

# ANNUAL REPORT



TUSCALOOSA POLICE DEPARTMENT

# 2023

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

I am pleased to present our annual report for 2023.

This year's report highlights a decrease in crime in all of the "Big 5" categories. The 2022-2023 numbers represent continuing downward trend we've experienced over the last few years.

We chose to include crime data collected over the last five years to show the sustained progress and effectiveness of our crime prevention and policing strategies.

This achievement reflects the dedication and hard work of our officers, strengthened by ongoing support from the community, Mayor Maddox and the Tuscaloosa City Council.

During 2023, we continued to face challenges in recruitment and retention, a common struggle shared by police departments nationwide. I am proud to report that we made considerable strides in addressing these challenges.

In 2023, our recruitment efforts were proactive and extensive. Our recruitment staff attended 55 job fairs and community events, reaching out to potential candidates to showcase the opportunities available within our department.

We're competing with other departments to hire from a pool of candidates that continues to shrink. Offers like take-home cars, lateral pay, sign-on and retention bonuses have helped us attract new candidates.



With help from the mayor and council, we implemented a take-home car program in 2023, recognizing the importance of staying competitive to attract the best candidates.

The positive response to these initiatives has been evident, and we are confident they will contribute to ongoing recruitment success.

In August, the mayor and council made a significant commitment to these efforts by supporting a retention bonus for officers who agreed to stay with us for at least two years. This incentive has been instrumental in boosting morale and ensuring continuity within our ranks, with the majority of officers choosing to sign contracts.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to fostering a positive work environment, supporting our officers, and maintaining strong partnerships with our community. Together, we will continue to strive for excellence in serving and protecting our neighborhoods.

Thank you for your continued support.

Chief Brent Blankley

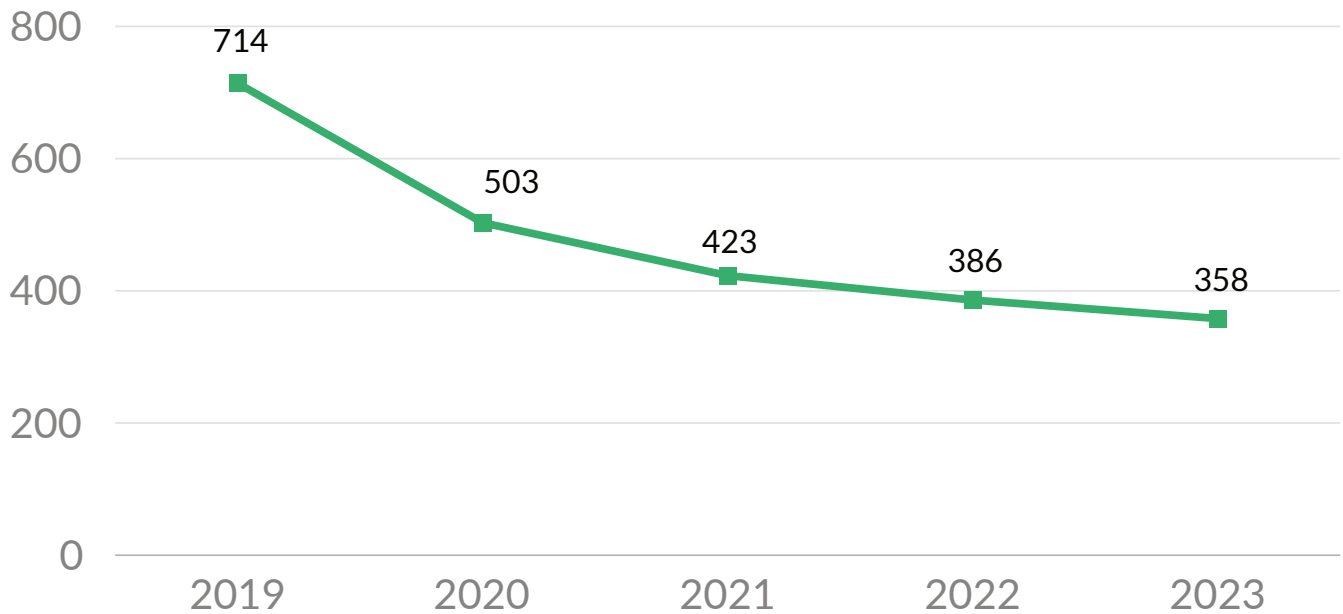
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brent P. Blankley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# BURGLARY

Over the past five years, we've seen a notable decline in burglary rates, reflecting our concerted efforts towards ensuring public safety. From 714 reported incidents in 2019, the number has steadily decreased to 358 in 2023, marking a significant reduction of 49.8%.

