

**MARENGO POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF MARENGO, IOWA**

FROM: Ben Gray, Chief of Police

DATE: January 25, 2021

TO:

Hon. Adam Rabe, Mayor
Marengo City Council
Ms. Karla Marck, City Administrator
Citizens of Marengo
Members of the Marengo Police Department

SUBJECT: Marengo Police Department 2020 Annual Report

It is my honor and privilege that I present to the citizens of Marengo, the Marengo governing body, and members of the Marengo Police Department the annual report. This is my first annual report as Chief of police. This report is only possible due to the ongoing efforts of the police department staff and their dedication to the City of Marengo and the police department. This report will detail the numerous activities and crime statistics of the department and its operations. It will also address changes made to the department and its structure.

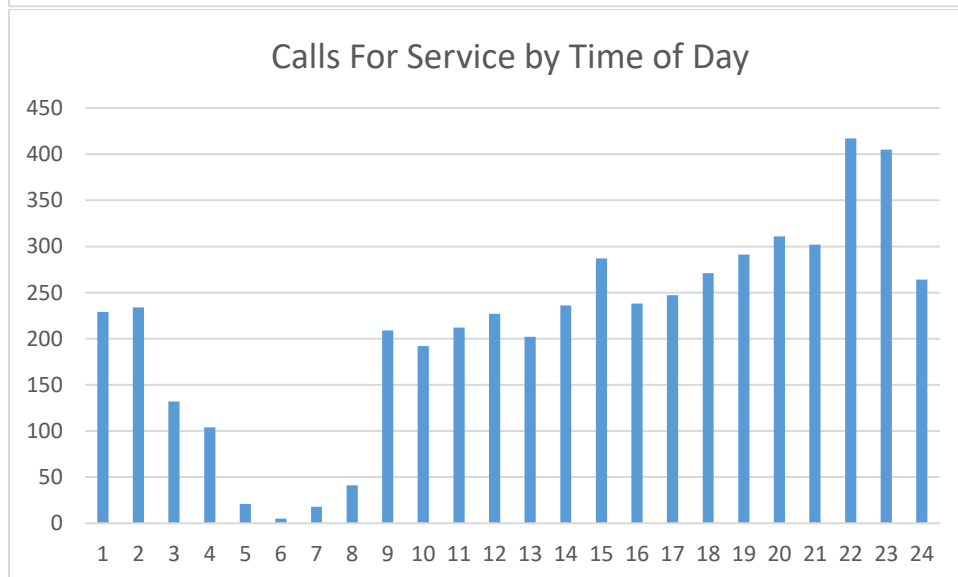
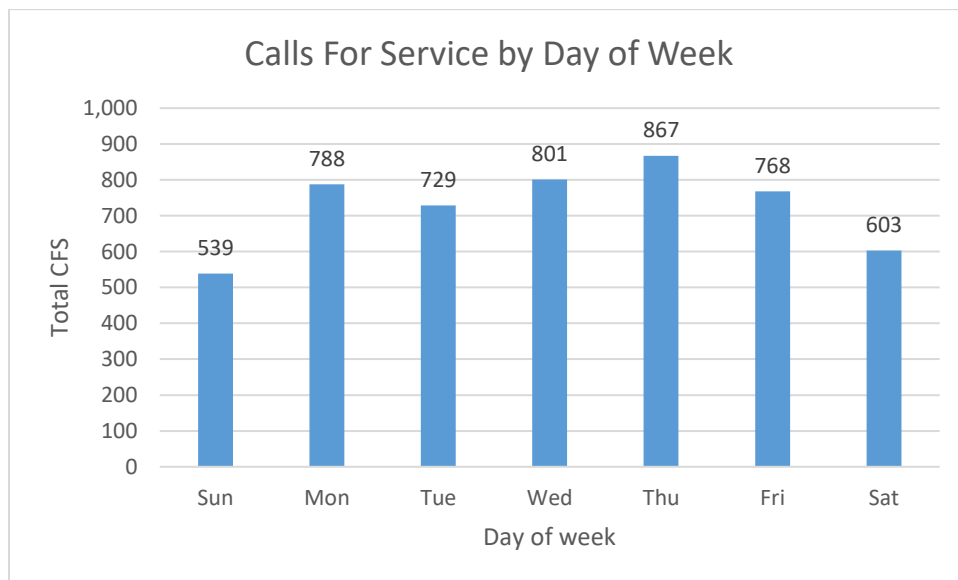
Upon taking the position of Chief of Police in November of 2019, the City of Marengo City Council determined that the full-time staff of the police department would be limited to three full time officers. I was told to use 2020 to show what the appropriate staffing level should be and to make my recommendation to the council to allow for additional budgeting to allocated to permit the addition of any full-time staff. This was certainly one of my highest priorities during 2020. After much discussion and thanks to much of the data you will review in this report, I am pleased to announce that in July of 2021 we will be adding the fourth full-time officer back to our staffing levels.

