

Gaston County Police 2005 Annual Report



Proudly serving Gaston County since 1957



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Mission Statement

The mission of the Gaston County Police Department is to enhance safety and security through police services, which reflect our compassion and concern for the quality of life of all citizens.



Value Statements

The organizational philosophy of the Gaston County Police Department toward service delivery and an overall sense of direction can best be summarized in the value statements of the department. The value statements serve the purpose of informing both the community and department personnel of the foundation for providing efficient and effective police service. Therefore, Gaston County Police Department officers always think:

F.I.R.S.T.

- ***Fairness:*** We protect constitutional rights through impartial enforcement of the law. We are dedicated to treating citizens and our employees with dignity, respect, and equality.
- ***Integrity:*** We adhere to the highest moral and ethical standards. Honesty and sincerity serve as the foundation in dealing with each other and the community. In all we do, we have the courage and commitment to uphold these values.
- ***Respect:*** We will treat all people with compassion, tolerance, and dignity by providing professional law enforcement services through highly trained personnel accountable to our community.
- ***Service:*** We strive to improve the quality of life in partnership with the community. Our commitment is unwavering in the face of the many challenges confronting our officers.
- ***Trust:*** We demand honesty and accountability from every employee. This value fosters community and employee confidence in the department and allows for an open and honest relationship.



GASTON COUNTY POLICE

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W. J. Farley
Chief of Police

The Gaston County Police Department is pleased to present its 2005 Annual Report. I am very proud of the continued work and accomplishments of the Gaston County Police Department. As an organization, we are approaching our 50th anniversary, and while the Department is quite different than it was fifty years ago – our commitment to quality and service have remained constant.

As I reflect on our organization's history, it is clear we have accomplished more than just advancing conventional policing strategies, but have embraced new challenges as well. Since the first County police officers took to the streets nearly 50 years ago, our organization has continually expanded traditional notions of policing by taking on new duties and responsibilities. Today these duties include: managing animal control, operating the emergency 911 communications center, conducting environmental investigations, participating in code enforcement, initiating nuisance abatement actions, providing educational services, and performing crime analysis. I am certain such a diverse array of services would have been difficult to imagine by any of the original "Rurals" in 1957. Yet, as each year passes, the Department continues to incorporate new initiatives and technologies to enhance our operations and ultimately improve services for our community.

I know it is only through the quality of our employees that we are able to accomplish so much. We recruit, train, and select only the best. Our selection process is rigorous, but it enables us to hire those who are ready, willing, and able to accept the challenges we face in modern policing. It should come as no surprise that Department-wide, for every twenty applicants, typically only one is found to be qualified for the task. This high standard is essential though, as it is only through the collective efforts of every police employee that we are able to make a difference in the lives of those who live and work in Gaston County.

The pages that follow highlight the dedication, achievements, contributions, and sacrifices made by your County Police employees in the performance of our duties. As you look through this report you will see that our Department continues to evolve to meet the challenges of the future. I am sure after reviewing it, you too will be as proud as I am of the men and women who serve our community with the County Police.

William Farley
Chief of Police

CRIME

Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Index Crimes

In 1930, the FBI began collecting and compiling data on “index crimes,” after the International Association of Chiefs of Police expressed a need for reliable and uniform national crime statistics. The information is collected through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, and the figures are used for two primary purposes. First is to better understand and improve law enforcement administration, operations, and management, and second is to indicate fluctuations and patterns in the level of crime in America. The “index crimes” are a combination of eight categories, selected because of their seriousness and frequency of occurrence. The index offenses and their UCR definitions are listed below:

Violent Crime:	
homicide	The willful (non-negligent) killing of one human being by another.
forcible rape	The carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Assaults or attempts to commit rape by force or threat of force are also included.
robbery	The taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person(s), by force or threat of force and/or putting the victim in fear.
aggravated assault	The unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault is usually accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm. Attempts are included.
Property Crime:	
burglary	The unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or theft, or an attempt to do so.
larceny - theft	The unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of property from the possession or constructive possession of another.
motor vehicle theft	The theft or attempted theft of a motor vehicle.
arson	The willful or malicious burning or attempt to burn, with or without intent to defraud, a dwelling, house, public building, motor vehicle or aircraft, or personal property of another.

National UCR Crime Statistics for January – June 2005:

Overall, violent crime in the Nation decreased 0.5%, and property crime declined 2.8% during the first six months of 2005, as compared to index crime figures from the same time period in 2004, according to the FBI’s *Preliminary Semiannual Uniform Crime Report*¹.

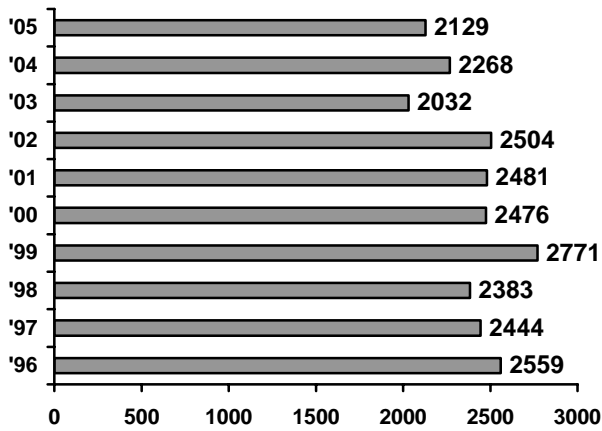
Of the violent crimes, a 2.1 percent increase was seen in homicides nationwide, as was a 0.6 percent increase in robberies. However, forcible rapes and aggravated assaults both decreased during the first half of 2005 by 4.7 percent and 0.7 percent respectively.

Of the property crimes, there was a decrease in each of the four categories. Burglaries dropped by 1.1 percent, larcenies fell by 3.5 percent, motor vehicle thefts were reduced by 2.1 percent, and arsons decreased by 5.6 percent.

¹ FBI Press Release December 19, 2005

Gaston County Total Index Crimes through 2005

Total Index Crimes, 1996 - 2005

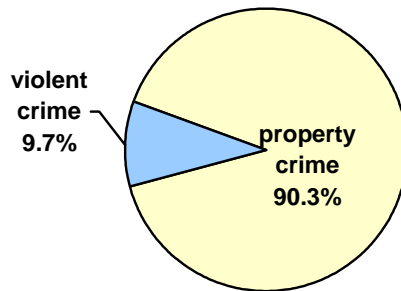


The total number of index crimes occurring in Gaston County this year was 2,129 – a **decrease of 6.1%** when compared with the 2,268 index crimes occurring last year. Violent crimes **decreased** by **1%** from last year with the most significant reductions seen in rape and robbery offenses. Moreover, property crimes **decreased** a total of **6.7%** from last year with reductions in burglaries and larcenies.

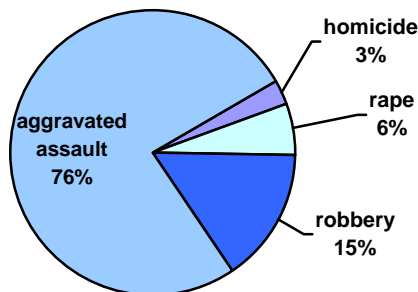
Violent Crime vs. Property Crime

Violent crimes accounted for only 9.7% of all 2005 index crimes reported in Gaston County, while index property crimes accounted for the remaining 90.3 percent.

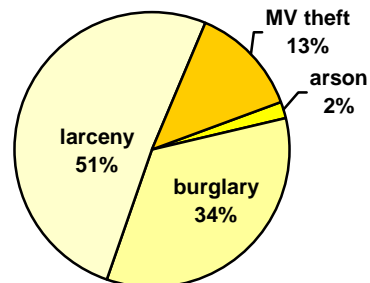
Index Crime Comparison



Percentages of Violent Crimes

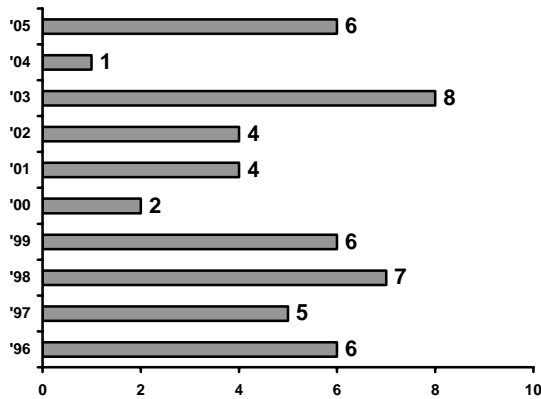


Percentages of Property Crimes

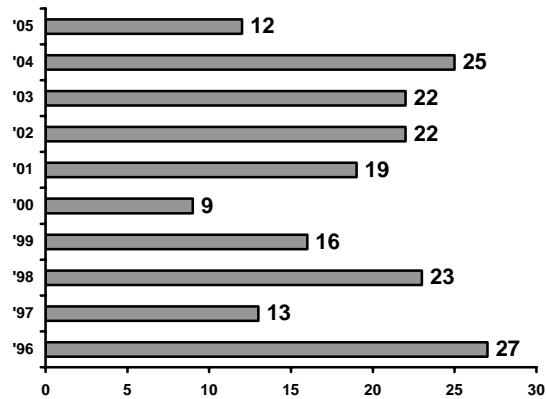


Gaston County Violent Crime Index

Total homicides, 1996 - 2005

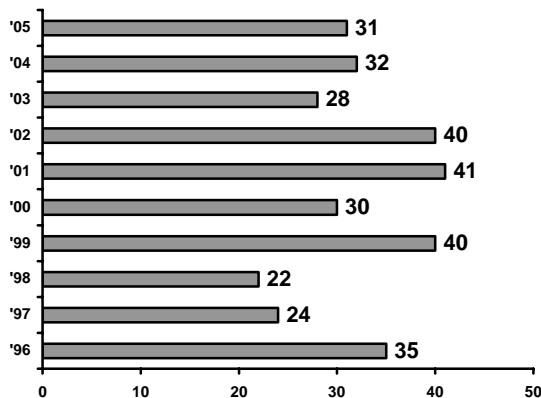


Total rapes, 1996 - 2005

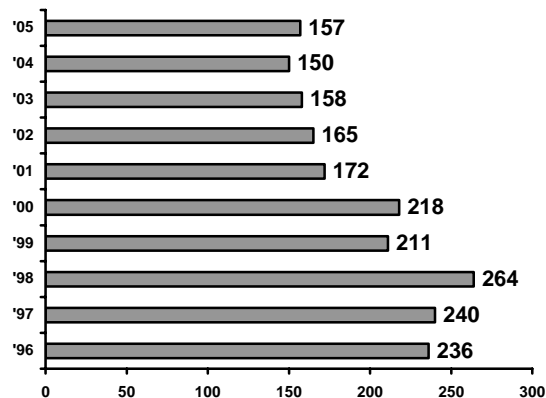


Violent crime in Gaston County this year **decreased** overall by **1 percent**, with a total of 206 violent crimes occurring as compared with 208 crimes last year. The most significant increase was seen in the number of homicides occurring this year, up to 6, with 3 happening in the month of December, as compared with only 1 last year. The only other category experiencing an **increase** was a **4.5%** rise in aggravated assaults – up from 150 incidents last year to 157 incidents in 2005. There was a modest **decrease** of **3.1%** in the total number of robberies, falling to 31 occurrences this year from 32 incidents last year. However, the most significant change among the violent index crimes was the overall number of forcible rapes reported, which **fell** by **52%** from 25 occurrences in 2004 to just 12 incidents in 2005.