↓ 49.8%

This downward trend underscores the effectiveness of our proactive policing strategies, community engagement initiatives and collaborative partnerships with local stakeholders. As we continue to prioritize crime prevention and enforcement efforts, we remain committed to fostering a safer environment for all residents.



In late 2022 and early 2023, we were responding to an alarming increase in catalytic converter thefts. The Burglary Unit worked with patrol officers and identified one suspect who was purchasing stolen converters. The investigators searched his home and recovered more than 150 catalytic converters and other exhaust system components, filling eight 50-gallon totes with seized evidence. The suspect was charged with 35 felonies, and we saw an immediate drop in catalytic converter thefts.



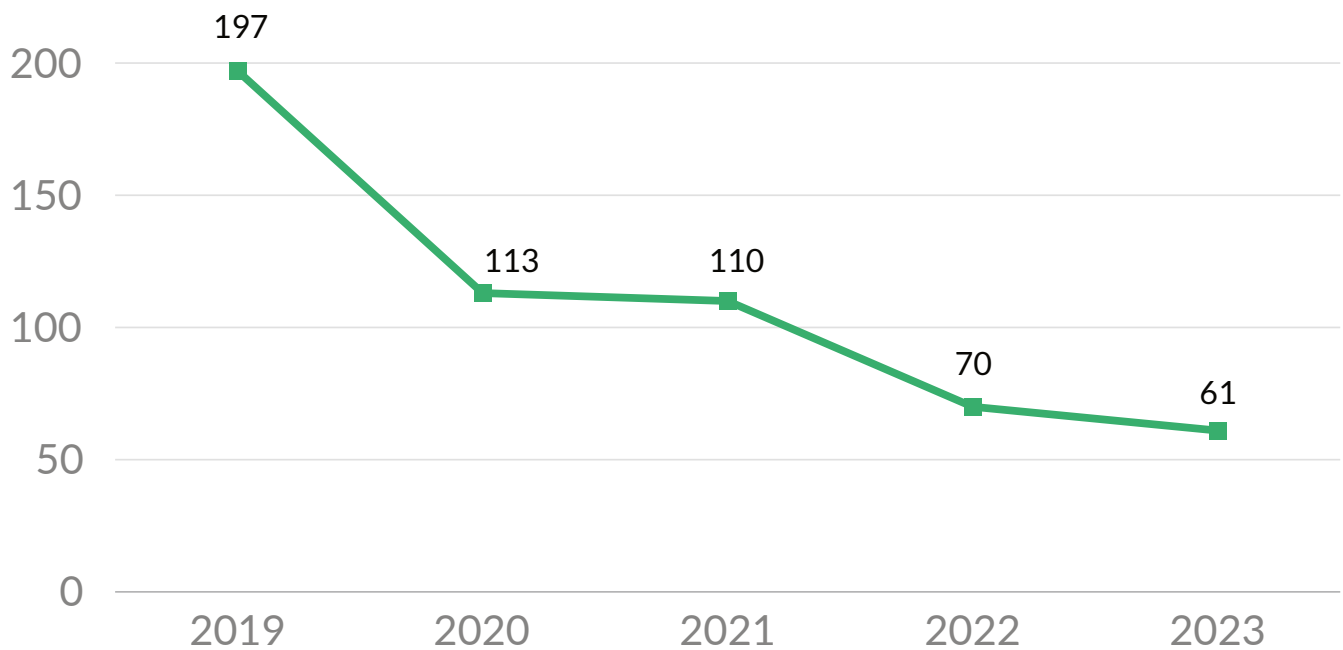
In May, management of a local entertainment business directly contacted members of the TPD bowling team to report a break-in. Our burglary investigators quickly identified the suspect as a longtime serial burglar, who our department has arrested more than 30 times for breaking into local restaurants, salons and retail stores. Their quick response very likely prevented further business owners from being victimized.

