

Americus Police Department

2018 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



Page 2

Message from the Chief

Turn to Page 2 for a message from Chief of Police, Mark A. Scott and a summary of the crime statistics for 2018.

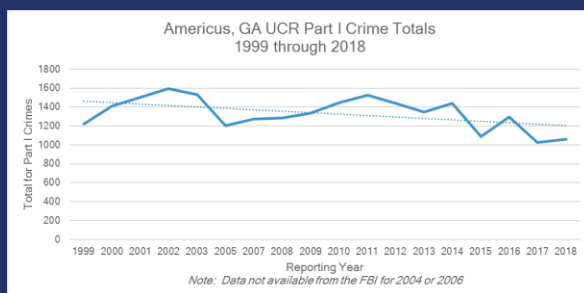
Page 4

Community Relations



Page 6

Operations Analysis



2018 CRIME STATISTICS

The number of reported Part I Crimes in the City of Americus continued the downward trend. Turn to Page 3 for a summary of current statistics and a look at the numbers over the past 20 years.

Message from the Chief



It's a brand-new year, and as we think about all that we hope to accomplish in 2019, I believe it is helpful to take a look back at the past twelve months. 2018 was a year filled with challenges for the police department, but also a year filled with accomplishments. We started 2018 with only four vacancies on paper, but since eight people were in training, it was hard to see much difference on the streets. During the year we were able to get those officers trained and working. Although we had some attrition due to retirement and other reasons, we continued to hire good candidates. As we launch into the new year, we still have four vacant patrol officer positions to fill, but only three officers are currently in training, allowing us to fill some much-needed positions in other areas of the department.

As 2018 progressed and new recruits became new officers, we were able to transfer three of our veteran patrol officers to fill vacancies in the Criminal Investigation Division. These transfers provided some much-needed depth to our on-call schedule and allowed the detectives to decrease their individual caseloads and increase the amount of time available to spend on their assigned cases. We were also able to implement a K-9 program with increased staffing availability and a grant from the One Sumter Economic Development Foundation.

