

GASTON COUNTY  
Police Department



2007  
Annual Report



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Inside The Report

Our Department	4
Message From the Chief	4
About the Department	5
Budget	5
Mission	5
Values	5
Recognition & Awards	6
Administration	8
Professional Standards Unit	8
Community Feedback Survey	9
Command Organization	12
Overview	12
Organizational Chart	13
Department Contacts	14
Community Policing Division	15
Zone 1	17
Zone 2	17
Zone 3	18
Zone 4	19
Marine Enforcement Unit	19
K-9 Unit	21
Investigations and Support Services Division	22
Criminal Investigations Unit	22
Crime Search Scene Unit	23
Property & Evidence Unit	24
Special Investigations Unit	26
Emergency Response Team	28
Hazardous Devices Unit	29
Educational Services Unit	30
Employee Development Unit	32
Recruitment and Selection Unit	33
Accreditation Unit/Victim & Witness Coordinator	34
Records Unit	35
Communications	36
Animal Control Division	38
Crime Statistics	40

## Message from the Chief

On behalf of the 137 sworn police officers and the near 115 other dedicated personnel whose efforts and energies are reflected within these pages, I am pleased to present the 2007 Annual Report. The combined efforts of Animal Control, Communications, Community Policing and Support Services make Gaston County a great place to live.

This report is not only an overview of the accomplishments of this organization but an opportunity to see how so many people have re-dedicated themselves to the true purpose of public service. In the words of Margaret Chase Smith (first woman ever elected to both houses of Congress), "Public Service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people..."

We respond with diligence to the needs of our society as exemplified by our efforts to partner with other community agencies so that attempts to institute change become lasting differences that are truly made. For example, we have partnered with our school system and social service agency to help our youth. These efforts have positively impacted truancy and teenage violence making our schools not only safer but increasing daily attendance so that these citizens of our community receive an education that will offset those factors that lead to crime. We partnered with local churches and ministry groups to identify and direct needed resources to those less fortunate. Code Enforcement and Inspections personnel have partnered with us to ensure adequate living conditions and safer housing. These efforts in conjunction with the Department of Human Services have not only improved the health and well-being of many of our citizen's but also reduced the negative impact of those seeking to fraud our public assistance programs. Our many partnerships have continued to increase our ability to reduce violent crime, impede the trafficking of narcotics, and help us address illegal immigration.

The challenges we face are complex, ever-changing, and with certainty, growing in number. The success of our people is heavily dependent upon the resources they have available to them. We actively seek out and implement those technologies which allow us to stay on the leading edge of law enforcement and make our community safer each day. Hazardous device detection, a new Automatic Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) and improved covert investigation capabilities allow us to be more proactive in our policing, thus preventing those who seek to harm us from having additional opportunities. Additionally, advanced crime scene processing and improved drug testing technologies ensure that adequate evidence is secured so that our courts can increase their convictions of criminals.

Thank you for your interest in our department. We hope that in reviewing this report you will see the dedication of our people. More importantly, we hope you feel the difference these people make in serving you and the other citizens of Gaston County. We are dedicated to serve, because, after all, it is our community as well.

*William Farley*  
Chief of Police

## About The Department

The Gaston County Police Department began operation in 1957 with a chief, a secretary, and 23 sworn officers. Since its inception, the department has continually grown stronger and more proficient. By 1991, the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) awarded accreditation status to the Department, making it the 190th internationally accredited police agency.



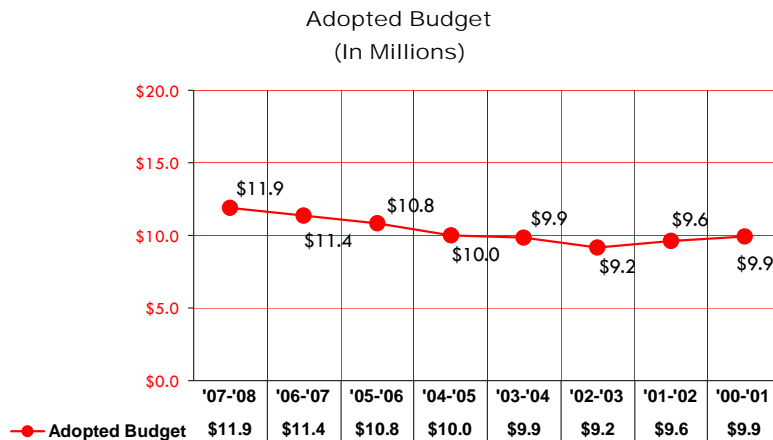
Then: Patrol Car in 1957.



Now: 2007 Patrol Car.

Today, the Department employs 137 sworn officers who patrol a community of more than 85,000 residents and spans an area of over 270 square miles. In addition, the Department employs 90 civilians who provide essential services such as communications, information processing, planning and crime analysis and animal control. Every member of the Department is committed to promoting the Department's standards and goals, which are best expressed through our mission and value statements.

## Budget



## Values

- **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 honest and accountability from every employee. This value fosters community and employee confidence in the Department and allows for an open and honest relationship.

## Mission

To enhance safety and security through police services, which reflect our compassion and concern for the quality of life of all citizens.

## Employees of the Year

2007

**Sworn** - Dan Caison

**Civilian** - Janet Russ

**Telecommunicator** - Ann Mitchem

**Animal Control** - Heather Mitchell

## Employees of the Month

January

**Sworn** - Mike McPherson

**Civilian** - Terry Phillips

February

**Sworn** - B.D. Henderson &

A.L. Schmidt

**Civilian** - Laura Bumgardner, Karen

Emery & Eric Johnson

March

**Sworn** - Reggie Bloom

**Civilian** - Toni Cormier

April

**Sworn** - Gerren Willis

**Civilian** - Heather Irish

May

**Sworn** - Kevin Murphy

**Civilian** - Nicole Costner

June

**Sworn** - Ashley Wright

**Civilian** - Lisa Davis

July

**Sworn** - Tim Leophard

**Civilian** - Jeanne Nation

August

**Sworn** - Dan Caison

**Civilian** - Lisa Benton

September

**Sworn** - Anderson Holder

**Civilian** - Teresa Wilson

October

**Sworn** - Mark Stewart

**Civilian** - Nicole Costner

November

**Sworn** - Doug Hord

**Civilian** - Jeanne Nation

December

**Sworn** - Matt Sampson

**Civilian** - Susie McMillan

## 2007 Awards & Recognition

### GASTON COUNTY AWARDS

Employees of the Year - Doug Hord  
Sonja Floyd

### DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS

#### Outstanding Service

**Sworn** - Christie Rhoney

**Civilian** - Laura Bumgardner

Medal of Valor - Dan Caison

Problem Solver Award - Zone 2, Squad 3

#### Outstanding Service in Unit

**SIU** - Stephen Zill

**SRO** - Eddie Burgess

**Zone 1** - Chris Vaughn

**Zone 3** - Gerren Willis

**CIU** - John Ferguson

**Records** - Angela Huskey

**Zone 2** - Korey Bishop

Outstanding Service by a Citizen - Patti Dreher

Citizen of the Year - Melinda Jones

Volunteer of the Year - Char Fobell

#### Chief's Commendations

Cheryl Greenwood

James Buie

Dean Henderson

Laura Bumgardner

Karen Emery

Lou Caliendo

Rob Henninger

Jason Meixel

Catawba Heights Baptist Church

Terry Moore

Joe Bill Lineberger

Andy Schmidt

Eric Johnson

Steve Brandon

Chad Jenkins

Sally Price

Steve Simpson

Special Recognition - Joseph Kenny

#### Military Service Recognition

Roger Davis

Chad Jenkins

Amber Hastings

David Dawson

Community Watch Association Member  
of the Year - Queens Road/Queens Court

## Gang Prevention Initiative Receives Region of Excellence Award

Each year, government members of the Centralina Council of Governments (COG) are recognized for their commitment and dedication to regional excellence through the Region of Excellence Awards Program. There are four major categories for the awards: Local Government Efficiency & Effectiveness; Planning and Community Investment; Environmental Planning and Conservation; and Service to Citizens. In 2007, COG awarded the Gaston County Police Department the "Excellence in Service to Citizens Award" for its Gang Prevention Initiative.

A growing gang problem prompted the development and implementation of the Gang Prevention Initiative, which calls for the mobilization of the community to address gangs and the problems they cause. An Assessment Team was formed to collect and analyze data during the assessment period and maintain daily contact with targeted youth throughout the initiative. The Assessment Team consists of many agencies already charged with the responsibility of addressing the gang problem throughout the County.

In 2006 and 2007, the Assessment Team directed the implementation of five new community-based programs, targeted primarily at gang prevention, in five (5) identified hotspots throughout Gaston County: Street SMART; TEAM Program (Teaching, Educating and Mentoring); Gang of One Hotline, Law Enforcement Training; and Gang Awareness Conferences and Community Forums.

Efforts have directly impacted more than 1,300 youth to date, and outcome data is positive. The Boys and Girls Clubs reported that of middle and high school students who participated in the first year of the Street SMART program, despite living in neighborhoods where gangs are active, 93% had no reports of delinquent behavior one year later.

### Gang Prevention Initiative Community-Based Programs

- ✓ Street SMART
- ✓ TEAM Program (Teaching, Educating and Mentoring)
- ✓ Gang of One Hotline
- ✓ Law Enforcement Training
- ✓ Gang Awareness Conferences and Community Forums

### The Assessment Team

- Department of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention
- Gaston County Schools
- Gaston County Police Department
- Gaston County Sheriff's Office
- Gastonia Police Department
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Gaston
- Salvation Army Boys and Girls Clubs
- Alliance for Children and Youth
- Gaston County Department of Social Services Workforce Investment Act
- Gaston County Grants Administrator



## Professional Standards

The employees of the Gaston County Police Department provide direct public safety services to many individuals every day. However, some citizens have questions, concerns or complaints about the Department or the conduct of individual employees. The Professional Standards Unit conducts objective investigations of complaints made against any Police, Animal Control or Telecommunications employee.

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 failed to discover sufficient evidence to clearly prove or disprove the allegation made against the employee.

**Unfounded** - The investigation indicated that the alleged act or omission reported did not occur or did not involve Department personnel.

**Exonerated** - The investigation indicates that the act or omission reported did occur but was justified, lawful and/or proper.

The Department strives for continuous improvement in the level of service it provides to citizens. The Professional Standards Unit meticulously investigates all complaints and views each one as an opportunity to improve the Department's service and communicate more effectively. Moreover, information gathered through the complaint process assists the Department in the reduction of future complaints.

## Stats

The Professional Standards Unit investigated a total of 45 complaints in 2007 involving the following:

- 15 non-sworn employees
- 37 sworn employees
- 1 department
- 1 unknown

### Non-Sworn Employees

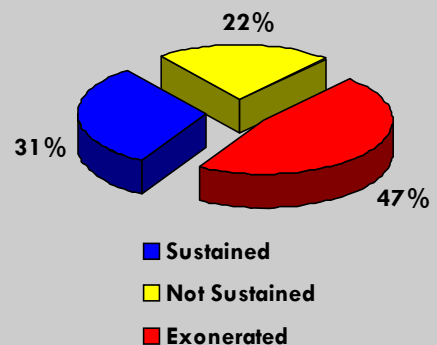
Sustained	6
Not Sustained	4
Unfounded	0
<u>Exonerated</u>	<u>4</u>
<i>Total</i>	<i>14</i>

### Sworn Employees

Sustained	8
Not Sustained	6
Unfounded	0
<u>Exonerated</u>	<u>17</u>
<i>Total</i>	<i>31</i>

## Complaint Breakdown: 2007

<u>Complaints</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006-2007</u>
						<u>% Change</u>
Improper Actions	14	12	38	25	20	-20.00%
Violation of Policy	6	17	3	12	13	8.33%
Demeanor	9	13	7	4	8	100.00%
Criminal Misconduct	0	0	1	0	0	N/A
Excessive Force	4	5	1	4	4	0.00%
Civil Rights Breach	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0.00%</b>





## Community Feedback Survey

### Safety

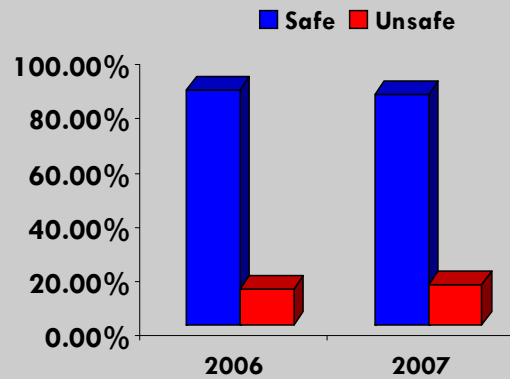
The Department contacted over 1,000 individuals who requested police services in 2007 to participate in its community feedback survey.