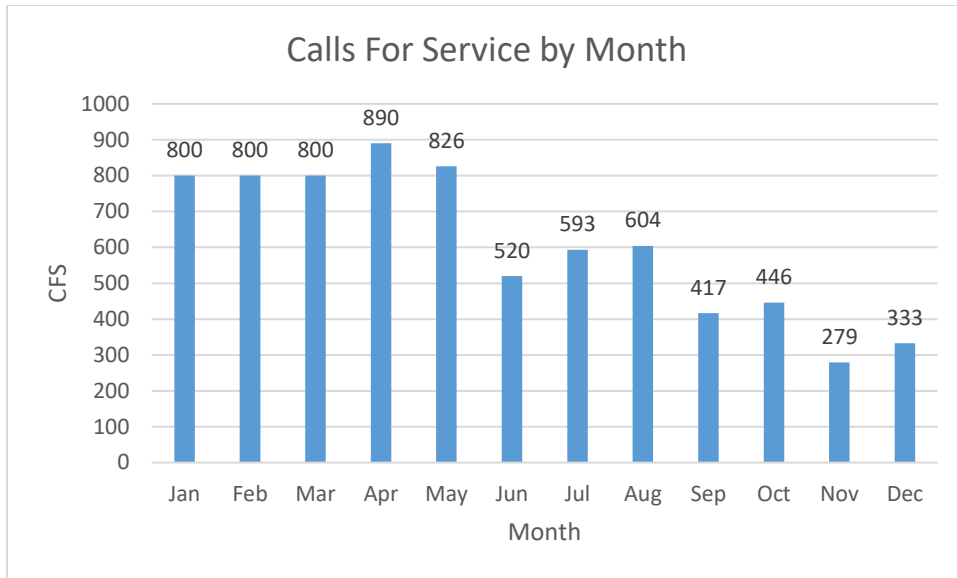
The police department lost some tenured officers during 2020. We thank all prior staff for their service to the community and the police department. As I am writing this report, I am in active interviews with several qualified candidates for open positions within the Marengo Police Department. As of the date of this report the department has two full time police officers (with an open 3rd position to be filled) and four Reserve Police Officers. I also have fielded several inquiries and am considering adding additional qualified Reserve Police Officers to our ranks.

Below listed are highlights from 2020 activities of the police department. In March of 2020 we went live with Zuercher Suite a new records management software. This software has allowed us to do a much better job of documenting department actions and officer activity. Understanding that data was not readily available prior to go live some data has been estimated for the months of January, February and March.

CALLS FOR SERVICE

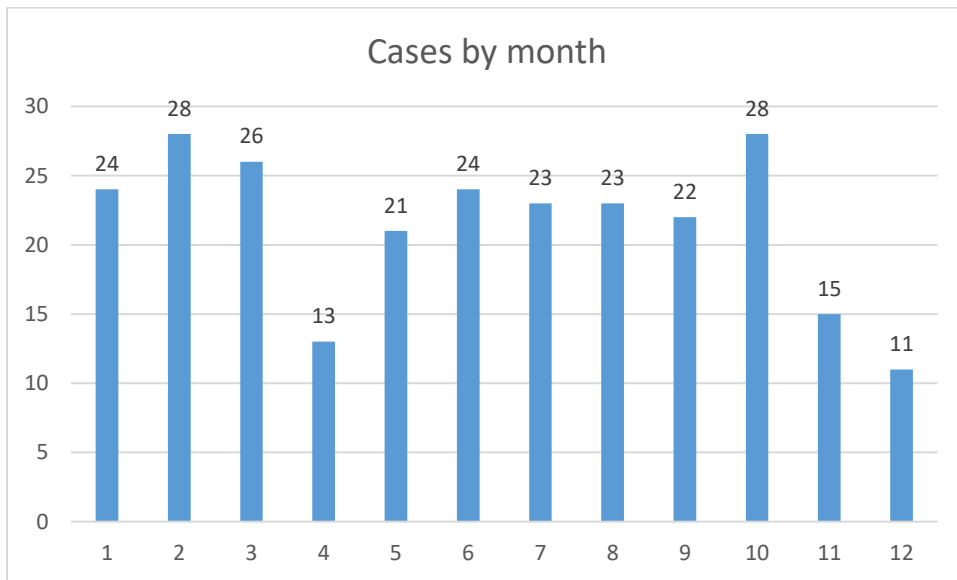
I was told that we previously estimated that we handled 5000 calls for service annual, but that number was not able to be confirmed as good records were not kept. Realizing that data only exists for calls for service as of the live date of the software below is a snapshot of calls for service and their types. The data collected for the 8 ½ months of live data show that we handled 5,095 calls for service. We can estimate that for the first two and a half months of 2020 an average of 800 calls for service each month (January-March) which means an estimated total call for service for 2020 would be 7,295. (note that during January-March the police department was at 3 full time officers). These calls for service include but are not limited to: reports of criminal activity, motor vehicle crashes, traffic enforcement, assist to other agencies, medical and fire emergencies, business and property checks, and other service related functions.