# ROBBERY

The number of reported robberies has dropped significantly since a worrying spike in 2019. In 2020, robberies dropped to 113, reflecting a noteworthy 42.6% reduction from the previous year.

That trajectory has continued, dipping to a five-year low of 61 last year.

↓ 69%



Beginning in 2021, a serial robber began targeting a local retail store within walking distance of his home. On four occasions, employees called 911 after an armed and masked suspect entered the store and demanded cash from the registers.

Patrol officers recovered a face mask after the fourth robbery, which investigators submitted for testing. Combined with an analysis of cellular data, we were able to confirm the same individual had committed all four robberies. CID investigators developed a suspect, and were still investigating when the store was robbed a fifth time.

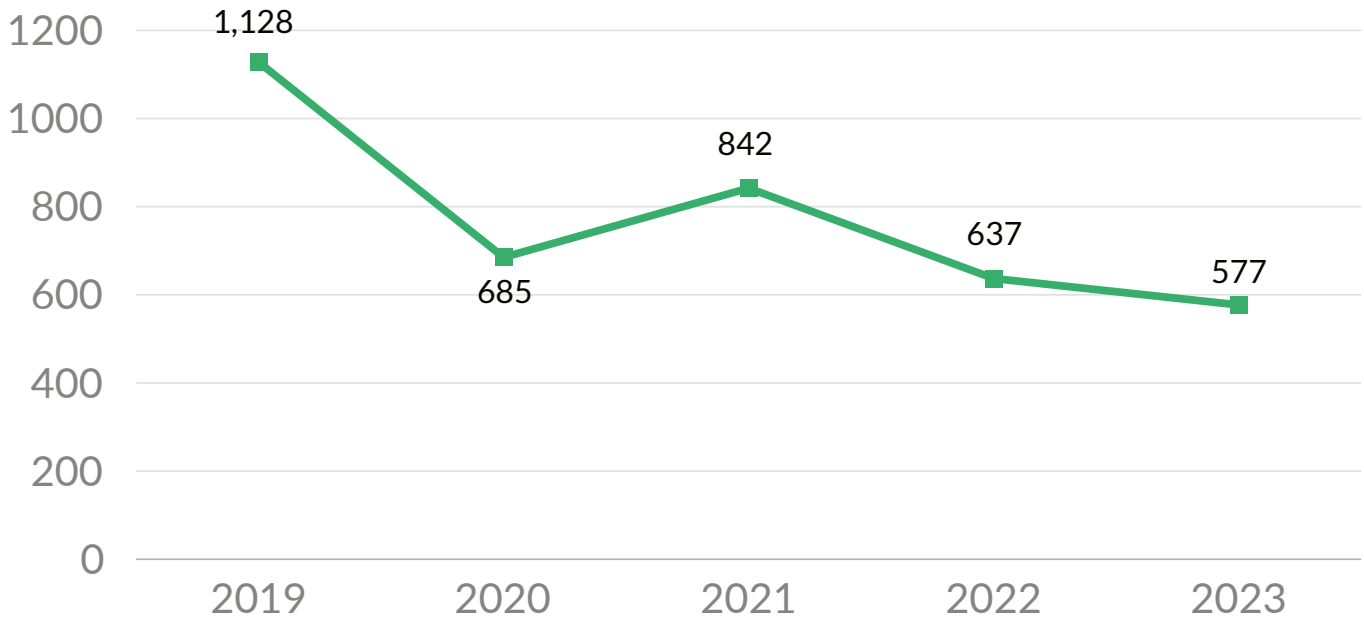
Officers went to the suspect's home and recovered cash and other evidence to charge him with all of the robberies. That suspect remains in jail and will be prosecuted for these serious crimes.

# VEHICLE BREAK-IN

Vehicle break-ins continue to decrease, which we attribute to targeted efforts to identify problem spots and employ proactive measures to address it promptly.

Our daily review of reports allow us to pinpoint hotspots, often multi-unit housing and higher-density neighborhoods. The Criminal Investigations Division worked several late and overnight details to patrol these areas, while our continued community partnerships gave us access to valuable home security footage that led to arrests.

↓ 48.9%



Vehicle break-ins occur in waves throughout the year, often in high-density areas where offenders can target a lot of vehicles in a short time.