Of the citizens surveyed, the majority (61%) have never been a victim of a crime. Of the 386 respondents who have been victims of a crime, more than half (58%) said the incident happened within the last year.

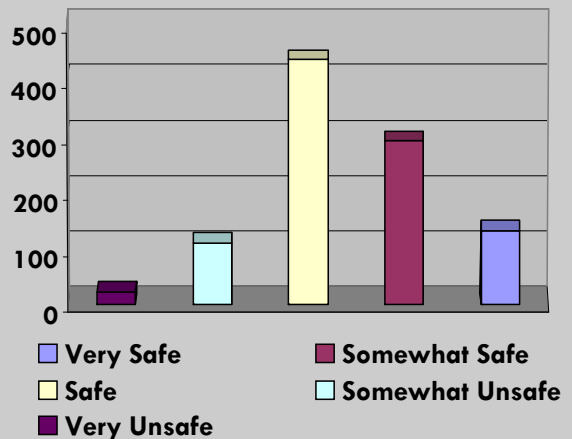
Results revealed that residents generally feel safe within their neighborhood and Gaston County. Forty-four percent said they feel safe within their neighborhood and 42% said Gaston County is a safe place. Residents who feel safe or somewhat safe accounted for 75% of the responses.

The 2007 survey results are consistent with 2006 results with little exception. The overall perception of safety has changed slightly. In 2006, it was reported that 87% of survey respondents felt safe in Gaston County, which dropped by 1% in 2007. The same is true for their perception of safety within their neighborhood, dropping from 88.4% in 2006 to 86.6% in 2007. A declining sense of safety is a trend that is occurring nationally. Overall, participants still feel safe in their neighborhood and in Gaston County.

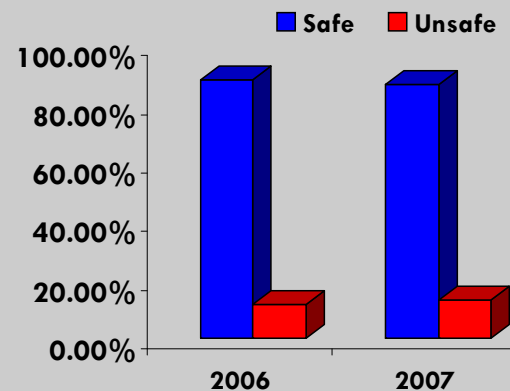
Safety  
Perception of Safety  
In Gaston County  
2006 to 2007 Comparison



In Neighborhoods: 2007



In Neighborhoods  
2006 to 2007 Comparison



(Community Feedback Survey)

### Crime Rate

Approximately 66% of participants feel the crime rate within their neighborhood is stable and only 29% feel it is increasing. More than half (54%) of the residents feel the crime rate in Gaston County is increasing, but 42% feel it is stable. Less than 6% feel the crime rate is decreasing in their neighborhood and in the County.

### Quality of Service

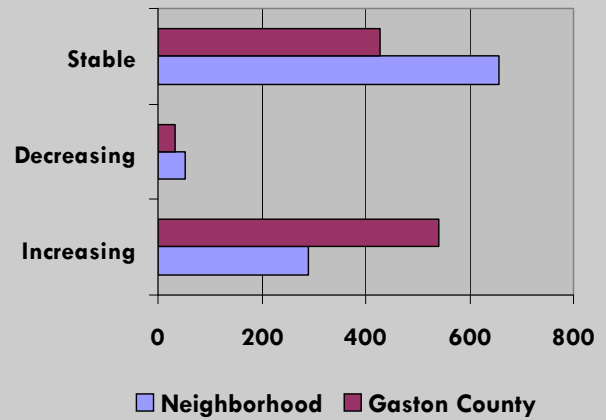
Participants were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the quality of service provided by the Department on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest level of satisfaction. Forty percent (40%) responded with a "10." In addition, 80% rated their satisfaction level an "8" or higher.

The overall satisfaction level of participants with the quality of service provided by the Department has increased from 39% in 2006 and to 40% in 2007. These figures reflect the Department's efforts to directly address residents' needs and concerns.

### Contact with the Department

Three-quarters (75%) of the respondents have met with or been in contact with an employee of the Gaston County Police Department within the past year, but only one-quarter (25%) of those residents had contact with the Department more than once. They classified their contact in two major categories: (1) Victim of a crime (42%) and (2) general assistance (35%).

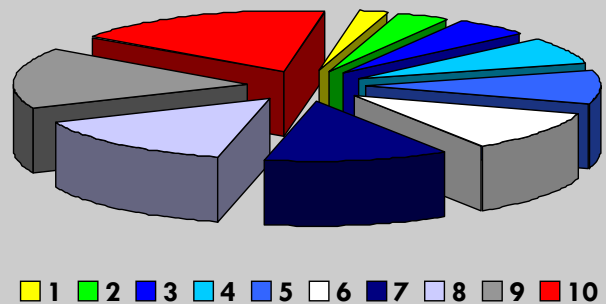
### Safety Perception of Crime Rate In Gaston County and Its Neighborhoods



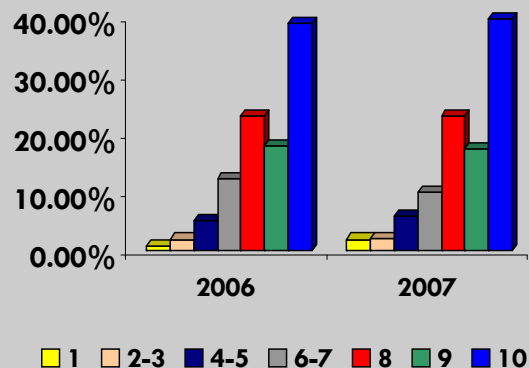
### Quality of Service

#### Quality of Service Rating

1 = Lowest Level of Satisfaction  
10 = Highest Level & Satisfaction



### Respondents' Satisfaction Levels



# ADMINISTRATION

(Community Feedback Survey)

## Satisfaction with Call & Case Management

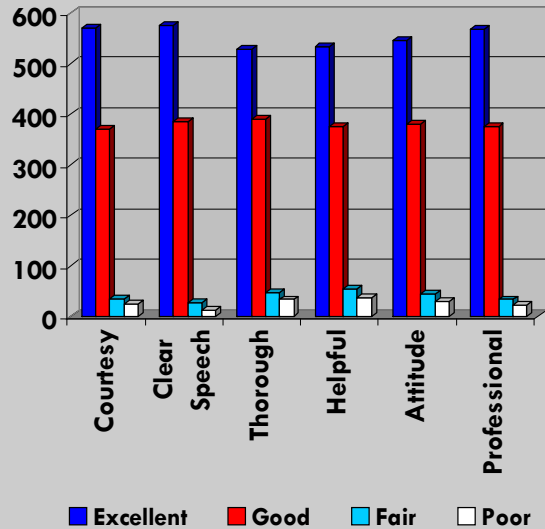
Survey participants were also pleased with the overall handling of their telephone call and case. They feel their call was answered quickly (93%) and handled appropriately (93%). Approximately 82% of participants were contacted by an Officer in person and the majority rated the Officer as “Excellent” in the areas of courtesy, speech clarity, thoroughness, helpfulness, attitude and professionalism. They were very consistent in their ratings of Officers with “Excellent” representing the majority opinion for all 6 categories. Less than 4% of respondents rated Officers “Fair” or “Poor.”

## Other Concerns

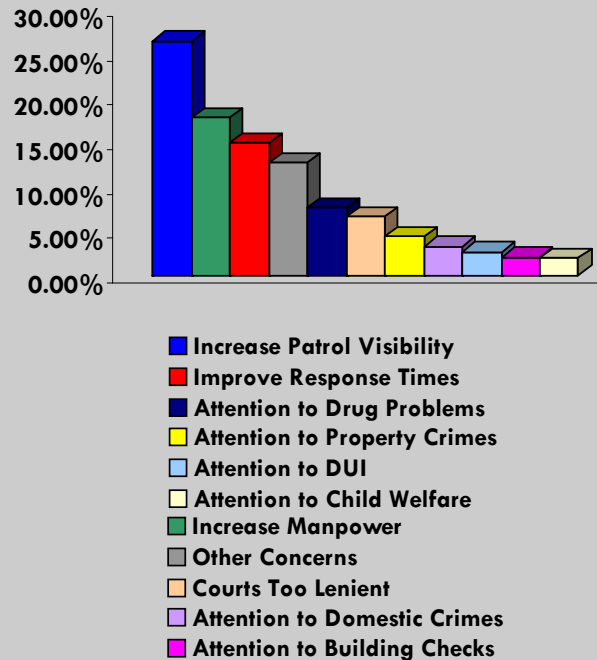
The three major areas of concern for survey participants have remained the same from 2006 to 2007, with patrol visibility, improved response times and additional manpower taking the forefront. The number of survey participants in 2007 who said police should increase their patrol visibility increased by 1% over 2006. More participants in 2007 felt the department needs more manpower than in 2006, increasing by 4%. The number of respondents concerned with improving response time in 2007 remained consistent with 2006 results. Overall, residents are still concerned about the same issues they reported last year.

## Satisfaction with Call & Case Management

Respondents' Ratings



## Other Concerns



## Office of the Chief

The Chief manages each division, which is commanded by an Assistant Chief or Director. Within each of the 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 and Planning and Analysis 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 also has two specialized patrol units, which are the K-9 Unit and a seasonal Marine Enforcement Unit.

## 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), and the Support Services Unit. The Division also consists of two specialty units, the Emergency Response Team (ERT) and the Hazardous Devices Team, whose specially trained members are available 24 hours a day to assist in crisis situations. The Criminal Investigations Unit is responsible for the investigation of major felony offenses, select

misdemeanors, missing persons, unattended deaths, offenses involving juveniles and the processing of evidence. Property and Evidence is also included in this unit. The Special Investigations Unit is primarily responsible for narcotics investigations, but is also charged with investigating gambling and prostitution offenses. The Support Services Unit includes Educational Services, which provides Student Resource Officers to County schools; Employee Development, which is responsible for employee training; Recruitment and Selection, which handles all aspects of the hiring process; Accreditation, which is responsible for maintaining all necessary information to maintain compliance with accreditation standards and Police Information Processing, which is primarily responsible for maintaining the Department's records and providing 24-hour access for both public and officer inquiries.

## Communications Division

The Communications Division is led by a Director and comprised of 53 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.