Cases

All case reports completed by the police department were documented in the records management software for this year. All cases generated prior to go live in March of 2020 were back entered into the system. From the estimated 7,295 calls for service a total of 258 cases were generated. These cases are used to document and report crimes against persons and property crimes. For some types of calls for services, cases are automatically generated requiring an officer to complete that report.



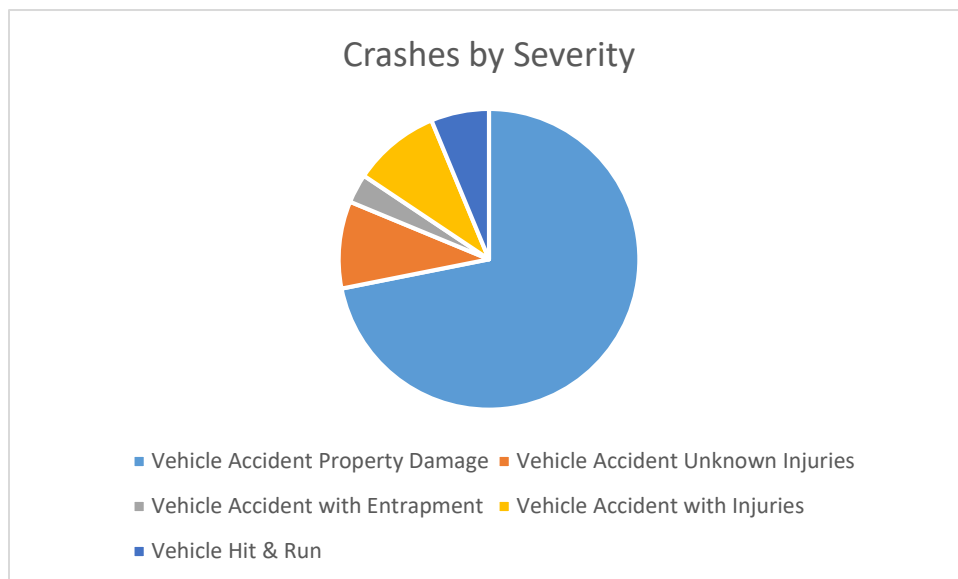
Traffic Enforcement

The three E's of traffic safety are Enforcement, Education, and Engineering. Officers use traffic stops of violators as ways to promote both the education and enforcement efforts of traffic safety. The department uses personal contact in the way of traffic stops and the departments speed trailer to assist in enforcement and education efforts.

Officers of the Marengo Police Department conducted a total an estimated 165 traffic stops. These stops resulted in a total of 85 citations being issued and 130 written warnings being issued. It should be noted that officers are given discretion to determine the best way to resolve their interaction with the violator. By policy, all officers are required to issue either a written warning or citation via the use of the mobile computer so that accurate documentation of the stop can be completed.

