics and included major case investigations; cell phone, financial records, and surveillance analyses; timelines; identification of suspects; SB 20-217 statistics and analysis; patrol workload analysis; race/ethnicity statistics; accident analyses; city-wide calls for service; assaults on peace officers; temporal and geographic analyses; location-specific statistics; DUI statistics; bureau/officer statistics; offense-specific statistics; and hotel/motel analyses. Additionally, the Unit produced bulletins for Investigations and Patrol regarding officer safety, attempts to locate or identify individuals or vehicles, and requests for information regarding similar crimes or suspects.

Records Team

The Wheat Ridge Police Department's Records team has room for seven dynamic technician positions, a Lead Records Technician and Supervisor.

As the Covid-19 pandemic stretched into its second year, the Records team was able to adjust to virus spread in the community by changing window times, flexing shifts and offering many new online options for the public. In the spring of 2021, the LexisNexis CopLogic Suite of products allowed Records to both accept online reports as well as online requests for existing cases. Through the use of Request-a-Report, the team could fulfill online requests while upholding the same strict standards of the Colorado Open Records Act as they do in person. The Desk Officer Reporting System allows citizens to make reports of low-level crimes, minor accidents and submit supplemental reports. This has alleviated some of the call log officers respond to, providing sworn personnel more time on higher-level calls and to focus on timely responses to crime.

Property and Evidence

The Property and Evidence Unit is operated by two Evidence Technicians. The Unit has an inventory of 30,750 items, with 11,276 being submitted this year. Thirteen cell phones were extracted using Cellebrite and the Unit donated bicycles to the Wheat Ridge Optimists Club and numerous items to charity and auction.

In 2021, 270 individuals registered as sex offenders living in the city of Wheat Ridge and 60 individuals deregistered with the city.



Training and Accreditation

Accreditation and training is responsible for the development, coordination and implementation of training throughout Wheat Ridge Police Department. This unit's responsibilities include training program enhancement, coordination of training opportunities, providing internal training to both sworn and civilian members, tracking and documentation of training for all officers, and ensuring compliance with Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) and Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) standards. This unit becomes closely involved in each member's careers from the date of hire through retirement or separation. Through coordination of new employee orientation to specialized training, this unit provides support to each member as they learn and develop the skills necessary to provide exceptional law enforcement service to the Wheat Ridge community. This unit provides annual mandatory training in the areas of policy, law and legal updates; de-escalation search and seizure; providing services and support to those suffering with disabilities, mental illness and emotional crisis, force application and response to resistance decision making.

From orientation to specialized training, the Accreditation and Training Unit provides opportunities for officers, detectives, and staff to learn and develop the skills necessary to provide exceptional law enforcement service to the Wheat Ridge community.



Accreditation

Accreditation is a key component in any law enforcement agency's ability to perform in the present and plan for the future. This is the foundation for competent, responsible, and ethical service to the public. It also requires the agency to take a thorough, introspective look at its mission, objectives, and operation. As part of the commitment to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and providing the community with exceptional police services, the Wheat Ridge Police Department has voluntarily participated in the law enforcement accreditation process since 2011, and recertification in each subsequent review period. Reaccreditation occurs every four years with a review of work completed by police personnel to ensure the department's standard operating procedures, policies, and actions are consistent with CALEA national standards.

Major Case Investigations

Crimes Against Persons Unit

On September 23, 2020, the Wheat Ridge Police Department was called to 4705 Routt St on a report of a stabbing. When officers arrived, they found a 53-year-old man who had been stabbed at a local bar. A few minutes later officers were also dispatched to the Rambling Rose Bar on a report of a man down and bleeding in the parking lot behind the bar. Officers found the victim on the ground, and he appeared to be suffering from stab wounds. The victim was transported to a local hospital but died a short time later. The suspect told officers he was in a fight at the bar with an unknown man but he had no obvious wounds from the altercation. He was transported to the hospital and cleared without receiving any treatment. The suspect was arrested and charged with Second Degree Murder. After a search warrant was obtained for the suspect's residence, a knife was located in an upstairs bedroom hidden in a desk drawer.

During the trial on 09/10/2021, the defense argued the defendant was acting in self-defense and had been attacked by the deceased victim. The prosecution argued that while there was an altercation, the primary aggressor was the defendant. Furthermore, he stabbed the victim repeatedly, ultimately killing him. The defendant had no major injuries from the incident to support the defense claims. The defendant was convicted of both 2nd Degree Murder and 1st Degree Assault. He was sentenced to the maximum 48 years in the Department of Corrections.