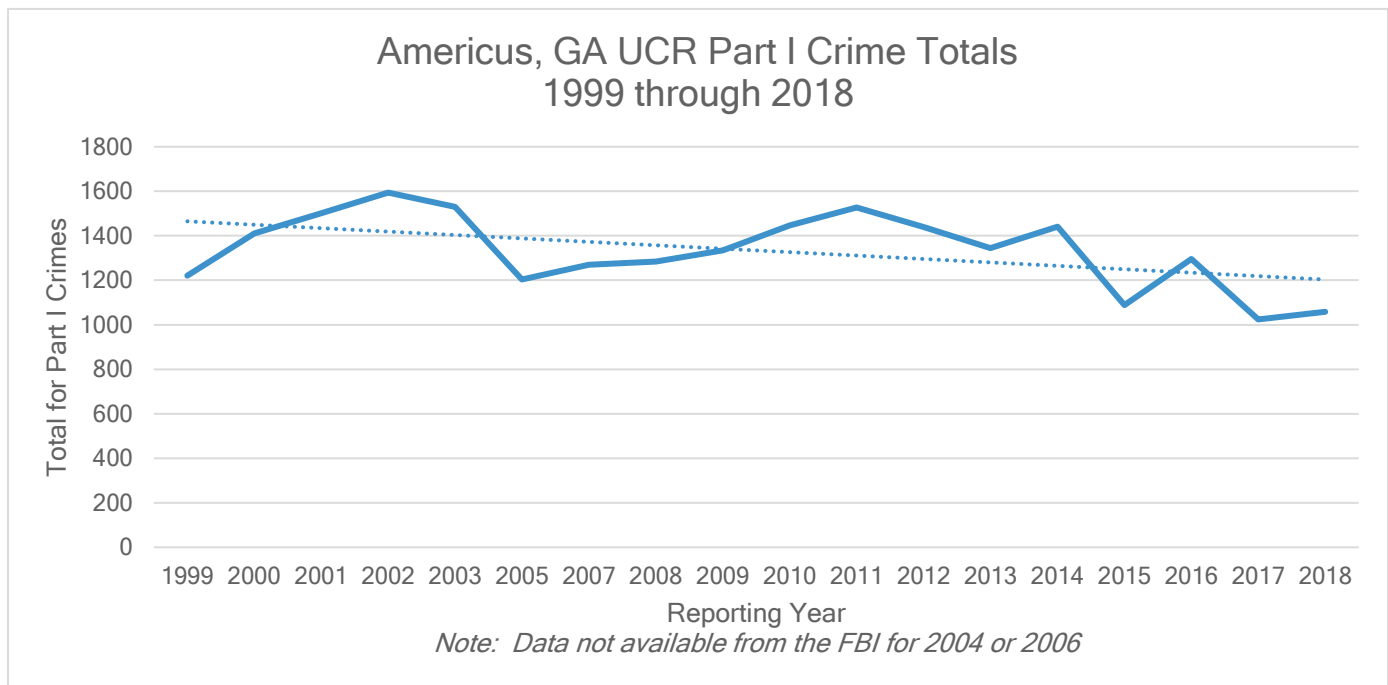


One of our major accomplishments as we closed out 2017 was to become a State Certified Agency through the Georgia Law Enforcement Certification Program. We received this certification in October of 2017. We then began the process of becoming a nationally accredited agency through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) in January 2018. Accreditation through CALEA is typically a three year process and we have been hard at work implementing policies and practices designed to meet the 462 different standards. We are currently on track to complete the self-assessment process within the next few months and hope to be able to schedule an onsite assessment with the Commission in early Fall, a year ahead of schedule.

Some of the other noteworthy accomplishments in 2018 included training officers in the use of Police Mountain Bikes and getting our bicycles out of storage and back into use. We worked closely with the United States Attorney's Office to begin implementing the Safe Streets Program which involves prosecuting violent criminals through the Federal Court System. This program also involves an educational component which we implemented this summer as we provided the summer GREAT Program, which we had not been able to staff in previous years. We partnered with Federal Prosecutors and agents from the FBI, GBI, and GSP to provide the STYLE Program to our local youth. This program allows youth to interact with law enforcement through a series of role play scenarios designed to help them understand different legal principles and the decision-making process that law enforcement officers typically use during street encounters with youth. We were also able to replace some of the aging vehicles in our patrol fleet with Ford Explorers in 2018, giving officers a more functional and spacious vehicle for patrol operations.



A major milestone for the police department and for the community in 2018, was the arrest of Devontae Watts for the 2014 murder of five-year-old Asata Snipes. This arrest came as a result of a four year investigation by the department in cooperation with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. As we enter a new year, one of the crime problems we must face includes the nationwide opioid abuse epidemic which is claiming lives through drug overdoses here in Americus and Sumter County. We ended 2018 charging two men with murder for their role in the overdose death of a local woman. We will work closely with the District Attorney in 2019 to prosecute individuals who are profiting by supplying these deadly drugs to our community as we also work with our local mental health agencies to help those battling addiction to get free from these dangerous drugs.



Finally, we will be working closely with our local community leaders to address the rising incidents of violent crime in our community. Violence, particularly gun violence, is increasing across the nation and Americus is no exception. Although we are continuing to see a downward trend in reported crime and our overall crime numbers continue to be lower than they have in years past, we are seeing an increase in the number of injuries and deaths due to violence among the young men in our community. There were eleven reported incidents of drive by shootings in our community in the last 90 days of 2018. We charged seven people in connection to these incidents and at the time of this publication, the incidents are still under investigation. We have been able to tie nine of these incidents to the same groups of people and are fairly certain that the other two are also related. Fortunately, although a lot of rounds have been fired indiscriminately in these incidents, only two people were actually injured. We seized or recovered 37 guns last year, 16 of those in the last 90 days. This is a community issue, in that the only way to address this type of violent crime is to teach our young people violence is never an acceptable method of resolving conflict. Incidents of individuals shooting into houses, cars and crowds because someone has made them angry increased dramatically last year and unless we address the issue as a community, I fear that they will continue to increase in 2019.

The men and women of the Americus Police Department are committed to our community. We will continue to pursue and arrest individuals who choose to victimize others. More importantly, we will work tirelessly in 2019 to address the issues that negatively impact our community in partnership with others in Americus who truly care about making our city a safe place to live, work and play.

Community Relations



Shop with A Cop 2018

It is the responsibility of every employee of the Americus Police Department to foster a positive relationship with members of our community. All employees are encouraged to be active participants in community activities and many employees are members of local civic and service organizations and serve as volunteer coaches and mentors. Sgt. John Brown is responsible for helping to coordinate our community relations activities.