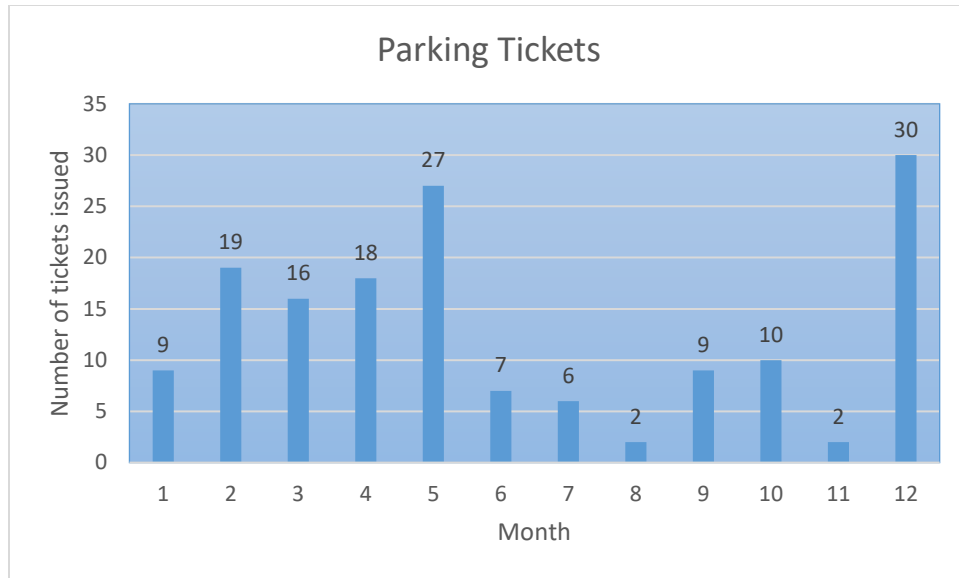
The Marengo Police Department also participates in the Iowa Governors Traffic Safety Program (STEP) which provides for overtime funding and traffic safety equipment funding. With limited staffing, not all of the monies provided from this STEP grant were utilized for 2020. It is my intent to not have this issue repeat itself in 2021.

Officer responded to a total of 32 vehicle crashes. These include property damage, personal injury, and hit and run crashes. Per Iowa Code, a crash report is required to be completed any time someone is injured, killed, or damage is in excess of \$1,500. A total of 17 crash reports were completed by officers.



Parking Tickets

Parking tickets are routinely issued by officers to ensure the safety of all traffic and pedestrian travel. Infractions that are often seen are parking in no parking zones, violation of the no parking 2-6 AM, parking the wrong direction, and snow emergency. My message to our department is for us to become more consistent in the issuance of these types of tickets, this is especially important since this is the most common complaint regarding parking tickets. In the spring of 2020 I ordered new parking tickets which are a newer style which allow the violator to clearly see the ticket. The new tickets also provide officers with an easy check mark on common violations that are often issued which assist in identifying the specific violation easier.



Training

Training is a priority of mine and I have been working to organize and enhance training that the police department staff participates in. There are mandatory training requirements that the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy requires in order to obtain and maintain positions of Police Officer or Reserve Police Officer. It is my goal to exceed those required trainings and to enhance each officers’ abilities. One way to enhance this training was the purchase of Police Legal Sciences web based legal training. Officers will begin using this program in January of 2020 and will complete training each month with this program. With the deployment of Zuercher I have also enhanced our ability to track the training officers partake in. Copies of training certificates and supporting documentation is now entered electronically to each officer’s personnel record.

In 2020 we purchased Lexipol which is a web based policy manual. To accommodate extra training specific to departmental policy, in 2021 we will begin using Daily Training Bulletins (DTB) in this program. While the policy manual is still being issued, once the majority of the policies have been released, the DTB’s will provide officer approximately five minutes per scheduled shift of training and review on departmental policies. Each DTB will provide an officer an opportunity to review a scenario, review applicable policy, and then answer a test question.

Crime Prevention

In 2020 I instituted a practice of becoming more involved with the schools. This includes an effort to actively patrol the schools during the school hours. Night shift patrols also participate in school patrols during school functions that occur after normal school hours. These extra patrols are in addition to routine calls for service that the department handles at the schools. We have worked closely with school administration to address areas we believe can lead to safer environments for students, staff, and visitors.

In 2021 I look forward to being able to provide a complete set of data for all department activity. Areas of focus will be to get our department fully staffed and trained. We will continue to strive to provide the best public safety services to the citizens and visitors of Marengo by adhering to our mission statement: to

serve all citizens and visitors with respect, fairness and professionalism. We are committed to the preservation of peace, order, safety and the protection of life and property.

The Marengo Police Department will seek to continually enhance the quality of life Marengo by holding ourselves to the highest ethical and professional standards.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ben Gray', written in a cursive style.

Ben Gray
Chief of Police