Property Crimes Unit

Detectives investigated a string of organized retail thefts totaling \$16,015 from Ulta Beauty Supply. The estimated loss from Denver Metro Area Ulta's tied to this theft ring was upwards of \$300,000. Using social media resources, suspects were identified and interviewed. The suspect involved in the Wheat Ridge incidents was linked to the organized theft ring operating in multiple jurisdictions. WRPD detectives ultimately filed multiple felony theft charges on two suspects.



Professional Standards Unit

The primary duty of the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) Sergeant is to ensure the integrity of the Wheat Ridge Police Department. The Professional Standards Unit's areas of responsibility include the development, implementation, and supervision of recruitment, the police department awards and recognition program, and internal investigation activities.

Pursuits

Police officers are instructed to be cautious when engaging in police pursuits in order to minimize danger to innocent bystanders. The WRPD pursuit guidelines state that each officer possesses the authority and responsibility to initiate a vehicular pursuit. The decision to initiate a pursuit is based on the officer's judgement that it is a) within policy and, b) that the possible dangers and risk are less than the immediate or potential danger to the public if the offender remains at large. In 2021, there were 150 total eluding incidents in which suspects failed to yield to police officers.

Response to Resistance

Officers are required to complete a Use of Force report when they use force greater than control and compliance, or whenever any person sustains an injury. Control and compliance is defined as the use of some combination of leverage and strength to generate compliance, including joint locks, pressure points, takedowns, and come-along techniques. Supervisors review the reports and make recommendations as to whether the incident needs further investigation. Professional Standards Unit received 24 reported Response to Resistance incidents in 2021. All reports were investigated and the final review supports the statement that officers consistently make every effort to use the least amount of force necessary to affect arrests. This statement could be made since the majority of Use of Force incidents were for Control and Compliance techniques.



Complaints and Commendations

PSU received 39 complaints that were investigated in 2021. The investigations were classified as follows: 14 Minor, three Administrative, two Divisional, and 16 Inquiries. Five were Sustained resulting in disciplinary action.

Community Programs

Catalytic Converter Program

The Wheat Ridge Police Department in partnership with the Colorado Auto Theft Prevention Authority (CATPA), and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), hosted two free crime prevention events in 2021 to help vehicle owners with theft prevention of catalytic converters.



Vehicle owners of all makes and models were welcome to participate in the anti-theft program. A non-removable, chemically etched identification number was applied to the vehicle's catalytic converter and matched with the vehicle's VIN number. They were then entered into a national database. This makes it easier to report a theft and identify suspects who try to sell the converter. The event served more than 500 residents and people from as far away as Erie and Colorado Springs. Additionally, Detective Kulp, who coordinated the event, responded to other agencies around the metro area wanting to duplicate the program for their communities.

National Night Out

National Night Out is just one of the department's many crime prevention programs aimed at building partnerships with residents and business owners by strengthening crime prevention efforts at the local level.

The celebration, hosted by the Wheat Ridge Police Department, included a display of patrol cars, the West Metro SWAT BearCat (armored rescue vehicle), the PD Command vehicle, Crash and Traffic Team motorcycles, as well as Community Services Team vehicles. The FOX31 Pinpoint Weather Beast also made a special appearance.



The goals of this nationwide program include:

- Increase awareness of ways to prevent crime and violence
- Generate support for, and participation in, local anti-crime programs
- Strengthen neighborhood spirit and police and community partnerships
- Send a message to criminal offenders that our community's neighborhoods are working together to fight crime

Wheat Ridge Police Department Presents 2021 Awards

The Wheat Ridge Police Department awards are presented in recognition of the outstanding efforts of officers, detectives, staff, partner agencies, and community members in recognition of their efforts to make the community a better place to live, and to help make the Wheat Ridge Police Department a better place to work.



Citizen's Awards

Troy Guba

On Feb. 20, 2021, WRPD responded to I-70 over Kipling where a man was trying to jump into traffic and end his life. Troy Guba, a passerby, saw this, stopped his vehicle on the shoulder of the highway, and spoke with the man for about 15 minutes. The man tried to jump in front of a vehicle on the highway and Guba restrained him saving his life.