## Animal Control Division

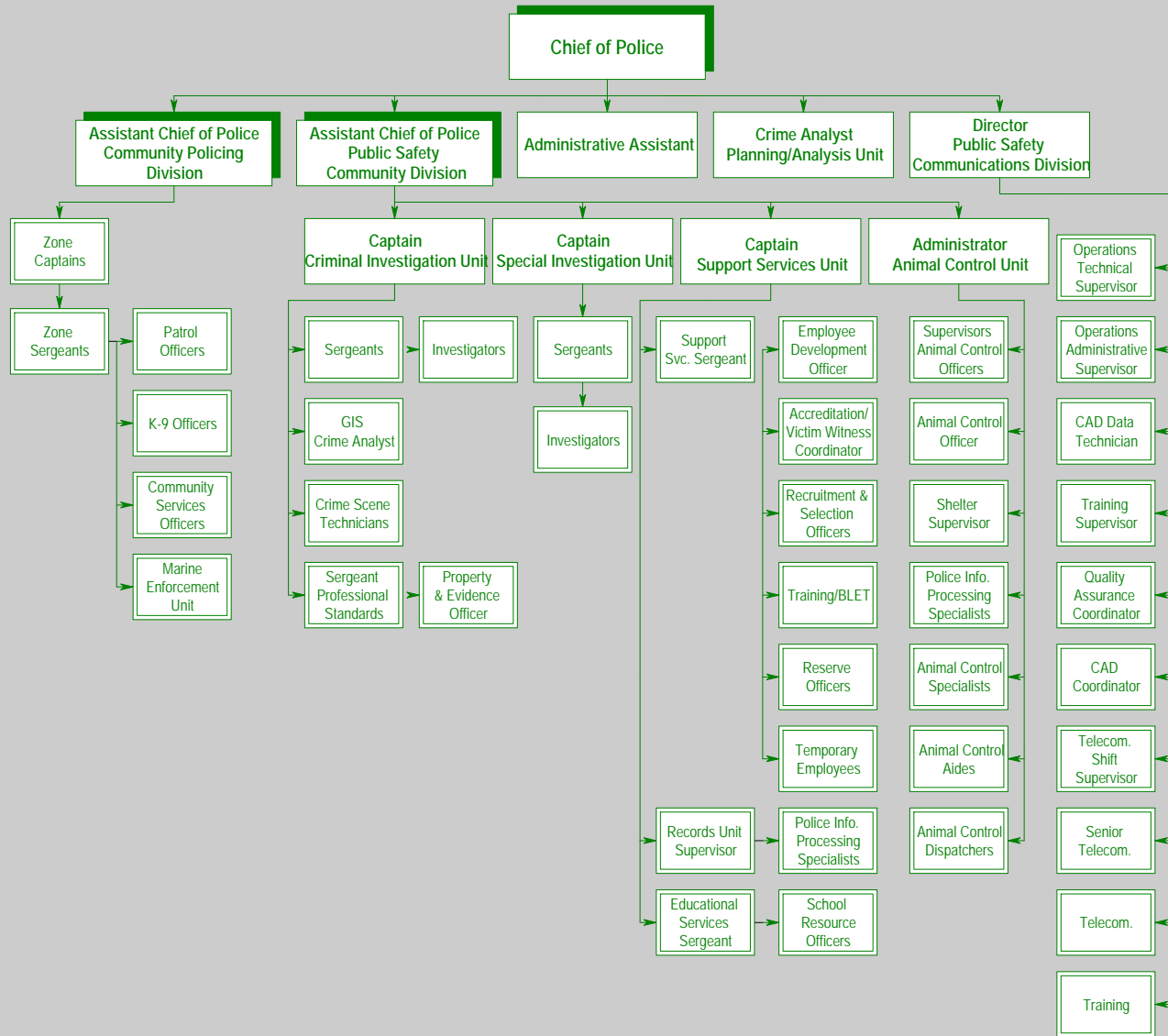
The Animal Control Division is led by a Administrator and comprised of 22 employees including 3 supervisors. Animal Control is charged with the duty and responsibility of enforcing animal related State statutes and County ordinances. Field operations are comprised of both sworn and non-sworn personnel, while administrative personnel provide general clerical, accounting and informational services. The mission of the Animal Control Unit is not only to enhance the safety of county citizens, but also to ensure the proper care and treatment of animals.

# COMMAND ORGANIZATION

## Organizational Chart

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

### Gaston County Police Department



## Department Contacts

### Administration Division

<b>General Inquiries</b>	<b>(704) 866-3320</b>
Professional Standards (Internal Affairs)	(704) 866-3384
Planning & Analysis Unit	(704) 866-3392

### Community Policing Division

<b>Emergency</b>	<b>911</b>
Non-Emergency	(704) 866-3320

### Investigative Division

#### Criminal Investigations Unit

Crime Scene Search Unit	See General Inquiries
Crime Analysis Unit	(704) 866-3305
Property & Evidence Unit	See General Inquiries

#### Special Investigations Unit

Emergency Response Team	See General Inquiries
Hazardous Devices Unit	See General Inquiries

#### Support Services Division

Educational Services Unit	See General Inquiries
Employee Development Unit	See General Inquiries
Recruitment & Selection Unit	See General Inquiries

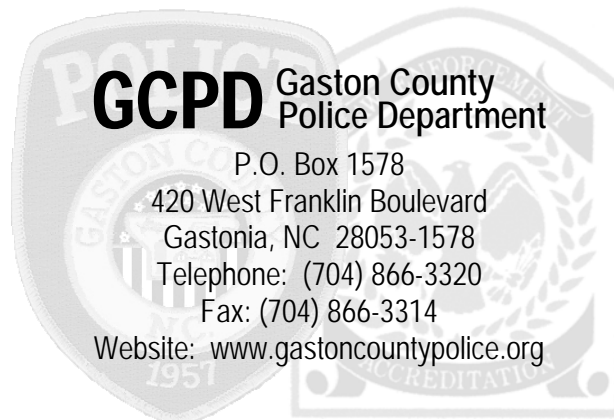
Accreditation	(704) 866-3378
Records	(704) 866-3320

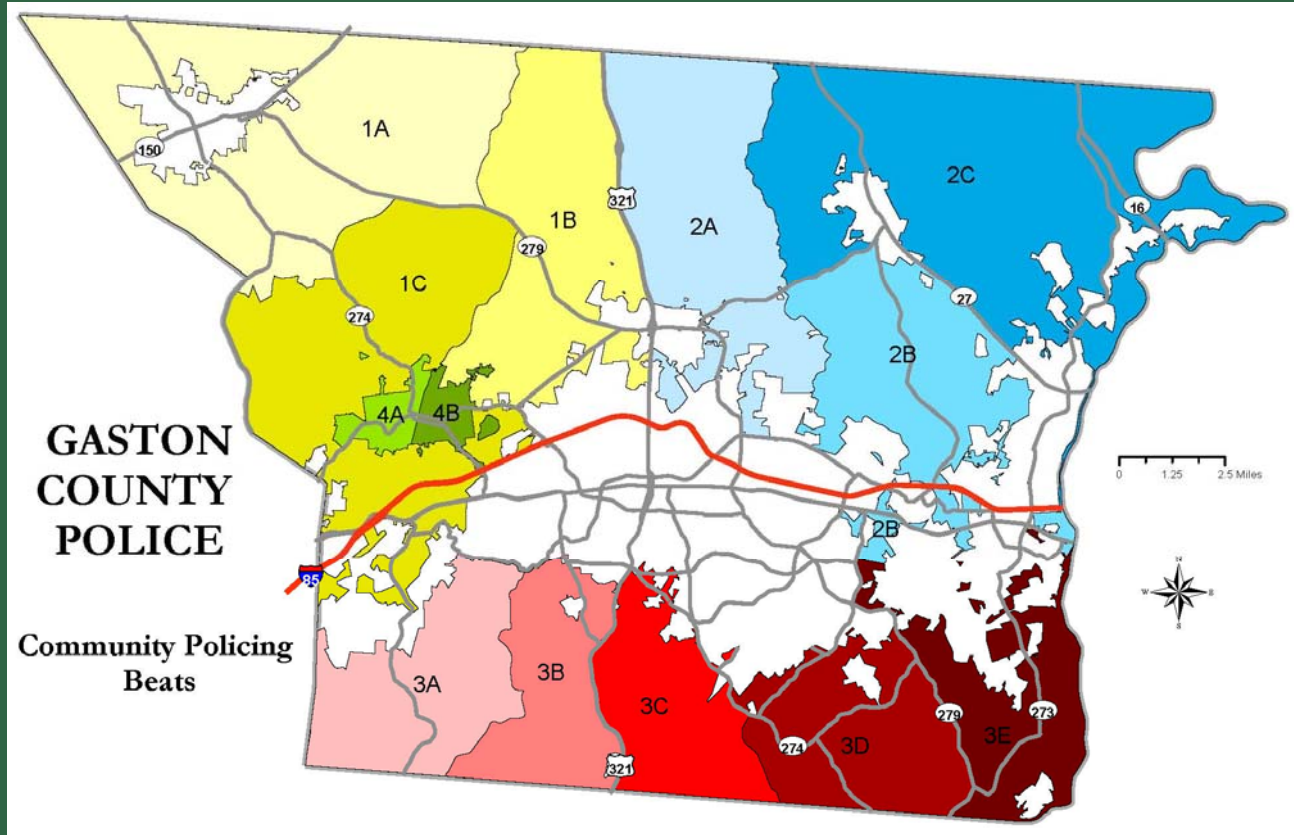
### Communications Division

<b>Emergency</b>	<b>911</b>
Non-Emergency	(704) 866-3300

### Animal Control Division

<b>Emergency</b>	<b>911</b>
Non-Emergency	(704) 922-8677





## 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. A detailed description of the zone locations is provided on the right. 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 also has two specialized patrol units, which are the K-9 Unit and a seasonal Marine Enforcement Unit.

### Zone 1

Zone 1 comprises the northwestern part of Gaston County and covers 100 square miles with over 20,000 residents.

### Zone 2

Zone 2 is located in the northwestern part of the County, covering 97 square miles with more than 30,000 residents.

### Zone 3

Zone 3 encompasses the southern unincorporated areas of Gaston County. This represents over 75 square miles with nearly 28,000 residents.

### Zone 4

Zone 4 represents the incorporated city limits of Bessemer City. It is predominantly an urban area spanning 4.4 square miles with a population of over 5,000 citizens.

# Unit Statistics

## Zone Stats

	<u>Zone 1</u>	<u>Zone 2</u>	<u>Zone 3</u>	<u>Zone 4</u>
Traffic Citations	2,101	1,888	2,180	1,146
Traffic Accidents	9	17	10	99
Warning Citations	1,304	722	662	883
Arrestable Offenses	645	590	704	315
Warrants/Summons Served	789	1,220	970	413
<b>All Case Offenses</b>				
Aggravated Assault	37	53	58	32
Alcohol Violations	2	4	5	6
Arson	5	8	17	2
Burglary	136	242	178	62
Drug Violations	161	188	179	129
DWI	6	2	5	8
Fraud	36	51	42	43
Homicide	1	2	0	1
Larceny	162	271	225	112
Larceny from Motor Vehicle Theft	54	103	99	37
Missing Persons	12	39	17	9
Motor Vehicle Theft	62	81	62	26
Public Order	5	16	21	9
Robbery	1	15	11	8
Sex Offenses, Forcible	13	24	24	9
Sex Offenses, Nonforcible	3	13	7	1
Simple Assault	83	172	127	62
Stolen Property	19	7	12	5
Trespassing	8	19	12	10
Vandalism	66	134	132	57
Weapons Violations	14	19	14	14
All Other Crimes	67	120	93	48
Not a Crime	73	79	61	36
<b>Total All Case Offenses</b>	<b>1,026</b>	<b>1,662</b>	<b>1,401</b>	<b>726</b>

### Marine Enforcement Unit Stats

<b>Calls for Service</b>	<u>2007</u>
Boat Assists	61
Boating Accidents	2
<b>Enforcement Activities/Marine</b>	
Boating Warnings	82
Boating Citations	1
<b>Shore Violations</b>	
Trespassing Violations	50
Citations/Arrests	2
Warnings (Written & Verbal)	0

### K-9 Unit Stats

Man Tracking Searches	152
Narcotic Searches	1,605
Calls for Service	7,025
K-9 Arrests/Misdemeanor	304



## Zone 1

### Persistent Investigation Tactics

A year long initiative was conducted concentrating on relentless follow through in investigations. Officers devoted more time and effort this year to developing informants and tracking down leads compared to 2006. Overall, crime was up just over one percent (1%) within Zone 1; however, an increase in clearance rates was realized. In addition, more property was located and returned to the rightful owners in 2007.

### Intent Case Management

Officers also focused on persons who have a history of violent behavior. These individuals were identified through crime reports and their cases received a more critical review. Enhanced relations with the District Attorney's Office led to increased pre-trial bonds and more jail time for offenders. Special attention was also given to victims of domestic violence. As a result violent crime in Zone 1 decreased over 15% compared to 2006.

### Youth Involvement

Officers partnered with elementary schools by presenting classroom instruction. Topics included the proper use of 911, stranger awareness and bicycle safety. Officers are regularly invited to mentor students as well and be positive role models for children within the zone.

## Zone 2

As a result of increased calls for service within specific communities in Zone 2, Officers contacted and worked closely with Gaston County Code Enforcement, Animal Control and the County Attorney's Office to identify solutions.

### Directed Enforcement Efforts

**Hickory Glen** — Formerly known as East Gaston Mobile Home Park, Hickory Glen had several issues that needed to be addressed.

(Zone 2 Continued)

There were building code violations with most of the trailers within the park and animal control violations which resulted in a low quality of life for its residents and a high volume of service calls for Zone 2 Officers. Master Police Officer R. K. Montgomery worked with Gaston County Code Enforcement, Animal Control Officers, the park owners and its tenants to correct the problems. Trailers were repaired according to building code standards, problems with animals improved and the calls for service were greatly reduced. As a result of Officer Montgomery's hard work, the citizens of that community now have an improved quality of life.

**Upper Stanley Road** — Officers received a large number of calls and complaints about an alleged drug house on Upper Stanley Road. The trailer had no electricity or water and was primarily being used as a location to sell and use drugs. Robberies and other violent crimes were also occurring in the vicinity. Officers conducted directed enforcement activities at this location, making numerous arrests throughout the year. Their efforts have nearly eliminated the drug related activity in the area. Officers will continue their efforts by working with the Gaston County Attorney's Office in an attempt to seize the property and have it destroyed to prevent possible reoccurrence.