In December of 2016, the Americus Police Department partnered with Sumter County DFACS and the Southwest Georgia Children's Alliance to shop for Christmas gifts with ten local children. In 2018, through the generous donations of local individuals and businesses, we were able to shop with 30 kids! Officers from the Americus Police Department and the Georgia Southwestern State University Department of Public Safety met with the children and their guardians at Shepherd House for dinner. Many of these children are in foster care and all were selected based on their need. After a time of fellowship, the group traveled to Wal Mart, where each child was paired with a volunteer police officer to shop for Christmas gifts. The kids were each given a \$100 gift card which they could spend on anything they wished. Their partner officers helped them select gifts and stay within their budget. Many of the kids spent the money on gifts for family members and not on themselves.



The department sponsored a Coffee with A Cop event on the first Wednesday of October, in conjunction with other departments across the United States. The event was held at Café Campesino and was very well attended. Neighbors from the community were invited to join members of local law enforcement for a time of coffee and fellowship. There was no set agenda for the meetings and no formal program. The only objective was to provide a relaxed atmosphere where officers and citizens could get to know one another.

Officers attended four career fairs to provide information to attendees about employment opportunities with the Americus Police Department and worked with community partners to sponsor twenty two different community events. To schedule a Neighborhood Watch Meeting or to request an officer to attend a meeting or community event, contact Sergeant John Brown at 229-924-3677 ext. 325, or by email at jbrown@americusga.gov.

Sgt. Brown and Lt. Helen Sims work closely with the Sumter County School System to provide the Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) Program to students at the Sumter County Intermediate School. They also work closely with the Sumter County Sheriff Office School Resource Officers (SRO) to provide security at school events and to assist with the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program. The police department was able to provide the GREAT Summer Camp component in 2018 for the first time in several years. As a part of GREAT Summer Graduation, we partnered with the US Attorney's Office, the FBI, GBI, SCSO and local Community Supervision Office to provide the STYLE Program, which was a one day seminar that allowed students and officers to role play through different scenarios where they might have an encounter with law enforcement and sparked discussion on what to do and what not to do in these encounters. The kids particularly enjoyed getting to role play officers while the officers role played kids.

Citizen's Police Academy

The department sponsored our third Citizen's Police Academy beginning on October 2nd and concluding on November 13th with a graduation ceremony in the third-floor training room of the Americus Municipal Building. The Citizen's Police Academy is a six-week, twenty-four session course, which exposes citizens to many different aspects of local law enforcement and included representatives from the Americus Police Department and six other state and local criminal justice agencies. Some of the topics covered in the course included, Patrol Operations, Animal Control, Traffic Enforcement, Accident Investigation, Criminal Investigations, Use of Force Issues, Domestic Violence, Drugs & Narcotics, SWAT Operations, Gang Awareness, and a General Overview of Municipal Government. The Citizen's Academy is an annual project of the Americus Police Department and is offered in the Fall. Watch local news outlets and our Facebook page for dates and registration information.

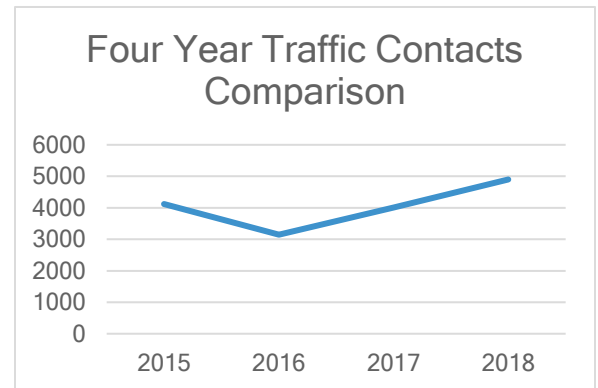


2018 Citizen's Police Academy Graduates

Traffic Enforcement Analysis

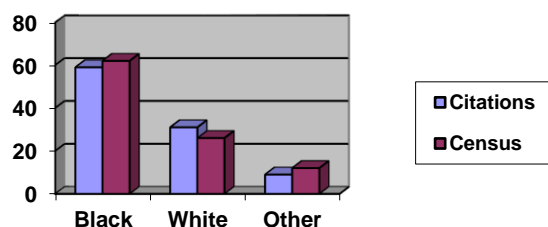
An analysis of all traffic activity reveals that officers issued 2,518 citations and 2,381 warnings in 2018, for a total of 4,899 traffic contacts, which is an increase in traffic contacts over the 4,010 traffic contacts documented in 2017. However the number of citations written has declined markedly as the number of written warnings has increased. Officers issued 3,146 citations in 2016, and 4,117 citations in 2015. The department switched to a new records management software system on September 1, 2017. The new software allows officers to electronically generate traffic citations and warnings and print the citations in their vehicles, rather than having to hand write citations and warnings on multi-part preprinted forms. The new system also allows administrators to quickly and easily access statistical data on citations and warnings issued overall and by individual employees.