Bryan Kennedy

Littleton Police Officer Cooper-Childress

While working Clancy's at 7000 W 38th Ave., Officers Holliday and McCarthy were assisted by two Good Samaritans in safely placing an intoxicated suspect into custody. Those Good Samaritans were off duty bouncer Bryan Kennedy and off duty Littleton police officer Cooper-Childress.

Harold (John) Belger

Timothy Mullins

On 06/20/21 at approximately 5:45 pm, officers were dispatched to I-70 Frontage Road North and Tabor St. on report of an injury accident. Dispatch aired that a vehicle went off the road and into a ditch between the Frontage Road and I-70. Once Officers arrived on scene there were numerous witnesses and they were all pointing down the hill where the red truck had come to rest. The man driving the vehicle when it crashed had been partially ejected when the truck rolled during the crash and he was pinned under the truck. Officers on scene learned that three good Samaritans (Harold Belger, Timothy Mullins, and an unknown 3rd party) had worked together to lift the truck enough to remove the injured driver from underneath the vehicle. Medical personnel arrived and quickly took the driver to the hospital to be treated. Without the quick actions of these three good Samaritans the man in this accident could have been further injured or possibly died.

2021 Awards Ceremony

DUI Officer of the Year – Officer Josie van Veen

Officer Van Veen led the department in DUI arrests increasing the safety of the roads in Wheat Ridge.

Officer of the Year – Detective Mark Slavsky

Detective Mark Slavsky joined the COVA (Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance) board in 2011 and currently serves as the Co-Vice President. His actions, presentations, and interactions within the victim advocate community has shed positive light on the department, its members, and the community.

Officer Joseph Mallory and Officer Barry Malloy

During COVID, homelessness surged in the Wheat Ridge area due to homeless shelters closing at the direction of the government as well as the jail not accepting the majority of new charges or warrants. After much discussion in the city, it was determined that, during the summer of 2021, School Resource Officers Barry Malloy and Joe Mallory would become a temporary team to work on the ever-present issue of homelessness in the I70 Kipling and 38/Wadsworth areas of the city. No unit or team has ever been tasked with “solve homelessness” and Officers Malloy and Mallory did not even hesitate to say, “anything you need.”



Life Saving Medals

Officer Marc Fisher
 Officer Josie van Veen (Medal of Commendation)
 Officer Reshew
 Officer Mikolajczak
 Sergeant Simpson
 Officer Espinosa



2021 Awards Ceremony

Employee of the Year Michelle Stodden, Administrative Project Coordinator

Michelle is the backbone of the Wheat Ridge Police Department. In her many years with the agency, she has provided administrative support, while also assisting with grant management and annual budget planning. Due to a staffing shortage, Michelle added the role of chief's assistant to her daily work. Even with these added duties, her cheerful demeanor and knowledge of policy and procedure is unmatched.



When you walk by Michelle's desk, she will greet you with a smile and will stop whatever she's doing to help out in any way she is able. The police department would not run as smoothly without Michelle!

Medal of Distinguished Service

On July 12, 2019, Wheat Ridge officers, detectives and the PIO responded in support of the Edgewater Police Department to 26th and Fenton St. on a call involving a barricaded suspect with a gun. Gunfire was exchanged with the suspect; however, no one was hurt and he eventually surrendered peacefully to police. Officer Dwayne Baker, Sergeant Scott Bellomy, Officer Tyler Clary, Officer Krista Cuney, Officer Terah Hooper, Commander Lucas Hunt, Detective Justin Paugh, Commander Jon Pickett, Officer Kendall Rezac, Commander Shellie Salser, Officer Jeremy Schmitz, Detective Tyson Shaul, Sergeant John Simpson, Detective Kira Smith, PIO Sara Spaulding, Corporal Tony Wardell, Sergeant Keith Weimer, and Sergeant Dan Whittle.

Meritorious Achievement Medal – Detective Charles Hemming

Intelligence Detective Charles Hemming is responsible for enforcement efforts of massage businesses. He recruited officers who were interested in undercover operations, developed a training program, and organized undercover enforcement operations to clearly identify businesses engaged in prostitution. Detective Hemming was instrumental in spearheading the creation of the new massage ordinance passed by City Council in August 2020, that was developed with a diverse group of stakeholders in order to license legitimate businesses and identify and close down illegitimate businesses with ties to human trafficking, criminal organizations, and other criminal enterprises.