### Programs

Officers maintained active partnerships with Community Watch groups in Zone 2.

**Community Watch Association** — Abbington Place Apartments has formed a new Community Watch group and officers have built a strong relationship with its residents over the past year.

## Zone 3

During 2007, Zone 3 officers put a directed emphasis on reducing property crime and repeated calls for service, as well as targeting areas where the sale of illegal narcotics were taking place. Officers worked in conjunction with the Crime Analysis Unit to identify crime trends and locations where these types of calls for service were occurring most often. The information gained was used to implement problem solving strategies to address specific issues in the identified areas. Officers also increased directed patrol efforts in those locations and partnered with citizens and other entities within the County to improve the safety and quality of life in those communities.

### Programs

**Community Watch Association** — Officers maintained active partnerships with the community through continued participation in the Gaston County Community Watch Association and by attending Community Watch meetings within the zone. There are currently seven community watch groups in Zone 3 that meet on a monthly or quarterly basis to discuss community concerns and crime prevention strategies. During the year, officers also worked to develop four additional Community Watch groups in Saddlewood, Mountain Home and Foxfire subdivisions as well as the Madison Place Senior apartment complex.

**Safety and Crime Prevention** — Officers expanded their reach into the community through various safety and crime prevention initiatives. Some of these initiatives included an AARP Driving Class, Home Security for the Elderly, Church Watch and Identity Theft programs. Officers were also involved with other community partnerships such as the Interagency Child Abuse Council, Gaston Together, NC Crime Prevention Board, Traveler Protective Association and Gaston County Safe Kids.

(Zone 3 Continued)

### Directed Enforcement Efforts

Additional focus was placed on the identification and location of individuals suspected of criminal activity. Constant monitoring of these locations and proactive enforcement by every officer, including specialized units, led to multiple arrests and immediately reduced drug related activity. One such initiative involved repeated complaints of drug activity within the Queens Court community. Officers targeted this specific location and were able to identify two major drug traffickers. Through proactive patrol efforts and assistance from the Special Investigations Unit, successful undercover buys were made from two drug traffickers and both were arrested. The Community Watch Association in the area was grateful for officers' efforts and the calls for service within the area and at those two locations have significantly decreased.

### Enforcing Environmental Crimes

Police involvement in quality of life issues proved beneficial to several locations plagued with environmental hazards. Zone 3 officers partnered and worked diligently with other non-law enforcement agencies such as the Gaston County and City of Gastonia Code Enforcement Departments, Gaston County Health Department and Gaston County Attorney's Office to address the problem areas and make the communities more desirable and healthy. One effort involved a dilapidating mobile home park located in South Gastonia. Through proactive police efforts in collaboration with Gaston County Code Enforcement and Health Department, the owner was located and officers worked with him to upfit the homes to meet building codes. Problems included sewage, accumulated solid waste issues and fire hazards.

## Zone 4

2007 was a challenging year for officers in Zone 4 (Bessemer City). Property crime increased by 23% over last year, while violent crime increased 21%. The zone also experienced an increase in the number of wrecks, injuries and property damage. Thefts at local cemeteries also began to peak. Three major initiatives were developed and implemented to address these issues.

### Directed Enforcement Efforts

#### **Illegal Drug Activity & Trespassing** —

Officers determined that the increases in property crime and violent crime were strongly linked to drug activity. To combat this rising trend, efforts to increase surveillance, develop informants and execute search warrants were intensified. Stronger partnerships were created with the Department's Special Investigations and K-9 Units to aid in this process. Offenders involved with illegal drug activity were also observed trespassing on railroad property, which led to a stronger enforcement of trespassing violations. Officers will continue to work with residents to address these issues.

**Wrecks, Injuries & Property Damage** — A wreck reduction initiative was implemented throughout Zone 4. Locations involving high incidents of wrecks were identified. Efforts to reduce the number of accidents, injuries and property damage included educating the residents by publishing notices in the local newspaper and utility bills. Orange flags were placed on speed limit signs where speed was a contributing factor. Officers increased monitoring and enforcement of posted speed limits. As a result, the number of wrecks decreased 53%, the number of injuries decreased by 43% and property damage decreased 23% compared to 2006.

**Cemetery Thefts** — Crimes at cemeteries within Zone 4 were a continual problem. Thieves targeted flowers and expensive brass vases. An initiative was developed to

(Zone 4 Continued)

engrave items for easy identification. Signage was placed at the entrances to the cemeteries warning that items were engraved and the public was informed. As a result, no property theft at the cemeteries has been reported since the initiative started in May.

## Marine Enforcement Unit

The Marine Enforcement Unit operates on a seasonal basis from June until October. The unit consists of four full-time and three part-time officers. It is charged with the responsibility of enforcing boating laws, conducting

boating safety inspections, removing navigational hazards,



The Marine Enforcement Unit pictured aboard

answering calls for service, enforcing shoreline laws and providing assistance to boaters and other governmental agencies at Lake Wylie and Mountain Island Lake. The unit utilizes a 22-foot McKee Craft boat and two jet skis for patrol.

### New Equipment

Through the "Law Loaner" program offered by Yamaha of Gastonia, the Unit received two wave runners for the 2007 season. The wave runners are used in special events and for patrolling areas that are not accessible by larger watercraft.

A Raymarine radar was recently installed on the boat. The radar provides GPS coordinates, greater detail of features in the water and increased water depth accuracy. It also keeps an accurate track of all the boats on the lake by displaying all the information on a 12-inch color screen.

(Marine Enforcement Unit Continued)

### Partnerships

The Unit has partnered with agencies on Lake Wylie to keep the waterways safe. It works closely with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police, NC Wildlife, SC Department of Natural Resources, Tega Cay Police and York and Lincoln County Sheriff's Marine Units. The Lake Wylie and Mountain Island Marine Commissions granted the Marine Enforcement Unit, along with other agencies, policing authority over the waterways and shorelines of Lake Wylie. The Unit partnered with area agencies for the following efforts in 2007:

- Assisted in a dive operation on Lake Wylie. Divers searched for a handgun used in a homicide in Gaston County.
- Gaston Emergency Medical Services teamed up with the Unit during the July 4th week for a proactive approach to medical emergencies on the lake. GEMS Paramedics carried all of their medical and diving equipment on the boat.
- Partnered with the Harbortowne Marina and T-Bones at the Lake to create a reward program called "Operation Flotation Citation."

During safety inspections, any child under the age of 13 wearing a life jacket received a "Flotation Citation," which is a coupon redeemable for one free slushie at Harbortowne Marina or T-Bones at the Lake. The goal of the program is to promote a positive message from law enforcement about the importance of wearing life jackets. The program was extended to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Marine Unit, NC Wildlife, SC Department of Natural Resources and the York County Sheriff's Office. The program was received well.



"The Flotation Citation."

(Marine Enforcement Unit Continued)

### Educational Programs

The Unit also provides educational programs year round. This year, the Unit participated in the Draper Wildlife Management Area Youth Fishing Rodeo, where over five hundred people attended. The Unit partnered with Charlotte



An Officer talks with a child about SPLASH the Robot and safety at the Draper Wildlife Management Area Youth Fishing Rodeo.

Mecklenburg Police and the Lake Wylie Marine Commission to use SPLASH the Robot in educating children about water safety. The following is a partial list of the Unit's educational programs in 2007.

- Participated in the Spring 2007 water safety kickoff at Lake Norman hosted by Duke Power. The Unit answered questions about boater safety and equipment regulations.
- Partnered with other agencies to provide information about water safety and boater safety to adults and children at the Mid-Atlantic Boat Show in Charlotte, NC. The booth consisted of the SPLASH trailer and a Gaston County Marine Enforcement Unit wave runner along with the printed materials displayed on tables. The booth was manned at all times to answer questions about boating laws and required equipment.

### Training

Unit members participated in several training opportunities in 2007, including the following:

- US Coast Guard Open Water Search, Rescue and Safety Training Course at the



Unit members aboard a vessel

## (Marine Enforcement Unit Continued)

Wrightsville Beach Station. The training consisted of day and night waterborne search and rescue, proper positioning of rescue boats during fire suppression operations, advanced vessel towing, equipment transfer from various vessels and preserving life and property involving a sinking vessel.

- Participated in a multi-agency domestic terrorism training exercise on Mountain Island Lake. The Unit assisted the bomb squad on Big Island during the exercise.

## K-9 Unit

The K-9 Unit consists of six handler and dog teams responsible for answering routine calls, responding to crimes in progress, performing street level drug interdiction and assisting all divisions of the Department by conducting specialized searches with trained law enforcement canines. The searches include searches of houses and vehicles for illegal drugs, searches of buildings for suspects, area searches for evidence and tracks of subjects that have run in an attempt to elude arrest. Other responsibilities include assisting other agencies in the County and surrounding counties and participating in drug and crime prevention activities by providing canine demonstrations to various civic organizations, community watches and schools.



Handler Tim Leopold and Canine Dinky during a recent training

## Challenges

Early in 2007, two of the Unit's canines retired, Canine Fin and Canine Deros. Deros was the Unit's oldest canine member. In February, Officer Jake Michael joined the Unit, following the promotion of an officer. Canine Dinky and Kimo arrived in March



Canine Kimo joined the Unit

## (K-9 Unit Continued)

from Ventosa Kennel and went through ten weeks of training before going on the road. Both Kimo and Dinky have shown great promise. Canine Kimo located a hidden bag of marijuana in a vehicle on his second day of duty and Canine Dinky had outstanding success in his first 7 months on the job, running 18 tracks and locating 19 subjects.

## Performance

The Unit provided services to many organizations in the area and conducted countless successful searches. Unit handlers and canines made 2007 a banner year. Listed below are some of the Unit's activities:









Canine Dinky uses his keen senses and training

- Assisted the Kings Mountain Police Department in apprehending one of FBI's and America's Most Wanted subjects.
- Assisted the NC Division of Prisons in Dallas with a drug check point to keep visitors from bringing in drugs. Drugs were found during the operation and three subjects were charged.
- Assisted the Gaston County Sheriff's Department and Probation and Parole on Halloween night with security and drug checks of sex offenders required to report to the Sheriff's Department.
- Conducted demonstrations for several different organizations throughout the year. These organizations included the Gaston County Police Adult and Youth Citizen Police Academies, Gaston County Boys and Girls Club, Freightliner's Employee Day-Out Picnic, several schools and Community Watch groups.
- Conducted several drug searches for Duke Energy and Shaw Construction at the Allen Plant job site while Shaw conducted a large-scale addition to the facility.
- Targeted locations throughout the County regarding drug complaints, which resulted in search warrants and arrests.

## Criminal Investigation Unit

- February, a homicide occurred at 4136 Mountainview Street in Gastonia. This domestic related incident involved a female, restricted to a wheelchair, who shot her husband to defend herself. The District Attorney ruled it justifiable.
- March, a homicide occurred at 2115 Mountain Island Highway in Mount Holly. Two individuals attempted to rob an elderly man and, during the commission of the crime, shot the victim numerous times.
- September, a homicide occurred at 134 WH Kiser Road in Lincolnton. Began as a domestic situation, but the female victim was shot while three children were inside the residence.
- November, a homicide occurred at 104 East Maine Street in Bessemer City. The suspect went to his ex-girlfriend's residence in the middle of the night and stabbed her multiple times. The victim's 11-year-old grandson was stabbed multiple times as well. The suspect also stole prescription medication.
- December, CIU charged an individual with breaking into 15 motor vehicles that resulted in 35 charges. Approximately \$10,000 worth of stolen property was recovered. The larcenies occurred in the southern part of Gaston County.
- October, November and December, CIU cleared the largest arson case in Gaston County history, according to the Fire Marshal's Office. Three individuals were charged, resulting in 104 charges. These individuals set 9 vehicles and 1 house on fire during a 3-month period in the southern part of Gaston County.
- July, CIU started working with the Department of Social Services Fraud Unit to help curb food stamp fraud. The CIU charged a total of five individuals with 131 charges of fraud. Case involved a total of \$24,929.00 of Gaston County tax dollars.