Biased Based Profiling is clearly defined in Chapter 14-1 of the Americus Police Department Standard Operating Procedures Manual as the targeting of people based on their race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, age, cultural group, or any other identifiable group. This practice is strictly prohibited. For example, the fact that a person is African-American, Hispanic, or a member of any other ethnic group is not a basis for suspecting that person of wrongdoing. Any law enforcement-initiated actions that rely upon membership in a particular people group, rather than on behavior are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Such actions include but are not limited to traffic contacts, field contacts, and asset seizure and forfeiture efforts. No officer of the Americus Police Department shall endorse or act upon stereotypes, attitudes, or beliefs that a person's background increases the probability that the person will act unlawfully. An individual may only be detained and/or law enforcement action taken based on factors related to a violation or the investigation of a violation of: Federal Law, State Statute, or Local Ordinance.

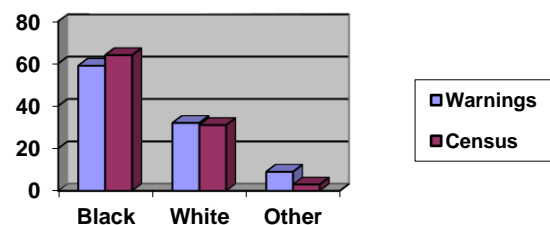


The percentages in the accompanying charts and analyses are based on the combined data captured from both handwritten and electronic citations. The number counted as "Other" reflects all races other than Black, White or Hispanic.

**2018 Citations by Race %
Compared to 2010 Census Data**



**2018 Warnings by Race %
Compared to 2010 Census Data**



There were no complaints made with the department in 2017 alleging bias-based profiling in traffic or any other contacts. As depicted in the graphs, the racial breakdown of citations is a close match to the racial composition of the City of Americus according to official US Census data. There is nothing in the statistical analysis that indicates disparate treatment of persons in traffic enforcement encounters according to their race or their gender, although the number of violations by male drivers is significantly higher than those of female drivers.

Written Citations and Warnings Issued

	Citation	Warning	Census
Black	62%	59%	64%
White	26%	31%	31%
Hispanic	4%	3%	2%
Other*	8%	7%	3%
Male	54%	49%	44%
Female	46%	51%	56%

**The Other category includes those persons whose race was not recorded on the citation.*

Vehicle Pursuits

A pursuit is defined by department Standard Operating Procedure as: An active attempt by a law enforcement officer in a motor vehicle to apprehend one or more occupants of another moving motor vehicle, where the driver of the fleeing vehicle is aware of the attempt and is actively resisting apprehension.

The Americus Police Department is aware of the tendency for a violator to attempt to avoid arrest by fleeing the police. We are also aware that pursuit of violators poses a threat to the safety of all concerned and to non-involved citizens. This department therefore acknowledges both the utility of pursuit actions as necessary for apprehension and the importance of protecting the life and property of all persons. The decision to initiate pursuit is that of the individual officer, but at no time shall an officer act outside the parameters of this policy regarding chase or pursuit.

Pursuit is a judgment-initiated call that relies on good common-sense decisions on the part of the officer. Officers shall consider the following question when initiating pursuit; "Will the risk to other drivers be heightened because of the pursuit; and does the severity of the violation justify the risk involved?" Many factors must be considered when an officer makes a decision to initiate pursuit. They include, but are not limited to:

1. Severity of Violation
2. Weather Conditions
3. Time of Day
4. Area of Pursuit (Open highway, residential, school zones, etc.)
5. Traffic Congestion/Pedestrian Activity
6. Jurisdiction

Traffic law enforcement is a major function of this department. Officers may employ basic apprehension action in order to stop a traffic law violator. However, once a traffic violator has clearly exhibited a refusal to stop for police and an intention to elude, the officer shall cease pursuit and resume safe driving practices and attempt to bring the suspected violator to justice by other means. Pursuit of a motor vehicle for any traffic or misdemeanor violation is strictly prohibited.

