Americus Police Department

2017 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



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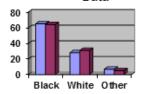
Turn to Page 2 for a message from Chief of Police, Mark A. Scott and a summary of the crime statistics for 2017

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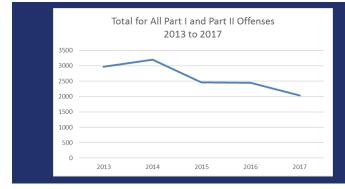


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2017 Citations by Race % Compared to 2010 Census Data



□Citations ■Census



2017 CRIME STATISTICS

The number of reported Part I Crimes in the City of Americus is the lowest that it has been since 1999. Turn to Page 2 for a summary of current statistics and a look at the numbers over the past 20 years.

Message from the Chief

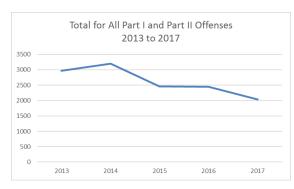


Chief Mark Scott

As we launch into a brand new year, I would like to take some time to look back on 2017 and examine our progress. One of our main goals last year was to fill vacant patrol officer positions. At the beginning of the year we had twelve openings. Through aggressive recruiting efforts, I am happy to report that we currently have only four openings for police officers. We will continue to actively recruit the best and brightest candidates that we can find and hope to be fully staffed by the end of March 2018.

We set a number of additional goals for the department in 2017. A full description of our goals and detailed accounts of our progress can be found on our web page at www.americusga.gov/police-department. To summarize some of the high points, we sponsored a series of Criminal Justice Summits which brought

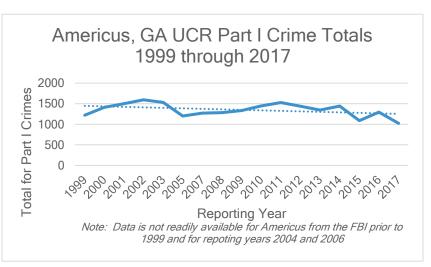
representatives from the court system together with local, state and federal law enforcement representatives to discuss issues facing our community. Hopefully these summits will become a regular occurrence for sharing information. The police department worked very hard to achieve certification from the Georgia Law Enforcement Certification Program. We successfully met all the required standards for the program and were approved for certification in December. We also met many of the goals we had set for 2017 in the areas of community involvement, technology enhancement, general training, and crisis intervention training.



Of course, one of our major ongoing goals is to implement proactive strategies to reduce crime in the City of Americus. I am very pleased to report that we had a significant decrease in reported crime in 2017. The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting System divides criminal offenses into two major reporting categories. Part I Crimes are offenses such as murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and burglary. Part II Crimes are offenses such as simple assault, forgery, drug activity and other offenses. The Americus Police Department

investigated 1,024 Part I crimes in 2017, which is a 21% decrease over the number of Part I crimes reported in 2016. We investigated 1,015 Part II crimes in 2017, which is a 12% decrease over the number reported in 2016. The total for both Part I and II crimes is 2,039, which is a 17% decrease over the same categories in 2016.

The FBI maintains a record of Part I Uniform Crime Report data on their web site beginning with reporting year 1995. The first year that data is available for Americus is 1999. Looking at the past nineteen years, the number of serious crimes reported by the department varies from year to year, but shows a very clear downward trend on average. The number of serious crimes reported in 2017 continues that downward trend in criminal activity and is the lowest number of reported serious crimes in the City of



Americus since 1999 (the last year available on the FBI website).

While we accomplished a lot in 2017, we are even more optimistic for 2018. Some of our major goals for this year are to implement a K-9 program (funding already available), implement a special investigations unit to deal with drug activity and other street level crimes, and augment our state certification by pursing national accreditation. We will also be working hard to build on the partnerships we have already established in the community and to forge new cooperative efforts with community partners.

Community Relations



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.

The department sponsored two Coffee With A Cop events in 2017. The first event was held in April at Bittersweet Coffee Shop. The second event was held in October at Madea's Diner. 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.

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. This year, through the generous donations of local individuals and businesses,

we were able to shop with 25 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 Roman Oven for dinner. Many of these children were 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. Most of the kids spent the money on gifts for family members and not on themselves.



The department also worked to revitalize our existing Neighborhood Watch Groups and to assist neighborhoods in organizing two new watch groups. We contacted all of our Neighborhood Watch Captains and hosted an informational meeting to provide them with information and resources to assist them in their neighborhood meetings. The department attended Neighborhood Watch meetings

throughout the year and assisted a coalition of watch groups with sponsoring signature neighborhood events in an effort to reach out to the members of their communities. Members of the community who are interested in joining a Neighborhood Watch Group or starting one in their neighborhoods are encouraged to contact Sqt. 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.

Citizen's Police Academy

The department sponsored our second Citizen's Police Academy beginning on October 3rd and concluding on November 17th with a graduation ceremony in the third-floor training room of the Americus Municipal Building. The Citizen 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.

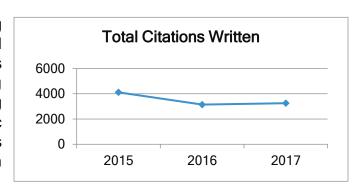


2017 Citizen's Police Academy Graduates

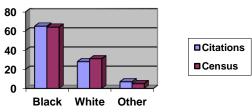
Traffic Enforcement Analysis

An analysis of all traffic enforcement activity reveals that officers issued 3,252 traffic citations and 758 traffic warnings in 2017, which is a slight increase of 3% over the 3,146 citations written in 2016, but down considerably from the 4,117 citations written 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. The data compiled for this report is drawn from a combination of handwritten citations issued from January 1 to August 31 and electronic citations issued from September 1 to December 31.