Total robberies, 1996 - 2005

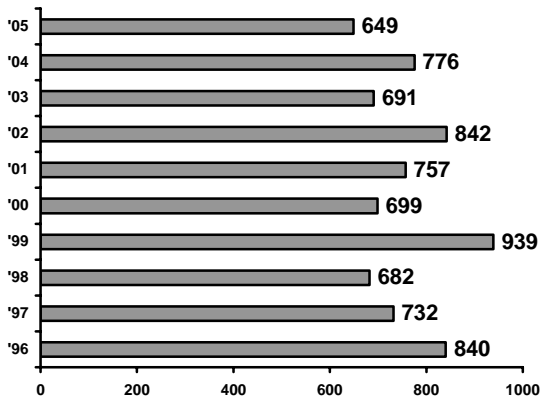


Total aggravated assaults, 1996 - 2005

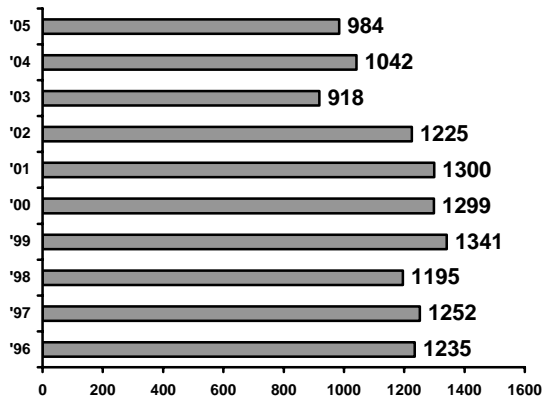


Gaston County Property Crime Index

Total burglaries, 1996 - 2005

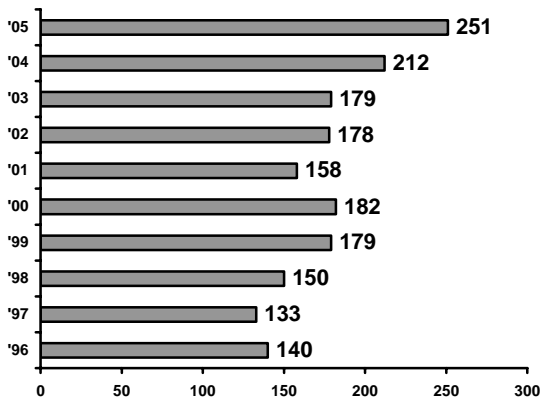


Total larcenies, 1996 - 2005

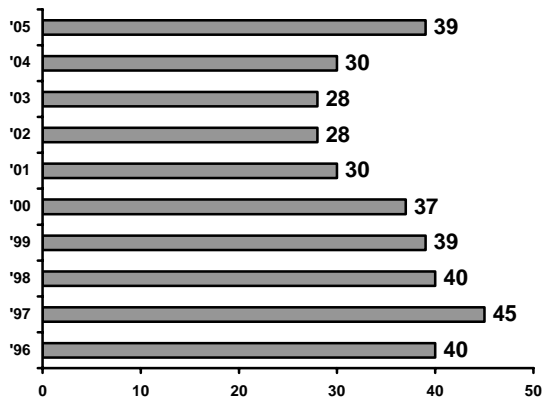


Property crime **decreased** overall by **6.7%** from last year. Significant decreases were seen in both the number of burglaries and larcenies. Burglaries dropped to 649 incidents from 776, representing a **16.4%** decrease, and larcenies fell from 1,042 incidents last year to 984 in 2005 – a **5.6%** reduction. However, increases were seen in both motor vehicle thefts and arson offenses. Incidents of motor vehicle theft **increased** in 2005 by **15.5%** to 251 incidents as compared with 212 incidents last year. Additionally, arson offenses increased from 30 to 39 offenses, representing a **30%** increase.

Total motor vehicle thefts, 1996 - 2005



Total arsons, 1996 - 2005



COMMAND ORGANIZATION

Command Organization

The Gaston County Police Department began operation in July of 1957 with a chief, a secretary, and 23 officers. Since its inception, the department has continually grown stronger and more proficient – to its current size of 131 sworn personnel and 83 non-sworn employees. Throughout the years, the department continually strove for excellence, and in 1991 became the 190th internationally accredited police agency. Since then, it has been re-accredited three times including this year, where the department exemplified its on-going commitment to excellence by achieving a 100% compliance rating.

Gaston County covers a total of 365 square miles with 15 incorporated municipalities. The municipalities however, only account for 94 square miles (26%) of the county. Moreover, four of the cities do not provide policing services, thus they and the remaining unincorporated areas are served by the Gaston County Police. This area consists of 271 square miles, and is home to over 85,000 residents.

The department is overseen by the Chief and provides its high level of service through three divisions, which are in turn comprised of various sub-units. Each are described below:

Office of the Chief

The Chief manages each division, which is commanded by an Assistant Chief or Director. Within the three operating divisions are various units that carry out the department's operational and administrative functions. The Chief also directly manages all budgetary functions of the department as well as the Professional Standards Unit.

Community Policing Division

The Community Policing Division is overseen by an Assistant Chief and is comprised primarily of uniformed officers assigned to one of four geographical areas known as zones, which are in turn commanded by a Captain. The officers assigned to each zone are further divided into squads that cover rotating 12-hour shifts, and are supervised by a Sergeant. The Community Policing Division is responsible for controlling and preventing crime through regular patrols, answering calls for service, apprehending offenders, enforcing criminal and traffic laws, conducting preliminary investigations, and working with the community to solve neighborhood crime problems. This division is also made up of two specialized patrol units, which are the canine unit and the marine patrol.

Investigative and Support Services Division

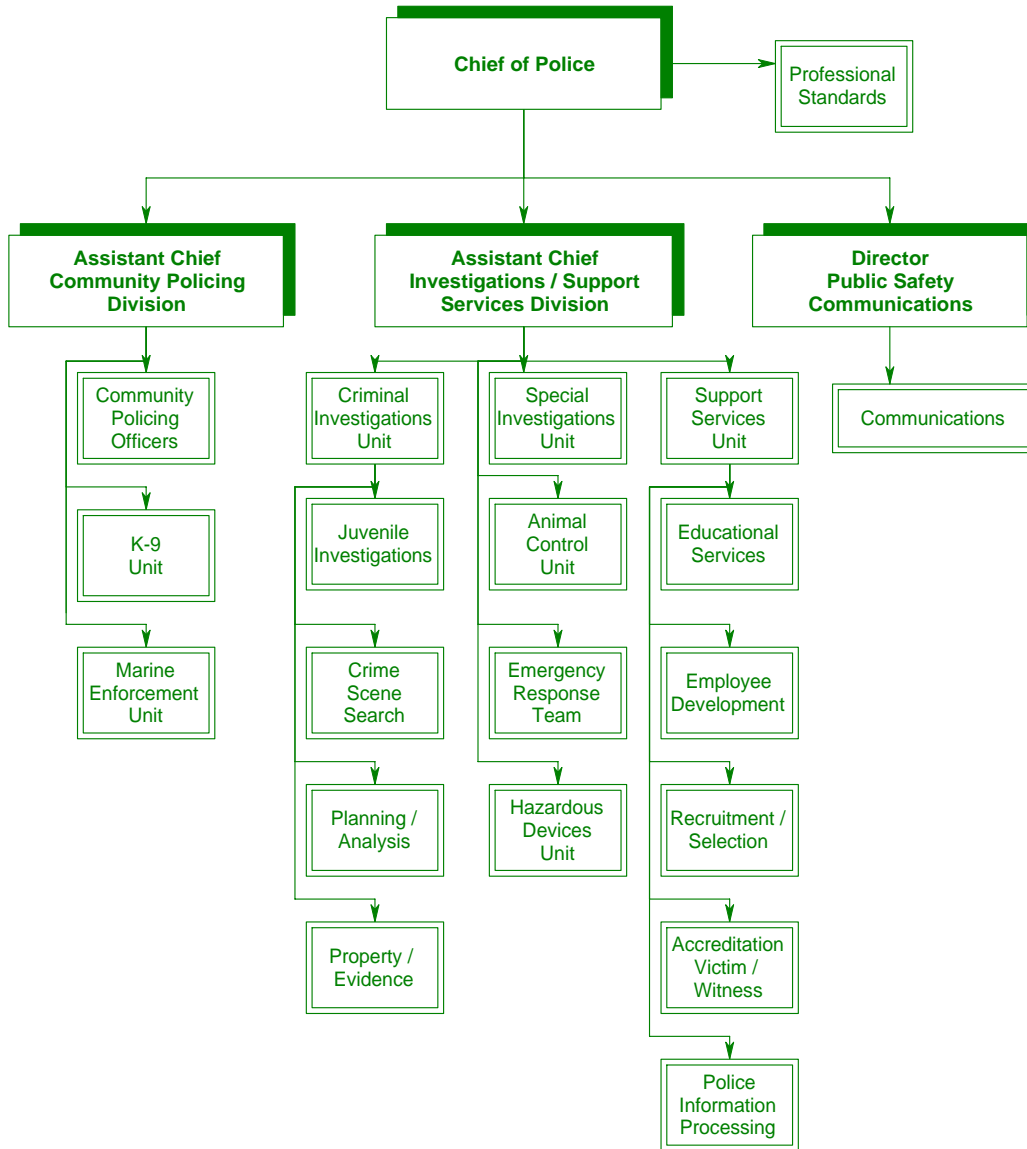
The Investigative and Support Services Division is overseen by an Assistant Chief and is comprised of the Criminal Investigations Unit (CIU), the Special Investigations Unit (SIU), Animal Control, the Emergency Response Team (ERT), the Hazardous Devices Team, and the Support Services Unit. CIU is responsible for the investigation of felonies, select misdemeanors, missing persons, unattended deaths, offenses involving juveniles, and the processing of forensic evidence. Crime Analysis and Property and Evidence are also included in this unit. SIU is primarily responsible for narcotics investigations, but is also charged with investigating gambling and prostitution offenses. Animal Control, the ERT, and the Hazardous Devices Team are specialized units. The Support Services Unit includes Educational Services, Employee Development, Recruitment and Selection, Accreditation, and Police Information Processing.

Communications Division

The Communications Division is led by a Director and comprised of 50 employees covering 4 shifts, who provide 24-hour coverage of emergency 911 calls and radio transmissions. The unit is charged with maintaining and operating the computer-aided dispatch system for police, fire, and medical calls, as well as receiving both emergency and non-emergency calls for service.

The organizational chart for the Gaston County Police Department depicts the chain of command and indicates each Division and supporting Units.

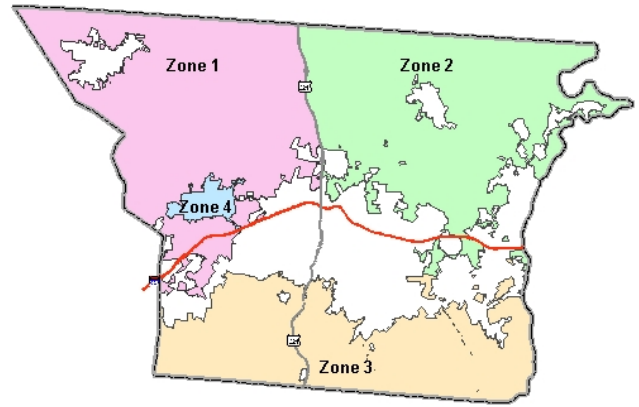
Gaston County Police



COMMUNITY POLICING DIVISION

Community Policing Division Zone 1

Zone 1 comprises the Northwestern part of Gaston County covering 100 square miles, which is home to more than 20,000 residents. In 2005, the 21 officers assigned to this area responded to 30,773 calls for service, issued 2,760 citations, served 1,175 warrants, and made 809 arrests.