## Investigations Breakdown

General Investigations		33%
Charges (Arrests)		474%
Juvenile Cases		-6%
Larceny		2%
Sex Offenses		-8%
Overall Caseload		24%

## Unit Stats

- Opened 655 investigations in 2007, a 33% increase over 2006. There was a slight decrease in juvenile investigations with 142 juvenile cases opened during 2007 compared to 151 in 2006.
- Arrests were substantially higher in 2007 with 1,298 charges filed compared to 226 in 2006.
- Of the total cases investigated in 2007, 16% involved burglaries to residences. There was a 2.5% decrease in the investigation of burglaries to businesses, motor vehicles and outbuildings.
- Larceny accounted for 12% of total caseload, a 2% increase.
- Missing Persons reports accounted for 12% of the caseload, with 76% of these being juveniles.
- Sex Offenses accounted for 12% of all investigations, an 8% decrease.
- Violent crime only accounted for 2.5% of the investigations, which was down slightly from 2006. This is significant, given the fact that there was a 100% increase in homicides in 2007 (4) when compared to 2006 (2). All four homicides have been cleared.
- There were 55 unattended deaths in 2007 requiring preliminary investigation. This represented a 22% increase over 2006.
- The remaining 38.5% of investigations included offenses such as assaults, frauds and other types of crimes.
- Overall, CIU experienced a 24% increase in caseload in 2007.

## Crime Search Scene Unit

The Crime Scene Search Unit (CSSU) remained a four-officer unit in 2007 despite an increase in the legal and technological responsibilities involved in crime scene processing. The Unit offers certified expertise in the areas of evidence identification, documentation, collection and preservation. CSSU is responsible for crime scene processing within the Department's jurisdiction. However, the Unit has established an excellent reputation with other agencies resulting in frequent requests for crime scene processing. CSSU responded to 690 calls in 2007. In addition, the Unit was asked to assist other agencies 121 times.

### Unit Stats

- Processed 94 vehicles and 96 deaths including 8 homicides, 4 in Gaston County and 4 in other jurisdictions.
- Latent prints were developed from crime scenes to assist in identifying potential suspects. CSSU conducted a total of 6,740 latent print comparisons of which 39 were identified. The Automated Fingerprint Index System (AFIS) was used a total of 4,293 times to search for fingerprint matches. Two were confirmed.
- Responsible for fingerprinting all prisoners and requesting civilians. Prisoners are fingerprinted during the arrest process. Civilians frequently request fingerprinting for job or school applications. A total of 516 people were fingerprinted in 2007.
- Continued to use digital photography in crime scene documentation. The practice provides tremendous savings in film processing. A total of 532 compact discs were created. A total of 543 photographs were developed.
- Houses the specialized Forensic Recovery of Evidence Data System (F.R.E.D.). F.R.E.D. is used to conduct forensic computer searches involving cyber crime activity. Processed 94 vehicles and 96 deaths including 8 homicides, 4 in Gaston County and 4 in other jurisdictions.

(Crime Search Scene Unit Continued)

In 2007 CSSU made a concentrated effort to break new ground in the area of acquisition and utilization of technologically advanced equipment. The first major achievement was NarTest, an analytical instrument that provides drug analysis detection of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin and marijuana. The system employs revolutionary 3D Fluorescence Signature Technology for on-site drug detection and conclusive analyses of drug samples the day of arrest.

CSSU implemented laser scanning capability for crime scene documentation. Using a computer controlled laser rangefinder, DeltaSphere measures millions of points in minutes. These measurements are then triangulated by means of 3D Visualization and Analysis software and the operator is allowed to create a computer graphic model of the scene. The software also allows for the import of photos and videos in order to recreate a crime scene. By combining the interaction of computer animation with photography and video, CSSU can view, measure and analyze a crime scene from any perspective.



CIU members received training on the new DeltaSphere technology.

The Unit also upgraded AFIS by acquiring the Integrated Automated Fingerprint System (IAFIS), which is maintained by the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division. It provides automated fingerprint and latent search capability and electronic image storage and exchange. It provides unlimited access to the largest biometric database in the world. IAFIS is designed to bring the SBI fingerprint database together with the FBI database. This will allow CSSU to streamline search capabilities. IAFIS is currently being installed and will be operational soon.



## Property & Evidence Unit

The Property and Evidence Unit is responsible for the storage and maintenance of all items seized by the Department during criminal investigations. 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 each person having contact with the evidence is documented. This information is used later at trial to show the item is in the same condition as it was when it was first collected. To accomplish this goal, the Unit has one sworn officer in charge of the evidence room. 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.

In 2007, the Unit focused on clearing out and disposing of evidence from older cases which were still housed in the evidence room. More specifically, older cases involving guns, money and jewelry were targeted. Disposal of evidence related to these types of cases is more difficult because a court order is required from either a District or Superior Court judge, which dictates precisely how to dispose of the evidence. Through this focused effort, the Unit disposed of 184 firearms and turned more than \$20,913 in seized money over to the Gaston County School Board.

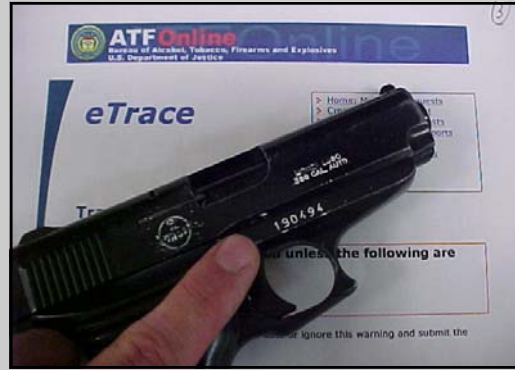
The Unit continued utilizing NC General Statute §15-12(b), which allows unclaimed bicycles to be given to non-profit organizations for charitable purposes. During 2007, the Unit donated 23 bicycles that were reconditioned and given to needy children.



# 2007 HIGHLIGHTS

## (Property & Evidence Continued)

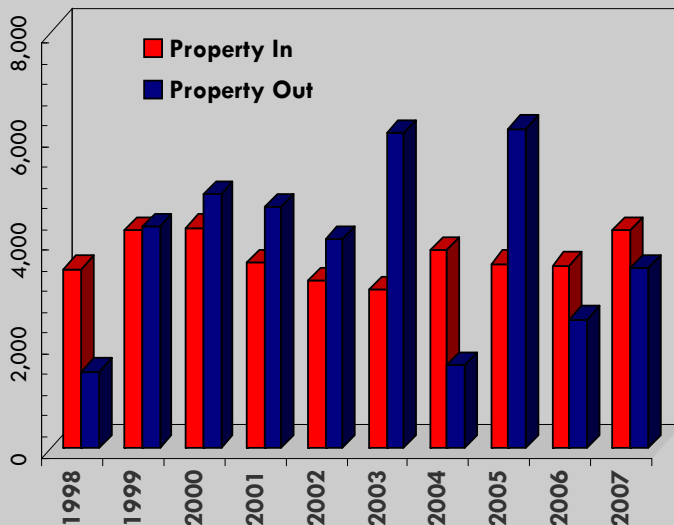
Also during 2007, the Department continued participation in a weapons tracing project sponsored by the US Department of Justice, Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Bureau (ATF). The project, called E-Trace, allows law enforcement agencies to track the sale and movement of a gun from manufacturer through each change of ownership. For each firearm that is logged into the property and evidence room, the Evidence Officer accesses the ATF database via the Internet and enters descriptive data and possessor identification information. The information entered by the Property Officer adds another link in the chain of movement for each gun seized. The Property and Evidence Unit entered 168 firearms into the ATF database this year, compared to 68 in 2006.



## Unit Stats

- At the end of 2007, the property and evidence room housed over 8,670 items of evidence. The graph and chart below shows evidence entering and leaving the evidence room over the past 10 years.

Property & Evidence: 1998-2007



	<u>Property In</u>	<u>Property Out</u>
1998	3,439	1,467
1999	4,182	4,262
2000	4,246	4,880
2001	3,571	4,634
2002	3,221	4,010
2003	3,045	6,072
2004	3,811	1,583
2005	3,546	6,156
2006	3,513	2,470
<b>2007</b>	<b>4,182</b>	<b>3,472</b>

## Special Investigations Unit

The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) is a team of 5 Investigators, 2 Sergeants and 1 Captain who conduct investigations involving narcotics, gambling, illegal alcohol, and prostitution within Gaston County. In 2007, SIU opened 302 cases. During the course of those investigations, 162 people were charged with 916 counts of various “vice” related crimes. SIU works closely with all of the municipal police departments in Gaston County as well as neighboring counties. A mutually beneficial relationship with the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) is also ongoing. Federal level casework was conducted in cooperation with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF). SIU has investigators detailed to the BATF, FBI, & ICE as task force officers.

### 2007 Highlights

**Cocaine & Marijuana Seizures** — SIU and ICE agents conducted a joint investigation that was initiated in Gaston County with the seizure of marijuana from an individual. The investigation led to other suspects within Gaston County who were not only selling marijuana, but also cocaine and crystal methamphetamine. The case eventually involved suspects in Mecklenburg County, Henderson County and Mexican border counties in Texas. Drugs with a street value of over \$3.9 million were seized.



Methamphetamine was seized in a joint investigation with ICE in Gaston County.



A closer look at crystal meth.

**Steroid Seizure** — A three-month investigation in conjunction with ICE, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department and DEA resulted in the seizure of steroids

(Special Investigations Unit Continued)

with a street value of \$15,700. The case was eventually linked to an international DEA investigation that involved shipments and seizures of large amounts of steroids and their components from China.



Seized steroids.

**Community Impact Targets** — SIU continued its efforts to not only work federal level investigations, but to also work closely with the Community Policing Division’s Zone Captains to support their efforts addressing narcotics-related crimes within high risk neighborhoods. SIU has worked cooperative investigations alongside patrol officers in the Hickory Grove Road area, Vantine, and 321 South corridor. These cases resulted in drug seizures, search warrants and arrests. Feedback from the community has been positive.

**Ecstasy Pills Investigation** — An investigation initiated by an SIU arrest in Gaston County resulted in the eventual arrest of 4 Canadian citizens who transported 50,000 dosage units of the drug ecstasy to Charlotte, NC. The pills had a street value of approximately \$1.25 million. Ecstasy is an illegal drug that acts as both a stimulant and psychedelic, producing an energizing effect as well as distortions in time and perception within the user.

**Marijuana Eradication** — In conjunction with NC National Guard air support, SIU conducted marijuana eradication at various target locations in Gaston County. This involved helicopter observation of potential marijuana growth locations along with radio contact with SIU agents in an effort to pinpoint and remove any marijuana plant operations. One location was identified in the southwestern portion of the County and 198 marijuana plants with a potential street value of \$435,000 were seized. The investigation resulted in the successful execution of a search warrant and an arrest.

# INVESTIGATIONS & SUPPORT SERVICES

## Unit Stats

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>
Cases Opened	<b>302</b>	298	374	511
Cases Cleared		260	186	318
Persons Charged	<b>162</b>	169	123	272
Number of Charges	<b>916</b>	1420	1151	2293
Searches	<b>76</b>	111	79	104
Surveillance Hours		983	686	856
Undercover Buys	<b>152</b>	153	172	211
Marijuana Plants Seized	<b>209</b>	56	85	132
Other Marijuana Seized (lbs)	<b>931.20</b>	56	85	132
Cocaine Powder Seized (kilos)	<b>11.00</b>	74	59	13
Crack Cocaine Seized (gms)	<b>265.16</b>	682	549	919
Pills Seized (dosage units)	<b>55,048</b>	18631	3631	3572
Heroin (packets)		32	17	551
Methamphetamine		220	276	59
Cash Seized	<b>\$224,764</b>	\$22,029	\$307,625	\$51,594
Street Value of Drugs Seized	<b>7,781,809</b>	8,795,205	8,420,886	2,483,774



The North Carolina Air National Guard provided a helicopter for marijuana eradication through its Counter Drug Task Force.



Marijuana plants identified growing inside camouflaged plastic pails at one operation.

## Emergency Response Team

The Emergency Response Team (ERT) is a group of highly trained officers who are available 24 hours a day to respond to critical and high risk incidents. The ERT also supports other law enforcement agencies in Gaston and neighboring counties when requested. ERT is divided into three sub-teams that work closely together. The sub-teams are Negotiators, Marksman/Observers, and Tactical Entry. Each sub-team has a designated leader who reports to the ERT commander. All are unified in their goal to see every situation resolved peacefully without injury to innocent bystanders, Team members, or suspects.

The Team participates in monthly training to maintain necessary skills and gain effective knowledge of newly acquired equipment and tactics. Approximately 3,600 hours of tactical training were logged in 2007 covering topics from basic building searches to advanced firearms tactics. ERT participates in an annual training academy which lasts for one week and provides Team members with intense and varied training at an accelerated pace geared toward building skills and unity.



ERT members participate in tactical training.

A tactical medic was integrated into the Team. The medic is a sworn officer who brings an Emergency Medical Technician background to the Team and provides the Team with the advantage of having medical aid moving in close cooperation with the tactical operators.

ERT's commander retired in July. He had been a valuable member of the ERT since it was founded in 1989.

