



2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

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LETTER FROM THE SHERIFF

Dear Citizens,

I have been a long serving member of this community with 30 years of service as a sworn member of the Kent County Sheriff's Office. I have had many roles within the department including Corrections, Communications, Law Enforcement, and Command. In each one of those roles I have realized the gravity of impact my decisions and actions have had on the lives of people I serve. I've endeavored to look at the big picture and prepare myself through training and education to be the best servant and guardian I could be. I have also always tried to put myself in the place of the person I was serving asking how I would want to be served; how would I want my child or my parent to be served. Since being appointed as the Kent County Sheriff in 2018, I have continued to look at the big picture and the needs of the community. I also look at what my team and I need to do to prepare the men and women of the Kent County Sheriff's Office to effectively provide, with compassion and empathy, for the safety and well-being of the citizens we serve.

In the pages that follow are the instructions I have provided to my staff; it is a five-year strategic plan. The priorities and goals that have been selected are the result of many hours of evaluation and input. These are the things that we will do to be prepared to meet your daily needs while providing the foundation to build forward and meet your needs in the future. This plan is designed to be a resource for the staff to use when making decisions on my behalf for the operation of the department. It is my intent to continue to monitor the application of this plan and to adjust the plan over time as needs dictate.

As the staff and I reviewed information about what issues were key to our daily and future operations, we found that they fell into four priority. I have included the priorities below.

Public Safety

Community Engagement

Provide Efficient, Effective, and Fiscally Responsible Service

Resource and Infrastructure Sustainability

As Sheriff, I know that transparency and understanding is crucial to a healthy collaborative environment. I hope that this plan can lead to even further coordinated efforts between the Sheriff's Office and our community partners. As we work together with expanded knowledge and understanding of the community, we can promote equality, safety and respect for all residents.

Sincerely,



Sheriff Michelle Lajoye-Young





VALUES

VISION

MISSION

Our team of professionals at the Kent County Sheriff's Office will serve with integrity, compassion, and empathy. We will strive to deliver equitable access to diverse services.

The Kent County Sheriff's Office will be guardians of the community. We will serve through vigilance, professional excellence, innovation, and empowerment.

Preserve and protect the safety and security of the community and to provide fair, impartial, and humane treatment to those entrusted in our care.

HISTORY OF THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The Legacy Behind a Sheriff's Office

The roots of the Office of Sheriff reach as far back as Alfred the Great of England. England was divided into Burroughs, known as "shires", and the residents selected an individual to protect their rights and needs. This person was known as the "reeve", or guardian. Through time, the terms "shire" and "reeve" were combined into what we now know as Sheriff. The Sheriff's responsibilities were codified with the adoption of the Magna Carta in the year 1215.

Due to the exploration and colonization efforts of England, it was not long before the position of Sheriff was adopted in such places as Canada, Australia, India, and the American colonies. There are over 3,000 Sheriff's in America today.

In Michigan, the duties and responsibilities of the Sheriff are found in the Constitution and their election is on the same election cycle as the President of the United States. Michigan Sheriffs are considered a "full-service agency" as they are responsible for both law enforcement and jail operations.

History Behind the Kent County Sheriff's Office

The Kent County Sheriff's Office was established in 1836. Today, our office serves over 653,000 people who reside within the 872 square miles of the county.

The Kent County Sheriff's Office is a nationally recognized law enforcement agency, receiving a national Sheriff's Star Award from the National Sheriff's Association, and we are one of approximately one hundred Sheriff Offices that qualify as a "Major County". We participate on state and national committees to shape public policy and best practices on all levels of government.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE PROFILE

The Kent County Sheriff's Office Has Five Divisions

Road Patrol

The Road Patrol Division, just like all the sworn law enforcement staff, has the authority to act anywhere within the 872 square miles of Kent County. Assigned to patrol are special teams that serve all areas in the county to include our Tactical Apprehension and Confrontation Team (TAC Team), Dive Team, K-9 Unit and Park Police.

The Road Patrol is the primary law enforcement agency for the townships which includes 735 square miles and nearly half of all county residents. They also provide critical backup for all police departments in the county including state and city patrols. In 2018 the Road Patrol Division handled over 60,000 original law enforcement incidents. Of all those incidents, deputies used force less than 1% of the time.