Index Crime in Zone 1

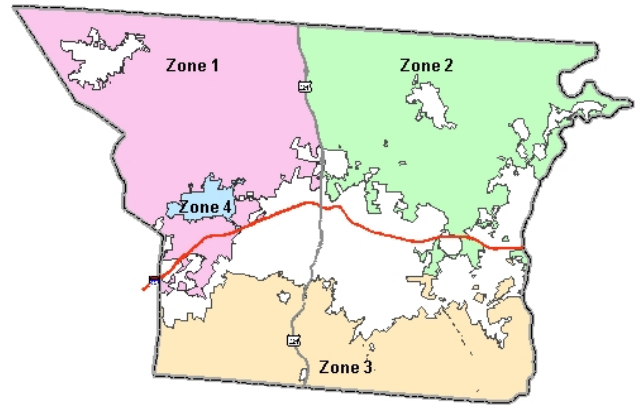
Index crimes in Zone 1 **decreased** overall from last year by **9.8%** for violent crimes and **18.8%** for property crimes. However, while violent crime as a whole went down, there were two homicides in the zone this year, as compared with no occurrences last year. Moreover, while property crimes decreased overall, there were slight increases in the number of motor vehicle thefts, from 57 in 2004 to 60 this year, and arsons, from 7 to 9 incidents. It was through the utilization of community oriented policing, innovation, and crime mapping, that Zone 1 officers were able to identify problem areas and target them with directed enforcement activities. These proactive steps were crucial in the reduction and prevention of crime.

2005 Highlights

- Targeting Counterfeit Merchandise: Gaston County Officers, in conjunction with the North Carolina Secretary of State's Office, manufacturer representatives, and other local police agencies, cracked down on the illegal sale of counterfeit merchandise with products ranging from music CD's to purses and clothing. During the year, several undercover operations were initiated resulting in numerous investigations of local sales establishments. These operations netted seizures of approximately \$500,000 in merchandise and cash, and resulted in the filing of 44 criminal charges. The focus on counterfeit merchandise sales in Gaston County will continue to be actively pursued, including the assignment of a Zone 1 officer to the N.C. Counterfeit and Trademark Violation Task Force.
- Conducting Anti-Theft Operations: As a proactive response to property crime in Zone 1, two larceny 'reversal' operations were conducted in 2005. These operations targeted four separate locations in Zone 1 that were identified as having high concentrations of reported larcenies. One of the operations resulted in the arrest of a subject who stole two string trimmers off the trailer used in the reversal operation.
- Highway Safety and Enforcement Team: This team consists of 4 officers who patrol primarily the I-85 corridor from US 321 to Cleveland County. The team's objective is to enforce all motor vehicle laws and to interdict drug traffic along the interstate. During the teams first two days of operation they seized over \$22,000 in drug money.
- Community Policing Efforts: While enforcement activities were on going, officers also worked closely with citizens through various community contacts such as Community Watch groups, day care centers, and interactions with senior citizens. Officers also provided security at various events at the Dallas County Park and assisted other jurisdictions on an as-needed basis.

Community Policing Division Zone 2

Zone 2 is located in the Northeastern part of Gaston County and covers 97 square miles with more than 30,000 residents. In 2005, the 20 officers assigned to this area responded to 35,108 calls for service, issued 4,158 citations, served 1,171 warrants, and made 587 arrests.



Index Crime in Zone 2

Violent crime in Zone 2 **increased** from 56 incidents last year to 72 in 2005, representing a **28.6%** change. This was predominantly the result of an increase in aggravated assault offenses, which rose by 12 offenses over last year, and homicides increasing from 1 incident in 2004 to 3 this year. Forcible rape was the only violent index crime experiencing a decrease from last year, **dropping** by **17%**. Property crimes in Zone 2 saw only a **1.8%** increase this year over last. Nonetheless, property crimes continue to be a major focus, particularly in light of a **12%** increase in the number of motor vehicle thefts as compared with last year.

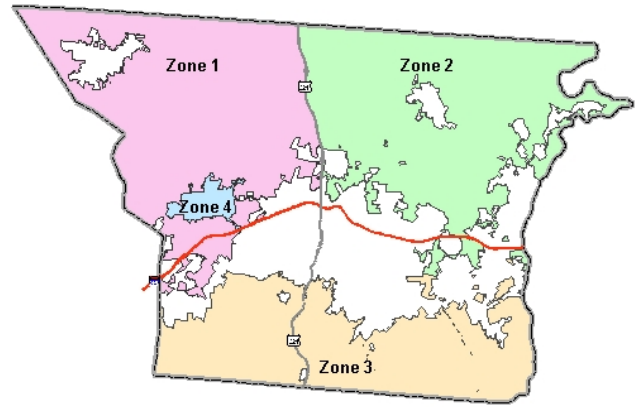
2005 Highlights

- Resolving Prostitution Complaints: Several complaints about prostitution prompted an investigation into the use of County parks as areas being used for solicitation purposes. Through a cooperative effort involving citizens, the County Parks & Recreation Department, and the County Police, the availability of the parks to commit these offenses was eliminated. Moreover, individuals involved in acts of prostitution were identified and arrested, resulting in a significant decrease in prostitution, loitering, and trespassing – and resolving the initial complaints.
- Enforcing Abatement Actions: Since the elimination of the Environmental Crimes Unit, patrol officers are now responsible for investigating environmental issues. During 2005, the Gaston County Board of Commissioners heard two nuisance abatement actions for properties located in Zone 2, and approved the clean up of those properties. Two officers, previously assigned to the Environmental Crimes Unit, took the lead in enforcing the abatement actions.
- Youthful Offender: Zone 2 officers received repeated calls for service and had numerous contacts with a juvenile causing a neighborhood problem. This juvenile was a repeat offender and known to use alcohol and other illegal drugs. Previous contacts with this juvenile were generally related to thefts and domestic or neighborhood disturbances. In response to this situation, officers maintained continual contact with neighbors and juvenile justice authorities to ensure the subsequent prosecution of this youthful offender included not only punishment for the offenses committed, but intensive treatment as well.
- Drug House Closed: Several individuals complained of possible drug activity at a nearby residence. In response, officers took a proactive role by conducting license checks, radar and surveillance operations, knock and talks, and follow-up interviews with the residents in the neighborhood. As a result, officers gathered sufficient evidence to obtain and execute a search warrant at the suspect's residence. This search resulted in six arrests for drug possession, drug paraphernalia, and possession of stolen goods. Furthermore, several other break-ins were solved as a result of post-arrest statements made by the offenders.

Community Policing Division

Zone 3

Zone 3 encompasses the southern unincorporated areas of Gaston County. This area represents over 75 square miles and nearly 28,000 residents. During 2005, officers responded to over 33,920 calls for service, issued 2,870 citations, served 1,452 warrants, and made 549 arrests.



Index Crime in Zone 3

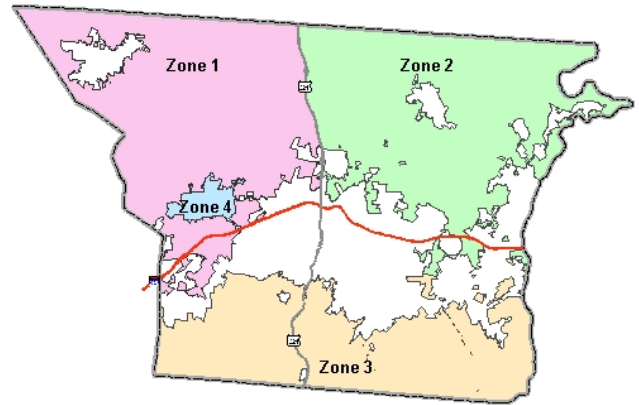
Violent crime in Zone 3 decreased significantly from 74 total incidents last year to only 56 in 2005. The only category in violent crimes that had any increase was the occurrence of a single homicide this year as compared with zero occurrences last year. Aggravated assaults **decreased by 10%**, forcible rapes fell from 11 incidents last year to only 3 this year, representing a **73% reduction**, and robberies **declined by 55%**. Property crime in this area also saw an overall **decline of 5.2%** this year over last. Burglaries saw the biggest decline falling from 228 instances last year to 182 in 2005. Larcenies also declined, but only slightly more than one percent. Motor vehicle thefts were the area with the greatest increase, rising from 54 instances last year to 75 this year.

2005 Highlights

- Community Policing: A number of factors contributed to the decrease of property crimes in Zone 3. One factor was the use of information provided by our Crime Analysis Unit. Another factor was the targeting of areas that were high in calls for service. In addition, officers were diligent with the implementation of enforcement strategies designed to eliminate specific problems at their root cause. Moreover, directed patrol operations and working in partnership with citizens were other factors aiding in the reduction of property crime.
- Directed Enforcement Efforts: Additional focus was placed on the identification of individuals suspected of criminal activity. Constant monitoring of their activity by every officer, including specialized units, rather than just a few officers within Zone 3, led to multiple arrests and resulted in an immediate impact on our efforts to reduce property crime.
- Crime Prevention Programs: Officers expanded their reach into communities through crime prevention efforts ranging from bicycle safety to identity theft classes. These expanded efforts resulted in the presentation of over 240 programs with an attendance of over 9,000 persons.
- Enforcing Environmental Crimes: Police involvement in quality of life issues proved beneficial to a community troubled with drugs and dilapidated houses. Officers developed a new Community Watch group and brought together many stakeholders within the community other than police such as, Gaston County Code Enforcement, Gastonia City Code Enforcement, Gaston County Health Department and Gaston County Grants Coordinator. The collaboration of these stakeholders accelerated the approval process for the demolition of 13 houses within that community if the respective property-owners fail to comply with clean-up requirements, in addition to shutting down two known drug houses.

Community Policing Division Zone 4

Zone 4 is the incorporated city limits of Bessemer City. This is predominantly an urban area covering 4.4 square miles with a population of over 5,000 citizens. During 2005, officers responded to 17,836 calls for service, issued 1,271 citations, served 497 warrants and made 362 arrests.



Index Crime in Zone 4

Zone 4 experienced an **increase** in property crime of **4.3%** as well as a **12% increase** in violent crime. The largest increase in property crime came from stolen motor vehicles increasing from 21 offenses last year to 30 offenses in 2005, a **42.9% increase**. Larcenies **increased** almost **10%**, however the increase in actual offenses was only 11 more than last year. The largest increase in violent crime was the number of robberies increasing to 8 incidents this year as compared with 6 in 2004. Yet the most significant change in the violent crime index was the decrease in the number of rapes occurring this year from 2 to zero.

2005 Highlights

- Juvenile Protection Ordinance Enforcement: County Police officers assigned to Bessemer City have focused on enforcement of the City's Youth Protection ordinances. During the summer months, while school is not in session, the City experiences an increase in crimes such as petty larcenies and malicious damage reports. Through directed enforcement of ordinances such as curfews, officers were able to reduce these types of calls for service.
- Skateboarders: Another area of concern within Bessemer City involves the growing popularity of skateboarding. The department has experienced a surge in complaints related to juveniles skateboarding in restricted areas. As a result, certain areas within the City, such as "The Pad" located on 13th Street, have had "No Trespassing" signs posted due to illegal activities committed by the skaters. While officers are strictly enforcing city ordinances regulating skating, the City Council and police continue to search for alternative solutions to the problem.
- Drug Interdiction: The sale of illegal narcotics leads to an increase in property crimes, thus officers targeted several drug areas within the City for enforcement. These investigations led to the arrests of several subjects. Officers also worked with the Bessemer City Council to change the loitering ordinance to include drug activity. In addition, officers and landlords worked together to have individuals involved in drug activity evicted from the landlord's property.
- Motor Vehicle Thefts: Officers also actively worked several stolen vehicle cases, along with other property crimes, which resulted in the apprehension of those responsible for the offenses.
- Community Policing: Community involvement is an integral part of policing. As such, officers conducted several safety talks with various Community Watch groups and other civic organizations. In addition, safety tips were regularly published in the Bessemer City Newsletter and on the City's utilities bills.