We saw one of these spikes in September, with multiple reports coming from apartment complexes near the UA Strip. When a caller reported a suspect checking vehicle doors in a parking lot just off University Boulevard, officers arrived within minutes and took the man into custody. They were able to connect him to several break-ins in the area, and return stolen property to victims.

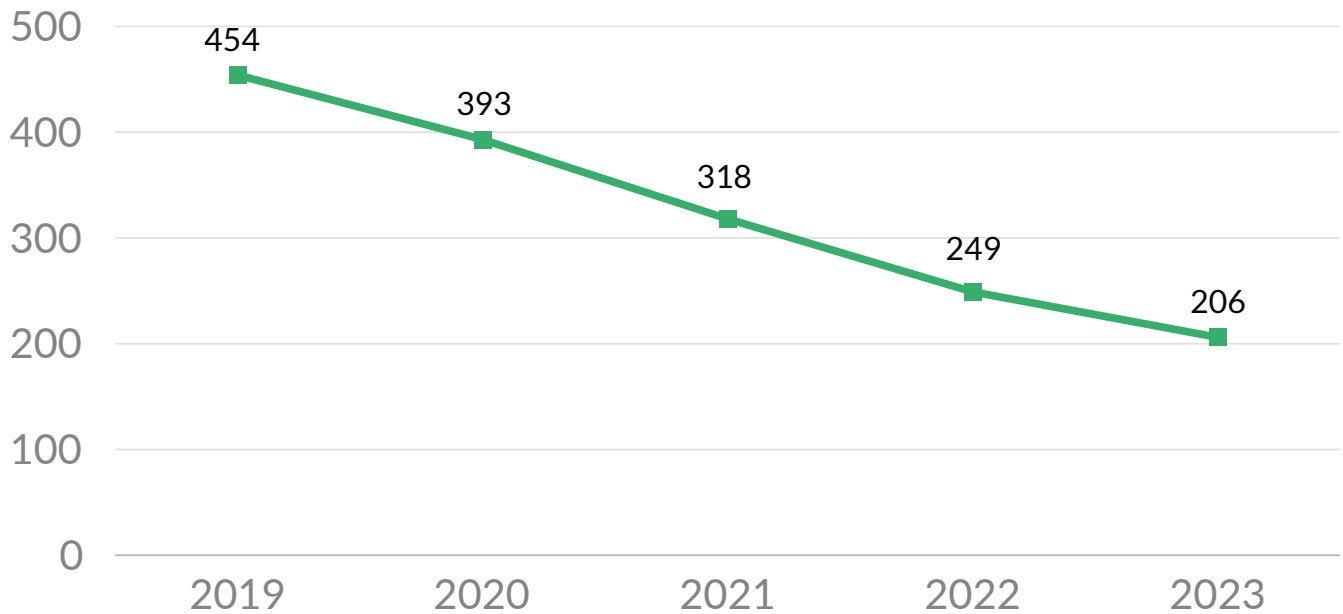
Their quick response and thorough investigation very likely prevented more break-ins.

# VEHICLE THEFT

We were lucky to avoid the rise of vehicle thefts that departments across the nation have experienced over the last two years, partly due to viral videos exposing security vulnerabilities of certain models.

↓ 54.6%

Vehicle thefts are often related to other crimes, with offenders using a stolen vehicle while committing offenses like drive-by shootings or robberies. We consider this drop a good indicator of overall decreasing crime in Tuscaloosa.



In September, patrol officers conducted an extensive investigation to recover a stolen vehicle. They located and arrested the driver, and found wire strippers, key fobs for several models of vehicles, a reader used to re-program keys, screwdrivers and several items that had been reported stolen out of vehicles.

This investigation led to the capture of a suspect who was using sophisticated methods to steal cars, and very likely prevented more citizens from becoming victims.