### 2007 Highlights

- **Cooperative Training** — The ERT has engaged in a training relationship with neighboring jurisdictions to enhance skills

### (Emergency Response Team Continued)

During scheduled monthly training, the ERT partners with Dallas Police, Cramerton Police and the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office in an effort to share knowledge. Cooperative training relationships are expected to continue for years to come.



ERT members are highly trained officers.

- **Fayetteville Police Assistance** — Team members traveled to Fayetteville, NC in the Spring to provide supplemental tactical assistance during a scheduled anti-Iraq war protest. The protest involved an extended march through the streets and ended with a rally at a local park. The Team supported Fayetteville SWAT as an additional reactionary unit in case the event became violent.

- **Sniper Competition**

— A two-man marksman/observer team from ERT participated in the inaugural Gastonia Sniper Competition held at the Gastonia Police range in April. Seventeen teams competed in various phases covering everything from distance shooting to obstacle courses. The ERT marksman/observer team finished in third place.



Snipers are strategically placed at high risk scenes and are excellent marksmen.

- **New Vehicle** — The Negotiations team received a 2007 Dodge Sprinter 3500 work van for use as a negotiation operation center. The van interior was configured for use during crisis situations when effective communication with possible suspects is critical to mission success. The van provides stand-alone capability with a generator and an office-like interior. This vehicle can also be used as a primary or secondary command post during large-scale events.

# INVESTIGATIONS & SUPPORT SERVICES

## Hazardous Devices Unit

The FBI and National Bomb Squad Advisory Board recognize the Gaston County Police Department's four-member Hazardous Device Unit (HDU) as an Accredited Bomb Squad. 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.



The Gaston County Hazardous Devices Unit undergoes rigorous and continual training.

All four members of the Unit are certified Bomb Technicians. All Unit members have attended and successfully completed the FBI Hazardous Devices School. The school is six weeks of classes and practical field exercises located at the US Army Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, AL. Members have also completed the advanced course in robotics operation and tactical explosive breaching. In addition, each unit member has attended training in and is certified as Hazardous Materials Technicians by the NC State Fire Marshal's Office.

### 2007 Highlights

- The HDU continued to participate in regional training by organizing practical exercises that encompassed planning, equipment and the experience of the Marine Enforcement Unit, the Gaston County Sheriff's Explosives K-9 Unit, Gaston Emergency Medical Services and the Gastonia Police HDU.
- In compliance with standards set forth by the National Bomb Squad Commanders Advisory Board, the Unit trains monthly.



HDU Officers participate in regional training exercises.

(Hazardous Devices Unit Continued)

- HDU responded to 29 calls for service regionally. The Unit leads the State in reported incidents to the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms tracking system. The Unit has responded to locations in Gaston, Caldwell, Burke, Cleveland, Lincoln, Catawba, Iredell and Rutherford Counties.
- Unit members train quarterly with the Department's Emergency Response Team. Members from both units have attended explosive breaching training at Ft. Bragg, NC. HDU stores and maintains all explosives and breaching equipment.
- HDU also assists the Gaston County School System with training faculty and administration in bomb sweep procedures, bomb threats, explosives recognition and response.



## Educational Services Unit

The Educational Services Unit is comprised of 10 School Resource Officers. The School Resource Officers (SRO) are assigned to each of the nine County High Schools plus Warlick Alternative School. The School Resource Officer Program for Middle Schools continued in 2006-07 school year placing officers at Bessemer City Middle School and WC Friday. This involves the use of off-duty officers to staff the Middle Schools on a daily basis. School Resource Officers primary duties are to ensure a safe school environment conducive to learning, act as a counselor in law-related issues, and act as a teacher of subjects related to law enforcement. The Department continues to partner with Gaston County Schools by implementing programs and courses aimed at keeping the students and staff in a safe learning environment. Recent figures released by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction indicate that crimes per 1,000 students in Gaston County Schools continue fall below the state average. The 2006-2007 Annual Report on School Violence shows that Gaston County Schools at 4.2 school crimes per 1,000. The Statewide rate was 7.7 crimes per 1,000. Of the 10 largest school systems in the state, Gaston County Schools has the lowest number of acts of violence per 1,000 students.

### 2007 Highlights

- The **“Saved By The Belt”** initiative continued in 2007. The program was started as a way to increase seatbelt usage among high school students. School Resource Officers promote seatbelt use through education, involvement, evaluation and enforcement. Education is accomplished through posters, lectures and morning announcements. Each SRO conducts monthly traffic surveys, frequently with the assistance of involved students. Enforcement occurs as a result of the

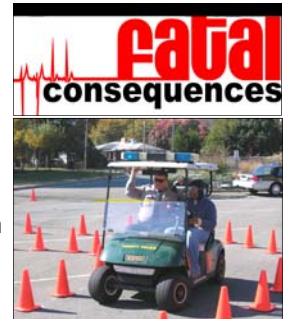


(Educational Services Unit Continued)

surveys and is directed at schools that have particularly low rates of seatbelt use. When this program was initiated the countywide rate of use was 74%. In 2006-2007 school year the average rate of use was 94%. The Highland School of Technology was the leader in seat belt use among the County’s nine high schools.



- **Fatal Consequences** is another program initiated by the Unit. It is designed to reduce drunk driving by teenagers through changing attitudes and increasing awareness. The program starts with a short lecture by an SRO given in high school health classes. The classroom instruction covers 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 vision and bad driving are directly related. To carry out this program, the Department purchased the Fatal Vision goggles, a golf cart and a trailer for hauling the equipment.



# INVESTIGATIONS & SUPPORT SERVICES

(Educational Services Unit Continued)

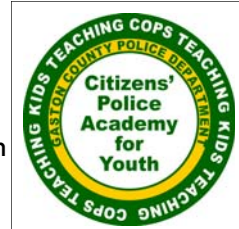
- Silence Hurts** is a program designed to reduce school violence. The program continued in 2007 and was a big success. Silence Hurts encourages students to speak out when they hear rumors of potential violent acts in school. They are encouraged to communicate through several means, either via the Crime Stoppers line, in written form through drop boxes located in schools, or on-line through their school sponsored website. From the school's website, students can click on the Silence Hurts logo and report information anonymously via e-mail.
- School Safety and Violence Education Program**, established several years ago, continued to serve as a resource for educators in 2007. This program provides training to school faculty on law enforcement related topics including the use of the SRO, drug usage/recognition, bomb sweep team training, violence prevention and domestic violence. In addition to providing useful information, this training counts as educational credit toward renewal of the teaching certificate for teachers.
- In addition to their regular duties, SRO's are involved in school activities and interact with the students and staff outside the normal school day. Officers Jason May (Bessemer City) and Officer Brian Dalton (Cherryville) were assistant baseball coaches for their respective schools in 2007.



Officers Jason May and Brian Dalton were assistant baseball coaches.

(Educational Services Unit Continued)

- Citizens' Police Academy for Youth** is held at the Department during summer vacation. The CPA-Y is oriented toward children ages 13 to 16 and is intended to give them an in-depth look at law enforcement and the Gaston County Police Department. Classes are held each day for one week. Classes cover various units including Criminal Investigations Unit, Crime Scene Search Unit, Special Investigations Unit, Marine Enforcement Unit, Hazardous Devices Unit and Emergency Response Team. The Academy is directed by SRO's and is taught by various officers from the Department.
- Citizens Police Academy** is a seven-week program designed to provide Gaston County residents, in an academy setting, first hand information about how the Department works. It is held twice a year, once in the Spring and again in the Fall. The academy requires a commitment of one Saturday morning for seven weeks for the Spring session or one Tuesday night for the Fall session. Classes are held from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. during the Spring session and from 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. in the Fall at the Gaston County Police Department headquarters on Franklin Boulevard in Gastonia unless otherwise specified. Attendance is free. In December, the Citizens Police Academy graduated its twenty-ninth class.



## Employee Development Unit

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. The NC Training and Standards Division mandates that every sworn law enforcement officer receive a minimum of 24-hours of in-service training each year. This year's mandated courses included: Legal Update; Ethics- On-duty or Off Duty; Juvenile Minority Sensitivity (Current Youth Culture); Interacting With Special Populations; Domestic Violence; and Firearms/Use of Force. The compliance tracking and reporting for this requirement are also responsibilities of the Unit.



### 2007 Highlights

- Beyond the state mandated courses, the Department conducted additional in-service training, which included such topics as Hazardous Materials Awareness, Bloodborne Pathogens, Property and Evidence Updates, TASER Refresher and ASP and OC Refresher.
- Used the Department's five training rooms to host training for employees and other law enforcement officers in the area. These sessions included specialized Basic Crisis Negotiations, New Employee Orientation, Department Recruitment Training, Basic OC, ASP Baton Course, Room and Building Clearing, Basic Media Relations, AED-CPR Re-Certification, Basic Anti-Terrorism, TASER, Alco-Sensor, Gang Net, Self Defense, School Resource Officer In-Service, DeltaSphere Training and M-16 Transition Course.
- Department training rooms were also used for other functions such as gang awareness planning sessions, Police Explorer monthly meetings, Citizen Police

(Employee Development Unit Continued)

Academies, Citizen Police Academy for Youth, the AARP Alive at 55 Senior Driving Course, telecommunications certification sessions and countless other meetings. Also, a variety of community agencies, civic organizations, and community groups used our facilities on a regular basis. The agencies include the Gaston County Chamber of Commerce, Gaston County School System, Animal Control Task Force, Gaston County Health Department, Crime Stoppers Board of Directors, Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, Gaston County Community Watch Association and the North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

- Participated in a Gang Awareness Conference with the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council. This conference was a three-day event held at the Marriott and at the Ashbrook High School stadium. The conference featured expert speakers including Attorney General Roy Cooper, who discussed identifying gang members and presented resources for combating gangs. Participation for the event totaled over 150 attendees who came from a broad spectrum of law enforcement agencies, community service providers, community civic organizations and members of the public.

### Unit Stats

<b>Type of Training</b>	<b>Number Of Hours</b>
Roll-Call	322
Specialized	2,090
Advanced	1,245
Field Training	3,228
State In-Service	2,650
Dept. In-Service	895



## Recruitment & Selection Unit

The Recruitment and Selection Unit reviewed 529 applications during 2007. The applications received were for the vacant positions for police officer, police information processing specialist, animal control specialist, animal control aide and telecommunicator. This year, a total of 34 applicants successfully completed the Department's hiring process. Two Police Information Processing Specialists, 17 Telecommunicators, 12 Police Officers and 3 Animal Control personnel were hired.



### 2007 Highlights

- Computerizing Pre-Hire Screenings** — The CritiCall Assessment Program is now the first step in the hiring process for the telecommunications positions. This is the third year this testing procedure has been used. During 2007, 262 applicants were tested for the position of Telecommunicator. A few changes were made in the testing process during the year. Each applicant must now take and pass the Reading Comprehension Test with a score of 70 or above. If they do not pass this portion of the test, they are not allowed to continue with the remainder of the test and are removed from the application process. If they pass the Reading Comprehension Test, they

(Recruitment & Selection Unit Continued)

must take and pass the remainder of the test with a score of 75 or above. There are now 16 modules that must be completed within a two-hour time limit, which includes the Reading Comprehension Test. Of the 262 applicants tested, 98 passed the test. This has become a very effective tool in screening applicants for the position of Telecommunicator.

- Job Fairs** — This year, the Unit participated in three 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 Police One.Com.
- Other Forms of Recruiting** — During the Calendar Year recruitment advertisements were placed in the State Newspaper in Columbia, South Carolina, News and Observer in Raleigh, North Carolina and American Police Beat. Also during the year, radio spots for recruiting were done through Radio Station WEND Clear Channel Broadcasting 106.5.
- Recruiting College Graduates** — The Unit continued to update colleges and universities with current recruiting information and is dedicated to recruiting and hiring qualified college graduates.

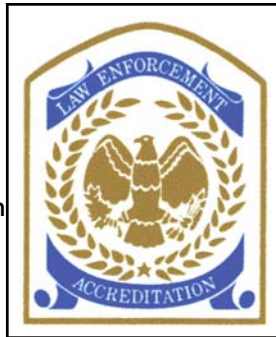
### Unit Stats

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total No.Of Applicants</u>	<u>Total No. Of Persons Hired</u>	<u>Hiring Rate/Applicants</u>
2001	236	33	14%
2002	455	24	5%
2003	336	21	6%
2004	316	22	7%
2005	394	21	5%
2006	496	25	5%
2007	529	34	6%

## Accreditation Unit

The Gaston County Police Department received initial accreditation in 1991 with re-accreditation in 1996, 1999, 2002, and 2005.