When an officer knows that the occupant of a vehicle is a forcible felon (armed robbery, aggravated assault/battery or other violent crime, see OCGA 16-3-1) he/she may initiate and continue pursuit until such time as the forcible felon is apprehended or the risks associated with the pursuit outweigh the risks associated with the felon's escape. The primary principle the officer must keep in mind is the level of threat to innocent persons that the felon may pose if he or she escapes, compared to the possibility of injury to the pursuing officer or others resulting from the pursuit. Even in the case of a forcible felon, if at any time the officer or his/her supervisor feels that the threat of injury to others caused by the pursuit is greater than the threat of injury if the felon escapes, the pursuit must be terminated.

When an officer knows that the occupant of a vehicle is a felon, but not of a forcible nature, he/she may initiate pursuit of the felon vehicle. The standard for termination of the pursuit is much lower, however, for a non-forcible felon. Since the felon poses no known threat to life if he/she escapes the lives of pursuing officers and innocent bystanders must not be risked in apprehending the felon. The pursuit may continue only as long as the pursuing officer and his/her supervisors feel that the pursuit does not pose a significant threat to the lives of others. If conditions change or the fleeing suspect exhibits a reckless disregard for others or an intentional attempt to hurt others, the pursuit must be terminated. For example, if a non-forcible felon disregards a stop sign or light, passes other vehicles, or in any way exhibits dangerous driving practices, the pursuit must be terminated.

Juvenile drivers are statistically known to be less safe drivers than adults. Juvenile offenders are more likely to make poor decisions and take unnecessary risks when attempting to elude capture in a vehicle. When the pursuing officer knows or is almost certain that the fleeing vehicle is operated by a juvenile and the offense is a misdemeanor or non-forcible felony, pursuit should be immediately terminated. If the fleeing juvenile is known to have committed a forcible felony and poses a threat to others if allowed to escape the officer may initiate pursuit. However, the pursuing officer must take the age of the offender into consideration and should terminate the pursuit if the juvenile exhibits a pattern of driving which poses a greater risk of injury to others than the risk of the juvenile's escape.

There were two Pursuit Reports completed by officers in 2018. Both of the reports were submitted through the records management software and both were properly reviewed by supervisors and command staff, who determined that the incidents were within department guidelines for vehicle pursuits. All personnel were trained on the department's pursuit policy in 2018 and no revisions to the department's policy or procedures are recommended at this time.

Use of Force Analysis

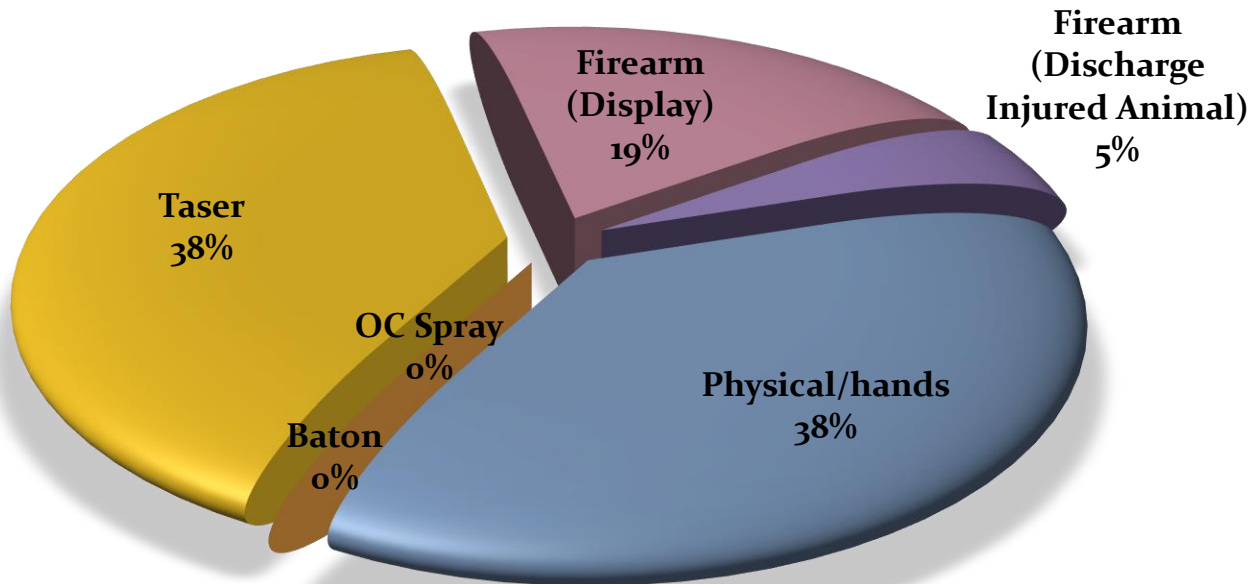
Police officers are occasionally required to use physical force against persons who have committed a crime in order to affect an arrest or to protect the life or wellbeing of others. It is the policy of the Americus Police Department that the value of human life is immeasurable and that officers will use only that force necessary to protect life and effect lawful objectives.