It must be noted that the new software is still being refined and that a significant number of issued warnings are counting race as "other" when race is not entered in the data field, rather than counting race as unknown. A directive was issued requiring both race and gender be noted on electronic citations and warnings, particularly when data is entered manually rather than being imported from a GCIC license query.

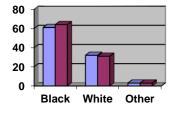


2017 Citations by Race % Compared to 2010 Census Data





2017 Warnings by Race % Compared to 2010 Census Data





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.

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.

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 pursing 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.

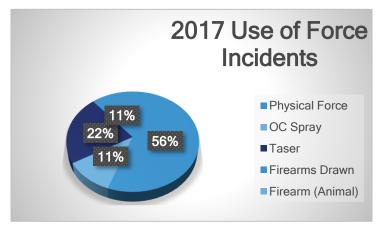
Juvenile drivers are statistically known to be less safe drivers than adults. Juvenile offenders are more likely to make poor decisions and take unnecessary risks when attempting to elude capture in a vehicle. When the pursing officer knows or is almost certain that the fleeing vehicle is operated by 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 three Pursuit Reports completed by officers in 2017, however upon review, none of the documented incidents were actual pursuits. In each case, the officer attempted to stop a vehicle for a traffic violation. In each case, the vehicle fled and the officer chose not to initiate pursuit. All three of the reports were submitted through the records management software in use at the time of the incident and all were properly reviewed by supervisors and command staff, who determined that the incidents were terminated by the officers before becoming actual pursuits. All personnel were trained on the department's pursuit policy in 2017 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 37,139 calls for service and made 865 arrests in 2017. Out of all these arrests, there were only 10 reportable use of force incidents in 2017 for a forcible arrest percentage of less than 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.

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. Request for consideration of a disciplinary action may also be assigned for investigation through the internal affairs function.

There were twelve complaints made by thirteen different citizens against employees of the department in 2017. All of the complaints

Control Number	Date	Nature of Complaint	Finding
42793	02/27/2017		Unfounded
42797	03/03/2017	Rudeness	Sustained Other
42825	03/31/2017	Procedural Violation	Unfounded
42830	04/05/2017	Rudeness	Unfounded
42855	04/30/2017	Excessive Force	Unfounded/ Sustained Other
42881	05/26/2017	Improper Arrest	Unfounded
42886	05/31/2017	Procedural Violations	Unfounded
42917	07/01/2017	Harassment	Unfounded
43007	09/29/2017		Unfounded
43031	10/23/2017		Unfounded
43080	12/11/2017	Rudeness	Unfounded
43096	12/27/2017	Rudeness	Sustained

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. The first of these complaints alleged that officers stopped an individual for no reason and seized his vehicle without cause. Investigation revealed that the subject was stopped and charged with several traffic violations and the vehicle was towed because it had no insurance. This incident was ruled unfounded. The second complaint alleged that an officer used excessive force in attempting to control a family member of an accident victim who refused to back out of the scene so the EMS could treat the victim. The investigator determined that the complaint of injury from the incident was unfounded, but determined that the officer could have used tactics other than physical force to deal with the distraught family member. This complaint was Sustained Other with mitigating circumstances.

The remaining ten complaints were for offenses such as rudeness and improper procedure. Eight of these were investigated and ruled as unfounded. The remaining two were sustained and resulted in written disciplinary action. It should be noted that all sworn personnel assigned to regular duty activities are assigned a body camera. Officers are required by policy to activate the camera on every call for service, traffic stop, and official citizen encounter. They are further encouraged to activate the camera any time that they feel a recording would be beneficial. In the majority of the complaints investigated in 2017, an officer's body camera was activated and captured a true and accurate account of the citizen encounter. As noted, the camera footage showed in all but three of the complaints that the officer acted properly and within department guidelines.

Recruitment Activities

The recruitment and retention of employees has been a major focus of the police department in 2017. The department has 44 positions allotted for sworn police officers and supervisors. We began the year with 15 vacant positions for police officers which meant that we had a deficit of 34% of our workforce. Due to this shortage of personnel, our officers had to work on their days off on a rotating schedule in order to provide patrol coverage for the city. Although the shortage was critical, we determined to work hard to hire only the most qualified candidates that we could find and to strive toward our recruitment goals 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 eight percentage points of the community demographics for Caucasians and within three percentage points of the community demographics for African Americans. Other ethnic groups, including Hispanics, comprise 10% of the service population, and with recent hires, comprise 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 15% 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 February of 2018, we have only four vacant positions left for police officer. 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	14	1	19	4	1	1	40
Percentage of Staff	35%	2.5%	47.5%	10%	2.5%	2.5%	100%

Department Profile Compared to 2010 Census							
	Black	White	Other				
Department	57.5%	37.5%	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 S U M T E R 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 Economic Development, Workforce on Development, Marketing & Communications, 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, we have been able



to purchase a vehicle for the K-9 Team and will be sending our newly selected K-9 officer to train with his new partner.

We Do Not Forget

Members of the Americus Police Department and the Georgia Southwestern State University Police Department accompanied the families of Nick Smarr and Jody Smith to Washington DC to observe Peace Officer Memorial Day on May 15th, 2017. Nick and Jody's names were dedicated on the National Law Enforcement Officer's Memorial along with the names of the 131 other officers killed in the line of duty across the United States and six other officers killed in the State of Georgia in 2017. This page is dedicated to their memory and to their families. We do not forget.

