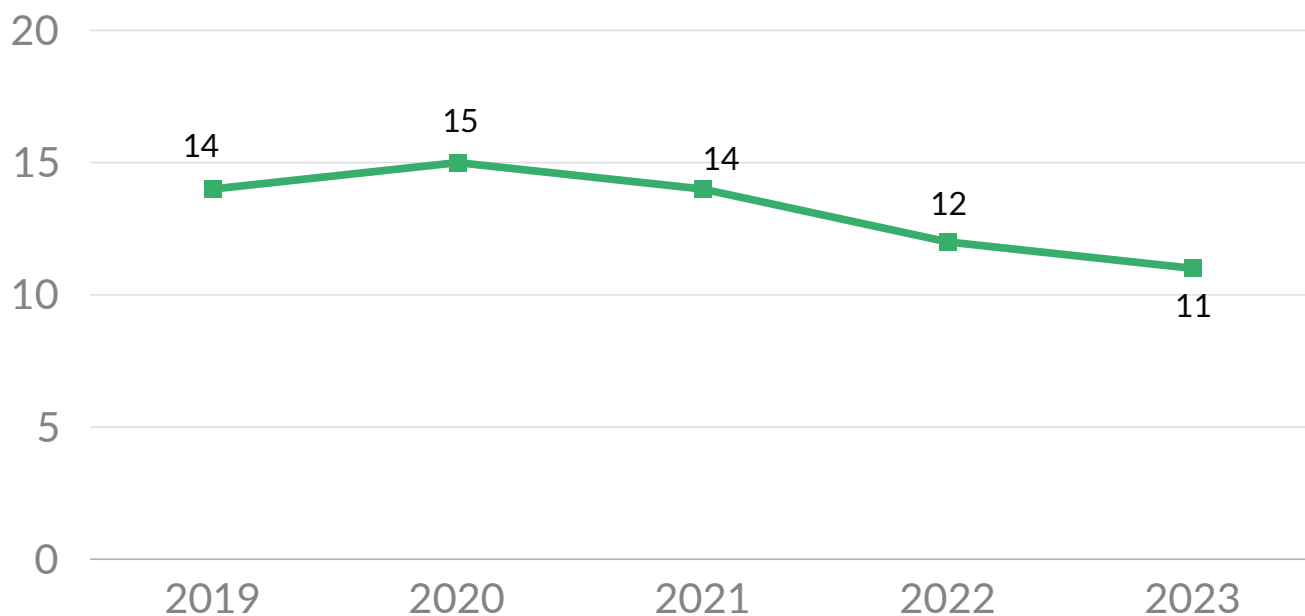
Investigators used advanced methods during a months-long investigation to locate a truck that had been stolen from a dealership in Mississippi. They tracked the vehicle to a location in Tuscaloosa, and falsified VIN. This is just one instance our investigators uncovering offenders who falsify vehicle information before selling the cars as used to unassuming buyers. Our CID investigators are frequently called upon to assist other agencies due to their expertise and experience with these investigations.

# MURDER

Data indicates a 13% nationwide drop in homicides between 2022 and 2023, a historic decline seen in large and small cities, metropolitan, suburban and rural areas.

We saw a drop from 12 to 11 between 2022 and 2023, down from 14 in 2019. We hope to see further decline as we continue efforts to identify and take the most persistent shooters and violent criminals off the streets.