Community Policing Division K9 Unit

The primary task of the six-team K9 Unit is to conduct specialized searches for weapons, narcotics, fugitives, and missing persons utilizing trained law enforcement dogs. In 2005, the K9 Unit responded to 6,000 calls for service including conducting 164 tracking searches, 720 narcotics searches, and 32 building searches. Of these total searches, the unit increased its success rate by 7% from last year, by locating the target of the search 276 times. In addition to conducting these specialized searches, the K9 Unit is also responsible for answering routine calls, responding to all crimes in progress, and performing street-level drug interdiction.



The K9 Unit put a strong emphasis on training during 2005, logging in over 1,600 hours of training. The unit hosted a K9 Decoy Training Seminar, where numerous K9 Units from area law enforcement agencies received handling tips and training to become reliable decoys by prominent instructors from the Police K9 Training Institute in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

The focus on training this year has had a positive impact on the Unit and its effectiveness as demonstrated through the 594 total arrests – of which, 303 were for felony offenses.

The K9 Unit also participated in crime prevention by providing demonstrations to various civic organizations, Community Watch groups, and schools. These demonstrations were provided to showcase the capabilities of the canines while giving officers an opportunity to answer questions and provide crime prevention information. In 2005, the K9 unit took part in 37 demonstrations.



Community Policing Division Marine Enforcement Unit

The primary functions of the Marine Enforcement Unit are to enforce boating laws, conduct boating safety inspections, remove navigational hazards, and provide assistance to boaters and other governmental agencies. The Marine Enforcement Unit began seasonal operations May 23, 2005 and continued full-time until August 25, 2005. The Unit maintained weekend and holiday operations through October 1, 2005, and thereafter responded to calls for service on an as-needed basis.



The Lake Wylie Marine Commission and the Mountain Island Marine Commission granted the Marine Enforcement Unit policing authority over the waterway and shorelines of Lake Wylie. Several other law enforcement agencies also have concurrent jurisdiction over Lake Wylie, and the Unit works closely with each of these agencies in order to maintain the safety of all lake goers.

2005 Highlights

➤ This year, officers from the Unit attended a Boating Search and Rescue class at Moss Lake, which instructed members on boating operations in flood conditions and swift water rescue techniques.



➤ Gaston County along with Charlotte-Mecklenburg provided scene security for an underwater search involving Gastonia City Police Underwater Search and Rescue Unit, Gaston Emergency Medical Services, and Cabarrus County Sheriff. These units were conducting a search on Lake Wylie for evidence in an investigation originating in Gastonia.



➤ Unit members also participated in several educational programs including the Coast Guard Auxiliary Safety Inspection, the Commissioners School of Excellence, the Citizens' Police Academy, and Citizens' Police Academy for Youth. Additionally, the Unit participated in several community programs such as the Mountain Island Lake Flotilla, the Bass Masters Championships, National Night Out, and the Fourth of July fireworks display on Lake Wylie.

**INVESTIGATIONS
&
SUPPORT
SERVICES
DIVISION**

Investigations and Support Services Division

Criminal Investigations Unit

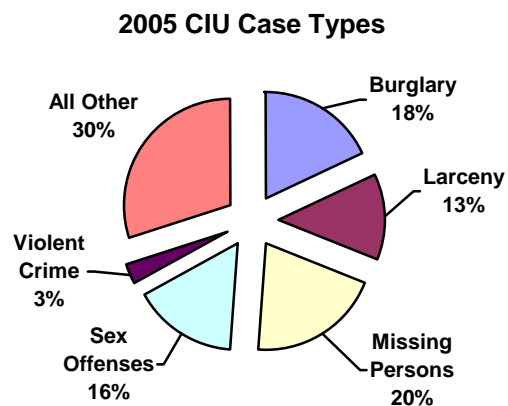
The Criminal Investigations Unit (CIU) is responsible for conducting follow-up and major case investigations. This Unit consists of a captain; 2 sergeants; 5 investigators; and 1 juvenile investigator – who is responsible for all cases with juvenile victims/suspects and most missing persons investigations.

CIU receives most of its cases after officers in the Community Policing Unit have conducted a preliminary investigation and completed a report of their findings. These initial reports are an integral part of the Unit's ability to solve cases as they provide investigators with vital information and potential leads.

Collaboration efforts also carry over to other law enforcement agencies as well. Every quarter, CIU hosts a multi-jurisdictional meeting of police agencies from surrounding areas to share information concerning criminal activity. This strategy has proven successful with several cases being solved through this information sharing.

The Crime Analysis Unit also plays a vital role in criminal investigations. Analysts provide "hotspot" maps and other important information such as methods of operations from crime reports within these hot areas. They also provide weekly and monthly maps and reports that summarize crime activity in an effort to examine trends and discern patterns. Analysts are also called upon to search database records for vehicle and suspect information that may match those listed in reports to assist in developing leads on similar or related cases.

Because the Criminal Investigations Unit is a small unit, each investigator is assigned a variety of cases. Of the total cases investigated in 2005, 18% involved the breaking and entering of residences/businesses, motor vehicles, or other outbuildings. Larceny investigations accounted for 13% of the caseload. Missing persons accounted for 20% of investigations (with juveniles responsible for 66% of the 20%); sex offenses accounted for 16%; violent crimes were only 3%; and the remaining 30% of investigations included offenses such as serious assaults, frauds, unattended death investigations and other types of crimes.



Overall, there was a **7% decrease** in the caseload for CIU in 2005 as compared with last year. This decrease directly correlates with the **6% decrease** in index crimes occurring in the County. CIU opened 472 general investigations and 146 juvenile cases during the year, compared to 507 general investigations and 173 juvenile cases in 2004. Arrests for the year were also lower with 489 charges being filed against 124 individuals as compared to 653 charges in 2004. However, more than half of last year's total charges were the result of just two cases.

2005 Highlights

- Recovered Property: Various items of property valued at over \$300,000 were recovered through numerous investigations and subsequently returned to the rightful owners.
- Death Investigations: There were six (6) homicides in the County for 2005 as compared with only one in 2004. In addition to these homicides, CIU responded to 31 unattended deaths requiring preliminary investigations.
- Theft Rings Broken Up: Three cases of particular interest in 2005 were crimes dealing with ATV larcenies; the arrest of two individuals on 74 charges, including burglary, larceny from motor vehicles, motor vehicle theft, and felony conspiracy; and the discovery of a “chop-shop” operation.
 - In the first case, 11 individuals were charged on 56 warrants including burglary, larceny, and possession of stolen property. In this case, 11 ATVs, valued at \$46,000, were recovered and returned to the owners.
 - In the second case, Community Policing officers arrested an individual after linking him to stolen property located in a pawnshop. Upon further investigation into the case, CIU assisted patrol personnel in taking out 36 warrants on that individual. Moreover, as a result of several interviews, a second suspect was identified as being involved in these cases. That person was later interviewed and confessed to additional crimes having 35 separate victims and leading to 74 additional charges for both suspects.
 - The third case was the discovery of a “chop-shop” operation in the garage of a residence after a patrol officer was directed to that location by a Lojack signal from a stolen vehicle.
- Forensic Computer Analysis: A CIU investigator was sworn as a Deputy U.S. Marshal and assigned to the Electronic Crimes Task Force, which is a section of the U.S. Secret Service. As part of this Task Force, the investigator is being trained as a forensic computer analyst who will be able to retrieve and analyze computer data in criminal investigations. This forensic training is provided and funded entirely through the U.S. Secret Service. With an increase in white-collar crimes, having a computer analyst in the Department will enable cases to be investigated more efficiently, as computer data can now be retrieved and examined in-house rather than requiring a State or Federal agency to recover the electronic information.



Investigations and Support Services Division

Criminal Investigations Unit – Crime Scene Search Unit

The Crime Scene Search Unit consists of 4 sworn officers trained in evidence identification, documentation, collection, and preservation. The Unit is responsible for responding to and processing evidence collected from all crime scenes occurring within the County's jurisdiction. Yet, as a result of the Unit's professionalism and expertise, they have developed a reputation of excellence, which has resulted in neighboring agencies routinely requesting assistance in the processing of crime scenes occurring outside the County's jurisdiction as well.

In 2005, the Crime Scene Search Unit continued to maintain a high level of response to calls for service for the Gaston County Police Department and other law enforcement agencies. This year, the unit responded to a total of 566 calls, and assisted outside agencies a total of 199 times.

The Unit conducted a total of 2,728 latent fingerprint comparisons with 231 successful identifications. They also utilized the Automated Fingerprint Index System (AFIS), initiating a total of 821 searches using this technology. This figure is significantly reduced from last years because the State Bureau of Investigation limited the number of "reverse searches" agencies could perform in an effort to alleviate a back-log of the system. Throughout the year, members of the Crime Scene Search Unit also fingerprinted 240 prisoners along with 333 civilians for background checks.



2005 Highlights

- Laser Trajectory: This year the Unit purchased four sets of Laser Trajectory Finder Kits. These kits aid Crime Scene Specialists in determining trajectory paths of bullets and other projectiles at crime scenes. They also aid as a lighting source to detect where a perpetrator was possibly positioned when a firearm was discharged. The laser lighting can also be photographed for court documentation purposes.
- Enhanced Fingerprint Identification Technology: Also in 2005, the Crime Scene Search Unit was in the first year of utilizing the newly purchased International Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) system and software. This enhanced system is linked into the Federal Bureau of Investigation's database in which all police agencies submit fingerprint cards of subjects arrested for felonies and serious misdemeanors. Thus, IAFIS will search for the prints of a suspect on a national and international level, instead of limiting searches to just North Carolina's database. Already, several out-of-state fingerprint cards have been retrieved by this system and compared to possible suspect fingerprints collected at crime scenes.
- Photography: The Crime Scene Search Unit utilized its digital photography equipment for its second full year, creating 444 compact discs as well as developing 489 photographs for court presentation and departmental purposes.

- **Training:** The Crime Scene Search Specialists attended advanced training during 2005, which included Latent Fingerprint Development, Latent Fingerprint Comparison, and Bloodspatter Analysis. Two Specialists also attended the State Bureau of Investigations Advanced Crime Scene Technology training.
- **Community Involvement:** The Crime Scene Search Unit conducted classes in the local elementary and high schools during 2005 at the request of school personnel. The students viewed some of the crime scene equipment and were shown various aspects of crime scene work such as fingerprints and photography. They also participated in a mock crime scene where they attempted to determine how the crime was committed based solely on the physical evidence present at the scene.