Communications

Communications is overseen by the Public Information Officer (PIO) who is responsible for media relations including on-scene interviews, press release creation and distribution, proactive coverage, interview requests, and follow up with reporters and producers. The PIO develops content for social media accounts and the City website which is integrated with overall communications for the department as well as implementation of communications strategy. In 2021, the PIO served as a volunteer media liaison at Line of Duty Death funerals and in March, for the family of a victim of the shooting in Boulder that took 10 lives including Boulder Police Officer Eric Talley. The PIO also presented training on public information and the role of the PIO for the department during annual In Service and orientation for new officers and members of the Community Services Team.

Information about promotions, education programs, crime prevention, safety tips, upcoming special events, and community programs are shared on the City website, in newsletters, and on social media platforms for WRPD including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, NextDoor, and YouTube. Due to the risk of COVID-19, many programs continued to be held virtually or not at all in 2021. Breaking news about incidents, traffic updates and weather alerts are posted first to Twitter with follow up calls to local media. Additional details are then shared on Facebook. Occasionally official press releases are created for critical incidents or complex investigations, distributed to media, and posted to social media.



In September of 2021, while on alternative duty, Officer Terah Hooper joined the Communications Team to assist with social media. She developed creative content for Facebook and Twitter, monitored comments and messages, and helped to increase community engagement.



Communications Team

Social Media Analytics



Reach 23,606
Followers 13,160



Impressions 98,700
Followers 12,700



Followers 1645



Verified
Residents 1,336



WRPD pages on the City website
are the 3rd most visited with
17,458 views

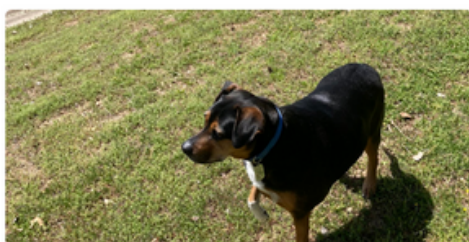
Top media Tweet earned 3,803 impressions

Officer Neyra enjoyed getting to visit with Woody and Jessie from Toy Story. WRPD hopes everyone is having a fun and safe Halloween! pic.twitter.com/wkbzenOICZ



Top Tweet earned 28.2K impressions

Please help WRPD find Buddy, male neutered pitbull rottweiler mix black and brown with white sox in a red Toyota Takoma pickup stolen this am at I-70 and Kipling. Call 911 or 303-237-2220. pic.twitter.com/dlQN23Ly6H



nextdoor



Wheat Ridge Police Department
PIO Sara Spaulding • 2 Aug



National Night Out - tomorrow, August 3rd. The Wheat Ridge Police Department invites the community to National Night Out!



Wheat Ridge Police Department
Published by Sara Spaulding • December 31, 2021

A message from Wheat Ridge Mayor Bud Starker about how to help Boulder County Fire victims.



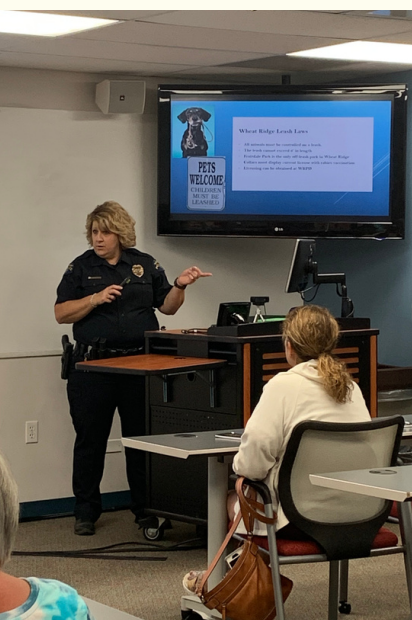
City of Wheat Ridge Government
December 31, 2021

Our community was heartbroken yesterday as we watched fires rage through Boulder County and the cities of Superior and Louisville. We watched with gratitude as law enforcement, fire personnel, and other first responders bravely raced towards danger to save human life, beloved pets and livestock, and try to mitigate property loss. The scenes that unfolded on social and mainstream media were terrifying, prompting worry for friends, neighbors and family members, and uncertainty about the path the fire might take, and what might be spared or destroyed.

WRPD in the Community



WRPD in the Community





7500 W 29th Ave Wheat Ridge, CO 80033
ci.wheatridge.co.us @WheatRidgePD