Accreditation is an on-going process with the Gaston County Police Department. The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) accreditation program requires agencies to comply with the highest standards in four (4) primary areas: policy and procedures, administration, operational procedures, and support services. Proof of compliance with these standards is reviewed and maintained on a daily basis through our Management Information Tracking System (MITS). This system provides the Accreditation Unit with the ability to request supporting documentation from the various units within the Department. This documentation illustrates that compliance with various standards is being maintained. Examples are Use of Force, employee grievances, employee evaluations, and weapons proficiency.



### 2007 Highlights

- The Gaston County Police Department is an active member of the North Carolina Law Enforcement Accreditation Network (NCLEAN) that meets six (6) times a year.
- Preparation for the August 2008 re-accreditation has begun and will be accomplished through the hard work of all departmental personnel.

## Victim & Witness Coordinator

The Victim & Witness Coordinator provides assistance to victims and witnesses of crimes and traumatic incidents. Services offered through this Unit include emotional support, ensuring victims are informed of their rights and helping victims find and obtain appropriate resources and referrals.

### 2007 Highlights

- Approximately 126 victims were contacted directly or through the mailing of targeted information packets.



# INVESTIGATIONS & SUPPORT SERVICES

## Records Unit

The Gaston County Police Department is committed to being accessible to the public at all times; therefore, the Records Unit maintains a 24-hour operation at the Department's Franklin Boulevard facility. The Unit is available to provide information and services to the public, Department personnel and other local law enforcement agencies as requested.

The main responsibility of the Records Unit is the maintenance, storage and retrieval of police records. The Unit provides continuous access to NCIC records and is also available to complete officer and other agency requests for checks of computerized criminal history, Administrative Office of the Court records, Motor Vehicle records and various other inquiries.

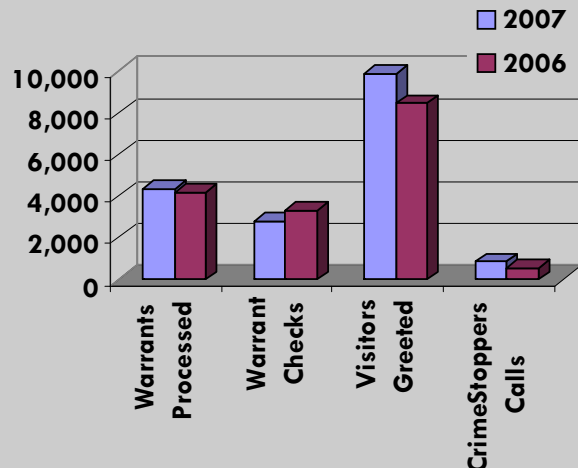
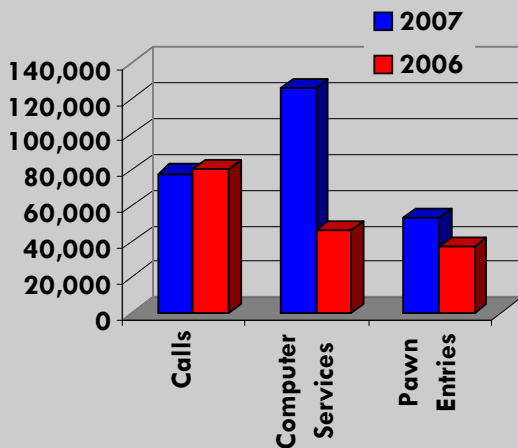
The Bessemer City substation maintains as its primary function the data entry of pawn tickets. The staff continues to complete Pawner and Item searches upon request and to monitor entries for possible matches to previously stolen property. The staff at the Bessemer City substation also provides assistance to visitors and officers by accessing the records software and NCIC/DCI as requested. This office is staffed between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. daily.

(Records Unit Continued)

2007 Highlights

- New World "Law Enforcement Records Management Software" (LERMS)** — The Records Unit has shown a significant increase in the computer services it provides to the Department by utilizing the New World "Law Enforcement Records Management Software" (LERMS). Each case report, supplement or arrest that is completed through Mobile is eventually "merged" into LERMS by a Police Information Processing Specialist. The process of "merging" ensures the accuracy of the data being added to LERMS, verifies addresses and minimizes duplications of names and property; which was not available with the previous records management system.

Unit Stats



## Communications Division

The Communications Division is a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional Dispatch Center that remains committed to providing the highest level of emergency service. The Division continues to aggressively seek to implement programs and upgrade equipment to further promote the safety and welfare of the residents of Gaston County efficiently and economically with the greatest degree of professionalism as possible.



The major priority addressed in 2007 was to continue to improve and refine existing technology and systems to strive to raise the level of efficiency, quality and reliability of delivered services. The Division continues to address the Human Resources issues of customer service as well as employee recruitment and retention.

### 2007 Highlights

#### Current Project Status

- Implementation of the final components of the County's 6-year Public Safety "radio refarming" project has been completed. The project has upgraded or replaced outdated communications hardware and infrastructure and should provide improved reliability for our Emergency First Responders' communications systems.
- The Division continues to maximize the reliability and utility of the CAD system that was installed as a component of the County's Integrated Public Safety Information Management Platform. Suggestions continue to be forwarded to the system vendor to increase the utility of the software.
- New radio equipment has been installed which should provide a greater degree of redundancy to essential systems.

## Unit Stats

- Received 139,089 911 emergency calls in 2007, a 4% increase over 2006. Over 94% of 911 telephone answering times were within the "Good or Better" categories. A total of 663,398 telephone calls were handled by this agency in 2007.
- Total CAD entries for 2007 were 387,726 – 2007 was the first full year of new CAD system figures which captures response totals differently than the prior system.
- In 2007, over 60% of calls to 911 were via cell-phone-- up from 56% of calls in 2006. The trend away from conventional telephones to cellular or Internet devices makes it more difficult to determine the true locations of callers and process the calls.
- A total of 27,026 hours were devoted to training. About 6,837 of those hours (25% of total hours) were dedicated to basic training of new-hires.
- Provided 798 Incident Histories in response to external requests for information. We also created 339 audio recordings of telephone and incident radio traffic. These requests required 419 employee-hours of processing time for delivery of these services.
- Language barriers are also present and a commercial service called Language Line provides live telephone assistance to Telecommunicators. This service was used 510 times during 2007.
- The County operates it's own paging system for notifications to Emergency First Responders and authorized Administrative personnel. A total of **109,657** pages were transmitted last year.
- County Communications, in cooperation with GEMS, has implemented a program whereby Medivac helicopters are notified to respond to specific types of medical emergencies. This has resulted in a reduction in the amount of time it takes to transport patients to an appropriate Trauma Center. In 2007, Communications initiated "auto-launch" of the medical helicopter for 553 incidents.

# COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

(Communications Division Continued)

**Technology** — This Department has also replaced or upgraded a number of other outdated systems this past year and continues to address other identified deficiencies:

- The new digital recording system installed in 2007 is more reliable and versatile than the old system and has increased Communications' ability to quickly provide accurate recordings of telephone calls and radio transmissions to requesting agencies.
- Modifying facility infrastructure to make the operation more resistant to lightning.
- Working in partnership with the City of Gastonia to replace aging telephone cables between our Communications

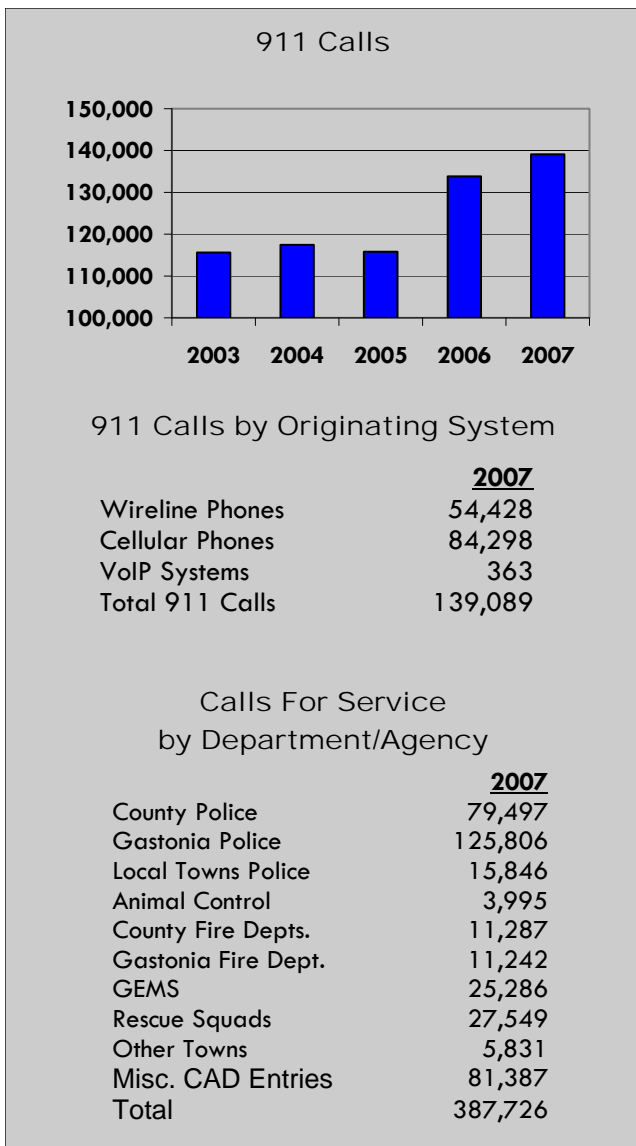
(Communications Division Continued)

facility and the Gastonia Police headquarters with a high-speed microwave or fiber-network data link.

- Exploring the feasibility of partnering with the City of Charlotte to share systems resources and reduce the likelihood of major telephone outages disrupting the 911 system.
- Moving forward to replace the County's old paging transmitters with more powerful units to increase range and reliability.

## Communications Interoperability

- Erected 3 new communications towers (Cherryville and South Point towers funded through Homeland Security grants). The towers have improved communications and allowed Gaston units to communicate directly with emergency personnel from surrounding counties and at the State level. Space is available to local municipalities within the County to improve their systems. The towers have also allowed the Division to discontinue leasing telephone lines and space on commercial structures for antennas, thereby reducing costs.
- Installed the Motorola "MotoBridge." It allows Communications to "patch" any type of radio frequencies together in the system. This enables direct, unit-to-unit communications. Testing was successful. The Division is awaiting the establishment of regional guidelines and protocols for system operations.
- **Staffing** — The Division continues to address the problem of attracting and retaining qualified personnel. Recruitment efforts have been broadened. The Division continues to use the CriteCall pre-employment testing program. Testing parameters are being optimized to identify applicants with the greatest potential for success. Other options being considered include changes in schedules, shift configurations and staffing and workplace issues.



## Animal Control Division

The mission of the Animal Control Division is to enhance the health and safety of all citizens and to insure proper legal care and treatment of animals through animal-related services, which reflect professionalism and concern for both responsible pet ownership and the public in general.

In 2007, The Division witnessed continued efforts in Animal Control providing a comprehensive animal-related program for Gaston County and its municipalities. The Division has been successful in increasing animal adoptions and claims, increasing its fiscal self-sufficiency and responding to a growing citizen demand without additional staffing.

### 2007 Highlights

**Animal Law Enforcement** — A primary responsibility of Animal Control is the enforcement of State Laws and local ordinances relating to animals and their care. Responding to citizen reports of violations, requests for assistance and observed situations, Animal Control field operations investigated 24,207 calls in 2007. This represents an 8% increase over 2006 and 11% more calls than in 2005. In a recent budget benchmarking exercise, Gaston County Animal Control averaged answering more calls per officer than any other North Carolina county in the comparison.

(Animal Control Division Continued)

**Adoptions** — Animal Control continues to strive towards placing unwanted animals in new homes, both through its medical adoption contracts and animal humane and rescue group claims. Although the incredible increase of over 200% in the number of animal adoptions from 2005 to 2006 was not duplicated in 2007, the Division still facilitated the adoption 443 pets, including double digit increases in puppy and cat adoptions. Humane and rescue group claims increased from 499 in 2006 to 1,080 in 2007, which is an impressive 116% increase.

The combined results of creating, building, expanding and coordinating a growing animal network of persons and organizations interested in adopting or claiming impounded animals has offset a relative stable animal impoundment figure of 9,107, producing an 8% decrease in animal euthanasia in 2007 compared to 2006 figures.