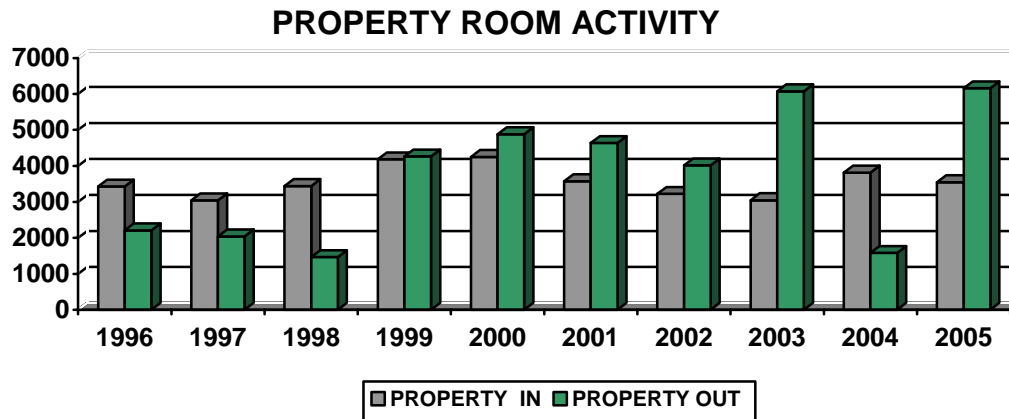


Crime Scene - Do Not Enter

Investigations and Support Services Division
Criminal Investigations Unit – Property & Evidence

The Property and Evidence Unit is responsible for the storage and maintenance of all items seized by officers during a criminal investigation. In order for an item of evidence to be admissible in court, its “chain of custody” must be maintained. This means the evidence must be housed in a secure area and that each person having contact with the evidence is documented to later show at trial that the item is in the same condition as when it was first collected. To accomplish this the unit has one sworn officer in charge of the evidence room, and each item of evidence is logged and classified using a modern bar code tracking system. Once a criminal prosecution has been completed, the evidence must be returned to the rightful owner, destroyed, or forfeited, depending on the disposition of the charges and the type of property seized. All illegal contraband is destroyed regardless of the disposition of the criminal charges.

At the end of 2005 the property and evidence room housed over 6,800 items of evidence. The graph and chart below reflect evidence entering and leaving the evidence room over the past 10 years.



Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Property In	3,200	3,425	3,439	4,182	4,246	3,571	3,221	3,045	3,811	3,546
Property Out	2,208	2,039	1,467	4,262	4,880	4,634	4,010	6,072	1,583	6,156

2005 Highlights

- Destruction of Contraband and Other Adjudicated Property: During 2005, the Property and Evidence Unit used 3 sources for property destruction. These consisted of the Gaston County Landfill, the Cleveland County Scrap Yard, and a secure smelting operation. At the smelting facility, the evidence is placed in 55-gallon metal drums and then melted and vaporized inside large electrically fired furnaces. The melted drums and their contents are then mixed with other metals and the resulting molten metal is used to make reinforcement bar for construction applications. This year, a total of 62 metal drums, containing 5,099 items, were destroyed at this facility.



- Unclaimed Property Donated to Charitable Organization: The Property and Evidence Unit continued utilizing N.C. General Statute §15-12(b), which allows unclaimed bicycles to be given to non-profit organizations for charitable purposes. During 2005, the Unit donated 32 bicycles that were reconditioned and given to needy children.
- Unclaimed Money Remitted to School System: Court orders were attained to turn over more than \$7,500 in abandoned money seized from crime scenes to the Gaston County School System.

Investigations and Support Services Division Special Investigations Unit

The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) is a dynamic team composed of a captain, 2 sergeants, and 5 investigators who conduct investigations involving narcotics, illegal alcohol, gambling, and prostitution offenses. In 2005, SIU opened 374 cases. During the course of those investigations, 123 people were charged with 1,151 counts of various “vice” related crimes. In addition to conducting investigations of its own, SIU works closely with other local, State, and Federal law enforcement agencies in numerous joint investigation operations. These efforts have been extremely successful, resulting in several arrests and seizures of illegal contraband.

2005 Highlights

- Cocaine Seizure: SIU and Federal Drug Enforcement Agents executed a search warrant in western Gaston County after an investigation spanning from Atlanta to the Triad of North Carolina. The search revealed over 40 kilograms of cocaine, which officers found inside a drum of chicken feed. In addition to the illegal drugs, officers also seized a stolen gun and more than \$200,000 in cash. Three individuals were charged with trafficking in cocaine and are pending federal prosecutions.

- Methamphetamine Lab Discovery: The Criminal Investigation Unit discovered components of a methamphetamine (meth) lab while investigating a stolen vehicle case. SIU responded to the scene accompanied by a certified clandestine lab specialist who oversaw the disposal of the lab materials. This marked the second meth lab located in

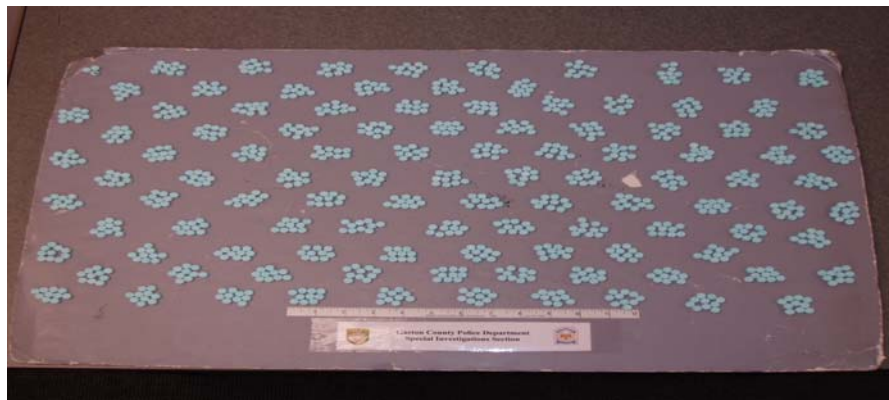


Gaston County in the past 2 years. Members of SIU are keenly aware of the danger these labs pose to the community, and are committed to keeping themselves and others informed and prepared to deal with the special hazards that arise when handling these labs. To that end, the Unit has facilitated training in meth lab recognition and

awareness for department officers as well as other law enforcement and governmental agencies such as the Gastonia Housing Authority, Gaston County Sheriff’s Office and N.C. Department of Juvenile Justice.



- International Drug Smuggling: SIU teamed with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement on a case involving the smuggling of ecstasy tablets from Canada. As a result of the investigation, over 5,000 dosages of the drug were seized.



Special Investigations Unit Activities and Seizures

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>
Cases Opened:	374	511	452
Cases Cleared:	186	318	387
Persons Charged:	123	272	326
Number of Charges:	1,151	2,293	1,753
Searches:	79	104	118
Surveillance Hours:	686	856	1,352
Undercover Buys:	172	211	130
Marijuana Plants Seized:	85	132	105
Other Marijuana:	277 lbs	177 lbs	383 lbs
Powder Cocaine:	59 kilos	13 kilos	7 kilos
Crack Cocaine:	549 gms	919 gms	1,150 gms
Other Pills:	3,631 dosages	3,572 dosages	2,610 dosages
Heroin (packets):	17	551	25
Methamphetamine:	276 gms	59 gms	346 gms
Cash Seized:	\$ 307,625	\$ 51,594	\$ 115,544
Street Value of Drugs Seized:	\$8,420,886	\$2,483,774	\$3,021,718



Investigations and Support Services Division

Animal Control Unit

The Animal Control Unit initiated and expanded several initiatives during 2005, furthering our mission to provide animal-related services reflecting our professionalism and concern for public health and the legal treatment of animals.

2005 Highlights

- Increased Licensing Compliance: Animal Control routinely notifies pet owners by mail of any failure to purchase a license tag within the required period after obtaining a rabies vaccination. If the license is still not purchased, a call card is generated for field response. This year, in an effort to increase compliance, Animal Control field staff began telephoning pet owners to personally notify them of the need to purchase their pet's license to avoid having a citation issued.

As reflected in the chart below, the result of these additional efforts was the realization of a **35% increase** in license penalty revenue over the previous year, from \$34,701 to \$47,189. Perhaps more dramatic, Animal Control's combined efforts have resulted in an approximate 87% compliance rate of vaccinated animals with licenses purchased.

Year	% Vaccinated animals with licenses purchased	Penalty revenue	License revenue
2003	80.6	\$26,233	\$255,272
2004	85.3	\$34,701	\$280,778
2005	87.0	\$47,189	\$365,186

- Pursuing Delinquent Debts for Animal Services: Animal Control took full advantage of the North Carolina State law allowing local governments to submit debts to the Department of Revenue for collection from individual income tax refunds. We began submitting delinquent debts in September of 2003 and received our first payment in February of 2004, ultimately collecting a total of \$4,490 for the year. In 2005, a total of \$21, 991 was collected, an **increase** of over **300%**.
- Spay-Neuter Program: Animal Control efforts are constantly geared towards the education of pet owners not only in legal responsibilities, but also the vital need to reduce the number of unwanted animals being born in our community by having pets spayed or neutered. 307 animal surgeries were performed by participating veterinarians in Gaston County's Low-Cost Spay-Neuter Program in 2005. This represents a **42% increase** compared to the 216 surgeries performed in 2004.
- Pet Surrender Study: To help determine reasons for owners surrendering their pets and as an aid in developing more focused and relevant educational material, Animal Control began tracking various owner responses when asked why they were surrendering pets. Response groupings included owners not having time to spend with the pet, not having adequate space to maintain the animal, animal or owner's health, finances, moving/landlord issues or behavioral problems. Started in mid-year, we have data from 1,188 or 30% of the total number of animals surrendered in 2005.

Results to date show nearly half (47%) of all owners surrendering pets to Animal Control report not having enough space to maintain or not having enough time to spend with the pet. Perhaps reflecting a failure to adequately research specific care requirements prior to obtaining a new pet or even a result of “impulse” or spur of the moment adoptions. Surprisingly, only 17% of owners reported behavior problems and 12% indicated they were surrendering the animal because of sickness.

According to our collected data, the four top reasons for surrendering pets are:

1. Owner doesn't have enough space for pet25%
2. Owner doesn't have enough time for pet22%
3. Animal behavior problems.....17%
4. Pet sick.....12%

➤ Preparedness Training: Lastly, Animal Control training always includes the notion of being prepared for the unexpected. That adage was never truer than in January 2005 when, in conjunction with Cleveland County officials, Gaston County Animal Control personnel were dispatched to Countyline Road in Kings Mountain regarding two tigers running loose. Initial disbelief was replaced by the necessity of duty upon actually finding two Bengal tigers at large! Both tigers were humanely impounded without incident, eventually transported to the North Carolina Zoo in Asheboro and ultimately moved to the Carnivore Preservation Trust for permanent care.



The handling and disposition of this potentially dangerous situation without injury to persons or the tigers, illustrates not only the very real possibility of having to address exotic situations far from the more routine, domestic animal investigations, but that sound judgment and training by dedicated Animal Control staff members contributed to such a positive outcome.

In conclusion, 2005 was certainly an exciting year at Animal Control filled with new and continuing initiatives aimed at increasing pet licensing compliance, reducing the number of unwanted litters being born in our community, and improving the collection of delinquent debts.

Investigations and Support Services Division Emergency Response Team

The Emergency Response Team (ERT) responds to tactical situations that arise throughout Gaston County. The team also responds to requests for assistance from other law enforcement agencies within Gaston County and neighboring jurisdictions as well as State and Federal agencies.



During 2005, the Emergency Response Team responded to four call-outs within the County's jurisdiction. Additionally, municipal law enforcement agencies requested ERT assistance on two occasions.

All incidents requiring the use of the Emergency Response Team were successfully resolved without injury to suspects or team members.

2005 Highlights



- Presidential Visit: ERT provided support services to the U.S. Secret Service on a presidential protective detail during a visit by President Bush to Gaston College. The ERT role in the presidential detail was one of scene security at the college and quick response to any threat occurring in the area.
- Tactical Assistance: Emergency Response Team members assisted the Special Investigation Unit and K9 Unit with covert surveillance and the service of high-risk search warrants.
- Prisoner Transport: Emergency Response Team members assisted the Criminal Investigation Unit with a homicide investigation by planning and implementing a high-risk prisoner transport of a convicted murderer from the South Carolina State Prison to Gaston County and back.