Department records show that officers of the Americus Police Department answered 39,761 calls for service and made 1,353 arrests in 2018. Out of all these arrests, there were only 18 reportable use of force incidents in 2018 for a forcible arrest percentage of approximately 1%. Statistically, the race and gender of those suspects involved in force incidents are consistent with the overall race and gender of those arrested for the year. The race and gender of the officers involved were also consistent with the makeup of the department.

The Americus Police Department is governed by the United States Constitution, State law and department policy in its use of force to obtain lawful objectives. Officers are given extensive training in the use of force and are supplied with several options for dealing with a combative subject. Each time that force must be used by an officer, the officer must file a written report detailing the incident. These reports are reviewed by the Chief of Police and the department's Command Staff.

There are several different types of force which an officer may have to use in performing his or her duty. The type of force used by the officer is dictated primarily by the person with whom the officer is dealing.

Use of Force 2018



The first force option which officers may employ, aside from the officer's presence on the scene, is verbal. Officers of the Americus Police Department are trained in the proper way to use verbal commands and communication skills to convince a person to comply with the officer's requests. In most cases, verbal direction is all that is required by an officer to safely affect an arrest. If the officer is unable to verbally gain control of a suspect or if the suspect becomes violent toward the officer or toward others, officers are authorized to use other means to gain control of the suspect.

The next force option is empty hand physical control of a suspect. Officers are trained in a variety of tactics designed to allow the officer to gain physical control of a suspect offering resistance to the officer's attempt to make an arrest. In the event that an officer is unable to gain physical control of a suspect or if the suspect is violent and causing or threatening to cause harm to the officer or other persons, officers are authorized to use a variety of non-lethal devices to gain control of the violent suspect.

All sworn officers of the Americus Police Department are issued oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray. OC spray is a non-chemical natural agent made from the essence of cayenne or habanero pepper. The spray causes immediate irritation to the mucous membranes in the eyes, nose, mouth and bronchial tubes of the person being sprayed. The initial effects of the spray last for 15 to 30 minutes with a burning sensation lasting for up to 60 minutes. The spray impairs the vision of the person sprayed and causes an intense burning sensation to the exposed skin and mucous membranes.

Officers are trained to provide a suspect with facilities to flush the affected areas with water as soon as possible after exposure. Normally, copious amounts of water and washing with non-oil based soap are all that is required to counter the effects of the spray. Rarely is further treatment at a medical facility

required. Officers are instructed during training to watch for respiratory distress or failure during transport of the suspect to the holding facility.

All sworn officers of the Americus Police Department are issued an expandable baton. The baton is designed as a defensive weapon to be used against a violent suspect. Officers are trained in the proper use of impact weapons and will only use impact weapons to counter a physical attack on the officer or on others by a suspect.

The police department utilizes Taser brand electronic incapacitation devices for use by sworn officers. Taser devices utilize compressed nitrogen to project two small probes up to 21 feet. These probes are connected to the Taser device by insulated wire. An electrical current is transmitted through the wires to where the probes make contact with the body or clothing, resulting in an immediate loss of the person's neuromuscular control and the ability to perform coordinated action for the duration of the impulse. Officers receive extensive training in the use of the device before the device is issued. The department has also implemented a clear and comprehensive policy which guides the use of the devices.