↓ 21.4%

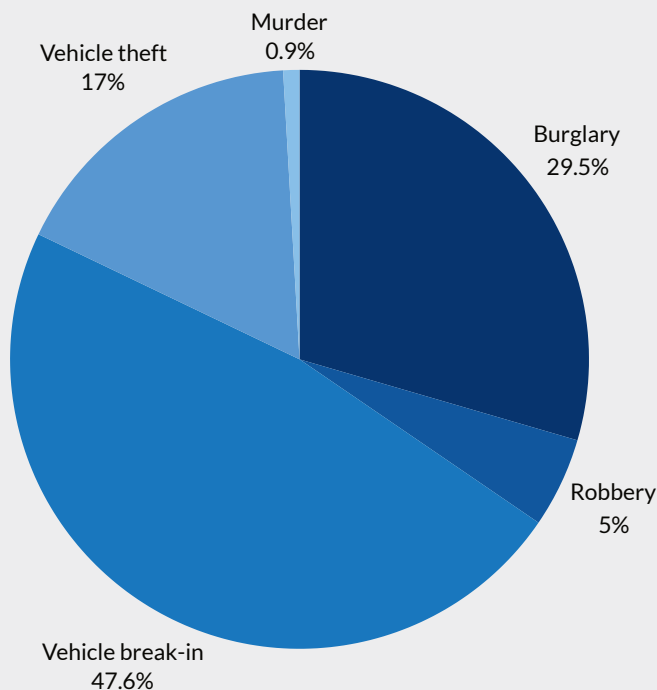
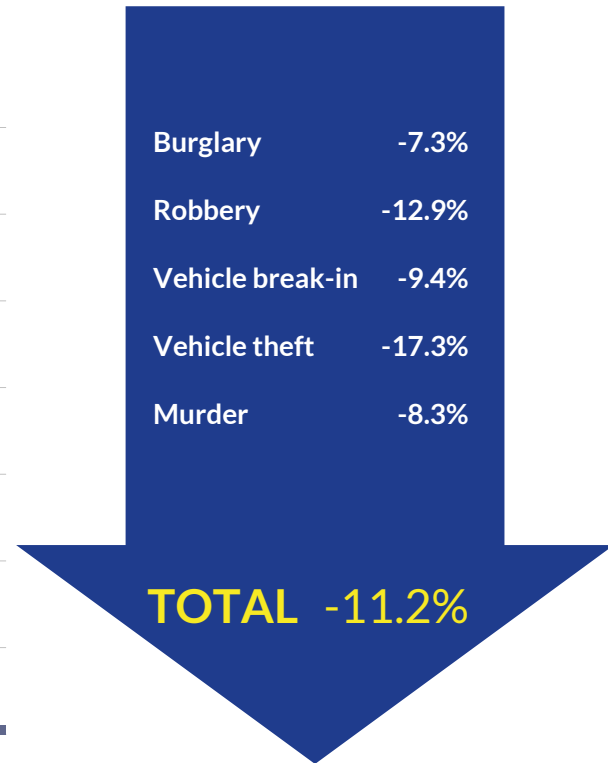
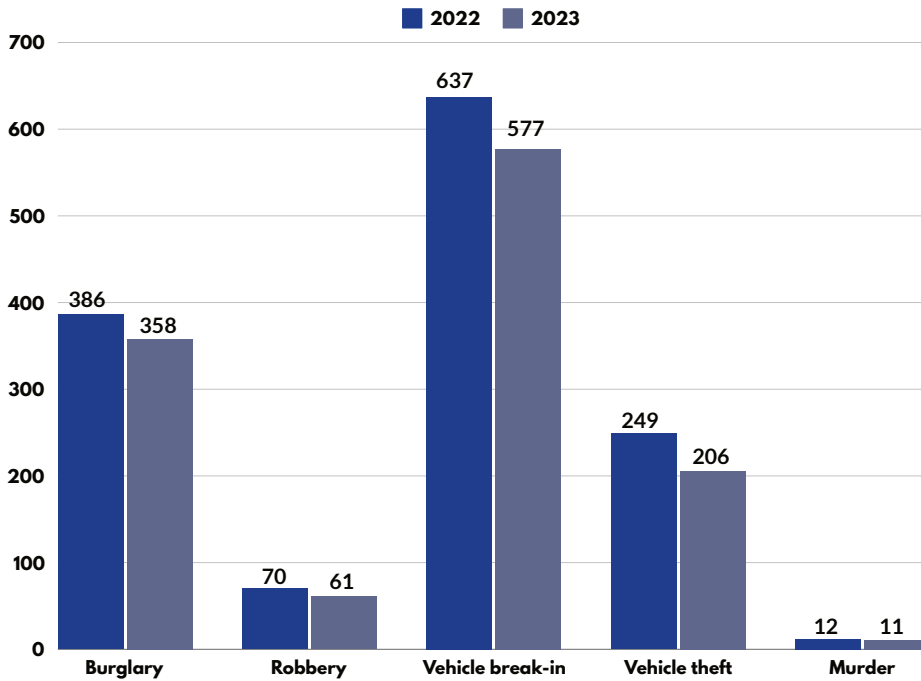


Murder is understandably one of the most difficult crimes to predict and prevent. Almost all the homicides investigated in 2023 stemmed from another crime, including domestic violence, armed robbery and child abuse.

We adopted a policing approach in 2021 called stratified policing, which facilitates the flow of information between divisions. Our daily, weekly and monthly analysis allows us to identify risks and make targeted interventions. Acting on any escalating issues identified through this approach, whether its an ongoing domestic problem or a beef between teenagers, will ideally help us curb violence and save lives.