The majority of the Emergency Response Teams efforts in 2005 focused on training. Team members totaled 4,760 training hours on a wide range of tactics, covering areas from basic room and building searches to advanced firearms techniques. In 2005, ERT acquired seven sets of night vision optics for use in low light situations. All team members received classroom and hands-on training with the optics. The five newest members of the team traveled to Cumberland County, N.C.

to take part in a two-day class covering rail car assaults. Moreover, the Emergency Response Team conducted several training exercises with the Hazardous Devices Unit emphasizing explosive door breaching and incorporating the 'Andros' robot into team functions. Throughout 2005, the ERT trained alongside tactical teams from the Gastonia Police Department, Cumberland County Sheriff's Office, and the United States Military.



Investigations and Support Services Division Hazardous Devices Unit



Gaston County Police Department's four-member Hazardous Devices Unit is one of approximately 500 bomb squads throughout the nation that has received accreditation status from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National Bomb Squad Commanders' Advisory Board. The Unit received its first accreditation in 1999 and was reaccredited in 2004. Only bomb units with highly advanced equipment, rigorous and continual training, and meticulous operating procedures are eligible for accreditation.



All four members of the Hazardous Devices Unit are Certified Bomb Technicians. This certification is achieved after successfully completing an intensive 5-week curriculum held at the FBI Hazardous Devices School in Huntsville, Alabama. Additionally, three members of the unit have also completed advanced courses in robotics operations.

In 2005, the Hazardous Devices Unit responded to a total of 31 calls for service in Gaston, Caldwell, Burke, Cleveland, Lincoln, and Catawba Counties. The Unit also continues to respond to incidents jointly with the Gastonia City Police Hazardous Devices Unit as part of a Regional Response Team. Both teams train together and work closely with the Gastonia City Fire Department's Hazardous Materials Unit, Gaston County Emergency Management, and Gaston County Emergency Medical Services. This collaboration prepares each agency to work as a uniform and collective unit in the event of a critical incident.



Andros F6A Robot

Investigations and Support Services Division Support Services Unit – Educational Services

The Educational Services Unit is comprised of 10 School Resource Officers (SRO), who are assigned to each of the nine County High Schools plus Warlick Alternative School. The officer's primary duties are to provide a safe school environment conducive to learning; provide students and faculty with guidance in areas pertaining to law enforcement; and organize classroom presentations on law enforcement related topics.

Recent figures released by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction indicate that crime in Gaston County Schools is below the statewide rate of occurrence of 7.4 reportable crimes committed per 1,000 students. The 2004-2005 Annual Report on School Violence shows Gaston County Schools with a total of 67 reportable offenses, giving the County a **2.1** rate of reportable school crimes per 1,000 students, -- more than **3½** times **less** than the state level.

October 2005 marked the third annual celebration of **Red Ribbon Week** in Gaston County Schools. This week is part of a nationwide effort to raise awareness about the dangers of drug abuse. Unit officers participated in Red Ribbon activities at many schools as well as taking part in the Family Fun Day festival at Sims Park, that marked the kick off of events relating to Red Ribbon Week.



Fatal Consequences is a program designed to reduce teen drunk driving by changing attitudes and increasing awareness. The classroom portion of the program discusses the hazards and penalties associated with teen drunk driving. The second part of this program gives students a practical look at how impaired vision affects driving. This is accomplished with the use of Fatal

Vision (DWI simulation) goggles and a golf cart. While wearing the Fatal Vision goggles, students are asked to maneuver the golf cart through a course marked off with orange traffic cones. This provides students with a very real, but safe experience of how impaired sensory perception and bad driving are directly related.



Silence Hurts, is a program designed to reduce school violence by encouraging students to speak out when they hear rumors of potential violence in school. The students may communicate anonymously through several means: the Crime Stoppers phone line, notes placed in drop boxes located in schools, and on-line using their school sponsored website. Through this program, students take the initiative to assist school officials prevent school violence before a tragedy occurs.



Several Unit members assisted with the annual **Commissioners' School of Excellence** at Belmont Abbey College. The Commissioners' School is a two-week residential experience offered to exceptional ninth graders who want to learn more about local government, civic organizations, and Gaston County in general. Unit officers assist by acting as counselors, drivers, and chaperones.



The **"Saved By The Belt"** program started three years ago as a way to increase seatbelt usage among high school students. School Resource Officers promote seatbelt use in the schools using education, involvement, evaluation, and enforcement techniques. The educational component is accomplished through posters, lectures, and morning announcements. Each officer also conducts monthly traffic surveys. The surveys provide data to determine if extra enforcement measures need to be taken at the school to ensure teens are using their safety belts when behind the wheel of a car. Three years ago when this program was initiated, the countywide rate of safety belt use was 74% among teens. During the 2004-2005 school year the average rate of teen seatbelt use was 93 percent.



Established several years ago, the **School Safety and Violence Education Program** continues to serve as a resource to educators and has become a mandated program for all Gaston County high school teachers and principals. This program provides training to school faculty in law enforcement related topics including drug usage and recognition, bomb detection, violence prevention, and domestic violence awareness. This year the program added a session on gang recognition and awareness. In addition to providing useful information, this program also counts as educational credit toward the renewal of teaching certificates.



Each June, the Department sponsors a week long Citizens' Police Academy for Youth (CPA-Y). The CPA-Y is oriented to thirteen to sixteen year olds and is intended to give them an in-depth look at law enforcement and this Department. Unit members direct the Academy activities, and various Department members teach each block of instruction. This summer, two Academy sessions were held with 28 middle school students participating.



The **Citizens Police Academy** provides Gaston County residents hands-on experience in police operations. Two sessions were held in the spring and fall of this year. Graduates are encouraged to participate in a ride-a-long program with patrol officers and also to join the Citizen Police Academy Alumni Association. This association offers opportunities to continue developing the relationships between these individuals and the Police Department.

Investigations and Support Services Division

Support Services Unit – Employee Development

The Employee Development Unit is responsible for preparing, conducting, and coordinating the training of new recruits as well as providing in-service and on-going training for existing employees. Beginning this year, the N.C. Department of Justice’s Training and Standards Division mandated 24 hours of in-service training every year for all law enforcement officers. The compliance tracking and reporting for this requirement are new responsibilities for this Unit.



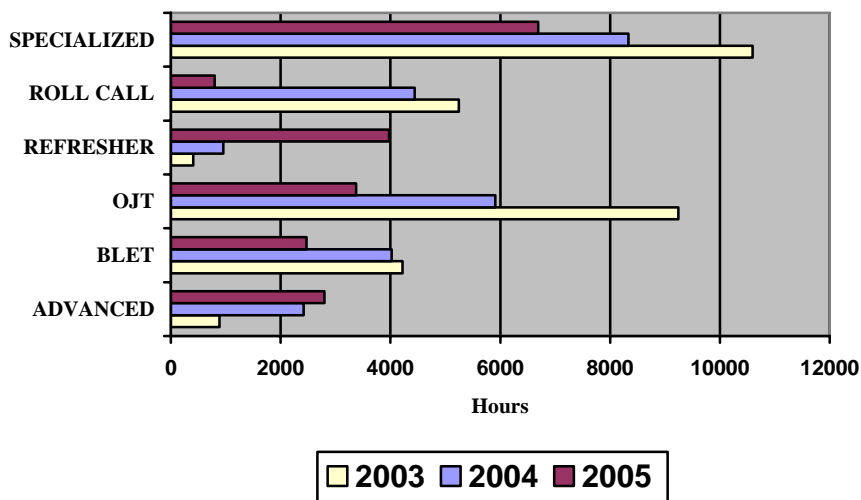
The newly mandated courses include: Legal Update, Hazardous Materials, Bloodborne Pathogens, Juvenile Minority Sensitivity, Ethical Awareness, and Domestic Violence Awareness. The Department utilized Gaston College to provide these courses to all sworn officers.



Other areas of in-service training, included drill and ceremony, firearms, defensive tactics, handcuffing techniques, property and evidence updates, response to nuclear events, and community policing. The Department also utilized outside training sources such as the North Carolina Justice Academy to provide specific training opportunities for officers.

The Department also took advantage of its premier training facilities by recruiting and hosting on-site training. Classes included specialized K9 training, a tranquilizer course for Animal Control officers, methamphetamine awareness, computer training, and a seminar on protecting children from on-line predators.

The chart below illustrates 2003-2005 sworn personnel training by type:



Investigations and Support Services Division
Support Services Unit – Recruitment & Selection

The Recruitment and Selection Unit reviewed 394 applications during 2005. The applications received were for the vacant positions for police officer, police information processing specialist, animal control specialist, animal control aide, crime analyst, administrative assistant, and telecommunicator. This year, a total of 21 applicants successfully completed the Department’s hiring process.



Year	Total # of Applicants	Total # of Persons Hired	Hiring Rate/Applicants
2001	236	33	14%
2002	455	24	5%
2003	336	21	6%
2004	316	22	7%
2005	394	21	5%

2005 Highlights

- **Computerizing Pre-Hire Screenings:** A new program was implemented in the hiring process for 911 telecommunicators. The CritiCall Assessment Program is now the first step in the hiring process for communications positions. The test is a computerized program that measures the applicants’ ability to make quick decisions, recall information from memory, give accurate directions, and spell correctly. There are 19 modules to be completed in a two-hour time limit. Applicants who qualify for advancement in the hiring process must next complete an on-line psychological profile. By conducting a computerized pre-hiring test and completing psychological profiles electronically, the Department accelerates the hiring process while ensuring applicants have fundamental qualifications.
- **Job Fairs:** This year, the Unit participated in four job fairs, sponsored by local colleges and universities. At these events, the Gaston County Police Department’s recruitment CD was distributed to prospective applicants. This CD includes an overview of the department’s functions and philosophy.
- **Utilization of On-Line Job Postings:** The Recruitment and Selection Unit continues to identify online job posting sites that provide free job listings, including such sites as: America’s Job Bank, North Carolina Justice Academy, International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the International House.
- **Recruiting College Graduates:** The Recruitment and Selection Unit continues to update colleges and universities with current recruiting information, and is dedicated to recruiting and hiring qualified college graduates.
- **Minority Recruiting:** In an effort to recruit and hire qualified minority applicants, the Unit identified 34 minority churches in Gaston County and mailed departmental recruitment posters and information sheets to each.

Investigations and Support Services Division

Support Services Unit – Victim/Witness Coordinator

The victim-witness coordinator provides assistance to victims and witnesses of all types of crimes and other traumatic incidents, and specifically serves as the direct contact for all victims of domestic violence. Services offered through this Unit include, 1) emotional support, 2) ensuring victims are informed of their rights, and 3) helping victims find and obtain appropriate resources and referrals. In 2005, approximately 134 victims were contacted directly or through the mailing of domestic violence information packets.

Administration

Accreditation

Law enforcement agencies can become internationally accredited through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). CALEA's accreditation program requires agencies to comply with the highest standards or "best practices" in four primary areas: policy and procedures, administration, operational procedures, and support services. The benefit of accreditation is that each accredited agency operates under specific standardized guidelines. In order to maintain a department's accreditation status, CALEA professionals review the standards every three years to ensure on-going compliance. Thus, constant evaluation of the Department's policies, procedures, and operations is required to meet and exceed the existing standards.



The Gaston County Police Department received initial accreditation in 1991, becoming the 190th law enforcement agency internationally to receive accreditation. CALEA has re-accredited the Department four times, most recently in 2005.

The 2005 re-accreditation process consisted of a four-day on-site evaluation by outside assessors. At the conclusion of the evaluation, the assessors determined the Department's policies, procedures and functions were in compliance with CALEA standards. Previously, after the past three evaluations, the Department was found to be in full compliance with all standards. Similarly, after this evaluation, the Department again was found to be in compliance with 100% of the applicable standards. The assessors noted this level of compliance as being rare and exceptional among all the accredited agencies.