The Patrol Division also manages two units that augment their capabilities; the first is the Mounted Unit. This is a blended unit in that it houses many volunteers who are highly skilled to manage the horses, but also several full-time law enforcement personnel. In addition, in the last several years we have added Grand Rapids Police Department staff to this unit and work together to complete over 1,000 hours of patrol and special event work throughout Kent County. The second auxiliary unit is our Traffic Squad which is the oldest voluntary police reserve unit in the United States (over 100 years old). This group is assigned to nearly 10,000 hours a year of patrol and special event services.

Investigative

The Investigative Division is home to over 40 Detectives, a crime analyst and command staff assigned in 8 different units. These units include Major Case, Computer Crimes, General Case, Family Services which include crimes against children, Financial Crimes, Friend of the Court, Federal Task forces and Narcotics Enforcement. These investigative teams work throughout Kent County and assist agencies at both the local, state and federal levels.

In addition to detectives, the Investigative Division has several specialty units. One of them that is popularly known is the Crime Scene Unit. Our CSU specialists analyze evidence associated with crimes both on-the-scene and in our crime lab. This unit works directly with most area departments and is made up of 6 technicians. They have responded to over 800 scenes in the last year.

The command of this division is also responsible to oversee our property management staff, over 60,000 pieces of property stored in 12 rooms and our court security and transport unit. The Court Security/Transfer Unit moves 50 inmates a day to courtrooms and facilities and ensures the safety of all citizens who use the courts each day to carry out crucial business.

Facilities

The Kent County Sheriff's Office Facilities Management Department maintains approximately 650,000 sq. ft. in six locations throughout the county. The main facility, located at 701 Ball Ave., is the home to the Sheriff's Administration office, the Correctional facility, Fleet Services and the Marine Patrol. There are three substations, one located in Gaines Township, one on 17 Mile Rd near Kent City and one in City of Cedar Springs. The Mounted Unit is housed at our equestrian center on Kroes in Rockford. A training center and outdoor gun range is located on 16 Mile Rd in Gowen. Our facilities span a 60-year period with the oldest portion of our facility built in 1956 and the newest completed in 2016.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE PROFILE

Support Services

Support services houses those functions that support the primary missions of the Sheriff. This includes the Training Unit which responsible for ensuring our nearly 700 staff members meet all yearly certifications and stay current on tactics, legal updates and best practices.

It includes the Community Policing Unit where we build our neighborhood and business programming, kids' programs and outreach programs alongside the residents of Kent County. Our School Resource officers are similar in mission but are assigned specifically to a school district. They constantly work to provide safety and education to the students and staff by educating (97 different topics are taught each year by our SRO's) and responding to things that could threaten the well-being of the students; we investigated 33 school violence threats in 14 different school districts last year. Community programming focus' on long term problem solving and leveraging community resources and volunteers to work proactively. This allows our patrol staff to respond to emergencies and be armed with resources they would not otherwise have access to.

The largest of our support services units is our Emergency Communication Center which has 62 employees. This group answers 911 calls for over 400,000 residents of Kent County, averaging nearly 400 emergency 911 calls per day. Our busiest time for calls is between 4pm and 5pm on weekdays when people are often calling in for traffic related emergencies.

Our community is served by almost 700 total volunteers throughout the community and correctional facility. As an example of the benefit to the community, here are some of the programs managed by our support services unit:

Victim Advocates: 164 Calls, 439 Hours, 9,833 miles driven, **Trail patrols** 1,219.5 Hours, 7,773 miles patrolled,

Handicap Enforcement: 2,598 Hours, 723 Tickets, 21,551 Miles Driven, **Senior Visits/Vacation House Checks:** 26 Home Visits, 199 House Checks .