The final force option which officers may use is deadly force. The use of deadly force is strictly governed by both Georgia law and department policy. The Americus Police Department Use of Force Policy is as follows:

An officer may use lethal force only when the officer reasonably believes that the action is:

1. In defense of human life, including the officer's life or
2. In defense of any person in imminent danger of serious physical injury, or
3. When necessary to stop or prevent the commission of a forcible felony where the victim is in imminent danger of serious physical injury or death, or
4. In the apprehension of a fleeing felon, when:
 - a. The officer has probable cause to believe that a forcible felony has been committed and the person to be arrested has committed it, and
 - b. The officer has identified himself as a police officer and given notice of his/her intention to arrest (time and circumstances permitting), and
 - c. The officer reasonably believes that the suspect's freedom represents a significant imminent threat of serious physical injury or death to the officer or to other persons, and
 - d. All other reasonable means of apprehension have been exhausted or are precluded before lethal force is used. (Americus Police Department Standard Operating Procedures Manual)

Each time that an officer uses force to arrest a suspect, the officer must complete a Use of Force Report which is submitted to the Office of Professional Standards. Each report is reviewed by the Chief of Police and critiqued by the department's Command Staff.

Internal Affairs

It is the mission of the Americus Police Department to provide service to all citizens based on the foundations of honesty, integrity and respect. To ensure that all employees maintain a culture of transparency and uphold our foundational values, the Americus Police Department treats all complaints against our employees seriously and all complaints made to the department are thoroughly investigated. To file a complaint, a person may contact any member of the Americus Police Department or come by the Public Safety Building at 119 S Lee Street to fill out a complaint form. The complaint form contains the name of the complainant, the name of the employee against whom the complaint is made, and a brief written summary of the complaint. Persons wishing to make a complaint against an employee are

encouraged to make the complaint in person; however, the department will take complaints over the phone, through the internet, or by other means. Each formal complaint is assigned a tracking number and logged for follow up.

Internal affairs investigations may also be initiated at the request of the Chief of Police. Such investigations typically involve violations of department policy or situations involving one or more supervisors. Requests for consideration of a disciplinary action may also be assigned for investigation through the internal affairs function.

There were thirteen complaints made by thirteen different citizens against employees of the department in 2018. All of the complaints were documented and assigned a tracking number. Eleven of the complaints were of a minor nature and were assigned to the employee's supervisors for follow-up. Two of the complaints involved more serious allegations and were assigned to an investigator for resolution. Additionally, there were five complaints made internally by employees or supervisors within the department. All eighteen complaints were investigated and the officers involved were exonerated in ten of the complaints, meaning that the investigator found the officers did not violate any laws or department guidelines. The remaining eight complaints were sustained with officers receiving formal written reprimands in seven cases and counseling in one incident.

Control Number	Date	Nature of Complaint	Finding
2018IA001	01/16/18	Use of Force	Exonerated
2018IA002	02/02/18	Traffic Complaint	Exonerated
2018IA003	02/26/18	Harassment	Exonerated
2018IA004	02/07/18	Improper Procedure	Exonerated
2018IA005	03/26/18	Internal Policy Violation	Reprimand
2018IA006	03/26/18	Internal Policy Violation	Reprimand
2018IA007	03/26/18	Internal Policy Violation	Counseled
2018IA008	03/26/18	Internal Policy Violation	Reprimand
2018IA009	03/26/18	Internal Policy Violation	Reprimand
2018IA010	04/30/18	Improper Procedure	Exonerated
2018IA011	04/30/18	Rude Conduct	Exonerated
2018IA012	05/09/18	Rude conduct	Exonerated
2018IA013	07/10/18	Harassment	Exonerated
2018IA014	07/18/18	Improper Procedure	Exonerated
2018IA015	09/04/18	Improper Conduct	Reprimand
2018IA016	10/29/18	Improper Conduct	Reprimand
2018IA017	10/31/18	Improper Procedure	Exonerated
2018IA018	12/20/18	Improper Procedure	Reprimand

Recruitment Activities

The recruitment and retention of employees continued to be a major focus of the police department in 2018. The department has 44 positions allotted for sworn police officers and supervisors. We began the year with four vacant positions for police officers which was a tremendous improvement over the fifteen unfilled positions at the beginning of 2017, which was a deficit of 34% of our workforce. We utilized aggressive recruitment efforts to strive toward our recruitment goal of having a diverse department that represents the community that we serve. We intend to accomplish this goal through a continuous program of recruitment activities designed to target unrepresented population groups within the guidelines of applicable Federal and State guidelines. Our recruitment objectives are:

1. Recruit the best possible candidates with the highest quality combination of skills and abilities to perform the required job-related duties.
2. Have an ethnic and gender composition in the sworn ranks that is representative of our service area.
3. Increase the number of qualified minority and female applicants for the position of Police Officer.