CALEA Assessors confer with Assistant Chief Isenhour during a formal static display, while Sgt. Human and Accreditation Manager Lorraine Ghorley look on.

Investigations and Support Services Division
Support Services Unit – Police Information Processing

Police Information Processing, also referred to as the Records Unit, operates on a twenty-four hour basis providing information and services to the public and department personnel. The staff’s main responsibility is the maintenance, storage, and retrieval of all police records. The Unit also provides officers with computerized criminal and motor vehicle checks.

At the Bessemer City substation, the Records Unit provides staffing between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. daily. The primary function completed at this office is the entry of pawn ticket data. The staff also monitor the “Pawnier and Item Watch” program. This program looks to match stolen property with pawned items. Additionally, this staff provides assistance to visitors and officers utilizing the Records Management System and NCIC/DCI as needed.

2005 Highlights

- Preparing for New Software Installation: During 2005, records personnel were trained using the New World Systems software, which will replace our existing records management program. Installation of the software upgrade is anticipated in early 2006, requiring staff to receive refresher training over the coming weeks.
- DCI Audit: The N.C. State Bureau of Investigation completed a DCI audit in February 2005. During this audit, servicing agreements; user certifications; terminal security; and accuracy and timeliness of DCI transactions were reviewed, revealing excellent compliance, with less than a .01 deficit.
- Community Survey: The Records Unit completed the 2005 Community Feedback Survey as part of the ongoing process to evaluate citizens’ opinions on the quality of Departmental services.

The following chart depicts other activities performed by police information processing specialists and compares the volume of this year’s activities with that of last year:

<i>ACTIVITIES</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2004</i>
Phone Calls	70,518	51,307
Warrant Checks	2,854	2,789
Reports Processed	21,430	26,336
Computer Services Rendered	60,013	53,241
Warrants Processed for Service	4,973	3,943
Pawn Ticket Entries	47,528	48,812
Community Surveys	1,006	1,150

COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

Communications Division Calls for Service



The 9-1-1 Communications Division is a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional dispatch center that remains committed to providing the highest levels of reliable emergency services. We continue to aggressively seek to implement programs and upgrade equipment to further promote the safety and welfare of the residents of Gaston County as efficiently, economically and with the greatest degree of professionalism possible.

The Gaston County Communications Center received **115,809** 911 emergency calls in 2005. A total of **710,075** telephone calls were handled by this agency. Additionally, total Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) entries for 2005 were **435,459**, which is a **4% increase** over 2004, and continues the incremental trend of past years.

CAD Entries for:	2003	2004	2005
County Police	110,294	122,720	121,296
Gastonia Police	165,639	170,811	180,476
Ambulance	64,522	67,738	77,524
County Fire	15,732	16,990	18,881
Gastonia Fire	16,256	15,617	16,624
Local Towns	17,933	17,885	15,250
Animal Control	3,695	3,776	3,308
Other Agencies	2,186	1,869	2,102
TOTAL ENTRIES	396,257	417,406	435,459

2005 Highlights

The year 2005 was one largely devoted to improving and upgrading existing technology and systems to raise this agency's level of service and efficiency.

Projects

- In 2005, Gaston County's Communications Center was among the first in North Carolina to achieve full compliance with the FCC mandated conversion to narrowband radio transmission, which was accomplished as part of the overall replacement program of outdated radio equipment.
- With this year's addition of fire dispatch for the town of Stanley, Gaston County 911 Communications now dispatches ALL fire and EMS calls countywide.
- Additional radio transmitter and receiver sites are being established which should alleviate most poor-reception areas for first responder agencies within the County.

Technology

- A new electronic emergency 911 telephone system was installed that will increase agency efficiency by displaying more complete caller information and location data in addition to providing greater reliability. It also provides statistical information regarding call volume and processing times, which can be used to adjust staffing levels to match expected activity levels.
- Radio pickups and console equipment were replaced, which will improve the quality and versatility of our public safety radio systems.
- New CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) equipment was installed that is faster and more efficient in processing ever-higher workload demands.
- Equipment desks were replaced with integrated multi-screen operator consoles that are better suited and ergonomically designed for extended-duration use.
- A second paging system transmitter was added in Mount Holly to provide more reliable coverage to that section of the County.
- The New World Systems integrated CAD dispatch and records system is scheduled for installation in early 2006. When fully functional, this new software suite will unify all participating agencies under a common, shared information platform.



Interoperability

- Gaston is the lead county in an eleven-county consortium that is constructing a regional radio system as part of a Federal Homeland Security financed initiative. To that end, preparations continue to erect two new communications towers in Gaston County. This will improve overall communications within the County, as well as enable Gaston units to directly communicate with emergency personnel from surrounding counties and at the State level – whose current system is incompatible with our own.

Staffing

- This agency continues to address the problem confronting the emergency 911 telecommunications field in general, in trying to attract and retain qualified and successful employment candidates. We have begun utilizing an abilities testing software program that screens telecommunicator candidates early in the hiring process. This process will help increase the retention of newly hired employees
- Nearly 15,000 hours were devoted to employee training, with 3,700 hours (or 25% of total hours) being dedicated to basic training of new-hires.

ARRESTS & CITATIONS

Arrests and Citations

ACTIVITIES	YTD 2005	YTD 2004	% Change
Part I: UCR INDEX CRIMES			
Aggravated Assault	157	150	4.6%
Homicide	6	1	500%
Rape	12	25	-52%
Robbery	31	32	-3.1%
Arson	39	30	30%
Burglary	648	776	-16.5%
Larceny	984	1,042	-5.6%
Motor Vehicle Theft	252	212	18.9%
TOTAL INDEX CRIMES	2,129	2,268	-6.1%
Part II: NON-UCR CRIMES			
Alcohol Violations	12	10	20%
Drug Violations	551	667	-17.4%
DWI	207	202	2.48%
Fraud	199	157	26.8%
Public Order Offenses	170	164	3.7%
Sex Offenses	77	90	-14.4%
Simple Assault	822	848	-3.1%
Stolen Property	46	19	142%
Vandalism	460	454	1.3%
Weapons Violations	79	44	79.5%
All Other Crimes	424	363	16.8%
TOTAL NON-UCR CRIMES	3,047	3,018	0.96%
TOTAL CRIMES	5,176	5,286	-2.08%
Value of Property Stolen	\$3,852,035	\$2,783,350	27.7%
Value of Property Recovered	\$1,550,729	\$1,403,133	9.5%
Value of Drugs Seized	\$636,140	\$173,319	72.8%

Arrestable offenses **decreased** overall by **2.1%** from last year. However, most of the decrease took place amongst the UCR Index Crimes, which **decreased 6.1%** from last year, as compared with the less serious non-UCR crimes, which increased slightly over last year.

Arrests and Citations

COMMUNITY POLICING ACTIVITIES	YTD 2005	YTD 2004
Citations Issued	11,623	13,710
Warning Tickets Issued	4,299	6,561
Traffic Accidents	184	145
Arrestable Offenses	2,307	2,164
Warrants/Summons Served	4,295	4,279
Other Agencies Assisted	277	229
Hours Assisting Other Agencies	522	370
Alcohol Chemical Tests Requested	195	195
Crime Scenes Processed	112	65

Type and Number of Citations Issued:

Traffic – 9,571

Drugs – 981

Alcohol – 255

DWI – 207

Other – 199

Public Order – 139

Trespassing – 96

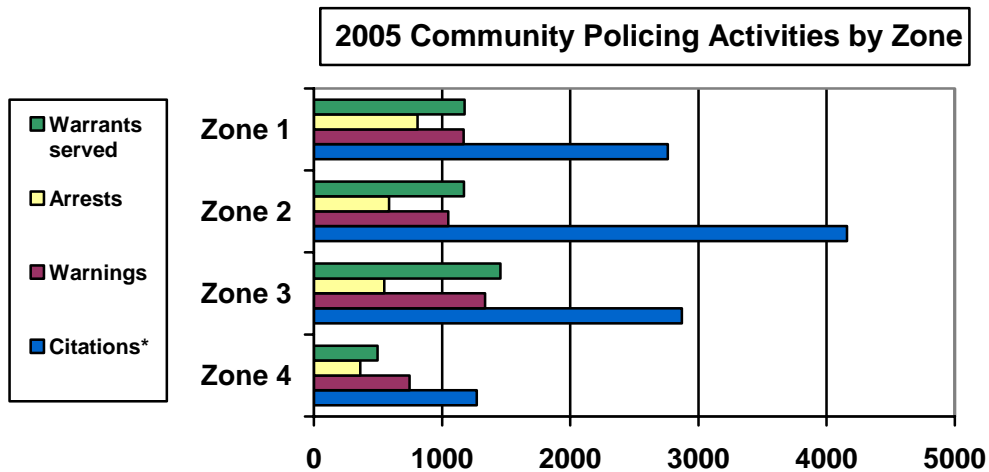
Simple Assault – 71

Weapons – 71

Larceny – 14

Damage to Property – 11

Stolen Property – 8



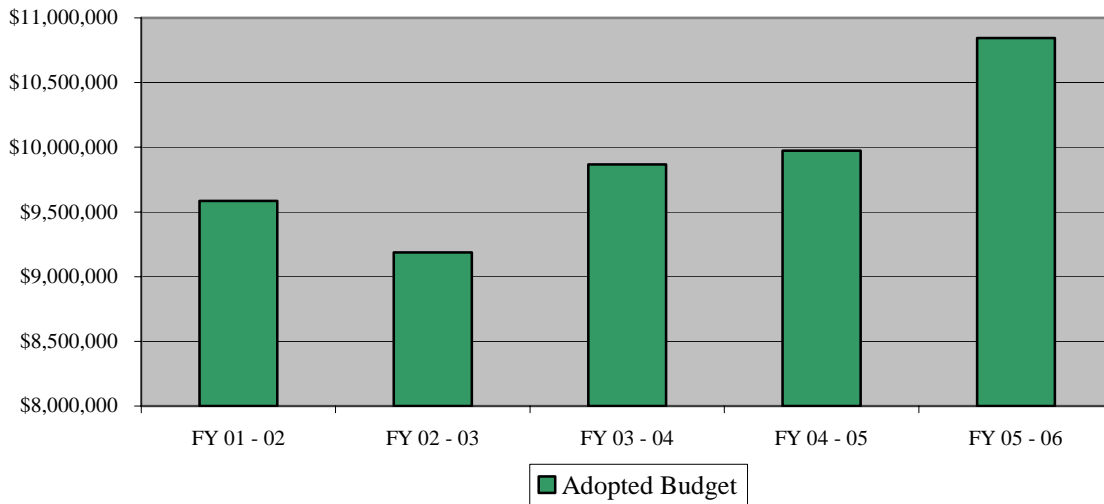
*Graphical representation of citations issued per zone does not include 564 citations issued within incorporated areas of the County.

ADMINISTRATION

Administration
Budget History

YEAR	ADOPTED BUDGET
FY 2005 – 2006	\$10,842,973
FY 2004 -- 2005	\$9,974,704
FY 2003 -- 2004	\$9,868,183
FY 2002 -- 2003	\$9,186,598
FY 2001 -- 2002	\$9,584,531
FY 2000 -- 2001	\$9,887,523

Adopted Budget



Administration

Professional Standards Unit

The Gaston County Police Department employees provide direct public safety services to many individuals every day. It is unavoidable that some citizens will have questions, concerns, or complaints about the Department or the conduct of individual employees. The Department's Professional Standards Unit conducts objective complaint investigations. In 2005, the Unit investigated a total of 50 complaints involving 11 non-sworn employees and 39 sworn employees.