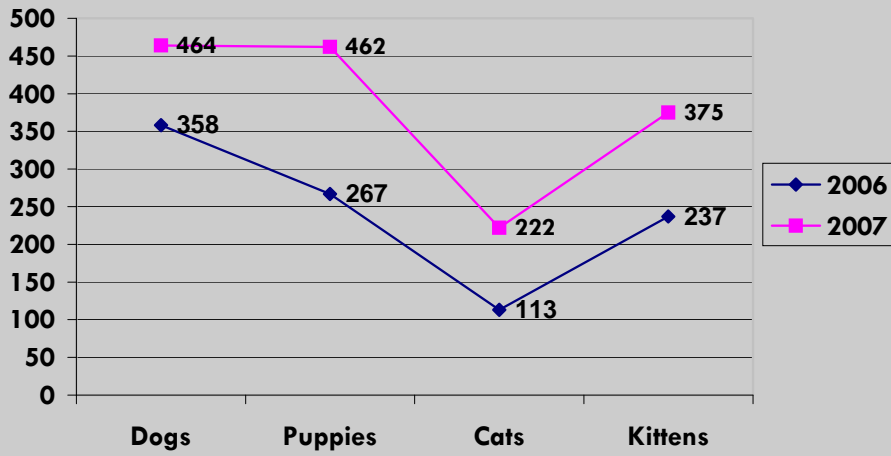
**Revenue Collection** — In a constant effort to become more fiscally autonomous, Animal Control realized a 7% increase in the amount of revenue collected for 2007. The revenue figure of \$766,116 represents approximately 48% of Animal Control's amended 2007-08 budget and over 66% of the actual 2006-07 budget.

### Unit Stats

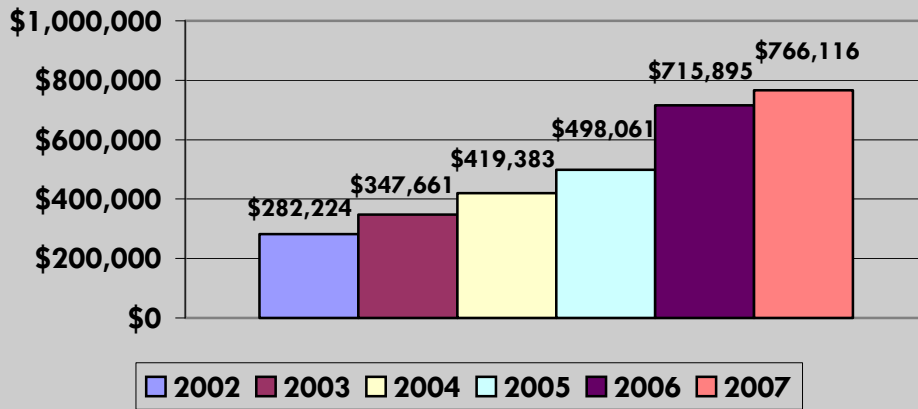
- Investigated 24,207 calls in 2007, an 8% increase from 2006 and 11% more calls answered than in 2005. Gaston County Animal Control answers more calls per Officer than any other North Carolina county in comparison.
- Facilitated the adoption of 443 pets in 2007, including double digit increases in puppy and cat adoptions. Humane and rescue group claims increased from 499 in 2006 to 1,080 in 2007, which is an impressive 116% increase.
- Through working with a network of persons and organizations interested in adopting or claiming impounded animals has offset a relatively stable animal impoundment figure of 9,107, producing an 8% decrease in animal euthanasia in 2007 compared to 2006 figures.
- Realized a 7% increase in the amount of revenue collected in 2007. Collected \$766,116 in revenue, approximately 48% of Animal Control's amended 2007-08 budget and over 66% of the actual 2006-07 budget.

# ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION

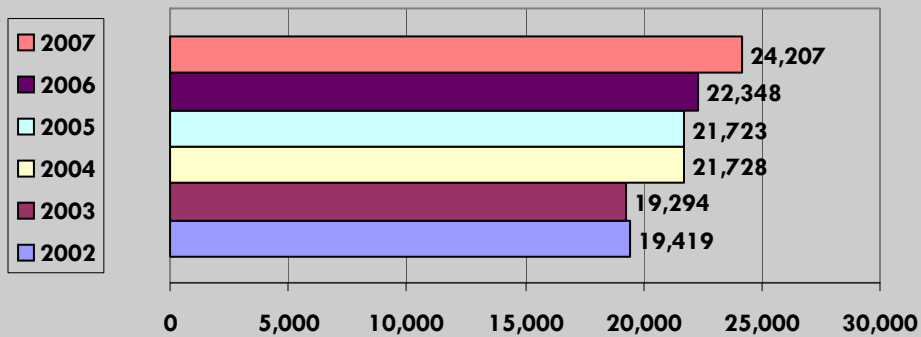
## Adoptions Through Animal Control And Rescue Group Claims



## Animal Control Revenue Collection



## Animal Control Calls Answered



## Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR)

### UCR Index Crimes

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) began the Uniform Reporting (UCR) Program in 1930 to compile data on eight “index crimes:” murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny and arson.

Since then, new reporting guidelines, called the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), was developed. The revisions in the new system were aimed at “enhancing the quantity, quality and timeliness of crime data collection and improving the methodology used to compile, analyze, audit and publish the collected crime statistics.” Under NIBRS crimes are divided into two groups with “Group A” offenses including the UCR index crimes as well as numerous other offenses. In total, the NIBRS Group A crimes were expanded to encompass 22 criminal categories consisting of 46 separate offenses and Group B crimes are made up of an additional 11 public order type offenses. Other changes under NIBRS include the restructuring in definitions of certain crimes, such as forcible sex and aggravated assault. The new and more detailed offense classification was changed in order to collect more information about each criminal incident as well as add greater uniformity to the crime data reported by law enforcement agencies.

As law enforcement agencies transition from UCR to NIBRS, concerns have arisen regarding its effects on crime statistics. Because of the new criteria, many jurisdictions with historically lower crime levels have experienced some exaggerated changes in their crime rates.

The Gaston County Police Department transitioned into NIBRS in 2006 and experienced some changes especially in the categories of forcible rape and aggravated assault. Both categories were expanded by

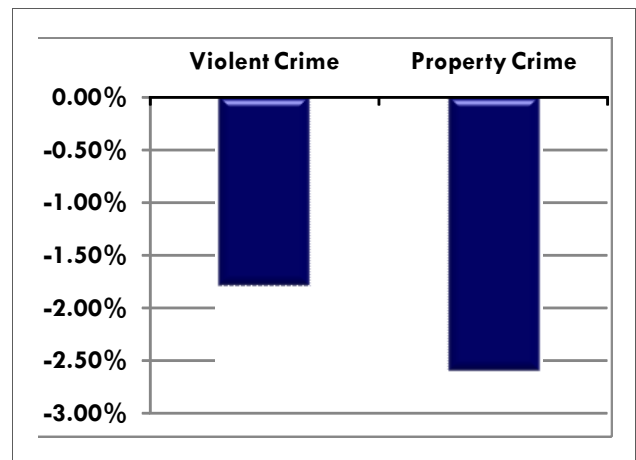
### (Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Continued)

definition in NIBRS. The Department’s violent crime increased and the transition to NIBRS was partially responsible for the increase. Numerous law enforcement agencies across the country are transitioning from UCR to NIBRS, but the FBI has determined that until a majority of agencies have switched to NIBRS, it will continue to publish the national crimes statistics based on the UCR Program.

### National and Regional Statistics (UCR)

**Violent Crime** — According to the FBI’s Preliminary Semiannual Uniform Crime Report, violent crime across the US decreased 1.8% during the first half of 2007. The report reflected a 6.1% decreased in forcible sex offenses, 1.1% drop in murder, 1.2% decrease in robbery and a 1.7% decrease in aggravated assaults.

**Property Crime** — Property crime decreased nationally by 2.6%. Burglaries and arsons dropped 1.3% and 9.7% respectively. Motor vehicle thefts dropped by 7.4% and larcenies decreased by 2.1%.





# CRIME STATISTICS

## Crime Statistics

### Total Index Crimes

The total number of UCR index crimes occurring in Gaston County in 2007 was 2,306, increasing 4.2% over 2006. In comparison to ten years ago, the total index crimes are down by -3.2%, indicating a better quality of life for residents of Gaston over the past decade.

Trends in the more specific types of index crimes committed have changed significantly over the last decade, but are consistent with national trends.

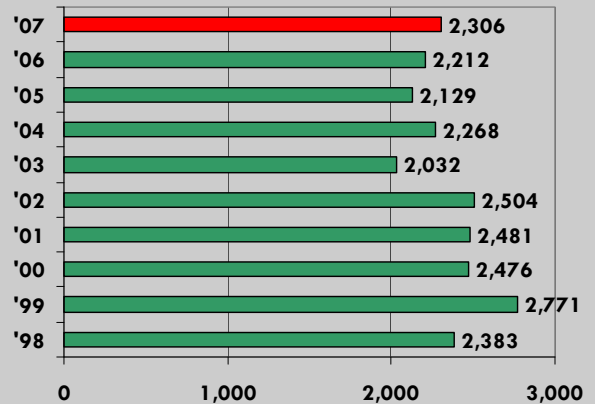
### Violent Crime Vs. Property Crime

Violent Crimes accounted for 14% of all 2007 index crimes reported in Gaston County, while property crimes accounted for the remaining 86%.

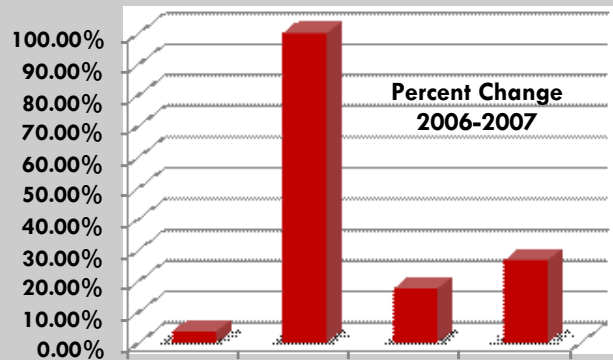
Violent crime increased 7.0% over 2006. The most significant increase in violent crimes occurred in the number of homicides reported. There were 4 homicides in 2007, compared to 2 in 2006. By year's end, however, all four homicide cases were successfully cleared.

Property crimes increased slightly by 3.3% over last year. The most significant increase in property related crimes occurred in the number of larcenies, a 14.1% increase over 2006. The number of motor vehicle thefts decreased by 9.6% and the number of burglaries decreased slightly by 2.5%.

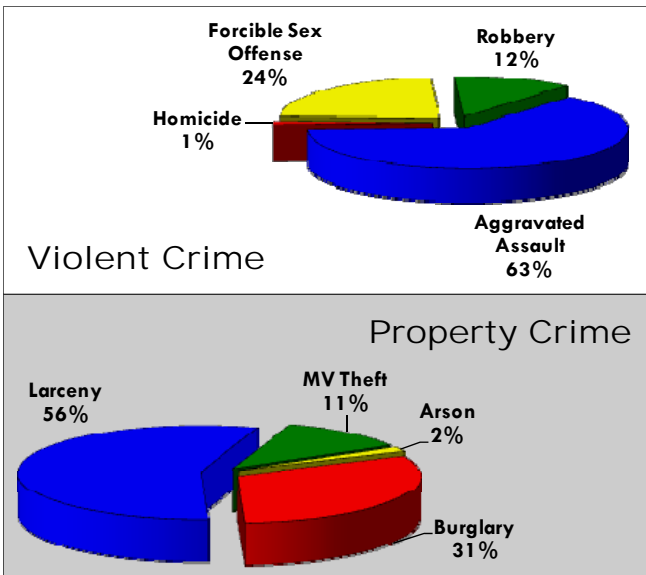
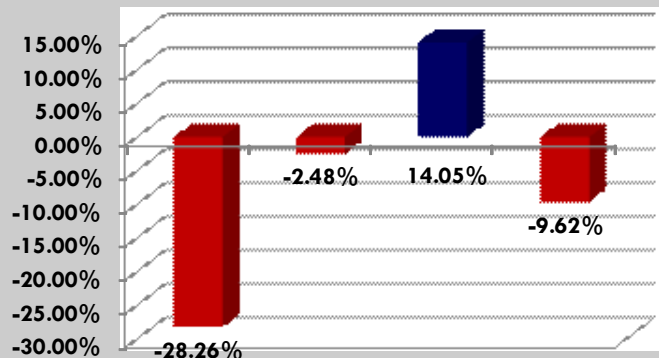
### Total Index Crimes by Year



### Violent Crime Breakdown Percent Change 2006-2007



### Property Crime Breakdown: Percent Change 2006-2007



# GCPD

Gaston County  
Police Department