The Americus Police Department has an ethnic composition that is within 8.9 percentage points of the community demographics for Caucasians and within 10.5 percentage points of the community demographics for African Americans. Other ethnic groups, including Hispanics, comprise 5.9% of the service population, and with recent hires, comprise 7.5% of the department's sworn officers. Although the composition of the department is not an exact match with the community, it is much more

representative than other departments in the Southeastern United States, according to statistics from the US Department of Justice.

One area of concern for this department and for police departments across the country is the lack of female sworn employees and female applicants for employment. Based on current census estimates, females represent 53.9 % of the service population, and 49.7 % of the available workforce in the Albany Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Within the police department, however, females represent only 17.5% of the sworn ranks. Although this percentage is slightly better than the national average of 11.6% for female sworn officers, there is clearly room for improvement in our recruitment and employment efforts.

We are pleased to report that as of January of 2019, we have only four vacant positions left for police officer (although two of our current officers are on long term military leave). We have aggressively recruited applicants through advertisements and attendance at career fairs over the past year. The current composition of the department is depicted in the accompanying table.

	WHITE		BLACK		OTHER		TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Number on Staff	15	1	16	5	2	1	40
Percentage of Staff	37%	2.5%	40%	13%	5%	2.5%	100%

Department Profile Compared to 2010 Census			
	Black	White	Other
Department	53%	39.5%	7.5%
2010 Census	63.5%	30.6%	5.9%

Community Partners

The police department could not work in this community effectively without the cooperation and support of our community partners. It would be impossible to list all of the groups and individuals that have given us support over the past year. Two groups, however, do deserve recognition for their major contributions to the agency.

The Smarr-Smith Foundation was incorporated last year following the murders of Officers Nick Smarr and Jody Smith on December 7th, 2016. The foundation provides funding for scholarships at our two local colleges and also provides money to local law enforcement agencies for training and equipment. The foundation provided over \$20,000 in scholarships and over \$30,000 in equipment to the Americus Police Department, Georgia Southwestern State University Police Department, Sumter County Sheriff Office, and Georgia State Patrol.



Thanks to the generosity of the Smarr-Smith Foundation we were able to purchase new Tasers for all of our patrol officers. This allowed us to make sure that all sworn personnel assigned to enforcement activities are equipped with this non-lethal force option.



We also received a generous donation from the One Sumter Initiative to start a Police K-9 Program. One Sumter Economic Development Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting and enhancing economic development, community growth and workforce development throughout Sumter County. With an emphasis on Economic Development, Workforce Development, Marketing & Communications, and Transportation, One Sumter seeks to improve the economic vitality of all citizens in Sumter County both now and into the future. Thanks to their generous donation, Ofc. Chris Gaddy and his K-9 partner, Vonn completed their training in August of 2018 and are now working with our uniform patrol teams. Vonn is trained to locate narcotics and to track fugitives. As of the end of December, Ofc. Gaddy and Vonn had logged 25 K-9 deployments, tracked six fugitives resulting in one capture, a recovered gun and recovered narcotics. Vonn made a total of 10 narcotics finds, resulting in arrests.



We Do Not Forget

Members of the Americus Police Department, Sumter County Sheriff's Office, and the Georgia Southwestern State University Police Department sponsored the county's first local Peace Officer Memorial Day Observation on May 15th, 2018. Friends and family members of the seven law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty in Americus and Sumter County were invited to attend the ceremony and place a carnation in wreaths presented by each of the law enforcement agencies with fallen members. This will be an annual observance which will hopefully be conducted in 2019 in conjunction with the dedication of a planned Law Enforcement Memorial. We do not forget.





On December 7th, 2018 we commemorated the second anniversary of the death of Officers Nick Smarr and Jody Smith, at 12:00 noon outside the GSW School of Nursing. The Marine Corps presented Nick's family with the Navy and Marine Corps Medal (Posthumously). This is the highest non-combat award that can be given to a Marine for an act of heroism. Life Link Organ Donation was also there to honor Jody's family for the lives Jody saved through organ donation. Nick and Jody's story was featured on a new show on Identification Discovery called Body Cam. A production crew was here in Americus for several days during the summer videotaping interviews and footage for the show. It can be seen on the Identification Discovery Web Site.