As each complaint is investigated, a determination is made as to whether there is sufficient evidence to sustain the allegation and take disciplinary action. If there is insufficient evidence to sustain the allegation, the disposition of the complaint is then categorized based on the level of mitigating evidence. The following is a list of possible dispositions of employee complaints:

- Sustained: The investigation disclosed sufficient evidence to prove the allegation clearly.
- Not Sustained: The investigation fails to discover sufficient evidence to clearly prove or disprove the allegation made against the employee.
- Unfounded: The investigation indicates that the alleged act or omission complained of did not occur or did not involve police personnel.
- Exonerated: The investigation indicates that the act or omission complained of did occur but was justified, lawful, and/or proper.

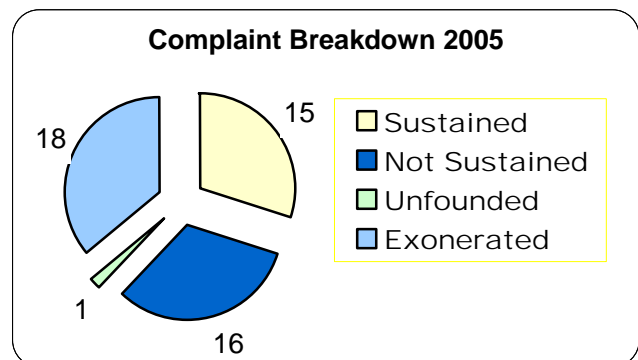
During 2005, complaint disposition totals were as follows:

Non-Sworn Employees:

Sustained-3
Not Sustained- 6
Unfounded-0
Exonerated-2

Sworn Employees:

Sustained-12
Not Sustained-10
Unfounded-1
Exonerated-16



Complaint Review Chart:

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Improper Actions	14	12	14	12	38
Violation of Policy	8	11	6	17	3
Demeanor	16	11	9	13	7
Criminal Misconduct	0	2	0	0	1
Excessive Force	5	6	4	5	1
Civil Rights Breach	0	0	1	0	0
Total	43	42	34	47	50

The Gaston County Police Department strives for continuous improvement in the level of service we provided to our citizens. The Professional Standards Unit meticulously investigates all complaints and views each one as an opportunity to improve our service and communicate more effectively. Information gathered through the complaint process assists the Department in the reduction of future complaints.

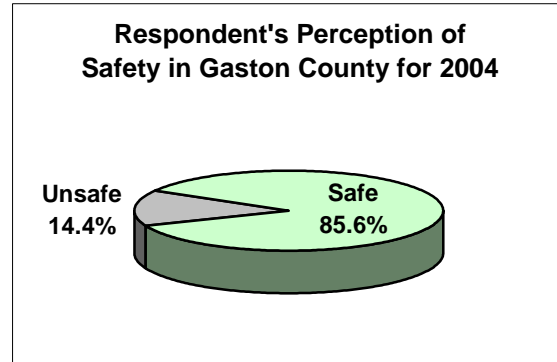
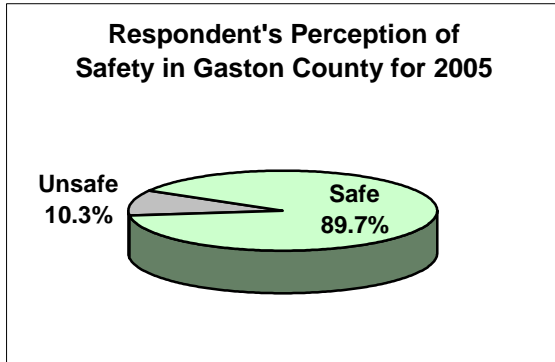
Administration

Community Feedback Survey

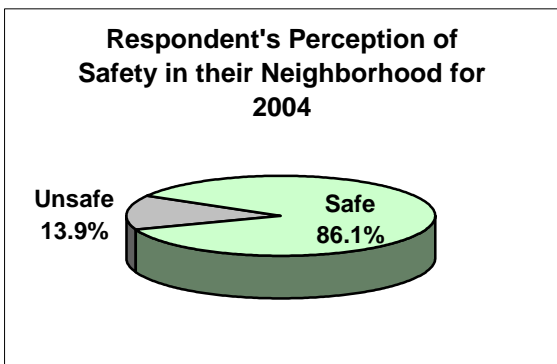
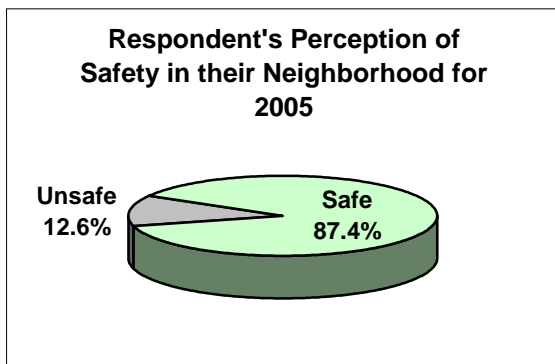
The Gaston County Police Department contacted over 1,000 individuals to participate in the 2005 community feedback survey.

The survey results indicated that of the individuals contacted, 37.7% stated they had been victims of crime in Gaston County. Yet, 90% indicated that they felt safe in the County with most responders perceiving the overall County crime rate as being stable. Seventy-nine percent of the survey takers had met with a County Police Officer at least once during the year. These encounters were for general assistance 42.6% of the time, the reporting of a crime 42.2% of the time, and all other police encounters making up the remaining 15.2%.

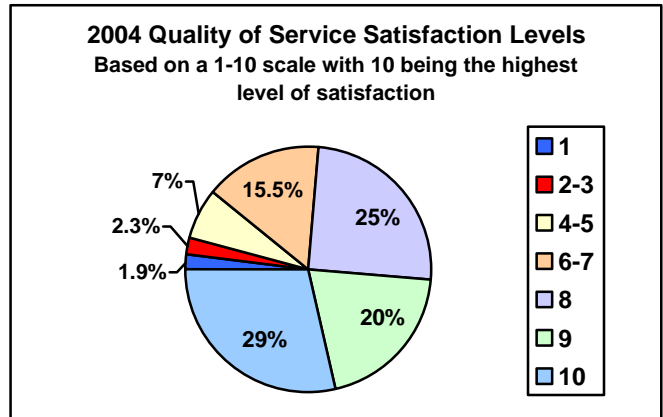
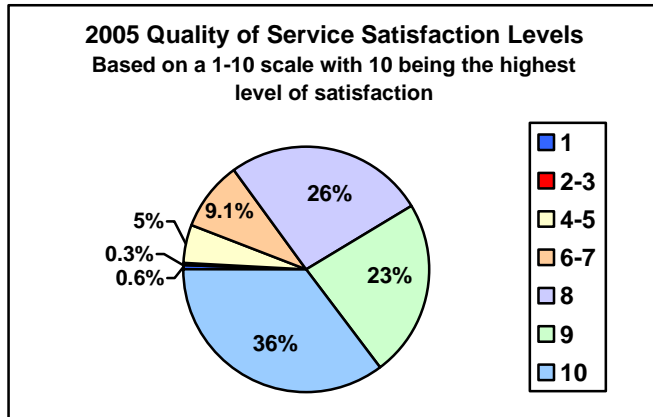
Gaston County residents reported a growing sense of safety within the County. This year's survey results show more citizens feel safe in the County over last year's figures.



In neighborhoods, Gaston County citizens also reported a growing sense of safety in 2005. The perception of neighborhood safety rose slightly more than a percentage point from last year.



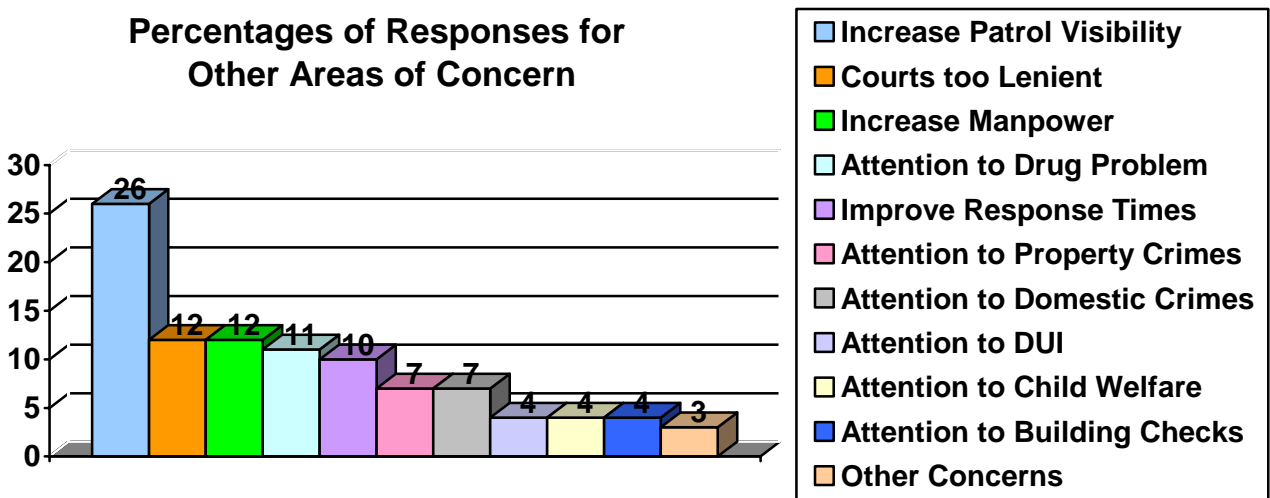
The feedback from the survey also reveals high levels of satisfaction with the quality of service provided by County Police Officers. Survey takers were asked to rank their level of satisfaction with quality of service on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest level of satisfaction. The charts below indicate the results provided this year as compared with last year's rankings:



Overall, the level of satisfaction with the quality of service provided by the Police Department has increased significantly with 85% of the 2005 survey takers rating their satisfaction level at an 8 or higher as compared with 74% of last year's responders. Equally telling is that last year 4.2% of survey takers rated the level of service as a 3 or less whereas this year those categories totaled less than 1%.

Finally, survey takers were asked if they had other comments or concerns with the Police Department specifically or with the criminal justice system. The following is a list of the top five responses, which account for 71% of all responses:

1. 26% said that the police should increase their patrol visibility;
2. 12% indicated that the courts are too lenient;
3. 12% stated that the police department needs more manpower;
4. 11% felt the police needed to pay more attention to drug problems; and
5. 10% thought police response times needed to improve.



**Administration
Personnel**

Employee Recognition

2005 Employee of the Year

J. B. Lineberger

2005 Employees of the Month

	Sworn	Non-Sworn
January	S.R. Fisher Zone 3, Squad 4	S.G. Hyman Communications – QA Coordin.
February	K.P. Murphy Zone 3, Squad 1	J.M. Nation Support Services – PIPS
March	B.L. Griffin Zone 3, Squad 4	C.R. Painter Communications – Shift D
April	B.P. Bolick K9 Unit	D.J. Kendrick Communications – Shift A
May	J.T. Avery Zone 1, Squad 2	L.B. Ghorley Support Services – Accreditation
June	D.M. Robinson Sgt. Zone 1, Squad1	P.P. Weaver Communications – Shift D
July	J.R. Marr Zone 2, Squad 1	
August	M.K. Shelor Zone 2, Squad 3	K.E. McGinnis Support Services – PIPS
September	T.M. Leophard K9 Unit	
October	G.T. Willis Zone 3, Squad 3	P.I. Love Communications – Shift D
November	J.T. Avery Zone 1, Squad 2	E.L. Owens CIU – Crime Analysis
December	B.L. Nache' CIU – Juvenile Unit	L.D. Waycaster Communications – Shift B

Fairness
Integrity
Respect
Service
Trust

**Administration
Personnel**



Committed to Service
Committed to Safety
Committed to Excellence

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