Corrections

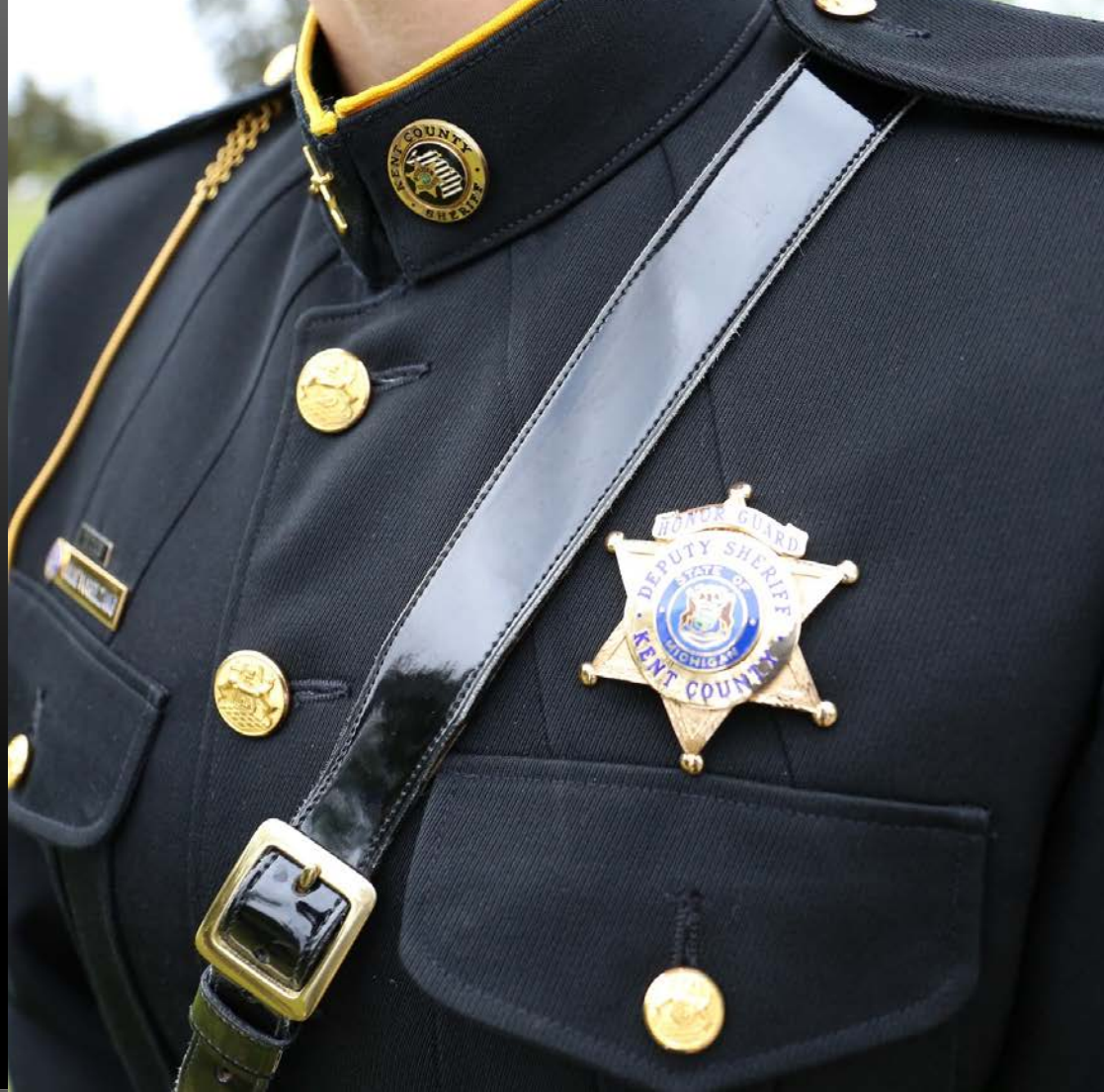
The first Kent County Jail consisted of two cells constructed within the Courthouse in 1835. Today, the Correctional Facility consists of 15 housing units that hold minimum, medium, and maximum-security inmates. The facility has a combined bed space capacity of 1,477 beds. In 2018 the average daily inmate population was 1,121 and we booked over 22,000 inmates. The overall average length of stay was 11.5 days, however, 45% of all inmates are released in less than 23 hours.

Today's inmate population is made up of approximately 25% females, (2006 the percentage was 11%). Our jail is the largest mental health facility in the county. Approximately 30% of the inmate population is being medically treated for a mental health issue and 10% have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness.

As of January 1, 2019, the Correctional Facility employed 290 staff members. The Corrections Division has several specialty units including the K-9 Unit, Correctional Engagement Response Team, Utility Services Team, Jail Intelligence Unit and Classification Unit. Corrections deputies also participate across divisions on the Dive Team, Peer Support Team, Honor Guard, and Mounted Unit.

Inmate programming is a key component in the management of the Correctional Facility. This is achieved through numerous partnerships with community organizations. Managing over 10 inmate programs is a collaborative effort between corrections staff, civilian staff and volunteers. Inmate programming provides offenders with skills that assist them with re-entry into the community. Some of the inmate programs available to qualified participants are: Work Release and Trusty Worker programs, Education programs, Sober Living Unit, Community Re-Entry programming, and Biblical Life Principals.

PRIORITY - PUBLIC SAFETY



Public safety is our number one priority and is the prism through which we view all goals of the Sheriff. This requires us to: leverage our resources, be guardians in our community, have effective and adequate resources to meet the needs of the community in an emergency, and to manage those in our care in a fair and humane way.