# 2022 - 2023

These charts show notable drops in reported crimes between 2022 and 2023. We far exceeded our goal of reducing crime by 5% in 2023.



## 2023

Burglary	358
Robbery	61
Vehicle break-in	577
Vehicle theft	206
Murder	11





2023

# AT A GLANCE

## PATROL

### TOTAL CALLS

**105,319**  
911 & officer-initiated

### ARRESTS

**5,556**  
custodial arrests on

**10,366**  
misdemeanor & felony charges

**683**  
criminal summons issued

**6,239**  
TOTAL ARRESTS

### ACCIDENTS

**5,624**

## INVESTIGATIONS

### VCU

**719**  
multi-agency cases worked

### CID

**7,290**  
Assigned cases

### WANTF

**1,602**  
Felony arrests

**19**  
Countywide  
homicide investigations

**5,869**  
Cases cleared

**707**  
Misdemeanor arrests

**1,165**  
Arrests

**286**  
Search warrants

## CALLS FOR SERVICE

**79,942**

911 and non-emergency line calls

## REPORTS TAKEN

**25,413**

# 2023



In January, a team of TPD officers responded to Selma to provide security and traffic control in areas ravaged by a powerful EF-2 tornado. We know firsthand what it means to receive outside support during a time of crisis, and we're committed to assisting neighboring communities in their times of need.

In April, we were honored to lead the funeral escort of Huntsville Police Officer Garrett Crumby, who began his law enforcement career with us in 2013. Although he moved to Huntsville PD in 2020, his legacy is still very much a part of our department and he will always be remembered.



The TPD Honor Guard paid tribute to Officer Crumby and all other officers killed in the line of duty during their annual trip to Washington D.C. for Police Week in May. This year, they spent time there with the family of Meridian Police Officer Kennis Croom, a Tuscaloosa native who will always be remembered for his sacrifice.

The take-home car program supported by the mayor and council in March provided a Tahoe or Charger to every patrol officer. We expect this to be cost-effective in the long run by cutting down on maintenance and replacement costs. Previously, each vehicle was being used 24 hours a day. Many officers chose a new Dodge Charger, models we added to our fleet of Tahoes during the summer.

We spent a week in November filming a promotional campaign video that is set to launch in targeted areas nationwide. The video is part of our revamped recruiting site: [www.jointuscaloosapd.com](http://www.jointuscaloosapd.com).

Our recruiting staff worked with the Human Resources department to host a department job fair in March. Throughout the year, we chose to highlight the different divisions and specialty assignments officers can explore with TPD, which sets us apart from other agencies.

We continue to see positive results from the campaign and our continued



efforts to stay competitive, including the take-home cars, lateral transfer opportunities and 10-hour shifts.



After almost a year of preparation, our Cyber Intelligence Unit launched Safeguard Tuscaloosa, a community security footage sharing program to increase public safety and streamline investigations.

The program allows residents and business owners to register their cameras with TPD. Their location is kept in a database, and flagged when a crime occurs nearby.

TPD Cyber Intelligence analysts are able to send messages to all registered camera owners in a specified area, asking the to review their footage for any evidence that could assist with the investigation.

This replaces the time-consuming door-to-door method of investigation. Camera owners have been receptive, especially after assurances that we can not access their video without their permission. Most participants at this time are residential camera owners, many who signed up after the program was highlighted in media reports. Our next goal is to expand the program to more businesses and multi-family residential complexes.

In March, we bid farewell to Assistant Chief Tubbs, who dedicated 38 years of service to our department. Assistant Chief Clark stepped into the role, continuing Chief Tubbs' commitment to uphold our values of integrity, professionalism and service.



Throughout the year, we worked to strengthen bonds with residents through community events.

Introducing new programs like "Popsicles in the Park" and the "Summer Skate Jam," gave us new opportunities to interact with the public in positive situations, and were well-received in the community. Additionally, our annual staples such as the "Halloween Carnival" and the "Classic Car and Bike Show" continue to grow each year.

These are just a few highlights of our work over the past year. During 2023, TPD officers responded to more than 100,000 calls and assisted thousands of people. They even captured a runaway pony.

Thank you to every member of our department and the community for your support and collaboration, as we work together to make Tuscaloosa a safe place to live.