GOALS

- **Reduce response time to emergency calls for service.**
- **Strengthen police presence and visibility within the community.**
- **Deploy well-trained specialty units throughout the county to augment services for all county residents.**
- **Enhance emergency management capabilities for preparedness.**
- **Ensure countywide readiness for critical incidents.**
- **Continued enhancement of the safety and security of the Correctional Facility.**

PRIORITY - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



It is imperative that we know and understand the community we serve and that we work each day to be part of the community. This compels us to engage and constantly adapt to meet the dynamic needs of our diverse and vibrant population. This priority demands goals that purposely direct recruitment, training and engagement activities for the staff. We have made significant strides in this priority with our social media campaign including our Sheriff's Office App.

GOALS

- Enhance community engagement and ensure accessibility to all services.
- Optimize two-way communication on multiple social media platforms to increase transparency and improve emergency preparedness.
- Leverage strategic relationships in the community to enhance multi-language written and electronic communication options.
- Enhance inmate programming that provides skills and treatment for meaningful community re-entry.
- Leverage our mental health and addiction treatment partners for enhanced services within the correctional facility.
- Optimize departmental recruiting programs to promote diversity.

PRIORITY - PROVIDE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT SERVICES



Resources are always a concern in public services. We work to leverage our resources in ways that optimize what we have available to meet the dynamic needs of the community. This priority requires a data driven approach that gives us the information we need to make sound decisions. It has been the catalyst for initiatives such as overtime reduction, patrol car optimization, shift adjustments and patrol district changes. To this end, we will continue to build and evaluate data systems to assist us in the most critical times.

GOALS

- **Define operational equipment replacement plan.**
- **Create operational dashboards that will facilitate command staff monitoring public safety and other inmate initiatives.**
- **Evaluate staff deployment to reduce response times and overtime.**
- **Develop data systems to enhance our abilities to track training, equipment and personnel.**
- **Increase efficiency and capability of the communications center.**

PRIORITY - RESOURCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE SUSTAINABILITY



The most important and valuable resource we have is our staff. Simply put, we must do everything we can to promote our staff's well-being as they serve our community. This includes having the right training, the right input, the right supervision and the right equipment and facilities. We have several initiatives that will ensure our staff have the resources they need to do the work of the people.

GOALS

- Continued emphasis on the professional development of staff.
- Make staff's mental and physical health a priority when developing policy.
- Emphasize de-escalation in all training and continue expansion of Crisis Intervention Training for all staff.
- Develop a master plan for expansion and renovations of our facilities to meet the future needs of the community and staff.
- Maximize safety, security, and efficiency at all facilities.

Interesting Facts

Detectives can spend up to 2,000 hours investigating major cases, such as homicides.

Since 2017, KCSO personnel have successfully used AED's in over 20 medical emergencies.

KCSO has 13 Police K9s: 11 tracking K9s, 1 comfort K9 and 1 Arson K9. K9s responded to over 700 incidents in 2018

Narcan has been deployed over 70 times and saved numerous lives since its introduction to KCSO Deputies in 2016.

KCSO covers over 6,000 hours of special events each year. Events include the LPGA Tournament, multiple races, ball games, and school events.

The Sheriff's Office hosts an annual Citizen's Police Academy which allows Kent County residents to see how the department operates. Visit our website to apply.

The Sheriff's Office employees almost 700 employees.

KCSO Deputies covered over 1,000,000 miles patrolling and responding to calls for service in 2018.

The Sheriff's Office maintains the readiness of several specialty units to respond 24/7 anywhere throughout Kent County. Those specialty units include the Marine Patrol, Mounted Unit, K9 Unit, Dive Team, Corrections Engagement and Response Team, Tactical Apprehension and Confrontation Team, Honor Guard, Motorcycle Unit, Mobile Field Force Unit and a Mobile Command Post Unit for all critical incidents.

The Correctional Facility books an average of 62 inmates per day, 1,873 inmates per month, and averages a population of 1,121 inmates per day.

The recidivism rate of our Correctional Facility is 27.6% lower than the national average. Per our 2018 annual report, the percentage of former inmates returning to our jail is 40.4% while the national rate is 68%.

The Sheriff's Office is dedicated to responding to all emergency calls for service as quickly as possible. There has been an approximate 2-minute reduction in response time to priority 1 and 2 calls for service in the first quarter of 2019 from the last quarter of 2018.

The average hold time for calls for service is less than 2.1 minutes.

CONTACT

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